

Sherwood Guernsey '68
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Karen Navarro

JANOWSKI: Hello, my name is Elizabeth Janowski ('21) and I'm here this morning speaking with Mr. Sherwood Guernsey of the Class of 1968, as part of the Dartmouth Vietnam Project, an oral history project that aims to record the testimonies of Dartmouth alumni and members of the Upper Valley community who lived through the Vietnam War era. The date is July 9th, 2020, and it is currently around 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time. I'm calling in from my home in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and Mr. Guernsey is at his home in Williamstown, Massachusetts. First of all, Mr. Guernsey, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today.

GUERNSEY: Well, it's a real pleasure, Elizabeth. I'm very happy actually to talk about the Vietnam era, and particularly pleased that you and your professor are taking this on. I do think it's important with a lot of, I guess, lessons that hopefully we can learn, although who knows if we will?

JANOWSKI: Yes, thank you. All right. So, I guess going into a couple quick questions, then. First of all, when and where were you born?

GUERNSEY: I was born in Albany, New York, on August 30th, 1946.

JANOWSKI: What was your father's name and what did he do for a living?

GUERNSEY: My father's name was actually Howard Sherwood Guernsey, and he for most of his life—well, he had two careers, two different careers. The first he was, he worked in his family nursery which his father had started in 1888, my grandfather, which was called Guernsey Schoharie Nurseries. Schoharie is the name of the town that I grew up in, and it's spelled S-c-h-o-h-a-r-i-e. Guernsey Schoharie Nurseries. And he worked there right after college for a good 10 years, but then he left that work and went to General Electric where he worked for 26 years in Schenectady, New York. And that's S-c-h-e-n-e-c-t-a-d-y.

JANOWSKI: And how about your mother? What was her name and what did she do for a living?

GUERNSEY: Yeah. My mother was Margaret Ransom Guernsey, and she was a homemaker all her life for the family while my dad, you know, went off to work each day.

JANOWSKI: Okay. And then, also did you have any siblings?

GUERNSEY: I did. I have two older sisters. It was a struggle. [laughter]

JANOWSKI: How so? I mean, I have two older brothers, so I guess I can really appreciate...

GUERNSEY: Oh, you're in heaven then. Oh, you're fine. [laughter] No, I was the youngest of three, and I mean, it was fine. We grew up in this little village of Schoharie, New York, which I mentioned earlier, a small village in Upstate New York about an hour-and-a-half outside of Albany. It's very rural. There's only about 1,500 people. At the time I was growing up in the 1950s and early '60s, it was actually a fairly vibrant little town, like a lot of rural America, Elizabeth, at that time. The main street was full of every kind of little small business that you would need in your daily living, and the high school, etc.

And so, we had a good life there and I had a place to live where my dad had renovated an old house and we had 20 acres of land and streams to play in and, you know, we created all kinds of play. I don't remember watching screen time very much, but... [laughter] So, yeah, it was good. My two older sisters were great. If we did have [inaudible], there was that my oldest sister's eight years than I am, and so there was a good share of the time when she was out of the house, having gone off to college, and so it was just myself and my middle sister, and then for the last four years I was a single child, before I went off to college.

JANOWSKI: And what were their names?

GUERNSEY: My older sister is Carolyn (C-a-r-o-l-y-n) Shepard (S-h-e-p-a-r-d) and my middle sister is Camille (C-a-m-i-l-l-e) Groves (G-r-o-v-e-s).

JANOWSKI: Yeah, so maybe tell me a bit more about Schoharie and growing up there, I guess specifically in terms of maybe like

the political and religious makeup of the town? What was that like?

GUERNSEY:

So, Schoharie was rural Upstate New York, as I mentioned, and held many of the characteristics of literally rural conservative small town America at the time, which still holds true to some extent, to a great extent. But, the village was very white, been settled by the Dutch. There was—I don't believe there were any black people in town. I believe there might have been one person who was Jewish. And, so it was full of people religious-wise who were Catholic and Protestant, of a couple different denominations: Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed and Community Church, which is basically a Congregational Church. So there were three different churches in a small town, but it did cover an area. It brought in from the farms, etc.

It was a farming community that was kind of morphing into a bedroom community in part for the so-called Tri-City area of Albany, Schenectady and Troy, New York, and so a lot of people, mostly men at the time, were commuting or began commuting, as my dad did ultimately at the start of World War II, into usually Schenectady because that's where there's a huge General Electric turbine manufacturing plant, thousands and thousands of workers. It's kind of the typical situation, Elizabeth, in the mid part of the 1900s where people who had been working the farms came from the farms into work that was higher earning capacity, especially during World War II. And the factories were just really humming, and so people left the farm for good in seek of that kind of employment. And plus, there was a national defense need to do that.

But, back to Schoharie itself, it was white. Basically it was white, Christian and small. Very few Jewish people. There were never—I never saw a Latino or anybody of color that I remember literally growing up, except maybe on the television that was just beginning to become prevalent. But yeah, so that was a very—it was a type of community that you didn't even appreciate all that. And of course, I graduated in 1964 from high school, and the civil rights movement was swirling around the country, but believe it or not at that time I had very little knowledge of it, even though my father read the *New York Times* voraciously every day. He was a Republican, and he was what was called a Rockefeller Republican at the time, which was a relatively

liberal Republican, but... and we had dinner table discussions every night. I learned to debate him there later, not at that time, but we never really had a sense of the civil rights movement and what it meant at the time. So it was a very isolated, I think safe to say, community that was in the tradition of being white, rural and Christian, and very conservative.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, I was actually, I was going to get into that more and ask specifically about your parents' political leanings, especially because I know that later on in life you became pretty involved in Democratic politics.

GUERNSEY: Very. So, when I was growing up, just to elaborate a little bit, in my family experience my father was a very strong individual, and they both were well educated, both my mother and my father. My mother had gone to a couple different colleges, but she'd gone to Wellesley and Emma Willard, somewhat different, but she had a difficult, let's just say, father who refused to support her halfway through college, so she had to drop out and go somewhere else.

But, to move back to the main point, they were both well educated. My dad went to Dartmouth. And he was the only one in town who had ever gone to an Ivy League school. It kind of reminds me of *A River Runs Through It* in that sense, the movie and the book, where one of the sons goes off to Dartmouth from the town in which no one had ever gone even east to college before. But, it was indeed very conservative. My dad was a member of the Republican Committee. But, Republican politics at the time was never ever like it has morphed into now. It was not outwardly racist, it was not outwardly—I say outwardly because there weren't any blacks or Latinos in the community, so in a sense one would never know. But I do know that my father was fairly broad minded unlike Republicans today. And he reviewed all the issues and looked at all the issues from a lot of different sides, and made notes on the newspaper, put it up on the bulletin board every night. I mean, I really got a dose of current events, interestingly as I said, except for civil rights. And I think it just—I think maybe that's a factor because there just weren't any people of color in the community, so I don't think he could relate to that. I don't know why, but that is a speculation.

But aside from that, it was conservative, and my dad was very conservative, one of the leading Republicans, and I absorbed that as a young man listening to him discuss, and of course I only ever really ever heard one side when you're growing up within the household. I was a good student at school, but schools then, I don't even know if there was a civics course. There must have been. But it didn't—you know, it was typically, if it was, and I actually know a fair amount about civics because later I taught a year of civics, but at the time, it's an old textbook and it just went through, you know, how to make a law, you know, who the founders were. It was very didactic, and frankly very boring. And, so people walked out of that civics class, the teenagers walked out with having retained I think very little except this general knowledge of how our country was built, which is good, but it's nowhere near sufficient to have good citizenship develop.

But, so it was a very political family. We were always discussing politics. My father was always very involved in school and school budgets, any political matter that came up. He also was very involved in church politics, which of course can be very dramatic, and in fact the Congregational congregation that we had been a part of and going regularly, the congregation had a meeting to both to change affiliation from Congregational to Presbyterian. And in my father's mind, that was really awful, it really was, because it was moving from the Congregational church, Elizabeth, which is a very democratic institution. There's no hierarchical structure. Ministers are not appointed and just told to go to the congregation. All decisions are made, *all* decisions are made by the local congregation. And it's run by members in committees, and that's always the way the Congregational churches worked. It's like direct democracy. Not representative, but direct democracy.

So then the Presbyterian is more structured. It's not like the Catholic Church structure, but it's still more structured, and he objected to that. And I'll never forget his getting up in a church service, and I was, you know, very young still, probably 10-ish or something, but I never forget he gave a speech that was unbelievably riveting, you could have heard a pin drop, and very succinct. And I was very proud of his speaking ability. And then we dutifully all as a family voted against the motion, and only one other family joined us. But, that was the way my father operated. He was very principled, strong-willed. And if he believes something, there

was no way that he would ever compromise, and he just saw it as a matter of principle, and he would move forward and he would try to convince people to be with him. There were similar scenes in the school meetings and school budgets. So, I grew up in a very political family, one-sided politically, but I learned a lot about how issues were raised and developed, and I took that to heart and used it in my own life later.

JANOWSKI: Yeah. I guess going into your experience with school, too, could you tell me a little bit about your early school experiences? I imagine your school was pretty small, coming from a pretty small town.

GUERNSEY: [laughter] Well, that would be a good analysis. That was very sharp. Yeah, I don't know if you went to a school in Milwaukee or where you went to school, but yeah, are you ready for this? I had a total of 64 students in my graduating class.

JANOWSKI: Wow.

GUERNSEY: Wow, yeah, and it's overwhelming, right? And I think it probably started out as about 80, and then there were some basically, it wasn't just guys, but there were people who dropped out. They didn't care about going to school. They would work on the farms, or whatever they did. But yeah, we wound up with just 64 graduating seniors. However, and it was a small school, no question therefore, but it was interesting in that I was able to play some sports. I was no good at football, but I had to play football because a small school, if you were entering any school sport, you had to play two semesters of a sport. Well, I wanted to play basketball, but I couldn't play basketball unless I played football, so I had to play football. And so, I had one sterling moment in football where the coach put me in and I was on an end, and I raced in when the play was called and caught the quarterback behind the line to great cheers. And, you know, the cheerleaders are jumping all up and down. And then the next play, the opposing team ran an end around and they pulled every single player I think on the damned team and ran right over me like I was in a cartoon and I was plastered, and they scored a touchdown. So, that was my one sterling moment and depressing moment. So that's I think how life is. You only have highs and lows.

In any case, yeah, forgetting that story... and then I played basketball, and I did make the first string there because I practiced really hard one summer and was able to get on in my sophomore year to the starting lineup, and that was pretty—I felt pretty good about that, so that was good. So in any case, I got to play sports, but more importantly, you know, interestingly, the classes were small and the teachers were really very good except for, you know, there's always one or two I think in a high school career at least that you feel didn't really help; you can't be sure. But yeah, I had a really good math teacher, and that was really helpful for me because math wasn't my best subject. And the social studies teacher, whatever it was, I don't know what kind of _____ it was, was good at engaging, and then, although didn't do anything with current events, which was a disaster. But, on the other hand, I had a really good music teacher that was—and I played in the orchestra. I played the baritone horn. I bet you may not even know what that is. Do you?

JANOWSKI: I mean, I don't think I've ever seen one in person, no.

GUERNSEY: [laughter] That's okay. I know you're supposed to be the interviewer. So, in any case, a baritone is smaller than a tuba and bigger than a French horn. But in any case, so I played that in the band. And so it was good. So we had a band that was really, you know, it was pretty decent. We had a marching band. So, the school really did try to reach out and participate in a lot of different things, and I felt like I had a pretty broad education. I didn't have anywhere near the depth of the subjects that I found that half of the Dartmouth students had as they entered from the private schools, and that really forced me to work really, really hard the first year because I wasn't sure how I would do. It turns out I did fine, but you know...

So the small school education was not bad at all actually. I would give it pretty high marks. On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd say I got a 7 or 8, believe it or not. Because it was—because those classes were small, there weren't a lot of distractions, and people paid attention. I was able to study and the teachers were responsive to me. So it was in that sense, it was really good. It lacked some of the depth certainly in what one would get at a large high school, although I will tell you that my father, again, strong-willed man that he was, he decided that it would be helpful to me to get into college if I had four years of a foreign language. And so, there was a

very good Latin teacher, so he wanted me to enroll in Latin. So, I can tell you that I had four years of Latin, which was at least unusual on my application, I think.

But yeah, so I mean, there were opportunities that you could grab like that, though, that I think in a bigger school would be less accessible. And so, for my family it gave us an advantage, if you will, because it gave us the advantage to take advantage of those when we saw those opportunities. Other families, if they didn't see (s-e-e) and seize the opportunity, then that would pass by and their education I think would have been less positive. So, overall I had a pretty good experience in high school. But, you know, there were the normal school yard fights. I call them normal. I guess everybody went through that. And, you know, roughhousing among the guys. And yeah. So we had sock hops, you know. I guess everybody did, so yeah, we had pretty regular stuff.

JANOWSKI: Yeah. Was there any particular subject area in high school that you were really interested in that you sort of kind of started knowing that you wanted to go into potentially?

GUERNSEY: Well, you know, I just was really attracted to the history and social events, even though there were a couple gaps, as I explained to you. I mean, my household was just filled with news of what was important, and my father really drilled down and talked about a lot of issues. And so, yeah, I think it was social—in general, you know, social studies. I enjoyed reading a lot, so English was something I really liked, and we had a really good reading course and a great English instructor, and as [inaudible] at least in a couple of years of the high school.

And actually, I liked biology, but in general, math was not my forte, although I did well in math in high school. It was actually the math became more problematic when I got to Dartmouth and had to take calculus. [laughter] That ended my math career right there. So I think, actually I think I did—now that I think about it, my decision about not taking any more math and not liking math only occurred at Dartmouth because of calculus, but I think I know I was with a large number of my students' body, at that time at least, that that was the end of our math career when we took calculus. So, it was an easy way to weed out the math students from the non-math students. But in high school, I actually think I found

geometry fun, algebra. So, yeah, so I mean, I think fair to say that yeah, I would say that the math and social studies and biology... Chemistry didn't do much for me. Physics didn't do much too much for me.

But yeah, so in general it was like a—I realized then, to answer your question more broadly, that I realized early on that I first of all could speak well, I could project—my voice projected, I could articulate things quickly on almost any issue because of my grounding in my house, and so I gravitated to those things which were involving people doing things: history, social studies, that kind of thing, rather than the formulaic kind of studies. So I gravitated more towards the people oriented studies. And that has stuck with me all through my life. So, it did formulate that interest and I have carried that on.

And I also, as a side note, I became the—I ran for and became the student council president in high school for two terms, which was interesting, and I enjoyed that. And that was also a good way for me to kind of cut my teeth on what it was like to run an election. And so, yeah, so it was all really quite formative in many ways to how I developed during the rest of my life and matured in those areas, because I was early on very focused, although not necessarily intentionally, on the same areas which I think I gained in strength for my future career and other related work.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, I think to your point about calculus, it still tends to serve as a weed out at Dartmouth, too. I know a lot of friends who gave up after taking one class of that.

GUERNSEY: [laughter] I still remember halfway through, turning to one of my classmates—I don't remember who—and saying, "Oh, for God's sake, the only way I'm gonna get through this is to memorize these darned formulas." You know, I just, I didn't get it. I mean, literally, I have to admit and I admit to the world, I didn't get calculus, you know? You've got to understand it to do it. I never understood it. And I think I had [John G.] Kemeny as a professor at that time, you know, kind of a world renowned guy in computers, and he was renowned as a good teacher. Well, he may have been. [laughter] Didn't work for me. So, but yeah. So it was good.

So, you know, listen, I'm not saying that everything was rosy in high school. You know, I could tell you a couple of examples if you wish that were not very rosy in my school, one in particular that happened to me. But overall it was, I think that what I'm trying to say is that a small rural school, if you take advantage of the small classes and the teachers who are really interested, you could really make a lot out of it, and you can use it to your advantage and it can be a very positive experience.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, and I think kind of going into Dartmouth a bit, so did you always, since your father was there, have the intention of also going there?

GUERNSEY: Well, since he took me up there at age five, I think, or something like that, [laughter] I must say that he did a good job, quite a good job of indoctrinating me, in retrospect. But, you know, I think that again, there's another aspect to my little village which was not so good, and that is that if you excelled and looked like you were going to be able to like go on to a school like Dartmouth or something similar to that, there was actually animosity, if you can believe it. That's the down side of a small town, not the school particularly, but people get jealous, and they want to know all about you. I grew up in an era, believe it or not, it was where not only were there no cell phones, but there was a party line. And this is a digression. But on the party line on my—I lived on a rural road—but my party line on the road for my family, I mean, you could pick up the phone, Elizabeth, and you could hear someone breathing on it. [laughter] That is, yeah... And my father would sometimes pick up the phone if he wanted to make a call and the first thing he would say is, "Ruth, would you please get off the line." [laughter]

So, it was—the only reason I share that story is because I doubt it's relevant to your project, but it is relevant in the sense that in a small town it is legion to say that what is your business turns out to be everybody's business. And, so what happened in my family was we became incredibly protective of our privacy. We were very conscious of it, and we were very careful in what we said about anything happening in the family or family matters or anything that our own particular beliefs, unless it was something relevant to something being discussed in public. And that wasn't a good feeling growing up. You felt a little trapped, frankly. But, and so the small

town atmosphere created a bit of a sense of “us versus them,” and that was not really positive.

And the only reason I’m sharing this now is because in the background growing up I have this view of this wonderful campus. I’d gone up—I didn’t go up there a lot, but my father took me up to a couple of football games and we drove around and stuff. I mean, he liked the campus and all that. And he was involved in Dartmouth off and on, and he probably headed up the Dartmouth Club in the general area or something, I don’t know. But the bottom line is that I actually began to really appreciate Dartmouth more from a distance, and not just Dartmouth, but good schools in general because the village was already resentful of the fact that I might go to a really good school, if you can believe it. I mean, I still am astounded. But there were many people who felt that way.

And, so as I began to look at schools, and I did, I had a guidance counselor who was talking about various schools and where I could go, and, you know, Cornell was one of them because they knew I was a good student, and I turned out to be valedictorian, but they knew I was a good student anyway. And so they had me look at Cornell [University, Ithaca, NY] and then somewhat even smaller schools. I didn’t want to go to the Midwest to the big schools. I don’t remember all the schools I looked at, but I know Cornell and Dartmouth. But I must say that by the time it came to apply, I applied Dartmouth early admission and got in. So, there you go, that’s the history. But, my father did do a good job of spreading the word about why Dartmouth would be good. He didn’t, however—there was no pressure, no pressure directly at all.

My father and mother both said, when it got to be the middle of junior year, “Look, we want you to think about going to college. We certainly hope you will. Both your sisters have.” And I said, “Yeah. And I might...” Middle sister had gone to the University of Rochester, and the University of Rochester seemed like a great place, and so we’d see that. And I’d seen some other schools. You know, I’d been to Cornell actually because my father had good friends who were there, or had gone there, excuse me. In fact, our best friend in a neighboring town had gone to Cornell, and he used to kid my father all the time about football games and stuff.

But, in any case, we went... So, I had certainly other—had seen other schools and knew of other schools, but my father put no pressure and said that I could go anywhere I wanted to, “as long as you...” so I went to the best school I could get in. That was the mantra. “Just try to get into the best school you can.” And then it came down to the application process and I said, “You know, I’ve looked around and the guidance counselor says I can apply to certain places early admission because I’ve got good grades and I’m a good student, and, you know, wide ranging activities.” So I said, “Okay, I’ll apply to Dartmouth.” And that’s how it happened.

JANOWSKI: So I guess let’s get into your time at Dartmouth a bit. When you first got started at Dartmouth, did you have a particular major track that you were interested in?

GUERNSEY: Not at the beginning. You know, at the time I was there, and I’m sure it’s different now, Elizabeth, but at the time I was there they had just started the trimester system, which I’m very happy about, was very happy at the time, mainly, though, I was happy because it enabled me to get home before the Christmas holiday and there was almost no other college that did that. So, that was... But in any case, aside from that personal appreciation, no, I didn’t have a particular track at the beginning. I basically took the required courses for the freshman term. It was pretty much a required routine at the beginning for your freshman term of your freshman year, and actually your second term pretty much. There weren’t a whole lot of choices. You had to take a range of courses. And it was intentional so that you’d get a sense of the various areas, and of course the well heralded English courses which I actually really enjoyed. I loved the meetings and I loved the, actually the writing, believe it or not. And so I liked that, and took some other courses.

One of the things I began to get interested in, however, was Spanish. And so, in the second term I did take a Spanish course. The unfortunate part about that was that it was a retiring professor who unfortunately had no interest in teaching anymore, and I wanted to learn how to speak, and he wanted to learn how to teach us grammar and write. So, I spent as much time as I could in the language lab, but it didn’t really take very well, but I still was gaining an interest in Latin America. And don’t ask me exactly why because I don’t know. There were no Latinos in my hometown, etc.

But, the [José Clemente] Orozco mural maybe? I don't know what it was. But I somehow began to get interested in it.

And I'd always wanted to travel because of the family, we traveled only minimally. My father had limited vacation time. We went down to Washington, DC, went down to Florida, another trip went up to Maine, Prince Edward Island. So we had gone around, and New York City and stuff. But, no big trips. We never did any international travel other than Canada. And so I think that was a hankering as I began to learn about fellow students who had done a lot more traveling. So I think there was, now that I think about it, a very growing interest, as I was beginning to get acclimated to Dartmouth, in the international travel.

But it was broader than that, Elizabeth. For me in the first year, my first year was all about two things. I had to prove myself, because I came from a school of 64 kids, and I walked in and I was in the matriculation line shaking hands with the president, and the guy in front of me turned to me and said, "So, what did you get on your SATs?" And I said, "I did pretty well." I said, "What'd you get?" And he said, "800." And I said, "Oh, fabulous." And I decided I'd started with a conversation. So the guy behind me—I didn't ask him—the guy behind me picked up on it and he said, "Yeah, I got 800, too. You know, they weren't so hard." And of course, I did not get 800, Elizabeth. Did well, but not 800. And so, I just hunkered down for the first year and made sure that I did my best, and I did well, but it took a lot of work. I remember not even going to one of the football games, just to tell you how intense I was.

But, the fact is that that was one goal for the first year, and then the second one was just to expand my knowledge out of this small town. That was really important to me. And I began to do that. So I began to really look at all the options, especially in the second term, how I could do that, because that became very intentional. I was so happy to be out of that small town, and the small town environment and this whole pressure of privacy. And I really had a sense of wanting to really move out, maybe even more than a lot of the normal process, Elizabeth, as students go through their college career, because of my background. And so, I really began to look at—so a part of that was the international travel, but the other part of it was simply just wanting to expand my knowledge.

So, that first year I took the required courses, but ever after that I took as many courses in different areas as I could to learn about all kinds of disciplines, and secondly, I really began to focus, and I chose to go on a trip to Mexico in my freshman to sophomore year with a roommate, and had a fabulous time, learned a ton, and knew right then that I wanted to focus on that part of the world. And so, Dartmouth really pointed me in that direction, and it was great in that first, just in the very first term, the very first year.

JANOWSKI: Yeah. What was the trip to Mexico for? Was it sponsored through a particular department?

GUERNSEY: It was through the Latin American History Department and Spanish Department combined, and the focus of the trip was to work in a barrio there, in a community at the outskirts of Mexico City. I don't know if you've traveled to the developing world and seen the condition of peoples as they move into the outskirts of the city and try to find their way, and slowly but surely a lot of them at least make it and improve their conditions. But at the beginning it's just really rough living, you know, with tin roofs and cardboard sides, at least at the time anyway and I think it's probably true still in some areas. But, very poor living conditions, very poor sanitary conditions, etc. etc.

And the Catholic church there was building a community center for the people, and a very important part of the progress for these communities. And so, our job was to participate in the building during the day. Each day we would go, get on a bus and go to this community center, and we would make bricks from straw and mud and mix them up, and then let it set, and then when it was ready, we would plaster it on the walls that had been built beforehand, and we would make blocks. So, we were there for hard labor, you know. It wasn't glamorous. But we were able to mix with the workers and learn about the situation in the barrio, so I learned a ton during the day.

Then at night—this is the interesting part of this trip more than anything else—we stayed with an upper middle class family, and still in Mexico City, but in the opposite side of the city where it was very wealthy. And so, we would go back totally filthy, but my roommate and I had an actually separate cabana to live in by ourselves from the main house. And of

course, the structure and rhythms of the main house in Mexico City, especially at that time, the father was a lawyer in a downtown law firm, and we would maybe see him for breakfast, but usually not, because he would leave early. Well, we left early, too. I don't know why we didn't see him very much, but... well, I'll tell you a little bit about that. But, so we would often see him in the morning, now that I think about it. Then we would leave, we'd each leave, go our different directions. We'd get a bus; we actually had to change two or three buses, but we managed to get there by bus.

But we would visit the main house to eat in the morning. We would eat at the communal center for lunch, whatever was being served, and then we would come back home, and at evening we would have this incredible feast of all kinds of fruits and chopped meats and cheeses and breads laid out. And the father was never there because his hours were—he would work in the mornings, then he would come home and take a siesta and have a large meal in the middle of the day and then go back around 3:00. So the hours were a little bit crazy.

The interesting thing there, of course, for us as our eyes were wide open, was that the father openly had a mistress, and everybody knew it. This was not something that was hidden, and he would often go to see her, he'd spend some nights with her, but usually he would see her mid-day. And I remember the rest of the story was, after a while we got to know his wife quite well, as we were warm and congenial with her, and I remember one time she just totally broke down crying because of the fact that he was away and she couldn't understand this tradition and how much it hurt her.

So we got to see real reality at various, at both sides of the economic spectrum. So we learned a lot. It really was, so I began to—yeah, I mean, that firsthand experience not only taught me what I learned that summer, but it taught me a life lesson that if you want to learn about other people, you have to start by being open to respecting them and who they are, and you have to be at their level. And you can't be a traveler and travel from one Hilton to the other, and expect to really do other than see the outsides of their culture. And so, that was a lesson that I also took with me the rest of my life, and attribute to Dartmouth to allowing me to have that opportunity.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, that's great. I think that's a really important thing, and definitely applying that to life is really... and that's just great, yeah. I was also going to ask, in terms of other organizations and extracurriculars, what were you involved in at Dartmouth?

GUERNSEY: So at Dartmouth I made what I think is one mistake. I never got involved in like intramural sports. I never had the confidence to join Dartmouth regular sports teams, for better, for worse. I might have—I was thinking of trying out for the basketball team, but you know, that initial freshman term, freshman year, I didn't have the self-confidence, Elizabeth, I just didn't because I had to, I really had to focus, as I said, the goal of really making it at Dartmouth. And so that's what my whole focus was, so I didn't do any sports in the fall or spring.

And then that continued, although I did decide in the beginning of the second term to try out for the Glee Club, and so I became a member of the Glee Club, because I had sung in a high school chorus, which I don't know if I mentioned, with a very, really wonderful music teacher, and in addition to being in the band. But I didn't play in the band at Dartmouth. So I sang in the Glee Club. And then—and that was the most important major extracurricular formal activity. But then, as became typical to my nature, I began tutoring in the beginning of my sophomore year. I especially, this was after my experience in Mexico, I realized that it was really important to help those who were really—that didn't have the good fortune that I had to come to a place like Dartmouth. So, I began to do some tutoring in the fall my sophomore year, and then in the beginning, I believe, of my junior year, I actually started a tutoring group. I don't remember what it was called. But, so I was organizing at that point some tutoring in the Upper Valley schools, Lebanon in particular.

And then, I also formed another group in the beginning of my junior year—I believe it was the beginning of my junior year—based on a course I had taken to expand my knowledge of religion. I took a world religion course and absolutely loved it. And so, I started a group at Dartmouth called the Dartmouth Religious Liberals. And it was a very simple kind of—the group of guys just really enjoyed learning more about what was going on in the world from a religious

standpoint. We had debates, and we had speakers come in, we'd have dinners in some of the small dining rooms. And yeah, so it was just a fun thing. We met every so often, and I said we had speakers in. I don't know that we, quote, "did anything" otherwise. It was really a learning and debate group, and so that's what that did. And plus, the tutoring was the out—you know, doing something outside the college kind of activity.

The thing that I didn't do at Dartmouth in terms of any organized group activity, which shocks me now because I spent so much time outdoors, is that I never joined the Outing Club, which in retrospect I don't understand, except my father didn't and was kind of a honcho, and that maybe because my father was, I didn't do it. So, but that was a part of my Dartmouth experience I've always wished I had taken part of, but I didn't, the Outing Club. Yeah, so organized activities? I tended to organize activities rather than become a part of existing activities. [laughter] And I enjoyed them.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, it definitely sounds like it. The Religious Liberals group, that definitely sounds interesting.

GUERNSEY: It was.

JANOWSKI: And I was going to ask you about when you were at Dartmouth, sort of the political leanings of your peers there, and what that was like?

GUERNSEY: Good question. Interestingly also, and this begins to move into a relationship to Vietnam and what was happening at the time. So let me talk about that. First of all, I want to go back to high school again. At the time I graduated, Richard Nixon was President, or I think he was. Or he was running for office. Good Lord, I should know this, but I don't remember in 1964. No, he wasn't in office. But, I remember, you know, Barry Goldwater of all people was running. I remember that, sorry. In any case, so Barry Goldwater was running, and my father was supporting him, I'm ashamed to say in retrospect. [laughter] But, and so that's again an example of the tradition I was coming from.

So I go to Dartmouth. And again, from what I was saying you can guess that in my first term, what do you think? I didn't pay attention to politics at all, right? Because I was just studying. In my second term I began to loosen up, and by

the time I had gone off to Mexico and come back, I was a different guy, okay? I was no longer a conservative Republican. I could not believe the Republicans really had a philosophy that focused on tight government when there were so many people in need in the world. It just blew me away. I said, *How can a country and how can a people that are so well off be so stingy?* That was really putting it in simplified form, but that really was part of what I was feeling. When I was working with these people who weren't just dirt poor, they were really struggling; life was a challenge in a way that you and I probably—well, I certainly—I don't know your circumstances—will ever know.

And so, I needed a political philosophy that fits with the idea that we were willing to be a positive, outgoing government that could do good in people's lives, that government could do good, and that it should be there to be respected and to provide that helping hand as long as you needed it. That was not the Republican philosophy. So, when I came back from Mexico, if not before, but certainly when I came back from Mexico to my home, it transformed, Elizabeth, my relationship with my father, and what had begun as discussions about issues and details of issues that we might debate in my junior and senior year with him around the dinner table now became a full-fledged debate on political philosophies of the two parties and what that meant. And it was a much more serious and different debate set-up. My father, true to his form, maintained his position, and we would spend hours literally sitting at the dinner table. Everybody else was gone, and we were still talking, discussing, debating these issues. It was a real formative time.

So, my political views changed dramatically by the end of the first year. And that is not uncommon, but it certainly was very strong in my situation. And the second thing that of course I began to become aware of dramatically during the beginning of my sophomore year in particular, because again, I was away during the summer between freshman and sophomore year, so I didn't have a lot of exposure to the Vietnam War. But when I came back, the campus was really beginning to light up with issues related to the war. This was now 1965, the fall of '65, and then obviously the winter and spring of '66. And [President John F.] Kennedy had, of course, been assassinated by that time, and [Lyndon B.] Johnson was in, and there was a lot of very slow, but there was a lot of talk

now about having to build up in Vietnam. Kennedy had come in a little bit, but then it was beginning to be expanded under Johnson. And there were a lot more young people being recruited.

And there began to be a lot of debate about the value of the war and the growing anti-war efforts in my sophomore—as I began to relate to it and become involved in making my own decisions about whether the war was a good war or not, whether or not it was worth American lives, whether or not it had any value to the American interests overseas, and I began to study international politics. And I should add as an addendum that at the time I was beginning to realize that what I wanted to major in was something in Latin America, and I began a focus, and I began to focus, and what I resolved was a joint major in Latin American development and history. And so that's where I spent the focus of my time ultimately in the junior and senior year. But, involved with looking at Latin America in detail, I began to see the ravages of American power there, and so I was studying that at the same time. The backdrop was this gaining momentum about the Vietnam War and analysis of it, and should we be sending our colleagues there at our age?

And so, we really began to study the Vietnam... I remember reading several books on Vietnam, North Vietnam and South Vietnam, South China. I became quite a student of that area, as most—and by the way, as most Dartmouth students did. Everybody really took it pretty darned seriously. And so, we began to be able to really make an informed judgment. And not everybody came down against the war, but certainly the people that I was beginning to make really close friends with, we began to realize that this was something that we were really finding very, very difficult to understand why we were fighting that war. It just didn't seem to make sense to us.

You know, it was, I mean, it was more than half a continent away. There were forces at work that were way beyond what the US interests should be in there, we believed. We looked up the history of that area, and it was one people taking over another to begin with, and a lot of civil war history there, and the history of the North Vietnam trying to be independent of China, and yet we were worried about China overrunning everything. So there was a ton of conflicting information about why this war was important and why we should ever be in it.

So by the end of my sophomore year I was totally opposed to the war. I got a three-room suite for my junior and senior year in Fairweather, and we became a kind of a hotspot of conversation with the underclassmen about the war, and let's just say, you know... also other topics, you know, whether that be from the latest Mount Holyoke bus coming to campus or whether it be the Vietnam War. But it was really, we really began... And the political involvement with our political leaders because 1967, the Presidential campaign really heated up for the coming '68 election, and all of that process created a lot of heat on campus.

And I don't know if I'm getting ahead of your questions, but I do distinctly remember when George Wallace came to campus, Elizabeth, and that was in the fall of '67 or maybe the winter/spring of '68 before the election. And he was spewing, of course, all of his rhetoric and belief in segregation, you know, "Segregation now, segregation forever," and that, you know, "black people are not equal to whites," the white supremacist thing that you're hearing all the time now unfortunately. And so, the Dartmouth students were out in force. Not everybody opposed him, but most of us.

And the one thing I remember from that is that, well, two things: one is that his car was almost overturned as it tried to leave, by the students, but more than the potential violence was... I didn't get into the hall, into Webster Hall at the time. That was where he was speaking, before it was converted to Rauner [Special Collections] Library. But, you know, he came and left, and the whole campus, you can picture that the entire Green [the Dartmouth Green] was full of students discussing the political issues related to the campaign and the political issues related to racism and to segregation and to the South and the North. I mean, you name it, it was alive. And it stayed alive with discussions. We went into the Hop [Hopkins Center for the Arts] at around 3:00 a.m. We never came out till like 4:30. It was, in terms of political involvement, it was a very exciting night. And I give you that example because Dartmouth was really alive politically in a way that I have rarely seen it since. I know the year after I left it was very involved also, but that era in general.

So then, I clearly was very much anti-war and I began to deal with expressing my opinions, so I would stand out on

the peace lines, not every day, because I was studying, you know, but a lot of days, and became very supportive of the anti-war movement. And of course that was contrary to my father's beliefs, but he, as I said, he was not a rabid Republican like today with kind of very extremist views, and he respected my views always. He always did. He really did. And I always respected him for that, that he could do that, and I wish that we had that today, and we don't.

So, that was kind of the trajectory of my political growth and maturity as I moved from a cloistered environment, if you will. Maybe that's too strong a word, but a very closed environment in Schoharie, New York, you know, white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant basically, some Catholics thrown in, and very conservative, and basically racist, although outward racism never came out because there were just weren't anybody of color there. But then moving into a much more liberal, progressive belief based on my experiences, both in Mexico and as I began to study about the Vietnam War and realize that as I went out to tutor and realized how other people were living, that even though I'd come from a family that had very little money, that the very fact that I was privileged enough to have incredibly well educated parents and that I was going to Dartmouth was an incredible privilege, and that I needed to give back if I wanted to be a good citizen in our society.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, that definitely, that answered a couple of questions that I had wanted to ask you.

GUERNSEY: [laughter] Sorry, I get speaking on these issues and I can't stop, so you should stop me.

JANOWSKI: No, I mean, it's all good. It's all interesting to hear. I think I'm interested in hearing a little bit more about specifically the shape that anti-Vietnam War activism took on Dartmouth campus, and what sort of things students were up to in that regard?

GUERNSEY: So, the two things that I remember the most... three things. The three things I remember the most were the study groups, to put a name on it. Remember I told you we were reading books. And so, there were just ad hoc study groups that were formed in every dorm all over campus, in the Hop they would appear. We started one in my dorm room, and yeah, we just everybody exchanged ideas on books. You

know, we didn't have—well, we had nascent computers, but just to do calculating. But we couldn't just jump on Google or any other device that, you know, "okay, give me a list of books on Vietnam." So you had to share your ideas. People would go in the library and check things out. And so, but we had study groups where we tried to learn and did learn a lot about Vietnam and the history and various viewpoints. Typically, you know, it was a college setting, so people would read different things and talk about them. So, study groups is number one.

Number two, it took the form of the peace line, which was important, each day there would be around noon time. And there would be a peace line, by the way, but there would be also what I used to call the "anti-peace line," [laughter] those in favor of the war. So again, it was not one-sided entirely. The peace line was generally longer, but there were a lot of students on campus who supported the war effort, especially in the beginning of the buildup. And secondly, many of them who supported ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps]. That became a big issue on campus. Dartmouth did have an ROTC chapter, and it became an issue of whether or not Dartmouth should host, should be the host, you know, because if ROTC comes to campus, then they have to be hosted by the college, and in order to do that, they would come in. And so, the question was should Dartmouth terminate the ROTC authority to be there? And over time, there was a large movement to remove ROTC, and ultimately they were removed, although I can't remember whether it was done during my tenure there, or whether it was done starting in 1969.

But, so that was the—so getting back to the activism was shown by the peace lines. There were peace marches also from time to time in which community members would join in, by the way. And there were gatherings on the lawn of the administration building to get the college to take a stand. In my tenure at Dartmouth, we never stormed the administration building and took it over. That was done in 1969. So I left. But, so there was a buildup, but we were in the years of the building it up and formulating the foundation for what turned out to be one of the more activist steps. But while we were there it was the peace line, it was the gatherings on the administration lawn, you know, yelling that "please, you gotta take a stand against the war, you gotta do

more. We need courses about the war,” that kind of thing. And then there was the movement to eject ROTC.

And then, there were speakers who came to campus that the college brought, both pro and con, the most exceptional of which was George Wallace. But he came just because he was a Presidential candidate, I will say. I don't think Dartmouth really invited him. I'm sure they didn't. But, so we had various speakers, and so there was a lot of activity around that. And then a lot of just organizing a lot of people—I didn't get involved this—organizing, helping to organize the effort against the war off campus. Now, I didn't do that, mainly because I was just focused on my Dartmouth career. But, so that was another form that activism took, and I just didn't become a part of that.

JANOWSKI: Yeah. I think another dimension of everything that was going on in the '60s, in terms of the civil rights movement, was there would you say a similar degree of activism going on on Dartmouth campus related to that?

GUERNSEY: I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand your question.

JANOWSKI: I mean, I know that you brought up George Wallace coming, and bringing up this white supremacist rhetoric. Was there, I guess, similar activities relating to racial equality or anything like that? Did you see activism on the campus related to that?

GUERNSEY: Well, that's a really good question. Let me think a minute. You know, there was around the, when like for the Presidential campaign definitely, and so it came up in that context. And I began to really appreciate the civil rights movement, which I mentioned earlier that I really had hardly been aware of in high school. And so, the civil rights movement took on a lot of both coverage and influence and importance to me. And I considered, by the way, going down to the South to register voters.

And I did—as it happened, I think I decided a couple things. I was really focused on working with and helping people in poorer situations overseas. I was really learning Spanish. And, so my focus became overseas, not so much, interestingly enough, with the American poor community or American black and Latino community. So it's interesting how I did not. I mean, I certainly have in my adult life. But at

the time I was really trying to do that, and also I was becoming very worried about and concerned about what the heck I was going to be doing after Dartmouth. I decided I couldn't make a living protesting the war. And so, I was trying to decide what to do. And I did make an early decision to try to see what life in the business world was like, and my father was really encouraging me and pushing me in that direction. So, I my sophomore-junior year, I forget where I went. Oh, I went to New York City and—no, that was my next year. I honestly can't remember right now, sorry, Elizabeth.

But, I did not get directly involved in the civil rights movement, to really answer your question. However, the campus was, it was a very big issue on campus. And it wasn't as big as the Vietnam War, I will say. There wasn't the activism on campus around civil rights that there was around the Vietnam War, which is not to say that in—for example, in today's world it would be considered huge activism about the civil rights movement. But by comparison to the Vietnam War, that overtook everything. It really did. Now, the civil rights movement began to take on more and more importance during the course of 1967 and '68. And of course, '68, 1968 was a really pivotal year in terms of the assassinations that were happening and the devastation in our cities. I mean, the cities overall burning in 1968. I don't know if you've ever seen any footage of the American cities in 1968? It's really devastating. And city after city just broke out in flames as people were so angry about the poverty and the ghettoization of black people, and they were just—they'd just had it and they were just really, you know, just really reaching out any way they could. And a lot of it became violent because they let out their frustrations. And then, you know, it all [inaudible] around and sparked by the assassinations, Martin Luther King and then Bobby Kennedy, and it was a hellish time, frankly, in America and politics.

And it's very different now, just as hellish now with the dangers to our democracy. But, so I lived through two very, very explosive times. But it was, getting back to your question... So, there were a lot of study groups around the civil rights issues, too, by the way. So, there wasn't as much personal activism around civil rights for the reasons I explained. But, there certainly was on campus.

JANOWSKI: I definitely—I was going to get into specifically 1968, too. I remember one other person I interviewed for this project, he sort of described to me the atmosphere at graduation for the Class of 1968, saying that it was “somber” is the word he used. And I was wondering if you could kind of speak to that in terms of what that felt like graduating and going out into the world during a year like that where there was so much political and social turbulence.

GUERNSEY: Here’s the... let me tell you a couple things. Yeah, I can certainly speak to that, and I’m glad you brought that up. But I wanted to add one more thing about the civil rights activism on campus. One of the issues that was becoming very important to black people at that time was the issue of the fact that there were so few blacks on campuses in, you know, the privileged colleges. And so they would begin—they were agitating, if you will, to or struggling to form their own groupings. And that created its own dynamic because a lot of students were not happy with the, quote, if you will, the African-Americans intentionally formulating their own segregated group. And so, there was that. And I actually supported the black people forming their own groups as a means of such a small group being supportive of each other and working their way through, but at the same time I wanted to have some interaction.

And I remember talking to the dean one time specifically about couldn’t the dining hall—couldn’t the college make arrangements in the dining hall for specific times when various of the ethnic groups on the campus, and there were more than just the blacks—there was Latinos, etc. beginning to formulate—could have special dining with those who were interested in talking to them about these issues? And they ultimately did some of that. I’m not saying I instigated that alone, but I did talk to the dean that, saying, “Listen, this would be really good for this campus, so that I support the self-identity that the ethnic groups need, but I also think it’s good for the college and good for us as white folks to hear more directly. I’m not getting that kind of interaction.” So, that was one specific area that I wanted to add about the civil rights movement. I’m just calling it the civil rights movement. It’s really a matter of respecting and understanding racial diversity, and what was going on with different cultures and peoples within our country.

But, on to the issue of graduation. So, the Vietnam War was getting worse and worse. I didn't continue the tale to the time when in February of my senior year, in 1968, the Vietnam War really took over our lives, because that was when the draft was initiated by President Johnson. So there was no young man at Dartmouth—and there were only young men at that point—who was not potentially affected. And so, everybody began reviewing what their plans were for post-college, including myself. I had applied to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, mainly because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, and I thought I should at least see what business school was like. And so, I got accepted.

But then, the draft was announced, and one of the things that happened was all deferments from having to serve in the military were ended for graduate school, period. There may have been an exception for medical school. I don't remember. But not, it wasn't in the areas that I certainly considered. And so, I began to look around as to what I would do and how I felt, and by that time, as you can probably tell, I had already made a, for me, a principled determination that I was not a supporter of that war, and because I believed that, here I am the son of my father, if I believed that, there was no way that I was going to participate in it.

So, I definitely began to look at my options, and one of the options was to become a teacher, because my draft board... Decisions were basically left up to the individual town and city draft boards. My draft board would allow a deferment for teaching for one year. When my father was able to find that out for me, I began to look around for teaching jobs. Now you understand this is late February. Ask me if I had ever, ever considered being a teacher? You know the answer. Never. And I was looking for a teaching job in March and April. Most schools—every school tries to fill any of the teaching vacancies they have long before that. So, I was at this last minute applying all over New England for, at schools that I had discovered somehow, you know. You couldn't go on the internet, but somehow I discovered guidance counselors at schools that were still applying for jobs—seeking applicants.

And believe it or not, I got a job two weeks before graduation—talk about cliffhanger—to teach school in

northern New Hampshire, and I took the job two weeks before graduation. And I was hired to teach three different courses: 7th grade math—you may remember my feelings about math; 7th grade geography, which I looked forward to; 8th grade math; and then a 9th, 10th and 11th grade civics course. So, I actually thought that this could be really good. And it turned out it was very, very good actually for me. But, that's another story. But what I can tell you is that I felt, therefore, quite relieved by the time the graduation came along.

In my own life, you should understand something. My mother contracted cancer when I was in high school, but she recovered. It was breast cancer. But then, it metastasized in my senior year at Dartmouth; it metastasized to her brain, and she had brain surgery in December, and unfortunately never recovered. So, here I am, and she died in the end of January. The draft deferments were announced in early February. Let us just say I was not in a very good place. And it was a really, really hard time. But I just kept going and got this job I mentioned to you. I felt really good. But I could not have been more opposed to this war than I was at that time.

And along comes graduation, and I would say one word certainly to discover it was sobering or somber, because it was not a celebration for—in a lot of different ways. For me it was hardly a celebration. The only celebration part of it was that I had made it through this very good institution, and I graduated cum laude, and that was a big deal for some young man coming from a small school, so I was proud of that. I was proud of the achievement. And my father was proud of that. But there was so much turmoil in my life, and turmoil in the world because of Vietnam, that there was no further celebration.

And I participated in and among those who wore white armbands opposing the war. And Bob [Robert] Reich ['68], who was the president of the class, did also and supported that effort. And I've always been proud of Bob for that. And then, so the graduation was indeed both sober and somber, but it was also electric, I have to say. So there was a bit of both, and why? Because there was strong feelings at that graduation, very strong. As I said, not everybody wore the white armband. Some may have felt like they didn't like the war or didn't support it, but who weren't willing to stand up and say so by just wearing an armband. And then there were

others who were adamantly supporting the war. And, so there was a real tension. So as somber and sobering as it was, it was also to some great extent tense, as we marched in and with the great awareness of how the country and the student body was being torn apart. Yes, we were still together with the glue of Dartmouth, but it was fraying in terms of the national issues and would continue to divide us after we stepped away from the podium. And indeed, I'm sure that that did in terms of our focus and beliefs.

And so, I was stepping out to go on to teach for a year. I had a one-year contract. Others were going off to enlist. Others were going off to officer training. I should say that one of the events of my senior year was that I went for a physical. This was, it was required when you were my age and you were subject to the draft, even though you had a college deferment. You had to take a physical in preparation for being drafted. So I went down to take a physical in the armory in I believe it was Springfield, Mass. And Elizabeth, I have to tell you, I don't know if you've ever seen the movie, *Alice's Restaurant*, or heard Arlo Guthrie? Have you heard him sing it? Have you heard that, "Alice's Restaurant?"

JANOWSKI: No, I can't say I have.

GUERNSEY: Well, here's the—I have a job for you. After my interview, I would like you to just go ahead and listen to Arlo Guthrie, folk singer, sing "Alice's Restaurant," the original version if you can. It describes the atmosphere, once he gets past the dumping the garbage in Berkshire County; forget that part. That's the funny part. But then it gets on to his taking a physical for the draft. Well, the way he describes it is exactly what we all went through. And please do, I'm serious. If you're involved in this Vietnam Project, you really need to listen to Arlo Guthrie sing "Alice's Restaurant," because the part that describes what it was like for all of us young men to go through these physicals, where half of us never wanted to be there, and we would be, you know, injected, dejected. They were emotional—what do you call them? I mean, there were mental tests, you know, you had to pee into a cup. I mean, it was everybody was half naked in this huge armory. It was amazing, an experience anybody my age never forgets. Every young man will remember it. And it just felt like you were just, you know, you lost your identity for that time period while you were just walking through there, like herded through.

But in any case, so that was another experience in preparation for this potential for having to serve, which again did nothing but again increase my opposition to this war, where one lost your identity and lost any kind of self... well, I don't know what the correct words are here. But, you know, you became part of the herd that was going to have to be trained, yes, as a unit, as a fighting unit ultimately, so that the Army's got to do some of that. But in terms of going through Dartmouth where focused on individuality and learning for the good of learning and for applying the good to society, all of a sudden this looks like a total disaster. So, there were a lot of things that I'm trying to explain, built up in the opposition to the war, and this loss of identity through this draft physical certainly added to the list.

And so the buildup to graduation was actually quite tense on the campus, both because of Vietnam and because of the civil rights movement. And so, it was the most political time that I ever heard of or seen at Dartmouth. And frankly for me, that was very exciting. That part was just really electrifying to me, and I loved Dartmouth for it.

JANOWSKI: Okay, I guess moving along then into, so then you took a year and just taught classes at a school in northern New Hampshire, is that correct?

GUERNSEY: Yes, right, in a little town you may—I don't know if you ever went up there skiing or anything, to—are you a skier by any chance?

JANOWSKI: I'm not, but I have friends who are.

GUERNSEY: Yeah, sure. So, it was near, sort of near Cannon Mountain in northern New Hampshire, but it was the little town of Littleton, which is an hour and some north, way up north, and I taught school in Lisbon, and lo and behold it was a very small school, actually a little smaller I believe than even Schoharie. And so, I was like coming back home. And boy, did I know the type of community. And I can tell you a couple of highlights of my experience there. Now, mind you, the Vietnam War is raging, the civil rights movement is raging, the cities were burning, and that—you've got to appreciate that is the backdrop at which I was beginning my teaching career. And nevertheless, my father was supportive. He had gotten remarried by that time, so that was a new thing in my

life. I supported it. I supported him. But, here I was going into this whole new thing.

And I began teaching. And of course, I'd never taught in my life. I didn't have a clue how hard it was to actually, the difference, to understand and know the difference between learning a subject and actually teaching that to someone else. So, there was another life lesson for me, and again I'm grateful for that one year of teaching. And I worked really hard each night to prepare lessons. And of course, I was doing these all from scratch.

And the geography I found real fun. It came naturally to me, and I had great fun. These are 7th graders, and frankly they were my favorite class by far. I had two classes. And we studied rivers, we studied lakes, we studied continents, you know, how the continents moved. It was fun stuff. So, that was great. And then I taught two classes of 8th grade math. That was actually the most difficult teaching for me because, you know, the math didn't come as naturally to me, and I tried to create a lot of real life examples for these students that would relate to what they did in life or what their parents did. So I'd use examples of, you know, bales of hay would be the examples, or reels of wire because there was a local wire mill that some of the fathers and mothers worked in. So, I really did a—I really worked hard to try to create a situation where it would be clear that math had meaning in their lives, at least that's what I was trying to do. But it was hard to create those examples around something, a subject matter that I... Look, it wasn't calculus, so I mean, I obviously knew what I was doing. But still, geography was much easier for me, to create those examples and have fun. But no, I think I did give them a pretty good background that year.

And then, the most interesting course was my 9th through 11th grade civics course because it was one course that was required, and there were students in there from 9th grade, 10th grade and 11th grade, and more importantly, I suppose, the range of students who were good students and bad students was just as broad. And there were students there who had no interest in being there, you know, the big guys who sat in the back and threw spitballs and much worse. So, I had a lot of issues with that class.

But, it was also the most exciting because there was an old civics textbook. It was a textbook that was from the 1940s, I

think, and it was like the civics course I took in high school, and I knew it as soon as I saw the book. It was just this boring didactic about what was in the Constitution and what was in the Bill of Rights, and who the Founders were and what states they came from? You know, at the end of each chapter there were these facts you had to relate. That was what the lesson was supposedly. You know, so how many states did it take to ratify the first 10 Amendments? And what was the first state to ratify? So, all these facts that you were supposed to learn. But there was nothing in these lesson plans about understanding history at the 20,000 foot level, and not a word about really understanding the people on the bottom rungs, and particularly about black people and how they were suffering. It was just the fact that there were slaves, and oh, how awful that was, but there was no depth to it at all.

Well, I decided to change that. So, I threw out the book. I literally one day stood up in front of the class and I said, "I want everybody to throw these textbooks in a big pile in the corner." They were shocked. I said, "Now, I'm gonna pick them up after class, but what you're gonna do is now take these books." And so I began to teach them with a series of fiction and non-fiction books, and the first book I chose was a book called *Manchild in the Promised Land* [by Claude Brown]. And it was a radical book for its time, I have to admit. It was a book about growing up black in the ghettos of New York City. And it didn't mince language. Yes, there were swear words. Yes, there was a lot of talk about what it meant to grow up and live in a household where fathers were coming and going, and families were—what was a family was a totally different meaning, and the drugs were beginning to come in. It was really eye opening for any white person, frankly.

So, I began to teach them this book. This was in October. And lo and behold, pretty soon the parents got wind of this incredible book that the kids were bringing home and said that their teacher had told them they had to read an assignment from. And a group of them marched into the principal and said, "You must stop this book from being used in our school." So, we came close to a book burning, and the principal called a meeting. And it was the principal standing in the front of the classroom one evening around 7:00. The place was packed. It was October. It was a warm day. You gotta picture this scene. The windows were wide open

because it was still so hot. And tempers were just the same. And the place was packed. I was at the front and the principal was there and all these parents. And I knew that there were two sets of parents who were supportive, but everybody else basically, to varying degrees, wanted this book banned. They were there to ban this book from teaching it in this high school.

And so the principal opened it up and said, "Everybody is going to remain calm. State your opinions. I'll make sure everybody gets a chance to talk." He did a good job at opening it up, said, you know, that "teachers are here to instruct our students in things that they don't know and don't know about, and it's important to be open minded. On the other hand, you may have objections, and so we'll listen to them as to why this particular book should not be taught." He said some good words about me, which was very nice, in that I was a smart young man who knew a lot that I could bring to these students, but that he was going to turn to me to tell him and to tell everybody there why it was that I was teaching this.

So, what I did was I held up the textbook first and talked about the textbook, and what it didn't do, that there was not one word about black people, and that if people in Lisbon, the students in Lisbon, were to learn about civics, then civics involved not just white people, but also people of color. Well, you should have seen the looks on these people's faces. Then I talked about this book. Well, I got cut off, and finally the real debate began. And after about an hour-and-a-half of heated discussion—I won't go through it all—you don't have time—but what I will say is at the end of the heated discussion, another life lesson, and that is, the principal forged a compromise. Listen to the compromise, and the compromise was accepted.

He turned to me in what sounded like a harsh voice and said, "Mr. Guernsey, there are a lot of objections to this book, so I am going to now tell you that you will not send this book home with any of your students. I do not want this book to be sent home so that these parents will have to see and hear about this book at home. You may, however, continue teaching this book. They just can't take it home. You can assign assignments. They have to read them in study hall, but you may not allow that book to go home." And he said it in like very harsh language. The truth is it was a perfect

compromise. And he actually stood by me, because he could easily have caved in to all the people that he had to continue to face as a principal that year and beyond. Instead, he stood up for allowing that book to be taught.

And it made no difference, of course, that the kids couldn't take it home. They still read it. They loved reading this book. And of course they still learned—of course, they knew the swear words anyway, but the parents had talked about how they hated the swear words, and there were sexual acts in it. I mean, by today's standards there were no sexual acts, just so you know, Elizabeth. But there were references to people making love in all these set-ups, different fathers with the mothers. It was just, you know, it was life as it really was. And, but of course the kids were still allowed to read that and learn about this life. They just couldn't take it home.

To me this was a whole victory, but he allowed—he created this victory and made it look like this was a real restriction. It was a real lesson in how you can be forceful and create a sense that there was a compromise, and yet still maintain the basic principle that you believed in. And he truly believed in the freedom of a teacher to teach. And understand, I knew by that time I would only be there for one year, Elizabeth. I was going to be the one who left. He had to stay there. But he stood up for me. That was a real profile in courage. I've never ever forgotten it. And I've always respected him for it. You know, he was never heralded for it. I don't even remember his name. Nobody remembers him. But, he did something that was really, it was really, really tough, but he did it, and he maintained the principle and just managed to compromise on an issue that did not affect the principle. Would that we could always do that, Elizabeth. So, that's my teaching experience, probably in more detail than you want it.

But all the while I'm more swirling, and now what else am I doing? Well, I've decided that now—my draft board wouldn't allow more than one year deferment for teaching, so I had already decided that, from my junior year at Dartmouth, that I wanted to go into the Peace Corps. I had loved the optimism and the positive views of John Kennedy and the way he viewed government as the ability to do good for people. I really wanted to be a part of that. So, I applied for the Peace Corps.

I had met a young Holyoke woman [Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA] that I'd fallen in love with, and we wanted to—so I turned to her at one point in the fall of my—well, I guess it was maybe the spring of my senior year actually—I said, “Look, I’m going to be teaching for this next year, but I wondered if you would be interested in going in the Peace Corps with me? I really want to go.” And I’ve loved her ever since, she said “yes,” no hesitation. And so, careful, I become emotional. It was really very special. It was more than I expected. Peace Corps isn’t exactly, you know, going off and getting married and starting a home in a nice little suburb. So, it was wonderful.

And so, yeah, so I applied to the Peace Corps. We both applied. We got accepted and by the spring of 1969, as I was finishing my teaching career, we found out that we were accepted and that we had choices. We both asked to go to Colombia or Peru. The choice that came back because it was an opening there was Panama. So, we readily chose Panama. My draft board gave me another one-year deferment, and so I was then continuing my path of avoiding the draft and not having to participate in this war to which I was so opposed. So that was the next step in my process.

So, if you want I can continue with that, because it’s all relevant. So then, I finished that teaching year, and then we had to disembark to... Oh, I got married, sorry. I got married. Yeah, two days in June I got married. Good thing my wife isn’t here now. She would have not liked that. So, I got married on June 21st, and on that same day, on that same day I had booked a flight to go to Puerto Rico where at that time that’s where Peace Corps training was held. So in June of 1969, on June 21st, I left the US and I flew to Puerto Rico with my new, very new wife, and our honeymoon was going to be in the Peace Corps. And actually we had a one-night honeymoon on our own at a Hilton hotel in Puerto Rico, where we had one night to ourselves, and the next day we had to report to Peace Corps training camp.

And then we were in training camp for two-and-a-half months. We learned Spanish intensively through a Rassias trained program. Professor [John] Rassias from Dartmouth had formed the way of teaching languages in the Peace Corps. And I got to know him later in years because of that, and we had many communications. And so, we did that, and also, yeah, they give you information about the country

you're going to, the culture, and some good important stuff on what you were going to be doing. My job was going to be involved in agriculture, so I had to learn tropical agriculture and a little bit about how to raise pigs and grow vegetables in Panama, which I learned a little bit about. And then of course, there were a lot of events going on as we were going through training. We were sent out on our own to a village, knowing very little Spanish, and so we were just sent out to a village we knew nothing about, and we had to find a place to live for two nights. We had no money. How would you like to do that? [laughter] So, it was all part of the Peace Corps training.

And, but anyway, so we finished the training and went on to Panama, and we wound up in a small village in the interior of Panama, a little village called La Laguna, of about three or four hundred people, and we spent two years there, and these were, without question, the two best years of our life. And we learned so much from these people, and to this day are working with them, because we went back 40 years later and started some computer learning centers in the schools there. So, we're still—I'm still very much involved with the people of Panama and couldn't be more proud of it.

Then, while I was in the Peace Corps—this is the last part of this to tell you that—so, when we were in Panama, the focus again was all of a sudden really on Panama. We didn't get news for—you know, it was very old news. I managed to have my father send me a *Newsweek*. We got it, I think we got it two months after publication date. So, I got only old news. We didn't have radios down there. There was one little television in a little store that worked intermittently. We didn't have any cell phones. You know, we had nothing. So we, you know, it was really all about our life, except that when we went into Panama City to Peace Corps Headquarters, then we'd get all the news, we'd ask about the war, and of course we knew then when the lottery was going to be instituted. I'm sure your other interviewees talked about the lottery.

So, the lottery now came along, and this was in 1971, if I'm not mistaken. Yeah, it was in the spring of '71, I think, whatever. Yeah, I'm sure there was. And so we all—the Peace Corps brought us all together from all the outreaches, I mean, a lot of them just were even further up than we were, and came in to the capital however we could make it, and we

all sat around and we waited to hear the numbers drawn. And there was a volunteer two villages from where I was, and he drew number 1, I'm sorry to tell you. And he, to ratchet forward, he was pulled out of his village the very next day. Well, actually he had to go back to his village and they told him he had to leave right away. He left and he went back to his town, he went to training, he went to Vietnam and never came back. And at the same time here I am sitting there and I got the number of like 285, if I remember correctly. And so, it was both a tragic night and a night for personal celebration. But it was tragic also. And, so the war continued and built up, and I was able to get through the rest of my Peace Corps experience because I had a high draft number and never again had to worry about being drafted into a war that I despised.

JANOWSKI: Yeah. No, that's definitely tough to hear about.

GUERNSEY: Yeah. Everybody wanted to [inaudible]. That was my—I just tried to tell you in sequence here all of the steps in the process that I went through to continue to be opposed to the war and be true to my principles and not go. Some of my friends, of course, were not so fortunate even though they believed against the war. One of two things happened. Some of them went to Canada, of course, I'm sure you know, and then spent years there before they came back. The people that I knew went were able to come back ultimately and did come back.

Then, and others just felt that they had no choice. They didn't want to go to Canada and they didn't want to apply—oh, I forgot, you could also apply for a deferment. It's called a 4-F, but you had to come up with some particular reason that was legitimate. Usually it was a health issue. You know, there wasn't good health care out in the jungle, so if you had a health problem, then they would not take you. They didn't want to have to take on that additional liability in the service. So you could do that, or you decided you know what? You had no choice but to enlist. Usually that was because they also had pressure from their parents. So, some of those who were still opposed, they decided to go anyway. Others tried to get a deferment. Some did, some didn't. Others went to Canada. Many tried to just go underground. I don't ever know how successful that was. So, and a lot of us just worked like I did to try to find ways that were indeed successful in avoiding it. And I luckily, very fortunately,

because of the fact that I'm still alive and talking to you, here I am. And I was successful, and I'm just very grateful for it.

But, I will tell you one interesting little story about this is that while I was teaching in this little town of Lisbon that I described to you, there were two or three new teachers, and one of them was there—there was a young woman and... yeah, actually it was three, three new teachers: a young woman and two of us guys. And so, I would often go out to dinner with this young man. He was a biology teacher. And one day he lost total control of his class. I mean, the students were throwing his briefcase out the window. He just didn't have the—he was very, very soft spoken, and he just had no respect from those in the class who wanted to disrupt things to begin with. And I had the same students in my class, but I was more successful in, I don't know, just controlling them for whatever reason. Nothing specific, but sometimes you just have a manner about you, I guess, but he didn't. He looked—he just acted like if you wanted to roll over him, you could.

And, you know, and so I took him out to dinner that night and tried to support him and buck him up a little bit and say, "Listen, you now, the principal came in, it's okay." You know, "I'll be there to help him down the hall, "let me know again if something happens," and all of that. And then he started talking about how he was also now really worried about the draft. He didn't know what he was going to do. Yes, he was in a very, very down mood. And I looked at him and I said, "Is this stress affecting your mouth somehow because you seem to be favoring it?" He said, "Well, it may be, but I've got this problem with this tooth. I always have. My teeth aren't in great shape." I looked at him and I said, "I tell you what you do. You go to your dentist and you get an analysis of your teeth. Take that analysis, if it's bad, you take it to your draft board, and I'll bet you you've got a good chance to get a 4-F deferment."

One month later he walked into my classroom unannounced, the kids are in class, he has this huge smile on his face as he said, "I got my deferment," and he said, "I owe it to you, Mr. Guernsey." And that's been one of the—it was the first success I always felt as a young lawyer, because I also went on to become a lawyer. But, that was my first advocacy effort and it was successful. And I can't tell you—again, it was very emotional because he was one of those who really, he never

should have been in that war. He was just not—he would never have been able to withstand the emotional stress. Not that I would have, but he certainly could not. So... That was quite an emotional, special moment that related to the Vietnam War. And, yeah.

JANOWSKI: I think going back to your time in the Peace Corps a little bit, could you tell me a bit more about what specifically, the work you did and also the work that your wife did?

GUERNSEY: I sure will. So, we were dropped off in this little village from a green Chevrolet Suburban. And there were like 10 of us packed in as we left Panama City, and we were the last ones dropped off at about 4:00 in the afternoon one hellishly hot day, which of course they all were in Panama. And we were dropped off. We were the last ones to be dropped off. And the driver just said, "Okay, here's the village. That's the house where there are people expecting you. And have a great time," turned around and left, and there we were, standing with one bag each in the middle of this road, looking up and down the street, one street with houses on it. And in front of us was this mud brick house that had a little opening because it was the local store, and the oldest man I had ever seen in my life standing in the store window with what looked like his wife that looked to be about the same age. And we were dumbfounded. But, what do you do, right? We'd been taught, you know, *you gotta just step forward*.

So we stepped forward, went to the window and said, in very broken Spanish, Elizabeth, I'm sure with Guernsey, if you can imagine saying that, you know, trying to do that in Spanish, "This is my wife, Carol, and we're here. We were told that you were expecting us." They had no clue. [laughter] But luckily, luckily they had a daughter who appeared from the back room who it turns out was an English teacher in the local school. She'd just gotten her university education. And she looked at us and said, "Oh, of course, it's the Guernseys. Oh, welcome." And, you know, and this is all in Spanish. And so we're catching some of the words, just enough to understand that she knew who we were. And they did have a room for us. They had a corncob bed and a dirt floor, but it was a spacious enough room and it had what you call a tinaja. It's a jug that's made of clay that it keeps water cold, so the tinaja full of water, and they actually had an outhouse out the back. And so, this is what we had [inaudible]. And we did.

So, we began our career. And what we did was within a month we had found our own little house to rent for \$5 a month, and so we moved into that. We had a cement floor and one lightbulb, so we were just living it high. And that's the way we continued to live for the next two years. She was involved and began to talk with the women in the area about health care issues in general and improving their health. And then, they began to really get into childbirth education, which was rather interesting because of course she'd never had any children. But, you know, there was a lot of material out on it now, and why breastfeeding should continue to be encouraged as opposed to the formula that Nestle was trying to push on people and the women because it was, quote, "better," but of course it was full of chemicals. And, so there were a lot of things that she became involved in, and then joined in with other volunteers, and they formed a group, and they went around from village to village. And it was really quite an impressive activity.

So that's what she did, while of course we were both trying to figure out how to learn to live together and keep a house together in a rather different situation than we'd grown up in. And then, what did I do? Well, I went out with the boys, so to speak. I went out with the men, starting with the second day I was there, and I got up at 5:00. I figured I had to do what everybody did, so I got up at 5:00. They gave me a machete, and I had been invited out to go cut rice. So I went out, and they were teaching me how to cut rice, and I just tried to get into it. And, of course, I wasn't doing very well. But, more than anything else, I did that for the next two days straight. I was determined to do that with them. They were very impressed, but I got sunstroke. So I landed in the hospital on Day Three, not very impressive, Elizabeth.

JANOWSKI: Oh, no.

GUERNSEY: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I had a hand in things, but it was just, you know, coming from somebody who'd all lived his life in Northeast, it was I just was having trouble. And, so I learned my lesson, and I still, when I came back I went out and did things with these guys, but I didn't go out all day and I didn't go out with them in the heat of the day. And, in any case, so that began my work.

But I was working in agricultural development, and I began to start gaining the confidence of some of the men in the community and I began to do projects, Elizabeth, to raise—really the most important things were raising pigs and also growing vegetables. Almost nobody had a garden, and also they just didn't grow vegetables commercially. They were subsistence farmers raising rice and corn. That's what they did. It turns out—I didn't know this at the beginning, but most of them were renting land from large landowners, unfortunately, and they didn't have their own land. Some of them, a few of them did have a little parcel of land. But what 90% of the men did there and the families lived on subsistence agriculture.

A few of them began to get—somehow they collected enough money from their work to be able to buy a cow or so, and there was a lot of dairying. Not like our dairy farms, trust me. It would be a few cows here, a few cows there, and they had the old milk cans that they would put out by the road. And, you know, the milk truck would come along and pick them up, but it would be like one milk can at the end of a piece of property and sometimes just half full. But yeah, so there was dairying in addition. I did not ever get involved in that.

But I did start a lot of different projects. We started—the first project was to raise onions with a lot of the farmers. And so, we raised, we had a huge bed of onions, and that was very successful. Other people saw that. And I was able to encourage another group to form to raise pigs in a way that was better than just feeding them scraps and running around the village. We built a pigpen literally, a cement floor, wire sides, put it near a stream. I managed to get somebody who would sell us eight pigs, and had a group of eight people who were working on the construction of it. You know, they all came down the first—we could only work on Sundays because they had to work on their own agricultural livelihood. They had to raise corn and rice for their families during the week. But, they would come down on Sundays to help out. There was a lot of comradery and they loved working with a gringo, I think.

And, but in any case, but of course the group that did the work degenerated after a while to like three or four, but we still got it done. And on the last day when we were ready to go get the pigs, Elizabeth, the man who was going to sell

them to us decided that he liked what we were doing and so he was going to raise them himself. So, I wound up with just one pig. However, I managed to find another place to buy seven more, so we did have eight pigs, and it turns out everybody in the group was able to raise a pig. And I showed them how to do it, to get clean water, to add some grain to the feed, plus all the scraps that they would bring in. And we actually grew these pigs amazing. And everybody was really pleased. And a couple of those farmers continued to do it, and two of them are actually still alive today that were on that project and they're still raising pigs. So, that was good.

And then I started other vegetable projects, the most successful project of which was a tomato growing project with two farmers. And long story short, we had a huge production; it was two-and-a-half acres of tomatoes. That's a lot of tomatoes. They tended them every day first thing in the morning at 5:00 a.m. and at the end of the day. And we used raised beds. And I won't go into the details of raising tomatoes, but I had the help, thank heavens, of a local regional agricultural expert who was actually assigned to the Peace Corps. Without his help, I never could have done all this because I needed that expertise and knowledge. Whenever there was like a blight or a fungus that appeared, I would race into the local town, which was a half hour away after you got some transportation, because it was just like a van that came by every so often. So you'd grab one of those, and so three hours later you're in seeing this guy. First you had to find him because he was always at one cantina or another, but he would always come, and he was always there with the right answer, and we solved the problems.

And it was a great harvest and we got a—I rented a truck, and we drove this huge harvest of tomatoes into Panama City with these two farmers who had never been in Panama City before, and I found out where the market was. I didn't know how to get there really, but you know, you do these things as a Peace Corps volunteer, you just find your way and figure it out, you figure everything out along the way. And we went to the market. I found the market, and drove in, and there were a lot of, you know, all of the Panama City restaurants were there or whatever other function halls were there. They swarmed over this truck of tomatoes. We sold those tomatoes in a matter of one half hour. I've never worked so hard in my life. One box of them after another.

And these guys were so proud. I don't remember how much money we got, but it was so much more than they'd ever seen in their lives before. I don't know, maybe it was a thousand dollars, I don't know, but it was like huge for them. And it was the biggest success we had. And then, we went back and they decided they were going to just build a concrete block house for both of their families, and they did. And that was the thing that they wanted to do. And they wanted to continue raising tomatoes. The sad part of that story is that after we left the Peace Corps, I learned years, years later that nobody would give them land to do it. It was very sad, so they were never able to do it again. The other project continues, but not that one.

In any case, the last saga about the Peace Corps I'll tell you is that two things; one is, in the process of while we were there, it turns out that the Peace Corps director who was appointed by Washington came down and had no interest in us as volunteers. He was more interested in climbing up a ladder and spending all his time at the embassy. So a lot of us got together and—this is, remember, the '60s still—and we were used to protesting and standing up for what we believed. And so we went in there and we were protesting, and he didn't do anything. Went in again, same thing. This was over the course of a year.

And so finally the third time, with the support of one of the regional directors of the Peace Corps, we placed a call to Washington, DC, to the Director of the Peace Corps there. They were not used to getting calls from all the volunteers in a country. And somebody shoved the phone at me to say "you speak for us," so all of a sudden I was there speaking to the Peace Corps Director in Washington on behalf of the volunteers. And we listed a whole list of complaints, and lo and behold, two weeks later the director was removed. So, the protest movement of the '60s taught us all a lesson, that you really could make change if you stood together.

And then, at the end of our first two years, Carol and I tried to leave, but we had been told already that we had to leave, everybody had to leave Peace Corps because another important historical event, the Panamanian Government was beginning to negotiate for a return of the Peace Corps [sic] [Panama] Canal to Panamanian ownership. Now, I don't know if you've ever studied anything about that, but we as a

country went in under Teddy Roosevelt and actually literally took over a part of Colombia, and declared that Panama was independent from Colombia, and there was our gun boats, and Panama became an independent country, and the Panama Canal rights were, surprise, surprise, given to the US to build the canal. We were given a swath of land 10 miles wide right through the heart of Panama. Now, picture a 10 mile wide piece of land going up the Mississippi River dividing the United States. How do you think we would feel about that 10 mile swath of land owned by a foreign country? Yeah, you know, not so well.

Well, the protests were starting in Panama, and the general who was then the head of the government—it was not a democracy at that time; it is now, but it wasn't then—began to realize that he needed to pressure the US to get that canal land back, and [inaudible]. This is 1971, and there were a lot of riots in Panama and he decided he, the President of the country, decided that one of the things he could do was to kick out the Peace Corps. And so he evicted the Peace Corps from the country.

Carol and I tried to stay nonetheless. We went in on our own to try to get visas and we were rejected after sitting there for three hours. The immigration director came out and with a smile on his face he said, "I think you knew that you weren't able to stay, and that is the case. You can't stay as individuals and you can't stay as Peace Corps volunteers." So we were unable to stay in the country. We wanted to continue our service because it was so rewarding, but we couldn't.

So, we left and I bought a VW van in the Canal Zone from one of the people there and, because we had like 10,000 servicemen there, so a lot of families, and we bought a van there, and I decked it out with an old mattress. When I got back to the village, we left our kitty cat there for the people to care for and drove away a couple weeks later, and drove all the way up through Central America, took three months, and got to New York City. We were then back in the United States. So, that went fast. It was an incredible trip, and it was a wonderful trip. We were able to stop. By that time we were really fluent in Spanish and we knew the culture. It was absolutely wonderful. We slept in the van every night, and we had breakfast in the morning right there, but then we always had lunch and dinner at local cantinas or wherever it

was so we could see the people and meet them. And yeah, it was a wonderful experience, so, a great time.

And then I came back and decided I had to continue to see what business school was like, although now I wanted to learn about international co-ops as my goal. But instead of learning about international co-ops, Wharton didn't offer that, but well, *I'll go the first term anyway*. And it was just everybody wanted to go into IBM and General Electric and all these big corporations of which I had no interest in at all. And so, after a term I left. I walked into the dean's office and said I had to leave Wharton, and as a sort of a personal story, he looked at me and he said—I'm shortcutting this, but he basically said, "Now, Mr. Guernsey, nobody on the Dean's List leaves Wharton." And I said, "Well, this one is." [laughter]

So, I left and I went out and I decided to start a bicycle shop. We were still living in Philly where Wharton is because my wife had to finish up a year of undergraduate school because she left Holyoke before she finished her last year of college, so she was finishing up. And I needed something to do, so I got a job with a social service agency, but then decided I wanted to start a bicycle shop, so I started a bicycle shop in Connecticut, applied to law school, and went to law school the next year. And then, three years later I became a lawyer.

But I went to the Antioch School of Law, which was a brand new law school, very liberal, and a whole new teaching methodology which I wished to this day most law schools adopted, but they don't, so... So, then I became a lawyer, and after graduating from Antioch Law School in Washington, I took a job with Legal Aid defending migrant workers in southeastern Pennsylvania. I started my own office of Legal Aid there, pretty incredible. Had a great two years, but I found my clients didn't show up a lot, so it got a little frustrating. So, yeah, so I just then decided I would leave and come up to the beautiful Berkshires, and so, we've been here ever since.

JANOWSKI:

Yeah. I think, just really quick before we continue on, I know that this has gone a little bit over two hours. Do you have time to talk more? I just want to be respectful of that.

GUERNSEY: Yeah, I've allocated up to a little before 1:00. Then I have to quit.

JANOWSKI: Okay, that works perfect for me, then. Okay, also I just wanted to backtrack a little bit, too, and ask about when you first got back into America after your years in the Peace Corps. It was 1971, right?

GUERNSEY: Yes, it was. It would have been like the end of summer in 1971, because I needed to get back before... I left the Peace Corps in Panama in June, to complete our two years of service, and then we boogied on back, so to speak, for basically it was two months, or two-and-a-half months. We got back just in time to go to Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia, and I could start graduate school.

JANOWSKI: I guess I'm kind of interested in what that transition is like back into the States, I know especially because you brought up that you didn't have that much access to current events from the news?

GUERNSEY: Yeah. So it was a really... So, here's the—I'll try to give you a sense of it. That's a good question, Elizabeth. Overall it was a shock. I mean, the only experience we'd had with what America might look like were the times when we managed to get into Panama City, but that didn't even begin to tell the story, because that was a developing country city, and there were a lot of poor people pouring into the outskirts of the city, and the city was really basically kind of a mess, if you will. There were problems with drugs. There was a wonderful experience that the volunteers had, though, who were in the city. We used to join them whenever we were there, which was infrequently, for these wonderful church services of Jesuit priests in a place called San Miguelito. But anyway, that is just one of the good things on the city. But it was a really tumultuous...

Other than that, we didn't know what to expect. And we drove across the border at, it was Rio Juarez [City of Juarez], I think, where we crossed the Rio Grande. In any case, we crossed, and we got across the border, got through customs. And, you know, I was a bearded young 23-year-old that had no idea what to expect. Carol looked like, more or less like a hippie. We'd been traveling in a van for two-and-a-half months, and going on mostly dirt roads and stuff. So, we didn't look your average American ready to go to college.

But in any case, the first thing we saw was a McDonald's, literally the first big American store we saw was a McDonald's. And the sign said "over 1 billion hamburgers sold." This was back in 1971. I stopped the van, we looked at it and took a picture. I could not believe my eyes, that McDonald's had sold one billion hamburgers. I mean, that's one dramatic example of how shocking it was.

And then, we of course then began to see other things, like the shoes I had were all worn out, so we saw a shoe store, and we parked in of course this gargantuan parking lot that we weren't used to, you know. And I went into the shoe store and I said, "I'm here to get a pair of sneakers." [laughter] And he couldn't understand. He looked at me like I had five heads. "Well, what kind do you want? Do you want running sneakers? Do you want exercise sneakers? Do you want weightlifting sneakers? Do you want sneakers for soccer?" He went through this whole thing, and I just, I turned around and walked out. I was so in shock at American consumerism. You understood, we made our own meals from all the basic foods that we had in the village or we could get really nearby, for two years. And then coming home we basically do the same thing. And now, I was being offered all these options.

So, one of the big shocks was how consumer America had just really taken off in the time that we had been in the Peace Corps. And those are just two examples. But, so that continued to be really hard for us, frankly, to see the consumerism that, I mean, we had known about it before to some extent, but again, we were college students, and then in this little village of Lisbon, so we really hadn't experienced the full extent of it. But now we were seeing as we traveled up from Texas up to New York City. So that was one big shock.

Now granted, we still weren't interfacing with many people. So then we get to Carol's house. She grew up outside of New York City in Chappaqua, which is just an hour north of New York City. We visited her parents in this wonderfully nice suburban home. And then we left there and went up to see my parents, and just outside of Albany, New York, as you know, Schoharie. And in each case, the parents were quite interested, but they would have friends over. And I can tell you this, the big problem that we had and we learned from every other Peace Corps volunteer is, we used to

phrase it that “eyes glaze over,” because people wanted—they were always asking, “Well, how was it, Sherwood?” or “How was it, Carol?” And we would start to tell them about what the experience was. Only we learned very quickly that we had to capsule it into, you know, sound bites, because they would all of a sudden, if you had five people in your little group you were talking to, you’d wind up with just one person left because everybody else had gotten bored. They could not understand. They could not relate to the experiences we were telling them.

The only thing that held their attention was if I’d tell them a funny story, or a story that I thought was funny and they would be a little aghast at. For example, one that I found I could use because it would both shock people and they would listen, was when we were doing some of our agricultural projects I described, at the time Peace Corps was still authorizing the use of insecticides, much to my chagrin now, but we did. And so we had bags of insecticides. So, what did you do with the insecticide bag? Well, we’d try to protect it and get it away from where we were working, and put it off to the side of the field or on the other side of the fences. And one day we did that, and we came back in the next morning, and there was a big prized bull that had decided it was very tasty, and he ate the whole bag. Needless to say, he was lying very dead. And this was the neighbor’s bull. And, so we had to go report that, etc., etc. It caused a huge kerfuffle in town. And then in the meantime, what we didn’t further take into account was that the neighbor dogs came over to eat the meat from the bull. Two of them died.

I mean, I don’t want to say this was a normal day in a Peace Corps activities, but it was just all these unexpected things that just are so unlike our lives here. And that Germanic kind of story would keep their attention. Otherwise, they just couldn’t relate to all these people living in these mud houses and they’re going out to the fields to cut rice and corn. They would try to listen, and you’d try to tell some stories, but it was very difficult. Nobody could relate, so it became a very lonely experience of trying to tell people about the Peace Corps experience. And that is a very common experience. And a lot of volunteers struggled with that for, I mean, for a long time, for months if not years, if the people can’t relate to these incredible two years where life is so different. So, that was hard, yep.

Now, what happened for me was that I then got thrown off into trying to find an apartment right away in Philly. We had this focus. I went to classes at Wharton. I was trying to get used to academia again and this stuff about accounting and macro and micro management of companies, and I'll tell ya, it lost me. Nobody had an interest in international co-operatives, which of course I wanted to learn about. So, I became just both bored and aggravated by the whole teaching and what they were teaching and why at that time, 1971. So, I found it very, very frustrating.

And of course, it was in large part because of my experiences where there was a life that was so different, and it was so basic and people's needs were so clear, and people enjoyed life in a very different way. They stressed over whether they'd have enough food, but they didn't stress like we do as Americans. And it was a powerful experience, Elizabeth. And I could not tell anybody that they would understand that. Why would anybody want to live in that situation, you know, and not have cars and refrigerators and two-story houses and all the air conditioning? They couldn't understand it. They just couldn't relate. So it was hard. So it was a real cultural gap. And it took me a long time to get used to. And that's of course one reason I left Wharton. But, I've never looked back and I'm happy that I did. Does that help to give you a picture of what it was like?

JANOWSKI: Yes. Yeah, that was perfect. Yeah, let's see. I want to change directions a little bit here and skip a bit ahead into the future. So I understand that you served for quite a while as a state representative in Massachusetts. What motivated you to get into politics?

GUERNSEY: My childhood experience in my father's dining room in the house, and then secondly, when I went to Dartmouth and became very politically involved on the campus with civil rights and the Vietnam War, as I've described, and learning to discuss and debate and formulate arguments and study positions. And the fact that I began to get a sense that I could from high school on organize groups and get respect, and I could articulate positions, I could speak publicly, all of those things I learned starting in high school and going on into college, especially the last two years at Dartmouth, where all those skills, without my knowing it, were formulated as I formed those groups I mentioned, and I was a leader of

those two groups, the tutorial group and the Religious Liberals.

And I wasn't a leader in the peace movement, but I was very active in helping to organize it on campus. And then I struck out on my own, both teaching and then the Peace Corps was huge in that I had to really learn to adapt and do things quickly. And that all contributed to a background of that. But, it was all related to everything I had ever done, because the Peace Corps then added this cultural aspect in how people weren't being treated properly, and the US had no sense of what it should be doing, in my view. And so, I was really highly motivated by the issues that were driving the country and driving the world to change that. And from the time I graduated from Dartmouth, it was all about in my era trying to change the world, believe it or not. So, that's one reason we went in the Peace Corps, it's one reason that I went to law school, and it was a follow-up reason as to why I got again to think that I should get involved in the political world.

When we moved to the Berkshires [MA], I immediately decided I would try to see what it was like. So, I was really highly motivated from the days of my father's initiating me into political issues and political debate, to all through the various experiences I've described, and culminating in when I began to practice law here in the Berkshires and had some time to really begin to reach out and join community groups. And I began to join the Democratic Party organization in my town, in Williamstown [MA], and had great leadership and exciting things we were doing.

And so, I got really motivated, and three years after I came here, I decided to run for county commissioner. And I did. I think I had a knack for creating some interest in what I did. And the first thing I did was—a very difficult time. Oil prices were really spiking, so a lot of people were changing from oil to gas. In the process, there would be oil left in their oil tanks, and so it was going to waste. So, I just came up with this idea of going to the local oil distribution company to ask them if when they went to make the switch from oil to gas, the oil that was left over they could put in their trucks and then deliver it to those who were having trouble affording home heating oil that winter. And the three companies in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where I had my law office, just a half an hour from here, Elizabeth, the three oil companies agreed, and I used that as a—I all of a sudden was on the

front page of all the newspapers starting this. I hadn't intended that.

But all of a sudden I realized that I was getting pretty well known very quickly, and so I said—and there was a race for this county commissioner office. I thought, *I'd love to be able to be a part of that, and why should I wait?* And the blessings of blessings is that my wife agreed, and so, I began this campaign, and I began to get people to help me out, and that I found to be relatively easy to do for me, and especially at the time. I had tons of energy and I was highly motivated to try to develop a way, a path in which I could really make change in this country. And now I lost that race, but I gained a lot of recognition.

And then I worked hard in the Michael Dukakis campaign for re-election for Governor, got more known, learned all the tactics of organizing again. And then I ran for state legislator and I won four successive races. And it was an exciting time for me in part because I loved public speaking and I loved public policy debates and I loved formulating legislation, and all of that. And then, my career went the other direction and I lost a race for state senate, and then I also lost a race for Congress. But, the race for Congress in particular was exciting, and I just didn't have the votes from where I lived. But, so that's my political career in a nutshell.

But the motivation really was all of my life experiences up to the time I moved here, but starting in particular with my own family and the focus on the discussions and all the *New York Times* articles tacked on the wall, and all the debates. And then when I came back from Dartmouth. And yeah, I was instilled to that, and then all of my experiences, whether it was in Mexico as I described or on campus, and then in the Peace Corps, and then in school, in the year I taught school. You know, all of that all contributed to it. And formulating ways in which people could come together and believe in the issues that we articulated, and hopefully convince people that it was time to make some changes. And I'm still at it today.

JANOWSKI: And just to clarify the years on this. So, you were a state representative, was it from 1983 to 1990, is that correct?

GUERNSEY: Yes, actually it was the very beginning of 1983 to the end of 1990, that's correct. Yep.

JANOWSKI: Great. And then, I also see, so you returned to working for the Peace Corps in 1995, right?

GUERNSEY: I did. I went back to my law practice. Well, I never stopped actually at my law practice. I just didn't—it was kind of on hiatus, although I kept it open and I did see some clients while I was in legislature. But then I went back to law practice full-time. But then I got a—I was still very involved politically supporting candidates—and I got a call from my Congressman, who I had actually lost to, but he became a good friend. He was another Democrat. And he said, "You know, there's an opening for, and they're looking for someone to start an office in the Peace Corps in Washington to support the returning volunteers and to help them create projects around the country," and he said, "you know, I thought of you, and I wondered if you would be interested. I'd be happy to put you in contact." So he did.

And then I went down there and I found it exciting, so I put my law office on a sort of suspension for another two years and went down there, and actually wound up traveling a lot around the country and talking to all these various—the returned volunteers formed groups of volunteers, and basically in cities and areas, and so, I would go to talk with them and communicate with them and create ways in which they could be involved in their own communities in ways which would be representative of their work in the Peace Corps, whether working with immigrants in particular or organizing in the schools to spread the word about different cultures and how to respect them. So, we did a lot of different things with the schools in particular. So yeah, it was kind of a good two years. And then, things began to change in the Peace Corps office a little bit, and I was restricted from doing a lot of the things that I wanted to initiate, so I decided this is enough, went back, and so yeah, so then I came back and became—my law practice actually took off at that point because of various people that I'd met. But in any case, so my law practice was really good then for the next—until I just was transitioning now.

But in the meantime I started a couple of local political organizations: a local Democratic organization and a countywide Democratic organization called Berkshire Democratic Brigades, the first countywide organization in the state for Democrats. And supported a lot of different

candidates over the years. And then, with the advent of the present President's election, I formed yet another group called the Four Freedoms Coalition, which is a bipartisan group to bring people together around our basic freedoms, no matter what political party you were in because things looked so desperate, and I was right. So, that Four Freedoms group continues to operate on a bipartisan basis to bring people together around issues, and support the kinds of things that Franklin Roosevelt spoke of in his Four Freedoms speech, when he articulated that the four basic freedoms of this country are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom of the press, I guess, yeah. So, but in any case, so we have celebrated those four freedoms and tried to bring everybody together around those, with some... see, we've had huge marches. The first march we had like over 2,500 people, and that's a lot for Pittsfield, Massachusetts, trust me. So it's been good.

So I just have totally believed in the value of being a really important role of being a citizen in terms of figuring out what you believe and what's important for your community and what's important for your nation, and stepping out and speaking out on those things. It can be local issues of school or it can be state, it can be national, world, it doesn't matter, and then organizing around those issues to make a difference. That's what our democracy is about. So, I don't want to sound dramatic, but that's what's the driving force in my life.

JANOWSKI: Right. Yeah, and that work is definitely very important. Let's see. I also, I was wondering if you could talk a bit about the Fund for New World Development? I know that that was the project, or one of the big projects that you worked on during your return to the Peace Corps, right?

GUERNSEY: No, actually. So, there were two separate things. One is I was down in the Washington office of the Peace Corps, and I held the title of the—I was on the senior staff and the head of Domestic Affairs, they called it, which was a misnomer. But, what it was was I was charged with developing programs, as I described, with returned volunteers, volunteers who had served overseas and come back into this country. They were forming groups to try to figure out what they might be able to do for this country now, because that's part of the charge of the Peace Corps, which is to serve overseas but come back and, if you will, bring your

learning that you have learned overseas here, so that people in this country could understand and appreciate and respect other cultures. That was one of the three goals that President Kennedy set for the Peace Corps. In summary, the three goals were to help people learn from us overseas, secondly was to learn from them what they could teach us, and then to bring that knowledge back. So I was working with the returned volunteers in this country. That was my two years from '95 to '97 in Washington.

The Fund for New World Development is entirely different. It is a foundation, a private foundation that Carol and I started simply because we returned to Panama and the village we served in, which I described at some length our service, and we returned to that village 40 years after we served, after we left, for the first time. And we were welcomed with open arms. We were welcomed by people who had not seen us in 40 years, and of course, my friends had become old, but the little kids who had played on our porch, they were of course now 40 years old themselves, or whatever, or older obviously. But, they all welcomed us. It was wonderful. Some of our best friends were there and still are to this day. And they asked us if we could work with them still, Elizabeth. And I said, "Well," we said, we kind of said, "Well, we hadn't planned to. We just came to see you and visit you." Well, they said, "Please. We'll hold a community meeting." So they held a community-wide meeting, and had this incredible debate for two hours about how it was that we could help them, and still, because we weren't coming—I told them, "We're not coming back to live here. We've got grandchildren now" and all that.

So, they said there were a couple of priorities. One was to get a caution light installed by the local town, or the county there. The two bigger things that were important, though, were where they had no place to play athletics, no place. Every other village had a central square. This village didn't. And they needed a place to play, so somehow could we, I don't know, get some land for an athletic field for them. And third was to bring computers to the town because there were none in there, none, not a one. And they'd heard about them and knew that their kids needed to learn.

So I'm going to ratchet forward, because over the last 10 years what's happened is we developed this foundation because that was necessary to do business there, we found

out, to start a bank account. So we either had to own land or create an entity, so we created this entity and began to create contacts down there to help us. And, so we decided that we would develop computer centers in the school there, and ultimately we did so in another village. And so, we called them computer learning centers. And the foundation, we funded the foundation, and the foundation actually worked—and the foundation is us basically. We have a wonderful local attorney and board member down there and a couple of board members here.

But, we went down, we visited four times a year initially, and we got arrangements with all the local agencies we needed to provide training, computer training. We bought the computers, had them delivered, had them set it up. We first had to get some permissions to go into the Department of Education to get a classroom. We got the classroom. We had to refurbish the classroom. Long story, but we ultimately got the computers in, set up, everything going, and we had enough people trained, but we chose the top one in the class of computer learning to come and be our teacher—everybody from the village—and to be our administrator. So, over time we developed two administrators. Everybody is from the village and they teach all the students not only how to use computers, but now the focus is on working with the teachers in the school to teach analytical creative learning, as opposed to rote learning, which is still the norm down there. So, we've expanded our goals, and we're in two different villages. We were in three or four. We've cut back, and still trying to make a difference in what amounts to hundreds of students' lives in these small Panamanian towns. That's what the foundation does.

Oh, one other thing. We bought a piece of land, and we created the only professional sized athletic field down there. It's not fancy, but it's level, and there's a professional sized soccer field and softball field, with a road access that's at least okay. And we have the basics for soccer nets and backstops and bases, and that's it. But, they maintain it. We don't. They do the maintenance and they have leagues. And so, there's some real successes there.

JANOWSKI:

Yeah, that's great. Okay, I think, so we're kind of winding down in terms of moving up to, I guess talking about the present now. I guess tying it back to Dartmouth a bit, I know

that you mentioned the 50th reunion in our initial [inaudible]. So, you attended that reunion, right?

GUERNSEY: Yes, I did.

JANOWSKI: Okay. Yeah, could you tell me a little bit about your experience there just reuniting with other members of the Class of 1968 and what that was like?

GUERNSEY: I can. It was actually very encouraging. I actually really enjoyed it. I'd been to the 40th, but I didn't go to very many before that. I don't know if I'd gone to any. Went to the 40th, and then again went to the 50th. Not many of my classmates came whom I'd really known well, but one or two did, and that was really good. But aside from that, there was a major topic that we're talking about. There was a really incredible seminar put on about the Vietnam War, and I know I referenced it earlier that I hope your professor can get a copy of the tape of that, and I would hope that everybody who's doing the interviewing would review it. But, it was a time for—they had some panelists, but the real focus was on allowing everybody who wanted to speak about their experiences to talk about them. And obviously it was much briefer than these interviews, but it was an opportunity for a number of us to get up and just express what we did at the time, and whether we served; if we served, where, what we did there; if we didn't, what we did and why. And, so it was a wide ranging discussion for a good three hours. So that was very, very good and we came away very energized by the openness of our class.

And then secondly, at the class meeting I went with my friend and we sat in the back, not thinking that we'd participate. And then at one point, it was open for questions and I realized that this is an opportunity to talk about how people felt about the Vietnam War in general, and the condition of the country in 1968 and how they felt about it now. So, I just stood up and I said, "I have a question for the class. And the question is, I'm wondering if we could all have a show of hands as to how many of us wore armbands protesting the Vietnam War at our graduation?" I did not know what the response would be, Elizabeth. It turns out that a good 70% of the classmates in attendance at the reunion 50 years later, about 70%, I think that's a fair assessment, of us raised our hands, that yes, we had worn armbands protesting the war at that time.

Then I had a follow-up question. I said, “So I’m wondering also how many of you would wear white armbands again today in protesting the policies of the Trump Administration if we were graduating tomorrow?” Another 70% or maybe more percentage raised their hands saying that they would. I was so pleased and impressed that—from my standpoint, I was just so pleased. I was worried that there would be a lot of conservatives or maybe ultra conservatives. I’m not saying there weren’t any, but the majority of them, a large majority were supportive of being in opposition to the Trump Administration. So, you know what happened, right, Elizabeth? People came up to me afterwards and said, “Well, do you have any white armbands?” Because the 50th reunion class walks in separately, after all that year’s graduates are seated, the 50th reunion class at graduation—well, you remember this. Oh, you don’t, I’m sorry. You didn’t have a big graduation this year. Oh, I apologize. That’s not good.

JANOWSKI: Right.

GUERNSEY: But in any case, in a normal year—oh, my, I’m sorry about that—all the seniors walk in, they sit down, and all the parents, everybody else is seated. You know, there’s thousands of people there. And then the 50th anniversary class gets to walk in to a little bombast and cheers and support. You know, everybody’s clapping for the old guys. So we walk in. But, the idea was that we would at this point right after the class meeting, did we have any white armbands to wear the next day when we marched in? And so I looked at Carol, looked at my friend, and I said, “Well, why not?” So we went down, Elizabeth, we went down to, I guess it was Target or Walmart, and got some white sheets, and that evening, while everybody else was dancing, Carol, I and my friend, and other people came to join us, were ripping up sheets so that the next day we could offer white armbands to our class.

And the next day, I gave out armbands to anybody who wanted, and people came up and said, “Yeah, I’ll help you distribute them.” And I’m going to tell you right now, we had at least 80% of our 50th reunion class wearing white armbands as we did in 1968, protesting the government policies. In this case it wasn’t the Vietnam War. In this case it was the more generalized Trump Administration atrocities.

And, so that's kind of a capstone on my involvement in the Vietnam War, if you will, from 1968 to 50 years later when we still wore white armbands in protest.

JANOWSKI: Yeah, I actually, out of my other interviews with the members of the Class of 1968, this is the first time I've heard that story. That's really cool.

GUERNSEY: Well, there's actually a picture of it in the alumni magazine, I think, on the report on the class. It's not a big one, but it's there. And I have a picture that I took of it when we were seated and everybody raising their arms with the white armbands on it. Kind of fun. Kind of cool. Well, for me it was significant because I came up with a question, and then it developed into the idea. But you ask them, anybody else. Well, you're not talking to anybody else, but yeah, it was real. We did it. And I was really pleased. So...

JANOWSKI: Yeah, that's great. Okay, I know that we're kind of coming up on the end of our time here, but there is one last sort of thing I wanted to ask to tie things together, and that is, I know specifically on the topic of racial inequality right now, there's all these protests erupting around the country following the police killing of George Floyd and a lot of other black Americans. I was kind of wondering if you see parallels between what's going on right now in America versus what you saw in the 1960s?

GUERNSEY: And the answer is "yes, but it's different." And I have to say that, you know, that it's different and I think it's better different. And here's why. Because in the 1960s, there were a lot of us who were opposing the Vietnam War, not necessarily because we had studied that the war was wrong, which is true in my case and in my friends', and we had a principled stance. But others who were just opposing the war because they didn't want to serve because they didn't want to fight, they just thought that they wanted, or they were privileged enough that they could find a way to get out of it from their draft board. So it was kind of a privileged white response.

What is better now about this, and it is similar in that there have been protests around the country, there is a groundswell of support for the opposition to police killing of all these black people, and in awful situations where there was no good reason at all. And the bottom line is that what

makes it better in this sense is that I think it runs deeper. I think those of us who are white Americans are realizing this is not just out of support for them; it's out of a recognition that this is our problem, that we as white people enslaved the blacks, and we have a responsibility for the tragedies of their lives in a very general overall way, and it continues to this day, that racism is just a part of this country now as it was back in the 1700s and 1800s, and it is. And so, it's incumbent upon us as white people to recognize that and lead on this.

And I think this goes deep, and I think it goes in a way that is going to have long lasting effects, because this is more than a movement, if you will. I think it's a general feeling that things have gone really wrong in this country. This is by a majority. I know that a lot of people will disagree with it. And the whole history that we have had of white supremacy is something which can't be maintained in a multicultural, multiracial society that we already are. This is not something that is in the future. It's now. And so, particularly for someone like myself who's been imbued with the Peace Corps experience and the appreciation and respect for other people, this is a really big thing. It runs different than, if you will, the opposition to one military action. This is a movement that's recognizing that we have a serious endemic problem in this country. That goes deeper, and I think it's more important.

The protests themselves are similar, but it's not the same groups of people. It's much more across economically diverse lines, ethnically diverse lines. That wasn't very much the case in the Vietnam protests. It was mostly white people protesting the war, not exclusively, but it was mostly. And the black people were more worried about their economic conditions and then the war because they were being shot up in bigger numbers in the war. So it wasn't like the war wasn't their issue, but they had broader issues. Now those broader issues are being addressed. So, I think it is both similar and more deeply rooted, and hopefully will bring long lasting results.

JANOWSKI: Right. Yeah, definitely. I think we're all hoping that good things will come out of all the...

GUERNSEY: I hope so. And you know what? It will if we keep after it.

JANOWSKI: Right. Okay, well, I think that's a pretty good note to end on. Yeah, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I know this went a little longer than you were anticipating, but this was great.

GUERNSEY: Well, Elizabeth, you're a good interviewer and I appreciate your hanging in there with me. I'm not reticent as a speaker, so I suspect I'm the cause of the lengthy interview. But I do appreciate—I really frankly very much appreciate your doing this. I think it's very important to have this kind of history laid down, and to the extent that this is there and can be used productively and constructively, I hope that it will, and I wish you good luck, both with this and also with whatever endeavors you're going to be jumping into in a very uncertain world. I wish you the best, Elizabeth.

[End of Interview.]