

SCHEDLER HONORS COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Cindy Lea Oral History Interview Transcription

Narrator Name: Coleman, Rebecca

Interviewer Name: Ramos, Anacaren

Date of Interview: 03/17/2022

Location of Interview: Remote Interview - Zoom Recording

Acronyms:

AR= Anacaren Ramos

RB= Rebecca Coleman

UCA = University of Central Arkansas

Interview Summary

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Rebecca Coleman conducted by Anacaren Ramos on March 17, 2022. This interview is part of the Schedler Honors College Oral History Project.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

AR [00:00:01] All right. I am just going to ask if you will please state your name, the date and time and where you are located right now.

RC [00:00:12] Rebecca Taverner Coleman. It is March 17th, 2022 at six thirty-two p.m. central time, and I am in Springfield, Arkansas.

AR [00:00:24] Perfect. All right. If you'll just tell me, where you are from?

RC [00:00:32] I grew up in Little Rock. I was born in Camden and my parents settled in Little Rock and lived there until I graduated high school.

AR [00:00:44] Perfect. So if you'll just tell me a little about Little Rock. Was that a small town or big town?

RC [00:00:53] Little Rock is the capital of Arkansas. I lived in Southwest Little Rock.

AR [00:01:01] Did you like growing up there?

RC [00:01:05] It was good. I mean, I would say I had a really good childhood. It's a typical Gen-X childhood. We came, we went outside and stayed outside all day long until the streetlights came on. That was the rule. Went to school, there was a local school there. Besides going to school, my brothers and I hung out a lot and rode our bikes. Did the typical outdoors things that a lot of people. I don't know, like kids don't do that anymore because things are different. But yes, it was back in the day before any types of video games, no video games, no smartphones. There was one phone in the house. [laughter]

AR [00:01:52] What would you say that the family dynamic was?

RC [00:01:58] In my family, we're all very close. My parents are still married. They'll have their fifty third anniversary this summer and I have two brothers. I'm the oldest. My brother, Rick, was born in seventy two. We were— We're almost three years apart and my baby brother Matt was born in seventy eight, so he was kind of a late baby. My brother [Rick] and I were very close. We did

everything together. He was my very, very best friend and we had a lot of adventures together. Of course, I probably ganged up on our little brother way more than we should have. We were a close family. There was a— we didn't have a lot of money and my dad worked as a millwright in a factory in Little Rock and my mom stayed home. She— they kind of made the choice that that's what they were going to do, even though it was— we were not—I wouldn't say we were poor, poor, but we were pretty poor.

AR [00:03:15] Yeah.

RC [00:03:15] After my little brother got old enough to go to school. My mom started working part time and I think that kind of helped a little bit and we took a few vacations here and there and never far Branson and places around Arkansas. My dad was really big on teaching us history. We went to places like Arkansas Post and took us to Hot Springs and Mountain Home and all these different places. We went to, I think we went to the Jonquil Festival probably one year, and I'm sure we went to a couple of other festivals as kids because they wanted us to. They couldn't afford to take us to Disney World but we did get to go to Silver Dollar City a few times. It was good. I would say my parents were never real outgoing people, and they're both pretty—I wouldn't say shy, but kind of introverted. I think they were very surprised by me. I would say I'm introverted as well, but I think I'm probably the most extroverted person in my family. I was always out there.

AR [00:04:36] How would you say your high school experience was growing up?

RC [00:04:43] I hated high school. I did. I loved school. I loved learning. I loved going to school, especially as a kid. It started getting a little more tricky in junior high and then high school I didn't like at all, but I think that was mostly it wasn't because of academics that I always did really well

academically. I think I just never felt like I fit in. I'm sure that everybody feels that way when they're in high school. I was happy to get out of there.

AR [00:05:23] Yeah. So you're in your high school, how did you hear about the Honors College?

RC [00:05:36] OK, so when I graduated high school, I went to Hendrix my first two years. I really wanted to go to Hendrix really, very badly, and I worked my behind off to get good grades and I did everything I could to come up with scholarships and I think they had the Pell Grant at that time. Hendrix is a little more expensive, I mean, it is a private college. I got in and I went there the first two years and I really, really loved it. Hendrix is an amazing school. It's really, really awesome. I didn't have any money, and I knew that my parents were struggling because they had always committed to helping us get a bachelors degree. Anything after that? We were pretty much on our own. I knew that I was really kind of stretching them a little bit and I felt bad about it. I knew I needed to transfer somewhere, but I wanted a similar experience. I didn't want to have an experience where I didn't feel challenged, which Hendrix did. I heard about the Honors College and I honestly cannot remember through whom. Probably when I talked to maybe somebody in admissions, I don't know, about transferring over, but I contacted them. I had the interview with Norb, the infamous Norb interview. He, I don't know how if he continued to do this, but back when the Honors College was pretty young and I was, I was in the class of 92 so this is a while back. He interviewed everybody and I had that and I knew that this is probably going to be the best place for me and maybe even better than Hendrix in many ways because they offered a scholarship that was really going to help me stay in school and do the things that I needed to be able to do while I was in school.

AR [00:07:48] Yes. What was your major at the time when you transferred over from Hendrix and can you tell me about the application process?

RC [00:08:13] English. Honestly, Anacaren, that it's so long ago. [laughter] I mean, I'm sure it was paper. [laughter]

AR [00:08:23] Yes, that's totally okay.

RC [00:08:25] I'm sure it was talking, having to fill some things out. I know I had to get my records, but I think really the biggest thing with transfer students back then was the interview. I mean, they wanted to know whether you were interested in what the Honors College was about and working really hard. That was the conversation that I had with Norb. I assured him these are things that I really was interested in pursuing.

AR [00:08:53] How was transferring over in terms of making friends and connections at UCA?

RC [00:09:04] I was never a big person about making friends. Oh, I know that sounds terrible. I had a few good friends. I mean, my roommate from Hendrix and I both transferred at the same time and we lived together while we both went to UCA and hung out a lot there. I had a few other friends in the Honors College, so the friends that I did make were in my class and they are friends to this day. They are two of the only ladies that I keep up with regularly and speak with regularly, and we've gotten together when we can if we happen to be in the same area. I wouldn't have met them had it not been for the Honors College.

AR [00:09:52] You said that you did meet Norb. What was your first impression of Norb when you met him?

RC [00:10:02] How can you not love Norb. Norb was a person who— he never told you you were wrong, but he always got you to question yourself in a way that allows you to come to a conclusion or an idea your own way. Norb never told you what to think. Norb kind of taught you how to think and how to see things from different perspectives. I think that's something I've carried with me my entire life. You kind of knew that as soon as you met Norb, that he was non-judgmental. He was warm. He was sincere. He was truly interested in who you were and what you had to say.

AR [00:11:05] Oh, that's amazing. Let's talk about a little bit about any of the Honors courses during your time here. Is there any that you remember?

RC [00:11:24] I do. I remember vaguely. I know that I didn't do Honors Core one and two because I came in as a transfer student and at that time, they didn't make you do one and two. I think I had to take maybe like a mini course or something. They gave me the books to read and maybe we sat down and had a conversation, but I think I went straight into Core III. Three you got to read about the religions and I know that we did *Houston Smith's Religions of the World*, which was really very interesting to me, and I enjoyed that very much. It's something that I think everybody should experience. Everyone should learn about all of the religions of the world and learn what they are and where they come from. I think it's really very helpful. I know that I took some kind of seminar. It was about China, and I cannot remember what it was for. I'm sure it was like some type of elective or it was like an extra.

AR [00:12:40] It could have been a junior seminar? Possibly.

RC [00:12:45] It probably was a junior seminar. Yes. We read. I remember we read a novel called *Rickshaw*. We had a few textbooks, I know that we studied quite a bit about art and on food, and I am pretty I can't even remember who taught it. He had been to China. I don't think he was— had any

other relation to it other than he lived there for a long time. He had a lot of really good insights. That was an interesting one. Our senior seminar, I know we read *Amusing Ourselves to Death* and a couple of other books. I'm pretty sure that— if it was not that one, but I know that we studied St. Augustine, Immanuel Kant and Descartes, we studied all those philosophers. As I told Norb, all those dead white men. [laughter] We talked about all of them. Then I wrote a senior thesis. My advisor was Norb. We got to work together frequently, which was so much fun. I don't even know how I came to this and I wanted to do something different, not English, because that was my major. I chose a history topic. It was— and I was really interested in Russia at that time. I had read a lot about the last Tsar and his family of Russia before the revolution and became really interested in that. There's a lot of mythos around there, as always, happens with history. The Empress Tsarina Alexandra was always maligned in history and called a crazy lady; she believed this monk rescued and allowed him to infiltrate. That wasn't the only reason they fell. Certainly not, but that was an intrigue and something that was going on that was distracting, obviously. I didn't think that was really fair. The woman always gets the blame for the downfall of the great man, and he wasn't really that great anyway. I found the—I dug up the original letters between Alexandra and Nicholas, the tsar, like back when they, when they —before they even got married. They were related, probably more than you want to know about this topic. They're related vaguely through Victoria, who apparently is the grandmother of everybody in Europe. They were planned for each other and they got married and because of all this and all the intermarriage in this family, she carried a gene for hemophilia and hemophilia does not usually do anything in women, but for men most of the time, I think it does affect women occasionally, but mostly it's men who will be greatly affected like her son, Alexei. They didn't really know really at that time what it was or how to address it or anything like that. They tried everything. He was a very sickly boy. A lot of people in that family in this Victoria line have died of hemophilia because it's a gene that she carried. Alexandra was desperate. She's a mom and she has a very sick little boy. He is supposed to be the heir because women can't inherit the throne. She had four daughters before this little boy. He's the last hope of this dynasty.

She's desperate to do anything she can, and one of the things that she does is she kind of convinces herself of the healing powers of this Greek or Russian Orthodox monk named Rasputin, and he claims that he can heal him or make it go away. He does actually have some powerful kind of effect on him in calming him, and that usually will stop bleeding. Anyway, he kind of got into this and people hated him, and there was a lot of intrigue and a lot of gossip going around about her and him having an affair and now all this other stuff. I wanted to investigate that and say, "Hey, she's really not. She's a mom and she's trying to do her best in the face of a lot of really other terrible things that are happening in the country." She was rich so there's that I'm not really trying to be an apologist for the last tsarina but that interested me. I think that I've always been interested in women being a part of history, but yet never really being honored for their part in history or maligned or seen as the downfall of someone. I think that's what often happens when we when we leave women out of history and we don't talk about their contributions. Norb loved it, it was so much fun. I got to present it at this conference in Denver. It was like a conference for Slavic studies or something like that. Here I am, a senior in college and I get to go to this big conference and there are lots of super professors and people from all over that area of the world, lots of Russians, you know? I get to present my little paper and people came to listen to it, and I felt really bolstered and excited about that. It was a really good experience.

AR [00:19:14] Do you remember the exact courses and the amount of time that you had to finish them for your last year?

RC [00:19:38] No, I probably should have pulled my transcripts to see what I took. Sorry I did not prepare for this very well.

AR [00:19:46] No you are good. You definitely had the junior seminar, the senior seminar, and then you went through your capstone project and you said you did do core three so that would make

sense if that was the only courses you took. How was having Norb as your advisor for your capstone project?

RC [00:20:09] Great. Norb and I just sat around and talked. We had great conversations about those very things that I was really talking about is how women had just been largely absent from almost every aspect of society. Any time you would look at a history book, it would always be about what the men did because the men do the big things apparently. They become president or they're warriors or they conquer or they make really big mistakes or they create these things. When I was a kid or a young woman, I always wondered, why? Does this mean that women have always just stayed, we just stayed at home all the time? We didn't do anything. We didn't. We didn't write anything. We didn't make anything. It was always we're just going to— or is it that women did do those things, but that they weren't good? I think I really, for a long time kind of had this idea that women just weren't as good at those things, at anything as men were. That was the reason why you only got to read about man really got to see men portrayed. I think having those conversations with Norb and having that experience of being in the Honors College really kind of helped me develop the confidence to say those things out loud and to challenge them, to question it, not just to myself, but to other people. I wouldn't say that that is earth shattering for right now in 2022, but that was not the case in 1992. Even then, there were lots of challenges and lots of obstacles that women had to face in order to be taken seriously. I don't think I ever would have had as much confidence as I did to stand up for myself and to kind of demand to be heard. If Norb or if Rick Scott too was there— I had Rick Scott for a class or two or he was a co teacher— And both of them [Rick and Norb] we're just really open minded and open about encouraging everyone to speak and actually even encouraging women to speak more frequently.

AR [00:23:12] Would you say that your education changed from Hendrix to the Honors College in terms of speaking up?

RC [00:23:24] That's a really interesting question, and I'd be hard to say it was solely because of a transition from Hendrix to the Honors College because I got older. There's a big difference between being 18 and being 20, but you don't think that's really that much. A lot happens and definitely a lot happens between 18 and 22 or 23. I would say that I probably got more one on one support than I would have at Hendrix because we had a very small class. I don't even remember how many people were in the graduating class of 1992. I suspect it's fewer than a dozen. I don't think we were a very big class, but I'm sure you could look that up. Because we were such a small class, we kind of developed those friendships and those understandings and had a lot of opportunities to get feedback, support, and guidance from Norb and Rick. That probably wouldn't happen today if you had a larger class, but definitely it was different from Hendrix. I mean, Hendrix is a small college, there aren't a lot of—it's not nearly as big as UCA, but you're still kind of lost in the crowd.

AR [00:25:01] I'm just curious. You've transferred and you were from Little Rock at the time. Since you are now in Conway, where did you live?

RC [00:25:22] I lived— when I was at Hendrix I lived on campus in a dorm. Then when— this is funny, when I went to UCA, we lived at Mansard Apartments. Do you know where that is? I don't think they're called that anymore. You're on the UCA campus where the stadium is, where the football stadium is? They are those apartments right across the street from the football stadium there, those little square, rectangular looking things. That's where I lived.

AR [00:25:53] Wow. That's where the athletes live now. Today, I believe.

RC [00:26:00] Well, I think probably some of them [athletes] lived there then too. It was kind of a free for all because at that time, and I think it was, it wasn't student housing like it was a full fledged UCA didn't own it at that time, and it was kind of a party place. [laughter]

AR [00:26:23] And did you live there your whole time?

RC [00:26:28] I did as an undergrad. I went to grad school at UCA also, and I got married after I graduated with a bachelor's degree. I can't remember where we lived. I know that we lived in a duplex. It seems like it was over there around German Lane. I can't remember exactly, though, and then they built this. [They, this nefarious they [laughter]] and this new apartment complex was built and it's still there is called Lake Point Apartments. They built that— I would say probably 91-92ish around the same time— they were brand spanking new. We lived over there until I graduated with my masters degree and then we moved back to Little Rock.

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AR [00:27:25] While you were living close to the campus, how would you say the food was? What was on campus accessible to you and students?

RC [00:27:40] I never ate. I didn't have a meal plan because we were living in an apartment, right? We were on our own and grown-ups. Pretty sure we probably shopped at the Kroger there on Oak Street because the one on Salem was not built yet. I'm sure that's where we— when we shopped we bought our own stuff. My parents paid for—I think my parents paid for half of our rent because I had a scholarship, so it wasn't costing them anything for me to go to school anymore, so that was kind of nice. They set us up an apartment instead of having us in a dorm which was much nicer. I don't think I ever ate on campus. I may have stopped at— It seems like there was a student union there. I know they had burgers and stuff like that, but they definitely didn't have— I think you have a Starbucks now don't you?

AR [00:28:48] Yes, we have a Starbucks in our library now

RC [00:28:52] In the library?

AR [00:28:53] Yes, in the library. The College of Business has like a Think Coffee shop in there.

RC [00:29:02] Oh my gosh. I mean, there wasn't anything. I think I know there's that building that has like a pizza place in it across the street. There was a store or whatever it was, but yes it was really very different. A lot of things have been added since then.

AR [00:29:22] Yes. I know that you also mentioned earlier that you grew up as one of those kids that didn't have technology, you know, so you have to play and then come back outside. How was that in college? How was the technology?

RC [00:29:39] Lets see, Hendrix– I don't think I had anything. I know I had a computer when I was at UCA and it was a Commodore 64 and I had a dot matrix printer, and the printer was the kind where you had to get the paper that you lined up the holes so that it would grab on to the holes and spin the paper so that paper comes in all one roll. That's what I had.

AR [00:30:21] How would you guys access the readings for the Honors College?

RC [00:30:27] Then you bought a book or you could– Sometimes there are articles that were assigned and they usually would be photocopied for free for fair use. At that time, you weren't supposed to keep it. You had to turn it back in for fair use. Sometimes. I think that was kind of before the copyright laws and not that they weren't in effect. But anyway, I'm pretty sure we had a

lot. Then you could also go to the library. The faculty would tell the library, "I want to pull this article. I want to pull a copy of this article so you can photocopy it." They put it into a folder and you'd go and you check it out and you would have— so you could check it out for like an hour and you'd read your article and take your notes and everything, and then you have to turn it back in so that other students could come in and check it out after you. That was how— now that I am thinking of photocopies, that's how they did it. You obviously couldn't just get a photocopy to everybody that you could photocopy things and then destroy it after everybody had used it. That was how we did that. No computers or anything like that. Everything was in the library. You could check out a magazine or a journal and they always had the back issues of the journal that were hardbound. Sometimes you had to look up things on microfiche. You've probably never seen microfiche.

AR [00:32:06] No, I haven't.

RC [00:32:07] Yes, it's great. It was great fun.

AR [00:32:11] What would writing an essay or paper look like?

RC [00:32:18] I wrote everything longhand out. When I composed papers, I had, I mean, scads of notebooks and legal pads. I wrote everything down in my legal pad, and then I would go to my computer and I would type it up. I didn't compose very well on the computer. Then again, it was not like you use the computer twenty four hours a day, like you do now. That was a special kind of thing, to sit down and type something up. So unless it was just word processing, there's nothing fancy or fun about a computer, at least it wasn't for me. Yes, and you take notes. When you did research, I would probably still do a research paper this way. When I did research, I always had a little plastic container that you could put a note card in it. I would put my stack of note cards. Then when I pulled my research material, I take notes on my note cards and my note cards were always

numbered and labeled so that I knew this went with Point A on my outline. I mean, that just tells you one, how old I am and two how organized and weird my writing system was. I had— I mean, I had scads of note cards that would label what my sources were. I have a source card that had the full reference for it so that I didn't have to go back and try to find it again. I was really super organized with it. I loved research. Oh my gosh, it was so— I loved doing that stuff. I do, and I never really enjoy doing research on the internet as much because I don't feel like I really have to— I feel like I do not have to dig for it and what do you feel when you have to dig for something? It kind of makes you feel like you're on a treasure hunt and what you uncover is special. Now you can find everything, almost everything on the internet. It kind of makes it seem, I don't know, not as special, because everybody can get it.

AR [00:34:30] Yeah, I totally understand that. That's a very valid point. How would that work when you wanted to, like, hang out with other people if you don't have technology or a way to reach them?

RC [00:34:48] Well, we did have phones.

AR [00:34:49] Okay, I'm forgetting.

RC [00:34:53] Yes, just not smartphones, we had telephones that were on that were on the wall. If you are really rich, when I was a kid, you'd have more than one. We did not. We had one telephone. You have to know people's phone numbers. I memorized a lot of phone numbers and was really kind of amazed by the fact that I cannot remember anything now because I know that I knew everybody's phone number back then.

AR [00:35:35] What would you say would be a hangout spot for you?

RC [00:35:44] McAllister, I think everybody hung out there and you'd go to the big forum and hang out with everybody. Somebody was always playing some weird music or reading an interesting book or having a discussion about what we'd just done or something going on in the world. It was a good place to hang out. I walked around campus quite a bit. I didn't really go to one place, but I like to walk. There used to be a gazebo somewhere. I cannot remember where it was, but I used to kind of walk to and around. I didn't hang out with a lot of people. I was really a serious student. I wanted to do well. I knew that I was there on scholarship. I knew that my continuing to go to college depended on my keeping the scholarship. I also had, you know, I had intentions. I wanted to go to grad school and I knew if I wanted to get into grad school, I really had to do well and I'd have to be able to also kind of find a way to pay for grad school through scholarships or something. My roommate and I hung out a lot at our apartment and we knew people around. We went to parties here and there. Yes, I mean, just regular college stuff.

AR [00:37:26] Is there anything that's very memorable to you, like any story about UCA or the Honors College?

RC [00:37:38] OK, good question. A story? I am trying to think of a good one. I do. This is another Norb story. When I was—I think it was probably a senior seminar, something when we were in our small group. I'm pretty sure that's where this happened. Norb and I got into, not really an argument, but a disagreement, and I'm pretty sure it was over, probably Immanuel Kant or one of the dead white men. [laughter] I've probably made a point about that. "You know, why are we reading all these people? Who cares what they think anymore?", that kind of thing. He offered a counterpoint to me, and honestly, I can't remember what he said to me, but I know because he tells this story later. I go like this [makes a ugh sound and lifts up hand]. I went like that to Norb. It's dismissive or whatever. When we have our senior banquet toward the end before we're supposed to graduate, they

invite all the parents there and they do a little, what we did and how great everybody is and all this kind of stuff. Norb tells a story about everybody that's in this class, and he told that story about me just kind of go "ugh". My dad looks at me and he goes, "Yep. That sounds a lot like you." I think that was, again, that was one of the pivotal moments of my life. It was OK for both Norb and for my dad that I was the kind of person that I am. I do remember Meadow Creek. We did the Meadow Creek thing and I'm pretty sure I went twice. I do remember one year that I went. I did a presentation at Meadow Creek and that was a lot of fun. I loved the atmosphere. We all got to, we all got to just kind of be by ourselves and be in nature for the whole solid weekend. A lot of talking around campfires, sharing tales, and getting to know people for who they are.

AR [00:40:26] Do you remember?- I had someone tell me about Meadow Creek and how it was vegetarian?

RC [00:40:37] Yes. It was all vegetarian from there. Like they had this huge garden and that was part of what it was about is back to nature and sustainability even back then. Yes, it was all vegetarian and people didn't like that. I was okay with it. I've always kind of been mostly a vegetarian. I prefer vegetables to anything else. I remember that was a big thing. I'm glad you- I was reminded of that. That was a weird thing then, you know. Yes, maybe it probably isn't now.

AR [00:41:15] I feel like it would be a little bit more acceptable now than it was probably back then. Were you active in any extracurriculars while you were at the Honors College?

RC [00:41:33] I don't think so. I didn't have time and I was in, I was in choir at Hendrix and I did do choir at UCA I think the first year. I think I was in choir as a junior and then I dropped it. It was just -it was way too much to sing, it was too much to handle. No, I'm boring Anacaren. [laughter]

AR [00:41:57] No, it's OK. The Honors College is big. I feel like that makes you not boring by default once you're in there.

RC [00:42:11] Well that was kind of your extracurricular being in the Honors College. It's kind of a neat thing. It was now— it's kind of a staple of UCA, but then it is kind of a little different. Yes, it was a little club.

AR [00:42:26] It was. You said Norb was teaching and then Rick was co teaching. If you could just talk a little bit about maybe the faculty or staff at the Honors College, what you remember?

RC [00:42:49] Oh, I've talked a lot about Norb and Rick Scott is an amazing person. He is a great hippy. He's always been that kind of person. Rick is who what you see is what you get. He's just so kind and funny and was always very devoted to the students and really wanted us to have an enriching different experience. I do remember that Rick invited everybody over one Christmas and we had a Christmas party over at his house. I think he lived in Maumelle at the time, so that was kind of a big deal. Maumelle was pretty, Maumelle was up and coming, so it was kind of a treat to go out there. It's not quite Little Rock, it's always Little Rock so it was pretty cool and that was fun. Rick was not really— he wasn't a counter to Norb. They were very much alike and they played off each other very well. I think that Rick really was more of the laid back kind of instructor than Norb was. They definitely were great at playing devil's advocate if you had them both in the same room, but they were a great comedy team. Glenda Middleton was also— she was not faculty, she was staff. Virginia was staff. I can't remember what her last name was. There were just an amazing, amazing staff and just so supportive and happy and always, always glad to see you. There was always— any time you went there, “you are welcome” to me. It wasn't like, “What are you doing here?” I mean, the kids were up there all the time. We sat around and we talked with Glenda and Virginia and we shot the breeze with Rick and Norb, where everybody was just there all the time. Those two stick

out for me. I know that they had guest lecturers for a semester. They would hire somebody that worked at UCA. I think Shumaker did it maybe once when I was there and Shumaker is still there. He may have retired as an English professor.

AR [00:45:53] Hmm. I feel like I've heard of him, but I'm not sure if he is still here.

RC [00:45:55] I think that he was teaching pretty recently. I think he taught a class. My son was there. 2020. Yes, he would have been there about 2019 to 2020. I think he still was kind of teaching classes there. I can't remember who else. I should have looked at my transcripts because that probably would have helped me.

AR [00:46:29] That's nice. The smaller--

RC [00:46:37] Wow. I probably can't find it. I was going to try to find it for you, but I know you're asking questions.

AR [00:46:44] Oh no, you're good. That's totally fine. I just want to go to your final year at the Honors College. You've done your capstone project. Do you remember graduating?

RC [00:47:02] I do. We got these medals. I tried to find mine, and I'm sure it's in my attic and in a box that I just can't get to right now. We haven't gotten our house built yet, so I haven't moved all of my stuff. All our stuff is still in boxes. It was a nice little metal that was painted with a little square with the tree and arreté on it, so I still have that. We also got to wear the gold tassel for being in the Honors College. We graduated with everybody so the ceremony, you sit there for hours and hours and hours. I can't remember who spoke. I don't want to speculate.

AR [00:47:59] Who was it?

RC [00:48:00] It was somebody marginally well known. Not really that amazing, I don't think. I marched across the stage, and that was it. I don't think I walked for a master's degree because it was so boring and I was not doing this again. It was fun. We all came in together. It was nice to have all of your compadres that you've done all the Honors, all Honors work with. I came back actually, and it worked as a T.A. after graduation, and Norb asked me if I would be like a student teacher or an assistant. I jumped at it. I was like, Yeah, I mean, that'll help me pay for graduate school. It also gave me some experience in teaching because I thought I wanted to be a professor and I thought, Well, this is a good way for me to try it out and see if I do like it and if it is for me. I had some really good experiences that I wanted to use. At graduation for my bachelor's degree, I didn't really have any kind of nostalgia or emotions or anything because I knew I was coming back when I was leaving.

AR [00:49:23] Yeah, we talked more about how it is that you decided to come back and choose UCA. Why did you decided to go to grad school and why chose UCA?

RC [00:49:43] I really like the English staff at UCA. They were really amazing instructors, and I knew that I would get to experience more of that if I went to grad school there. I think it probably was. It was convenient and I already kind of had a place to live, and my husband at the time had a job there and it was— It would be harder to uproot that and go somewhere else. Norb asked me if I would— He offered me this job as a T.A., and that was another “Yeah, let me let me take advantage of this and kind of to be where I like to be.” I was already comfortable and happy and challenged, I felt like I got a pretty good English education there. Yes, a lot of reasons.

AR [00:50:49] What was grad school and also being a T.A. now because you're not a student anymore, you're the student teacher, how's that?

RC [00:51:01] Well, and for the grad school part, I loved grad school. I would be a student forever if I could be. I would still be a student if it weren't so expensive to go to school and if I never had to write a paper or take a test again. I just want to read and sit around and talk about things but I don't want to do things for grades. Those days are over for me. I loved grad school. It was so much fun and it was really intense. I took three classes per semester. I think I had two maybe some semesters, but I was booking it. I had at least three graduate level classes per semester, and those always entailed reading something every week and writing a paper about it. Basically every week I had three books to read or three things and three papers to write. It was intense. On top of that, the good thing about working as a T.A. is I had office hours, but I wasn't often busy during office hours there. I wasn't just like, crammed for work then. I worked on doing the newsletter, so I had that task that I had to do. I did teach one class and I think that it was usually, I think the class probably met three times a week, maybe. I didn't have like a huge number of students, but it was just enough to earn my keep. I also had a lot of time to study and also talk to Norb and Rick about what I was doing and bouncing ideas off of them. It was fun. I mean, I probably look back on those two years in grad school as to some of the best years of my young life because I was challenged and I was busy but it was— it felt good.

AR [00:53:18] Do you remember what you taught?

RC [00:53:22] I think it was Core II. I think that's the one that we did. Core II is the one where, or it used to be, the one where you'd have a lot of breakout. I did the breakouts. We'd all be together as a group and then you'd have to go out to your little breakout groups. I taught one of the breakout groups.

AR [00:53:47] How do you think that the Honors College prepared you for that spot as a T.A.?

RC [00:54:01] Well. Watching, Norb probably. That was the type of teacher I aspire to be, someone who never tells you what to think but always gets you to think. That I never want to tell students what they should believe or how they should go about their lives. I do want to give them opportunities to consider what their beliefs are and why they have those beliefs so that they are prepared to live them. I don't think you can really, truly live your beliefs if you don't really know what they are and if you haven't questioned them and you know exactly why it is that you think that way. That was exactly the way that Norb was. He never would tell you that you're wrong. He would just always tell you to be sure you know why you're right.

AR [00:55:07] Yes. You said that you had majored in English and you went to graduate school for English because you wanted to teach. Is that your current profession now? Is that still what you want to do?

RC [00:55:26] I do teach part time. I worked as an adjunct faculty member in English, at an online university and I've taught online. I've done a lot of different types of teaching. I taught eighth grade language arts for six years and then I taught college at the college level. I taught freshman composition and rhetoric and literature and humanities, and I did for a time teach Masters of Ed students for a while. I have my doctorate degree in curriculum and instruction. My job, my full-time job, is as an instructional designer. I've worked in instructional design for 15 years now for a few different companies. I started off at one company that is kind of a public university education corporation. They own a lot of universities all over the world. I worked for an international trade organization for their workforce training. I worked for a contractor or a government contractor now, and I love instructional design. It's not what I went to school for. I have used my degree in English

literature and then expanded on that. I know a lot of people are discouraging students from majoring in something like English or history. Those things are undervalued and people have the assumption that you can't do anything with them. It's exactly the opposite. You can do anything with an English degree because if you know how to communicate and you know how to think critically and you know how to research and organise ideas, you are going to be successful at almost any job that you choose to pursue and you have a lot of options with those kinds of degrees. Whereas if you specialise in something, sometimes you know your options are a little bit limited. That's my spiel about English. Then my terminal degree's in curriculum and instruction. I've used that and very much enjoyed that as well. I feel like my experience as a teacher has really made me a better instructional designer because I see things from both the student's perspective and the faculty perspective. I know what's going to work and what is not and what will play in an online environment and what's best suited to a face to face interaction. I love it.

AR [00:58:35] Do you think that the Honors College Education has helped you in terms of a worldly perspective?

RC [00:58:49] Yes, definitely. I think it definitely opened horizons that I may not have experienced in a different environment. There was that discussion, even then, there was a lot of discussion about the importance of diverse voices and the importance of lifting up people who have been marginalised and who are largely invisible in history and in discussions. I think that really helped me better understand that perspective, especially coming as a white woman in the south. I was fairly sheltered. I went to school, my school was fully integrated and there were a lot of different types of people who lived in my neighbourhood because I lived in South West Little Rock. It was definitely one of the areas where a lot of immigrants settled because it was cheaper, where we were all kind of poorer. I had a lot of exposure there. I think that the Honors College really helped me better connect

with those experiences in a way that didn't happen in high school. In high school you're getting your little cliques. You don't talk to other people that in the Honors college, you definitely would.

AR [01:00:19] Do you think that the Honors College did a good job about being inclusive toward the community?

RC [01:00:28] I mean, at that time, I think, yes, actually, I do. I think our class was pretty representative and we had a pretty diverse group. If you're thinking about the population of the college at that time. Which was mostly white and mostly middle class, but at the Honors College, there were different faces at that time. Probably not as many as there should have been. I don't—I am so glad that we're having those discussions now because nobody would ever talk about that. It's a discussion and it's something that people are demanding change. I think that's exactly what needs to happen now.

AR [01:01:24] I also want to ask kind of going back to when you were in grad school. Do you think that the Honors College impacted your resume or your job opportunity?

RC [01:01:45] Probably not. Not like on paper. I don't think it was really—I would never even want to classify it as something that would look good on paper. I just wanted to learn and to have experiences with other smart people who wanted to talk about the things that I wanted to talk about, who wanted to explore and to be challenged. I've never seen a college degree as a piece of paper. I've always seen it as an experience.

AR [01:02:29] That is amazing. I thought you were done. I kind of want to go into your current life and how that is. You said that you were working now? I guess just more about what you took away from the Honors College or just UCA in general.

RC [01:03:05] Having an education, no matter where you get it, is really important, I think, to helping people understand what it means to be human. I think that ties back to what I said about education not being a piece of paper. It should be seen as an opportunity to learn about yourself and to learn about other people in a way that kind of comes back to you over and over again. The experiences, the discussions, the debates, the arguments and all the things that I did as a college student I think prepared me to see the world from not as an end, not so I'm not working as a means to an end, it's a journey and adventure, something that you should continue to grow from. Those experiences keep pushing me to try to see that in everything that I do. I'm not doing this thing today, this task today because I want to earn something down the line. I'm doing this task today because I know it's going to help me develop this part of myself so that I can continue to grow. I think that's probably the single most important mindset I would say that I got from college. I think that's because that's the way Norb kind of taught. Life is an adventure and no one gets out alive. You have to take every day with that knowledge. I don't know if other people got that out of talking about all the really cool philosophies and arguing with Norb. But certainly what I got out of it is, you got to learn as much as you can while you're here and you need to have as much fun doing it as you can.

AR [01:05:30] One of the main questions that were asked when we are in the Honors College is where's the self? I was curious if for you, maybe you think you found it? Or a close answer after leaving the Honors College, what would be your answer to that today?

RC [01:05:56] Where is the self? Physically, like technically?

AR [01:06:04] We just get asked, where's the self located? Then it is up to us the way we want to answer.

RC [01:06:12] Yes, I mean, I think that's the question we're all trying to answer, isn't it? Or maybe even what is the self not even aware? What is it that makes you you? I think that's kind of what we're all trying to figure out. All the religions, the world, that's the question. They're trying to figure out what? What are we? Why are we here? What does that mean? No, I have not found the answer to that. I don't know why we're here. I don't know what we are. I mean, I don't want to get too philosophical or out there, but I mean, I think there is something that makes us who we are because I feel like we're spiritual beings. Having a human experience and not even maybe spiritual is the right word. We are energy that's all collected into this one thing for however many years you live and then you break apart and you're not this configuration anymore. All of those things go somewhere else. They make up something else. Well, there's something, some aspect of all this is me, whoever here that is. I think that also changes. I mean, I'm definitely not the same me I was when I lived in Little Rock with my brothers. I'm not the same me I was when I was at UCA in the Honors College, and I'm not the same me I was 10 years ago or even five years ago. I think we're always changing. If you try to search for yourself, you probably are never going to find it, because as soon as you kind of get a grasp on maybe what that self is, it is going to change, something will happen that will impact what that self is and that self is gone.

AR [01:08:26] Yes. Do you think that if you weren't in the Honors College, your perspective would be different?

RC [01:08:39] If I had not been?

AR [01:08:41] Yes, if you had not been.

RC [01:08:45] That is a good question. I don't know that that perspective would have changed. I think I already was on that path anyway. It's always kind of been my jam. I do think that being in the Honors College and especially Norb, really helped pushed me down that path of investigation and gave me the confidence that I wasn't nuts to think that way. I grew up in a Christian home. My grandfather was a preacher. We went to church every Sunday. We went to choir practise every Wednesday night. I'm pretty sure where I went to when I was older, we went to the youth group thing. We were Methodist, so you didn't have to go to church every day when you were Methodist, but you have to go at least twice a week. I grew up in that environment, and I think the honors college helps me kind of break out of that and recognize that wasn't a bad environment to grow up in, but it was also limiting and gated which I'd always kind of felt. I think the Honors College kind of gave me that push in that confidence to be able to continue to look at it and to think about what that means and who I wanted to be.

AR [01:10:23] When you were in the Honors College, did you ever get homesick?

RC [01:10:32] My family lived in Little Rock. Unfortunately, no, I never got out of my eye, so when I graduated high school, we lived in Little Rock, had two younger brothers and my parents moved out of Little Rock. I think probably like five days after I graduated. Which really irritated me because I kind of planned on— I knew that they were going to move because they're building a house in Greenbrier, but I didn't know they're going to be like five days after graduating. I planned on hanging out with my friends for the whole summer. I wasn't going to work because I was going to college and I was like, They are this summer, I'm just going on like I had already saved up money. I'm just going to chill, I'm going to hang out with my friends. Then we moved and I had such a crappy car that I could not drive from Conway back to Little Rock regularly. I was really mad that they moved to Greenbrier. So then I went to college at Hendrix, and my mom is up there in Greenbrier, which is, you know what, 10 minutes from Hendrix and she would pop in every once

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in a while unannounced until she came in and, you know, just discovered how terribly we were living. She was just like, "I've never, I'm always going to tell you when I'm coming over." No, I was never homesick. I was never really away from home. It was kind of nice because we didn't have to have to pay to get our laundry done. You had to go to the laundromat, but my parents were only 10 minutes away, so my roommate and I took our clothes to my parents' house and washed our clothes and we got to eat.

AR [01:12:39] That's all that I want to ask. If there's anything that you want to add, something that maybe about being in the honors college or anything?

RC [01:13:16] Well, I think the biggest thing you'll probably if you interview a lot of people, you're probably going to get similar things. I really think that Norb was probably what I think of as college. I think more Schedler. I always will because he was just a phenomenal man. I got to hang out with him before he died. We [Rebecca's family] came back here and from being away for a very long time, he and I reconnected and met every once in a while just to sit around and talk about things. My son actually went over and helped him with some gardening, and we visited him several times before he died. Even as his body gave out, his mind was still just so incredibly sharp and it was still the man that I had grown to really love and care for when I was at the Honours College. He's probably the most impactful teacher I've ever had, not just as a teacher, but as a person. I'm getting teary eyed talking about him and he's just a great guy. I think that is his legacy. He has a lot of people who like me, who you brought into this really amazing environment and got us to talk to each other and challenged us and never told us that we were stupid for thinking a certain way or that we weren't going to amount to anything. He told us, time and time again, you can do anything that you want. I talked to him about my book and I feel just—I'm so sad that he never got to see my work because it takes a long time. He was always, "How is your book? How is your writing? How are you doing? I read this thing. What do you think about it? Here's a book that I want you to read."

There were just so many exchanges and so much. He continued to be a teacher to his students long after we were no longer students. I'm so— I feel so privileged that I got to have those years with him and that I got to meet Norb. It was a really lucky break for me. The Honors College is Norb. It always will be. Honors college was great. It was really fun. Norb was, Norb was the experience.

AR [01:16:21] Thank you so much for sharing that with me. It's amazing hearing your stories, you know? I think it makes us all feel closer to Norb because we didn't get to meet him personally.

RC [01:16:37] Yes, I'm sorry, you did not. I'm sure you've heard a lot of stories about him from other students and we all loved him. It was just too great, a great all around person and for everybody. I mean, it wasn't just a certain set of people or a certain type of person who connects with Norb. Everybody loved him. I mean, there is no way that you couldn't like Norb. He is just an amazing guy. I miss him. I think about him a lot. Every once in a while, I'll just think “What would Norb think here?” and wish that I could call him up and ask him.

AR [01:17:20] Unless you have any questions for me or anything, I think that is the end of this interview. I'm very thankful that you volunteered. I can't wait to go back and hear the interview because hearing these interviews also makes me a little bit teary eyed, especially here. You guys talk about Norb for sure. I do get a little teary eyed, but I just want to say thank you.

RC [01:18:00] You're welcome. Thank you for doing this. I love this project and I can't wait to see whatever you guys can release to the public. I think it's really awesome, and it's an important thing to document for sure. The college changed a lot of people's lives, and Norb and Rick changed a lot of people's lives, having that experience changed a lot of people's lives. I know that we all share a community. You can tell that we stick together and we know each other, and I hope you'll have that too.

AR [01:18:38] Thank you.