

SCHEDLER HONORS COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
Dustin Seaton Oral History Interview Transcription

Narrator Name: [Seaton, Dustin]

Interviewer Name: [Triplett, Cam]

Date of Interview: [03/13/2022]

Location of Interview: [Narrator's Home] (Remote Interview - Zoom Recording)

Acronyms:

[CT = Cam Triplett (Interviewer)]

[DS= Dustin Seaton (narrator)]

[UCA = University of Central Arkansas]

[UAFS= University of Arkansas– Fort Smith]

[U of A= University of Arkansas– Fayetteville]

[TAG= Travel Abroad Grants]

[URGE= Undergraduate Research Grants for Education]

#### Interview Summary

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Dustin Seaton conducted by Cam Triplett on March 13th, 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. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

**CT** [00:00:06] This is Cam Triplett with the Schedler Honors College Oral History Project. Today is March 13. It is a Sunday, and I am interviewing Dustin Seaton, who is at his home in Fayetteville, Arkansas. We will be talking about Dustin Seaton's experience leading up to, during, and after their time in the Schedler Honors College. Please state your name and age for the recording.

**DS** [00:00:39] My name is Dustin Seaton and I am currently thirty-seven. I'll be thirty-eight this summer.

**CT** [00:00:46] What year did you enter the Honors College?

**DS** [00:00:50] So I was one of those weird kids that started after my first semester. So I wanted to go to U.C.A. Honors College, but I did not apply initially, or I did apply initially, and I realized I did not want to do it. I thought it might be too much work. So I entered the Honors College in the Fall of 2002 and I started officially, I guess you could say, in the Spring semester of 2003.

**CT** [00:01:17] When did you graduate from the Honors College?

**DS** [00:01:20] I graduated in May of 2006.

**CT** [00:01:25] Okay, what are your pronouns?

**DS** [00:01:30] He/Him

**CT** [00:01:32] OK. Where are you from?

**DS** [00:01:34] So I am from Van Buren, Arkansas, graduated from Van Buren High School in 2002. Pretty much born and raised there, but I have family all over Arkansas.

**CT** [00:01:48] Would you say Van Buren is a small or big town?

**DS** [00:01:51] Well, at the time, it was a 7-A school, which is the largest classification, so depending on size, I mean, it would be in the top twenty-five for Arkansas. Comparing it nationally, it is a small town, but for Arkansas standards, it is one of the larger towns.

**CT** [00:02:09] How do you feel like growing up in Van Buren impacted your life? Or your childhood or upbringing?

**DS** [00:02:16] So it is an interesting question because Van Buren is more of a suburb of Fort Smith. So I had a more of a suburb upbringing. There's not a lot to do. It was a dry county, was not a lot of exciting things happening in Van Buren. So that limited my ability to see the experiences that bigger cities or urban areas have.

If we did anything fun, we would often have to go across the river to Fort Smith, which was the second-largest city with about 80000, and now it is the third-largest city. It is been kind of a dying town, more of a manufacturing town, but Van Buren is kind of like one of those quiet Mayberry-like towns. I mean, there was not a lot of diversity growing up, which I felt like was a problem for me because later in life, after graduating from college, I applied to be a Teachers for America person or a teacher. That was one of the drawbacks, they said, "You went to UCA, which is kind of diverse, but your high school was not very diverse," and they were worried that I would not be a good applicant to work with a lot of diverse students afterward. So I think that was kind of a hindrance. But growing up in Van Buren, the small town, you pretty much know everybody. My

graduating class was about three hundred and six, which is a decent size, but Fayetteville high school, for example, their graduating class was about double that, so it is about 750.

**CT** [00:03:46] Yes, I know mine. I graduated from Northside, and it is that it was pretty up there, it was like five hundred and something.

**DS** [00:03:52] Yes, so it is a lot bigger and there are two high schools, as, in Fort Smith.

**CT** [00:04:00] So there is one high school in Van Buren, and you grew up knowing everybody. What were the class sizes like in Van Buren? Would you describe them as small?

**DS** [00:04:10] they were pretty average, for the most part, about twenty-five students. I do not think I ever had a class with more than 30 for class for student-teacher ratio. I mean, it was pretty, pretty average in that regard.

**CT** [00:04:23] Do you feel like growing up in Van Buren had any impact on your education?

**DS** [00:04:30] Yes. Van Buren had a good history of having really good academics, which I think definitely was an impact because we were always challenging ourselves to be better. I think probably the best thing that being at Van Buren high school gave me was the band program. The music program was phenomenal. We were known as one of the best marching bands in the state, and so we automatically had a close-knit family being with all the other band nerds and so forth. That was also one of the reasons why I chose to go to UCA, they had an excellent band program and I got a music scholarship to play in the band at UCA.

**CT** [00:05:09] That is great. What instrument did you play?

**DS** [00:05:12] I was a percussionist, so even though I could play any of the percussionist instruments, mainly I was mallet percussion. So I did like bells, xylophone, glockenspiel chimes, things like that.

**CT** [00:05:24] OK, that is great. So a little bit about your upbringing. What did your parents do?

**DS** [00:05:34] So my mom just retired about five or six years ago after thirty-three years teaching kindergarten, so she was a kindergarten teacher in the same classroom, in the same school for all those years, except one. She taught at County Line just outside of Branch, Arkansas, or around Paris, Arkansas, for one year. But all the other years was the exact same content, same classroom, and everything.

My dad was in manufacturing and worked at the G&B factory in Fort Smith, doing distribution. Then later he went to work for Simmons, the chicken company doing their distribution as well.

**CT** [00:06:16] Do you feel like your mom being a teacher impacted how you viewed education?

**DS** [00:06:23] Yes, totally, because I did not want to go into education [laughter]. My mom would have us go clean her classrooms at the beginning of the year or at the end of the year, either one. I remember picking like boogers off the chairs, and sometimes she would have us test some kids when she was falling behind. I was like, I do not like elementary kids, and so I did not want to go into education. I actually took one education class at UCA, and I was the only man in there, too. It was primarily elementary-focused teachers. So, I finished the class and I was like, Nope, do not want to do education. Which is ironic because now I am in education [laughter].

**CT** [00:07:04] That is funny. All of my uncles and aunts are teachers, elementary school teachers, and it made me realize that maybe teaching elementary school is not for me.

What was your dream job growing up?

**DS** [00:07:23] So it changed quite a bit. Growing up, I thought I loved animals and I wanted to go into that veterinarian science, and that was probably the majority of my upbringing.

Then, for whatever reason, and this is a sidebar, I got to job shadow in the mid-nineties, a Urologist. I think it was part of like a career orientation class. And so, mind you, this is before hip HIPPA. So they allowed me as a, I want to say, ninth-grader or tenth-grader, to join a local urologist in Van Buren. I got to sit in for surgery, early in the morning, and see a penile implant surgery, which is scarring because they had a surgery where they actually let me go in the room wearing scrubs, which again is not allowed today. They do not allow any high school or college kid to do that. I just remember the smell of flesh because they had those incisors that were going side by side and they were cutting the skin. You could see the smoke coming up. Even with the mask, I could smell it, and it was the worst smell I could ever imagine smelling. I have not smelled anything worse since.

For the rest of the day, I was just job shadowing this urologist, sitting in on meetings. There was one time where I was just standing in the corner and the guy is like “he is job shadowing me. Do you mind?” And they were like, “No, not at all.” So, then he just drops his trousers [laughter] and is fully naked. I was just looking at all this stuff, and I was like, “This is crazy.” I thought I would be going into med school or sciences in high school until that experience. I am like, Nope, not for me. So, long story short, I thought I was a science-minded individual.

One of the other advantages of being at Van Buren in high school was we had a really strong Social Science department and a lot of AP classes, and I had an amazing Social Studies teacher that taught A.P. World and AP European History. That kind of steered me into history. I actually ended up majoring in history while I was at UCA and getting my bachelor's in History while I was at UCA.

**CT** [00:09:39] That was that is really cool. You got to do all that.

**DS** [00:09:44] And random right?

**CT** [00:09:45] It was very random [laughter]. Urology to History, quite a journey. So after graduating high school, what was choosing a college like for you?

**DS** [00:09:56] So one of the drawbacks of Van Buren High School is I do not feel like they did a really good job of college planning. Like, they did not really do one-on-one goals and they did not encourage us at all to go visit colleges and universities. I think part of my choice of going to UCA was because I had attended band events there. I went to Boy's State there, so I had some familiarity with the campus. That small experience and familiarity with the campus led me to apply to UCA. I did not want to go to UAFS or U of A, it felt like everyone was going there.

My dream school was Hendrix, and I end up getting accepted to Hendrix. The only problem is I got half of it paid for and then looking at the price tag, it was like, Nope, not going to Hendrix [laughter].

**CT** [00:10:50] Yes, it is definitely expensive. How did you come upon the Honors College? How did you find out about it?

**DS** [00:11:07] In high school, I was with a very competitive, close-knit group of friends, and we all challenged each other to be better, and thankfully we did not do drugs, we did not party, we did not drink alcohol, we did not do anything like crazy or wild or illegal. But we did challenge ourselves to be academically minded, and we all tried to one-up one another to be top of the class. So looking at all of our friends, we were one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, pretty much at the top of our

graduating class, but we were also challenging ourselves to see who was going to be going to the best colleges and universities. One of my best friends applied for Hendrix and I was like, "I want to go there too." Another friend applied for the University Ozarks in Clarksville. I was like, I do not want to go there. It is a private school, and it is not far enough away from home, being from Van Buren. It is like forty-five minutes, and I had some friends that applied to U of A and UAFS. I was like, that is way too close. I want to be far enough away, but not too far, but close enough to be home, but not too close.

I did have a friend that was applying for the Honors College, and she was super excited and talking about the experience. So, I applied, but thinking I have been doing so much academics throughout high school that I did not really want to do that challenge. Initially, out of high school, I was like I'll take it easy. So, my first introduction to the Honors College was just from a friend that was applying and encouraged all of us to consider doing that as well.

**CT** [00:12:43] That is really cool. Would you mind if I take a quick pause in the recording?

**DS** [00:12:50] Yes, you bet. No worries.

[Pause in recording]

**CT** [00:12:53] So, you mentioned that being far away from home was an important factor. How is being a Conway different from being in Van Buren?

**DS** [00:13:12] Well, they were very similar towns. I mean, they are both comparably sized. The difference being that Van Buren does not have three colleges like that. Conway does. Conway is also a lot closer to the Little Rock metro area so that was a big plus. Whereas Fort Smith and Van Buren are very compatible, as.

I like the idea of being closer to the capital. I was getting very political, or politically involved I should say, in my last couple of years because it was right after the 2000 election, I remember. So I was paying more attention to politics when I was looking at schools, and I like being closer to Little Rock than I did being closer to Van Buren. Conway and Van Buren are very comparable. Band programs are good, academic programs are pretty good, demographics are even comparable. So that part alone also had some familiarity with it that made it comfortable.

**CT** [00:14:16] That is really cool. Being close to Little Rock, what did you do for fun? Did you go to Little Rock for fun?

**DS** [00:14:26] In college, yes. I'll be blunt. I tried to be the nerd goody goody kid at first, and so I joined the judicial board and I was being very appropriate. I made the conscious decision not to room with my best friend that also went to UCA because I figured I see him all the time, I do not need to be in the same dorm with him. I also wanted to make new friends, so I entered the random lottery to get a roommate because I wanted to be academically focused and then do activities. But I also knew you could go do some other fun stuff off-campus, and so we often would go to parties at Hendrix. That is, or at least it was, kind of an open invitation where you could do whatever you want virtually on the Hendrix campus. Even the college campus police wouldn't really do anything as long as you are keeping it on campus.

My favorite memory of what we used to do, besides being at political events and activities, was they had a gay bar down in Little Rock called The Factory. This was back in the early 2000s when being gay or lesbian was a very taboo and closeted thing. One of my best friends, that was at Hendrix, came out to us after the first semester and we would often go with him and other Democrats or progressives down to the gay bar and nobody cared. It was just fun. We were not even eligible to drink, but nobody really cared about how pretty you were, how ugly you were, or how nerdy or whatnot. So those were some of the fun things that Little Rock had to offer us as students.

You could go thirty minutes down the road and be in an urban area and experience a culture that we did not have growing up in Van Buren.

**CT** [00:16:20] That is amazing. I just learned something new because I have never heard of The Factory.

**DS** [00:16:24] I think it is closed down.

**CT** [00:16:29] That is such a shame.

**DS** [00:16:32] It was a lot of fun when it was open, and then they also had drag shows. I want to say at Cajun Wharf that we used to go to. Now, they had the Miss Drag America contest. I want to say last month or two months ago in Little Rock. So, it is a bigger and more celebrated affair, but in the early 2000s, it was not. It was very risqué and taboo, and people thought “We may get arrested being here” or whatever. I am like, it is not a big deal, but it was culturally for a small town or southern Arkansas type of mindset.

**CT** [00:17:14] Wow, that is amazing. I am learning so much already. You being from Van Buren and being up here, did you ever get homesick?

**DS** [00:17:33] Not really. So, interestingly, I stayed in a relationship from high school into college. So my friend that went to the University Ozarks, she also became my girlfriend in like December of my senior year. So we were an hour apart almost to the dot from Clarksville to Conway. I remember the very first night I moved her in, but my very first night they let all the band kids move in early because we had summer band camps and stuff. The very first night she snuck into the dorm with me [laughter]. So it was really nice to have like a friend and a girlfriend nearby. I did not really feel homesick because she would come down sometimes in the middle of the week or every weekend, or vice versa, so I never really felt that desire to be home. But I also made a point of going home at least once a month for laundry and other stuff like that. Food.

**CT** [00:18:33] Right [laughs]. So going back to the Honors application process, do you remember a lot of your application process for Honors? How did that go?

**DS** [00:18:47] So I guess it has changed over time since when I started. They wanted, I want to say, an average of about twenty-seven or twenty-eight on your ACT, which now I know it has gotten a little higher. But you submitted your application. You also had to do an interview process with some of the faculty at the Honors College and then they accepted you.

So I remember starting the process and I was like, You know what? I do not really want to do the interview. I want to do band and just do the basics and not stress and actually enjoy college. I regretted it because then my whole fall semester like I said, I did not room with my friends. They partied and almost failed out of school the first semester, and I was bored. The first semester at UCA, it was very boring. I CLEP'd out of some classes, I had some AP credits and I was still in probably my sophomore year, early general education classes. I was just bored.

So I went and talked to Philip Melton and Rick Scott and Donna. I remember interviewing with Norb about how I am bored at UCA. I started to apply, but I never finished it. Is there a way I could join in the second semester? And they were like, Yes, there's a small grouping of it, but you had to do that interview process. It was a really fun interview with Norb. That was the very first time I ever met him, was at that interview in the fall of 2002.

**CT** [00:20:26] s you did not do I<sup>2</sup> Day or any of that?

**DS** [00:20:28] No because I did not go that route because I was going the band route. And one of the cool things they told me in the band program when I was applying for UCA was that if you are looking for friends, you automatically start college with 200 close friends being in the band and they were right. We got to move into the dorms early and so we got to know each other early. Then we were with each other all day during band practices and then often after hours doing fun activities and whatnot. Then we would go on Saturday band trips and Saturday football games, so we really got to meet people that way. So that became my family, and it still was, I just was not fulfilled academically like I wanted to. That is why I applied for the Honors College.

**CT** [00:21:16] This really cool. So, the friendships that you formed in band, did they last your whole college career?

**DS** [00:21:21] Yes. So I stayed in band all four years, and I still connect with people all around the state, largely from band. They were largely either in band programs or they were teachers themselves. So that is been a nice network as well, and a lot of them have gone all around the country.

I joined college before Facebook happened, but I ended college after Facebook. I think I joined in 2005, so I have been on Facebook for a long time, but we were able to grow and watch each other grow and become fathers and mothers, and sometimes grandparents already.

**CT** [00:22:01] Oh, that is great. I am glad you all still got to stay connected. So your interview with Norb, it was a while ago, but do you remember what it entailed or what you might have talked about?

**DS** [00:22:17] Yes. So, if I remember right, it was largely about like my philosophy on life. He was also interested in extracurriculars that I was doing because I think he was always about investment, like, what are we doing to invest in the culture and in the community? I remember the conversation about small is beautiful because I remember being impressed by his resumé and talking about how he could be teaching anywhere in the world or any Ivy League or whatnot, but he felt that Conway was small and beautiful, and you can make an impact, a greater impact than you would just being another high Ph.D. scholar at a major university. I just remember thinking how awesome it was and how lucky UCA was to have this philosopher-king, so to speak, here in Conway, when he could literally be anywhere in the world and be doing the same type of thing.

**CT** [00:23:14] That is really cool. Do you feel like that philosophy of impacting a small place impacted what you wanted to do with your career?

**DS** [00:23:22] Oh, absolutely. I feel like it has impacted how I coach students as well because I think the conversation came up like “you could be a big fish in a small pond or a small fish in a big pond.” It is just where do you feel like you are going to have the biggest impact? Norb kind of instilled in me the idea that his impact was greatest in a smaller area in a southern town like Conway. So I have modeled that mentality onward. Many of my personal philosophies were shaped by the Honors College doing like American pragmatism with Doug Corbitt and of course, just the idea of the whole giving to your community and finding oneself, finding oneself in the arts and all those Core classes— I do not know if they were still around today, but that has definitely shaped my career personally and professionally moving forward.

**CT** [00:24:27] So, you mentioned the Core classes, which are still around. Did you have a Core I?

**DS** [00:24:34] I guess Core I took the place of English or Comp. I do not remember the class, but because I had already taken that credit, I did not need to take a Core I class. So, I am sad to say that is the only thing I never really got to experience. Well, let me back up. I taught a Core I class with

Rick Scott my last year. It was the very first year they started the Pedagogical Associates. I do not know if y'all still do PAs.

**CT** [00:25:08] Yes.

**DT** [00:25:09] Ok, I was in the first class, my senior year, to get to do a PA. I was Rick Scott's PA. Rick was obviously director of the Honors College at the time, and so he was side barred and distracted. So I got to teach the Core I class, I think it was Core I. It might have been Core II, but I am pretty sure it was Core I because I was like, This is the experience I never got to have from your side, but now I am getting to teach it. So it was a full 360 in terms of the experience of the Honors College.

**CT** [00:25:40] Did you have a Core II?

**DS** [00:25:41] I did, yes, I did. I want to say with Alison Wallace, is she still there? Yes, and that was my very first experience, and I still talk about my experience with her because the very first day we had the Core II class, it was coming back from Christmas break. She said something like, "All right. Tell me about the books that you all read over Christmas break or over the winter break." And they went around the room and asked everybody about a book or the experiences that they had over the winter break, and I was embarrassed. I did not have one. Like, I did not read a book over Christmas break. I got a job. I worked at Toys R US over winter break, but everyone was talking about how they were growing intellectually. And again, I grew intellectually from my experience working at Toys R US over Christmas, which was chaotic. But I felt so naive to not have that shared experience of a book or something other academic to share.

I, as a teacher, have never let that downtime waste again. Like, I never miss a winter break or spring break, or summer break without reading a book or doing something to grow intellectually. Because that was my very first experience in the Honors College and I was feeling less than everyone else around. I felt like maybe they were challenged to do that, or maybe they were just smarter and higher academics than I was at that time. I have learned my lesson from that experience.

**CT** [00:27:08] I am going to come back to talk about your Core II, but you said something I find really interesting and I want to pose this question. Impostor syndrome, it seems like you experienced a little bit. How did you deal with that?

**DS** [00:27:21] Going back to not having that Core I experience; I know how bonding it was for the students that had the Core I. They had that experience that I did not have. So, I was joining in the second semester feeling like this is not my family [laughter] or I do not belong here. Maybe I made a horrible mistake. So, yes, I definitely had that impostor syndrome, that Core II experience. I think it was really until I got accepted into the full-blown Honors College after Core III and IV that I felt part of the community.

**CT** [00:28:02] What is your advice to the students that still experience impostor syndrome? Because I know at least for my cohort, and the cohorts above me and below me, we all had a major case of impostor syndrome and still do. So, what's your advice for dealing with that?

**DS** [00:28:20] I think maybe that is just part of the experience, to work through it individually. I think that helped me grow. It helped me challenge myself. It made me realize that I have belief and I have intelligence.

But being from Van Buren, where I was always at the top of the class or one of the smartest kids at the school, it was very unnerving to be in this equilibrium state of I am not the smartest in the class anymore, and maybe I do not belong here. I think that struggle is real and probably a



healthy thing for kids to experience because I feel like the Honors College is always trying to get us to get uncomfortable. This equilibrium state where you are not in your comfort zone is a good thing. That is how you can grow. If you are just in a comfortable state all the time, you are in a status quo. and that is not always the healthiest environment for intellectual growth. I honestly would say, embrace it, and understand that you are not alone. It is just part of that evolution of your intellectual development.

**CT** [00:29:35] I think that is one of the best pieces of advice I have heard about dealing with imposter syndrome in Honors [laughter]. That was really good. Going back to Alison's Core II, Core II is the search for community. Do you remember what theme her class was? I believe that is when you can start getting experimental with what you want to teach.

**DS** [00:30:00] Yes. So we did a project and I thought it was one of the coolest projects ever. I have always been interested in politics, but I'll be honest, I never took a political class. I did not take AP government politics, even though I have taught it now as a teacher, but I never took it in high school, and I did not even take one in college, initially. I CLEP'd out of it.

Allison had us create our own society. I do not know if that is something you still do in Core II, but we could choose a socialist, a communist, a utopian, whatever we wanted. We created our own government and currency and laws, and I just thought it was the coolest experience ever. We had to present it to the class and answer questions from the class and defend it. Talk about how it would survive. We came up with logos. It was just a really cool bonding experience. That was definitely a part of the imposter syndrome because they immediately put us in groups with others that everyone knew each other but me, and they knew terms that I did not know. They were referencing Core I ideas and philosophies that I did not read. It was educational for me to be immersed in that. So that was a lot of fun, and I remember that really well.

**CT** [00:31:23] I am glad that in the times where you felt left out, you still found some connecting factor somewhere like, oh, I am still learning from this. That is really cool. Do you remember what your society that you created was like?

**DS** [00:31:39] We called it Tara. We knew Alison was very environmentally friendly and or eco conscious, so we were talking about Tara being the Earth. It was very communistic, but it was also a utopia where everyone worked and lived, and it was completely erroneous. It would have floundered after a few months [laughter] if we had tried to put it into existence. We made buttons and we explored the idea of the different styles of government. So when people talk about Socialism today, it is because they really do not understand Socialism or Communism. Just taking a deep dive into what those terms actually meant and trying to put them into action was really an eye awakening experience for me.

**CT** [00:32:35] Out of the three Cores that you got to take. Do you have a favorite?

**DS** [00:32:43] I would definitely say Core II is my favorite because it was my first experience in Honors and learning in the community. I am a very communal social type of person, so I really enjoyed that. In Core III, it was not an Honors College faculty. We got paired with the Arts faculty. It is the search for the arts or something along those lines. Is that right?

**CT** [00:33:10] Core III? Honestly, I do not have it right now.

**DS** [00:33:17] I want to say maybe that was III or IV, but we got paired with the non-Honors College faculty and the lady that did ours was doing music. I just remember the only thing I really learned out of that Core was how the arts can be integrated into every content.

I did a project on presidential campaign songs, so again, nerdy. I went throughout all of history, American history, and looked at the different songs or jingles associated with presidential campaigns. It was politics. It was music, and it was kind of like the psychology of the lyrics and the jingles of the presidential campaigns. So I really enjoyed that, but that was like the only project that we really did that I remember was worthwhile. What is Core IV?

**CT** [00:34:08] Core IV is the Art of the Search. I just found it.

**DS** [00:34:12] OK, so then the music one was Core IV. Core III is the other. Now I am going back to the other. I had Donna Harris for the other, and that probably would be my most memorable, now that I am thinking about it, course. Because this is before Facebook mind you, we had an Honors College graduate. For his senior thesis, he created this online forum. I forget his name.

**CT** [00:34:53] Was it HCOL?

**DS** [00:34:54] It was before HCOL.

**CT** [00:34:58] Oh, wow.

**DS** [00:34:56] I want to say it was just called the forum, but it was an online chat room, basically where you would continue threads like on Reddit or something. Donna had us talk about religion and politics and all the hotbed culture wars. I felt like I was the only Democrat in that class, and there were times I'd be up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning arguing with my classmates about abortion and gay marriage, guns, and stuff. I really enjoyed that class because it was my first foray into online engagement, online communications.

**CT** [00:35:43] Wow, that is really cool. I feel like a lot of us have a similar experience where we come to Honors and we kind of have to argue it out with our classmates. Sometimes you are the minority, sometimes you are in the majority.

**DS** [00:35:57] I just remember being in the minority among all of these really smart conservative Christians [laughter] and I was raised Catholic. So I can argue until I am blue in the face on the Bible and find just cause and stuff. That is when I first learned from Donna about what ad hominem attacks were because we were full of them as sophomores, attacking each other online [laughter].

**CT** [00:36:31] So did you have a favorite reading from any of the Cores?

**DS** [00:36:40] Yes. We read a book, and I want to say Donna's husband wrote one of them, but it was a culture war book. It was talking about the pros and cons for all the different issues. So like, if we were talking about abortion, it might have had a quote from the Pope or a quote from focus on the family or something. So we had multiple sides presented in culture wars, and I thought that was a really cool thing to do because oftentimes we just go very one-sided. It was nice to be exposed to someone else's thinking and rationale from their perspective. I forget the name of the book, but I have it. I believe still. It was something in culture wars was the name of it. It was all primary sources, it was not like the author was trying to sway us one way or the other, it was just taking an article written by— Let's say if it was the 2000 election, it would be an article written by Al Gore, an article written by George W. Bush, or their campaign managers or something like that. It was very objective yet subjective to their side. I enjoyed that book.

**CT** [00:38:02] That is great. You mentioned the election a little bit earlier, and how you came in soon after it happened. Do you feel like that had any impact on what you talked about in your Honors classes? Any tension between you and your cohort?

**DS [00:38:21]** Yes. Are we talking also outside of Core?

**CT [00:38:26]** Yes.

**DS [00:38:27]** OK. So in 2004, Bush was up for re-election, and I was very heavily involved with the UCA Young Democrats. I felt, again, like a minority in the Honors College, I thought surely more honor students would be political and they probably were. They just were not as vocal, perhaps, or they were still in their ongoing awareness or the evolution of their ideologies. Anyway, the 2004 election was significant because I remember campaigning locally in Conway and doing a lot of political activism and then expecting John Kerry to win. I remember talking with Donna and Rick and Allison, and they were obviously a lot more aware, obviously politically, but would ask, like, what am I hearing? What am I seeing? Because I was doing stuff with the Arkansas State Democratic Party. So when John Kerry lost, it was a big blow. I remember everyone in the Honors College that I respected, like Donna, we were all wearing black the next day because we were in mourning [laughter]. Like another four years of George W. Bush. I had bumper stickers on my car and stuff like that. That was an awakening experience.

It also allowed me to get involved with a new organization that was created called the United Leftist Front, which was extreme left-wing social democratic socialists that were on the other extreme of the Democrats. But I worked with them, and we were able to bring in a co-sponsor. We brought in a professor. I think I have a flier for this somewhere that if you wanted to bring it or send it to you, I could. But we brought in a professor to talk to us about Samuel Alito getting appointed to the Supreme Court. This organization paid for him to come in and talk to all of the UCA students about it. At the time, I was like, this is not that big of a deal, but it was a huge deal, obviously for the Supreme Court, because Alito is still on there and shaped the court in lots of ways, conservatively.

My involvement politically also allowed me, and even though I was not in student government, I worked on campaigns for student government. I was like a campaign manager for a lot of students that were interested in running for student government in Honors College or in the band. I felt like I could get those groups to coalesce and kind of form a coalition of voting blocs. We end up getting a lot of people elected to the student government and the only thing I ever ask them is, well two things. We got the student government to pay for the Young Democrats to go to the Nashville convention in 2005, and it was in San Francisco. UCA paid for about 15 of us I want to say, maybe 20 of us, to fly to San Francisco, for the Democratic National Convention. I was the only one of age that could drink, and I felt like I was babysitting all of these kids [laughs]. They were in California wanting to party and whatnot. So that was one.

Then the second part was we brought in former CIA director Stansfield Turner. He was the CIA director under the Jimmy Carter administration for all four years. One of the books I read, I want to say in Donna's class, dealt with how the Reagan administration tried to subvert the Carter administration and hold the Iranian hostages captive until after the election because it made Carter look weak and all this stuff anyway. So I wanted to ask the CIA director if any of that was true. I got to pick him up in Little Rock at the airport and drive him to UCA. He gave a speech and then afterward, I drove him back. On the way back I remember asking him, "Is any of that stuff true?" Did the Reagan administration really subvert the Carter administration? He was very elusive, but you could tell he did not want to say anything definitive. But I got the feeling, yes, that there was some truth to some of that. So like I said, there was politics definitely helped shaped my career at UCA.

**CT [00:42:45]** You were involved in a lot. That was some great negotiation on your part to get everybody to go. What else outside the Honors College were you involved in? Was it all strictly political?

**DS** [00:43:01] I became President of the UCA Young Democrats and that was probably my last three years. We were really close and did a lot of events politically. Obviously, I was still in band. I did percussion ensemble in the Spring and the marching band in the Fall, so that took up a lot of time. Of course, just doing classes was pretty busy. Yes, I like to say I did a lot more, but mainly it was just politics, classes, and band [laughter].

**CT** [00:43:38] So I know from the pre-interview that you were pretty involved in Honors. Can you tell me about some of the things that you did that related to the Honors program?

**DS** [00:43:50] Yes. So one of the things I remember besides being a pedagogical associate or assistant for Rick Scott, which I really enjoyed because we were able to teach and that really kind of led me to say, maybe I do want to be a teacher. I do not want to teach elementary; I want to teach college; I want to teach older kids. So that was helpful.

Also, my roommate, Blake Vernon, was a year older than me and ended up staying another year and finishing maybe a double major or something. He was my roommate the last two years in college, but we end up doing a history of Honors College together where we got to interview the president of UCA at the time, Dr. Jeff Farris. He was retired at that time and lived with his wife in Hot Springs Village. So we drove to Hot Springs Village, which was like an hour and a half away and sat in his house, and videoed him and asked about meeting Norb and why he wanted to start the Honors College at UCA. What were some of the obstacles they had and things like that. We got to interview Norb, obviously, and we interviewed some of the first-year students that were in that initial graduating class. So we shared that out with students at the Honors College. To celebrate, I want to say maybe the 20th or the 25th. I do not remember the anniversary, but we were trying to capture some of the oral histories, like what y'all are doing now. But we had a lot more primitive equipment back then.

**CT** [00:45:21] What made you want to do the miniature documentary? What was the inspiration behind it?

**DS** [00:45:28] Well, one, I was a history major, so I felt like doing a history project made a lot of sense, and doing oral histories made a lot of sense. We were about to build the new Farris Student housing, so it was kind of culminating to build up to that next phase of the Honors College.

It felt just right, like a good transition time to do it because we heard that some of the people were dying off or, throwing artifacts away. We were collecting things and trying to archive them and preserve and restore some of the things. I think just meeting those people was kind of cool, too. Whenever you meet a former president of the university at his house in Hot Springs Village, that is pretty cool.

**CT** [00:46:18] Right. Do you have a favorite part of the documentary that you all shot?

**DS** [00:46:29] Probably just the interview with Dr. Farris. Because he ended up dying in 2009, I believe. So we interviewed him probably in 2005 or 2006. So he died about three to four years later. So just that whole experience of getting to go into his house and talk about the founding of the Honors College in the late 70s, early 80s, was pretty cool. And then now, of course, the Honors College dormitory is named after him. So I think it is really cool to have that come full circle as well.

**CT** [00:47:06] That is great. Farris was being built at the time that you were here. Where did you stay?

**DS** [00:47:15] So my very first year, it was not the Honors College, it was the residential college. I moved to Short/ Denney when I entered the Honors College. What's the dorm right next to Mashburn?

**CT** [00:47:39] There's a new hall.

**DS** [00:47:41] It is not New hall. It is right by the stadium.

**CT** [00:47:53] Bear Hall? I am having such a hard time.

**DS** [00:48:02] It was part of the residential college, but they may have moved all of that. It is not Bear Hall now. Hughes Hall, that is it. So, my first semester was Hughes. I stayed in Hughes all year and then my sophomore year I went to Short/Denney. Is it still up or did they destroy that?

**CT** [00:48:42] Yes, both are still up.

**DS** [00:48:43] OK, because it was right by the student center. And we got like own little suite, our own little private room with adjoining bathroom. That was the hottest thing since sliced bread. Have your own room. So, I stayed in Short/Denney my sophomore year. Then junior year, they put us off-site because they ran out of room. They rented these apartments literally across the street from Hendrix. But it was UCA housing, but it was an apartment off-site. I stayed there junior year and then senior year; it was kind of a similar thing. They had these apartments off-site just south of the roundabout where that Farris Hall is now. So, I had kind of like off-site, off-campus housing.

**CT** [00:49:43] What was your favorite place of residence while attending UCA?

**DS** [00:49:49] So every one of them was different and every one of them had their own fun, cool experience. I have always enjoyed the idea of living in a communal area like a dorm. I am already wanting to live in a senior center, to be honest [laughter], so you can just walk around. So that is why I love being in Hughes Hall, having known neighbors where you just walk upstairs, downstairs, or down the hall. I really like Short/Denney because you had your privacy, and I was able to make friends really easily and do some pranks and stuff in Short/Denney. I probably would say my favorite was my senior year because you are a little bit more mature, , you know the area, you are able to drink. You're off-campus even though you are in campus housing. So I would probably say my favorite one is the duplex/apartment off-site, my senior year.

We threw a party once for UCA Honors College, so it was the Democrats and it was like the Honors College kids, and so we called it— And my roommate, Blake Vernon, is half Japanese. So, we had a sashimi/sushi party with Donkey Punch. That was pure grain alcohol. I just remember thinking, “how dumb were we to have sushi and PGA alcohol?” Everyone ate it and they drank it and had so much fun until it kicks in and they start vomiting everywhere [laughter]. It was very, very stupid.

**CT** [00:51:20] That is the college experience though. It is like, you do it and then you make it make sense later.

**DS** [00:51:31] Those two things should never go together. I felt really bad because it was my last year on the UCA Judicial Board. Do you know what the judicial board is? Do you have those still?

**CT** [00:51:44] I do not. Do you care to explain it?

**DS** [00:51:46] So basically, it is a group of students and faculty that become a panel. If you get in trouble in housing for whatever violation— drinking, staying up too late, breaking stuff— you have

to go before this judicial board, this panel. They hear your case and you can have a lawyer or have somebody advocate who will for you. Then we give punishment or a consequence. Oftentimes we would say something like “you have to do community service” or “you have to clean the dorm,” or something small. Occasionally, though, if it was multiple offenses or serious offenses, we would kick people out of the housing, out of dorms. I remember this one kid got in trouble for drinking in his dorm. We did not kick him out of the dorms, but it was close. Then later, like an hour later, he came to my party, the sushi party, and he's like, “You're drinking on-campus.” I said, “Yes, but I did not get caught.” [laughter]

**CT** [00:52:50] Alright [laughs]. It is all about whether you get caught or not.  
What was your favorite thing about staying on campus?

**DS** [00:53:00] I guess just being close to everybody else. My freshman year when we were on campus, I would do my work and all that stuff, and then we would go play Mario Kart until like 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. And you could do that because it is like staying in a hotel. So I would say just that closeness, that bond. Everybody wanted to stay on campus because there was no reason to leave campus unless you just needed food. But if you needed food, you could also walk to the cafeteria. You know, it is not that bad.

**CT** [00:53:36] Just a separate question for my own curiosity, what console did you use to play Mario Kart?

**DS** [00:53:41] Nintendo 64, the original. The Good One.

**CT** [00:53:48] Was the Student Center around when you were here?

**DS** [00:53:54] Yes, it was not as big or as nice. I think now they have a really nice food court. I have been there multiple times as a teacher sponsoring student events and like, this is nothing like we had. I had a post office box and it was probably the only reason I would go in there or if I needed to buy a t-shirt or something they had that T-shirt shop in there. We hardly ever used the Student Center because we would have food or whatever we needed inside. Now they have all those really fancy restaurants or grab-n-gos and stuff.

**CT** [00:54:31] The Donaghey dorm building with the restaurants on the bottom, did it exist when you were here?

**DS** [00:54:39] No, that was new too. We had the Papa John's at the corner of Farris and Donaghey, which I think they demolished. Is there a dorm or something there now? At the corner of Donaghey and Farris?

**CT** [00:54:56] Maybe, but we do have a Papa John's that is right across from the street from Farris.

**DS** [00:55:03] OK, maybe that is it then. I did not have a cell phone before I went to college. Honestly, what's interesting is I was driving from Van Buren to UCA., and my mom and dad realized “you need a cell phone.” So, we pulled off in Russellville and they got me a cell phone through AT&T. Even to this day, I still have that same phone number, but it is associated with Russellville. If I would have got it in Conway, I'd have a Conway number, but I have a Russellville cell phone number. I say that because one of the very numbers I put in my cell phone was the Papa John's number [laughter]. Like, we are going to order a pizza.

**CT** [00:55:45] Did a lot of people have cell phones around you? Like a lot of your peers?

**DS** [00:55:53] I think it started to. There were kids in high school that had cell phones for sure, but it was not like I have to because I remember still using payphones at the bowling alley, calling my mom to come pick us up at the one out in Fort Smith. I definitely remember most freshmen had cell phones by that point, but they were not fancy smartphones. They were like flip phones or the ones that if you want to do “A” or “B,” you have to like two twice. You know, it was Old School texting.

**CT** [00:56:32] So with Farris being new when you were there, did you ever get to visit it?

**DS** [00:56:39] The dorm? I did get to visit it once. We kind of felt cheated like the UCA entering freshman class were going to get these really fancy quad dorm rooms, and we did not have that. And so I always felt like we were building this up and supporting all of y'all and passing it, leaving it better. But we do not we do not get that experience and we kind of felt cheated that you all now have that and we did not.

**CT** [00:57:12] I definitely get that. So going back to some things that you did in relation to the Honors College, we talked about the Vino. Did you work on the vino?

**DS** [00:57:26] I think I wrote some articles for it, but I did not really work because journalism was not my thing. Writing really was not my thing. But I collected some Vinos, especially when we were doing our history project for it because we had some that were from the 80s and it was cool to go back and read what was happening in the Honors College. Obviously seeing its growth over time was cool because it was started with a small class, and it has gotten huge. Now I feel like they are going back to smaller classes or smaller enrollment classes.

But no, I did not. I probably wrote a couple of articles. One of the things I did remember writing, now that you are asking about it. I want to say it was freshman year. I wrote an essay that won for the Vino, and it was a satire on satire. It was a modest proposal by Jonathan Swift, but I changed it to a proposal of modesty. Basically, I wrote this essay about eating cats on campus because we had a lot of feral cats. I remember reading a modest proposal in Honors College and how Jonathan Swift said, “Let's eat babies because we are we have no food and we have too many people, so let's start eating babies.” And of course, it is satire, but they were running out of food in the cafeteria. There were feral cats all around campus and nobody knew how to handle it. So I was like, I have got a solution, let's eat the cats. So anyway, I wrote that satire on the satire, and I end up winning an essay contest at UCA Honors College freshman year. I am still very proud of that, I thought was really cool.

**CT** [00:59:11] OK, crazy enough, I feel like I have heard of that laughter]. I feel like somebody has talked about it before. That is really cool. Just for those that might be listening that do not know what the vino is because it does not exist anymore. What was the Vino?

**DS** [00:59:30] It is like a newsletter that Honors College put out about things that are happening. Let's see if I have a copy of it [shuffles through papers]. The school paper was called the Echo. Anyway, I do not see it here. I thought I had a copy of it. I see it. There it is. So they put in news, updates, things that were happening in the Honors College. Famous quotes. They would also have articles that students were writing about events, random events or cultural events, things to do like over spring break or winter break, things like that. It was just kind of a basic Honors College publication that would come out, I want to say, once a month or something along those lines. They would have congratulations to events for recognizing people, for passing, or doing something noteworthy. Summer job opportunities If you are looking for something to do in the summer, trivia stuff like that. I do not know when they stopped doing it. I remember graduating that they still had a Vinoo or a version of it that they did.

**CT** [01:00:58] I believe maybe a little bit before 2010, but I might be wrong. Because I know it has not existed for a while. So, you mentioned the cohort size fluctuating. What was your cohort size, do you remember?

**DS** [01:01:18] So one of the cool things that I remember getting, this was fall of 2003, so this would my freshman year. No sophomore year. They gave out Honors College Directory [shows directory]. So they would give out everybody's name, birthdate, where they were living, email, and cell phone or home phone, for that matter. They did it for the entire college. So, freshmen and sophomores, juniors and seniors. I remember just kind of like, this is like pre-Facebook. So we are going through it like, "Oh, your birthday's coming up" and we would celebrate your birthday by putting in our calendars or whatever.

I want to say our freshman class was, let me see. I can actually tell you exactly. It was like 100, but that may be too many. So [starts counting from 100]. Yes. So it is about 100, maybe one hundred and twenty. What is it now?

**CT** [01:02:34] Mine was 75.

**DS** [01:02:36] See they have gotten a little smaller. Granted, not everybody stayed in Honors College because how I was bored in regular classes and wanted the challenge. There were kids in Honors that were stressed, and they would quit.

**CT** [01:02:55] So we talked a little bit about the Vino and the events that would get published. Do you have a favorite Honors event?

**DS** [01:03:05] I always enjoyed the sophomore lectures because it was kind of like a rite of passage that you have to do. I have always wanted to go back— Patricia has asked us to do it remotely because of COVID, but I always enjoy hearing the sophomore lectures and their thesis presentations and so forth. Joining and that rite of passage, joining our ranks of the full Honors College.

I also like the Soapbox. You all still do that?

**CT** [01:03:36] Yes, every Friday.

**DS** [01:03:36] Yes, I really enjoyed that. I think the Soapbox was fun. Also, honors was just a place where you could go and have intellectual conversations without any bias, without any prenotions. It was just a place for intellectual curiosity. I do not know if it is still like that, but we would come not worrying about offending anybody or saying something inappropriate or doing anything wrong because we were all there just to learn and grow from each other. We loved lectures, and they used to do Honors Challenge Week. Do you all still do that?

**CT** [01:04:15] Yes, we do.

**DS** [01:04:18] OK. That was another favorite of mine, because whoever organized them, I want to say Alison did one year because we had like a green focus one year. We also had amazing speakers that would come in, like keynote speakers. My favorite one, I think, was probably Donna did one on evolution, and we brought in some big names in evolution that were like religiously opposed to it. And then, of course, scientifically in favor of it and had an open forum where we invited everyone in the Conway community to come and partake after hours. I thought that was just a really cool thing to have Challenge Week where it was to challenge an idea or a prenotion. And it was not just for Honors College kids.



**CT** [01:05:09] That is really cool. So it seems like a lot of what you all did in Honors was very much pro-challenge. You invited people that had different points of view. Do you feel like having somebody challenge you was beneficial to your education in a way?

**DS** [01:05:32] Oh, totally. Yes. So American pragmatism is my personal philosophy of doing things that are practical and make sense, and that you can always change and grow, especially if there's new evidence that is presented. All of that came about because of the Honors College.

One of my two favorite classes that we did— Historically, we had a history professor come in for Honors College and it was the history of progressive movements or just movements in American history. And there were things like transcendentalism, the utopian movement in the United States, of course, the progressive era, and so forth. It was just a really cool experience of seeing how groups of ideas and thoughts changed over the course of American history.

She is not there anymore. She is in Iowa because she is from Iowa originally, but she did a class on the history of sex, love, and marriage in American history. So it was very similar to the progressive ideas of the movements, but it was all about the meaning of sex and love and marriage and how it evolved throughout American history or throughout history in general. But our final, and I use this a lot as a teacher, was we had to create a wedding, and everybody had to take a different role but it had to be reversed or flipped. So, a bride had to be a man, the groom had to be a woman. I was the wedding planner, so I had to organize a whole wedding and make sure it went off smoothly. And I have some pictures. Like some of my very earliest Facebook photos are from that final. I remember some people stressing out about memorizing whatever periodic table or whatever final that they had to do. And I am like, I am super excited about this because I am getting to play in a wedding [laughter].

It challenged the idea of like, why do dads give away their daughters? “Who gives away this bride? And they say, “her mother and I do.” It was all about that overt masculinity and kind of sexual passing of a virgin to another man and all that stuff. And I never really analyzed any of the meanings and the symbology about it. But again, I go back to what the Honors College does. It challenges you to think. It challenges you to ask questions. I never really did that until Honors College.

**CT** [01:08:09] That is really cool. So going back to the matriculation, we talked a little bit about it, but I am curious, did you participate in the matriculation process?

**DS** [01:08:21] Was that at the beginning?

**CT** [01:08:24] That is sophomore matriculation to get your minor.

**DS** [01:08:27] Yes. Yes, I did that. Sorry. I do not remember it being called that, but I am sure it was. Yes, I did. I do not remember what I talked about, to be honest [laughter]. That one was not as meaningful. My senior thesis, I thought was very impactful, but it was more impactful for me. I did a history of collective and individualistic thinking in the United States and how we get torn as a double dual conscious similar to what Frederick Douglass talked about and other famous black leaders in the early 20th century about having like “Am I American or am I African-American?” How do you think individually or how do think collectively. Am I a part of a bigger group or am I part of an individual group or have an individual mindset?

A lot of how we argue is that same concept. Is it better for me? or are we looking at it from a perspective of it is better for us and it ebbs and flows depending on the situation. Anyway, that was my senior thesis. I remember that and I thought I had a lot of really important stuff about it, but it was probably just, , fluff being naive 20, 21, 22 year old [laughter].

**CT** [01:09:49] That sounds like a very interesting thesis. I would definitely read it. I might actually read it. I have not got to read it in full, but that made me want to.

**DS** [01:10:00] Do you all go back and read those?

**CT** [01:10:03] We do have a collection of some theses that you can get access to. I will try to see if I can access yours, some of them you can't.

**DS** [01:10:17] Jane Simonsen is the professor that had worked with us on the history of sex, love, and marriage. Jane was a phenomenal teacher. Now she is an Iowa.

Doug still there? All right. I still follow him a little bit on Facebook, he's very even-keeled, but he has got a lot more political than he ever has before because Doug was very religious. But he was also moderately conservative but progressive. So I have always enjoyed having conversations with him, but I am glad he is still there.

**CT** [01:11:00] Did you have Doug?

**DS** [01:11:02] I think I had Doug for a class or as an adviser for something, but we always did pranks on Doug because he's easy to prank [laughter].

**CT** [01:11:14] I feel like pranks on Doug has lasted through the years because we still do pranks on Doug [laughs]. That is an Honors tradition.

I am interested to know what was the decision behind your thesis topic, how did you wanted to do that?

**DS** [01:11:38] I was really studying heavily the progressive era of American history and analyzing all the major events that were happening, like the Food Drug Administration, the busting of big corporations and monopolies and trusts. Just the mindset of what would cause somebody to look at it collectively when we are in the same concept of a culture war of what is good for me versus what is good for us? So, I was looking at parallel timeframes, the early start of the 20th century to the early start of the 21st century. I think it was just kind of a combination of things that have built up to that because again, one of my favorite books of all time, it was introduced to me by Doug, is called the *Metaphysical Club* by Louis Menand. I hope he still teaches a class or uses that book for something because it is a great American history story with American philosophy. It really instilled in me who I am today and what I believe because of the conversations I had from that book.

**CT** [01:13:06] Who was your mentor for your thesis project?

**DS** [01:13:11] That is a good question, I do not remember [laughter]. I want to say it might have been Donna, but no, I remember it was Dr. Foote who's not there either. Dr. Lorien Foote, she was in the history department. Now she is somewhere in Texas, but she was my mentor. She taught American history, a lot of the history classes there.

**CT** [01:13:45] Did you study abroad while you were at UCA?

**DS** [01:13:49] I never did a tag. Is that what it is called? TAG? I did the URGE grant and my URGE grant paid for me to go to Chicago for two weeks with the chair of the history department at that time, Dr. Ron Fritz, who randomly reached out to me recently because he's on Facebook. Anyway, he is at another university in Alabama, or he is retired now, but he just wrote a book. Anyway, long story short, he did a history of Chicago politics course, and so we spent a week in the summer. I want to say this was 2005, and we did a week reading some books about the history of Chicago, and the politics of Chicago. Then we stayed two weeks in Chicago at Concordia University, and that was again an amazing experience. Chicago is a place that I'll always treasure because of that experience and learning about the history and the evolution in the politics of

Chicago. But also my wife and I ended up having our anniversary, our honeymoon there, and our 10-year anniversary there, and it is a really cool town. I did all that because of the Honors College, that URGE grant.

**CT** [01:15:00] That is really cool. Was there a staff member that left an impression on your honor's experience?

**DS** [01:15:09] I mean, obviously, Doug. Doug was important for the American pragmatism side, just introducing us to pragmatism. He made me want to take a lot of philosophy classes because of that.

I had Jane Simonsen, who will always be endeared to my heart because she would embed history and culture and religion and made it fun and very approachable.

I think Rick, I would put him up there because he was the director at the time, but I remember having a beer with him after we graduated. They brought all the Honors graduates together, I want to say at his house in Maumelle. Having a beer with him and I was like, "I am an adult having a beer with professor" [laughter].

Donna was inspirational because of that Core III class, that search for the other where we debated in that culture war. Also, her husband, Noel. Does he ever teach anymore with anymore? Well, he is a movie critic and I remember the very first time I met him and his passion for movies. He was like an adjunct faculty at the time. But he was doing movie reviews and stuff nationally and whatnot and had an Oscar party. So, after that, I started doing Oscar parties, and every year I have done an Oscar party as a result.

**CT** [01:16:42] That is really cool.

**DS** [01:16:44] And of course, I mean, you can not go without saying Norb. Norb is one of those guys that— Did you ever get to meet Norb?

**CT** [01:16:51] He passed away right before my class came in.

**DS** [01:16:55] OK. I know his mental health was deteriorating before then, too. I felt like I was in the presence of a God whenever he was there. He would listen. He would come up with, quick-witted comments about anything and everything. But you always felt at ease. You never felt like an idiot. You know, you never felt like you did not belong there. He was very welcoming and receiving and gracious all the time. So I love the fact that the Schedler Honors Colleges in his honor, because it is literally, is his legacy. I will always buy any materials, T-shirts, or whatever that has his name on it, just because you do not think of the Honors College without thinking of Norb.

**CT** [01:17:43] Absolutely. What is your fondest memory of Norb?

**DS** [01:17:49] So we did something to surprise him, and I do not know if it was his birthday. I think it was his retirement. He retired like eight times [laughs]. It felt like he was always like "Awe I am leaving," then he would come back. I want to say it was Blake Vernon, my roommate, and a few others that came up with this idea that let's make Norb shirts. I do not know if we all bought them or if the Honors College bought them for us, but we all had black shirts with his glasses. That kind of look like Harry Potter glasses and then his bow tie, his signature bow tie. We surprised him at an event where he walked in— And again, it felt like it was dragging out like, "Oh, he's retiring again, oh, he's retiring." And we were like, well, this is it. We were not buying any more shirts or doing any more events like he's retiring after this [laughs]. So that is probably my fondest memory. It was a transition time because he was leaving, and it just kept dragging on and dragging on. But I remember that experience and how honoring that would be to have. That was probably the other reason why we did the history event was because he was leaving, officially leaving.

**CT** [01:19:08] How did the Honors program, if it did, change your worldly perspective?

**DS** [01:19:18] Probably going back to American pragmatism. The idea of just looking at evidence and coming up with practical solutions and getting a lot of stakeholders involved and being positive. All of that has shaped who I am today. That discussion and that formation started in the Honors College.

**CT** [01:19:43] I think that is really cool.

**DS** [01:19:46] If you have never researched it, do it. I mean, it is mind-blowing. Americans are not known for philosophy and being philosophical, but it started in the late 19th century and emerged and evolved throughout the 20th century. It really changed who I am. I think junior year in college, when I was first introduced to it, I am like, “wow, I love it.” It is science-based, it is positive, it is practical.

**CT** [01:20:20] I would like to thank you for your time, Dustin Seaton, and this concludes our interview.

**DS** [01:20:29] I will say, now I am thinking about it real quick, we had a long-standing secretary named Glenda Middleton. Is there anything in her honor?

**CT** [01:20:41] Not that I can think of.

**DS** [01:20:42] She, and Norb was like a triumvirate. She ran the Honors College basically until she retired. She had a secretary named Stephanie Crane. So, Glenda was kind of like the administrator of the Honors College, and Stephanie was the secretary for Glenda, or for the Honors College. But those two, I hope that they were embedded in the history of the Honors College because they definitely helped shape the Honors College. Glenda was in charge of a lot of those TAG and URGE grants to make sure that people got paid and got their credits and so forth. I think a lot of the behind-the-scenes stuff that happened at the Honors College would not have ever happened without Stephanie Crane and Glenda Middleton's work when they were there. So, I always want to make sure we acknowledge their contributions to it as well.

**CT** [01:21:32] Absolutely, absolutely. I have heard of Glenda before, so I am kind of wanting to know, where is their memorial? Rick Scott has the tree with the swings at Farris and Norb has obviously the whole college. So that would be interesting to know. Like where is? Maybe the forum, I do not remember if the forum is named after anyone, but that might be something.

**DS** [01:22:08] Well, the Honors College would not be what it is without Glenda, I can tell you that because she was one of the first people I met and handled all of the business type of stuff. Being a big American pragmatist, you have to have logistics. Someone that is able to plug into the pieces and give you some organization, and that was her. Norb can be the philosophical one, but Glenda would be the one that brings that philosophy, makes it into practical reality.

So Glenda definitely deserves some honoring, and I just wanted to make sure I shout out Stephanie too because I think a lot of the administrative assistants and secretaries do not always get the credit that they deserve when you are talking about the evolution and the building of the legacy of the Honors College.

Donna, too. Donna Bowman deserves a lot of credit for the evolution of the Honors College. I do not know what role she plays now. I think she was the director or the interim director. I think she was the long-term director after Rick. I do not know whatever it was, but she has been there a long time. I know her kids. It felt like they were really little when I was there. Then I have

seen them grow up on Facebook and other education adventures that I have partook. It feels like we were a part of the family because they were little, and we have literally seen them grow up and mature and be a part of the Honors College family.

**CT** [01:23:43] I am in the same cohort as her son.

**DS** [01:23:47] Really? OK.

**CT** [01:23:49] Yes, we are going to be graduating together. That is really cool.

**DS** [01:23:53] Well, I remember when he was little. When were you born?

**CT** [01:23:58] 2001.

**DS** [01:24:00] OK, so yes, he would have been one or two when I first met him then. I remember seeing posts by Donna on Facebook. He has an amazing quiz bowl knowledge, and he would win all these quiz bowl awards and stuff. I would see him at these Quiz bowl events because I was a quiz bowl coach for a time. I was like, “You do not know me, but I know you” [laughter].

**CT** [01:24:27] Yes, he is extremely smart.

**DS** [01:24:29] Yes. You got to ask him if his dad is still writing movie reviews because he would write things that I would be like, “I hated that movie” until I read his review. It changed my perspective, 180. He is a really good writer and an excellent movie critic.

**CT** [01:24:52] I do not believe there is a class on it, but he has come and talked about it and we have had maybe like a PPP about it. Where he has come and talked about it, and the reviews were that it was extremely cool.

**DS** [01:25:10] Yes, I think he did a speech about the Oscars or something, but he had an Oscar party and I remember doing one and inviting some friends in Short/Denney. And literally, we have had big parties and we have had nobody because of COVID. That is something I have always enjoyed doing every year, doing an Oscar party. Predictions and trying to watch all the movies and stuff. Noel was the one that got us into that. Like I said, lots of continuing impacts and legacies from the Honors College. You will see once you are older. You will be like, “Oh, I am doing this because the Honors College” [laughter].

**CT** [01:25:51] I am very much looking forward to it. Well, I would like to thank you for your time, Dustin Seaton. This concludes our interview.

**DS** [01:26:08] All right. Thank you, Cam.