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SCHEDLER HONORS COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Kristen Spickard Oral History Interview Transcription

Narrator Name: Spickard, Kristen

Interviewer Name: El-Houri, Noor

Date of Interview: 03/15/2022

Location of Interview: Remote Interview - Zoom Recording

Acronyms:

UCA = University of Central Arkansas

ACT = American College Test

UALR = University of Arkansas at Little Rock

TAG = Travel Abroad Grant

Interview Summary

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Kristen Spickard conducted by Noor El-Houri on March Speaker 15, 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.

Speaker Speaker 1 [00:00:02] All right, welcome. I'm Noor El-Houri with the Schedler Honors College oral history project. Today is March 20th, 2022, and I am interviewing Kristen Spickard. We will be talking about your experiences leading up to and during your time in the Honors College. Please go ahead and state your name for me.

Speaker 2 My name is Kristen Spickard.

Speaker 1. All right, welcome. So, for the first part of the questions, they are basically a couple of questions that are just going to help everyone get to know you a little bit better. So I saw that your pronouns are she and her correct?

Speaker 2 Yes, that is correct.

Speaker 1 Ok, so where are you from?

Speaker 2 I'm from Little Rock.

Speaker 1 What high school did you go to? You went to Little Rock schools growing up?

Speaker 2 I went to Arkansas Baptist High School.

Speaker 1 And then middle school was all in the Little Rock School District?

Speaker 2 I went to the Arkansas Baptist School System from K through 12.

Speaker 1 Were you born in Little Rock?

Speaker 2 I was born in Little Rock.

Speaker 1 Your parents? What are their names? What do they do?

Speaker 2 My parents' names are Pam and Dave, and my mom works for Arkansas Game and Fish, and my dad is an IT manager, and they still live in Little Rock.

Speaker 1 Arkansas game and fish, do they have more authority than police? I have heard that.

Speaker 2 I don't know. My mom does not. She does her work from a computer.

Speaker 1 You are from Little Rock, so what's your family dynamic like? Do you have any siblings or extended family?

Speaker 2. Yes, I have one brother, James. He is six years younger than me, and he's also a UCA grad, and he also works at UCA. So I see him all the time.

Speaker 1. Wow! What does he do? What department does he work in?

Speaker 2. He also majored in art like I did, but he works in the physical plant and he does the HVAC systems all over campus.

Speaker 1. Was he also Honors alumni, or did he not go through the honors?

Speaker 2. No, he didn't do the honors program, but my cousin did. She is eight younger than me. Maddie Spickard, and she's an alum of the program as well.

Speaker 1. Did you introduce it to her? How did she figure out about the program?

Speaker 2. I think she was aware, maybe through me too, but also my aunt, her mom, is a graduate of UCA.

Speaker 1. There are a lot of alumni in your family?

Speaker 2. Yeah.

Speaker 1. Is that how you got introduced to honors?

Speaker 2. I do not really remember. I remember looking at UCA because the scholarships were really good and it was close to home and I came to visit campus with my mom and I thought it was such a beautiful campus and I could really see myself here. Then just kind of looking into what my options were, finding out more about Honors College, and that I could apply for that.

Speaker 1. How many colleges did you apply to?

Speaker 2. I think UCA was the only one, just because I had pretty much decided. I applied early. So, if it did not work out, I could have put in some other applications, but I pretty much was set on going here.

Speaker 1. Did your parents influence your education at all growing up?

Speaker 2. Yes. They chose for me to go to Arkansas Baptist, which was a good school academically. So, I think that was a good fit at the time, and they encouraged me to apply for the honors program here. They were invested in pushing me to be a good student, as you know, most students in honors are making good grades, and everyone's pushing them to do all that kind of stuff.

Speaker 1. Were they very strict about grades growing?

Speaker 2. I do not think they really had to be because I was really hard on myself to make good grades for whatever reason. So they did not really have to push me that hard to make A's.

Speaker 1. You were your own motivation.

Speaker 2. Yes. [smiles]

Speaker 1. How was your high school experience?

Speaker 2. The academics were really good. We did not have a strong arts program, which I would say is something I had an interest in, but it was less of a formal interest because I did not have classes that I could take for visual arts or music. We did not have strong programs in any of that. So I was pushing myself more in AP classes like math and

English and science, those kinds of things. So, I would say it felt like something was always missing. I did not have a core group of arts friends, which I think would have been really good for me.

Speaker 1. How did you know that you wanted to do art, or how did you know that you liked art if you did not have that influence throughout school?

Speaker 2. I was always obsessed with making things outside of school. I would make magazines, and I would sew and draw and do photography and everything.

Speaker 1. What was your dream job growing up as a kid?

Speaker 2. As a kid, I would say that I wanted to be a teacher. For a while, I went through a phase where I wanted to be a marine biologist, or a writer. I went to a marine biology camp. That was really fun.

Speaker 1. I went to Seaworld camp. [smiles]

Speaker 2. Yes! I do not know, I thought fashion design would be cool too. I had to get to college to learn more about what my career options were. But I will say, I was really interested in graphic design and making websites at an early age. If you went back and told my fourth-grade self that I am a graphic designer now, she would be very happy and not at all surprised. I went through another period in the middle where I did not know that is what I was going to be.

Speaker 1 You said you had your mind set on UCA, why UCA?

Speaker 2. I wanted to get out of Little Rock and just experience something new, and Conway is not far away at all, but it is as far away as you need it to be, if that makes sense. It can feel very far away, or it can feel very close, which is nice. And then, just scholarships. I know, for a while, I really wanted to go to college out of state, and I think it's just because I have a really adventurous part of me and I thought that is what I needed to do. But my parents were like, it's fine, you can go out of state later, just stay close to home and UCA will be good, and they have really good scholarships and good programs.

Speaker 1. Did you stay on campus?

Speaker 2. Yes, I lived in campus housing for 4 years.

Speaker 1. I read that you were the first year to be in Farris, correct?

Speaker 2. Yes, that was really exciting. [smiles]

Speaker 1. How was that?

Speaker 2. It was great. I lived in Baridon Hall my freshman year and that was fine. Then, going from Baridon Hall to Farris, it was such an upgrade. It was just an amazing year, and already being part of the program and having all my friends there was just a really, really fun year.

Speaker 1. Was your family supportive of your degree, you choosing to go into art?

Speaker 2. I think maybe they hoped I would do computer science or something like that, but yes, they were supportive.

Speaker 1. That is good because I usually, with a full ride, some people are like, art? Why are you doing art with your full ride? You could do anything. You said you lived on campus. You were not that far away from home, so did you ever feel homesick at all?

Speaker 2. I would say, no. I would go visit every couple of weeks, and I could see my family pretty much any time, so I did not really feel homesick.

Speaker 1. So you lived in Baridon in your first semester, correct? When did you move into Farris?

Speaker 2. It was fall of Speaker 2006.

Speaker 1. Did you see the process of it being built?

Speaker 2. Yes. We would walk over there and just kind of see the building being built. I remember I was in Conway randomly in the summer and just kind of walking around campus, and the building was done, but no one had moved in yet. I want to say it was Adam, he saw me looking in the window and was like, "hey, I'll take you in and show you around". I was with my mom, and that was really fun.

Speaker 1. So how was campus life? You had a lot of friends in the dorms? Were you involved in any extracurriculars?

Speaker 2. Yes, all my extracurriculars revolved around the art department. I did Clay Club because there was no photography club. There still isn't. Clay Club was really fun. I took ceramics one semester for a requirement, and I just really loved it.

Speaker 1. So did you know Liz Smith?

Speaker 2. Yes, she is the ceramics teacher still, so I see her a lot being on campus. I love her. And she took us on some really amazing trips to go to SOFA, a ceramics conference in Chicago, and she took us to Kansas City. And then I also had a student worker job running the Black Box Gallery, in Schichtl. So that was really fun getting to come up with art exhibits and do everything involved with running the gallery.

Speaker 1. You were a traditional student, correct? So, did you like the Honors retreat? How was your retreat for you guys or did you all do your homework?

Speaker 2. So, we went to Heifer Ranch, so it's in Perryville and it's run by a heifer international.

Speaker 1. I think like elementary school, I think I went there.

Speaker 2. Yes, and I thought it was cool. I was still just getting to know everybody, so I was like with my roommate and my suitemates because I'm a little more introverted, so just trying to meet people.

Speaker 1. Did they have any activities that you all would do? Was it a weekend long retreat? Or was it a day? How was that?

Speaker 2. Yes, we stayed there all weekend. I think we were working on some kind of paper and we had writing workshops and. We did a lot of icebreaker activities, I might have blocked a lot of it out because again, being introverted, it's not my favorite thing. But I do remember meeting a lot more people in the program and we did have a lot of fun.

Speaker 1. So you are introverted. What was it like? Did you ever find your group?

Speaker 2. Yes, I would say right away, after I started taking art classes, I made a lot of really close friends who I felt I had a lot of things in common with.

Speaker 1. So was it less in the honors program and more in the arts program where you found your friends?

Speaker 2. Yes and no, since I lived in the honors housing all four years, I did have some close friends in honors housing whose friendships mean a lot to me. But then, in the art department, it was just maybe easier in a way. But none of those people lived on campus. So it's kind of like I had two groups.

Speaker 1. Yeah, I get that. So how was your application process getting into honors college?

Speaker 2. I remember it being pretty straightforward. I remember coming in for the interview and there was one other potential student there, and Phil Frana was our interviewer. He's not a faculty member here anymore. I remember him doing our interview and I remember I met Norb in the hallway, which was cool and he seemed so down-to-earth. And now I'm like, "Wow, he was the dean?" Meeting a high school student in the hallway, which is cool.

Speaker 1. Have you had the opportunity to watch that documentary on, Norb have you heard about that at all?

Speaker 2. Oh, I don't think so.

Speaker 1. There is a student that made a documentary about Norb. That was pretty interesting. You were there when Norb was there. How was that? Did you interact with him a lot at all?

Speaker 2. Not too much. He was retiring, but kind of slowly, so he still taught a couple classes after I was a student, but they were hard to get into. Everyone wanted to take them since it was kind of his last time teaching, so I did not apply. I don't remember what semester that might have been when I took Allison's gardening class, which is my favorite class ever. And I had to choose what I wanted to take, and I really wanted to take that. So I didn't apply for Norb's class, but I remember him being there and it's just that he just had a really strong presence there, if that makes sense.

Speaker 1. Yes, someone else mentioned that he had a very bright and beautiful aura. So, the gardening class, I don't think she offers that class anymore. What did you guys do in there?

Speaker 2. It was so fun. We would meet twice a week, and once a week we would meet just in one of the classes at McAlister and do readings about food related stuff. Then once a week, we would go out into the garden. So there's a community garden in Conway, a few miles away from campus, but the semester I took it was the first semester that we moved the garden onto campus, so it's still around. It is behind Arkansas Hall. So we were the first class to work out there and we built a shed that's not out there anymore, but there's been other improvements made over the past few years.

Speaker 1. Do you still go out there sometimes and look at it?

Speaker 2. Yes, since I work here, I walk all over campus all the time. So if I'm nearby, I'll go by and see what they're growing. If she's not teaching the class anymore, I don't know who is working out there, but there's stuff growing every year.

Speaker 1. She might be. I just have not heard about it, so there is a chance. Do you ever just like to walk around campus and reminisce on your own college experience and how so much has changed?

Speaker 2. To me, so much is still the same, and I've been thinking about that a lot lately. How a lot of things on campus, I feel, are almost like time capsules. Last year, I got to teach a class in the art department when Donna Pinckley, the photo faculty, went on a sabbatical. I got to teach a darkroom class and it's like everything is exactly the same in there. I joke that it's like a time capsule. There's other things that are new or improved, and like any good community, it just keeps growing. Then there is stuff that you can come and it will be exactly the same as last time you were here. I think about that all the time. Yes, it's interesting.

Speaker 1. So you've had prior knowledge of the Honors College before going into it, so what was your impression of the Honors College before going into it?

Speaker 2. So interestingly, my high school is very conservative and my guidance counselor, when I expressed interest in applying, warned me not to. But because it would just be too liberal, I guess, was her take on it. My parents really wanted me to apply. Then, I came for a Bear Facts Day with a few of my friends from school and one of them knew someone in Honors College. So, he came and he got our group and gave us a tour of Baridon, where a lot of the Honors students were. So I was at Bear Facts Day and a friend of a friend in honors, someone I had never met, offered to give our little group for my high school a tour of Baridon and just talk to us about Honors College, and I told them I was thinking about applying and like, I don't remember this person. We didn't become friends or anything like that, but he really changed my mind, and I think just meeting a student and getting their perspective. I didn't really trust my guidance counselor.

Speaker 1. One random student kind of changed your whole perspective about coming?

Speaker 2. Yes, because it just sounded like such a good fit for me. And then just having one person who is supposed to be in this position to help you figure things out, telling me not to apply was really weighing on me, but just meeting someone from the program helped kind of normalize it and help me to see that it was just a normal thing to do and that she was making a big deal.

Speaker 1. So were you more excited or more nervous when coming into the program? I would say all college freshmen were excited and nervous to start school. I wasn't too

worried. Probably like everyone in honors, you're taking really high level classes before you come in. So I wasn't worried about the workload or anything like that, but just more about being in an all new environment, meeting new people and everything.

Speaker 1. So how were your first impressions of the Honors College? Not the guidance counselors have, [laughs] probably that random person who told you it was a good change as the course of your time here.

Speaker 2. I think it was a big time of growth for me. In a lot of ways my guidance counselor was right, but it was just a really progressive environment and one that would push me to think in new ways and to be more open minded. Where she saw that as a negative thing, it was a really positive thing. So it was really different and getting used to that was challenging. I guess it wasn't negative, but I think that going through the core one and core two classes and getting to know the faculty members and everything, you really grow a lot as a person.

Speaker 1. [redacted]

Speaker 2. [redacted]

Speaker 1. [redacted]

Speaker 2.[redacted]

Speaker 1. [redacted]

Speaker 2. [redacted]

Speaker 1. [redacted]

Speaker 2. [redacted]

Speaker 1. [redacted]

Speaker 2. [redacted]

Speaker 1. So did you ever consider any other majors?

Speaker 2. Yes, and when I was an incoming freshman, I had decided to major in family and consumer science because I was really interested in fashion design, and I thought that would be a good fit. But the program was really different from what I expected. So then I changed my major to art.

Speaker 1. How would family and consumer science relate to fashion design?

Speaker 2. There's a subset of the program that falls under that, and I took a bunch of sewing classes and things that were related. But the major here is a lot more general. So it just wasn't really what I was looking for.

Speaker 1. So you graduated with a BFA?

Speaker 2. Yes.

Speaker 1. And an emphasis in graphic design.

Speaker 2. My emphasis was in photography.

Speaker 1. So how did you get into the graphic design aspect?

Speaker 2. I did take a lot of graphic design classes, and it was like my secondary emphasis. I took the most classes in that after photography. And so it's just something that I had always been really interested in. And then eventually in my career paths just kind of led me more in that direction.

Speaker 1. Did you go to graduate school?

Speaker 2. Yes, I also did my MFA in photography.

Speaker 1. Okay, that's interesting. So did you have any other minors besides the honors interdisciplinary minor?

Speaker 2. I went ahead and finished a minor in family and consumer science because I had a lot of credits in that area.

Speaker 1. Were you involved in any extracurriculars at school? I know you said you ran the Black Box Gallery. What else did you do?

Speaker 2. I guess just that and clay club. I can't think of anything else. Just those two.

Speaker 1. So did you have a car when you went to college?

Speaker 2. Yes, I had a car.

Speaker 1. How was your social life? I know you were introverted, but I know you had friends.

Speaker 2. Yeah, it was good. It's like living on campus. We would go to the cafeteria and have what we would call "family dinners", just a lot of us who lived in Farris. That was always really fun. I was always hanging out with my art friends. I really like to cook and bake and so when I went off campus, whoever lived off campus would let me use their kitchen.

Speaker 1. And what was your favorite place to go with your friends?

Speaker 2. Oh, so my roommate, Casey Gambill and I, we both really like going to thrift stores and flea markets, and so we just always do that. And even now, she lives in Spain, but when she comes to visit, that is still what we like to do when we get together.

Speaker 1. Was she also in the Honors College?

Speaker 2. Yes.

Speaker 1. So if you would change anything about the Honors College, what would it be?

Speaker 2. I don't know that I would personally change anything. I can tell just from being on campus that it continues to evolve and it's changed a lot since I was there, like university scholars being added and there are probably a lot of other small changes.

Speaker 1. Do you think those are all good additions to the Honors College?

Speaker 2. Yes, for sure, I trust Patricia and everyone else in working on everything to do what's best for the program. Yeah.

Speaker 1. So could you answer, I know you, you went to core one, you had Allison core one.

Speaker 2. Yes, well, kind of. I can explain that more if you are going to have to explain. It was so my freshman year fall semester right after school started was when Hurricane Katrina hit and Allison's mom lived in Louisiana. She went down there to be with her. And we got a teacher from a school in New Orleans, who came and lived in Conway that semester and taught honors classes.

Speaker 1. OK. Wow, how is that?

Speaker 2. It was interesting, I mean, it was fine.

Speaker 1. Could you answer, where is the self?

Speaker 2. This is something I think about a lot still. And I think maybe the answer would change depending on when you asked any of us, but I feel like my core self is the same as it has always been, but I'm also always learning and growing, but I'm always coming back to myself. If that makes sense? I don't know if I'm answering your question, but that's how I think of it.

Speaker 1. Everyone answers this question in a different way, so it's going to be interesting to see everyone's own take on "where is the self?" So what Professor were you closest to in Honors College.

Speaker 2. I would say Allison, because I took her gardening class and then there was another food related class that she taught the next semester that I also really wanted to take. So I had her for two classes, and just everything we learned about, I was super interested in and still think about that a lot and read related stuff even today, and it's something that's still really interesting.

Speaker 1. So is she also your role model or the one that impacted you the most? Or would you say that was another professor in Honors?

Speaker 2. Yes, I would say she is the person who impacted me the most. I do think of her as a role model in a lot of ways because I just feel like I learned so much from her.

Speaker 1. So your thesis? I have it written down, I know what it was. So it was called "Discover Yourself: A Journaling Project". And it was about visual journaling in artists journals. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Speaker 2. It's about that process. So I wanted to do a creative project and then also research, so my creative project was that I kept a visual journal for a year and then I

scanned in all the pages to go along with my presentation. Then I did research on visual journaling, and I guess it feels like a topic that was just kind of coming up at that time. So there were some new books being written about it, and it was something that had interested me from some of my drawing classes. I worked with Carrie Dyer. She was a graphic design faculty at that time. I just was really interested in working with her. She did a lot of drawing in addition to graphic design, although she wasn't a drawing teacher, but as a sort of adviser, she was my thesis advisor. Yes.

Speaker 1. OK, did you guys have two advisors as well?

Speaker 2. I had a second reader, is that who you mean?

Speaker 1. Yes.

Speaker 2. That was Deb Kuster, also in the art department. She and I keep in touch now and we are actually having a show together in June in Little Rock with two other artists as well. Kind of just an art show. The theme is yard work. It's like nature/yard related things. And she does fiber arts. There's one other fiber artist in the show, Britynn Davis. She graduated from UCA in 2011, and then Barbara Satterfield. She used to run the Baum Gallery at UCA. So the four of us keep in touch and we're having that in Little Rock.

Speaker 1. I would like to know more about that!

So what was your decision making behind your thesis idea? How did you get to that? What made you realize you wanted to do a journaling process over a year?

Speaker 2. I guess it was just at the front of my mind because I have always been interested in journaling, and I was getting really into visual journals, like drawing a lot in my journals and doing collage and that kind of stuff. It seemed like a natural fit at the time. And I do remember struggling to come up with the topic. So maybe that was part of it too. And I was like, "This is something that I've been doing and I can research this."

Speaker 1. Did you take Oxford tutorials?

Speaker 2. Yes.

Speaker 1. Did that professor help you out at all with the honors project? Helpful with getting you comfortable with the thesis project?

Speaker 2. Yes, I think so. I had Phillip Melton for my Oxford tutorial and he passed away a couple of years ago. He was a big help and I remember that class was really supportive and we all had really different topics. There was not another art student in the class or anything. So that's interesting too, just kind of how Honors brings so many different majors together, and you're working towards some of the same goals, but the things that you're studying are so different.

Speaker 1. Yeah. So did you ever get the opportunity to travel abroad during your time with Honors College?

Speaker 2. Yeah, I attended Speaker 2 study abroad trips. So the first one, I went on a UCA sponsored trip to Florence, Italy.

Speaker 1. What is that? Through the Travel Abroad program?

Speaker 2. So a few UCA faculty members went and we went and took classes for UCA credit, and I think there were 40 students on the trip. It was really big. Most of us were art students. Then there were a couple of other majors there, too. I'm not sure. I know your instructor, Whit, was on the trip. She was really cool, and she was studying something else on the trip that I don't remember.

Speaker 1. Was she a student at the time you were?

Speaker 2. Yeah. So we were in the same year.

Speaker 1. Were you guys friends at all?

Speaker 2. Yeah, yeah. We were friends.

Speaker 1. So how was you all's relationship? Were you all very close? Or was it more just you see each other in passing?

Speaker 2. Yeah, probably just in passing. I remember hanging out a few times on the Italy trip, and I always thought she was just really cool and easy to get along with. So her company was always welcome, especially on a trip like that. Sometimes, you just need a break. Forty people is a lot, but it was amazing. Gayle Seymour was one of our faculty members, and so we had a Renaissance art history class and we would go to class in the morning. Then in the afternoon she would take us to look at whatever we had just learned about, which was really incredible.

Speaker 1. Yes, she was going to do another trip and also in Florence and have that same class. There were not enough people going on the trip. I was so sad because I wanted to take her class. But next time.

Speaker 2. But you said you did 2 trips abroad, so what was the second one?

Speaker 1. So the next year I went to a photography program in Greece on this little Greek island called Paros. It's a really small place. You have to take a ferry from Athens, and there was a school there and it was run by Americans. So everyone in the school, maybe like 30 people, we were all from the US and Canada and from just all different states. And it was really fun and pushed me out of my comfort zone a lot because that other trip I knew a lot of the people I was with and this trip I didn't know anyone. It was really fun to be in a really different environment, and we had a darkroom there, and I only have good things to say about it. It was a really cool learning experience. Then when that was over, the program lasted for three or four weeks, and then I took a quick plane trip to Italy and met up with my roommate, Casey, and we traveled around for a little bit. So, yeah, so fun!

Speaker 1. So did you apply for any of the TAG grants to get funding for these trips?

Speaker 2. Yes, I applied for TAG grants and then just saved all my money the whole year to try to pay for everything. And I had some help from my grandparents, which was really sweet of them.

Speaker 1. Did you have a job during school?

Speaker 2. Yes, I had several part time jobs on campus. I would run the darkroom at night in the art department and then the Black Box Gallery. And I had a performance scholarship, which is a thing in the art department. It's like you get a scholarship, but then you work five hours a week for a faculty member. And so I worked for the graphic design faculty who was my thesis advisor. So all of those things helped me pay for the rest of my trip.

Speaker 1. Wow. So what classes did you take in Greece?

Speaker 2. In Greece, it was just a photography class, a really intensive photography program, and we would go on excursions and take pictures and then go back to the darkroom and process everything.

Speaker 1. Were there any elections-Presidential elections that went on at your time in college? Was it Barack that got elected?

Speaker 2. Obama was elected in Spring 2008. I was in Farris Hall when they called it in his favor, and it was really late at night. I remember the whole building just erupted in excitement and everyone was running around and they were just really excited. That was a cool time to be there.

Speaker 1. I can imagine. I know I had another person say that everyone just went crazy and it was just awesome.

Did you ever consider taking a gap year?

Speaker 2. That was not really a popular thing. I don't remember when I first heard the term, but I didn't know anyone who did that, and I think it's just a more accepted thing now. But it's not something I would have thought to do back then.

Speaker 1. So during your years at the Honors College, were they very inclusive towards the LGBTQ + community?

Speaker 2. I can't speak for other people since I'm not a member of the community, but it seems like from the friends I had who were, I hope they felt it was inclusive. It seemed like it, but I'm sure there was room to grow.

Speaker 1. Have you seen any growth at all in the Honors College when it comes to anything?

Speaker 2. I think just the campus community in general, there's been a lot of growth over the past few years, and I hope we're moving in the right direction. I want all my friends to feel supported and like they can be themselves.

Speaker 1. If you could go through the honors program again, would you?

Speaker 2. Yes, for sure, I would do it again.

Speaker 1. Awesome!

So how did the honors college impact you after college? What did you do and where did you go? I heard that you moved out of state and then now you're back at UCA. So what's that story?

Speaker 2. It was a weird time to graduate. It was right after the recession had started. There were no jobs. It was so hard, I decided to go to grad school right away. I started almost a year after I graduated, so there was a little bit of a break, but I just felt like there was more I wanted to learn. It was a good time to go because there weren't very many job prospects and especially for someone just out of school, it was hard to get a job. So I went to The Ohio State University and did my MFA there, and that was a really good experience and I felt like Honors definitely prepared me to be able to go in and prepared me to think, I guess I would say, and to write. And those are two really good skills to go into a program with because I remember some of my other friends in grad school, they had gone to the art colleges and they're like, "I never had to take a writing class", and they were bragging about it, but it actually builds you. So I'm grateful to the Honors College for developing that in me.

Speaker 1. So what were your plans after you graduated, or after you went to graduate school?

Speaker 2. I wanted to teach, so in my grad program, I got to teach a college photography class. And then I stayed for a while, and I was an adjunct and I thought I would do that full time.

Speaker 1. What is an adjunct?

Speaker 2. It's just a part time instructor.

Speaker 1. Okay, sorry, I didn't know.

Speaker 2. No, it's fine. So I thought I would do that full time. I really loved it. But the problem is there's just not very many full time teaching jobs. After a couple of years, I just felt I was getting burned out and that I wanted to do something else. I got a job at a community college in Portland, Oregon, for a year. Well, it was a permanent position, but after a year I decided to move back to Arkansas and be closer to my family. And I also wanted to live somewhere with a lower cost of living, and Portland is very expensive. I loved it there in many ways, but it was hard. It's been a good decision. I ended up going into a position that was like a photography and graphic design position, all in one. That helped me get my foot in the door, then I realized how much I would enjoy being a designer full time and that that was the thing I wanted to concentrate on. The position I'm in now eventually opened up after a couple of years, and I was able to come over here and I really like it.

Speaker 1. So how did you get your original position at UCA? Was there a job opening and you just applied for it?

Speaker 2. Yes, so I moved back to Arkansas just kind of when my lease was up and I was just applying for anything that sounded like a good fit for my skills, and someone sent me that job posting, a friend, and I decided to apply and it just worked out, it felt like a really good fit in the interview, and so I'm just really grateful that they wanted me.

Speaker 1. So do you think the Schedler Honors College has impacted your success at all? Where you are today?

Speaker 2. I would say yes, because a lot of times when we are talking about success, maybe success is measured in how much money you make or what your job title is.

Speaker 1. What is success to you?

Speaker 2. Yeah, for me, I guess I have a more holistic view of it. I want to really enjoy the life that I lead day to day. I've just always seen myself as a lifelong learner, and I like that this is a place where I can really tap into that, being on campus and having the job I have. I just feel like all of the values that I got out of college are things that I just really appreciate and, I can't imagine not having gone through that program.

Speaker 1. So that being said, would you advise other people to join the honors program? If they feel like it's a good fit for them?

Speaker 2. I wouldn't advise anyone to just do one specific thing for every person. It maybe wouldn't be the thing that they would get the most out of. But if you're in the right mindset to do it, I think the best thing about it is, when you are a high achieving high school student, everyone just wants you to take harder and harder classes and do more and more, like take the higher level math class then and get better and better test scores. But the thing about Honors is it's not like that at all. It's more mindful and you are growing in a completely different way. It's not just about doing all of this busy work to put on paper, but you're really investing in yourself and growing in that way. So I think if somebody feels like that sounds like a good fit for them, then I would definitely encourage them to apply.

Speaker 1. So what advice would you give to someone who wants to apply?

Speaker 2. I would say, just like my advice to high school students is to go in person, take a tour, see if you like UCA, meet some people here. The same for career stuff. I would advise high school students to go shadow someone. That's not advice that I ever received, and I think that would have helped me a lot.

Speaker 1. Do you feel like the Honors College continues to strive to live up to the standards that were established by Norb?

Speaker 2. I think so, yes, I think it's a really cool place, and it's very unique, and I think it means a lot to the students now as much as it did in the 80's when it started, it seems to mean that much to everybody now, so it still has that special something about it.

Speaker 1. I know, and you probably do because you are staff there, but do you still keep in touch with people that you went to school with, like roommates, classmates or faculty?

Speaker 2. Yeah, of course, I always wish I kept in better touch, but I do keep in touch with some people and especially a lot of faculty in the art department. Sometimes I do work with Patricia on some marketing things, which is cool to get to do that and then friends I had keep in touch, so I value that a lot.

Speaker 1. Would you still say that you are an introverted person or did Honors College kind of break you out of that shell, or not?

Speaker 2. I would still say I am very introverted, but I don't know. It was hard being in the honors program as an introverted person because they kind of forced you to speak. You know, it was like you had no choice. Small classes helped, just like the seminar classes that can help. I think for me, if I can think about what I'm going to say first, then that's always helpful, so like in classes, if you're doing a reading and reflecting on it and then you get in class, you already have a lot to say, so that's fine. Introverted doesn't always mean super quiet, it just depends.

Speaker 1. I get that. So what would you say that your most memorable experiences were?

Speaker 2. I think the study abroad trips definitely would be at the top of my list. Also just living on campus and kind of being immersed in that environment, I really enjoyed that.

Speaker 1. Do you have any of those pictures to share with us today?

Speaker 2. I can send you a folder after our meeting and I'm still kind of going through so I can get you some more in the next couple of days. I'm going through a bunch of digital files.

Speaker 1. Yes, I would love to have those for the archive and this whole process. I want to see the photos. You should send them to me.

Okay, so last question because we're at about an hour. What advice would you give to your past self prior to entering the Honors College?

Speaker 2. That's really hard. I don't know. I think I would just tell my past self, just relax and have fun because I know when you get older and look back, just think all the little things that you've stressed about weren't that big of a deal. A lot of them weren't. And just to kind of soak up the moment and that it won't last for very long. So just enjoy it and have fun.

Speaker 1. Great. I love that. I needed to hear that for myself. Well, it's been wonderful interviewing you today. Thank you so much for allowing me to do that. Thank you. And that is all for today.