

SCHEDLER HONORS COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Dean Turbeville Oral History Interview Transcription

Narrator Name: Turbeville, Dean

Interviewer Name: Horton, Caroline

Date of Interview: 03/07/2022

Location of Interview: Berryville, Arkansas (Remote Interview - Zoom Recording)

Acronyms:

DT: Dean Turbeville (Narrator)

CH = Caroline Horton (Interviewer)

UCA = University of Central Arkansas

TAG = Travel Abroad Grant

URGE = Undergraduate Research Grants for Education

Interview Summary

The following oral history of a recorded interview with Dean Turbeville conducted by Caroline Horton on March 7, 2022. This interview is part of the Schedler Honors College Oral History Project where current students and alumni are asked to reflect on their time before, during, and after being in the UCA Honors College.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

CH [00:00:03]. This is Caroline Horton with the Schedler Honors College Oral history project. Today is March 7th, 2022, and I'm interviewing Dean Turbeville. Who is at their home in Berryville, Arkansas. We will be talking about Dean's experience leading up to during and after their time in the Schedler Honors College. Will you please state your name and age for the recording?

DT [00:00:44] Richard Dean Turbeville Jr. and I am 33 years old.

CH [00:00:48] What year did you enter the Honors College?

DT [00:00:55] 2006, in August.

CH [00:00:57] When did you graduate from the Honors College?

DT [00:01:00] May of 2010

CH [00:01:03] And what are your pronouns?

DT [00:01:06] He/Him.

CH [00:01:09] Where are you from?

DT [00:01:11] I grew up in Nashville, Arkansas, Down in the southwest part of the state.

CH [00:01:18] Is that a small or a big town?

DT [00:01:21] Small. It's like 5000 people. Smallish, I guess.

CH [00:01:26] Did you like growing up there?

DT [00:01:29] I mean, it was good. I did enjoy growing up in one place. I'm not a big fan of change a lot of times, even though it happens all the time, but a change is hard for me at all times. And so growing up in one's place, I think, was probably good for me. Looking back, I didn't really realize it at the time, but it was good for me.

CH [00:01:52] Is that also where you left to go to UCA in Conway?

DT [00:01:57] Yes. Yeah, I going up in the town I grew up in, I had really not left what we called the Arklatex like southwestern Arkansas, northeastern Texas, and northwestern Louisiana. I really hadn't gone outside of that area all my life until I came to UCA.

CH [00:02:20] What are your parents' names?

DT [00:02:23] Richard and Debbie Turbeville.

CH [00:02:27] What is your ethnicity and race?

DT [00:02:32] Caucasian

CH [00:02:38] Whenever you begin college, what was your major?

DT [00:02:42] Biology was my major. Premed, but rather there was not a pre-med major at the time, it was just biology.

CH [00:02:54] Did that change at any point in your college career?

DT [00:02:57] No, it didn't. I stayed the same the whole way through from one of the few people that I knew actually stayed the same.

CH [00:03:07]. Did your major correlate with your dream job growing up?

DT [00:03:16] I was always the kid that was like, "I'm going to be a doctor," even though I had no idea any of that entailed. It was just like, something you do when you got good grades and you go off and become a doctor. And so that's what I wanted to do. I was like, "Biology, that's what people do and they go into medicine!" So yes, that was the kind of leading up to it. It's different in hindsight.

CH [00:03:45] Are you happy that you were a biology major? Throughout college?

DT [00:03:50] I was not unhappy with the major, but I wish I had done something different because I think in hindsight, I would have liked to do chemistry or even something totally different from the sciences. I think I would have picked a different major because that was

my one chance to do something different like that. The rest of my schooling after that was all focused on biology and chemistry and everything. I kind of wish I had picked a different major going looking back. But I wasn't unhappy with it either. It was a good time.

CH [00:04:22] Did you have another minor besides the honors interdisciplinary studies?

DT [00:04:28] No, I did actually for a while think about doing a chemistry minor, but honors was my only minor. I kind of bounced around a couple of things out there. I was thinking like, *I'll do this*. And again, like, hindsight's 20/20 actually just done, but I never did it.

CH [00:04:45] Were you able to graduate within four years or did you graduate on a fast track or at a different time?

DT [00:04:56] No, I did. I did four years. I probably could have graduated earlier— I definitely could have graduated earlier, but it would have been a lot less fun.

CH [00:05:05] Now moving on to more honors college questions: What was your application/ I squared day experience like?

DT [00:05:19] A little backstory, my mom had gone to UCA and she was kind of the one in my immediate family who had gone to college at all. She had by the UCA and I thought, *Oh, that's a cool place*. And then I saw that they had the honors college [while in] high school and thought, *Oh, yeah, that looks good*. And I really had no concept of like *I want to go to the honors college and learn these things and broaden my horizons!* It was just like *this is good for applications and things, I should do this*. I just had no concept of what to really focus on

for what I wanted out of my college experience. But when I put in for the application process, we didn't have I squared days back then. We put in our application and then we had an interview day where we would come and bring your family along and the interview was going on with you. But then they're taking you on a tour with your family and showing you what honors and UCA are about. I remember [*laughing*] trying to get to Conway. I guess I hadn't traveled a lot growing up. I came to Conway and it was this huge thing of getting the directions and finding everything. Even though my mom had gone to UCA, it had been a long time since she traveled out there. The process was just like, all right, College. Honors College. That's what I want to do.

CH [00:07:00] You mentioned that your interview would be like one on one, who was interviewing you?

DT [00:07:09] Allison Wallace interviewed me and I remember walking into the room and thinking that she was very intimidating. I walked in and I was just like, *Wow, I don't know if I'm out of my depth here*. I walked in and she was like, "Okay, first thing's first: we want you here. This is for you to decide if you want to come here." From that point on, I was like, *Okay*. I was at ease and definitely was less intimidating than what I was expecting when I walked in the room and Allison was there. She put me at ease and I actually ended up having her for core one, too. I had a neat experience with it.

CH [00:07:53] Now Conway is sort of known as the city of roundabouts. Were there just as many roundabouts in Conway during that time?

DT [00:08:07] I don't know that there are any. There may have been the one down on Harkrider, the old one there, I think that may have been the only one in Conway. It's the only one I remember. I think that was the only one there when I came for that. But I remember that day [*laughing*]. It was like, you're printing off directions and it's just a vastly different experience.

CH [00:08:37] Well, it's still a good thing that you got to the interview [*laughing*].

DT [00:08:40] Yes, [*laughing*] yes. Once I got close to campus, my parents had both lived in Conway for a couple of years, and my mom had been there for four years. They lived there for a while. And so once we got into Conway, they knew where to go and stuff. But getting to there was a different, different animal.

CH [00:09:01] Allison had mentioned that they wanted you here in the honors college and the interview was for you to decide whether or not you wanted to be in the honors college. So what made you decide on both the Honors College and UCA?

DT [00:09:19] Yes. Again, at that point, at that moment, as an 18-year-old— no, I don't know. I don't know when I did my interview, I'm not sure what month it was. It must have been before— my birthday is in June, so it must have been 17 at the time. I had no aspirations of like broadening my horizons or doing anything. Any of the things that the Honors College actually did for me I had no premonition that any of that was coming. I was just singularly focused on like *This will look good for med school!* That was my only thing at the time. And again, that was all I was like *I'm here! I'm coming here!* I wish I had better aspirations at the time, but I didn't.

CH [00:10:09] Were there any like incentives that drew you specifically to the Honors College?

DT [00:10:15] Yes, definitely. At that time they had a full-ride scholarship with housing, meals, and everything. I was like, *That's perfect. That's what I want.* Growing up, my family didn't have a lot, and so it was just like, this is perfect. My best friend, too, in high school was going to UCA. Looking back on them, they were not things that I pick now, but at the time, those are my priorities. You know, like *a friend's going here, my mom out here, I'm getting a great scholarship, that's what I want.*

CH [00:10:55] That's a very sweet value [*laughing*]

DT [00:10:59] I had no idea how I got there. However I got there I'm glad I got there.

CH [00:11:06] Absolutely. You mentioned that the scholarship paid for your housing and your meals. What housing was available for you?

DT [00:11:15] I lived in New Hall. Farris Hall and New Hall were the options for incoming freshmen we had at that time. Maybe it is to this day, but [my cohort] was the biggest freshman class for a couple of years around my year. They just blew up the size to 150 of us in my class. I joke with my wife frequently, "Wow, I'm glad they had the class size bigger than. I'm not sure I would've made it in [*laughter*] if they hadn't had the class size so big." We had the [class] where we were just transitioning to Farris being the honors dorm. That was the one to get into if you were wanting four-person rooms and all that. New hall had just

two-person rooms. I'm super introverted and so I was like, *Just one roommate!* I wanted to live in new hall. I think that we ended up having at least half of the freshmen living there and then the upperclassmen were living in Farris if I remember right. Then after that, they started trying to do everybody into Farris. I lived in New Hall for three of the four years that I was there because I liked it a lot.

CH [00:12:39] Did you have any initial impressions about the honors college that you formed during the application process or the interview?

DT [00:13:03] At the interview, I think at least a little bit, I started to see that it was a kind of small, tight-knit community kind of thing that I didn't think about while I was applying. I just thought, *honors college, whatever.* But when I got there to the interview touring the resident halls and touring McAlister and thinking like, *Wow, you know, this is just it's like a tight-knit group of people on a big college campus.* That was very appealing to me, I was an introvert and still am, so that was a big bonus.

CH [00:13:39] During the application or interview, were you made aware of what the curriculum would be?

DT [00:13:46] Yes, they were very upfront. I think we may have even had a pretty detailed sample core one curriculum or core one syllabus— I'm trying to remember what they gave us for materials. But Yes, I remember it being very thorough. All the signs were right in front of me about what honors could have been I just didn't see them at the time. They were very forthcoming about that, like what honors was and the curriculum. Especially core one, they

were really trying to push, “This is what you're going to be doing immediately. You're going to jump right in.”

CH [00:14:26] Did those expectations match with your experience, specifically in core one?

DT [00:14:36] Yes, that's the dividing point for me. From week one, I started to feel like, *OK, this is a place where I can really learn new things.* And not just that. I think the biggest thing that I got from honors and that I saw even from the first few weeks of honors core one was this is how I can interact with a bunch of people who were some[what] similar to me but in a lot of ways different than me. I can figure out how other people think and why, how to interact and deal with them in the world. That was pretty quick, within a few weeks is like, *Wow, this is very different than I really thought.* And the education part of it is less focused on like *Oh I'm doing this for Med School* and more like, *Oh, this is how I'm going to grow as a person.*

CH [00:15:30] How was having Allison, Dr. Allison Wallace, as your core one professor?

DT [00:15:37] She was good. [*laughing*] Yes, I really enjoyed that. It was a while ago, but it seems like a really long time ago. Back in core one she'd go on and she'd flip the switch on and off, and being super stern and one minute and then she'd be joking with you. Eventually, she did seem kind of intimidating sometimes, even after. You'd think, *Oh, she's actually kind of pissed right now.* [*laughing*] Then I had to figure out when she was joking or not! I really enjoyed Allison's [class], it's been a long time since I've seen her. She was really good in core one.

CH [00:16:19] [Are] there any particular readings or discussions from core one that still stands out to you?

DT [00:16:28] For small groups stuff, we would focus on the readings, but it seemed like more of a class was it was more, “OK, let's just put you in a situation.” That's what Allison always would do. Put you in this situation like, “Dean! You're a whatever and somebody tells you this. What do you do?” That's what I remember more than anything. I remember doing the readings and doing the discussions and writing papers about the allegory of the cave. I remember those things, but that's not what sticks out to me about core one. It was Allison being like, “All right, in this situation what do you do?” And then she would say, “That's a terrible decision!” [*laughing*]. “Why did you decide that?” Then you'd like to switch your position and she would say, “No, why did you switch your position so easily?!” [*laughing*]

CH [00:17:37] With Allison, I'm going to say, lovingly pushing you, do you think that you were able to find the self?

DT [00:17:50] I think so. I think that honors as a whole, the biggest thing for me in the self is just finding out how you fit with everyone else. For me, it was discovering how to interact with other people and realize that even though their beliefs are different from mine, I can have a conversation with them. I can understand where they're coming from and have a great discussion about everything. Keep the discussion going, keep the conversation going. I'm a very ‘living in my own head’ kind of person, and so I never really thought about it until then. These are things that I never even like dreamed of thinking about before, like honors. But I live in my own head a lot and so myself is here [*points to head*]. I never thought about that

honors. Through all of honors, my experience like, *Yeah, you know, I'm in my own head a lot, but that's okay.* I learned a lot about myself and use it to my advantage.

CH [00:19:01] Transitioning from core one to core two, who did you have for your core two professor?

DT [00:19:09] I had Laura Bowles as my core two [professor]. The class was actually in New Hall. They were trying a new thing where they'd had a class— and I don't know if they still do it or not— but the class was in New Hall, they had a classroom downstairs. It was kind of weird that the class itself had a vastly different makeup. [*laughing*] We had some crazy characters in there. I don't know if you know who Cody Wilson is, but he was a guy that was in my class. You should, you should look him up after this. I'm sure he was big in the news for a while, maybe five or six years ago, maybe longer than that about making 3-D printed guns. Yes, that's him. Yes, he was in my class and he was in that core two class. And so it always seemed totally off the rails —because it's all about community. [Wilson in class] was this whole Libertarian off the rails like, “Communities are a farce!” Everyone was just like, [*hesitantly*] “Okay?” We'd spend like half the classes doing that, that's what I remember most about core two. But I would say as a whole what I got out of honors, the community aspect of it was probably the biggest thing I got out of it. But that class, in particular, that's all I remember [*laughing*].

CH [00:20:52] Now in core two, as of 2020, we do a community service project, but it's known as a community service project. What was your core two community service project, if you remember?

DT [00:21:12] I really don't. I don't even know if we did that. I mean, I remember a lot about my classes, but I don't remember doing it. Maybe as a class, we did something? I don't think as a singular core two class. Yes, I really don't remember doing anything specific like a local— I think that would have been a good idea if we did. Maybe we did and I can't remember, after how many years ago.

CH [00:21:44] You said that mostly the discussions in the classroom in core two stood out to you, did any of those readings? Like those we talked about for core one?

DT [00:22:00] I would say probably way less than core one the readings stood out to me. I will tell you another background thing is this is that I met my wife [then]. We were both in honors, but I met her the second semester of freshman year. We did a lot of hanging out and being together like that freshman semester. We were trying to do the readings and we talk to each other about what was going on in the readings. The core two readings I remember us being like, "I didn't like these as much [as core one]." I honestly cannot pick out a reading from core two that I remember the name of [*laughing*].

CH [00:22:52] It is very sweet to hear that you met your wife [in honors]. I know that a lot of people find their partners within the Honors College. What is that like?

DT [00:23:10] We were in the same class, and even though there were 150 [students] and it was a bigger class, we both knew each other, but we just didn't spend any time together. We were both sitting in there on the honors retreat when they were like, "All right! Some of you might fall in love and get married here!" I don't think it was really on the radar for either one of us. We kind of became the den mom and dad after freshman year. We were mentors second

year and we were just kind of like the old mom and pop of the group for a lot of sophomores, junior and senior year [*laughing*].

CH [00:23:56] You mentioned something about the honors retreat and that is an experience that I personally didn't get. I didn't get a freshman retreat, I got a sophomore retreat.

DT [00:24:08] I was wondering, was going to ask you what happened with that for you?.

CH [00:24:12] Ours got pushed back to a sophomore retreat. I still enjoyed mine, though I'm curious to hear about your experience at the honors retreat.

DT [00:24:23] My experience at the honors retreat. A couple of things: So I know it was at Petite Jean, at Winrock, which was awesome. It was great. The setting was great. We got to take everyone out there out there just spend the weekend, kind of figuring out everybody. We'd been like a month into— like it was in late September. And so we've been in school for a month and a half. We were still feeling each other out. The setting was great. I ended up staying in a like, I don't know— they had like hotel-ish style lodges up there. There are three or four of these dormitory-style things that were somewhere between a hotel in a dorm. It's nicer than a dorm but it's not quite like a hotel. You could fit 50 to 75 people in one of these things. So they had a couple of those. Then somehow, we had so many people in that freshman class that six of us got stuck out into this thing that was like a mile away. I think they called it the Pines. It was like a cabin. They had plans to bus us to and from the [retreat], they'd come out with the little van and get us in the mornings and take us back in the evenings. But for a big group of honors freshmen that we were, we stayed up till three, four a.m. So I remember there's a couple of guys out there with me that— [*laughing*] I think there

was for of us in this one cabin. For whatever reason [*laughing*] the three people that stayed with me all ended up not finishing honors. We stayed up way late. After staying up all night, we walked back at like six a.m. having like 10 percent of a clue about where we were going. We walked off and wandered off into the forest, and we were trying to figure out how where we were going. We finally got there on no sleep and sat for like two hours until the van came and got us for the morning get-together lecture. We would stay up and play poker and being 18-year-old kids. It was a lot of fun just getting to know everybody and sitting around a big room and interacting with people that you kind of knew that they were getting to know on a better level. It was a lot of fun, but kind of a strange experience because I stayed so far out.

CH [00:27:14] You mentioned that you got to meet a whole lot of people or connect more with them. Are you still in contact with the friends that you made and honors?

DT [00:27:26] Yes, a lot of them. Because the class was so big, it's not quite like it is now for you guys and before you were there. Yes, definitely. A lot of the people that from honors, I'm at least casual acquaintance contact with. A good handful of them we're still really good friends with. What is one that I would count as a really good friend but we don't talk a whole lot. We spend a lot of time apart and then you're talking and you're back there in the same spot.

CH [00:27:59] You're definitely still in contact with your wife, too, right? [*laughing*]

DT [00:28:04] [*laughing*] I'm still in contact with my wife, for sure. Definitely.

CH [00:28:10] Taking a step back outside of honors for a minute, were you involved in any extracurriculars UCA on campus?

DT [00:28:24] Yes, I did a few. And when I first came on I was so excited about extracurriculars for med school applications. The main couple I was really involved with—we had a med society that was learning what you needed to do to get into med school, take the MCAT, and all these things. It was fun. I think I was the treasurer one year and the president one year. We had meetings and the further along you got, the more you would help the freshmen and sophomores. [You'd] be like, “Those are things you need to do and classes take” and all these things. That group was kind of sponsored by the American Medical Student Association. They had like a pre-med chapter at all these colleges. It was kind of like a national organization, like it was the UCA pre-med club. It was like UCA pre-med AMSA. We would go to these regional meetings once a year. I went and it was actually the pre-med regional director for the South. It was like seven or eight states and we had a great time going and just essentially meeting other people from other states that were doing the same things we were. Taking UCA, we would go on road trips and drive. We drove to Atlanta one year for this thing and it was just like four or five of us in a car. That was a lot of fun. I Probably the most fun one I did, which I don't even sure if it's around now. It kind of died out like halfway through when I was there. We had a UCA quiz bowl team together, which was a lot of fun. It was really just like a group of five or six of us who were like, “Why isn't there a UCA quiz bowl team? We should just get together and make one.” It was my sophomore year and we did, and we went out and competed for a couple of years. We'd play these big schools and we beat Kansas State and all these bigger schools. Later on, though we would get hammered by all these other huge schools, but we had so much fun doing it. It was the best. We were like the ragtag band of people who just rolled out of bed. All these people that had really hardcore

quiz bowl teams three different teams from the same college. We really just rolled out of bed and came in. It was a lot of fun.

CH [00:30:57] Yes. So and you said that was your sophomore year, correct?

DT [00:31:01] Sophomore and junior year we did that. As we all got farther along and busier with like graduate plans and all these things, it just kind of died out. I don't know what happened to that sense.

CH [00:31:15] I personally don't know anything about [if quiz bowl is still around]. That doesn't say anything, though [*laughing*]. I know very little about UCA. You also mentioned that you and your wife were mentors, and that is something that you usually do during your sophomore year. Were you a mentor your sophomore year?.

DT [00:31:36] Yes, we were mentors our sophomore year. Whit was a mentor too, I think, actually, she was a junior at the time. Yeah, she was a mentor that same year because it was a mixture. I think actually it was like half and half. I think about half the people— because if it was the second year of mentors, I think, or the first year. It was either the first or second year that they had done it. They were still kind of experimenting as to how they wanted to do it. And I think it ended up being all sophomores later on. But it was, Yes, it was about half and half juniors and sophomores. It was fun at times. They were kind of feeling out like how to do it and what exactly it was going to be. Sometimes it kind of felt like, “Oh, I don't really know what you're supposed to be doing or what your duties entail.” I did find one piece of memorabilia from honors was a skit we did as mentors and all of the—oh what did they call them at the time. Short/Denney and Hughes, they all had these college experiences where

they had mentors. We all got together, and the mentors would put on skits. Ours was this really deep and dark theme where we were like mobsters. Mike Allen, who [my wife and I] are still really good friends with Mike and Amanda Allen. Mike was the Resident Master of New Hall when we lived there. He and Amanda were graduate students and they now live in New Jersey, but even though they were a few years older than us and they were in graduate school, My wife and I became really good friends with them. Amanda had been my wife's sister's good friend back when she was in honors, and we're really good friends with them. Mike was the mentor leader at the time. We were all Italian mobsters and like, he was Don Creep-e Anyway, people died and skits were shot. All the other mentor groups were kind of taken aback, I think. But that was one of the most fun things we did as a group of mentors. And I still have the script from the skit that we did. It's like just the word by word of what we did. Then I have Mike's name tag that says, "Don Creep-E."

CH [00:34:32] That's so funny. I don't think that the mentors still do that, but I will bring it up to them.

DT [00:34:42] I guess it was a lot of fun. Again a lot of the other ones are like pretty— I can't find the right words. They were just run-of-the-mill skits. Like, *Oh I know that's kind of funny, they're impersonating people.* Then we were just like at this like deep line plot where like mobsters were killing people. It was pretty fun.

CH [00:35:10] Other than the skit, do you have any other memorable moments being a mentor?

DT [00:35:16] I did enjoy meeting the freshmen that I still think of them, especially the ones that I was friends with and still am. That was part of what I liked about honors was the later you got—the sophomore, junior, senior year— I like being a mentor. I did. I was an ambassador, too. I kind of like guiding people along and saying, like, “Here's what you can do.” And that was my favorite part of being a mentor was being able to say to those freshmen that we were mentors and say, “You know, I was here. You’ve got questions. You can always come to us.” Just kind of like the day-to-day stuff. We did movie nights and put together stuff for them in New Hall. We had a specific programming that we did sometimes. The biggest thing was just kind of the day-to-day. They’d stop me in the hall and say, “Hey, how’s Allison’s core one?” All these just random things that the day-to-day kind of stuff that was the best part about being a mentor.

CH [00:36:22] You've mentioned a few times that you think of yourself as an introverted personality. Yet, I hear that you were a mentor and an ambassador. So what compelled you to do those things that don't necessarily fit with the introvert in you?

DT [00:36:44] I have gradually over the years – and my wife is somewhat responsible for this– but I'm more extroverted during certain periods. I can carry on being an extrovert for a little while, but it really just drains me. I particularly enjoy the process of already having a group of people that you're friends with and spending time with them. It's that new stage of like not knowing people, so like the ice breaker stage, that's the one that I'm just like, *I'm not a fan of that*. Over the years, [I've] practice[d] the art of the introvert becoming an extrovert for certain periods of time.

CH [00:37:33] I can personally say that I think you're doing a good job [at being extroverted]. You're conducting an oral history [*laughing*]

DT [00:37:39] Thanks, my job, too, has kind of forced me to be to interact with people all the time.

CH [00:37:46] What career path did you end up in?

DT [00:37:51] I went to med school and I went to a family medicine residency in India, actually. Then I went, and I came back to live in Berryville and work as a family physician. I work in a clinic seeing patients in the outpatient setting. Then I work in the hospital that's in Berryville too, seeing people that are in the hospital.

CH [00:38:11] Would you say that honors helped contribute to you finding your career path or influenced you in one direction or another?

DT [00:38:22] I would say that they let me find my career path in spite of myself. I thought *I'm on this track that it's like a train track that's unmovable, headed towards a career being a doctor*. The farther I got into it, the more I realized it was what I wanted to do. I think a lot of people have the same feeling of discovery that they were headed towards wasn't what they wanted to do, but it ended up being what I wanted to do just for different reasons. I enjoyed the science and the process of becoming a doctor, but I do enjoy helping people, figuring out people's problems, and helping them through what's going on. I would say honors really helped me in spite of myself, kind of get on that career path and actually realize that, *Hey, this is it*. I guess the biggest thing they would be to help me evaluate, why I wanted to do

these things and why I was doing what I was doing. Whether that was on my career path, daily life, or whatever. Of course, I spent a lot of time with Doug in honors, and so he was my favorite person in honors, I think. One of the books we read, and I think it was a junior seminar class with him or maybe it was a bioethics class [I took] with him too. Maybe in that class. It was *Examined Life*, was the book. And it's basically just examining what you do. Every time you're thinking [about] what you're doing, reevaluating periodically, this is what you do, and if you do that, you'll kind of really know why you're doing what you're doing.

CH [00:40:17] I'm making note of that book.

DT [00:40:19] It's really good. [*points off-camera to bookshelf*] It's over on the bookshelf somewhere in front of me. It's really good and I liked it a lot. The content sometimes is dry, but the meaning behind it was like, *Yeah!* I think that was a junior seminar because we did a lot in that class about examining like decision making and why you're doing what you're doing. It's OK to have a lot of different reasons. People have different reasons for what they're doing, but the important thing is to know what yours is.

CH [00:40:50] You mentioned Professor Doug Corbitt, who's your favorite person and honors what makes him stick out?

DT [00:41:02] I guess because I aspired to be somewhat like Doug because he has a lot of qualities that I wish I had in myself and that he— probably the biggest one— is that he finds the good in everyone and wants and tries to find the good in everyone. I don't always do that—I rarely do actually—but he's always, in every situation, thinking about *What is good and valuable in this person, even if they're not doing good and valuable things right now?* And

that's definitely something I aspire to do. You can have a conversation with him about everything. He seemed to know something about everything, there did not seem to be a topic that he didn't know something about.

CH [00:41:50] In the few years that I've been here. Doug has been notorious for having pranks played on him and just having a sense of humor.

DT [00:42:01] Yes, he's got a good sense of humor.

CH [00:42:04] So I have to ask, were you able to prank Doug?

DT [00:42:10] I never actually tried to prank Doug. I saw a lot, even when I was in honors. I would hang out in Doug's office a good bit, and I never was a part of doing any pranks, but it seemed like all the time people were doing something with his— he always had like huge stacks of papers and, things scattered all over his office. He also knew where everything was. And people that always come in and leave him notes [that said], “I moved this, good luck finding this.” I never did any of that stuff, but it was hilarious watching it from his office.

CH [00:42:52] That makes me happy. I think Doug will probably listen to each of these oral histories and will become weepy [*laughing*].

DT [00:43:03] Yes. [*laughing*] Oh, of course. But that's one of the good things about Doug, is that he knows his emotions and he uses them.

CH [00:43:12] It's very admirable. So speaking of professors, did you know Norb?

DT [00:43:21] I knew Norb, but just on an acquaintance basis. I knew who he was and if he saw me on campus kind of wave, but I never really had anything more than a casual conversation with Norb. The people in my year I think were some of the last people to have him in a class. I think it was our sophomore or junior year—was that the last? Maybe it was even my senior year that was the last time he taught a class. I just never spent any significant time with Norb. He knew my face, I knew him, but nothing more than that really.

CH [00:44:03] Outside of the Honors College, but still opportunities that the Honors College like fed into, were you able to travel abroad or do any of your own research?

DT [00:44:20] I did a couple of things. [laughing] With the TAG grant people [would say], “I traveled to this far away country, and [do] these really nice and cool things for people.” My wife ended up doing a paper on [TAG trip], and I didn't actually do a TAG grant. She did the TAG grant for herself. I went with her. We spent a week in New York City and we did like all the touristy things, which up until that point we had never traveled far away and done anything like that in our lives. We watched a lot of Broadway shows. Mike and Amanda Allen, who I talked about earlier, had moved up to New York and we visited them. We went and did all these really fun, amazing things that we still talk about to this day. She actually did a paper on John Dewey and Central Park—the history of Central Park. Basically the educational value of something that like Central Park brings to people. She ended up kind of doing a similar thing for her thesis, that was actually really cool as well. I did some research, but I never did an URGE grant. I did some undergraduate research, but it was extremely boring, and I kind of wish I had not done it. It was not URGE grant worthy [laughing].

CH [00:46:06] What was your research on?

DT [00:46:09] [*laughing*] It was about a single-celled organism, Dictyostelium, and how— it's a yeast, a budding yeast. How do I make this not a long story? So it's a budding yeast that is a single set organism that by studying my professor Dr. Naylor— I think she may still be at UCA she was a biology professor I think —she was trying to figure out basically a link to our own organelles like the mitochondria and things came from these single-celled organisms that have these analogous things inside them that at some point had evolved to forming these relationships with other organisms that eventually became part of them. That's how we got to have mitochondria and all these other things as organelles inside of ourselves. It was hilariously boring. It taught me some research skills. It was definitely the process of it was good, but the research itself was like [*cringes*].

CH [00:47:29] Did that have anything to do with your capstone or senior thesis for honors?

DT [00:47:37] Nothing at all.

CH [00:47:39] What was your capstone for honors?

DT [00:47:43] I did my thesis —it was a traditional research— I worked with Doug. He was my advisor and it was “Frontline Physicians Making Family Physicians the Focus of Our Primary Health Care in the United States.” Mainly just to illustrate that there are a lot of people whose only interaction they have with a doctor is a primary care doctor in a small town. That's what I wanted to do was go to a small town, be a doctor a. I spent a lot of time researching the financial and all these benefits. There's this huge laundry list of benefits to focusing the

health care system on primary care rather than specialist care. Got to some bioethics. Doug was very helpful on that and I was having a good time. The paper itself ended up probably meh, pretty boring for most people. The process of writing it was a lot more frantic.

CH [00:48:46] I mean, as long as it was something that you were really interested in, you

DT [00:48:49] It really has and it still is. It's still a relevant topic. I haven't read it in years, but I did enjoy doing it. It's something that's very relevant that I still believe in.

CH [00:49:04] While your thesis is still something that you still hold very dear to your life, the values of it. Is there anything else that you learned from the Honors College that you would say still impacts your almost daily life?

DT [00:49:22] Definitely. I think just like a summary of everything I learned in honors. Basically focused on two things helping me know who I am and helping me understand that whatever "other" is out there, they're going to maybe have different ideas than me, but don't approach them as the "other," approach them as a human being and someone who has value, has good ideas, and that you can have a conversation with. That's something that every day forever will probably use. In the last five or 10 years, it just seems like more relevant every year that that's the thing I got from the Honors College. It started with meeting a bunch of people freshman year that had backgrounds that I had never experienced. All the way through the content of the curriculum and talking with professors and everything just seemed kind of focused on realizing that there are other people out there, there are things you've never even heard or thought of that are going to be coming in front of you when you see them, you know,

turn this eye towards them and start with a blank slate of no preconceived notions and you'll be helping yourself.

CH [00:50:47] That is a that is a very honors-y – and might I add Doug – philosophy.

DT [00:50:51] Yes [*laughing*].

CH [00:50:53] That's very sweet. After spending this time reflecting on the Honors College, would you encourage prospective students to apply for the honors college?

DT [00:51:08] Definitely, and I do. I was an ambassador during honors. Since then, we've stayed pretty close. We're good friends with Tricia. My wife was taking pictures of her twins when they were babies. I remember going up to daffodil fields when they were like two or something and she was taking pictures of them. We stayed in close contact with a lot of people from honors. We've tried to be involved, talking to prospective students when we've been able to. I definitely recommend it [to] people in my hometown. [They'd ask] "what do you think? You went through this." Definitely. 100 percent recommend.

CH [00:51:56] Was there anything particular that sparked your interest in a class or from a reading that you've continued pursuing after honors?

DT [00:52:14] From an academic standpoint, probably not really. But, my two favorite classes – and the ones that I remember the most from and probably the one that I took the most from– I guess would be the suffering class. It was a class on suffering I took with Doug. It sounds crazy to be like, "I took a class on suffering here." But we read all these books

where these entire populations of people were made to suffer. There were just so many. Just book after book of all these people. It was some of my fiction, some nonfiction. I think actually most of them were nonfiction, and it was like firsthand accounts of what happened during the Holocaust and what happened in the Rwandan genocide. All these things that these entire populations suffered, but how they found meaning through it. Even in those times and what they took with them for the rest of their lives, like, “These bad things happened to me, I found meaning [and] I found a way to help other people to not have those same things happen to them, but also if they have to help them through it.” The main reason [it stood out to me] was the group of people. I mentioned my core ii class [and how] discussions kind of got off the rails a lot. For whatever reason, this group of people was not people that I hung out with a lot or saw a lot of other than that one class. But I remember it vividly. We had it on the third floor, McAllister in one of the classrooms there. It was just the perfect group of people. We always had like really deep, pertinent discussions and people brought up things that like, *wow, I hadn't thought of that*. Again, [people] I didn't spend a lot of time with outside of there, but there was a great group of people to have a discussion with them. We were always like spinning and we were like five minutes over talking about things in class.

CH [00:54:26] That sounds so sweet and I will have to pester Doug to bring that class back because I want to take that.

DT [00:54:31] It was great. I still have every book we read in that class, I still have on our bookshelves. It was awesome.

CH [00:54:38] By like interacting with me and Whit through this process [of this oral history], and also [keeping] in touch with the faculty and some of the people you connected

with, do you feel that the Honors College continues to like, strive or live up to these standards established by Norb and the first generation of honor students?

DT [00:55:06] Definitely. [My wife and I] came in at the same time, she graduated in [20]11 because she did some extra stuff with getting a special-ED certification. We've both been out of honors for 11 years now and every time we come around, we'll sit in Lanita's office and there'll be freshmen coming in. Before COVID, we did [*laughing*]. We'd come in and it just seems like the spirit is always the same. Everybody is in a close-knit community and really just it's something I'm not seeing anywhere else. I definitely feel like the spirit of honors and what Norb brought to the table is still there.

CH [00:56:00] Do you have any last comments or questions for me before we wrap up this interview?

DT [00:56:09] What are your plans for life after college?

CH [00:56:13] Oh no! [*laughing*] You have you've turned the tables on me.

DT [00:56:19] Yeah.

CH [00:56:20] I recently added a minor in professional writing, and I am an English major. So, I am hopefully on the path to publishing. I'm working on applying to internships and but then also I think any career where I can help people I absolutely love. Right now, I'm one of the peer coaches and it is just one of the best experiences that I've had.

DT [00:56:52] Where are you from? I don't know if I got that the other day.

CH [00:56:57] I'm from Lonoke [Arkansas].

DT [00:56:59] Lonoke, Yes. It's probably about the same size as Nashville. I don't know.

CH [00:57:06] [*laughing*] It's a very small town.

DT [00:57:08] Yes. Maybe compared to some places it's bigger but for most people, it's a small town.

CH [00:57:15] It's a small town whenever you know it has less than two stoplights.

DT [00:57:22] My wife, she's from Salem over by Mountain Home, and she always talks about how she remembers when they put the one stoplight in.

CH [00:57:33] I also have a memory of that for Lonoke.

DT [00:57:37] Nashville has five stoplights. We got our fifth one when our Wal-Mart went to a Super-Wal-Mart, we got the fifth stoplight. Now that's a bustling metropolis there [*laughing*].

CH [00:57:53] Do you have any last comments about your experience in the Honors College, before, or after?

DT [00:58:02] I think I've covered pretty much everything. I really enjoyed it. A lifetime's worth of memories, for sure in the years that we were there. It's definitely the people that we kept in contact with and the memories that we made and the way we changed. Like I said, I didn't know it at the time, but it was a place I needed to be. I didn't necessarily get there and what I would say was the right way, but I'm glad I did because it definitely changed my life.

CH [00:58:33] I actually do have one last question for you. So as a current student, I am always looking for advice. Do you have any advice for me, whether it be in the Honors College, college, or just in life?

DT [00:58:50] Just I would just say to enjoy their college years. Strive to do what you want and find the career path that you want to get on and get on it. But really take some time to enjoy the college life itself. To this day, we've been out of college for a long time but my wife and I still just love [it]. I guess I don't know if lack of responsibility is the right word, because you still have a lot of responsibilities, but freedom to create your own day, a lot of times. Those are the parts about college that I feel like we did enjoy and are glad we did because it was a good time. Enjoy the freedom of college.

CH [00:59:43] Thank you so much.

DT [00:59:45] Thank you. Thanks for doing this, I hope everything goes well.

CH [00:59:50] Thank you for your time, Dean, and this concludes the interview.