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SCHEDLER HONORS COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Cathrine Schwader Oral History Interview Transcription

Narrator Name: Ziegler, Griffin

Interviewer Name: Schwader, Cathrine

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Location of Interview: Little Rock, AR (Remote Interview - Zoom Recording)

Acronyms:

GZ = Griffin Ziegler (Interviewer)

CS = Cathrine Schwader (Narrator)

UCA = University of Central Arkansas

AP = Advanced Placement

TA = Teacher's Assistant

NWACC = Northwest Arkansas Community College

U of A = University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Interview Summary

The following is a recorded oral history interview with Cathrine Schwader conducted by Griffin Ziegler on April 2, 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.

GZ [00:00:02] This is Griffin Ziegler with the Schedler Honors College Oral History Project. Today is April 13th and I am interviewing Cathrine Schwader, who is in Little Rock, Arkansas. We will be talking about Cathrine's experience leading up to, during, and after their time in the Honors College. Please state your name and age for the recording.

CS [00:00:27] I'm Cathrine Schwader. I'm thirty one.

GZ [00:00:30] What year did you went to the Honors College?

CS [00:00:33] Entered the Honors College the fall of 2008.

GZ [00:00:39] When did you graduate from college?

CS [00:00:42] May 2012.

GZ [00:00:50] So, Cathrine, what are your pronouns?

CS: She/her.

GZ: Where are you from?

CS [00:00:57] I'm from Rogers, Arkansas.

GZ [00:01:00] Well, I know a little bit about Rogers, so I know it's a bigger town. Did you like growing up there?

CS [00:01:07] yes, I liked it. We moved there when I was three, and that's all I really have a memory of. It's definitely grown a lot more since I was a kid, but I enjoyed it.

GZ [00:01:20] Where'd you move from?

CS [00:01:23] My parents had just lived in a bunch of rentals in Northwest Arkansas, Bella Vista Bentonville, but they bought the house in Rogers and moved there when I was three.

GZ [00:01:36] Would you consider Rogers a good place to grow up?

CS [00:01:40] yes, sure. Going back now, I'm faced with how conservative an area it is, and I don't particularly love that. But somehow I found my little bubble growing up. I don't really know how that happened, but somehow all the friends I made, even though we didn't talk about politics, all the friends I made from middle school onwards—we're liberal and very different than most people in the area.

GZ [00:02:13] What did your parents do for a living?

CS [00:02:16] My mom is a music educator. She had several different jobs when I was growing up. Music teacher for Garfield Elementary School and also a music appreciation instructor for the Northwest Arkansas Community College. That is now where she works full time as a music faculty

as well as the faculty professional development coordinator. And my dad works for a Wal-Mart distribution center.

GZ [00:02:47] What is your ethnicity/race?

CS [00:02:51] White/Caucasian.

GZ [00:02:55] OK. What is your family dynamic like? Do you have any siblings, extended family?

CS [00:03:01] Yes, I've got an older sister. She's about three years older and growing up. I had two parents on my father's side, an aunt with Down Syndrome. She was non-verbal, or is nonverbal, so I didn't have a close relationship there. Otherwise that was kind of the extent of my dad's family. My mom has a larger, extended family, many of whom, cousin-wise, lived in southwest Missouri so I got to spend time with them as I was a kid. But, pretty much, my core family was my maternal grandmother who lived near and with my parents for the last few years of her life and my sister and my parents and I.

GZ [00:03:44] And when did your grandmother pass away?

CS [00:03:49] Think it was October 2018.

GZ [00:03:53] That's pretty recent.

CS [00:03:55] Yes, relatively. She was 92. She lived a long time.

GZ [00:04:02] Did your parents have any influence over your education?

CS [00:04:08] Definitely. My dad dropped out of college, so he only ever had a high school diploma, and I think he felt like that limited him a lot. So, he had a lot of aspirations for his children. Granted, I did not go into engineering like he wanted me to, but he's still proud of me. My mom being an educator, of course, had a lot of strong opinions about my education and being a music educator. She had strong opinions on that as well. So, I was in band throughout sixth grade through graduating and she really wanted me to also be in band in college. But I didn't want to do that because I didn't want to go into anything music related. But she was very much a—not strict—but she gave the message of “When you're going to college, you're not there to blow off, you know, you got to go to your classes. No one's there to make you, but you still need to go.” And for the most part, I think I maybe skipped one or two classes my entire time at UCA. She definitely drilled that in me.

GZ [00:05:12] So you said that you were in band in middle school and high school. Was that because she made you do band or did you want to do band?

CS [00:05:21] Yes, and no. She made us do it, but also I liked doing it. All my friends were from band. When I stopped playing, when I got to college, I didn't really miss it until, like, if I went to a concert any time. I would go to a concert, I'd be like, “Oh, I miss this,” I miss being part of the ensemble.

GZ: What did you play?

CS: Clarinet? Oh yes, which was not really my choice.

GZ: Was that your mother's?

CS: No, she wanted me to play, oh my God, baritone. I just forgot the word for a second. But I didn't wanna do that because she plays tuba. And I was like, "You just want me to be miniature you. I'm not going to do that." So I don't know if I rebelled and chose clarinet, because it was almost as far away as possible. I think I just did it because my sister was three years older, played clarinet, and I was just like, "We've already got one in the house. Christine plays it. I might as well play it." I don't love clarinet, but you know.

GZ [00:06:23] Yes. Did you have a lot of friends who, how do I say this? I guess you did say you had a lot of band friends and I was a band kid, so I understand that I know how it goes.

CS: What do you play?

GZ: I play trombone and I was actually a music major, but I switched last year. Decided I didn't want to do it. But I know I had a lot of friends from band going off to university and doing university band. Was isolating for you, not having that experience?

CS [00:06:57] No, because the Honors College did become my band of sorts. When I was younger and in school, my friends were almost all from band. I had a few friends that I wasn't quite as close with, but still good friends who were from my other Honors classes, AP or other classes. But with the Honors College, it really did foster a community. I was able to make friends quite quickly through the Honors College, and I didn't feel like I missed out on the community aspect that I got from band, as you know, a junior high and high schooler.

GZ [00:07:39] That's good, that's good. So your last name, I did want to ask, what are the origins of your last name? Are your parents like—do they come from a family of immigrants?

CS [00:07:56] Not really. We haven't done full family history, but definitely not recent immigrants. It's a German last name. My mother's maiden name is also German. Ironically, though, my parents did one of those DNA tests a few years ago. My dad grew up thinking he was German because he's got this last name—Schwader, you know, Schwader [different pronunciation]--however you say it in German, and he had this affinity for German culture growing up. He took German classes, and he eventually went to Germany once with his German class and then once with me and my sister. We found out he's five-percent German, according to the DNA test. So, it's definitely a German name. But according to the Ancestry.com DNA test, I am not a majority German, despite both of their names. I'm actually more kind of British Isles. We knew my grandmother was Irish. Her maiden name was O'Connor. Her dad came from Ireland. So, the closest link we have to any immigration is my great grandfather who came from Ireland. But we were kind of surprised by how much of the DNA test came back as England, Wales and Ireland.

GZ [00:09:15] How would you describe your high school experience?

CS [00:09:21] You know, it was actually pretty good. I was definitely a nerd, I was in all the AP classes. I was in band, but didn't really get teased or anything like you would expect. I think it's because my high school was so big that it was fine. People can have their separate cliques. It was whatever. I think at the time Rogers hadn't split into two high schools yet so we were one of the biggest high school classes in the state. We had about seven hundred in my graduating class. Being in a bigger school, you're able to find those niche groups. I graduated in the top ten of my class and was one of six students who had all A's throughout all of high school. Most of what I participated in, though, was band, and academics, I wasn't in a lot of other clubs, but I had close friendships with my band nerd friends.

GZ [00:10:22] What high school were you going to?

CS: Rogers.

GZ: Was it just called Rogers High School?

CS [00:10:30] Yes. It's split now, so there's Rogers High School and there's Rogers Heritage High School. It was just Rogers High School when I went.

GZ [00:10:37] Forgive me, I'm not from Arkansas, so I don't exactly know how the Arkansas schools work. So, I had to ask—you said you took a lot of AP classes in high school. What kind of AP classes were you taking?

CS [00:10:53] I took AP Biology. I did not take AP physics because that was not my thing. I took AP Lit, Human Geography, AP Calculus. I think there is a few others, but those are the ones that I can remember.

GZ [00:11:15] Those sound like the standard ones that usually everybody takes.

CS [00:11:19] Yes, this is a personal grudge I have because I hold grudges, but I would have been ranked first in my class if I would have been allowed to take AP World History. But because my sister went first since, she took pre-AP world history and had a really hard teacher and got a B in the class after trying really hard. My mom's like, “Oh, I don't think you can take AP World History as a sophomore, that's going to be too hard.” She made me take regular world history, which, I don't know if you know about AP classes, but if you are in an AP class and if you get an A, your grade point for that is five instead of four. The more AP classes you take, the higher grade point can be

about five. The two people who are ranked above me were one of the others who got all A's. But they had one more AP class than me, and I kept thinking if I had just taken AP world history—but my mom wouldn't let me.

GZ [00:12:13] I had a friend who was in the top ten. I think she would have been number three, but she didn't take an extra AP class and unfortunately, that takes against your GPA. It really shouldn't, but it does.

CS [00:12:30] Yes, it was still a great GPA. It was still over 4.0. But just knowing that I wanted to take AP World History, all my friends took AP World History, but my mom wouldn't let me—I could have handled it—just because Christine had a hard time.

GZ [00:12:43] Yes. I took AP world history and it was a great class. It was definitely not the amount of hard everybody said it was, but I also took it at a different high school.

CS [00:12:55] The teacher I ended up having for world history, it was his very first year teaching, so he didn't really know what he was doing. He got pushed around by the students a lot because the students were ones who weren't used to taking hard classes, and they want it to be as easy as possible. But it is what it is. I turned out fine. But I could have had another feather in my cap if I had been tied for first instead of tied for third.

GZ [00:13:26] I mean, that's true, but being in the top 10 in my book is still really impressive. I couldn't have dreamed of that. That's a really, really impressive thing to carry with you. When did you first hear about UCA?

CS [00:13:47] I guess senior year as I was applying, I had never really considered UCA much being from Northwest Arkansas. Obviously, all we hear about is the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. That's the state school, and it's the closest one to where I grew up. I got a mailer about UCA, and I got something about the Honors College and I just applied on a whim because the scholarship application process for scholarships at the U of A is just a lot harder because they have a lot more students go there. And I was like, "Well, this one seems pretty easy. I just have to read this thing and write a couple of things—the reactions to it." I think I actually submitted my application the last day possible. UCA wasn't really at the top of my list and I applied for some other schools. I was interested in anthropology, so the University of Tulsa, which was two hours away from Rogers, they had a pretty good cultural anthropology program. I applied there and I applied to Missouri state, where my sister went, a few other places. But then I got invited to the interviews for the Honors College.

CS: I went, it was a lovely spring day. UCA's campus, it's not the prettiest in the world, but it's rather nice in the spring, with all the azaleas blooming and everything, and had a good day there. When I got to tour the dorms and I saw, all these are nice and I have my own room. You don't get that at the U of A, the honors college dorms there is where I stayed when I went to band camp as a kid. Those rooms are kind of old and shitty, so seeing Farris and how nice the private rooms were, when I got the offer, I was like, "Well, yeah, debt free and private dorms. I'll go there." It's a lot better than Fayetteville, who didn't give me that much scholarship and it was so close. My mom was like, "You can live at home," [I] didn't want to do that. She teaches at a community college and technically, I can take classes for free being her child. She's like, "You could start out, do your gen-eds at NWACC and then transfer." And I was like, "No, Mom, I'm an adult." I got a full ride at UCA. It's just as good, if not better than staying here and going to NWACC.

CS: I will say, though, my dream school was Hendrix, and I applied for the Hayes Memorial Scholarship there and got invited to the final round and did interviews, or whatever, at Hendrix. But they only select, I think, two people for that. It would have been a full ride. They offered me a good scholarship but it only covered about half and they were a lot more expensive being a private school. UCA was definitely the one who gave me the best deal and it was completely free. Granted, I shouldn't brag about this because I think it is not completely free now for Honors students. But at the time, Honors College scholarships covered everything.

GZ [00:17:01] Yes, I think that might be a thing that, well, there's a lot of politics behind it, honestly, but I know in my class we kind of got split on our funding—my class's specific year. So, kind of facing the unfortunate consequences of that. But it's good that UCA gave you a full ride. You said this in the pre-interview, your major was anthropology, or you wanted your major to be anthropology, right?

CS [00:17:33] Yes. Going into college, I hadn't studied anthropology, but I really enjoyed AP Human Geography and just talking with different people as I was considering what to major in college and cultural anthropology came up and I liked the sound of that. UCA didn't have an anthropology major at the time. There were just two professors in the department, so it was housed within the same department of sociology. I ended up majoring in sociology with a minor in anthropology, as well as Honors interdisciplinary studies minor.

GZ [00:18:09] If you had to go back and go to a different college that had your major and would have given that full ride, honors college or not, would you have chosen the other college?

CS [00:18:23] Knowing what I know now? That is a great question. I would be very tempted, but also probably not. Like I said, Hendrix was my first choice. That's really where I wanted to go and

not to be mean but Hendrix grads. I've met a lot of Hendrix grads being an adult now, working, living in Little Rock and a lot of them have not ended up anywhere particularly—I don't want to say special—but they're working in jobs that I would not necessarily want, like boring government jobs, like disability determinations services or working at local restaurants. I love local restaurants, I love cooking, I love food, but I don't necessarily want to have a restaurant job because they're hard and they don't pay well or just doing other things. I ended up where I wanted to be professionally. Knowing that, I also got a lot of really deep, lasting friendships out of the Honors College and I probably wouldn't have met those people, I mean, I wouldn't have met those people if I didn't go to UCA. I'd like to say I would still go to UCA. Being debt free is also great. I didn't have to take out any loans for undergrad. For grad school, I took out, I think, about \$15,000 and I have already paid it back. So definitely ahead of a lot of my peers in terms of student debt and not having any by the time I was 30. So, yes, I think I made some smart choices by going to UCA.

GZ [00:20:14] Where did you go to grad school?

CS: The Clinton School Public Service. [Shows certificate hanging on wall.]

GZ: yes, where is that? Is that in Arkansas?

CS [00:20:25] It's in Little Rock.

GZ [00:20:26] Yes, OK. I assume so because there's the Clinton Library in Little Rock.

CS [00:20:31] It's right next to the Clinton Library.

GZ [00:20:33] Well, I might have seen it and not known.

CS [00:20:36] Yes. The Clinton Library is the big metal and glass, kind of looks like a trailer, over the river right next to it in the parking lot for the Clinton Library is a two-story brick building that's called Sturgis Hall. It was a train depot. That's the Clinton School. That's where I went to grad school—right next to the Clinton Library.

GZ [00:20:57] I assume, do you focus on sociology in grad school as well?

CS [00:21:01] The Clinton School is a school within the University of Arkansas system, and the only degree they offer is a master's of public service, which was the first master's of public service in the country. I think one of the Bush schools ended up changing theirs to the Bush School of Government and Public Service, or something. I don't know. But yes, it's a very specialized degree.

GZ [00:21:28] What was your application to the Honors College like? I assume you had to write the essays and then you had your interview. Did you have an I² Day?

CS [00:21:41] I² Day sounds familiar. I don't remember. Is that the day where you go and do the interview and you sit in a couple of small discussion sessions? I definitely did that. I remember two of the people from I² Day that were in my group. They stood out because they were also from Northwest Arkansas, also ended up making it into the Honors College. One was Matt Duncan from Bentonville—Bentonville is like the rival school to Rogers—and the other was Leslie, and she was from Fayetteville. We, all three of us—Cindy was the professor leading our discussion group.

GZ [00:22:21] Did you have Cindy for Core I as well?

CS [00:22:25] Nope. I had Margaret Mead. She didn't work for the Honors College. I think she was in the writing department, but she would sometimes take her one classes.

GZ [00:22:36] You said Margaret Mead? Margaret Morgan, was it?

CS [00:22:38] Might be. Margaret Mead is a famous anthropologist. Margaret Morgan. That's the one.

GZ [00:22:49] I think it would have had to have been Margaret Morgan because there was another graduate I interviewed who talked about her. What was your experience in Core I with her? Did you like having her as a professor?

CS [00:23:03] To be honest, I don't remember her, basically, at all. In fact, I couldn't even remember who I had for Core I until I was discussing with another Honors grad a few years ago. It's like, why can't I remember who I had? It's because she wasn't an Honors professor. She just taught Core I occasionally. I didn't see her again after Core I, so I don't really remember her. What I remember about Core I was reading a lot of philosophy, which I had never read before. I never took a philosophy class, and to be honest, I don't remember a lot of what I read. My boyfriend is also an Honors College grad, and he loves philosophy and he remembers everything. Sometimes he'll be talking about something and he's like, "We've read this in Core I," and I'm like, "OK, I don't remember." But I remember doing a lot of journaling. I do remember the large group sessions a lot more than the regular, smaller Core I classes. But it was definitely my first introduction to philosophy. There was one reading—I don't remember that author, I don't remember what it's called—I just vaguely remember that it was about the golden past, and it's just, we always imagined things were better in the past or things will be better in the future once I'm this, once I achieve this, once I do that. It's kind of talking about how, yes, we always just glorify the golden past or looking

forward to the golden future, things will be better once this happens. That one kind of stood out to me and then I remember a little bit about it.

GZ [00:24:44] I don't think the readings changed. So it kind of rings a bell to me, and I should remember it because I took Core I last year, but it kind of rings a bell. What was your Core II class like? I assume that you took a professor that was stable in the Honors College.

CS [00:25:04] I had Core II with Phil Frana, who is not there now; but to be honest, I don't remember that much about that class either, except for it was a bit of a shit show because we had a lot of very vocal students and Phil was not able to manage the debates that would go on. Matt Duncan, the guy from Bentonville, who I met on my I² Day was one of them. He is now an actor. So, of course, he likes to hear himself talk. But being an introverted person who has a hard time speaking up and group debates. It was also just hard to, especially when it's a boisterous debate, to step into.

GZ [00:26:03] I totally get that. Would you say your professors recognize that fact? Of course, I guess there are students who it seems like they naturally join the debate and then there are other students who don't really. Like you described you[sic], it's not really your comfort zone, were there professors who acknowledged that and respected it or challenged you?

CS [00:26:34] Yes, I think most acknowledge that. I think the one professor I had the hardest time with, but the one professor who didn't really respect that or I don't know, I didn't have the best experience with, was Doug Corbitt because I didn't have him for anything until Oxford Tutorial. I didn't really know him well. I was a junior at that point, having not really had anything to do with him, except for the few times he did a large group lecture in Core I. I took Oxford Tutorial earlier than normal because I was hoping to study abroad my first semester of my senior year in France. If

I was going to be studying abroad, I couldn't take Oxford Tutorial abroad, but I could be working on my thesis abroad. So I took Oxford Tutorial early in my junior year. I was the only junior in the class. Everyone else was seniors and Doug knew everybody else. It just was kind of awkward not being in the class with my class because in Honors College, you do a lot with your class and you get to know everyone in your class really well, but you don't always get to know people in other classes as well. You can. I mean, there were ways through soapboxes and mentors and stuff like that, but this particular class just had students I hadn't really interacted with and I hadn't really interacted with Doug before. I was also an eight A.M. class and I'm not a morning person. So, an introvert who doesn't like morning classes and it was an eight A.M. class, I didn't really know anyone in it. So I guess I was kind of grumpy, but Doug definitely tried to push me to talk more and I was not feeling it.

GZ [00:28:26] I understand that, I can't blame you. I understand that, especially. Those are really unique circumstances, too, so I can understand how that would be hard. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but Oxford Tutorial is actually taken your junior year. I think at least it is now. Was that the case then? Was it taken the senior year?

CS [00:28:48] yes, I think in my case, most people took it their first semester of their senior year, and then they did their thesis second semester. Or maybe I took it first semester, my junior year, I don't know. I just know I took it earlier than anyone else in my class. Everyone in the class was there above me.

GZ [00:29:10] Because I know the way that they run it now is Oxford Tutorials is your first semester Junior class and then sophomores who want to graduate early or they have busy degrees or busy majors, they take it their sophomore year. So I wasn't sure.

CS [00:29:26] That's definitely different then. Yes, we did not take it that early. When I was there, you had Core I-IV, which was your freshman/sophomore year. And then you took other classes plus Oxford Tutorial and thesis your junior and senior year. But maybe they changed it because I had a lot of friends that had a hard time finishing their thesis and time to graduate on time. Some of them got extensions and finished their thesis over the summer. Some of them ended up being fifth year students, so maybe they changed it because they saw that one semester is not really enough time after our tutorial; plus, one semester for thesis isn't really enough time. But I think when I was there, yes, you did not take it. Did not take it first semester junior year, for sure.

GZ [00:30:21] They must have had to have changed it then, which I'm sure is comforting for you to know that it's not the same as it used to be because one year is definitely really hard to have your entire thesis and capstone developed, so it's definitely a good change. So when you lived on the UCA campus did you stay in Farris Hall?

CS [00:30:43] Yes. All four years.

GZ [00:30:45] All four years, you never moved off to an apartment?

CS: No.

GZ: So did you really enjoy living there?

CS [00:30:52] I did. The biggest issue for me was the lack of a kitchen. When I was first there, Farris didn't have any kitchen facility. We had access to New Hall across the courtyard. They had kitchens. But it's a lot harder to lug all your stuff across the courtyard and go into a dorm that's not your own. They ended up building kitchens in Farris my senior year and our scholarship covered a

meal program, so all of our meals. We had fifteen meals a week for the dining hall, so I didn't really need to cook, but I liked cooking. I think that's the only thing that I missed, would have led me to have an apartment. But now I liked living in Farris, especially junior and senior year. [I] Ended up finding roommates I really clicked with and we're still really close friends now. [I] talk to them all the time, was bridesmaid in two of their weddings. So, yes, finding the right people to run with that you jive with is great. And yes, with the private rooms there, I didn't really mind living in the dorm.

GZ [00:32:03] Did you ever get homesick?

CS [00:32:07] Not really. A little bit at first, mostly because my mom had a hard time letting go and she called me every day and I didn't have a car my first three years at UCA., so it was a little difficult sometimes to get home. I had two of my close friends from high school who ended up going to UCA as well, so I could usually catch a ride with one of them. But given that it was about a three hour drive from my parents to UCA and that I didn't have a car, I didn't go home too frequently. I mostly just went home for regular breaks: Thanksgiving, winter break, spring break. I don't think I really went home just for a weekend because there wasn't really enough time. But yes, I don't think I got homesick. I made some close friends, we kept busy.

GZ [00:32:59] Were you involved in any extracurricular stuff on campus?

CS [00:33:05] Yes, the main thing I was involved in was Sociology Club, which was headed by Cliff Beecham when I was there. He doesn't teach at UCA anymore, but I really liked Sociology Club and he was a big urban gardener. I was in through anthropology, was doing a lot of environmental anthropology stuff. Then with the sociology club being led by Cliff, we ended up doing a lot of service projects like Building Razorback Gardens for Habitats for Humanity and for the women's shelter and doing stuff like that. A sociology club was the main thing I was part of.

Through the Honors College I did end up being a mentor, my sophomore and junior year, a freshman mentor. That was extra work or activities at the college I was part of.

GZ [00:34:04] I'm a mentor now, currently, so I kind of know how it goes, you know? What made you decide to be a mentor a second year? Because I know most people do not.

CS [00:34:14] Most people do not. To be honest, they just had a hard time recruiting mentors, and Cindy reached out to me and one other mentor to ask if we would stay on another year. So, me and Ben were both mentors when we were juniors. Yes, I got to say, I was a less involved mentor my junior year just because I was busier and I was just like, "I got less time for this." Sophomore year, I was really into it because I had just been a freshman and there were a couple of the freshmen I was a mentor for when I was a sophomore that we became good friends. To be honest, when I was a junior, can't really name too many of those freshmen. I did it because somebody asked me to.

GZ [00:35:06] Do you regret doing it twice?

CS [00:35:08] I don't regret it. I feel bad that I didn't try as hard or be as involved my second year as a mentor. But no, I don't regret it.

GZ [00:35:22] So, you talked about having the meal plan on campus. You said it was fifteen meals a week. Was that the plan?

CS: Yes.

GZ: And was a meal the equivalent of a swipe at the cafeteria?

CS: Yes.

GZ: Did that include the student center?

CS [00:35:45] We had bearcash or bearbucks or whatever you call it. Per semester we would get fifteen swipes into the cafeteria a week and then we had \$100 in bearcash or whatever you call it, and we could use that at the student center if we wanted meals there. I mostly ate at the cafeteria; one, because it's pretty close to Farris and two, at the time I was vegetarian. There weren't a lot of great vegetarian options at the student center. Like I remember, they had an Einstein Brothers bagel and a Chick-fil-A, and a burger place. I didn't eat there as often.

GZ [00:36:31] That's more or less along the lines of what they have now. What were the vegetarian options like at the cafeteria?

CS [00:36:41] Not great. When I was there, there was always a salad bar, so I would do that. Sometimes there was always a pizza bar. So there was cheese pizza, not that it was great. There was the pasta bar they would have occasionally, but not all the time, where you could go have them make you pasta. Or maybe we made it. I don't remember. You can choose whatever ingredients you wanted plus throw some pasta in there. I did that a lot. I'd often take extra stuff from the salad bar because the vegetables they had at the pasta bar were fairly limited. But then, for hot entrees, I think they would always have three entrees and one was always vegetarian. Now it was almost always the same block of fried tofu that they just changed the sauce they put over it. So we're going to put like a sweet and sour sauce, we're going to put a whatever sauce and God it was not very good, but it was fine. Then there's four hot vegetables. Sometimes there would be bacon in it. There was plenty to eat, but none of it was good me.

GZ [00:37:49] Hasn't changed much. It's just now we don't have the pasta bar and the vegetarian bars don't really exist anymore, so I don't know. My friend has a limited diet, so they complain about it all the time, and rightfully so.

CS [00:38:08] Yes, there was someone who was a freshman, all of the time I was a mentor, she had Celiac and it was the first time I had heard of it. She couldn't have gluten and it wasn't just like, "Oh, I'm gluten intolerant." Like, pretty serious, so she really couldn't have gluten. I think the cafeteria did prepare a special Celiac meal, but it did not look appetizing. It was often like plain boiled potatoes with, whatever. I don't know. It did not look great.

GZ [00:38:40] Doesn't sound like it. I remember when I had to stay in quarantine housing last winter break—I didn't actually get COVID, but there was the risk—they delivered me meals every day and they also did not look appetizing. It kind of reminds me of that.

CS [00:39:00] Yes. Oh, God, that's the worst thing, if you don't even get to choose what they bring, you are just like, "Oh, here's whatever we have," that would not be good.

GZ [00:39:07] Yes, it was not great. But it's the thought that counts, I guess.

CS [00:39:13] Yes, I did appreciate once they got an Einstein Brothers bagel, which came in partway through my time at UCA. Any of the day-old bagels that Einstein didn't want to sell they would give to the cafeteria. We would get them as day-old bagels. And I'm fine with that. I would toast them and make a bagel sandwich, and it was great. I love those days.

GZ [00:39:34] I wish they still had those. I don't think they do. But honestly, sounds amazing. I would love that.

CS [00:39:41] I would toast the bagel and then I would just go to the salad bar and load it up with veggies, yes, that was good. Before that, they had store bought bagels, and they were not very good. I have a bagel stop. I'm a food snob in general.

GZ [00:40:02] I am too. Mine is more of pasta. Those are more of what I'm really into. But anyway—

CS: Do you make homemade pasta?

GZ: I wish I could. Whenever I'm home for the weekend, I do. I like to take the sauce from the store, boil it, and then put what I want in it: a bunch of spices. I really like doing that. But I don't really do much cooking here in Farris.

CS [00:40:32] I will say one of the other extracurriculars I did for a little while is—some other Honors College folks who are a couple of years above me, Josh Jackson—we started a cooking club and we just had a few little get togethers where we would cook together with other students. A while we did a couple of 'here's some basic knife skills. Here's some basic whatever skills.' It was basically just those of us who already hung out and liked to cook together, plus a few extra people who would show up. We didn't do it too frequently because I think it started my junior year and then the older students graduated. I was like, "This is not something I want to manage by myself," but I also did take a gardening class, I can't remember the title of it, with Allison Wallace. We managed a garden there on campus and we got to harvest the produce, and none of my fellow students ever want to take it home to cook with it. I was like, "I'll take it." Sometimes for the class, we would cook stuff together. That was fun. Although, one time I accidentally put a bunch of habaneros on a pizza and I thought they were Hungarian Wax Peppers instead of habanero and that did not go well.

GZ [00:41:51] It doesn't sound like it did.

CS [00:41:54] It didn't, yes. Then Michael helped me cut them, and he touched his eye after cutting them. And then he was like crying and oh, the bathroom. That was a bit of a disaster, but the pizza otherwise was good.

GZ [00:42:06] That's good.

CS [00:42:08] Despite the habanero.

GZ [00:42:12] That is so funny. Allison still does that gardening class, too. Was one of the classes I wanted to take but it just conflicted with my schedule, so I never ended up taking it.

CS [00:42:24] It's a good one. I liked all of Allison's classes.

GZ [00:42:29] Do you remember your thesis that you worked on in tutorial?

CS [00:42:39] I don't remember the full title, but it was basically on the social constructs and meanings around meat and vegetarianism. My thesis advisor was Doug from the sociology department, who was vegetarian. He taught classes on social inequality and stuff like that, but because he was personally a vegetarian, he was my thesis advisor and I had a second reader, Dr. Duncan from the gender—I don't know the department name—but she she taught, like, gender studies, and she was my second reader. Yes.

GZ [00:43:25] Let's see. Trying to generate questions. Sorry about that. Right. How was it like working on your thesis? Was it was it like a really, really hard thing to do or?

CS [00:43:46] Yes, and no. It was hard because I think we were required to have thesis advisers outside of the Honors College and second readers, and a lot of them didn't really understand the requirements of an Honors College thesis. They were more used to a thesis from their department and the loser, interdisciplinary nature of it kind of confused them. I thought everything was going great, I was doing research, I was writing my thesis. I had a first draft, but then when I showed my thesis advisor, he pushed back. Things like, "This is just a lit review with analysis, you can't have a thesis unless you have an like primary data collection." From his point of view from sociology, you don't do a thesis unless you do some of your own research. I didn't go into the thesis expecting that. I guess I was just approaching it like a giant essay, where I read these different sources and making an argument based on existing sources. Then it just kind of threw me off because here I was thinking I have a first draft, I'm almost done. And then he was like, "No, no, you got to do your own research." And then I was just like, "But what is it even going to look like?"

CS: Then I ended up doing just a bunch of interviews with people from other cultures to see how other cultures view meat and whether it's different, in terms of in the U.S., it's very masculine-feminine. It's very rare to see a male vegetarian because there's so much tied up in masculinity around eating meat. In fact, when I was a vegetarian and my boyfriend and I were living together at first, his parents, who were very traditional and Southern, complained that he wasn't eating enough meat because I was cooking everything and making everything vegetarian. The feminine is the opposite of that, and so [I] talked about other cultures and a few people from other cultures to see how they viewed it. I did a few interviews with vegetarians, both male and female, to get their experience. Some of the men told me, "Sometimes when we go to dinner and I order a salad and my girlfriend orders a steak, when they bring it out they put the steak in front of me because they

assume this man won't be eating the salad, “ and heard some of their stories. It turned out fine. I just was kind of shocked by this, what to me, seemed like last last-minute change. You've got to do your own research. I know a lot of my friends I was in college with had a similar experience: that it was really hard having reviewers or thesis advisers outside of the department because they had very different expectations of what the thesis should be, especially those who did more creative theses. Their advisors are like, “What is this? You're writing a memoir like, how's that a thesis?”

GZ [00:46:49] That is such an interesting idea, and you explore some of the stereotypes between masculinity and femininity when it comes to diet. That was really interesting and I appreciate that. I liked hearing that point of view. But you say that preparing your thesis, collecting the data, researching, doing all that, would you say that helped you prepare for your current career path?

CS [00:47:21] I mean, not really. No one really cares about vegetarianism in the professional world. It prepared me somewhat for my master's degree. I didn't have to do a thesis there. Clinton School is very field service based. At the time I went, before they revised the curriculum, one-third of our credits were all field service projects where we actually have a partner and we're doing a project for them that's of use to them. I ended up doing my capstone project, they're doing a healthy food access assessment of Northwest Arkansas emergency hunger providers. So, obviously, a lot of the social research techniques of doing interviews and stuff like that became helpful to me: doing that process. I don't know if doing my Honors College thesis really helped prepare me, but definitely my sociology major did, because public service is kind of a broad term.

CS: Most of us, about half of us, were there wanting to go on to non-profits or maybe government work where we're really designing programs and projects, and the other half going more into politics. We did take some classes on evaluation. And so having that social research background from my sociology degree was super helpful. So those of us who came on in with sociology degrees

and there are several of us in my class, my graduate class, you know, we were kind of had a head start. You know, we knew social research methods. We often had experience using SPSS software to run statistics and stuff. With my thesis advisor and undergrad being from the sociology department, just qualitative—I did interviews. It was still kind of helpful for my later classes.

GZ [00:49:27] I think they would have been doing this for you guys, the matriculation process. I think that was a thing when you were in the Honors College, right?

CS [00:49:41] Is that kind of like the same formula, sophomores?

GZ: Yes.

CS: Oh, the sophomore lectures. Yes, we did sophomore lectures.

GZ [00:49:48] Do you remember that day?

CS [00:49:51] A little bit. I remember my topic. My lecture was on the history of baking because I really like baking. It's one of my biggest hobbies and I don't remember much in my lecture, except for part of what I covered was the countries with the highest per capita bread consumption. That was really surprising to me, what country has made the top of that list, but I don't remember that much about the day, I vaguely remember my topic. I remember a lot of leading up to that, everyone finishing their their speeches very late the night before, and I remember that as soon as sophomore lectures were over, me and some of my friends immediately left and drove to Kansas City for a concert. To be honest, we were mostly focused about getting sophomore lectures out of the way. So, we go to this concert. But yes, we did do that.

GZ [00:50:49] So, I'm honestly surprised we haven't talked about this yet, because this name has been a big presence in my other interviews, so I wanted to see what you thought of Norb. Did you ever come into close contact with him?

CS [00:51:06] I've met Norb. He wasn't around too much while I was there. I think he did a couple of large group lectures. He did lead a class. I don't know which year it was, but he led a class on religion that my boyfriend took. I remember there is a project where they had to put God on trial, and I know that class made a big impact on my boyfriend. I never interacted with Norb one-on-one, and I had a fairly limited interaction with him overall. But yes, I know as the founder, it's kind of a big deal, but he was already pretty far removed from the the day he was retired and kind of removed from the day-to-day operation. Or, maybe he wasn't retired for class, but he was definitely not the dean of the Honors College at that point.

GZ [00:52:03] I mean, I heard he “retired” multiple times. So, yes.

CS [00:52:09] He still had an office there. Yes. But yes, I didn't have much interaction with them.

GZ [00:52:16] Was there any professor that you did have much interaction with that you were on a close, personal level with?

CS [00:52:26] Yes, I'd say three stood out.

GZ: Who?

CS: One, Allison Wallace. Three of the professors.

GZ: Oh, sorry. I misheard you.

CS: Allison Wallace stood out about because I took a couple of four classes and I really liked Phil Frana. He was highly involved with Honors College outside of just classes. I think he was the one behind the soapbox, organizing the soapboxes, and things like that. I took him for Core II and a class later on. And then Cindy, just because I was a mentor for two years. We worked closely with her for that. I would say I'm still Facebook friends with Cindy. We don't talk that much, and Facebook friends with Allison and Donna. I never took any classes from Donna, but I still keep in touch with Allison somewhat. I actually saw her not too long ago. We were eating at Zaza's in Conway. [I] went to visit a friend who lived there and we had lunch on the patio. Apparently Allison Wallace lives in that neighborhood by Zazas and saw her walking her dog.

GZ [00:53:47] What professor, would you say, impacted you the most?

CS [00:53:52] Probably Allison, just because I took a lot of classes around agriculture, both in the class where we actually did the garden, which I believe was the Environmental, Economic and Ethics of Organic Horticulture or something like that. Then I was actually a TA for her my senior year in some other class about food systems. I think that was the biggest impact because I went into college with a general idea of I probably went to work for a non-profit or do something to make the world a better place, but I didn't really have any specifics in mind. Through her classes, as well as some of my environmental anthropology stuff, and just knowing, personally, some of my sociology professors who were interested in local food systems and things like that, I became interested in supporting local food systems and food security, and things related around that. I read a lot in Allison's class and then further, just for myself, works by Vandana Shiva on food sovereignty and stuff like that. So, I learned that I wanted to focus more on stuff related to ideally local food systems, but also food security and things like that.

GZ [00:55:26] So you said earlier that you took Oxford early, earlier than your classmates because you were traveling abroad to France. So what was that whole process like?

CS [00:55:38] Well, I ended up not traveling abroad. That's the thing to know about me: I hold grudges. Obviously, I still hold a grudge to my mom to not let me take AP World History, even though it is inconsequential, but I wanted to. I was toying with an idea of a French major or minor, and I wanted to study abroad because I thought it sounded fun. When I was in high school my French teacher had mentioned this program that does study abroad for high school students, and I had applied, but my parents couldn't afford it, so I could only do it if I got a scholarship. I didn't get a scholarship, so I didn't do it in high school and so on. When UCA had a partnership with a university in France my scholarship would still cover it. I was like, "Great! I'd love to study abroad," but the head of the French department said, "You're not a French major and we wouldn't be comfortable sending you unless you could pass these classes."

CS: As I was preparing to try to study abroad, I took a couple of French classes. I did well in my advanced grammar and composition class; but there is a Francophone cultures and literature class I was taking with the department head himself, and it was very hard because we were reading philosophy written in French. It was just taking me hours and hours and hours to read the readings that were assigned. I went to him a couple of weeks into the class and I was like, "Look, do you have any suggestions on how I could be doing this differently?" I was like, I do feel like I am seeing improvement even on the two weeks I've been doing this. It's gone down from spending ten hours to read fifty pages and understand it to five hours. I don't know, I'm exaggerating, but it went from ridiculously long to just slightly long.

CS: He just broke my spirit and he's like, "Not everyone's cut out for this, and maybe you should just drop the class while you still can sign up for another class." He was kind of a dick and squashed that hopes and dreams. I dropped the class and I didn't study abroad, but I did get a travel grant from the Honors College to spend my summer doing a program in Rwanda. I had spent the summer between my sophomore and junior year volunteering at the Heifer Ranch in Perryville, Arkansas. Someone I met there, became close friends with, she had just gotten back from three months in Nepal through a program with this organization called Where There Be Dragons that leads student trips to different countries. She had done a semester-long gap year program, but I ended up the next summer doing a six week summer program in Rwanda with that organization, which definitely put me on a course to where I am today. It was the first time I'd ever traveled out of the country, and I went to Rwanda, which is not at the top of most people's lists. I didn't get to study abroad, but I did get to travel abroad for six weeks. Rwanda is Francophone because of the last bit of its time as a colony, it was a colony for Belgium and they spoke French. So, I was actually able to use my French, which was not great, but still better than nothing, to communicate with a couple of my homestay parents who didn't speak English but spoke French. I did not study abroad.

GZ [00:59:27] Well, what was that whole process of staying in Rwanda like for you? I know it must have been a little hard since you said your French wasn't that good.

CS [00:59:38] Yes, it was good. It was a very structured program, so I was one of ten students. I was the oldest student. My birthday falls such that I'm young for my grade because my birthday's in September. A lot of school districts have a cutoff, you have to be this age before you enter kindergarten. I entered kindergarten at four and turned five in September, so that means when I started college, I started at seventeen but turned eighteen just after starting. Anyway, because of how my birthday falls, I qualified for this program, but I was the oldest student in the program so it was interesting. The maturity level of me who had finished three years of college versus some of the

students who had just graduated high school or were just finishing freshman or sophomore year of college. That was very different, but I was also the only one who had never left the country before. So, that was an interesting difference. I think I was more mature in some ways, but also more sheltered in other ways compared to them. It was good to have that structure of the program.

CS: We had two American instructors and one local instructor who went with us and we did a mixture of homestays in rural areas, as well as staying together at hotels or guest houses. I think it was good having that structure. I learn well in a structured environment like that. It was good. I got feedback from some of my structures that I need to get out of my shell and be a little bit more adventurous. I was like, “Whatever, I’m an introvert and this is my first time ever leaving the country,” going there was my first time ever on a plane. So I’m like, “Give me time.” Also, extenuating circumstance: I had a problem with an infected ingrown toenail at the time I was there. That made it worse because I couldn’t wear my close-toed shoes. I just had to wear these shitty flip-flops I brought that I was not expecting to wear all day, every day while I was there. There were a couple of things we did where I had to wear my hiking boots the day we hiked up a mountain. That was really painful. Yes, it was good. It was interesting, I met a lot of people on that trip who were from Canada, New Jersey, Massachusetts, New England area, and a lot of them made comments like, “Oh, I’ve never met someone from Arkansas. You’re not like, what I expected.” Is that a compliment or is sort of like an insult?

CS [01:02:38] It’s like, cool. Glad to defy your expectations.

GZ [01:02:44] Yes. Well, before we wrap it up, I just want to ask, is there anything that you learned from the Honors College that is or has been applicable to your current life?

CS [01:03:05] I'm sure there has, but might be applicable in ways you don't really realize. I think the biggest impact is helping me narrow in on what I was interested in, what I wanted to work in. And then obviously, I do think the friendships were one of the biggest part. Of my close friends I have today, half of them are my Honors College classmates, and so we've stayed pretty close and even ones I'm not close in touch with I still run into a lot. Just this past Saturday, I went to an event and I saw two others from my class. Whit, your professor, was actually my mentor when I was in Honors College. Before she moved to Baltimore, after she graduated from her grad school and was living in Little Rock, we had a similar friend group and I got to see her and hang out with her and [I've] been over to her house and she's cooked me food. I think the friendships there and the relationships from the Honors College have been great. Honors College did set me up for where I'm going, because as I reached out to my roommate before we even came to college, after we found out who our roommates were going to be, we were messaging on Facebook and she asked me what I wanted to do and I was pretty vague about it. She's like, "Oh, I think you'd fit in well at the Clinton School." I'd never heard the Clinton School before. She mentioned it to me before we even met before freshman year even began. When I was at the Honors College, sometimes the Honors College would organize trips to go to lectures at the Clinton schools since Conway and Little Rock are pretty close. I went to a few of the lectures the Clinton School hosted while I was an Honors College student. I definitely think it helped me end up going there and then end up kind of doing the work I've done.

GZ [01:05:21] Is there any other closing thoughts or anything else you'd like to say before we end it?

CS [01:05:29] Not that I can think of. It is crazy to think how close I still live to UCA. Part of me wishes I went back more often. But I think that's one of the reasons when I saw this opportunity, I was like, "I can do that." That's the way to still be in touch with the Honors College.

GZ [01:05:55] It's also hard to when you have a full life going on, so you can't one hundred percent blame yourself for that. I really do appreciate you being willing to do this interview with me. So thank you.

CS: You're welcome.

GZ: Well, thank you for your time, Cathrine. This concludes our interview. I'm going to stop the recording.