

**Transcripts – KPU Oral History – Don Currie**

**Founding Faculty Member – Trades – Carpentry; KFA Negotiating Team; KFA Ombudsman**

**Interviewer – Roger Elmes, Dean Emeritus**

**File name: 180612\_Interview\_DCURRIE2**

**Transcribed by: Transcription Ninjas (MW)**

**Length of file (time): 1:45:18**

[Beginning of transcript]

ROGER: Okay so Don Currie is a longtime faculty member at Kwantlen, he started in late 70's, '78 I believe -

DON: That's correct.

ROGER: - and he was instrumental in setting up a lot of the trades programs involved in the early days of the trades programs and has some interesting stories to tell. And he was here until 2005 when he retired and he had a lot of different contributions to the institution over the years, Faculty Association, collective bargaining, I think you were ombudsmen at one point –

DON: I was yeah.

ROGER: - and you also played a role in a lot of the organization of picnics, fifty-gallon, forty-gallon [forty-five] drums for firebins to keep people warm with –

DON: That's correct.

ROGER: - and so on. So, a whole variety of things that you're involved in, beginning with the creation of curriculum and that started where, in the Surrey campus or over at 140 Street.

DON: Over at Surrey campus we had the portables and there was even a portable cafeteria, little luncheon place there and when I went over there, I had left Queen Elizabeth High School because we were teaching or ... Gunnar Kapan was teaching drafting and I was teaching the carpentry/building construction and the reason when I named the program that I started, I added the building construction behind it, because I firmly believed as a contractor where I was before I came to Douglas, an employer wanted more than just a carpenter, you had to be getting on the roof, you had to do some ceramic tile, you had to do a lot of things so our objective was to make the graduates more employable. So, we went over to the Surrey campus and I ended up in the classroom with Gunnar and I would call him an invigilator, Bill Reid and he assisted us with developing curriculum,

how to develop the curriculum, and he basically just read it over and made sure that we were following the path forward. So, I went back into the bush [behind the 140 St campus] and I had about eight or nine students at that time, bearing in mind that most of these students are young adults or adults period, and we demolished a bunch of trees in the bush and laid down bark mulch, put culverts in, and we ended up building a house that Gunnar had designed and we designed it so we could get it out so it was all modular and then the building was sold off, but for, I would say, a couple of months, we were out in the bush and the rain and the real world and that's where we actually really got started was in the bush. I think, jeepers, the principal that time was Bob Lowe –

[03:15]

ROGER: For the campus.

DON: For the campus, and so it was, every day was an experience, and then I got sent over with Frank Apel who ... I was part of the interviewing process when he got started. Now Frank was a middle-aged German fellow, and knowing Frank, I lived very close to him at Newton, just a great guy, a great guy, a big help, and I think he served one year as a Faculty Association President, but Frank had stories he could tell, because he came from Germany during the war years and actually was in the Hitler Youth program and he and I'd sit and talk about it for hours and hours. Anyway, we got sent over and I guess it was the fellow that actually hired me in the beginning was Ed Redmond and, another great guy. Unfortunately, he was almost retirement age when I got hired so my time with him was limited cause he retired, moved to the Fraser Valley. Anyway, Frank and I had a place we shared in the vacant space at Riverview [campus] Frank was at one end of the room and I was at the other and a fellow walked down the hall and he says "hi, how are you today" and I said "great, great, how are you?" and he says "fine", and I said "I'm Don Currie, from Douglas College", and he says "oh I'm Mr. Jones from UBC, Dr. Jones" and I said "oh what brings you out here?" and he said "oh you know I'm just taking a couple of courses and moving along the line", and I said "great well you have a great day" and he walked on down the hall. Two minutes later, two guys in white suits came by [Laughs] and said, "have you seen a fellow walking by down here?", I said "oh Dr. Jones? He's out from UBC", he said "buddy, check the shoes, check the shoes" [Laughs]. I guess all the inmates had certain footwear. So, anyway we had a good laugh about that and those were the good old days. Anything could happen, you have to expect anything, well then we went over to Newton Campus and I have actual photographs of the Newton Campus tilt-up buildings being built and I framed one of them and gave it to Manfred Baur when he retired, the coveted picture and we all had a good laugh about that. But anyway, moving forward –

ROGER: So, Frank taught masonry?

DON: Frank taught masonry and he was right across the hall from me. Now Frank unfortunately, when he retired he moved to the Sunshine Coast and his wife was a Newfie that he had married

when he came over from Germany and she used to get up in the morning and go out, she baked bread in this baker's oven that Frank had built and she would sell it at the end of the driveway. Well it got to the point where Frank produced business cards and it said, "Frank and Annabelle Apel, just loafing around". And so, she was selling out by ten o'clock on the weekends, Saturday and Sunday every morning, selling out. So, anyway he moved over to, I guess it was somewhere on the island around Nanaimo, and being aged he had a stroke and got some dementia and was into a home over there.

[06:50]

So, I like to keep in touch with a lot of the fellows and check up on 'em, because I was actually the youngest guy of that group. I said to my wife, I said you know we got to make a trip over to Nanaimo, because I want to see Frankie, you know he's not well, so anyway we went over to Nanaimo, met with Annabelle, and I sat for a couple hours with Frank in the home and just brought his memory up to date, you know he recognized me and things like that. We had a nice visit with him and then Annabelle phoned me to tell me that Frank had passed away. So, at that time I contacted Human Resources here and told them that Frank was a long-term employee that had been ill and has since passed away and so Kwantlen sent a beautiful bouquet of flowers to the funeral and it was done right. So, anyway that takes me to where the question that you asked. [Laughs]

ROGER: Yeah, so he was one of about three or maybe four or five key people in trades at the beginning?

DON: Well, I would say there was Frank, Manfred Baur, Gunnar didn't participate in much, but he was an excellent instructor, did a great job, taught a great program. And I kept telling, just as a side note, I kept telling Gunnar that I had been to Turkey and the Greek Islands a couple of times and I told him my desire was to rent a gulet in Turkey and go down the coast. So, he said well I'll fix you up when you come over because I'm retiring in Izmir. Well, before that could happen I got a phone call from his new wife who had informed me that he had passed away from a heart attack.

ROGER: Oh my.

DON: So –

ROGER: Now was he a cyclist in his youth?

DON: No.

ROGER: because there was somebody on that campus who coached Brian Walton, a cyclist.

DON: No, it wasn't, Brian Walton, Ray was his dad – and he was our campus Dean and Brian Walton, it was no one on Newton Campus.

ROGER: Okay, I thought it was a Faculty member from there.

DON: No, that doesn't mean it wasn't a Faculty member. I mean, he won a medal in the Olympics, and we were up watching him in the news and every chance we could get. Yeah so, I'm sorry that he didn't, and you know I keep wondering how he made out in his private life.

ROGER: Oh fine, I can send you a website for him, he has his own company where it's sort of high-level coaching –

[09:42]

DON: Oh yeah.

ROGER: - for high-level athletes.

DON: Awesome.

ROGER: He and his wife are both from the cycling world.

DON: That's great.

ROGER: Yeah.

DON: Well I actually got, I met Brian a couple of times when I was over doing some volunteer work for Ray in his backyard. Nice boy, really good, but a real credit to the community.

ROGER: Yes, oh yeah, yeah very interesting guy. The first time I met him was in those little old washrooms on the Surrey campus, do you remember the old Surrey campus, they all were. And he was there, and he was getting undressed from all this stuff and –

DON: [Laughs]

ROGER: - boots and so on. I said, "what's this?", he said "well I ride my bike to school every day". I thought "oh okay", so that's first time I met him, he was a student later, but I thought pretty keen guy in the middle of the winter riding his bike here.

DON: Right.

ROGER: So, Queen Elizabeth Secondary, you talked about teaching there in the evenings as part of Douglas College as we were sort of borrowing and begging space –

DON: That's right.

ROGER: - to get things happening.

DON: But you know, it was good, but it was very tiring. You know having come from the private sector as I did and I was a self-employed contractor, well you know when you dig an excavation and the next day it rains, you know what you're in for, it's a swimming pool. So, it's just something you have to do. So, I didn't have a problem with working nights, because my wife worked at a high stress job and we did what we had to do. But I became friends with the day instructor from Queen Elizabeth and his name was Bryan Singbiel and a good journeymen carpenter and when they finally closed down, or I thought they closed the program down, I told Bryan Singbiel, I said "listen, if we ever decide to expand you know, I'll let you know". He's a good man, and we ended up hiring him for a short time, for the apprenticeship classes that we started later on in the, I'd say the mid-'80's, and then the funding got cut and you know what happens then.

[11:55]

ROGER: Never heard of that. [Laughs]

DON: [Laughs] Yeah.

ROGER: Yeah, so maybe that's, that would be useful to talk a little bit about, kind of the set-up of trades programs, where they were, started with sort of just classes and then we got into apprenticeships and so on.

DON: Well the biggest thing -

ROGER: TRAC and -

DON: Yeah, I can give you a lot of information on that, believe me. When we first started and it was Ed Redmond's baby and I can remember going to BCIT, which was then Pacific Vocational Institute and one of their guys gave me a framing square that was designed by Paul Fredrickson, one of their instructors, in metric. And I said to him, I said "you know, you might as well keep the metric framing square, cause I'm not going to use it". I said "as far as I'm concerned, when they start calling a sheet of plywood twenty-four by forty in millimeters, maybe I'll do it, but they're still a four by eight to me and the industry is four-by-eight, if they throw that - that'd be a boomerang if you took that one on the job". So, anyway they asked me what I was attempting to do at Douglas and I said, "I am designing the first self-paced individualized method of teaching carpentry" and they said "well how does that work?" and I told them, I said "well Mr. Redmond's explanation is, if the industry needs a fish filleter in Bella Bella, then we can train at a moment's notice, a fish filleter, and fill that need, but we don't want to be constantly turning out fish filleters, because eventually nobody has work". And so I designed the carpentry program, which was basically hands-on and somewhere along the line another good friend, well I shouldn't say a good friend, a good associate, was the fellow that taught the Common Core and that was -

ROGER: Was it Jerry?

DON: Sorry?

ROGER: Jerry Murphy?

DON: No, Jerry Murphy was one of them, but it was Vern Young.

ROGER: Vern Young, yeah.

DON: Now, Vern Young had an unfair hand dealt to him, because he passed away the day he retired, so the government saved money on him, big time, but they're giving it to me.

[14:23]

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: [Laughs] So, that's why I went in 2005, but anyway as was typical, Vern was an academic, a very, very talented man. And his objective was to keep his numbers up in his class, so it became, it came to like a fishing derby, where I needed a student, cause I wanted to keep my class full and the industry was crying for tradesmen. I would go to Vern and I'd say "look, I need a kid", "well he's got to do a little more on the math" and I told him, I said "Vern, the big thing that you have to remember is that these kids" and I call them kids because they were young adults "are all here because the public school system failed them somewhere down the line". They didn't want to be in a classroom learning about camels roaming the desert in Algeria, they didn't care about that. So, to put them back into this big holding tank as I called it and force feeding them a little bit of math, give me the kid, and if I determine he needs math, I'll take him out of the class one-on-one, schedule him for an hour twice a week with you and that's how we worked it and it worked out just fine. So, as it moved down the line the young guys that were in my class, for instance let's say if I was training them to hang a door. Well, most of the doors we all bought from the time I was on, we never made the jam up and everything like that, we'd buy pre-hung doors, so you have to install the pre-hung door. Well, some kids could do it in one day, some kids could do it in two days, but until you get them going and watching them as they progress, you can't really tell if they've got a handle on it, because they have to be able to do it in twenty minutes, and if you can't do it in twenty minutes, you're going to be here until you can, because the employer isn't going to pay you if you take longer than that, you're done. So, that was the method of mastering the task that we had, and I can honestly say I bet you, well there's not many that have left the trade. Some have gone in to be firemen, because it was a requirement, they needed the points in order to qualify to get in and not only that, but I guess the fire departments determined that a guy with some carpentry background would have a better chance of being a good fire fighter, if he knew what he was about to go into right? And I've got one guy that just retired three years ago as a captain in Vancouver Fire Department and another

one that was the number two guy in Abbotsford in the Fire Hall. He started off, when he left me, he worked on his journeymen certificate Red Seal and he went to work as a plan checker for Abbotsford, eventually moved up to the Head Building Inspector and every once in a while, I'd say at least once a year, I'd take a day of my professional development and I'd go out with him on a ride along to see how he was doing and what he was facing with. Well he was one of the only Building Inspectors who would actually get up on the roof and check to make sure that the cedar shakes or shingles were properly installed, and so, that was a very, a good feeling.

[17:57]

ROGER: Yeah, definitely.

DON: And that's how the programs were developed, and it was self-paced. Sure some kids took seven or eight months to get through the program, but in the big scheme of things at least you've got a guy that's going to be successful in the industry and want to move on and I had one guy that was, that actually wrote a nasty letter about me to my Dean and that was Ray Walton I believe and it was because when I was getting ready to retire, I could see what was happening. I mean this guy was milking the system. He was on EI and EI doesn't want him on EI, they want to get him working. Well, the fact is I had to keep riding this guy, look I'm retiring on this date and you're going to be done, because the shop is closing. So, he accused me of trying to move him forward and because I'm retiring rather than he could do the job and it was what it was, I mean Ray Walton asked me if this is true and I said "no, I don't care", I said, "I'd come back a day or two after I retire, but I'm going to get this guy finished, that's all there is to it" and I told one kid too, another one, I had another one, but I'm not going to name him, because the parent still works for Kwantlen Polytech and the guy wouldn't let me take his picture to put it on the file so if an employer came back and said "oh I've got a guy that says he graduated", I go through the files and I see the picture and I can't memorize them all, but anyway I asked him I said "have you got a driver's license?", he said "yeah", I said, "then you're getting this picture taken" and he didn't like it, but he had bad attitude and I told him straight to his face "I'm going to be successful with you, in spite of your rotten attitude". And at the end of the day, I did. So, it's a good, I never had a bad feeling when I went home. At the end of the day, I loved the job that I did, and I still have very close friends that are ex-students and I can honestly say I loved everything about my job. I loved the people at Kwantlen, you know so.

ROGER: So the mastery was, there was a whole line of tasks, skills they had to acquire and so by setting them up in discrete modules, they'd be able to work their way through them and master them.

DON: Yeah, as they could master them. The big thing is, some of the stuff that I taught, was exceeding the pre-apprenticeship program that BCIT was offering over a six month period, but you know the feeling that I had was that's fine, everybody graduates on June the fifth let's say and you get your graduation paper, because all thirty guys in the class graduated and they'd say on your

certificate that you're number twenty-seven out of thirty, well don't be bringing me that application to work for me. I want the guy that graduated in the top five, because somebody with a, you know the success rate, if you couldn't do it in six months, you're not going to do it in a year. So, that was the good thing that we had, we had the freedom to keep them an extra month, or an extra week, or an extra two days and we had it worked with admissions that they would adjust the tuition fee to match the length of time he needed to complete and then when one comes out of the shop, another one would come in. But I had a number of grads, sorry a number of students, it was supposed to be eighteen and I had times up to twenty-two. I mean, time is employers are crying for people and you know what, it's dependent on the individual. So, we had a very exclusive program.

[22:06]

ROGER: So after they finished with you, then they'd go into apprenticeship?

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: And then on to journeymen.

DON: But they got a Level 1 of their certification as a first year of their journeymen training and a lot of these guys just blew through it. They're out there. They're doing the job. They're running the jobs.

ROGER: So, one day we should get some of those pictures from you.

DON: Oh absolutely.

ROGER: The set-up of those buildings, I think we had one person who made quite a bit of money on building and renting facilities to us.

DON: I'm sure they did, but you may know, but you know the third building at Newton, like my building was first or second, administration was first or second, I think I was first, but anyway the third building came in when we had a fellow by the name of Dr. Ken Gaglardi.

ROGER: Oh, for the tech center?

DON: For the tech centre, and we bought that building across the street and that was a big bonus, because that was a great building and they did some really exclusive work over there.

ROGER: They did, and at one point we had another building there, which maybe was three or four, I forget the number, but when they bought the extra parking and they got all the trades from BCIT.

DON: Yes.

ROGER: Upholstery and -

DON: Yup, we moved 'em down into building four below the carpentry shop and you know I looked at some of the work that came out of those, you know the upholstery shop and the auto upholstery –

ROGER: Auto trim and -

DON: Auto trim and all that, just top-notch stuff, top-notch stuff. In fact, you know I've run into people by looking at what they're doing today and I say "hey, you know, where'd you take your training", "oh I took it at Kwantlen", "oh yeah? Well do you remember so-and-so, do you remember" geez his name now, Meno Janssen, oh Meno retired, terrific upholsterer. And you know, there's a great, great number of people out there in the industry today that are all graduates of Kwantlen, and Douglas, but people don't, a lot of people don't realize how Kwantlen came about and I just tell 'em that in 1981 the government decided to split, North of the river stayed Douglas, South of the river took the new name. In fact, I remember they had a competition to name the new campus, or the new college and I think the Kwantlen name was decided on by Stu Richardson.

[24:52]

ROGER: Oh yeah, Stan McKinnon was the Editor of the *Surrey Leader* and somehow, he won a competition for the naming of it. So, what went on beyond that I don't know, but Stu Richardson defined the, designed the first Kwantlen logo -

DON: That was it.

ROGER: - and he designed that well before Kwantlen existed.

DON: Yup.

ROGER: So, like it was as the lead-up to it and he won this sort of competition and designed it while he was still a part of Douglas.

DON: Yeah, another good man, another good man. Unfortunately, he passed away.

ROGER: So that was kind of, we've got that campus more or less together now, you know most of it's still there, all those buildings.

DON: I know I drove by them awhile back.

ROGER: Yeah, it's quite interesting to see them still functioning away. So, we got up to the separation and 1985 you came up with the idea of entering a bathtub.

DON: Oh yeah [Laughs].

ROGER: In the Fort and Port Moody –

DON: Yeah in the –

ROGER: Golden Spike Days bathtub race.

DON: Golden Spike Days, yeah I thought it would be a good run, because I was a member of the legion in Port Moody, Branch 119 and they sponsored a bathtub. Well anyway there was a couple of drunks that were already operating the legion bathtub, so I said well maybe we should put one in for Kwantlen College. So, we did and Manfred, I got Manfred to drive the tub, because Manfred was a distinguished kayaker and I knew that you look about going down a river that's full of rocks and rapids, you've got to be nuts, right?

[26:35]

Not only that, he was a good faculty member. So anyway, I convinced him that he should drive this tub and we did and [Laughs] the next year after that, we went in the big one, the fulltime one from Nanaimo to Vancouver. Now that time was, I think there was only about seven or eight boats that actually finished. They were going to cancel the race, but it was too late to start to hold the bathtubs back, so the bathtub race went ahead. I took my own boat over, a seventeen-foot bowrider and I took Larry McGillivray with me and Glen Cartwright at that time was an ex-student of mine and his dad had a fifty-four-foot bay liner and so anyway, my wife and my son went with Glen's dad and Glen operated that tub. Now, there were twelve-foot cresting seas, I'm not kidding, and you couldn't see over the waves and because the fifty-four footer was slowed down enough so that we could keep up with him, the chase boat that he kept up on the top of his cabin ripped loose and my wife and son are up there in the howling winds, holding this thing and trying to lash it down. So, we ended up pulling the tub out of the water around Bowen Island and it was a trip from hell, it was, but the next year Manfred took the tub from Nanaimo and crossed, we lost sight of him because we couldn't keep up and Manfred [Laughs] he was crazy, I'm serious, you would never, there was no way in hell I would do that. So anyway, he ended up getting a trophy for the oldest finishing competitor in the bathtub race and that was to Kitsilano beach. And then –

ROGER: So that was built at Newton Campus wasn't it?

DON: Yeah, and we had, one of the fellows that was in the plastics that came from BCIT over, right by where it used to be the old print shop I think, well anyway he did, and his name slips me, he was only there for maybe a year and a half, but anyway he did awesome work as well. But we had the Kwantlen College name on the tub and everything, and yeah I could probably dig you up a few photos of that stuff too.

ROGER: Oh that'd be good, because a lot of people think of Georgia Strait and they don't realize that wind against tide makes big square waves.

DON: [Laughs] That's right.

ROGER: And they can be pretty awful.

DON: And you know when Manfred got his trophy, we had to get the boat back to Port Moody where I lived, and he lived so he took the bathtub.

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: Right? And I have actually [Laughs] -

ROGER: So he went through the Second Narrows and –

[29:53]

DON: Yup, I was, and it was I think a tide change and I looked off to my right as we're heading towards Port Moody and I could see Manfred coming underneath Lions Gate Bridge and the bathtub is bouncing on the top of the waves and it's crazy out there. But you know, such a cool picture and he, we made it home.

ROGER: So, that was the bathtub saga.

DON: Yup.

ROGER: Quite amazing. Oh and Jimmy Gillis came into that too -

DON: Yup.

ROGER: - because he gave you the outboard.

DON: He funded the price for the motor for the outboard motor, we didn't have any money, and so I told, when I told Gillis we were going to call it the Kwantlen College bathtub, he said "well then I'll sponsor it". So sure, enough he did, and I think he was out with, I thought Gloria was with him, I'm pretty sure she was at the dock when we took off and maybe Gillis might have even been in the bath, in my chase boat. I can't be sure, but –

ROGER: Well he was a Mountie, so it would be fitting to –

DON: Oh I know he told me many stories about the, he was a lot of Mounties over, he was with the Mounties in North Vancouver.

ROGER: Yeah, so you had a bunch of external projects that, including one up Indian Arm I guess eh?

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: Camp Jubilee?

DON: Well, Camp Jubilee was a camp that was originally, to my understanding, was originally started by the carpenters union Local 1251 and Local 452 out of Vancouver and it was because in the trade in those days a lot of guys who go from job, to job, to job, and when the job is finished you're finished. You go down for your unemployment, so they all got together so that the kids could have a place to go for a summer camp and we had an opportunity, Bob Whittaker was the coordinator of the carpentry apprenticeship, joint training committee for the carpenters' union. And he asked me, he said, "look we could use some help up at Camp Jubilee" and I said, "well it be a great training experience for any of my students who want to go", I said, "I'll do what I can". So, I talked to Glen Cartwright and he was the fellow who was in the bathtub race for us and his dad had one of those unsinkable high-end boats.

[32:37]

ROGER: Oh a whaler.

DON: A Boston whaler, yeah and so anyway, I managed to find about eight people that wanted to go up and work for a while and they'd sleep in the bunk house and there was food available so there was no problem there and we met them at, we met the students at um, [Belcarra Park] Deep Cove?

ROGER: Yeah, probably yeah.

DON: Yeah, and we took the boat up and meanwhile the balance of the students was looked after by Larry McGillivray and we had them up there, the students up there for a couple of days and then you know they're young guys they got girlfriends and that, they want to come back down. So, that was a donation of –

ROGER: There's no road.

DON: I'm sorry?

ROGER: There's no road, to Camp Jubilee.

DON: No, no, no, it's boat only. So, we went up and brought them back and it was a good time. It was a good learning experience and we helped, that was the main thing. And in those days, I think that would be around 1970- '75, '76, I used to coach girls' soccer in Port Moody and during one of the soccer games, one of the girls said to me "coach I have to go to the bathroom". I said, "well you

know look around you, it's all bush", I said, "you're going to do the same as the boys do, just go deep enough in the bush". So, anyway after that we realized there was no changeroom facilities or anything at Port Moody at Inlet Park they called it, so I put a proposal together with the city and asked them for a whack of money and promised to build it for nothing, cause I had my students so great experience, and the city went for it and we built the changeroom facilities. We sold what we called brick shares, but you got to buy a brick, an actual brick, not the old WAC Bennett bricks. So anyway, that was a great experience and Franky set up masonry crew, did all the masonry block work. We got all the masonry block donated by Ocean Cement and it was in the same style that was, that they had cast for Expo '86, they had a lot of it left, all we had to pay for the pallets. And that building, Ray Walton and I went over and received our accolades for Kwantlen University College or Kwantlen College we were, and it stands to this day. There's men's washrooms, women's washrooms, showers, and even a concession and an upstairs where they could have coaches meetings.

[35:27]

ROGER: And what's this haunted house that I -

DON: Oh well, there is a lady that used to work for the newspaper here, I don't recall her name, but she came to me and asked if I would be interested in helping build a haunted house at the site down on Fraser Highway right?

ROGER: Well there's one on King George which is in the Nicomekl Valley Serpentine river.

DON: Well this one's on the way, the old way to the border, you go straight down 152 and down and serpentine and Carey Vander Zalm was the fellow that ran it and you know he gave us power. We had lights and I think I can remember one day Bob Lisson came out to see what we were doing.

ROGER: So Bob Lisson was the VP of then Finance.

DON: Yeah, great guy, and we built this thing and they opened it up for Halloween and we made over twenty-five thousand dollars for the Foodbank and that was a great experience for the kids too, because it was something that we built, but we didn't have to demolish. It's one thing if you're working in the shop and you're cutting a rafter and you use the same piece of two-by-four five times until you're down to a piece like that. But it was a good experience and Carey was a good guy and [Laughs] he had a big field, I would say maybe fifty to a hundred feet from where we were building it and it was a big mound and he decided to mulch up everything and he got a lot of the food from Save-On and Safeway and they brought trucks of stuff in and he had pigs that were on this big huge mound and they had electrical wires around the mound with verticals hanging down so if the pigs tried to escape they'd get zapped and they were afraid to go through the hangers right? Well they started bringing in truckloads of stale Coca-Cola and they pumped that up onto the mound too and

then the Health Board said you can't sell these pigs for human consumption. [Laughs] I figured geez they'd all be diabetic.

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: But anyway.

ROGER: [Coughs] Excuse me. And then you did an addition to the Surrey Coordinating Crisis Centre.

DON: Well yeah, and the Surrey Coordinating Crisis Centre was, they had come to me and I guess they'd been speaking to one of our administrators and he came to me and he said, "well you know we really need this", and I said, "well what is a Crisis Centre?", and he said, "well it's, we man the phones twenty-four hours a day for people that are in crisis, or that are contemplating suicide and marital breakups and my life isn't worth living, that type of thing". So, I looked at the plans and I said, "absolutely, we'd be happy to do that".

[38:37]

So, I had four students that, one of them was a female, well I can remember we got the foundations all poured and the boys were harassing the female student, so it got to the point where one day she came to me after class and she was standing, we were standing in the doorway to the compound at Newton and she was crying and I said to her "well you know, you've got to tell me what's happening", and she said, "well you got to talk to these guys, they're harassing me, they're bullying me, they're swearing at me, they're just, I don't like what I'm doing anymore". And I said, well I said "I can only give you some advice", I said, "if I have to get involved, I can guarantee you they're going to hold it against ya", and I said "my advice to you, is you want to play in the field with the carpenters, you got to treat them the way they need to be treated", and I said, "if you think you can treat them a little worse than they're treating you, you'll win", I said, "if you don't, you're never going to make it, because they'll ride you right out of here". Well, she came back about a week later and said, "everything is better", and I said, "oh how so?", and she says "I just treat 'em the way they were treating me and now they pack their own lumber, they don't yell at me to do it" and stuff like that. Well as it turned out, eventually she married my substitute instructor Bob Whittaker and actually they both came over for dinner with my wife and I one night and they live in Deep Cove now, they've got two wonderful children, but that's how we worked with the Surrey Coordinating Centre. There was only four students, and we had a construction shack with an oil heater, and everything was in it, real world experiences and it worked out very, very well, yeah.

ROGER: So, you were building like a whole building for them or –

DON: Oh yeah it was an addition. We put the foundation in. We built the walls, installed all the windows, put the roof on, the whole thing and even we were right there until the drywall went in.

ROGER: Okay.

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: So they've watched all the wiring, they –

DON: Oh yeah they did, they did a good job.

ROGER: They built some wire?

DON: Actually no, because we subcontracted that out to a company called Colwin Electric, but they watched it happening and to this day that's a job that they'll never forget, because they didn't get paid, only in gratitude, and a lot of times when you get something like that, that's worth more than money. So, it was a good experience, plus we helped the community. I don't even know if it's still there, because I was over at the hospital for, getting some heart work done and I was, there's a Jim Pattison.

ROGER: Right, the Outpatient ....

[41:50]

DON: Yeah, well I have to go over there for the Happy, Healthy Heart program. So, I was going to take a drive by 140<sup>th</sup> Street and see if it was still there. I'm sure it's still there and I hope it's still there, but if it's still there I hope it's been re-built and a lot bigger, because it's a real program that's top-notch.

ROGER: Now, that old Surrey campus, did you guys build that huge workshop that was out in the back corner of it?

DON: On 140<sup>th</sup>?

ROGER: Yeah 140<sup>th</sup>.

DON: No.

ROGER: No, it wasn't eh?

DON: No.

ROGER: because there was a guy who was a big golfer and he was the facilities manager or something? An older guy and he had all these workshops back there and –

DON: Was he the, oh now hold it now, it's coming back, I can't recall his name, I'd recognize his face and I believe he had a bed and breakfast on Victoria Ave in White Rock.

ROGER: Yeah, that would make sense, that would be about that age. Interesting, so that was there for a long, long time too –

DON: That's going to bother me now.

ROGER: [Laughs] So then, picnics, I actually have some records of you guys organizing picnics for Douglas Kwantlen at [HMCS] *Discovery* and having boat races at *Discovery*.

DON: Yeah that was with Ken Moore.

ROGER: Douglas and Kwantlen.

DON: Ken Moore, the sailor, he came in and he was, the funny thing about Ken Moore, he had a lovely daughter that worked here, Maureen, and I could remember him, I started my class at 7:30 every morning because that was industry standards right? And I can remember Ken Moore, riding in to the Newton Campus [Laughs] on a Vespa with his leather hat on and the old-style German aviator goggles like this in the rain and I thought oh man, I got to get me some goggles like that. [Laughs] But he was our Dean for, I would guess, maybe a year, year and a half and he was ex-Navy. Well he got a hold of the *Discovery* and managed to allow us to use the boats and everything and we challenged, I think at the time it was BCIT and we ended up having a race and we just destroyed them, because you know I mean, well believe it we beat them by about a good fifty meters and they were not happy campers, but it was good for Ken, because being an old Navy guy, and in fact I think Ken Moore is the fellow that brought his old friend Ray Walton from Esquimalt in. Now Walton was I believe a Navy engineer.

[44:43]

ROGER: They were both in the engineer branch.

DON: Okay so anyway, my memory's coming back. [Laughs]

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: But Ray was a good Dean, he listened to reason, no problems. Mind you, we didn't really need a lot of help. I can remember purchasing - Mabel Endacott. She used to give me a hard time because I always put the suggested supplier down for what I required and you know it wouldn't come, wouldn't come, the stuff wasn't coming and then Kathy Hicks, I believe, was the number two in purchasing, well Kathy was saying, "well we have to go out for comparative pricing", I said, "no you don't" and I said, "you will not get a better price than what I get", I said, "believe me, I've got a

history with all the builders and the suppliers and if you think you can get a better price, go hard, but I need this stuff". So anyway, finally I just would put down Dick's Lumber, right over here on 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue and what I needed, and it got to the point where they just opened it up as a standing account with Dick's and we got what we needed and that was good. And you know the other, one other Bob Lowe, when he was the campus Dean for a while. I ordered from Dick's, I ordered a lift of plywood, no problem, 5x8's TNG and Bob Lowe said to me as I was walking into the administration office, he said, "you put a requisition for a lift of plywood", and I said, "yeah", he says, "well I hate to tell you, we don't have the money, we can't get it", and I said, "oh well", and he said, "what do you mean oh well?", and I said, "listen, just take a look over here", and we walked out into the driveway and I said, "in behind that compound, you see that lift of plywood there?", he said, "yeah", I said, "well I already got it and now it's just a matter of you paying for it".

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: [Laughs] And he shook his head and laughed, but those, that's the way it was. You know, life doesn't stand still when you need something.

[47:11]

ROGER: No, absolutely when you got a bunch of students ready to go. So, you were also involved in other picnics including, I remember there were several at Crescent Park that –

DON: Yup.

ROGER: - people organized.

DON: Yup.

ROGER: Some of those we had a hundred and twenty, hundred and thirty –

DON: That's right.

ROGER: - people at, yeah.

DON: Yup, and Frank and I worked very close together, Frank Apel and you know if you get too many people cooking the stew it never turns out right. So anyway, I can remember when we were at Crescent Park and we had the ribs and the ribs were being barbequed. Now I have my wife and my two daughters helping, you know Bob Lisson was helping out and Bob Lowe, there was a line up when it come time to get food. I was standing by the barbeque and I heard somebody at the back of the line saying, "gah shit, if I wanted a line up, I'd have gone to Expo", well I was on my way to him when Bob Lowe, Bob Lisson grabbed a hold of me, and he said, "what's the matter?" and I told him

and he says, “ah, don’t worry about it, just forget it”, but you know I got my whole family out here volunteering, because it’s a happy time, we want people to come together, right? And we let that go, but the parties were a lot of time good fun, good wholesome fun.

ROGER: Yeah, it was quite a, there was a time where that was supported, and people were interested in –

DON: Oh absolutely.

ROGER: - coming together and doing stuff together and –

DON: Yup.

ROGER: So the picnics were a big one and they were run for a number of years.

DON: Yup.

ROGER: So, they were very successful that way. You also were a faculty negotiator for what, twenty years almost?

DON: Eighteen.

[48:59]

ROGER: Wow.

DON: Yeah, in fact I started, I was just thinking back about that last night. There was a fellow at the Douglas College named Lynn Levins, remember him?

ROGER: Oh yup, yup.

DON: Pretty big guy.

ROGER: Yup, he was a business instructor.

DON: Okay well –

ROGER: But he was a like –

DON: Yeah he was big –

ROGER: “Gros” as they say in French.

DON: Yup and I, there was only four or five and we were all new faculty at Douglas College and I went to Lynn Levins and I said to him, I think he was on the negotiating committee at that time and I

said, “look, I’m with the trades faculty” and I said, “I really have a problem with you negotiating a collective agreement for us without our involvement”, I said, “you academics you don’t know what we do, you never have known what we do, so it’s time that we sit at the table”, and he said “absolutely”. So, I managed to get placed on the committee and the only time that I wasn’t involved in it was when I took time off in 1989 and I always, yeah, I have great memories of the negotiating committees because everybody had their little quirks. It’s a matter of reading the person, right? I can remember Derek Francis, we put a proposal on the table to him and he came back and he said, “the college has no appetite for that at this time” and when we broke for a caucus I said to Gillis, I said, “he’s already admitted they’re going to eat it, they just haven’t decided when”, you know at this time, oh yeah, well and we got there and it was all good, all of the negotiating I would say that I was involved in, the major priority was non-regular faculty and how they were treated. They didn’t get the same benefits that the regular faculty got, medical was a big thing, and we finally got it, we finally got it, well to some degree. I think the very first contract that we negotiated for non-regular faculty for absence through illness and stuff like that, they gave us a sum of \$10,000 and when the sum is done okay well, we always figured we could build on that, at least they’re recognizing that the non-regulars need help and that was one of the things, but I was there to make sure to at least have a hand in negotiating the best interests of the trades faculty. I didn’t want the trades faculty to end up like BCIT where they were negotiated with a different union, right? As long as we stayed with the KFA, the reality of the day is where the academics go, everybody else goes. It’s like if the doctors sign an agreement, you know the nurses are next. So, that was the thing and there was a lot of, I won’t say a lot, but some faculty felt that we should be represented by our own local and different. No, no, no, it took a while, but we managed to convince them otherwise.

[52:08]

ROGER: Yeah, I mean overall, the collective agreements here were pretty amenable processes to get. I mean overall, there were certainly points of contention and arguments and –

DON: Sure.

ROGER: - as you said, some things you had to build on from year-to-year and –

DON: Yup.

ROGER: - just kind of work it forward, because it also got rolled into a ...

DON: Yup.

ROGER: And then CIEA [College and Institute Educators Association] and so on as the whole thing evolved, the province got more and more involved in it.

DON: I know.

ROGER: because once they put the post-secondary education commission or whatever it was called where it was all the kind of colleges together and instructions almost from the province about here's the parameters that you can negotiate within and that kind of really changed the dynamics and how do you allocate these scarce resources –

DON: Well –

ROGER: - quotation marks.

DON: You know, I made no bones about where I stood on the whole thing and I went to the Kelowna CIEA Convention and I was sitting next to Jim Gillis and the Premier of the day, what was his name, NDP guy.

ROGER: Oh um, in that –

DON: Moe Sahota, no?

ROGER: No, no, no, the ex-Mayor Harcourt.

DON: No, no, no.

[53:39]

ROGER: No?

DON: It was, geez I can see his face.

ROGER: Harcourt and Glen Clark and then before that –

DON: Oh, it was Glen Clark, sorry. Glen Clark and he was the guest speaker at the convention. Oh, he walked in and right then all of the members of the convention were standing, giving him a standing ovation, except me and I was sitting in my chair and Gillis says, "Donny, you got to stand up", I said, "I don't have to stand up", he's "you got to stand up, you're the only one sitting down", I said, "listen, I'm a free enterpriser and I believe it and that's my right" and I stayed sitting, and my philosophy was I have the right to lose as much of my own money as I want, so you know don't go there, not even Maureen ,, who was President at the time, - Maureen Shaw. We named her Steel Trap, in fact Jimmy Gillis brought a trophy for her when she retired, well he sent it down to me anyway.

ROGER: So the sort of sequel to that story is that Glen Clark of course ends up in one of the bastions of free enterprise in the province -

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: - as the President for Jimmy Patterson.

DON: Yup, exactly hey, just goes to show you money talks.

ROGER: Yeah, yeah. [Laughs]

DON: [Laughs] But you know, he made a couple of mistakes, that's okay, in my opinion anyway.

ROGER: That's quite uhm, anyway, I sat on both sides of the negotiating –

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: So, it was always an interesting experience and one I didn't particularly relish necessarily, but it was always sort of interesting dynamics around that.

DON: There was a woman that was on the administrative side of the table, gee I can't remember her name now.

ROGER: HR?

DON: Sorry?

[55:34]

ROGER: HR Director?

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: Yeah, Liz?

DON: No, not Liz McKinley.

ROGER: Okay.

DON: Um...

ROGER: Well this could have been after Liz, because after Liz came in it was a different, well after Liz left a whole different configuration of how it –

DON: Yeah, well it was always good, but I can tell ya, you know we had Ron Flaterud at the time from counselling, Jimmy Gillis, myself, and I can't remember the others, but you know there administrative side would say well we're going to go and caucus". Well, our caucus was well let's just take a look at the language and see what they don't like with this and fix it. Well, oh Jack Finnbogasson, anyway Jack is making notes and Maureen Shaw, Maureen Shaw's sitting there with him, Flaterud and Gillis and I, for three hours, are throwing quarters and nickels against the wall to

see who can get closest the wall, [Laughs] you got to pass your time somehow. You know if you're in caucus for two hours, that's a long time, when you're just waiting, and you're come on let's get on with it already. Anyway, the good times, memorable times and we went for the full circuit over that. The eighteen years that I put on that as negotiating, I don't regret any of it, I learned a lot and our administrators were all good people. Everybody had a common goal right?

ROGER: They did and I think that I remember Bob Lisson mentioned that he saw sort of what was happening, couldn't remember what set of negotiations it was, but it was kind of going like sideways and he thought this so he just kind of went around talked to a few people and sort of said, "what's going on here, how do we sort this out, this is just crazy, let's sort it out".

DON: Bob Lisson, to me, if you were to ask me of all of my contacts over the twenty-five years that I worked here, I would be honest to say that I respected Bob Lisson more than anyone. I had his son in my class, good kid, graduated, and went on to work in the industry, not, maybe self-employed, whatever it was. But anyway, I was having a, I had a Telus box put in for my TV and stuff and it was a Telus rep that came and he was working in my family room and I have a sixty inch big screen and he's doing the work, doing the install and I asked him, I said, "gee, I noticed your name", I said, "is Lisson", I said, "do you live on this side of the river?" and he said, "no, no, no", I said, "well, any relation to Bob Lisson?", he said, "yeah, as a matter of fact I am, he's my grandpa".

[58:47]

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: I said "really?", he said, "yeah", I said "what's your dad's name?", he said, "Jeff", I said, "Jeff was my student". So, I thought gee whiz, here's a situation where it's gone right down through the family right? Son, to grandson, working in the trade and when I say trade, I mean it's something to do with housing, building.

ROGER: Yeah, absolutely.

DON: Yeah, just a coincidence.

ROGER: Yeah, well Bob started at Douglas on day, oh before day one.

DON: Before me.

ROGER: In the accounting, yeah, he was like 19-, late '69, by late '69, he was already there –

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: - because when Bill Morfey was the Bursar years ago, and then as Douglas, and then when that split Bob became the Bursar, VP Finance over here in Kwantlen. Yeah no, he has an incredible history with the institution.

DON: Yeah, everybody spoke very highly of him, I never heard anybody take his name in vain.

ROGER: Now you also at one point, you had, you took a year off and you got a bunch of your former students or something and built –

DON: No, no, I had in 1989, one of my students that participated in the bathtub race, Glen Cartwright, his dad used to own Avantee's Pub in Vancouver and he currently owns the pub in Mallardville, Dewey's is it?

ROGER: Don't know.

DON: Okay, Woody's.

ROGER: Oh yes.

DON: Yeah Woody's Pub, been very successful, and anyway, his dad came to me one day and said, "look I got a piece of property in White Rock" and I was getting a little restless and you know the question that I had and I'm being honest now is that after '78 to '89, that's eleven years.

[1:00:48]

I started to, in my own mind, question my ability to do my job and I always used my professional development to further keep up to date with the technological change in my industry, unlike a lot of people okay and that was a source of annoyance for me, because well PD is PD, it's not developing curriculum and anyway, he said to me, he said, "you know if you're interested, I'd like to come and work as partners and we'll build a condo down here on this piece of property", and I said, "okay, I'll give it some thought". So, I did and talked it over with my wife and I needed to get away from everything, just for a little while. So, we went down there, I took Glen Cartwright who was just a graduate, maybe not even graduated yet and a labourer and I took one of my students with me that had graduated Larry McGillivray. I indentured him as an apprentice and so I had Larry, and Glen Cartwright and another one of Glen's friends who's just, didn't have any skill he was training to be a fire fighter. So anyway, we built the whole thing. We did it all. We did the foundations, the drainage, we framed the whole buildings up and in eight months it was ready; we sold some units. And ... when I went to talk to Bob Lisson, I asked him I said, "listen, I'm going to take some time off and my Dean has said it's okay", and he said, "well why don't you take an educational leave", and I said, "no, I can't do that", and he asked me why, and I said, "look, if I'm working out in the industry, it's different if I'm writing a book, or it's different if I'm doing something else, but I'm going out into the mud" and I said, "I live in Port Moody and I'm building in White Rock and it's

snowing this morning, I'm just likely to say ah, it's not a big deal, I'm getting paid eighty percent of my salary anyway so I'm sleeping in today", world doesn't work like that, so I said, "I'll take it as an unpaid leave of absence and if I don't work, I don't get paid, that's work, simple. So, that's what I did and Bob Lisson actually, I would come to different events here when I wasn't working down there, like it might have been on a weekend or whatever and I invited Bob down, I said, "come down and see what we're doing", and he was really, really impressed. We had lunch and he came back and after nine, eight months, I came back, and the rest is history. I knew I could still do what I had to do and yeah, so I always kept my finger in the pie even when I was on my professional development, it truly was PD and that was one area that I thought may be the Faculty Association was a little out of line. I mean that, as far as I'm concerned if I'm paying you to do professional development, you got to know I'm going to be breathing down your neck. Well unfortunately the poor Deans that are running twenty-five faculty, it'll take them six months to just write reports that were due three months ago. So, the Deans gave up with doing the reports and to some degree there was a bit of, well I would say you're not totally committed to what you're doing and that's just the way it is.

ROGER: Yeah and then some other people would take full advantage of their PD and they'd be doing two months and bang they'd be doing stuff every day at that two-month period.

DON: That's right.

[1:04:51]

ROGER: And others would, you're right I mean the, it's individual but –

DON: But I can remember Roger, one other time, and I've made reference to you before. Like when I was working at the very, very beginning, when I was working out in the back field, at the back of the parking lot there building that home and you were doing a video display of your professional development and I'm right out of the industry right, I'm standing watching this beautiful slideshow and I said to Bill Reid who was standing beside me, I said "Jesus, are you telling me we pay somebody to do this?", [Laughs] and he said "shh" [Laughs] but that was the first time you and I met, it was a great show, great show, but –

ROGER: Well, I remember it well and the idea was, I was teaching all these students Canadian history –

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: - and most of them had never been east of the Rockies, ninety-nine percent, they had no concept of Canada –

DON: Yup.

ROGER: - so I said, “there’s nothing that I have available that I can actually show people these historic sites, so they get some feel for the time and place. So I want to use my PD, I’ll pay the cost of my travel and so on, you buy the film, you give me the film, and the slides will be Kwantlen’s whatever” -

DON: That was a great program.

ROGER: - and so that was the idea, you just, you wanted students to feel more sense of east-west versus north-south on the west coast.

DON: The reason I said that it was, and it was, I was still sitting in the little portable just trying to write a curriculum with Bill Reid and you know I walked in, now I have a different appreciation, because when you stop and think about it, how can you teach European history and all the boundaries of Bosnia, Herzegovina, different place like that are all changing. So, if you’re going to teach something about Europe you’ve got to get over there and get into it. So, I have an appreciation for that, and I have an appreciation for what you did, although I wasn’t ready for it, because I wasn’t a part of the academia at that time.

ROGER: Of course, it was always fascinating to work with people from other faculties and groups and so on, because they did have a whole different set of challenges, and different set of things they had to worry about and work on. But I always remember that people talking about you and how in quotation marks, how dangerous your shop could be, and how dangerous it could be to you if some kid or young adult –

[1:07:32]

DON: Had an accident.

ROGER: - screws up on something, you know, whether it’s like a table saw or bandsaw or whatever, it could really cause some significant injury.

DON: Well with that –

ROGER: So you had to teach them all that stuff –

DON: That’s right.

ROGER: - eighteen or twenty-two of them running around in there.

DON: Some couldn’t cut their throat when they first came in, I’m serious, but the beautiful part of what I did and I’m not just blowing smoke on this one here, in the twenty-five years that I taught, not one of my students so much as lost a finger, not one. I had one kid that was a little bit off and he came to my office when I was down the hall from the secretarial arts and he’s standing with his hand

like this, and I said, “what’d you do?”, and I’m not going to name the kid, because he’s, it wouldn’t do him any good. So anyway, he says, “I shot myself”, I said, “oh no, let me see”, so he holds his hand up like that and he’s got a three-inch spike sticking through the palm of his hand and out the other side.

ROGER: Oh a nail gun?

DON: Yeah, he was using a nail gun, and I said to him, I said, “Rob, how can you do that? I mean it’s got the safety on it”, he said, “well I was standing by the tool crib and I had the gun in my hand and I had my hand on it, and I guess my hand was on the trigger”, and he says, “somebody told me, don’t wave that gun around, it could go off, you could have a problem”, and he said, “it wouldn’t go off unless I depress the ring on the end of the muzzle”, and he said, “and as I said that I hit my hand with it and boom down it came”. So, I said to him, I said, “well you see you’re bleeding on the floor”, I said, “what do you want me to do?” He said, “well what are you going to do?” I said, “give me your hammer” and he says, “what are you going to do?”, I said, “I’m going to pull it out” and then he got really scared [Laughs] and I said to him, I said, “oh I’m only joking”, I said, “another student would drive him right down to Royal Columbian hospital”, or not Columbian, the Surrey Memorial, and he came back about two hours later and I knew what they were going to, they cut the head off and pulled it through, because there was barbs on it right, it’s like a fishhook. So anyway, he said they told him that it went right between the bones, never hit a nerve or a bone, and that was the only accident that I had and that is the, to me that was the most important thing I ever achieved. I feel so good about that, because how do you explain an accident where someone gets seriously hurt. But, you know my son-in-law, my current son-in-law, one of them actually, took the program to get close to my daughter so he could take her out.

[1:10:29]

ROGER: This is Shawna?

DON: No, this is [Laughs]

ROGER: Other daughter?

DON: My Shawna’s husband.

ROGER: Oh, okay.

DON: Yeah, and he was working on the –

ROGER: Shawna she’s on the board here?

DON: Yeah.



ROGER: - after you retired or?

DON: After I retired, and I kept saying, we went through the interview process and we hired a fellow, Wayne Andrews, and he was with me for, I'd say, about six weeks before bringing him on stream and then they went to Cloverdale and I didn't agree with going to Cloverdale. To some degree I still don't, but still I started getting phone calls, Wayne is, he's going to be away for a week or whatever, can you take the class? Well you know I helped out once in a while, but then with Doug Podets was from the Surrey schoolboard area here, and I worked with him in putting together what they call the ACE-IT program. That's the program that went into the high schools that allowed the schools to go in grade eleven or twelve, complete the ACE-IT program and leave high school with Level One accreditation for the apprenticeship. So, I came back, and I helped out the teacher from Samuel Robertson in Maple Ridge. I taught his class, because they didn't have an instructor. So, I worked six weeks on that one there and then I became friends with Grant Sitch, the instructor from over there, and they were so happy they invited me back to speak to the graduating class at their grad ceremony and yeah, it worked out well. But then, on the downside of it, we changed Deans left, right and centre and Wayne says to me, he says, "geez, you know any good carpenters that are wanting to get into teaching, and I said no, I've been, I would recommend Grant Sitch if he was available, but he's committed to the high school, and he runs a great program.

ROGER: Well the one place I would never have wanted to be Dean, was Dean of Trades and I'll tell you why, it was mostly because of the way you guys were funded and especially in the latter years when there was an agency which got involved in all the funding of the trades, a provincial agency, -

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: - I forget the name of it was, but it meant that you sort of were negotiated, basically you ended up negotiating all the time for the funding for the coming year.

DON: Yup.

ROGER: And so you didn't have any sort of ability to really say okay, here we are, we know we've got a five-year plan or whatever, we know that this is all solid money now and we can move ahead.

DON: Yup.

ROGER: So that was -

DON: Well the money -

ROGER: - I would never have wanted to be in that position.

DON: The money, you're right came from two, was controlled by two: The Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Ed, and Ministry of Labour is used to spending big money. We used to get, well you know it's a lot, it's more expensive to buy a two-by-four than that piece of paper there and we always had the feeling, well if you leave it to the academics, they're happy buying pencils and paper, no problem with that, but getting back to Bob Lowe telling me he's not playing for the lift of plywood. Well, [Laughs] you know that's the way it goes. But you're right, then it all went one way and we evolved back, which I think was a very, very big mistake. It went right back to the way it was, whereas if you went to Pacific Vocational Institute, you could roll a bowling ball through there for three months every summer and beautiful big spaces with well-equipped equipment and nobody there. That's not right and geez, I can remember saying and, if I could go back, it's like a parrot, I keep telling people that you have to train people for tomorrow, tomorrow, you know look at the numbers. When I started, when I was a young lad, before I went into the army, there was only thirteen million people in Canada, today we're forty million, well now they're wondering, they have a housing shortage, I wonder why. But anyway, geez, oh boy.

[1:19:15]

ROGER: So they had, at some point you also had an industry body that was involved in the funding, I don't remember the exact dynamics of it, but you had this really, that's why I never wanted to become the Dean of Trades, because it's like, I want to spend all my life negotiating with different groups to get the funding to buy plywood or whatever, it seemed kind of, kind of bizarre to me in a way.

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: Anyway, it's prospered and the trades programs have produced all kinds of people that have been very successful, right from millwrights and women going into millwright programs and the carpentry, growing the sort of the group that can become trades people in those areas and you produced all kinds of successful graduates.

DON: That's true, that's true.

ROGER: That –

DON: And you know it's still, unfortunately what's happened is different governments over the years have been involved in the training and what they're trying to achieve and to some degree they are is there used to be people that would say to me, "are you a carpenter? Are you a rough carpenter or a finisher?" There is no difference, you're either a carpenter or you're not. I can build cabinetry. I've built cabinetry, but I've also built homes. And the fact is that the carpenter is a carpenter. What they want is a California model and I went down to California and I redid a whole kitchen for a guy that was doing a TV show and it was a good, good job and I enjoyed every bit of it. But the thing is,

is that down there they have a special guy who's the journeyman shutter installer on the outside of the windows, the shutters and then he goes and then there's the door hanger that comes and hangs the doors. Then there's the guy that comes in and puts the base moldings on, all at ten bucks an hour. Well you know what? When I retired I got a call from the federal government or provincial government, wanting me to teach a class out at the high crime institute. What the hell do you call it?

ROGER: Matsqui?

DON: Yeah, Matsqui or the other one, anyway [Laughs] I said, "I just retired", he said, "yeah that's why I'm phoning ya", and I said, "what kind of money you paying?", he said, "thirty bucks an hour", then I really laughed.

[1:21:50]

ROGER: [Laughs]

DON: [Laughs] Really laughed and why would I go out there for thirty bucks an hour when I could go to Kwantlen for fifty and I don't run the risk of having my throat cut by somebody standing behind me? So I said no thanks, but still the California model is almost here now, where you know, they're paying a young kid after school to go in and they give him a little stick, about this high, and they say just go along every eight-to-ten feet and stand it against the wall and screw this electrical box on the stud. That's all they do, and then there's another kid that goes in and pulls the wire. An electrician comes in and ties it off and does the electrical panel. Well you know, you can't blame the employers, but I don't think that it's doing the trade any good. It's definitely not doing the trade any good. No, I mean we have to be able to be to maintain the trade and I feel sorry, I know that the program in Maple Ridge at Sam Robertson Technical School is the best of all of the high school programs that I've seen, and I've looked at a lot of them. I still keep in touch, I keep in touch with most of my faculty friends that I've made friends with over all those years, and it's nice. Like some of them from Cloverdale said, "hey, why don't you get a hold of Sheila Wallace and bring her up and we'll all have lunch at the pub on a Friday afternoon", I said, "yeah, I'll see if I can set that up", and I will. So, it's a matter of keep in touch with them. I mean, you wouldn't have known if Frank Apel died if I hadn't of told you.

ROGER: No, that's right.

DON: And you know, I was at Glen Williams funeral and Glen was another salt of the earth individual, just wonderful man. And I just had, Bev and I had lunch with his wife a month ago. So, yeah it's very important, very important to stay connected with our friends and they're all friends.

ROGER: Yeah, and so that's what we're trying to do with the association of course is to rebuild connections, because a lot of them just run out the door, sort of waiting to get by and that was the

end of it, unless you had a circle of people that you would keep in touch with. But to look at a broader circle, which I was lucky because I was moving around the whole institution –

DON: Sure.

ROGER: - so I knew an awful lot of people, but at the end of it was just kind of like goodbye and a lot of folks don't feel too good about that, because they'd like to maintain that.

DON: Well you had that experience too and, in your history, your background, you were a faculty member. And the big thing is some of the administrators are not ex-faculty members, they don't get the picture. And I wanted to have a, I phoned over to Kwantlen one afternoon and I wanted a twenty-minute appointment with the President of Kwantlen Polytech and the secretary said, "why do you want to talk to him?" and I said, "well because I've spent twenty-five years there and I was always sort of in a different space from a lot of them, but I have some ideas I'd like to share with the President" and she said, "well, what do you want to talk about?" and I said, "well, I guess that'll be between him and I and you know I'd still like to do it", and she said "well, I'll mention that you called", never heard back from him. But at your, in a day that Bev and I went out to Richmond and he, I believe that's who it was –

[1:25:33]

ROGER: He's in his sixth year, so it would depend when you called. He's been here about six years now.

DON: Yeah okay but the system hasn't changed and I can remember, I went, I used to go to the schools and I talked to the graduates and I was at the school in Lord Tweedsmuir for a program where I was talking to the students about trades, and I had about thirty of them in this hall that I was in and the game that they played was, what's my line, what do I do. So, they were guessing, some said, "are you a drug dealer?" "No." "Are you RCMP?" "No." "Are you a doctor?" "No." And after a couple of minutes, I told them I'm a carpenter, "oh okay", and I said, "let me ask you people here right now", I said, "how many of you are planning to go to university when you graduate?", about thirty of them hands went up. I said, "okay", stay standing, and I said, "how many of you have got a good, solid B average for your grade point averages", about six of them, the rest all sat down and I said, "okay, my next question is to the people that just sat down", and I said, "what are you going to do tomorrow, that you didn't do today, because what you're doing today isn't getting you into university, you're not going", I said, "and I don't care what the counsellors tell you, with a lousy GPA, you're not going, so eventually you're going to have to come and see me if you want to be a tradesmen, you want to work in the trade, you got to come to Kwantlen, get trained and we'll get you help to get you into the industry, but forget university, I don't care what, tell your mom and dad your grades aren't good enough to go" and the fact is that's true, that's the reality and I've

firmly, I've told Grant same thing. The counsellors today in my opinion have to counsel and they have to take a look at the kid's statement of attendance at school and his grades and Johnny might not know that he needs counselling, but if you've got his grades and you fail to counsel him, you're doing him a disservice. That kid needs counselling, and you can't wait for the guy to just drop in, because the counsellor coaches the basketball team. That's where I come from, that's why I've got a daughter that's a realtor and a mortgage broker, a son that's a journeymen carpenter and the rest is history. Fail to plan, you're planning to fail and so.

ROGER: So –

DON: One last thing Roger, when I used to go into school, before I got sidetracked there, when I used to go into the schools, I went into one of the schools down on, I can't remember the name of it now, but it's down about 89<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, down to Whalley in that corner down in there, and I went to speak to the students, not just me, I went on behalf of Kwantlen okay, and I walked in there, they had a meeting and I looked around the classroom and we had, well I guess BCIT had a bunch and we had a bunch of counsellors and me.

[1:29:02]

Okay, now I looked around and I thought there's something wrong with the picture here. And I recognized all the people from Kwantlen, I recognized where we are, it's a tough neighbourhood financially, the families are working hard, mom and dad both trying to make a living, and how many of these kids are going to go to university, right? And here Kwantlen has got six academic counsellors and me to talk about coming to Kwantlen and I said to them, I said to our counsellors, I said, "what are you going to tell them?", I said, "half these kids will never see an outside institution, half of them is just, it's just realistic", I said, "you're going to teach academics, you're doing academics, you all are", and I said, "from where we are and the kids I'm looking at out here, you need more guys like me here, because they're, most of them are going to end up coming to the trades somewhere", and they all got really angry, but tough luck, that's the way it goes. But that's where, like one woman said, "well I can talk to trades", I said, "okay", I said, "what's your name and when was the last time you were in my shop?", she said, "well I've never been to your shop", I said, "how can you sell what I do, when you don't know what I do?" and that's the reality, you know that. We saw it all the time, it was a natural happening, and what's one thing used to irritate me. I was usually the only one that went to the schools to speak about the trades and the other academic counsellors didn't know what we do, probably still don't. But that's what I wanted to talk to him about, is force your Deans to make sure that they can talk about what they're supposed to do. I mean we should have, I think all of our Deans, especially in the trades that we've had, whether it's Geoff Dean, and Geoff Dean would probably agree with me, but Geoff was a nice guy, but not very forceful, right? I think a good Dean would have said, "okay, there's a career fair, I want all of you guys, get substitutes in to teach your shop and get to that career fair", and send them down so the kids can talk

automotive, carpentry, electrician, plumbing, and give them what they need. Half of them don't, half of them can't spell Kwantlen, let alone know what they do. So, anyway, can I take a glass of water.

ROGER: Yup, please do. So it's certainly been a huge changes that have gone on around here just in buildings, number of people, number of employees –

DON: I got lost coming in here.

ROGER: - technology, changes have occurred. From every - one person you were just talking about Maureen Moore –

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: - is just retiring actually.

[1:32:12]

DON: Oh yeah.

ROGER: Started as a student and worked for thirty-five years –

DON: Yeah she's been here forever.

ROGER: Quite a long time and she was talking to some of her fellow employees in admissions and she was talking about, “well yeah we didn't used to have computers, we didn't have online registration, we didn't have all of these things, we didn't this” –

DON: That's right.

ROGER: - “well how did you get your work done?” Well she said, “we had paper and pencils and punch cards, and we just talked to each other” [Laughs] and I said, “well we didn't even text anybody or send them emails, we just talked to each other” -

DON: Yeah

ROGER: - and that was how we got stuff done and it was fun.

DON: And we didn't have call waiting and call screening. [Laughs] Like today, I blow my mind you know, up on, like I said I've got a big sixty-inch TV and when the phone rings, the person's name comes up on my cell, on my TV screen so I know who it is and then it becomes well, not right now. [Laughs] I'll call her back. But anyway it's, like you say the technological change is crazy. It's happening faster than we can keep up to it.

ROGER: Yeah, and it will continue to. I remember in the early, let's say 1980, '81, excuse me, the big deal was that some of the trades stuff was getting put on video discs for instruction.

DON: Mmm

ROGER: And this was like this huge breakthrough and of course video discs were going to be wonderful, because you'd put the whole library of congress on thirty feet or whatever it was –

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: - of shelf space on video discs. But I remember there was a big push in trades to put a lot of training onto video discs -

DON: Yeah, you're right.

[1:33:57]

ROGER: - and that kind of got, that was when I was off in Toronto with 'A Triple C' for four months, four years and I was seeing this stuff and sort of telling people about it like, "here's the technology that's happening".

DON: It's amazing.

ROGER: Now video discs, pretty hard to find video discs nowadays -

DON: I know.

ROGER: - like they're gone, it's all online. So, they can do all this kind of stuff.

DON: Well, I remember, I went Larry McGillivray, they had, my friend that ended up with Parkinson's, I went out to his house one day, he lived out by the **Fries** corner in down the lower flats there and he was having a garage sale. So anyway, a bunch of stuff was all laid out and one thing that I sold for him was a camera and actually it was an Asian fellow that come in and picked it up, "how much", and sold it to him and after the guy left, Larry says to me, he says, "geez, you shouldn't have sold him that camera", and I said, "well why not?", he said, "because there's a big hole in the middle of the picture when it's developed", [Laughs] and I said, "oh no" and it was an Asian fellow too. So anyway, his daughter, Larry's daughter walked down and there was a rotary telephone and said to him, she said, "dad, what's this?", I remember that plain as day, "it's a telephone", "really?". The old rotary phones, crazy.

ROGER: Yeah, it sure is.

DON: Well, tell me more, I'm sorry I'm not interviewing you, I just want to know more about our association, because I want to, have you heard from Jim Gillis?

ROGER: I have.

DON: Is he going to join?

ROGER: Well yeah, he'll, I think he and Gloria will join, but of course they're going to –

DON: I understand.

ROGER: - Courtney, Comox, but they get the newsletters and whatever and we're hoping to at some point run something more up there, like Judith McGillivray is up there, Bob Perkins is in Port Alberni, they're up that part of the island, a couple other people up there and then there's some on Saltspring and three, at least three on Saltspring, maybe four and several around Sidney, Victoria, so we're hoping –

[1:36:20]

DON: Yeah, it'll be a good thing, I'm glad you mentioned Bob Perkins, because I have always had a good memory about Bob. We were here at Surrey during the elections and I nominated him for the Ombudsman's job and so every once in a while, they would say, "well, say something, why do you want to be the Ombudsman?" So Bob had a few words to say and then I got up to speak to the rest of the faculty and I said, "you know", I said, "I've known Bob here for a long time" and I said, "just let me tell you one thing, when you get into a tough situation, it's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the amount of fight in the dog" and Bob's a little guy [Laughs] and they all cracked up and just erupted in laughter and he got elected. That was, I'll never forget that. Yeah, but it would wonderful if we could get those folks together.

ROGER: Yeah, and that's part of the, part of our objective. So, some of them have come over for things here, like Judith, Chris and Betty Rideout live on Saltspring Island now.

DON: Rideout, she used to live in Maple Ridge didn't she?

ROGER: Um, nope, I'm not sure Betty, when she was younger she lived on the Northshore.

DON: Okay.

ROGER: But they lived sort of White Rock area.

DON: Wasn't it, Rideout, wasn't she the woman from up in HR?

ROGER: No, no, this woman taught Psychology.

DON: Oh, okay.

ROGER: And so there's things that are happening and then there was one natural group of Registrar, of admissions office people and they sort of call themselves the OREG ladies or whatever and they just naturally Maureen Moore just got them together over the years and they'd have supper and –

DON: Good.

ROGER: - might be twelve, next time there's ten, there's fifteen, whatever.

DON: Sure.

ROGER: So, they've done things like that. So, it's sort of just saying, "here's the things that we're doing" and so we've kind of run a number of different kinds of things. Tomorrow is kind of a walking tour, about two hours in –

[1:38:28]

DON: Yup.

ROGER: - the, you know, east end, not east end, but Gastown area, but basically Downtown to look at some of the history of Vancouver and when it was in its other era. So, we try to do different things that will attract different people.

DON: Yeah.

ROGER: And then as we develop more and more the website and, we were talking about people I don't know if people have passed on, well that'll be one of the things where we'll have sort of a celebration page or –

DON: Sure

ROGER: - memorial or whatever page, where we at least record some of the, cause a number have obviously passed on with time and we may even be able to leave people the option to write their own little write up right?

DON: Sure.

ROGER: Here's what I want people to remember kind of thing.

DON: Well you know, what we had at Newton campus, I don't know, it might have been before your time, but anyway we used to have a little group with the faculty and staff at Christmas, you know you get a little gift and it's a hidden, you don't know who it's from and I [Laughs] I still laugh

about this. You know that somebody gave me, somebody drew my name, they gave me a framed picture. It was a brick wall.

ROGER: Oh really.

DON: Yeah, I swear [Laughs] it was. I said to my wife, I said, “geez”, she said, “well maybe they’re trying to tell you something, [Laughs] thick as a brick”, I said, “maybe not”.

ROGER: Didn’t have Frank’s fingerprints on it anywhere no?

DON: No [Laughs], no, well Frank Ludtke, he lived up behind up in Maple Ridge up on in Glenayre and he used to walk in the nature path behind my house, but I don’t know, I don’t know.

ROGER: Anyway, so that’s the idea, the more people we can tell about it, and somebody from trades is living up there too with, the woman who worked, she was on CDEA [Cultural Diversity and Ethic Awareness committee] with us and she worked for the student association, Donna Suttie.

[1:40:26]

DON: Oh, I remember Donna Suttie.

ROGER: Okay, well she’s with ah, a big guy who I’m ninety-nine percent sure was in trades.

ALICE: He had worked at UBC and his name is escaping me at the moment too. He worked in UBC in the horticulture.

ROGER: Oh that’s right, he was horticulture sorry.

ALICE: Yeah and then he came over to Kwantlen and I have to admit, I’m not sure exactly what he’d been doing, but I did work with him, he was an ISW facilitator and so before he and Donna got together, he was married and his wife passed away and he was at Kwantlen for quite a while.

DON: Wow.

ROGER: Yeah, they’re living up around 100 Mile House I think, somewhere like that.

ALICE: I think so, yeah.

DON: Well you know Lee Bolivar, she was, she worked with me in the carpentry shop a couple of days a week and then a couple of days a week she was with the millwrights and she had a place up, has a place, big piece of property on the lake at Fawn Lake and her son David is a graduate of mine and is doing really well, cabinet makers and they do a lot of restaurants and stuff like that.

ROGER: Well if you’re still in touch with her give her our –

DON: I can't get her, everybody's on the cellphone now -

ROGER: Oh yeah.

DON: - and the only way you can look's on Facebook, right?

ROGER: Yeah, we did a lot of that, Facebook and LinkedIn and so on, but it's really trying to connect with people again -

DON: Oh for sure.

ROGER: - and find different ways for -

DON: I agree with you and I support wholeheartedly what you're doing and I'm looking forward to the next get-together and the social side of it too. Unfortunately, about the walk about that's happening is I'm at the Healthy Heart program tomorrow at the hospital and I'm there, it's just something I've got to do.

[1:42:22]

ROGER: Yeah, absolutely.

DON: My cardiologist gets a report from them.

ROGER: That you attended? [Laughs]

DON: Well yeah [Laughs] and some very valuable stuff, nutrition and everything goes with it. You know I'll never live twice what I've lived, but I figure, you know with the life that I've lived, I honestly feel that I've lived two lives. You know I put a couple of years in the Canadian Army and I think it was some of the best years of my life and it's, I ended up getting posted to Camp Gagetown, New Brunswick and -

ROGER: Oh yeah, that's in the bush.

DON: - yeah, but I joined up in 1961 and I met my wife in 1963 and I'm still married to her.

ROGER: Well I joined up in about 1961, but I'm not still with [Laughs] the first person I married.

DON: Well that's okay.

ROGER: Like a lot of folks, but a similar pattern right?

DON: Sure.

ROGER: Military and then Douglas Kwantlen and then -

DON: Well you know, actually, not that it matters too much, well it maybe did, because when I was in the interviews for the position that I originally was hired for, there was, and I didn't know this until I sat down at the table, there was a guy by the name of Andy Andrews –

ROGER: Oh yes, yes.

DON: - he was a captain in the Canadian Army, he was my CO in trades training at Camp Chilliwack, but he didn't recognize me, and I never said anything. But anyway, I guess he might have read the resume and seen the Royal Canadian School of Military Engineering and I don't, somewhere down the line, I mean maybe it had an effect. [Phone rings] Is that me? It'll be my cell.

ALICE: It's not me, because I don't have one. I'm a luddite.

[1:44:31]

ROGER: ... calling in.

DON: Yeah, I wish. Excuse me just for a sec, "hello – okay, yup thanks hon, okay bye", my wife reminded me I have to pick up my grandson.

ROGER: Oh yeah.

DON: That's okay, so

ROGER: So that's, thank you very much.

DON: You're welcome, it's my pleasure.

ROGER: It's amazing to bring back all these things and to think of all those years.

DON: It's good for me, I got to admit, I've enjoyed this a hundred percent.

ROGER: Good, thank you very much.

ALICE: Okay, going to turn the machine off.

ROGER: Great.

ALICE: And turn this machine off.

DON: So if you're going to -

[End of transcript]