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September 14, 2004

d. What is the greatest need for professionals in the construction industry right now as they mature and as they face retirement? What do they need to do?

r. It depends almost totally on what stage of professional development they are at. Because I claim that the development of a professional, irrespective of what profession they are in, be it medicine, engineering, etc., that development starts back in grade school. It is probably first discernable about the fourth grade. I think that's where I can recall people (in my own experience) showing signs of what they were going to be. And that has been sort of a hobby of mine—to watch people in their development.

I can still remember characteristics of people like Ruth Kuhne, Ruth Franklin, and Mary Roshirt, and Betty Foster, who is now my wife, and other people. You see those names I would never remember unless there was some outstanding characteristic that they began to show back in 4th, 5th, 6th grade. And there is where I think professional development starts. It starts with an understanding of the home (the parents) whoever they might be, irrespective of the makeup of the family is – whether it's an large family or a small family. It begins in the home and it begins in the school with the encouragement of those people who are understanding and compassionate about what it is that not only this child or that child or anyone else in the children bracket are—that compassion is to extend to the entire family group—that rubs off on the young people. In fact that's probably one of the easiest things to polish young people with is the compassion that their parents showed toward others.

So, that's where it starts. That's stage 1. Stage 2 begins when the child moves into that comprehension period. That all of a sudden—now in my case it was in the 5th grade when I began to play the trumpet. I began to realize that now here was a whole unexplored area for me and my parents were very supportive of it, and as a result, the area of music began to open up—something that I was never very interested in. But because of the interest my mother, in particular, showed (my father had passed away) and also Ray ??, my trumpet teacher, who was a friend of my parents, he offered to give me trumpet lessons, and he didn't charge for it.

d. More compassion.

r. Yeah. That compassion is responsible for adding more good things than I can even remember along the people who knew my family members well. I had a very small family—my mother, myself, and my father up to the point where I was 10 years old. So it played a big part in my life because we were pulled together by a lot of common interests most of which were not discernible to me—I mean a lack of money, lack of resources that were important. This was during the last 20s and early 30s and on through til about 1934.

d. So there was a privation throughout.

r. Yeah, but that's the interesting thing. It didn't appear to us...of course as children, we didn't have the same perception of it as we do now. But to me, that was the point in time where I was beginning to shape in my own mind the things in life I felt I wanted to do and doing this with the help of people who were truly interested in helping...my Aunt Florence, my Uncle Mark, my cousin who is one of my best friends, and I guess all the people I knew...Bill Lattin in high school, the trumpet player. These are people who impact indirectly, but they all play a great role in certain key decisions. So when I began to realize, first of all, that I liked music, and then I began to realize that I was a reasonably talented musician, I then began to realize that I could make a career out of this. But then I would have to...at this point I was in high school...

d. And this is Stage 3?

r. This is probably Stage 3. I think the 8th grade, I played Cherry Berry Bin on the stage as my farewell song to Ford School at Highland Park. And it went over fairly well, I think I did a pretty good job...Ruth Cune was a wonderful pianist and a good accompanist—a little loud but very good. Then I realized all the people in our apartment had a lot to put up with over the years because we lived in a 4-story apartment—my mother and I—and I was practicing trumpet. But also playing "duck on the rock" out in the alley with my friends. And all those friends are the same people—Kenny Belky was one of them. In fact there were some relatively famous people who lived in that area at the time and we got to know them.

That was Phase 3—that was when I began to realize that there were various areas that were potentials. But all the time being pushed toward certain directions.

d. Now Stage 2 was when you were exploring otherwise new areas and realizing there was some potential, but you said that Stage 3 was when you actually had to start working for this. Could you go back and redefine Stage 3 for me?

r. Let me go back to Stage 2. Stage 2 was fundamentally where it became an internal realization that I was able to accomplish something. I realized my mother and my father were both interested in music to an extent and I could do things they couldn't do. It was very important.

d. That's also called differentiation—finding your own strengths.

r. I didn't look at it...that didn't strike me as being important. What struck me as being important was that I found I could do something that they also could do and that they did quite well, but not actively. They merely appreciated it, and they transmitted their interest into driving me to do better at playing the trumpet or later on arranging...and Ray McConnell furthered that by exposing me to people like Larry Keel, Ralph Jewel, all of the...who was the premiere trumpet player?

d. Leonard Smith?

r. Leonard Smith, yeah. And when I played with these people, or when I played in the WJR orchestra, for example, these were all fine musicians. They weren't top notch, but they were all pretty good people. See these are the people who also

brought me to realize that music is a transitory career. In Southeastern Michigan, or in the Midwest, if you're a musician and you want to be the best in the country, or the best in the nation or the best in the world, you don't stay here, because this isn't the center...it's the center of good musicians, but it's not the center of great musicians. And great musicians must work almost worldwide. So I realized all of a sudden what was going to be involved in being in music.

d. Now that's Stage 3?

r. The end of that is Stage 3. Stage 3 I realized when I was up here in Mount Pleasant waiting to be driven up to the Cherry Festival 1940. I think that was the first Cherry Festival...I'm not sure if it was the first one, but it was one of the earliest at the country club in Traverse City. The band that I was playing with—Ray McConnell had gotten me a position as the third trumpet player—that began to make me realize that here was a rather unique position for a guy in my position and I knew my capabilities. In high school I had a very tough task master at Highland Park High School—two of them in fact, Mr. Wolf and Wade Griffith, and these people were really plain and simple harsh people. I remember Mr. Griffith telling me that I would never make anything in the state competition. He said, "You're not a good enough player. Your technique is poor. You aren't practicing enough." And of course I realized all that, because if you're perceptive at all you're aware as you practice, and you know as an accomplished professional yourself, that when you practice, you're never satisfied with what you're doing.

d. Always the holes in technique and ability...gaps that you'll never close.

r. Well, yeah. And not only that, but gaps that you know you can't close.

d. Never. right.

r. I mean, I can still remember things I can't do. Never could do...can't do them now. But my point is you had to at least make an effort to cover them because if you didn't you weren't going to play professionally at the lower levels.

So anyway, after I went up to Traverse City to play in the Cherry Festival with the band, Bill Sawyer's Orchestra, which was the house band for all intents and purposes at the University of Michigan Union, which was a fairly prestigious place to play at. They used to play there every Friday and Saturday night. And I played there with them few Saturday nights, and he asked me to stay with them, but I told them that I had gotten a scholarship. And there was a defining point.

d. Do you go to school, or do you follow music? Yes. And the decision?

r. Well it was to go to Lawrence Tech. I mean I had no other way...I could see that I would never, ever...I would betray all of my people who had helped me...by following music. Because I knew I wasn't good enough. But you can delude yourself into thinking you are good enough.

d. For your standards, you weren't good enough. Maybe for somebody else's you might have been.

r. Well, for all the people I played with up through the Crystal Palace over here on Lake Michigan, or rather at Paw Paw Lake. So in other words I had a chance to compare myself with Al Burt, with others...I hear people on the radio today who were in that band, and those people were just great musicians. See you can't make it. The only person I know of who ever made it was Kenny Pelky. And Mike Ravitzs and Dick Flanagan who was our drummer. Mike left the band at the Crystal Palace...I remember when he left, he was a very disheartened person about the fact that he hadn't behaved as well as perhaps he should have and he was leaving to go with Jan Savat. Kenny Pelky and I went out to Eastwood one night to see him on the stage with Jan Savitt and he was a tremendous drummer. He had straightened up and kicked some of his bad habits.

r. Kenny and I, and we'd watch the bands.

That was during college. And then of course I went into a stage where I was playing in the pit band for General Motors. I was working out of an office, Max Gale office, in Bill Gale's band, and I was playing rather regularly every week with him. I was playing in a very small orchestra. I was the only trumpet player. Owen Moran was in that. He was one of the people like Morry Milster who could play any tune at the drop of a hat. That used to be a contest at Motel Statler in the dining room in the evening. He'd play tunes at request, any tune you wanted. You'd name a tune, he'd play it. And I used to do that at dances. I used to play at the boat club, the yacht club, the Detroit Country Club, the golf club. We played a lot of places. They were nice gigs, and I enjoyed them. We were all straitlaced. We were all pretty young. I was the youngest member of the group. But that began to reinforce my decision to go to Lawrence Tech. I had a scholarship. I had no other way of getting there, and I was encouraged to go there by my trumpet teacher and I made the decision pretty much on my own except for my mother.

Yeah, I think the rest of the family. They didn't know much about what I did...Aunt Florence, Uncle Art, Bud.

d. But they liked you.

r. Well, I think they did. I was never close to them, oddly enough, since they were our only relatives. They were the only people I knew in our family in Detroit, and I used to go over there...I'd work at Krogers and at Smith's store on Saturdays and then go over there after I'd finished around 10:00 in the evening. And I'd take over a pint of ice cream, and we'd sit around and just talk, Bud and I. So we were good friends. That's I think how I came up here, because my Uncle Art and my Aunt Florence and Bud were transferred up here to Farrow Stamping in Mount Pleasant.

The next phase came about when I went into the army because at that point in time I had a very difficult choice to make—did I give up music completely...the first thing was the partial abandoning of it. The second phase was really a tough one because that was when I had to...see that trumpet back there...that was just before I left to go in the army. I was just starting to work at the Detroit Athletic Club, and I...Ray was there and another fellow...and I heard something rattling in my horn, and the third valve chamber had a screw in it. Either someone put the screw in there, or it came out of the case, and I never...see that was also a defining point because I realized at that point...I had already realized that the music business is very competitive...and there are a lot of people who don't hesitate to hurt somebody else if they can. And

from that point on, the competition for local jobs was extremely intense, and there were a lot of people who had no compunction about hurting you.

d. They probably saw you as a threat.

r. It didn't matter. What I learned from that was that it didn't matter...which is terribly important. Because if it mattered, then what you were going to do was not only lose your career, but you would lose your sense of self-worth. And if you lose that sense of worth, then you lose something that is absolutely essential for the musician....because no musician can exist if he or she doesn't consider themselves worthy of those honors that they might have achieved.

d. Of playing music...

r. Yeah, so I knew I couldn't let things like that bother me.
d. There are a lot of very sour musicians out there.

r. Yeah. All I do is I just look around up here. You can walk through the school of music over there and throw a stone and hit one without even trying.

d. It's almost as if these people are in music by accident.

r. I look at that picture up there on the mantel.

d. A picture of The Usual Suspects.

r. And I say what difference does it make that they may not be the neatest guy in the world. Or what difference does it make if they make a mistake while they're playing at tune. Or what difference does it make if they aren't able to do something as well as what you think they should be. That's not important. The important thing is whether you're satisfied with what you do.

Now that was phase 6.

d. Wait a minute. I'm still back on Stage 3, which was recognizing the work that's required, music is a transitory career, learning your capabilities, and striving to cover your inadequacies. The defining point of deciding to accept a scholarship to Lawrence Tech...now the defining point, is that Stage 4?

r. I made a major decision then. Yes.

d. Yes. That still Stage 4, and then you move into...

r. I had taken my trumpet with me along in the army.

d. And the army is still Stage 4...you're determined to go to Lawrence Tech to further your education...

r. I've gone to Lawrence Tech. I've graduated.

d. OK so you've made that choice, you're playing on weekends, you're playing part time

r. Yes.

d. And the next stage is when you abandon music altogether.

r. Well I went through the stage where I decided to abandon it.

d. So that's Stage 5 then.

r. When I went into the army, I thought maybe I could get into one of the army music organizations. And I could see that that was almost impossible because the quality was just eye opening. I didn't realize that there were that many good musicians. They were just good.

d. And yet you'd come up in Detroit, and there were some pretty good musicians there.
r. Oh, yeah. But these people...these people were in Glenn Miller's quality.

d. Did you ever play for any of them?

r. No. No. There was no way as a private first class that I could ever get out. I dug myself a neat hole and that was where I was for a year and a half. Oh yeah. I was a PFC for a year and a half.

d. And that persisted because....?

r. Well because I'm stubborn because I resist things that I don't believe are right and I try hard to help people who I feel have a role to play in what it is that I think is important.

d. Yeah...but you also had a certain sergeant who declared you a "hothead."

r. Well that was a first sergeant...those are expected. If I held grudges against all the people that I perceived quarrels with, I wouldn't be able to talk to anybody. See, those are other things—in-between stages that you go through...see there are a whole series of transition stages that we haven't even talked about that lead you from one to another...from the 5th grade up to the 8th grade performance at Ford School...and practices in the apartment with Ruth Cune, the accompanist, who played piano on the second floor of the apartment, and my mother and I had our apartment on the first floor. There were a lot of musicians in the building...my trumpet teacher.

d. So how would you describe this fifth stage of being in the army?

r. Well that explains something I never understood. My father was in the army, and I used to ask him if there was another war, could I go. And he said, "Yeah, you could, but I don't think you'd like it." So that's the orientation that I grew up with. And he was right...although I did like it. I learned...the army taught me a lot of

things. It taught me survival skills that I certainly still use to this day, particularly in the construction business. But it also taught me a lot about people, about inanimate objects that explode and the damage they can do.

d. Since we're taking a little diversion, I wonder if you could tell me a little about your work in the army—your special training and where that led you.

r. I was playing in a pit band in Indiana when I got my notice from the induction center, so I had to come home. So I left the group down there. We played in Flint, Saginaw, Bay City. It was a traveling band. I was playing first trumpet for the first time.

I came home and reported and was accepted into the army. They sent me to Camp Grant over near Chicago. The band was playing in Chicago at the time so I went to see them, and I saw what kind of a life they were leading. And it did...it sort of made me glad that I had decided to give up music as a career. It certainly wasn't the type of life...the show gals particularly, they were very disruptive...they were very beautiful ladies and the boys in the chorus...usually the stars were not too bad—they had graduated out of that promiscuous stage—but there were a lot of things going on that I didn't particularly care for. And I could see very easily what was happening, so that was sort of a deciding point – I decided that I did not want to be a part of that scene. It was one of those points where the thing gets solidified a little bit. At that point I entered active army service and from there I went from Camp Grant to Fort Sheridan, and from Fort Sheridan down to, oddly enough, Fort Benning, Georgia, and I went into basic training in what they call the ASTP program – (Army Specialized Training Program). I was slated to head for Cincinnati first and then they changed that later to the University of Minnesota.

d. Now this was... you were already a college graduate, an engineering graduate, so you were a fairly valuable commodity.

r. [laughing] I thought so...

d. Explain about that.

r. People like myself were not looked upon with great favor. We still had to overcome that at the reunions. Here we are 75 – 80 years old and we're still trying to explain to the people...

d. ...that you're not a bad guy?

r. I stopped telling people...I joined the 86th Division later when they were already in Camp ???, Louisiana. That was where I joined them, and I was taken out of I company which is a rifle company which was my MOS (military occupation serial) number. I was a rifleman and a scout – that was my classification. And once you get classified, you don't...the chances of moving from being a scout to being a trumpet player in a military band – it's a long leap.

d. But you certainly made a transition because you moved from being a rifleman/scout to being a demolitions expert. How did that happen?

r. Well that was because I was very interested in demolition work, and scout...there were only 7 of us in the I&R platoon (intelligence & reconnaissance) and I was transferred from I Company to the Headquarters Company which was the lead group battalion. You see there was the headquarters company and then there were 3 or 4 rifle companies, and the heavy weapons company—the ones that handle the mortars. I ran the gamut of these. I fired every weapon there was. I haven't fired a weapon since I got out of the army, but I fired all of them from the simplest carbine up to I think I fired the 57 mm anti-tank gun.

d. So the BAR is familiar to you.

r. Yeah, the Browning Automatic Rifle. In fact I've got one of Bud's or maybe it's my own because I did get qualified in it...but the point is you got badges and these qualifications were noted on your resume. So it didn't take long to build up enough of a resume so that when they looked at that that here was a guy who was qualified to shoot weapons well and who was a scout and who was a rifleman and who had been in a rifle company and who was now in the headquarters company and still with the division that we'd like to have him. So I went out from Camp Livingston Louisiana to Camp Grant in California.

Louisiana was big snake company. I used to hate going out on those night bivouacs with all those dumb snakes all over the place.

Well anyway, at Camp Grant, we started our amphibious training. We climbed cargo nets and all kinds of stuff. I mean it was all very rough training. Those cargo nets were 60 feet high, and you'd climb up there and then you'd have to climb down the other side. But anyway, I can't say I didn't enjoy it because we were all young, and that sort of thing appealed to us. And then from Camp Grant, I went to Camp San Luis Obispo, there the amphibious training began in earnest. I had become somewhat of a specialist in demolition work by my training at Fort Benning, Fort Livingston and then the I Company and the Headquarters company, and then I pulled KP on the train out to California. I think I was on KP every day. All the way—I saw the United States all the way from Camp Livingston to Camp Grant in California watching it from the kitchen car because that is where I spent my time.

d. Was that because you were particularly good at kitchen work?

r. No. It was because I was particularly bad at almost everything else. No I just was a rebel, and nobody liked me so the obvious place for me was in the kitchen because the cooks had a way of keeping you under control. I learned a lot there.

d. Did you once have to dig a 5 x 5?

r. No. I've had people dig a 6 x 6.

d. You never had to do that?

r. No. I imposed that sentence once because I was a...there was a trouble maker in our company who continually...this was after I got my commission, and I hesitated a long time before I did that because it was a very dirty job. But during the day he

went out in the field and worked, and then when he got back at night he had to be over at the hole working until he dug enough of the hole. Then they had to fill it back up again.

d. Of course, you wonder just what that was all about...an exercise in humility.

r. Well, it has some very practical purposes. People don't understand what war is all about today. They think it's all really a big game. Well it's a big game, but it's a hell of lot bigger than most people know. This is not fun and games. You're playing for your life, and people don't realize that. That's what surprises me. I mean, we've been through 5 wars since WWII, and there are still people who just don't understand what war is. It doesn't mean that everybody who goes into the army likes it. It means that there are some extenuating circumstances that brought them there and I don't say much about it anymore...people just get angry with you. What good does it do.

d. Let's get you back to San Luis Obispo. You pulled KP on the way out to Camp Grant, and then from Grant to San Luis Obispo.

r. We took a lot of our hard physical training at Camp Grant and then from there to San Luis Obispo which is of course right on the water and that was sort of a rough time because that was where we took our wet training. We would train in the Pacific. Usually we were out in the ocean every day. We had to carry all of our equipment, pack, rifles, the whole thing. And then we had to clean all this stuff at night when we got back. You were required...the next day you had to be out there on the beach with your equipment clean. Cleaning rifles was very difficult with salt water.

So anyway, that is something you'd never forget. And from there we had the amphibious training. Swimming training – they'd take you to the pool...they wouldn't tell you how cold it was, they'd just throw you in. You swim or sink – that's all. They were just testing to see if you could swim. That's the most direct way they could think of. That's what my father used on me when I was younger—over at the grade school pool. He just said to the swimming instructor, "Throw him in. Let's see if he can float." The thing is that we were then taken out in Morell Bay, near Morell Rock, in San Luis Obispo...it's just off the coast. We did most of our wet work out there in the ocean. That's again, when we had to get thrown into the ocean, you see, because we hadn't had any saltwater experience up to that point which is a whole different ballgame. When you swallow a mouthful of saltwater, you never forget it.

d. Something pretty elemental about it.

r. Yeah. It had a direct impact. People with weak stomachs, they never did make much of this. That was interesting because that was where (Camp Livingston) I met John DeLorean in the stockade. He was down there...I was running a scouting problem...

d. Camp Livingston again is in Louisiana...we're back in Louisiana.

r. Yeah.

d. This is still stage 5.

r. We're a little higher than that, but that doesn't matter.

I had wanted to get into OCS ever since I got into the army because that was sort of something like wanting to become first trumpet player in the...

d. That's the elite...Officer Candidate School.

r. I wanted to get into the engineering school, but that was not possible. So my first sergeant supposed that...the first sergeant that became one of my best friends, Sgt. Carter...he used to come to our reunions and reminisce about how neat it was that he was able to keep me from going to OCS. They used to have a ceremonial bonfire that was supposed to be by the sgt. major of the battalion. I finally went up that high. I ran a risk of being court-martialed for doing that. And I went up, and I said I wanted to know what was holding my application up. He said, "Don't you know?" I said, "No." He said, "Well the 1st sergeant of your company has a lot of fun because when they get your application, they light a fire with it and they do a little dance around it and say that's one more." I couldn't believe it, but that's essentially what they did.

d. Why?

r. Well, because they didn't like me. I was a maverick. I didn't belong there. I wasn't part of the original division. I joined the company at Camp Livingston. I was traveling as an outsider. The people—the mechanics and the other people—they liked me. And my squad leader, he liked me, I guess.

d. But somehow or other you got into OCS, didn't you?

r. Well, yeah, I took an exam at the division level.

d. How did that happen? I mean, you didn't go anyplace without their OK.

r. I applied for it again. I applied for it formally, and then I passed the exam. I was, out of 13 people who were selected, I was 13th. And I guess, they finally picked me either because they wanted to get rid of me, or at that time...

d. They had had about all the fun they were going to have out of you.

r. I had gone the route; I had done every job, and I didn't complain...what good would it do?

d. And, there were people on the front lines who were dying.

r. Yeah. That kind of thing didn't really cross my mind too much – you didn't really think about that. After I got my commission, however, then I began to do a lot of thinking about it because I ran a lot of close combat corps. My job was to train recruits, and I trained them in using live ammunition which was very, a rather

thankless job. I remember I told a bunch of troops – we were taking them out onto the close combat course – I said, "Don't ever get behind the two of us (the sergeant and myself). Don't ever get behind us because if you get behind us, you're going to shoot at us," for the simple reason that we told them to shoot at anything that moves. And sure enough, we made a bad mistake, the sergeant and me both, we got out in front of one brand new recruit, and he shot at us. He hit the sergeant. He didn't hit me. I was down pretty close to the ground, but the sergeant had his foot up about – well when you lay down, you put your foot flat, and he had his foot up so that the top of his foot was up like this. And the recruit put a 30-caliber bullet right through his foot, right there, just as neat as he could. We had to get him back to the company compound very quickly, of course—get an ambulance out, and get him back. And when the guy got down to the...we just continued on with the training...when he got down to the cave (one of the places we had to attack), I said now, "When you get down to that cave, there's one thing I want to tell you—keep your head down. Because if you don't, I'm going to knock the helmet right off of your head and part of your head will go right along with it. When you do something like what you did back there. Just forget about it. If you're going to do it back there, you're going to do it in combat. I can't possibly turn you loose from here." And boy he learned a lesson. I shot at him, and I cleared his helmet by about that much – put the fear of God in him. I noticed he lost a lot of his cockiness by the time he got back to the company grounds. I don't know whether I ever saw the sergeant again, but anyway – that's the kind of training I did. We'd run that 3-4 times a day. It was 2 miles down, 2 miles back. We'd move on down firing at foxholes and targets as we went down. See the sergeant and I stayed back and pulled targets. They had hidden ropes on them, and we'd pull them up, and the recruits would fire at them. This guy got in back of us, which was our mistake actually.

d. But he'd been warned.

r. Oh yeah, they'd all been warned, and we'd have them throw live grenades, and that was always a traumatic experience. They'd never thrown a grenade before. And of course, the only thing on your mind when you're holding a grenade is to get rid of it because once that pin is out, you're through. I mean you've got a grenade in your hand and as long as you're holding the handle down, that's fine, but how long can you hold it down? That gets pretty tiresome after a while. So then you gotta throw it away—and you gotta throw it in the right place otherwise...I used to conduct little experiments like filling grenades with gunpowder and they would break the shell of the grenade but they wouldn't fragment. I mean, they hurt, but you didn't want to have one in your hand, because we were using very large firecrackers. All you do is unscrew the thing and pour in gunpowder and put the cap back in which was a fulminated mercury cap. And then you'd just reset the pin. I used to use a dummy grenade – I didn't put any gunpowder in it. I used to throw it out into the group when they were sitting around listening to the lecture, and I'd pull the pin out before I'd throw it just to see what they would do. It's funny because you'd look around after that 4 or 5 seconds, 10 seconds whatever it was and you'd see them up in trees and off hiding behind a bush here. They sure could scatter in a hurry. It was a test to see how fast they moved. And if they didn't move fast enough, you'd run some more exercises. It's sort of a brutal type of treatment. But you see, the point is, and I told the guys, "You're not going to see me anymore, and I'm not going to see you. And when you leave here, this is the last contact

you'll have (except for other instructors) of what you're going to be exposed to. This is your chance to learn. It may save your life or somebody else's."

So that has to be sort of a defining point. I mean in all of this stuff—that whole dialogue. I mean I think it did a lot of good. It taught me a lot of things. So from there, of course, most of my work was demolition work.

d. So as long as the war was on, you were training recruits stateside – that was your work. And when the war was over, they sent you, in particular to Germany for demolition work.

r. Yeah, I went with the battalion – Oh, I'm sorry I got transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

d. Oh! How did that happen?

r. After I got out of OCS, then they changed my commission to the Corps of Engineers. But I was never put in the Corps of Engineers. I stayed in the infantry. I don't understand how that happened. I told Bill Remus that, once he was a colonel, here at CMU, so he gave me a Corps of Engineers insignia.

d. So you finally got that...

r. So anyway, by that time, I was full-blown into demolition work. I had a corps. I was a person who tended a combat engineer company, and I worked basically in Castle, Germany. And I occasionally moved around in that area doing miscellaneous demolition work. There was a Messerschmitt that we had to demolish one day and I couldn't get rid of it. I tried every means I knew of to get rid of it. And then finally I was so embarrassed by all the krauts standing around me and in front of us, I got a couple of 2 1/2 ton trucks out there and just said hook one here and hook one there and just tear it apart. I stopped trying to demolish it and be nice because it was the same plane as the Germans used...it had crashed, been shot down. My company commander told me to get rid of it—it was a disruptive force. So we did.

d. Well, you didn't send pieces of the plane flying into the crowds by pulling it apart.

r. At that point in time, it wouldn't have mattered one little bit. I can assure you I would have gladly told them once to get out of the way because we did many times during the day, but at that point in time, about 6 or 7 p.m. I was embarrassed enough, tired enough and angry enough, and this is the same thing, this is the feeling – you wonder how the American soldiers feel now in Iraq. The 3rd division was there, and you've seen enough of the movies to know what kind of exasperation they faced—and it's not...it's a lot like what it is.

d. Now a lot of your work I remember you telling me was to destroy bunkers.

r. Oh yeah, that was the majority of my work.

d. Tell me about that. Do I recall correctly once you had to crawl back into a bunker because something didn't...

r. Yeah there was a misfire. I don't remember the name of the town, but the bunker was one of these stubborn dirt bunkers that – you never know how they're going to react because you don't know what's in there. They keep sheep and goats and potatoes and all kinds of things in there. That's why the krauts didn't want us to get rid of any of that stuff because they used them for the farming operations, and I can understand that. On the other hand, the displaced persons, the people from Poland and the other countries over there who were migrating through Europe – just wandering through, and they were pillaging the land killing Germans, killing American soldiers, British. They were some very dangerous people, criminals.

Our job as the 3rd Division Corps of Engineers, 10th Engineering Battalion, that was our assignment to get rid of all the bunkers in the Castle area. A lot of bunkers. I was looking forward to the biggest challenge—we were going to get rid of a 10-story air raid shelter, and I had boned up on this for weeks, on how to get rid of it. I was going to implode it because it was, although Castle was a wreck anyway, but it was downtown and there would be a lot of people and damage to other things, so I had decided how I wanted to do this. But that order was rescinded. I was glad actually because I didn't have the stomach for that kind of a job, and it was a little bit out of my league—like the trumpet playing, you realize you have limits, and I had reached a limit there. I didn't realize it at the time, but that was another boundary that I had reached.

d. You were spared that one, but you were sent crawling into another one. What happened then?

r. Well the other one...I just crawled into it with a cable around my leg, and I told the guys that if the bunker collapsed, just hook up the winch and pull me up. That's all you could do. There was no other way to get out of there. I had a sergeant who worked under me, and he had been a coal miner so he knew pretty much what this was all about. Nothing happened, I mean I went in there and reset the charge which is always a dangerous thing because if you're going to monkey around with a blasting cap that's still in the explosive, you're very apt to set it off. So that was what I was concerned about. So it was just... at that time I don't think I drank a bit...I don't think I had had 3 bottles of beer up to that point in my life. Maybe that's where I started drinking...no I still didn't drink. But anyway, I crawled out...these were close quarters...maybe 3 x 3 foot space like a Michigan basement...unreinforced dirt...just a hole. I had the option of going in there myself or sending someone else in. I could have done that, but it certainly would not have been palatable to the person or to me. I just didn't feel that was right. But anyway there wasn't any problem with it.

I think the most humorous thing that happened was when I got the call from the colonel's office saying that they had discovered a minefield in a nearby area. I asked him if there was anyone around who had helped to lay the minefield and he said that yes, there were some men in the prison camp. I got their names and set them to work. They got all the mines out and no one was hurt. That was the most interesting solution to a problem. I told that to a Jewish paratrooper over in Israel

and he was flabbergasted. He said he had never heard of anyone doing anything like that, and he thought it was a good idea. He said, "I'll remember that story."

d. Well they knew the mines intimately. They knew where they'd put them. They know how to trigger them.

r. They know what kind they are.

d. Now, did they dig them up, or did they explode the ordnances?

r. I never went near the site.

d. You never went near the site; you didn't even oversee this thing. Now there's an exercise in management.

r. Yes, that's when I began to realize the power of management.

d. We're almost to the end of this recording. Let's take about 5 minutes and see if we can put together the tail end of your military career and get you back to the States.

r. My military career in total is a defining point because that is where all the major decisions and transitions...I was only 24 years old then.

d. How did you get back to the States?

r. Liberty ship...well no...that was a whole saga...a racial saga that I don't think I'd like to repeat here. It dealt with having just...are we still taping?

d. Yes, we're still taping, and I've heard this story before, and I know you had to make use of a body to ensure your safety.

r. Well I did, but it was accidental. It wasn't something we did deliberately. I sure did help us keep alive.

d. That doesn't need to be here. So how did you get demobilized? You got your orders to go back to the States?

r. Well, there were about 4 of us who got orders to go down to Nuremburg, which was quite a long trip. We went down there and of course we asked the colonel what the problem was, and he told us General ?? had talked to him personally...off the record.

d. So here we are then. You were dispatched to Nuremburg to a company battalion back to the States, so you took a train then from Nuremburg...?

r. ...from Nuremburg up to Bremen or Bremerhaven? That was a long trip because these people were like a bunch of jittery grasshoppers.

d. You had your hands full.

r. Oh, yeah. Not only me—all the people who had been sent back to guide and manage this trip on the way back. These people, some of them, were pretty desperate criminals. They were facing some charges that were not light charges. So anyway, we finally, after some events...we got on the boat. These people were pretty rough and there were some fights in the sleeping quarters on the ship. I remember the people that we were taking back, they went on strike one day and they refused to work in the kitchen. The ship's captain said, "I presume you all like to eat, and since you choose not to man the kitchen, we'll just shut it down. Whenever you'd like to work in the kitchen again, we'll welcome you back, but meanwhile the dining room and the kitchen will be off-limits to all passengers." So that didn't go over very well. It certainly ended the strike in a hurry, I'll tell you that. Very quickly, in fact – almost instantaneously.

Coming back, when we finally entered New York Harbor, I was watching the Statue of Liberty as we were sailing in. A group of them cornered me on one of the decks and threatened to throw me overboard. I said, "Do you see what I'm carrying in my holster? That's a .45. There will be a lot of you that will go along with me if you try to do anything funny." Please, don't spoil what up to this point has been a rather difficult trip anyway by doing something that you will regret for the rest of your life. They looked at each other, and they looked around and saw that there were quite a few people on board that had side arms, and I think they just changed their minds because they walked away. One thing that was odd – on the ship was a casket, and our quarters for the officers, (I was a 2nd lieutenant) were down below decks at the bottom of a gangway. The casket contained the body of a robber who had been shot in Paris and was being taken home.

d. A U.S. soldier.

r. It could have been. We never inquired about who it was. The only thing we had to know was that there was a body in the casket. You have never seen a place – ever – that was avoided like the bottom of that stairway. I don't think anyone ever used it – except we did when we had to go to and from our cabin. Nobody else used that stairway. Nobody wanted to go anywhere near that. The characteristics of the people were rather self-evident, and it was just an area that was off-limits for them.

d. And when you got them home, you were out of the service?

r. Ah, no...we had to get to camp Joyce Kilmer after we landed. We got them all turned loose. They went back to a camp in New England somewhere. I didn't want to know where they were. Then we had 2-3 people from our I & R platoon who had come home earlier and they were at Harvard and Yale. These people were from elite families in the East. They were all very wealthy, and so a couple of us visited them. It was a lot of fun talking to them. Then we got on a train and came home.

Now on the train I learned another lesson – another phase in my life – that is that you never play poker...I had played a lot of poker in the Army...but you never play poker with people you meet on a train.

d. Why's that?

r. Well, they know things about poker that most of us have never been exposed to or have forgotten.

But then I got back and at that point in time I was ready to....[End of disk I]

I left out a major phase in my life. I never described how OCS changed my life.

d. Well let's go back and let's pick it up right now.

r. That was a 3-month period—how I got into OCS, of course, I took the exam and passed it—13th. See I was always a mediocre student. I'm still a mediocre student. I don't have the capacity to become a brilliant academic. So most of the things I achieve I achieve by—despite how trite it sounds—by remembering things...which I'm often accused of not doing. I'm probably the most accused person in history of not remembering anything. But that isn't really true. I just don't talk about it much. I do remember a lot of things that I find people don't like to be reminded about what they said. Something that I object to is I object to calling people's attention to something that they said because once it's said—anything you say in defense or support of it is liable to be misconstrued. It's the same thing with the faculty. That's one reason I don't interact well with the faculty over here because of the fact that I believe that most of their jobs are not really jobs and I have to...that pops out occasionally...I don't mean to do that. But on the other hand...

d. Well, for my own work...I have trouble believing that they actually pay me to teach.

r. You're a good example of a person who understands where your place in this world is. There is a place for all of us. It narrows down as you get older. The earlier you find that [place] ... and I think that's the key to what we're talking about here. The earlier you find that, the easier it is to make the transitions into what I would call alternate worlds that you are going to have to live in for the rest of your lift.

d. And let's go back to that narrowing process – but first – OCS.

r. Yeah, that was part of it. OCS was a definite part of the narrowing process. For example at San Luis Obispo it started out, everybody was standing on the beach where we were just about to go out into this dumb ocean...out there...there had been a couple of storms the day before, and here you've got what appears to be 1000-ft. waves. They actually were probably only 5 or 10-feet high but they looked 10-ft. waves in a rubber boat—the rubber boats were not very big, and were easily sunk so what you do—of course you wear life preservers—but it's the rifle that's terrible because the minute it gets wet, you have to clean it. And so you desperately protect the rifle no matter what else happens—you drop the oars and everything. It was a very uncomfortable period. We were out on the beach and I remember it as being very cold.. It might sound like a lot of fun, but it was uncomfortable and somewhat scary..

What happens in OCS is you learn all these things in spades. It isn't just academic...you either experience it or you don't survive or you don't stay in OCS. For example, a turning point for me was when I was told I had a temper, and I didn't

know that. That was sort of stupid of me because I always had a temper, ever since I was small enough to know what a temper was. And it got me in a lot of trouble at Lawrence Tech because I was constantly baiting the instructors. One of the things I regret at this point in my life that I did that because it was very rude and I certainly have attempted to make up for it by my actions since then.

d. If it's any consolation, occasionally I wind up with a student like that. And if it's not appropriate for me to bring the student up short – because sometimes it's not – there is the consolation and the sure knowledge that the world is going to kick it out of the student.

r. That's what happened to me as I realized how agressive I was...that my overbearing attitude, my feeling that I was right and most other people were wrong, and not really expressing it well was leading me into some paths that really and truly – being an orchestra leader for example – well, you know, you've lead bands and you know that leadership is a tremendous management experience because you dealt with all kinds of people. I was very impatient, and maybe that was a reason we had a fairly good band...I don't know. It certainly wasn't my musicianship that did it. It might have been my limited skill at arranging or understanding how something can sound, because that's something that even today I still retain is the ability to perceive what sounds good and what doesn't.

That leads me into this OCS thing because there you narrow on problems very quickly. You converge on a target. It's like taking a doctoral program. I've often wondered myself what good a doctoral program is. It's not any good unless it teaches you something—that's the whole purpose of education as opposed to training. And in our doctoral programs today, we force all of the things that are essential into the front and present them before the person is capable of understanding what it is he/she is being taught, and therefore, what happens is we lose a lot of the benefits of education and we lose a lot of the benefits of succeeding generations of good teaching of doctoral candidates. They aren't taught well. They aren't taught like Russell Kirk tutored and mentored his following.

d. My experience with Russell Kirk – you know I've listened to so many people who have suffered the tortures of the damned in trying to earn a doctorate and I have sympathy for them but I did not have that experience. I had the most fun learning with Russell Kirk that you can possibly imagine. It was lots and lots of work, but it was pure joy.

r. It was because he was competent and when he taught you something he realized that...1) It was something he knew, 2) it was something he knew was worthwhile, 3) it was something that would contribute to the betterment of the world.

d. And with Russell's teaching...I have 2 generations of students I am teaching now...and this is all because of Russell. Learning was a subject that he didn't even teach me. But he taught me how to go about it.

r.) He didn't have to teach you because he taught you by teaching you, and that is a very important distinction. But anyway that's part of the OCS thing. It's condensed – 90 days. One of my roommates told me one day that I had the worst temper he ever saw. He said if I didn't lose that temper, and this was echoed later by some of

the instructors, that if I didn't control that temper I would never make a good officer. That's all it took.

I had had a lot of experience with losing my temper, but nobody ever just told me that. So all of a sudden I realized what a deterrent that was to my career and to my own work. As you know, I still have a temper but I try hard to control it. And I don't abuse it. I usually try to get up and walk away from situations that are liable to light that fuse again – an action I don't want to have happen.

So anyway that was a major turning point. That was where I think I went into demolition work with a real energy, because I saw the need to not make mistakes: and losing your temper is one of the worst mistakes you can make, especially when you're in a management area, and particularly under pressure. If you're lighting a fuse on something that's not going to stop until it explodes, then don't start out by making a mistake, and being emotional about your attitude toward the fuse because that will endanger everybody who is around you. That is why the expert calls "Fire in the hole!" to warn people to get out of the way because something is going to explode and it's something they can't stop, and I can't stop. And that's important to learn.

d. Have you thought long and hard about the analogy of dealing with explosives and demolition and the control of your temper? These things are intimately connected.

r.) Yes. I used to...when I was in the hospital in Kassell (I had to go in for an emergency appendectomy), the Doctor experimented with a new technique they had just finished using a Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, and the doctor who operated on me was a brain surgeon on his way to do a delicate brain surgery somewhere in Germany the next day. He just happened to be in the hospital. This was midnight, and he talked to me throughout the operation. He asked me if I wanted to see what I had for lunch. First I said, "No thanks," then I changed my mind and said, "Yes. I would."

But anyway I was in the hospital for a few days, and I remember we were getting a shipment of a ton of TNT that came in in half pound blocks, and I tried to track that in my mind – where it was--so that if it was anywhere that it would be dangerous at any time I would know where it was.

That bothered me a great deal that I wasn't able to be out there tracking it personally. I think it bothered me a lot. I'm not sure. I wasn't quite as generous about things as I am now. I think I was more worried about the TNT than I was about the people that were around it. The point is – that's why it was a turning point is because I saw people – a guy in my company, for example, who had contracted gonorrhea. When I was in the hospital, I visited him, and he was thankful for that, and I told him in no uncertain terms that he had made a very serious mistake by exposing himself to gonorrhea, and I hoped he wouldn't do it again. He said, "you can be sure of that. I've already traveled that path." I think even today, wherever he is he probably is a model of abstinence. But that's where I learned about how important it was to listen to people who know more about things than others.

See this was part of a whole series of very rapid learning events. By the time I got out of OCS I had a whole different attitude toward the army and people and the role of discipline and everything like that. By that time a whole lot of other things began

to relate to my previous experiences of making decisions about music and engineering. So this is where all of that stuff sort of came together **--I don't think that...if I had not gone to OCS I don't think I would have been able to survive very easily my experiences in demolition work or in management work because. 34 months in the army is long enough to expose you to a lot of funny influences and get rid of them.** I think the OCS training had a lot to do with it because it involved tremendous discipline.

d.) How has OCS formed the rest of your life? What are the life lessons you have applied from OCS to the rest of your life and career?

r.) Business administration for one thing.
Personal development, very definitely because it taught me that my boss expected me to comply with what he told be what to do. Warren Yee was my department head and was a very fine many, who taught me how to be a good structural engineer and a good technical manager. I had to get rid of 3 or 4 people ... He said, "You pick them, and if I agree with you, we'll fire them – or you can fire them, whatever you choose.

I went home that night with a bottle of champagne and Betty and I drank the whole bottle. That was a fairly important turning point, but it actually was just the culmination of a lot of things up to that point. So anyway, almost everything on that first page of this biography – plus all the rest of the material we've written so far, have influenced me more or less by things I learned in OCS and in other similar experiences.

I learned how important it was to be impeccable in your behavior, because you have to live with yourself as well as others That's the biggest thing – whatever you do, you can't blame it on anybody else...because that's a waste of their time and yours. Not only that, but it's immoral and wrong.

I learned how to straighten things out in a hurry. One thing you sometines must do is to confront people. I still confront people, of course, as you're well aware. And that's a fault I'd think I'd like to moderate. The only trouble is that I've come to depend on it for so many years that if I don't confront people at the right time, I don't resolve problems .

d. Why do you think confronting is something you ought to lose?

r. Because it takes on a form of harshness—it takes on the appearance of comfortless companionship. People tolerate you because there are other reasons why you are useful to them. Confrontation may be good for the whole group but it isn't good for your relations with other people.

d. Maybe in the short term, but what about the long term?

r. You don't worry about the long term in many confrontational circumstances because most management relations are short terrm and must be resolved quickly to be considered effective and to be successful.

d. How about people you have confronted and with whom you still have a good long-term relationship? Were those confrontations successful in any sense?

r. Usually the confrontation was caused by something undesirable happening. Here you must locate the cause and correct it to resolve the problem. Humility is often the best approach to pushing the resolution in the best direction.

d. Right, and the confrontation itself is usually unpleasant but brief.

r. And even then the problem may not be resolved. Unresolved confrontations may extend over long periods of hidden arguments and may never see resolution except in forced, and uncomfortable working conditions that continue on.

d. But in the long run, if the confrontation does solve something...?

r. Consider yourself lucky or brilliant.

r. You probably will never know about it. People are reluctant to come back and talk to someone who has confronted them.

d. Let's take a for-instance...suppose one of your friends was to be here this weekend. But didn't show

r. KS

d. ok

r. All right.

d. I presume you have often disagreed with KS about various points of technical interest.

s. Yes, some people, in fact, don't like to see me coming into their office.

d. But KS wanted to come here this weekend, didn't he?

r. Yes.

d. So over the long run, your confrontations with him cannot have been detrimental. He has no obligation to come to you at all. He doesn't owe you a thing except gratitude, and yet even though you've confronted him, he wanted to meet with you.

r. Yes --- it sometimes takes a long time to resolve some of those confrontations

d. So OCS as one stage of resolution --- then implementing what you learned in OCS at least in controlling your temper and then in practicing what you learned about demolition work.

r. OCS was certainly a tempering process.

d. Now coming out of the service, you said a goal of yours was to get more education. What led you to that?

r. Well, my mother for one thing...and Betty for another. They agreed that I should go back and get my master's. degree So I went back, but at first they wouldn't take me at Michigan State because I did not graduate from an accredited school. The person in charge told me, "I'm sorry, Ralph, we can't admit you to graduate school because the school where you got your bachelor's from is not accredited." So that was a surprise to me.

d. So what happened --- because as I recall you did earn your Master's Degree from Michigan State?

r. We negotiated. I said, "Is there any way I can get in?" I went through the marginal shadings from the eye test...which I've always been a little ashamed of, and I took my glasses off and squinted which allowed me to see the eye chart very easily. The eye test was the acid test. If I couldn't pass the eye test, I was out. And that meant that I would have faced another 2500-mile journey back to an ocean that was already unfriendly to me... that is if OCS would allow me to be taken back. Fortunately the lady, the bursar, was very and let me enroll.

d. That was at OCS – the eye chart.

r. Yes.

d. So you negotiated with the lady at Michigan State. Tell me, what did you say?

r. Well, she was anxious that I go to school because I think she could see that I was quite honest and above board about the thing. I wasn't trying to do something that was wrong. I was trying to find out how I could correct what I did wrong. She said, "Well you can take additional classes." So I said, "That sounds reasonable." So that's why it took me a year and a half to get my degree. Normally a master's degree takes about 9 months. She was a very nice lady. She tried very hard to get me in the MSU master's program, and she did.

d. You had to take some courses that they sensed were deficiencies. What about those courses, were they redundant? Had you already learned the material? Was she right or was she wrong?

r. Oh I think she was probably 70% right. So I have nothing but respect for her. This was another one of those turning points. If I hadn't gone through and gotten my master's, I would probably have had a lot of difficult times ahead of me because I would have had to make up those classes in some way to do the work I'm doing. And Betty, of course, and my mother were both right...which they usually were. When they teamed up on me, I didn't stand a chance.

d. Now you weren't married at this point.

r. No.

d. In fact, were you even engaged at this point?

r. I don't recall...it's seems to me we were engaged all the time from the 4th grade on

d. So you earned this master's degree in...?

r. Civil engineering, with a minor in mechanical engineering, which was my major at Lawrence Tech.

d. So you had some kind of shift here...

r. Yes that was another major Stage in my career...In order to get my credits in under the Veteran's program, I had to take a lot of my Lawrence Tech undergraduate work over again because there had been so many advances. I mean after all, we had gone through WWII and many things that we were taught about internal combustion engines at Lawrence Tech no longer applied to switch gear, electrical wiring and complex things of that type. So that was another change.

d. But the change from mechanical to civil

r. Well, I'd always wanted to be a civil engineer, and since they didn't offer civil engineering of the complexity I wanted at Lawrence Tech—that was one of the reasons they weren't accredited—I didn't have that advantage. I got a veteran's scholarship to Michigan State so I came out pretty well in the long run.

d. Was it at MSU that you met Gordon?

r. Yes. He was my roommate at MSU and was already there when I got there. I guess we just hit it off. I liked him because he didn't say much. He was very quiet. We could sit for hours and not say a word to each other. There are a lot of people who can't do that—keep quiet, and those people, I learned at OCS, to listen to them because I find that's where I learn more. I found that if somebody wants to talk to you, listen to them and you'll learn.

d. So you graduated with a master's in civil engineering and a minor in mechanical. Here you are, you graduated, you've had the experience of OCS, the experience of WWII, the experience of training people. What happened next?

t. I began to realize, about 20 years ago, that time was flying by and how quickly it was going by, and I began to realize that we (Betty and I) needed to make some better plans for our future. That was when I talked to Chuck Ricker. We got along well together—he drank martinis and I drank martinis. Betty liked him and I liked him, and he was a very astute financial advisor, so we retained him. When Chuck passed away Bob Bilky bought the business from Chuck's widow, and that's the relationship we still have. That is the phase we are in right now. We've been able to develop to a point where we at least have some assurance that the assets that we've built will last us through some foreseeable changes and that was a major area that came under personal development – financial principles, decision making, management techniques, legal techniques. That all came about as part of our work—my work and Betty's work and other areas at OCS and places where I was that led us to think the way we think. What our

condition is now is basically a sociological condition. It's a position that we have tried very hard to work toward, and now that we have got some of those things in order that are in this list up here, now I began to see other people having the same problems, and it's apparent that some of these people are my clients. There is an age where you begin to realize that you have to pay attention to that sociological problem that you're starting to move into – that area in your life. The areas that we've been talking about here. And as you go through these, if you don't pay attention at these particular points, to certain things that are important to your future, then when the time passes that you should have done things, they are no longer re-capturable. You can't do them anymore.

d. So it's either act at the appropriate time or...

r. Or miss an opportunity that may ensure something desirable happening – that you wish to happen.

d. Now what do people need to pay attention to? How do they recognize this point in time? What are they supposed to do about it?

r. I think in my chronology, I started back in the 4th grade, and in my opinion, that's where it continues from. And if you trace the path I would consider that my own career has been somewhat of a storybook career. And therefore I would recommend it be followed if at all possible. I watch other people in similar careers—some of them much more successful than I am, some of them less successful, some who enjoy the same degree of success—but I find that the people that I respect the most and who have been the most successful and have enjoyed their lives the most are those who have followed this general pattern of successfully overfcoming different and difficult phases of their lives. That becomes obvious because of the fact that they follow a pattern that is somewhat congruent with the age factor, although most of my friends are younger than I am. That's another thing...that's where I have tried, and often succeededing in getting new ideas. Those ideas are often confirmed by my older friends.

d. I think one of the things that you are urging people to do is at some point in their professional development, is to look backward at what you've called the stages of their life.

r. Absolutely.

d. So part of looking forward is that professional practitioners have to look backward and discern the stages and see the influences and see the continuity that got them to where they are now.

r. And learn more about that continuity.

d. And only then are they truly prepared to look forward to the future.

r. Only then, or on a concurrent path, as long as the understand the concurrency. The concurrency is very important because what occurs in your careers are all those little milestones: if you miss one of those...a major milestone for me was my shift

from music to engineering. If I had been a musician, I can still see me playing in a bar over in Hamtramck while I'm teaching algebra or something at a grade school somewhere in an urban grade school.. That wouldn't be hard for me to visualize at all.

d. That could have been your future.

r. Your're right, because I like teaching. I like kids—as long as they behave and I don't have to beat them with belt straps or anything like that. But any of those things could have been...I could have been thrown out of OCS because of my temper...very easily—that would have the simplest thing in the world for some of those instructors to do. They were playing for keeps.

d. And they needed to find the weak link in the chain and replace it if it needed replacement.

r. Management needed to find someone who could perform the functions of a 2nd Lt. in the infantry. They couldn't afford to make many mistakes in that search..

d. You said this happened when you were between 20 and 24 years old: you got kind of a wake-up call that said it was about time that you began to look backward and put this together.

r. No I began to look backward...I remember the point in time clearlyh because I made it the subject of a talk I gave to...when I was at Victor Gruins, I was asked to gave a talk to the Latin Teachers Association of Detroit at the Hotel Webster on the value of my education and where it begins to take effect. That was the thrust of the talk—to tell these Latin teachers which is kind of ironic because I failed Latin in school—the only class of two I ever failed.

d. How did you get that gig to speak to those teachers?

r. They just asked me. Well, they asked me questions like you're asking. How did you get into engineering? When did you start? When did you know you were going to be an engineer? That question was a sort of leading questions. I had achieved some sort of renown as a presenter so I was given the assignment by Victor Gruen;s office management—they called me or someone referred them to me. As I was preparing the talk, I was writing my outline and it dawned on me that really I started being an engineer when I was in the 6th or 7th grade or earlier. That was when I made my decision. And from there on it was just a confirmation by successive people who were interested in my future. That was how it all started.

d. At Hope College we have had a good deal of discussion about the discernment process for students that we hope they will come to an understanding to "calling." What they're called to do, and I have heard in the last 6 months, again and again, how important the confirmation process is. That teachers can confirm, "Gee, you're pretty good at this." Or, "Gee, you know, you really might want to investigate something else." A confirmation process...

r. That's terribly important. You see what all of your students do, and I think you do this all your life, although there's a period of about 6 years...the earliest experience I've had with teaching students was the 6th grade class in church. That was the most difficult teaching experience I've ever had. In fact, I resigned the first year after I started because I could see that this was not a grade that I was particularly good at teaching. I went to senior high school teaching immediately. I figured out what happened in the 6th grade was that students are just beginning this discernment process so they're beginning to experiment, and usually they experiment on their teachers because teachers are the most vulnerable.

d. So the process...you discerned when you were preparing this speech for the Latin teachers that your choice as an engineer happened in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. You actually had some interest at that point, and from there, even though you had this enjoyment of music, you knew music would only serve an ancillary role and that engineering probably was your the primary direction to take.

r. Yes. When you play for a week at a time at the Webwood Bar, it just reinforces the fact that this is not the business I want to be in.

d. So the construction professional, at some point in his life, needs to look back and see these landmarks. What else needs to happen?

r. The professional and his family, his immediate surroundings, the people that are a part of that life have to understand what it is that they are in for in this professional career — like when Betty and I realized we had to save money. So how did we save money? Well, if I'm going to go into business, what role is Betty going to play? one thing, she's not going to work in the business. She did work, but she didn't work. She contributed to the family income and made it possible for me to work. if you know what I mean. I'm not saying it very well.

She was actually an absolutely indispensable part of our entire business, but it wasn't something that was predetermined that she would be a secretary and would do this and this and this. It was predetermined that she would help wherever she could just like it's predetermined that if I had a legal assignment that I would undertake it definitely and try very hard to achieve my ethical and moral responsibilities, but I wasn't obligated to take it. Neither was she obligated to take on her duties unless she wanted to...

d. You had secretaries – paid secretaries.

r. Yes. I had lots of secretaries

d. Betty's value to the business was far greater than that of a secretary.

r. Oh, absolutely!

d. She was your business consultant, business manager, mother and counselor, among other things.

r. She was what held the the business steady through the experiences, good and not so good that we went through, and we did go went through some very rough times. She was the one who straightened them all out.

d. Do tell. What were one or two of these?

s. Well one time I had to meet with a lady we were thinking of hiring as a bookkeeper. We had been using her for short while, and she said when I sat down, "Well, Ralph, you better grab hold of your chair because your income tax is due tomorrow, and you owe $2500." At that point in time, I think we had something like (considerably less – I don't recall what it was) in the bank and available in ready cash (?).

At that time my mother was still alive and had saved some of her small resources. Betty and I could have asked her for the money. She had Edison stock that was worth probably $3000-$4000, but I certainly wasn't entitled to ask for that. We didn't have that much money. I knew that. I called Betty, and I said, "Betty, do we have $2500 anywhere?" She said, "No. But, ;et me think about it." And that attitude kind of rubbed off on me, and I told our potential bookkeeper or accountant that we would look at it and see what happens. She said, "Remember, you need this by tomorrow." I said yes, I realize that. I went home, and Betty said, "Well, I found the money." I said, "Where?" She said, "Someday I'll tell you where it came from." She had found the $2500, but the story she told about how she got it is really a saga. It came from literally collecting lots and lots of pennies. She told me once where it came from. Of course, my mother's estate helped. I think her father was still alive and he and my mother in law also helped....I don't know, except we got the tax payment scraped together, a difficult job.

I was very angry with the bookkeeper, and then we had to decide about whether or not to hire her. I think I told her that we had made a mistake in thinking of hiring a bookkeeper so early in our business. I must have lied.

d. Well, she obviously had made a mistake.

r. Yes, she had underestimated business taxes, quarterly returns, and she saw no way of making it up to us except just leveling with us about what we had to do. And of course, she was honest.

d. What about the decision to go into business? These are some of the pitfalls that you find once you're in business, but what about the decision to go into business on your own. This is something you did on your 40th birthday, is it not?

Yes. It was pretty close to my birthday. That decision of course is another landmark. By that time I had pretty well cast the die regarding what I was going to do, and that led me to doing now what I was trying to do then — to improve the design and construction industry as I saw people in the industry and what they did and how they worked through their problems in their 50s, and 60s, and, 70s. I saw what a potential mess some were making with their futures, at least in my own eyes.

They weren't really making a total mess of it, but in my eyes they certainly weren't taking advantage of some of the things they could have. There were certain things

that were needed. So almost all of my efforts since my University of Wisconsin days—20 years I taught there, I decided that the industry needed people to relate successful career experiences that would help them avoid mistakes that I observed people (clients and others) making on a daily basis, but they didn't perceive them. Some of the people were very successful, e.g., Ozzie Pffaffmann I was an early outside consultant he had hired to help him do a good job of managing his business.

d. In terms of steps that you urge construction professionals to take, you said that you need to involve...

r. ...the family... and olther close relationships.

d. So you look backward, then you talk to **your** nearest and dearest, and then what do you do?

r. Then you make a joint decision. You usually let the feelings of those people of whom you have asked their opinions...the important thing is to act the way that, in my opinion, you should act when you have solicited advice from someone. And I always tell people when I'm asking them for advice, I always say, "Now look, I'm asking for your advice, and you may think it's just a token, but it isn't just a token, it's a very serious quest for knowledge about something that you know about and I don't. And I can't guarantee that I'll be able to do what you're recommending, but your advice will not be lost because of the fact that I will do something with it."

s.

t. I may have to end up not using it, in which case it will take longer to make a decision. That's a P.S. on my comment, but I will do something with it. And that's important because I've always felt that if someone who is soliciting my advice is not going to use what I recommend to them, totally or in part, at least tell me about it, it's been somewhat wasteful for them to have solicited my advice...not for me, because I may have learned a lot from that. Just like I've learned a lot from discussing this with you.

Most important points:

Business Administration
Personal Development
Decision Making
Problem solving
Management techniques
Personal Relationships
Ethics
Business Relationships
Communication Techniques

d. If this is the outcome of our talk today that the construction professional in the industry as he or she is contemplating retiring or leaving the business to go into another area needs to have a thorough understanding of the above points.

r. And they gain these through a progressive absorption of the stream of learning.

d. And this is what they are particularly rich in. This is what they carry with them when they leave the profession because financial principles, those can change, construction techniques will change, control techniques and engineering techniques will change, etc.... The things listed above are things that do not change no matter what happens to the business.

r. If I had a discussion right now of things that are important to a construction professional, some of the things up there would fade, and some of the things on the second page would establish themselves as important points.

d. Next time we'll talk about this some more and we'll actually move into the occupational handbook and why this thing is important.

(To be continued)