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150th Anniversary Oral History Project

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Oral History of
Anthony “Tony” Leach
Alumnus, Class of 1973

Date: June 12, 2014
Interviewed by Art Ford
Professor *Emeritus* of English and Alumnus, Class of 1959

Transcribed by Jessica Oliveri
Vernon and Doris Bishop Library Student Worker and Alumna, Class of 2015

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Dr. Anthony “Tony” Leach ’73—At LVC, Leach participated in various dramatic and musical events, eventually going on to a distinguished teaching, performing, and conducting career. He discusses his experience as a person of color at LVC and in Annville. In 2014, he received the June Herr Educator of the Year Award from LVC. He retired as professor of music and music education from Penn State University in 2015.

A: This is Art Ford, I'm here with Tony Neidig—Tony Neidig? Sorry about that.

T: That's alright.

A: You're not Tony Neidig.

T: I'm not Tony Neidig, of course (laughs).

A: OK—and we're going to be talking about Tony's background, a little bit about what he thought about coming to the College, and some questions about what it was like to be here at Lebanon Valley College. So, Tony Leach...

T: Yes.

A: Yes—where did you come from? What's your hometown?

T: Hometown for me is Washington, D.C.

A: OK—and when were you born?

T: April 8, 1951.

A: OK—and what schools did you go to down there?

T: I graduated from Aton Elementary School and then from Kelly Miller Junior High School—started at McKinley Technical High School in Washington, D.C., and then we moved from the city proper into the Maryland suburbs in Prince George's County, Maryland. So, then in the middle of my junior year in high school, I needed to transfer from D.C. public schools to Prince George's County Maryland public schools—doing a little bit of research because I was in a music major emphasis program at McKinley High School. I checked out high schools in Prince George's County where I could finish my music theory classes and there were only three schools that had advanced music theory because I had theory at McKinley—would've had theory all—the whole three years and ultimately decided to transfer to Bladensburg High School and finish my music

theory sequence and in the process, in working with the guidance office at—there, discovered that the kid who was graduating from Lebanon Valley College as the valedictorian of the Class of '68, had been—also graduated from Bladensburg High School—and therefore, Greg Stanson, who was the College recruiter at that time, was gonna be stopping me in—during the Fall of my senior year—and I kind of remembered that—and so fall, September, whenever it was, of my senior year—'68—I graduated '69—Greg Stanson comes to Bladensburg High School and—as a recruiter—and I got set up with an appointment with him, came up to audition in January of 1969. It's the only audition that my parents accompanied me to. It snowed like cats and dogs! And—but we made our way here from Washington, D.C., and the people took me one way into the Department of Music in Engle Hall and they took my parents another way and that was fine—spent most of that time with Bill Fairlamb who ultimately became my piano teacher—and the rest is history, kinda sorta—so it was really was by me transferring from McKinley to Bladensburg that I even knew about Lebanon Valley. I had heard about Gettysburg College, I'd heard about Bucknell, and applied to both of those schools and got accepted but didn't—obviously that's not the way it went down—and—but here's the real kicker—in April of my senior year just before I graduated, my mother says, 'got news for you,' and I said, 'what—what's going on,' and she says, 'I'm pregnant!' I was like, 'how could be pregnant?! I'm getting ready to graduate from high school!'—and I had a brother that was a year younger, a brother that was four years older, and then a brother that was seven years younger—so, of course, this was a change-of-life baby.

A: (Laughs).

T: —And so she says, ‘you got two choices—you can either stay home and go to the University of Maryland or you can go to anywhere in the Maryland system—or maybe even Howard University.’ Well, I crossed off all those schools and at that point kinda got Lebanon Valley fever and ultimately they decided, ‘well, we’ll support you going to LVC.’ So that’s how I got here.

A: Any scholarships to come here?

T: At that time—I had a small scholarship from Prince George’s County, Maryland ‘cause I was gonna pursue education and I don’t—I didn’t get scholarships, I got financial aid from the College at that time.

A: Yeah, do you remember the name of the student who was valedictorian in your class?

T: No, not at all.

A: OK, when you were in high school, various high schools, were you primarily interested in music?

T: Oh yeah.

A: So you were involved in everything music—involved in anything outside of music? Like sports or athletics or anything?

T: My—I got—well, I started with the school papers in ninth grade, stayed with that all the way through high school, and became—I was a sports editor at McKinley High School and then once I transferred to Bladensburg, became the editorial editor my senior year—and also my senior year at Bladensburg High School, one of the kids, who was in my French 3 class, says, ‘if you’re going to get to know lots of kids here why don’t you do something that brings you in contact with lots of kids’ and I said, ‘what’s that?’, he says, ‘well, we have guys on our cheerleading squad, why don’t you come out for the squad.’ I’ve never thought about that because, you

know, I'd only seen girls on cheerleading squads—and so I decided, 'well, maybe I can do that.'

So, I went out for the squad, got on the squad, and the rest is history because then when I came to LVC, I also cheered for four years while I was here—so between the newspaper and cheerleading, those are the things—my primary things I did outside of playing piano and working with church choirs and community choirs.

A: Do you remember how old you were when you first decided music is gonna be your career, your life, your interest?

T: The first conversation on that subject really occurred when I was in eighth grade. My father, my dad—I brought my report card home—the end of that eighth grade year and Dad was real excited about it and he says, 'your grades are so good, maybe you should think about going into medicine or the law,' and I said, 'oh Dad, no, music—music chose me, so I'm gonna embrace it,'—and that's the way it's been.

A: So your parents—what did they do for a living?

T: My dad, his day job was as—what was called a 'spotter presser' in a dry cleaning system just off the campus at the University of Maryland—and my mom was a service worker at the University of Maryland and prior to that she worked in laundry and that was by day, and then weekends and by night my dad was pastor of a Baptist Church in Charles County, Maryland, which is about—the church is located in Grayton, Maryland about 45 miles below Washington, D.C., and my mom—part time—was a church musician, and that's where I get my thing from as far as piano. She was always working with church choirs—some of my earliest memories, of course, are of her at the piano, practicing the piano and taking piano lessons. She was not allowed to do that when she was a kid and one of the promises she made to herself was when

she got to be an adult, she would buy a piano and she would learn to play the piano—and she did. And so, when I got old enough to ask if I could play, she said, ‘no! You’re too young.’ OK, fine—so I kept asking and she said, ‘no! You’re too young.’—and she would bundle me and my brother, Darnell, up and take us to choir rehearsals with her and I’m just very observant and then we’d go to Sunday morning services with her because at that time, Dad was not pastoring—but once Dad started pastoring, then she gave up all of her choirs in D.C., except for one choir—and did the music at the church where Dad was pastoring, and so that’s—we grew up in both of those worlds—being urban and also being in a very, very rural community.

A: Let’s skip over Lebanon Valley for the moment anyway and just move on with your own career—after you left Lebanon Valley, in what ‘73?

T: ‘73.

A: Where did you go, what did you do?

T: My senior year, I was doing auditions for graduate school to pursue a piano performance and also applying for jobs—and on the very day in April of ‘73 that I decided I’ll take the job—a job, I also got a call from Texas Tech University offering me a fellowship and a full ride to come and do my master’s degree in piano—and—

A: Was that known as a really outstanding music school back then too?

T: Yeah—and then the real link was professor—the fella who was in charge of piano at Texas Tech—had grown up with Bill Fairlamb—and so that link was kind of established—and so after thinking about it for longer than a minute and speaking with Mr. Fairlamb and Dr. [Pierce] Getz and Dr. [Robert] Lau and a few other people—I ultimately decided, ‘let me do the thing that I’m

not sure I can do every day,' and that was to go into a classroom. I had been student teaching of course, but there was still so much more to figure out about how to teach at that point—I was pretty sure I could be okay with the piano. So I decided that I would take my first job in Harford County, Maryland—the school district is the—well, Maryland schools districts are on a counting system and I started teaching at Aberdeen Middle School in September of 1973 and ironically, there were two of us that were hired as new music teachers for Aberdeen Middle School. I was the sixth grade specialist and Barbara Topper was the eighth grade specialist, but the person who had been there since 1965 was Dwight Interline, who was class of '65 from LVC—and so Dwight gave me some lifelines early on in that—my entry into the teaching profession, and I had no idea, of course, before I took the job that there was gonna be an LVC connection at that time.

So, Aberdeen Middle School—choral general music for two years—then in 1975, I wanted to come back into Pennsylvania because a community organization in Harrisburg—Capitol Area Music Association—was just—had just been organized in November of '74 and I—primarily African American musicians from South-Central Pennsylvania were involved—and since I had gotten involved in the black church community in Harrisburg while I was a student, I thought, 'well, I need to go back and be involved and get this thing launched.' So, in looking for jobs in South-Central Pennsylvania—did a shotgun approach and applied to about 30 different school districts, got interviews with two school districts—the first interview, I won't say where that was because it was the shortest interview and for the very first time I realized, oh, after having prior conversation with some people in Harrisburg, they said, 'are you sure you are really going to that particular school district to interview?,' and I said, 'sure!' and when I got there, went in,

and was announced, principal came out, took one look, and the interview was done in two minutes—I was obviously the wrong color as far as the process was concerned. The second interview was at Cumberland Valley in Mechanicsburg and as it turned out, Ken Hayes, who was class of '58 from LVC and was the coordinator of music at that time—it was the LVC connection that got his interest—turns out Shirley Miller, who was also class of '58, she was the string specialist at Cumberland Valley at the time, and Jim—I'm not gonna remember Jim's last name right now—but Jim was also class of '58, he was the original band director at CV, and so I—my second job then I walk into this network of LVC grads from back in the day and they were all at the very peak of their careers at the time. I went in as the second choral director because Kim continued to conduct one choir and coordinate the program—I conducted all the rest of the choirs and did the rest of the general teaching at the high school level—stayed there for two years—and then in the process, started—inquired at Penn State about master's degrees because it was time to start something—went there the summer of '76 and really liked what I discovered at the time because I'd never been up there, never had heard about the Penn State choirs, but still was not connected with any of that—was able to take piano that summer and established a wonderful rapport with my teacher Phil Adetra(?)—auditioned and got into the master's degree program—went back to teaching for one more year at Cumberland Valley and then matriculated full-time at Penn State fall of '77—stayed there for three years, discovered early on I hated the degree in piano because it's just you and the piano. I had been teaching for four years and I was used to interacting with kids. So once I figured out that balance, I thought, 'okay, if I'm not gonna do a degree in piano, what am I gonna do it in?'—and I kinda said to myself, 'well, maybe I could look at conducting,' and that decision changed the rest of my

professional development because I then auditioned into the conducting program and continued to study piano and give recitals—and so, finished up all that in '80, and in the process, became very good friends with the musicians in New York City and also in Lancaster—they were in charge of a group called Manna(?) Ministries—and that summer of '77, I spent the entire summer as a singer in Manna(?) Ministries and we toured across the USA, first time that I'd ever been as far west as Utah and down into Alabama and all that stuff like that—huge, huge, huge trip. But the good thing that came out of that was Henry introduced—introducing me to people at Covenant Avenue Baptist in New York City—turns out that as I was finishing my master's degree, their organist position opened and I auditioned and got hired for that position—moved to New York, stayed there almost a year—would have probably made a career there, but I'm—I'm—I've always had a pretty good sense of where home is—and Manhattan was not home. So once I decided to terminate that job, came back to Harrisburg as a self-employed musician, worked as a consultant with the Harrisburg School District, and reopened my private studio in the Harrisburg area and reconnected with my church, First Baptist in Steelton, and did that for a year. Then, in '82, my mother said, 'you know you need to go back into the classroom because at least you'll have benefits, as a self-employed person you don't have benefits.' I said, 'Hmm, never thought about it that way,'—and just as we had that conversation—Barbara King, who was one of my mentors from my first job at Aberdeen Middle School, called—because now at this point she was the coordinator of music in Harford County Schools—and said that there were three high schools were open in Harford County, I could have my pick—so I chose Fallston Middle and High School because my first principal had then moved from Aberdeen Middle School to Fallston and opened that school and that was a

wonderful, wonderful decision to do that. At the same time, my father announced that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Mother had retired a couple years before that, so I thought, 'well, let me see what I need to do about not moving home, but just being closer to home as far as my church work was concerned,'—and that led to me getting a position at New Bethel Baptist in January 1983, where I basically remain 'til this day—went in as minister of music at that time, served there until I left in '91 to go to Penn State to start the Ph.D., went back there in '02 part time, and since 2010 I've served as artist-in-residence—so, New Bethel part time, Fallston Middle/High School 1980–82 to 1986—Dad's health was then declining, finally got transferred to Montgomery County, Maryland, just around D.C.—Springbrook High School—my primary reason to be involved with family, but the other thing, I wanted a more diverse student population, and so left a predominately white school in Harford County and walked into the United Nations at Springbrook High School. The population—it was about 33 percent African American, about 33 percent white, and then the rest—Latino and Asian and whatnot—so it was heaven—and some of the strongest choirs I've ever conducted at the high school level I was able to shepherd through five years at Springbrook High School—and then, my mom said to me again—moms always know far more than we give them credit for—'what about that Ph.D.?' And I thought, 'oh Mom, please!'—and so (laughs), at the same time, Doug Miller, who mentored me through my master's degree at Penn State in conducting, contacted me and said Penn State is not going to do a doctoral degree in choral conducting as they had planned because the state budget was changing and they weren't gonna be able to fund additional academic lines and stuff like that—but!—they were gonna phase out the Ed.D. in music education and shift it to a Ph.D. in Music Ed., which would allow me to pursue the artistic

credential in choral conducting and choral literature—but also the research credential in music education—and so I went back to Penn State in '91—and '94 needed to decide whether to end my leave from my high school job and Penn State established the academic line for me. I'm in it and here I am today, so that's—

A: Very good, yeah—so you did say you're considering phasing or transitioning to retirement?

T: Phase retirement hopefully will begin July 1, 2015.

A: Oh, OK.

T: And I will keep some of my graduate teaching and my choir, "Essence of Joy," that I organized in 1991.

A: Good, good—well let's move back to Lebanon Valley.

T: All right.

A: And you talked a little bit about why you came here as a music major and that sort of thing—you lived in a dormitory?

T: Yes, sir. First dorm was Kreider Hall.

A: Kreider Hall, OK. So what was that like? What are your memories of dorms? Were you there for how many years?

T: I was in Kreider only fall semester—fall semester I was in a three bedroom—Donald Erdman from Precipity, New Jersey and Joe Dilorio from Long Island, New York—we were roommates and we were all in music-music education and it was a—Kreider Hall was a cast of characters—and the good thing is that Don Johnson, also Class of '73 and from Baltimore, Donny lived above us with another fella from Baltimore—I don't remember his name—who came to play basketball—and there was another African American from Upstate New York, a little guy who

played football, don't remember his name because he and the other basketball player were only here through freshman year and then they left—they didn't return to campus—but the interesting thing is I knew, early on, this rooming situation is not gonna work—and so I asked Dean [Rinso] Marquette, early on, I said, 'I've gotta get out of here, I've gotta get out of here because we were having issues in this room,' and so he says, 'I think we can do something,' because Funkhouser was getting ready to go on line for spring of our freshman year—and so the other good thing from that freshman year in Kreider Hall was Dave Binkley. Dave was a junior and Dave kinda took me under wing at that time and we have remained lifelong friends to this very day from those formative years for me in Kreider Hall.

A: What were the issues that you had problems with the roommates?

T: Personalities. Cleanliness. Hygiene. It was just bad.

A: Just bad, OK (laughs).

T: Yeah, I didn't grow up that way (laughs).

A: OK (laughs)—but you said it was a group of characters there in Kreider Hall?

T: Yes! Yeah!

A: In freshman year—

T: Yeah, and I like to think that my class, the class of '73, was pivotal in shifting the energy of this little—what I used to call crash-helmeted campus—from being, not so much closed but being more secluded, to being more aware of the larger world around us.

A: How did you—

T: Pot came in with my class and drugs came in in a major way with the class—and we were also starting to deal with visitations in the dorms because of —back in that time, you couldn't—

you couldn't go—there very—there were small windows of opportunity for men to be in the women's dorms and vice versa—and we, of course, we had dorm mothers at that time. Mrs. Ott—I will never forget her—she was my friend, my real friend—Elizabeth Ott—and so it was interesting, kind of watching the College, at that time, kind of come to grips with this different kid come in to a small, liberal arts college with a huge affiliation with a United Methodist Church—and how that played out in a very profound way during my four years here. I had—Don Frantz comes into play—Don and I and—Andy Stachow and—who was the fourth—oh, Lord—oh, I'm in trouble now—there were four of us that pledged Sinfonia spring of our freshman year—and Don and I became friends within the first three weeks of our transition to campus because he did the freshman production *Good Grief* and I served as music director for it, so that just threw us together—and at the same time, when I decided to go out for cheerleading, Connie Girler and Kay Forker were freshman on the squad and all three of us made the squad as freshman that year and we were friends throughout our time here and then even beyond—but the deal is some interesting friendships were formed in that first month or so being on campus. But—

A: Have you kept in contact with any of those people over the years?

T: My—as I said early on—Dave Binkley is my—is my real lifelong friend from my early experience, those early days, as well as Joe Barjue(?), we were class of '73, Joe and I pledged to be brothers December of our freshman year. Joe was also cousin of Joe Dilorio, my roommate from Kreider, and I was best man in Joe and Debbie's wedding, and we have—we have grown up together, really, and I will actually see Joe next week. The other person from those days, Joanne Path Miller—we were just—we'd just look at each other and we've just been buddies

ever since. Joanne and I just had lunch together last month, but Joanne spent her entire career in Red Lion School District teaching elementary choral general. Joe started off teaching on the eastern shore of Maryland, and then transferred to West Shore School District, where he spent the rest of his career, initially as a music teacher, and then big time upper level administrator and Joe's been—Joe's been retired now maybe four years and then Joanne retired a couple years ago—but my point—those are my primary, real, real go-to friends from freshman year up until the present. Many others—we have run into each other, especially through my work as a conductor and a supervisor student teachers—John Lemke, who was—John was three years behind me—John ultimately started his work in Camp Hill School District, then transferred to Milton Hershey Schools, and in '94 he was coordinator of music for Milton Hershey Schools and hired me as director of their Gospel choir—and so I did that for three years and then subsequently, John's son made his way to Penn State to do his master's degree in double bass performance and so it's interesting how the generations shift around in that regard. Eric Dundore, who is not a contemporary of mine became after me, spent his entire career teaching at Mechanicsburg High School and Eric just—this is his last day—he's retiring—and then we'll move forward and have his son in district and regional choirs—so there are a bunch of people from the '70s and '80s whose—our professional careers have been all intertwined and that's been a wonderful point of reference and, of course, the—there are two entities in that regard that are pivotal in nurturing that community when we were students and then fostering as alums. Dr. Curtman who's, as you know, was here for many, many, many years as our general music specialist. We didn't appreciate it at the time because we were just young and dumb—but on reflection—we realize his genius and the variety of strategies that he employed to help

us move from being selfish, insensitive, and not caring individuals about the delivery process for classroom teaching to being prepared, excited, informed educators—and for many of us that’s been our life—our life professional pursuit—and then the other anchor from that period for many of us is Dr. Pierce Getz. I didn’t—I—it didn’t take me long to figure out that he was the genius that he was as a musician. He realized, early on, that I had perfect pitch, and that if—that I have this uncanny ability to sight read just about anything at the piano—and he utilized those strengths mightily because I served as a compass(?) for concert choir for three years—and he was also pivotal my freshman year. We were on our spring break tour—started in Pennsylvania and eventually made our way out to Indianapolis, Indiana—and early on in the—in that tour, there was some little whisperings and I didn’t get it until we got to Fredrick, Maryland, and everybody was assigned a host family but me—and ultimately Bob Harnish who was the business manager for the choir, took me aside and said, ‘they’re working out something for you, just be patient,’ and eventually an African-American student from the high school where we were performing came and her family came and took me off and that was fine and dandy—and then we did the concert and then Sunday morning, we were in Hagerstown, Maryland, at Otterbine Methodist Church, I’ll never forget—I’ll never forget this—absolutely never—and Dr. Getz came to me and said, ‘Tony, let’s talk after the morning service.’ Fine. So there was a park across the street from this church and we did the morning service and while the choir was eating lunch, he says, ‘let’s walk and talk.’ So we walked and talked—and he let me know at that time that there had been problems with our hosts from our tour stops so far because they were all upset that no one knew there was a student of color, an African-American student in the choir, and what were they supposed to do—and Dr. Getz and Mr.

Harner says, 'you treat him like you treat everyone else in the choir,'—and so what Dr. Getz then said, 'we have called ahead to all of our event sponsors along the way,'—because we were then going to Martinsburg, West Virginia, and somewhere else in West Virginia and then into Columbus, Ohio, and Dayton, Ohio, and then ultimately to Indianapolis—and he said, 'we've made it clear—not only do we have a student of color in the choir, but if you have problems with this let us know, because we will not be performing in your church or your school,'—wherever it was that we were going at that time—and my respect and admiration for him just soared—first of all, because he took the time, because I—I had—I was clueless—18 years old, 18 years old—and even though I'm a city person, a city boy, and grew up in rural and urban settings and seeing racism up close and personal, I didn't—I didn't—that was not the case on this campus—and so as we left campus, I was not looking for instances where I was going to be mistreated, nor did I expect to encounter acts of discrimination.

A: So what you're saying is—on campus, there was no evidence—

T: True.

A: Or incidences?

T: True.

A: Or discrimination?

T: True.

A: Or anything like that?

T: That is very true.

A: Good.

T: Very true—my journey at LVC during that—those—that turbulent period in our nation’s history was almost protective in a very real way. You know what happened here then spring of my freshman year when stuff went down at Kent State University—and that we went on strike—and that rally was held on the steps of the chapel at that time and I remember Greg—Greg was a senior lacrosse player—African-American student and he says, ‘no!—don’t you and Donny—you all don’t—you’re not involved in this?’ He says, ‘we are getting ready to graduate, we have nothing to lose—you’re gonna be here a while longer,’—and we attended, but we were not highly visible in organizing the strike or anything like that, which is interesting—but that’s okay because then I left here and went home to the March on D.C. that was occurring and I thought, ‘wow!—this is bigger than life!’ You know? The fact that at LVC, students could get themselves organized and protest, you know, we were at the peak of the Vietnam War at this time, but at the same time realizing that there were things that were happening in our country, across our country, that were indicative of the changes that were about to occur in society and with laws and all that stuff—just human rights in general. So, did I have issues not on campus? My issues never occurred on campus as far as discrimination is concerned. I remember sophomore or junior year, I’d gone downtown to do something and a lady and her baby were walking towards me and I’m walking back towards campus and the kid was smiling—a little girl—and just as we were about to be physically in proximity enough so that I could say hi or good morning or something, the mother snatched the girl away and says, ‘don’t ever talk to a person that looks like him,’ and they rushed off and I thought, ‘Oh, OK.’ Kept walking—kept moving—kept moving—and I did my student teaching in Annville because I did not have a car at that time, so I walked down to the elementary school and then walked over to the high school

to do some things in the afternoon and that was—I know I was the first ‘almost teacher’ of color that any of these kids ever encountered at that time. I’m grateful for strong, savvy, cooperating teachers that just treated me like any emerging professional and I felt safe in those buildings at that time. I also did my junior-high general music teaching in Hershey—that was a little different situation—won’t go into those details and was in Iona in Cornwall-Lebanon for elementary general teaching early on—so it was interesting again, knowing that I’m getting ready to leave LVC, being that person of color that kids in these school districts had ever encountered because there was no minority population at any of those schools at that time.

A: Well you had quite a bit to say about the Music Department—

T: Yes! Because that was my life.

A: It was important and various instructors who were very important to you?

T: Yes.

A: What about the other courses that you had to take here? Do you have any memories or a favorite teacher or favorite courses that were non-music?

T: Dr. [Betty] Geffen—sophomore year—Historiography—what a teacher! What a genius! I’m so glad I took the course—only course I got a D in—and why did I get that D? Because I didn’t follow the instructions for the final project—(scoff)—but that’s okay, I got over that—but she was pure genius! I marveled at how she sifted through historical stuff, but more importantly how she shepherded the class through this process of—us kind of emerging as researchers on—our theme for the class that year was the 1920s and I decided to do a little project. I wanted to look at what was called a ‘race riot’ in Lilly, Pennsylvania, between Johnevensburg and Altoona. I was curious about activities of the Ku Klux Klan. I knew that there was Klan activity in

Pennsylvania while I was in school—never encountered that, but I wanted to look at it from a historical perspective ‘cause I thought, ‘well, was there anything happening in the 1920s,’ so she was very excited about the topic and where I was going with this—ultimately ended up taking a look at how the Lebanon Daily News—yeah—the Harrisburg Patriot, Pittsburgh Post Gazette, Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, New York Times, and Philadelphia—whatever that paper is—reported on this incident of this riot in Lilly, Pennsylvania, and I subsequently made my way to Lilly, Pennsylvania, as an adult just to see what Lilly, Pennsylvania, is like. Lilly, Pennsylvania, is just like Pennsylvania—you know, once you—every city is 20 to 30 miles apart and you just drive through and you keep goin’—but things went down back in the 1920s in a negative way and all of the papers reported facts through—from their vantage point. The local newspapers were a bit more negative in what really took place and what the aftermath—and the New York Times and the big urban papers were a bit more sensitive to the progression of the events that took place—but she was a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous teacher and scholar. It was interesting to go back to the school of music—Department of Music—it was interesting to see Bill Fairlamb our junior year—not as my piano teacher, but as my—our music history teacher—and I had music history at McKinley High School and so I was savvy about a lot of stuff—but it was interesting to engage him and to be engaged by him again from the scholarly standpoint. The—none of the general ed. courses as we call them now—I think because the school had, and still has, very high academic standards—I remember vividly sophomore year, James Bemesderfer, chaplain, book of the act of God—acts of God, New Testament, (Religion)(?) 12—God, I haven’t thought about that in a century—it was interesting to talk about religion and spirituality from an academic perspective as opposed to an emotional

or doctrinal denominational per se. I, of course, I never ever, ever, ever—because I'm a (unintelligible), my dad was a preacher, so you know—I know a whole lot of stuff as far as the Bible is concerned, but not from that scholarly perspective—and so, a lot of things that—thoughts—that I have that are anchors of my own spiritual growth and my outlook and ability to receive others who don't think as I think—goes back to this formative period here at LVC in that—oh, the—there's another religion teacher—little guy—who's long since retired and he passed—oh, I don't recall his name. He wore glasses—

A: Well—

T: Troutman?

A: Perry Troutman?

T: Yes!

A: Yeah, he's still alive.

T: OK, OK, OK—

A: He's in this building right now (laughs).

T: Oh! (Laughs) All right!

A: You passed him when you came in (laughs).

T: (Laughs) I was in—

A: He's doing well—

T: Very good, thank you. I was in—I don't remember the course—but I had a course with him in religion—and that was—he's a good teacher—a really, really, really good teacher. I loved my work in your English class, which was freshman year—I think I had you as a freshman—and then I had—red hair—Wig and Buckle?

A: Male or female?

T: Male—(long pause)—he was—he did the *Thespians*.

A: Oh, Glenn Woods.

T: Glenn Woods! I had him later—did I have him for Comp. Lit.? Did he teach Comp. Lit.?

A: No.

T: No. Who taught Comp. Lit.?

A: Uh—

T: Female—

A: Agnes O'Donnell.

T: Yes! Dr. O'Donnell—another genius. Comp. Lit.—no, I had Comp. Lit. my senior year in high school and then I had it again here—similar courses of course, but here—it was organized by themes and that's—that's how I roll—because I'm always looking—I've learned to—adjust my lens to whatever certain stance in which I find myself and the things that are similar from this to this—you glean that and you move forward—the things that are specific, especially as I've traveled and you recognize, 'Hm, I've seen this—I've heard this—I've read this—I now know this because I've experienced it.' Yeah, goes back to those Comp. Lit. days—so yeah—those were outstanding moments and teachers and—but again, you know, most of my waking moments were spent in Kreider—not Kreider but Engle Hall—and there was a group of us that practiced late in the night because that's when we could get the best pianos (laughs)—and I didn't —Dr. Getz wouldn't—I couldn't get in the organ studio until my junior year and that just took me on a whole 'nother trajectory as far as technical development was concerned—but—

A: That does lead us in a direction as we begin to wind this up—I'll give you a chance to say more later if you want to—but I'm interested—and you seem to be going in this direction—interested in what you would say if I ask you, as I'm about to—what does Lebanon Valley College mean to you?

T: (Long pause) LVC—in a very real way—helped me to discover my musical—(long pause)—and personal voice—I had lots of experience and had wonderful studio teaching practicum at LVC—had very strong mentors as a teenager in music, starting with my mom, so I was not lacking—and again, with my own high caliber skills, I realized, 'OK, OK, I'm in a really good place,' and the other good thing—just to focus on what LVC means to me—had a conversation with Bill Fairlamb towards the end of my junior year, and he said, 'what do you want to accomplish in piano by the time you graduate a year from now?,' and I looked at him and said, 'I want,' and again at that time, we were back in Kreider because they were building the current department building— we I said, 'I want to be well on my way to making really informed choices about how to play the piano, how to help others to discover music and if there's something I don't know, then at least to be able to figure out that I don't know and where I'm to go to get help or what not,' and he says, 'you're well on your way to being able to be an independent musician.'

Yeah—Dr. Getz was not only a deep thinker but a great facilitator of the individual, and I know, on reflection, that that was probably the secret of his—a lot of his success, not only with concert choir, but also as professor of organ—because with the studio, the organ studio, there were kids that were playing at the same level, now I know, as students that were in conservatories at that time—the same caliber level of difficulty of repertoire as anybody that was going through Julliard or Eastman or Curtis—but that's because he was this high caliber

musician and could figure out how to shepherd an individual from whatever, wherever they were to wherever they needed to grow. That was a marvelous model for me—so when I think back to LV—to my time at LVC—I know that those four years were pivotal in me discovering who I was becoming as a musician and ultimately as a teacher and then as an individual—being comfortable with myself from the inside out—I mean, I—one thing we haven't talked about—I was a dorm counselor junior and senior year—and you get to see things up close and personal and dirty—and you have to deal with situations and individuals that—that are not always gracious because we find ourselves sometimes in difficult situations—and I learned through those moments to deal with the deed and not the ego. People have plenty of opportunities to get their egos beat up—but if there's something that we need to work out—you deal with what was done. You can't always figure out the motivation for what was said, but what was actually done—that happened here at LVC. Those go—that also goes back to my relationship with Dean Marquette who, for all practical purposes, was a living saint—because he—his door was open to whomever and there were things that I know were shared for generations on his watch as dean of students that will forever remain in that office, because if he could be the difference in solving something or helping me at that time as a counselor to figure out how to process something so that a kid could move forward, then he was smart enough and sensitive enough and experienced enough to shepherd you through—not telling you what to do—but shepherd you through that process of figuring out this is appropriate to do, this is the appropriate action to take. He was my advocate the whole time I was here and I'm grateful for those—that real opportunity to be engaged and encouraged by him. I had an interesting encounter—this again,

goes back to what LVC meant at the time and still means—interesting encounter with the president of the College—

A: The current president?

T: No, no, no, no—back in the day—

A: John Synodinos?

T: No, no, no—that's another—we'll come back to John. He was wonderful—

A: Before that?

T: My fresh- my sophomore year, so—

A: Fred Sample?

T: Sample! Thank you! Thank you, thank you, thank you. I was president of the sophomore class and, again, president of the sophomore class, OK—I think I was president of the freshman class—and then junior year I was on Student Senate and then senior year I was on the Executive Committee—so I got to see a whole lot of stuff, that's the other part you asked about—things outside of music and cheerleading—Dr. Sample called me in for a meeting because he had heard that the sophomore class was not going to contribute toward the new student center at that time—and so he wanted to know why—I said, 'because, you didn't involve us at any level in planning and now you want us to provide finance—who's the hypocrite?' So—I had that backbone then, I have this backbone now. No—you are not—you are not going to manipulate me in any kind of a way to make me feel less than—in order for you or your agenda to move forward— because that's just not the way things are gonna go down here and we didn't give a dime to support the building of the student center at that time. Now, we enjoyed all the rights and privileges once it went online—but—no—if he would have approached it differently maybe

we would've—we could've negotiated something else—but no, no, no, no, no. So—my journey was filled with great people moments and great musical moments and because I was here—got to be involved with the black community in Harrisburg which is a relationship which remains to this day and just honored that God allowed my life to be here and not somewhere else because my baby brother was born.

A: That's right (laughs)—

T: (Laughs) Myron is very responsible for me being here—just went to his— his oldest daughter just graduated from high school a week ago, so I went down for that—couldn't get her to come up here 'cause she's a home girl.

A: Well that's a nice note to end on, I think—

T: Mhm—

A: Do you think so? I'm glad you came back, Tony.

T: Yes, sir. Thank you for inviting me. I'm honored to—that somebody thought enough of me to invite me to be involved in this archival project.

A: Well, thank you.

T: Yes, sir.