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Oral History of

Dennis Sweigart

Alumnus, Class of 1963

Professor *Emeritus* of Music

Date: December 23, 2013

Interviewed by Art Ford

Professor *Emeritus* of English and Alumnus, Class of 1959

Transcribed by Jananne Ferrere

Vernon and Doris Bishop Library Student Worker and Alumna, Class of 2015

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Dr. Dennis Sweigart '63, Professor *Emeritus* of Music—A graduate of the College, Sweigart taught at The Valley from 1972 to 2011. During that time, he mentored many piano students and was instrumental with their success in graduate school. He also became a well-known figure in performance, working as a soloist and accompanist.

A: I'm Art Ford and I'm here at my home on East Queen Street in Annville. It's December 23, 2013. I'm here with Dennis Sweigart, who is a graduate of the College, and also for many years taught here, and is now professor of music *emeritus*. So, let me start, Dennis with some simple questions here. Where's your hometown?

D: I was born in Reinholds, Pennsylvania.

A: OK.

D: In 1941.

A: And what high school did you go to?

D: Cocalico. One of the things you might want to note is that I was born with a disability. People don't know that.

A: No, no.

D: I was born with clubbed feet. Both of them. So for the first 10 years, I was in and out of hospitals, wheelchairs, crutches, braces, etc.

A: That's amazing.

D: Yes, if my parents hadn't taken me to the hospital, I would be walking on the tops of my feet.

A: What did your father do?

D: He was a carpenter, who then became manager of the Reinholds Lumber and Supply Company.

A: And did your mother work?

D: No, she was at home. I was one of four children, but she would do a lot of odd jobs like taking in laundry and providing childcare. In the summer time, there might be six to eight kids

besides us. And then, we had a huge garden and she did a lot of work with that. She was constantly working to augment the family income.

A: So your parents didn't have a college education then?

D: They didn't even have a high school education. Both of them were born into farming families who wanted them to help with the work at the farm as soon as possible. They finished the eighth grade and that was it.

A: What caused you to go to college then?

D: I don't know. I never really felt I was part of that family. You know, I liked going to school. In fact, at one point, I thought in ninth grade 'Gee, I'd like to be an English teacher.' Then in tenth grade, we had the worst English teacher and my role model evaporated. Then I began thinking 'Gee, I've spent a lot of time in music,' and that's when I began to focus more on that as a career. There were those people, one graduated with my sister, he's still a very good friend, Gerald Wingenroth, class of '58 from here, and Harold Weitzel, also class of '58. Those two guys were really strong musicians and I compared them with other teachers that I had who were from Millersville or Mansfield; there was no comparison. When it came time for me to go to college, there was only Lebanon Valley; I never looked anywhere else.

A: Did your parents encourage you to go to college?

D: No, it was my own pursuit. As a matter of fact, I did everything myself. I did the interviews; my parents were never a factor. In fact, they felt shy perhaps, and they felt inadequate because they didn't have a high school education.

A: Did you have a scholarship here?

D: I didn't, but I did have help from the Pennsylvania Disabilities Services. They followed me all the way through high school and college, but in the beginning, their statistics were so outdated that for the first year and a half I paid it all myself. After that PDS paid all expenses until I graduated.

A: What extracurricular activities were you engaged in in high school?

D: Many. Band, chorus, dance band, High Five club, sports editor of the newspaper, co-art editor for the yearbook, accompanied dance classes weekly for Mrs. Cook, the Sunday school orchestra met one night a week, I was a junior choir director of my church, and I played piano for the Sunday school. So, I was busy every night of the week.

A: I would imagine. Let's see, you're not married?

D: No.

A: Did you have jobs at all when you were in high school?

D: I worked for my father after I was 16. Then, whenever I had time to work, I would work there all the way through college but—let's see, I spent three summers in Bay View, Michigan, and my parents at first said, 'No, we don't have the money for that.'

A: Now was that during high school?

D: No, this is college. So, I unloaded cars of lumber and I manufactured bed frames. I still remember the oak wood was so hard that the nails would constantly break or bend. Eventually we got the air hammers. It was usually my uncle and I who shared the space doing the job. We started at 7 o'clock in the morning and worked until 12, and from 1 o'clock to 5 o'clock. This is non-stop hammering. In order for me to release the hammer, I would have to peel my fingers

off the hammer. And if I wanted to continue with playing the piano, I had to practice at least two hours a night, otherwise my fingers would become very stiff. That wasn't easy.

A: When you arrived as a student here then, what year was that?

D: 1959.

A: OK. You had been on campus before?

D: Yes.

A: Because you knew some of the people here. Is that true?

D: Starting in, oh, let's see, it was in my senior year when I began studying with Bill Fairlamb, so every other week I'd come up here for a lesson. I would get out of English class to do that (laughing). But really that's the only part of being on campus that I knew. That was the lesson up on the third floor of Engle Hall.

A: Do you remember any impressions you had of the campus itself?

D: I just thought it was old. But, that maybe all colleges were a bunch of old buildings. I didn't think it was particularly attractive, but I knew that what I needed I could get there, which was a quality education.

A: Yes, you had said earlier that you hadn't visited other campuses because this is where you were going.

D: I remember passing by Kutztown University on my way to visit my grandparents, who lived in Tobyhanna. They lived there because of my grandfather's asthma.

A: And obviously you came as a music major.

D: Yes.

A: Now was it just called a music major, then, or was it like today—

D: There was only one degree offered when I came here and that was music education, and that was a B.S.

A: Was that still a conservatory when you arrived?

D: No.

A: It had already been changed?

D: It had already been changed. That's why we had to take general education requirements.

A: That's right.

D: I think in my sophomore year they had a B.A., which was for, or maybe B.M. in performance.

It was either the B.A. or the B.M. I think it was the B.M.

A: Did you live on campus?

D: The first two years, I commuted. That was a blessing because my father provided the car, he bought the gas, they paid for the insurance and AAA. All the things—so I didn't have to pay for those things, which was really good. I was involved in accidents in the first two years, especially in the winter time. In my freshman year, it was in my first semester, I was a passenger with Dennis Schnader, who shared a ride with me. We came to an intersection in Lebanon and it was a light. The guy going in front of us was trying to beat the light which just turned green, and we were continuing. The impact caused me to break my fourth metacarpal of my left hand. The windshield broke and as you can see, all of the blood vessels have realigned themselves.

A: Did that effect your piano?

D: It did at the beginning. And there would be times when I would have to stop because of sharp pain. But, what it taught me was another way to negotiate and so I believe that I think of

more lateral motion, than I ever did before. I can't lift this finger as high as the others, so I learned to compensate by moving the hand laterally.

A: What about your last two years?

D: It was then that Pennsylvania Disability Services came through with an offer to pay. In fact, they started this in the middle of my sophomore year, they would pay for all my expenses from the middle of my sophomore. And if I decided to stay on campus, they would pay for that, so why not?

A: Which dorm were you in?

D: I was at the old Kreider Hall. The one that's on the site of the science building.

A: Which floor were you on?

D: The first floor. There were three seniors who needed a fourth roommate, so they invited me and I said 'fine,' then the next year I would have to find three juniors.

A: Do you have any memories of dorm life? What was it like then?

D: It was chaotic. If I wanted to study in the dorm, it was best for me to go down to the basement where there was a television going on and there was lots and lots of sound. Because there were four people in our quad, there were always visitors. You know, it was difficult to separate what was going on there and what you were trying to do there. The library would close at 10:30, and so would the music building. So after 10:30, you were either finished studying, or you had to find somewhere else. But, there was no place quiet.

A: So you prefer going down to where the TV was blaring out?

D: And where conversations were going on that I didn't want to know anything about.

A: So you had to block it out. That's how you did it. What about the courses and teachers that you had. Were there any courses that you particularly liked? Or faculty that were very influential on you?

D: Music History, taught by Bill Fairlamb, was very popular. Most students loved that course and how he presented it. In other areas, I remember during sophomore year there was an attempt to integrate all of the arts and literature. Do you remember that?

A: A humanities course?

D: Humanities, yes. I remember [George] Struble was the homeroom teacher who led discussions after lectures and we'd have reading lists.

A: What did you think of Struble? He's an institution.

D: He is. I got to know him, but I didn't think I would because he was so stiff and proper. I think he contributed a lot to the business meetings of the faculty. He always had an opinion.

A: That's when you came back as a faculty member?

D: Yes. As a student, again he appeared stiff and very formal. You wanted to be prepared.

(laughing)

A: Were you involved in any extracurricular activities, in music I imagine you were.

D: I guess as a music major, you wouldn't call them extracurricular, but I did a lot of accompanying, I was in the band and I was in the chorus. As a matter of fact, I had a flute that was given to me in high school. In fact it was in sixth grade when I received free equipment and in my junior year, I got a piccolo, but by the time I graduated, I had to give all of that back. Mr. [Robert] Smith here said 'if you ever played a marching band instrument, get out on the field. Even if you don't have one, all of the flutes are being reconditioned and you can use one of

those.’ Well, I was in the marching band and the concert band, but I had never taken any private lessons. I had no idea what a vibrato was. I began to feel a little bit intimidated by Thurman, who was really a task master. He would just point at you and say ‘play, play!’ (laughing) and I would always hope the first chairs were there. But, this time, they weren’t. And so I had to play the first chair music; that’s when I decided maybe I better study with Frank Stachow, so I bought a flute and studied with him. By the time I was a senior, I played an entire Handel Sonata in a campus recital.

A: What did you think of Frank?

D: I loved him.

A: People say that. What was it about him?

D: He would claim to be against piano players; ‘you’re just a piano player.’ (laughing) He had this unusual—how would you say—delivery that would include this nasal sound. Anyway, he had a wonderful sense of humor. I knew when he was kidding and when he wasn’t. He was probably the most instrumental person in my going to graduate school. As a matter of fact, both Richard Rotz and I had applied to Michigan and were denied because we were too late for out of state admission. So, Stachow gets on the phone and says, ‘If you don’t take these guys, I’ll never recommend another student.’ And so, we were in.

A: So they took you?

D: Yes, they took me.

A: Was he—did he simply know people there; what’s his reputation?

D: Yes, he knew Dean Flower, who was one of the major administrators there. He sent other students there. And he had some other personal connection. But, I thought that was incredible. I could've gone to a few other places, but I'm really glad I went to Michigan.

A: Did you stay there for your full graduate program?

D: I stayed there for the master's, which was two full years.

A: But where did you go after that?

D: That's when I began teaching. There was an agency in Chicago called the Lutton Agency, and they would sign you up—they'd audition you and sign you up. Then send you post cards with job info, and they called those

"leads." Then you followed up with a letter and phone call. I got my first job through (?) and it was in Monmouth, Illinois. I remember my first year's salary was \$6,500 and the Lutton Agency wanted me to pay 10% of that. But, the college paid that, so I got all of the \$6,500.

A: Where was your first teaching job?

D: Monmouth, Illinois.

A: Monmouth. And was that the name of the college?

D: Monmouth College.

A: Monmouth College, yes.

D: Yes, there's one in New Jersey and that's a little bigger. That's confusing! And while I was in my third year I got a call from one of the U. of Michigan professors. He was hired as the chair at Hastings College in Nebraska. His first appointment was head of the keyboard area, so this former professor of accompanying said 'give Dennis a call.' After a brief phone interview, I flew to Michigan and played for Millard Cates and another faculty member from Hastings who was

Eleanor Barber, who was later hired to head the Bach library at Baldwin-Wallace. So I played, got the job, and stayed there for two years. The first year I was very comfortable. The weather was sort of like it is here. The second year, you couldn't leave Hastings for at least three months. If you tried to drive the interstate, you couldn't drive faster than 30 miles an hour. It was incredible! So I had a friend who was a roommate of mine at Michigan who had become an executive trainee for Ford Motor Company, making a complete switch and never did—even though he got a master's degree in music—never did take a full-time job in music. He was always working around cars, so he followed that area of interest. He said 'Why don't you come out to California?' Then I began thinking I always had a very strong interest in business, maybe I could also get an executive trainee job in retail. So I went out and looked at all the programs that were available; and, May Company was by far the best. I spent 11 months as an executive trainee going through all of the steps. You start on the sales floor then you become a manager of this, and other jobs open and you interview for the position. I remember during Christmas I was a manager of the men's accessories, which was comprised of four departments and I had about 50 sales people to oversee. That was not fun. Then I became an assistant buyer for another area in the store and that's when I got a call from Bill Fairlamb, my LVC piano professor. He invited me to become his duo-piano partner at Bay View, Michigan. Until that point, there were two other pianists who had the job for years. I always thought that Bill and I could perform more successfully than the previous duo. Without hesitation, I said yes. So that brought me back to Bay View. So Bay View was an important point in my career. While I was at Bay View I had no idea what I was going to do in the fall. I got a call from my professor at Michigan who said, 'I understand you are looking for a job. There is one waiting for you at

Indiana State University. Call them, audition, and if you don't get it, that's your own ass' fault.'

(Laughing) His name was Eugene Bossart, one of my favorite professors. It was a one-year-only position, and, while I was there, Bill Fairlamb called me again and said 'Would you like a job at Lebanon Valley?' and in those days, you could do that. You didn't have to wait for a national search to develop. And I said 'Yes, that would be good.' He wanted me particularly because we get along well personally and also as musicians.

A: Then you got your Ph.D. in music—

D: Actually I came to LVC to interview with Dean [Carl] Ehrhart, who asked if I planned to get a Doctorate. I hadn't thought about that question, but I thought I better answer yes. In 1974, I went out to the University of Iowa and studied for that summer. Then, came back to LVC and taught for the '74-'75 year. Then went back to Iowa for the summer of 1975, fall of '75, spring of '76, summer of '76. I took a leave of absence, meaning I didn't get paid by the College, but I did get a half-time assistantship while I was at Iowa, and then in '77 I finished my degree. It was a D.M.A; a doctorate of musical arts.

A: I think what we will do now is switch to your career—teaching at Lebanon Valley College, and get some of your thoughts on that. Again, if you could just think back—over how many years did you teach here?

D: 39.

A: 39. Did you really? 39 years?

D: Yes.

A: During those 39 years, were there any experiences or moments that you can think back to that stand out?

D: You mean the things that happened on campus?

A: Yes, or to you in teaching?

D: I think when I first got here, the Spring Arts Festival was in its second year. That was incredible. It still gives me chills as I remember how affective that was. That was really an interdisciplinary effort in the arts. He was able to get money from the state in order to bring musical groups from Juilliard and Manhattan. There were first-rate mime shows. It was incredible. There was also the film festival at that time—I believe Fleischman was on campus and he took a huge interest in that. We used to have real art and quality crafts. I mean, really—it was a place, if you had money, to buy art. As the years went by, and other students took over the leadership, the integrity and quality of the festival deteriorated, not unlike what happens when you play “whispering down the lane.” Have you ever played this?

A: No.

D: OK. Everyone is in a circle, and you whisper something to the person next to you. Then it is repeated all the way around the room, and by the time it gets back to you, it’s nothing like what you originally said (laughing). Kind of like Spring Arts. But that was really an outstanding experience in its original form.

A: What was the Music Department’s reaction to that? I mean, you were enthusiastic about that.

D: It was very positive and supportive. As a matter of fact, I remember there was always an opening night on Thursday, the opening of the festival. Bill and I played a two-piano recital for one of those openings. I remember recommending certain people, like Roger Drinkall, a

fabulous cellist to perform here because I had known him and accompanied him at Bay View. The Music Department was definitely involved.

A: What else? What else do you remember from all of that time that you were here?

D: When I was a student, I remember the snow piled high in front of the Administration Building doors. The classes had to be cancelled. You were there then too weren't you? At the top of the huge pile of snow, someone placed a book. This was done in reaction to a sermon we heard during Religious Emphasis Week. We were told to go alone to the top of a hill and read a book.

A: No.

D: You had graduated?

A: I've heard about that many times.

D: Another memory was the Concert Choir Tour. Pierce Getz became the Concert Choir conductor when I was a junior. Fairlamb was his teacher, and Bill recommended me to be the first accompanist of the choir. These tours were about 10 days long, sometimes three performances in a day. To give a break for the singers, I was asked to play a solo at many of these concerts, and accompany others who were featured performers. I remember accompanying Sandy Stetler, I don't know if you remember her, and John Stouffer? Anyway, that gave me an incredible chance to perform regularly and without much warm up or practice because we would be on a bus going from place to place. Also, staying at other people's houses. It was something to experience.

Another thing that struck me immediately was the friendliness of the students. As you walked on the Academic Quad to your next class, you couldn't pass these people without saying hello,

or smiling. When I went on to grad school at Michigan, I continued with the same friendliness, but people looked at me like I was crazy (laughing).

A: Let's focus on the department, since you were in that all that time. Were there changes over the years in the department—faculty coming and going?

D: There were many changes.

A: What do you remember about those?

D: (long pause)

A: How was it different at the end than it was at the beginning?

D: OK when I started in '72, we were in the process of building what we call Blair Music Center. When I started here, we were teaching in dormitories, in fact I was teaching in the dorm where I lived as a student! All available spaces were used for classrooms. I had to carry heavy record players to distant classrooms. The attendance was increasingly greatly to the point where we had hit the magic number of 200.

A: Majors?

D: Majors. And so it justified building this huge building, Blair Music Center. The construction went on for quite a while. Bob Smith was the chair. Until he decided to step down and selected Bob Lau to replace him, things changed. There were some issues that I think kept people from enrolling. Finally, we were down to around 50-some majors in the department and Bob resigned.

A: When would that have been approximately?

D: About '89.

A: The College enrollment in general was way down at that point.

D: Right. So it was—yes, it was a sign of the times. What was happening in music, who knows? But as the numbers went down, we had a difficult time recruiting people who wanted to teach music, especially band directors, because there wasn't a marching band. So where would they go? West Chester. So West Chester benefited from what we weren't able to offer. It was really Stachow, who in the '70s, started a recording technology program. He was always really interested in the modern technology, especially having to do with sound recording. He had some really advanced knowledge of what should be in a place like Blair. For example, in all of the rehearsal spaces there were patches for plugs to go to the room on the second floor where they would actually record. There were patches in the band room, the chorus rooms, the organ-choral room, most advanced for that time. Students started operating that studio but it was not yet a program in the department. So, in 1990, [George] Curfman, who was the temporary chair, invited a facilitator to come in—I think she was from Peabody for a day of self-examination; what are we, what can we do best? And we decided that music education was something we could do well. Could we train performers like a conservatory can? Should that be part of what we do? And we decided we can still train performers, but we don't have to give them the B.M. degree. So, that's when performance changed to a B.A. It was now time to search for a chair, and that's when we came up with Mark Mecham. He came here in '90, '91. I think? He had definite ideas about the direction of the department and I felt that he was really a very welcome person. As matter of fact, the administration loved him from the very beginning. Whatever he needed, he could have gotten. In fact, I had been told that by some of the administrators. That's when we looked to expand our offerings to include music business. We now had music education, sound recording, music business, and the B.A. The B.A. could be—

not just performance, but you might want to do it in composition or jazz studies, or the B.A. was a catch-all for what didn't fit into the other programs.

A: Consequently, did you get any more students?

D: Yes. We were way up over 200 for a while. As a matter of fact, I think we were taken for granted by admissions. We used to have their help in posting posters in the high schools. In the last 10, 15 years there was nothing. Admissions felt that we didn't need to print posters. Well now we do. I think there was some miscalculation on the part of admissions.

A: So it was that quickly after Mark Mecham arrived, within a few years, that things were turned around, and you had all of these students. Was it largely because you expanded and have all these different programs?

D: I think it was and I think too his idea of auditioning students was quite different from what we had before. We used to have the cattle call auditions, where on a given Saturday morning you would have people coming in to audition in their respective areas of interest. Then, they would perform again in the afternoon for all of the faculty. It was an all-day event. But, you never got to know these people. So in place of that, we auditioned during the week, whenever we had half an hour in our schedules. I got to spend a half an hour with every student who was a potential student in piano. They also spend half an hour with Mark Mecham or someone to explain the music programs, then a series of appointments with financial aid, admissions, and so on. I think for a long time, people felt much more comfortable with this approach. We had the opportunity to give advice to each student.

A: When did you retire?

D: In 2011.

A: Was the department much different at that point than it had been two decades before?

D: Not so much.

A: You know, prospering?

D: Yes. Recently, the numbers are down. They began to go down just a little bit again. I think the admissions office didn't quite understand why it was necessary to promote when the numbers were up in music. Now, also, we are competing with all Steinway schools. Millersville is now an all-Steinway university. Susquehanna is definitely a competitor. Messiah; I don't know if it is an all-Steinway school, but there has been a lot of promotion of those schools because they are an all-Steinway facility. Our facilities when we first opened in '72 were far above the best in the Middle Atlantic. As time goes on, those instruments become really bright and really unpleasant in a practice room. I'd done as much as I could to try to get the chair of the department to understand the importance of the all-Steinway program.

When Mark Mecham was on sabbatical, I found out that Reifsnnyder's, who is the Steinway agent in this area, had a piano they were going to retire—a rental piano they had bought four years earlier. They then offered institutions this piano at a very discounted rate. They were offering this Steinway B for \$40,000, perhaps new it would've cost \$75,000. I asked myself, 'How can I get this done?' So I went over to the Administration Building to speak with Deb Fullam, V.P. of Finance, and I said, 'This is what I would like to happen. What do I need to do?' And she said 'If you come up with half, we will come up with the other half.' We went over to Steve MacDonald who was the dean at the time, and he agreed to that. I had some friends with money, so I asked them if they would be willing to help me in this project. One of them is a multi-millionaire, and he said he would be good for \$10,000. Well, he gave me a check for

\$2,500. That didn't help a lot. But Gerald Wingenroth, who had already contributed a lot to LVC—is one of the higher contributors—I think he has been recognized as one of the few people who's given way more than \$100,000 to the school. So he agreed to give me \$10,000. Then Tom Strohman, who was the temporary chair during Mark's sabbatical, agreed to buy one of the Baldwin pianos in my studio for his son, Greg. So there was \$3,000. He also said he had money in another place that he thinks we got the Steinway. That was the beginning, I think, of a real effort to say 'OK, we need to think about becoming an all-Steinway school. We won't do it right now, but let's replace what we have with really better quality.'

A: You mentioned just a few minutes ago going to the administration. Over the years, what has—what was your impression of the administration and working with faculty, specifically music?

D: I know that some people had difficulty at times, but I'd always felt comfortable with them. That's partly why I joined the Quittie Investment Club, because I enjoyed [John] Synodinos. Now Bill McGill was very difficult for some people because he is not very talkative. I know that there are some faculty who remarked, 'oh, that was excruciating' and 'I didn't know what to say' (laughing), but because I knew him from Bay View, I never had a problem. We could always go to that place. We never had a lull in the conversation. I think being able to know the people and their interests has helped me to feel comfortable with them.

A: Let me ask you a couple of broader questions. Again, over the years, what time periods come to mind when you think of the more exciting times for the College?

D: I think we talked about that for the Spring Arts. (long pause)

A: Well tied in with that are the proudest moments. The things the College has done over the years, which ones come to mind?

D: Well I was really glad to see Synodinos come to campus because I think he had a very good objective assessment. He said, 'This is one of the best hidden colleges.' So he was about to make it more visible. The entrance on Sheridan Ave. for example. You couldn't tell where Lebanon Valley was—or Lebanon Valley College was—without help so he was doing that and spent a half a million dollars on the academic quad; making it more logical and more beautiful. Then, from his time on, there was always some project going on. The excitement I think came from knowing the place was growing, at least for me. I hated that old library. I thought it was so cold and uninviting. Now, I can spend a whole day there if I had to. I know that the people in the sciences love their building. I also love what happened to the old gym. Seeing that gives me energy. When I see nothing change, it kind of dies.

A: When was it that—maybe the most depressing time period?

D: That was when we were down to around 50 in the Music Department.

A: You're talking about the end of the '80s.

D: Yes. That was depressing. I remember Bill Fairlamb saying, 'Wow, well we're going to have to take that student.' And I was saying, 'Wait a minute. Do we really have to lower our standards to that point?' 'Well, it's either that or selling apples at the bank.' (laughing) We never did have to get to that point.

A: Again, a general question. As a student here and as a long-time faculty member, and most of your life has been tied up one way or another with Lebanon Valley College...

D: Lebanon Valley College probably was my life. For 39 years, I spent all day teaching and talking to people and going to meetings. Then in the evening, I'd be practicing in the studio. I was there from early in the morning until late at night most of the time because it was expected that I would produce a recital. It takes hours and hours to prepare for a piano recital. People think you just sit down and play. Lord, if they only knew (laughing). Then because kids knew I was there in the evening, they'd knock on my door if they had a question about a certain course.

A: So the question: What does Lebanon Valley mean to you? You just answered that then.

D: Yes, it's everything.

A: Everything.

D: When I'm called for a solicitation from Michigan or Iowa, I say, 'Look, I only have three alma maters. And I think I am going to choose the one that has served me best.'

A: Another general question here. How would you like to be remembered at Lebanon Valley College? How would you like people to think and remember you when your name comes up?

D: I would like to think that I made a difference and that I definitely helped students. My philosophy of teaching was always if you leave me and play no better, I have done nothing for you. Sometimes students didn't quite understand that I expected certain things, and if I didn't expect certain things, they wouldn't change; they wouldn't get better. So, I take great pride in knowing that I have helped people elevate their skills and knowledge to a point where they could go to a graduate school. I remember a student coming in with just basic knowledge—maybe a year or two of lessons—I knew he had a good ear, really great rhythm. He said, 'I want to be a piano major.' And I said, 'OK. Do you have four hours a day?' 'Yes, I can do that.' And he

did it. He went on to study at the University of Iowa with the person I wanted him to work with. That was Joe Bashore. That was just an example of one of these. Another thing is I'd like to think I—that I left the place better than I found it. For example, acquiring that Steinway. Then I began thinking, 'What can I do in order to help that?' So I established the Steinway Endowment Fund. I didn't realize that in order to establish that, I had to give money (laughing). I was having a particularly good year with the stock market. One of those stocks was called GameStop. I would have to pay quite a bit of taxes on capital gains, and so I sold it during that year. That was the stock I would give in place of currency, and it yielded around \$20,000 to get this thing started. Then, I also offered to speak to a class during their reunion—that might have been five or six years ago. They wanted information about the Music Department. I got Tom Strohman to share this space with me. This opened the door to pitch the Steinway Endowment Fund and what it can do for the College. If we are going to compete with Steinway schools, we are going to have to improve our facilities to do that.

A: One final question now. I know you have given some thought to all these questions. Have we missed anything? Is there anything else you want to add to what we have said so far? Any further thoughts?

D: (long pause) I think that pretty much covers everything. Oh, you asked about committees and I've been involved with committees all those years, but as faculty change, as administration changes, we find new committees and we discard the old ones. I remember the kind of unimportant committees I was first on like the Convocation Committee, which we don't have anymore. Or the honorary degree committee—things like that. Then later on, more substantial committees were created like the standards and policies. I think the Curriculum Committee

does a lot more now. Academic review—boy, that was kind of interesting. I was on that when [Ron] Toll, Dean Toll—I liked him but he made some enemies and he was really strict about putting some teeth into the reports that we made concerning other departments. Not happy (laughing).

A: A little touchy then (laughing)?

D: So he has a much better paying job and he's in the South. Doesn't have to put up with winters.

A: Anything else?

D: (long pause) I think—oh, again, you get excited from things that happen on campus. It's from contacts you make. Ernie Manders, who was then head of plastic and reconstructive surgery at the medical center, came to study piano with me. I was always interested in those people, those professional people, who instead of taking a nap or turning on the television, would change their mind to another interesting phase. And so instead of doing again what average people do, he would spend his free time practicing. But he was also brilliant and would love to read the biography of famous composers, especially at the end, the postmortem. Beethoven just really fascinated him to the point where he said, 'I think we can create a program together.' And so I began the program with playing a piece and then he would show a slideshow of the time Beethoven lived and the important people in Beethoven's life. Then I'd play again, the Opus 53 Sonata from around the time of Beethoven's impending deafness. He would do another slideshow with the postmortem detail. He would come to a conclusion of what Beethoven really died from and it was thought it was syphilis. He said, 'This points to this, this points to that, this points to that. Could it be something else? Maybe but this is our best

conclusion.’ Then I would finish Opus 53 to end the program. It was a combination of music, history, and the postmortem. We did this several times, especially for doctor groups like plastic surgeons. We did that at the Skytop Lodge. Do you know where that is?

A: No.

D: It’s in the Poconos. It has its own zip code. It’s a beautiful lodge. And we went to Abington Hospital where I met his mentor and presented the program. We presented it at the Hershey Motor Lodge and the Hotel. We could’ve done it in Brazil where he went to give some lectures. He thought, ‘This would be good.’ But at that time, I think it was Bob Lau, who said, ‘Absolutely not.’ In fact, he was totally against this program. At that time, Dean Reed was here. I went over to Reed and told him what I had planned. He said, ‘That sounds fascinating. Do it.’ (laughing)

A: Did you do it?

D: Yes, I did. Right, so—but that was exciting. Things like that can happen. Or the time I was asked to play with the Harrisburg Symphony for a Christmas concert. You ask for an embarrassing time? Well, the manager, the personnel manager told me I had the job and brought me the music to prepare in advance of this event. The Harrisburg Symphony had a rehearsal in the afternoon and in the early evening, on the day of the performance. There wasn’t a lot of practice time. First thing I said to the personnel manager, ‘No Tchaikovsky on a Christmas program; something from the Nutcracker?’ That’s what they gave me. So when I got there, the conductor asked, “Is it OK if we start with the ‘Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies?’” Which has a celesta part, it’s a major part. There’s a solo in there. ‘Where’s the pianist?’ I had to sight-read this on a tabletop celesta, which was hard to play. I thought, ‘Oh, I could kill

somebody.' The librarian had forgotten to give that to the personnel manager. It went fine, but I didn't need to have all of the added stress.

A: OK. That's the telephone ringing... I think we will end at that point. Many thanks.

D: Thank you.