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Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
Conducted by Meg Leddy-Cecere
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LEDDY-CECERE: Okay. So can we start by you telling me a little bit about your life before Dartmouth? Like where you grew up, your early sort of years, stuff like that.

DOOLEY: Sure. Let's see, I grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and my parents moved out there in the late '70s. They're both from New Jersey.

LEDDY-CECERE: Okay.

DOOLEY: I grew up mostly—My main activity was playing sports. I played all sorts, all kinds of sports. I also did some music and theater and stuff.

LEDDY-CECERE: Oh, cool.

DOOLEY: Yes. And it was just, you know, really loved being in Minnesota. Spent a good amount of time on the East coast visiting family and also playing lacrosse. That was—My main sport was lacrosse. And so, I always kind of had the idea in my head that I wanted to go to college out East and play lacrosse. And that's also kind of what drew me to Dartmouth initially.

LEDDY-CECERE: The lacrosse. So you were in Minneapolis which is like a city.

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: And do you have any siblings or anything like that?

DOOLEY: Yes, I have two siblings. I have—I'm the middle of three boys. And, yes, we grew up in Minneapolis. Minneapolis is a very residential city. So kids from New York are really shocked that I live in a house with a yard in the city. But that's just how Minneapolis is.

LEDDY-CECERE: It's like suburbs-style?

DOOLEY: It’s kind of hard to explain. I guess it does kind of look like a suburb. But it’s, you know, it’s a five-minute drive from downtown. So you can see the skyscrapers; there aren’t many of them, but you can see them. And, you know, a ten-minute walk away, there’s this real busy intersection with big shopping areas and stuff like that. But then, if you’re back in my neighborhood, there’s a lake there, and it’s pretty quiet, and it’s all single-family homes.

LEDDY-CECERE: Well, it sounds so—it’s like the perfect meld of...

DOOLEY: Yes, yes, it’s really a nice combination.

LEDDY-CECERE: So what drew you to the East other than lacrosse? Like what about the East did you really—

DOOLEY: I mean, to be honest with you, it was mostly lacrosse.

LEDDY-CECERE: Are there just not a lot of opportunities to do that?

DOOLEY: Yes, pretty much. I mean, there are a few Division 1 programs outside of the East coast, like Denver, Notre Dame. But I think... I’m sure there was more that was drawing me to the East coast and to Dartmouth. But at the time it was just that it made so much sense with lacrosse. I mean, everything else past that was just like a cherry on top. There were a couple of other schools I was looking at that had good lacrosse programs. But none of them really had all, you know, the right combination that Dartmouth had. And I think the East coast also... You know, I went to a private day school and that was just kind of— That seemed like... What everyone aspired to do was to go to a good college on the East coast.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes. So did you have any connections to Dartmouth other than— Was it just sort of a random... You looked, it was Division 1 lacrosse, and it had a lot of qualifications? Or did you have family or friends or did you know anything about Dartmouth before you decided to come other than this sort of sports element?

DOOLEY: Yes, I did know a couple of alums, really close family friends and one teacher who had gone to Dartmouth. And interestingly, I knew that they were really loyal to Dartmouth and really loved it and came back a lot. And the times when— One of these family friends was a neighbor and in their house they just had Dartmouth stuff everywhere. And interestingly, though, when I started to get interested in Dartmouth and wanted to talk with them about it, they

were very open to talk about it but weren't overbearing at all. And didn't even... You know, I didn't even really talk with them all that much before I came.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: It was mostly just, this is the place that I want to be. It seems like it's a place that people really love.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: That was kind of the extent of my knowledge of Dartmouth before I decided that this is where I wanted to be.

LEDDY-CECERE: So it was the sports and then also just this sort of sense that it was a community that people felt a lot of attachment to, like even post-graduation?

DOOLEY: Yes, definitely. It seemed like Dartmouth had—it seemed like Dartmouth people, whether they are alums or students, just really loved the place. And that's I think probably what drew me to it most.

LEDDY-CECERE: And do you feel that way now, after four years? Do you feel that way now, still, about Dartmouth? Or has that changed for you, or is that still the impression? Has it been complicated by your experiences?

DOOLEY: I definitely—I love Dartmouth, just not in the way that I thought I was going to at all. It just—it was such a different experience than I thought it would be, which is so great. And I love it in a very complicated way. There are things I really don't like about it and things that I think are great. And I think, you know, I haven't always loved Dartmouth. But I think that, looking back now, that it was a great challenge.

Along the way, there were always things that were very easy to love. I mean it's easy to love New England in the summer. It's easy to love having great professors and small classrooms. So it wasn't like it was—it was never too difficult. But I wouldn't say that everything is, you know, peachy, in my book.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. Can we start with your freshman year and sort of how you experienced like the community that you sort of had an impression

of, other people, how you sort of experienced that initially? And then maybe go on from there?

DOOLEY: Yes. I mean the initial experience for me was DOC trips.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And I had actually come to Dartmouth a few times on recruiting trips. So I'd gotten to know some of the lacrosse players and some of the guys in the fraternity. And so I felt like coming in to DOC trips, I had a little bit... I just like knew about Dartmouth student life a little bit more than I think a lot of the other kids that are coming on DOC trips.

So my initial experience was as a recruit, visiting, you know. And we had a great time and went out and partied. We were guests. It was just like a— There's always a few days of fun, basically. And so, when I came in for DOC trips. Yes, I mean the initial impression is like, wow, these people are really weird and they really like each other, and they really like Dartmouth.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And I had a great time on DOC trips. I had two awesome trip leaders. I had an interesting group of tripees. And, yes, I mean, that was my initial experience. It's hard to like package it up into one little neat thing to talk about it. I do remember how I felt. I just remember feeling towards the end of the trip, like, okay, I'm ready to actually go to college now. Like I want to start with this whole experience. I feel like this is a little bit— This is all a little contrived.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And then, when I came back to campus, that's when—like during orientation week—everything's just nuts. [Laughter] And there's just so much partying. And everyone trying to get to know each other and trying to figure out who their friends are.

LEDDY-CECERE: Sure.

DOOLEY: So that was a very different—I think it's an interesting contrast, going from DOC trips to that.

LEDDY-CECERE: So do you think— So basically, you came in with sort of like an initial idea of community because you knew that you were going to play lacrosse. You'd been recruited for lacrosse. You'd had some experience with... Like you'd visited and been with people.

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: And then you entered DOC, which is sort of like—At least for me, it was like everyone loves everyone. And everything is just like... It's sort of like a social sphere outside of... And then you entered orientation, which is sort of like a... Did you feel that it was like more real, more harsh, harder? Like better? How did you compare those? Because I agree, it's like a huge gap. But how did the contrast sort of feel to you?

DOOLEY: I think it was in some ways really exciting and really liberating because it's, you know, the first week or two of college, you're on your own. No parents, no rules. You can do whatever you want. But in other ways, I think it was.... It's kind of like everyone's trying to learn the social rules. And it almost felt a little bit competitive about who can figure out how to like get on the pong table. Or who can figure out how to, I don't know, talk to upperclassman girls. Or who can figure out how to have the right like persona in a basement.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: Who knows who? It all became very... Yes. It was just very different from DOC trips.

LEDDY-CECERE: In a sort of a hierarchical way, would you say? Or not?

DOOLEY: Yes, I would say. Everyone is sort of— You're on DOC trips, it seems like everyone loves each other at Dartmouth, and you can do whatever you want and the sky's the limit. And we just want you to be you. And those are all great messages. But it is a very different reality from then, when you come back to campus. And I think the—Yes, the social hierarchies, the social norms, it all kind of hits you like a ton of bricks, and you just have to like— It seems like all the freshmen just kind of scramble to figure it out.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And there are lots of, I guess... There's a whole energy about that, you know. And people end up in friend groups or start butting heads

or, you know, there's just a lot of experimentation, trying out different things. It's just a pretty mixed-up, crazy time.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. So why do you think that Dartmouth sort of initiates your experience with the DOC sort of trips thing? And do you think it's because, like you said, those messages are really great messages? Do you think that there are like areas of Dartmouth that do match up with the messages that the trips are giving? Or do you think it's sort of like a faux Disney World-style Dartmouth orientation? Like, you're here and it's terrific! And then you get into the real thing, and you're like, what?! Like what do you think the rationale behind trips is, and do you think it's a positive thing for Dartmouth or a negative thing?

DOOLEY: I definitely understand the rationale behind trips, and I think trips are great. I think it's really important for freshmen to feel supported coming in.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And to see positive examples of...just the examples of positive loving relationships and happy people and weird people. I think that's all awesome. There's another part of your question.

LEDDY-CECERE: Do you think it's— Is it okay to have that sort of disconnect, or is that a negative thing or a positive thing?

DOOLEY: I'm not really sure what can be done about it. Because I think actually... After my DOC trips, I don't think I met—I didn't meet anyone for a while who seemed to like fit that, I guess, archetype of being really happy with Dartmouth and having great friends and being totally loosey-goosey and being very spontaneous and outdoorsy.

I mean, I ended up finding friends who were like that eventually. And I think part of it was just everyone, you know, comes into their own in college in different ways. And so, as upperclassmen, you're—Everyone becomes more comfortable being themselves.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: But, you know, I don't even know if that's anyone's fault, you know.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: I think that that's.... It is a strange thing. The trips to campus is a strange transition.

LEDDY-CECERE: But sort of an inevitable transition.

DOOLEY: I think it might be kind of inevitable, yes. I mean I think, you know, without making it too black and white, I think that the trips and the Dartmouth social scene are just so polar opposites. To put it in simple language, like it's just black and white in terms of what the expectations are and how you're treated as a guest in a social space.

LEDDY-CECERE: That's so interesting, yes, yes.

DOOLEY: You know I mean you just... Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, I never thought of it that way. Just like the way that as a new person entering this space, it's a totally different sort of reception.

DOOLEY: Right.

LEDDY-CECERE: In those two. So, you were sort of talking about earlier, you know, times at Dartmouth that were were not like trips. Can you talk a little bit about sort of how maybe your experience with the community changed over time? And has it developed in negative ways or in positive ways? Whatever you want to talk about.

DOOLEY: Yes. My relationship with the Dartmouth community has changed a lot. I think my freshman year I was... My freshman year—I don't even know how to describe it. My freshman year I don't think I felt especially close to anybody, really. I had a few close friends, but I think what I was struggling with was that I didn't feel very close to my teammates. And those were the guys who I spent the majority of my time with.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Especially as freshmen, varsity athletes tend to just kind of hang out with the guys in their class or the women in their class because, you know, you're trying to figure out this whole lifestyle of classes and practice and workouts and social life. And the easiest way to do it is just with your teammates.

LEDDY-CECERE: Because it's so overwhelming.

DOOLEY: It's just overwhelming otherwise. I mean it's hard to do it on your own or to try to have a social life outside of your sports team.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And, you know, it's just hard to bring those two things together. So I spent most of my time with my teammates. And I just had a difficult time with the dynamic on the team. I felt... Our senior class that year, I think we were all very intimidated by them. They all seemed to be very antagonistic towards the rest of the community. And so...

LEDDY-CECERE: The community as in Dartmouth or the community as in the sports community?

DOOLEY: Dartmouth.

LEDDY-CECERE: Dartmouth!

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: Okay.

DOOLEY: It seemed like outside of their fraternity and a couple of other fraternities and sororities, they didn't really interact with anyone else, and they didn't want to.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And they were openly antagonistic towards many elements of the campus. And so that made me feel like I had to, that there were certain... I always felt that there were a lot of rules, social rules, that I didn't understand yet.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: And I didn't want to break them.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: So the safest thing to do was to just do whatever anyone else did and fly under the radar. And at the same time, you know, there was a huge element of proving yourself, especially being on a male

sports team. That was—I think myself and all the other freshmen were eager to prove ourselves to the upperclassmen, kind of gain that validation.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: So I think that all those things combined made me feel very defensive, very insecure, always on edge. You know, I was not interested in exploring many of my interests outside of lacrosse because I just didn't want to break the mold. I didn't want to rock the boat at all.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: So. And that definitely carried into my sophomore year. I started to branch out a little bit more. I ended up not joining the lacrosse fraternity, and that was... You know, I think I felt... I did have a lot of support from a lot of the guys on the team.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: But some guys took it really personally.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And so that kind of added another layer to things, where, you know, it was... I already didn't feel that close with a lot of the guys on my team. And then on top of that, I was kind of setting myself apart. And I think there was just a lot of miscommunication. I think a lot of the guys didn't understand why I didn't join a fraternity like everyone else did.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: And so that was just something that was always on my mind. It was always in the back of my mind. Even if someone had told me, hey, I support you. Don't worry about it. You do what you want to do. I just wasn't quite sure with everyone. I felt very unstable in a lot of my relationships. And so I never... Because I was so worried about the relationships on my team, I think it was really hard for me to branch out because I was just so... I was spending so much mental energy worrying about those relationships.

LEDDY-CECERE: You were preoccupied with this one. Yes.

DOOLEY: I just couldn't... I didn't have the energy. And I also didn't, because I was so worried, I was never—I was rarely fully being myself in front of people, instead of unapologetically being myself. And so therefore, when I met people outside of that social circle, I wasn't very—I had a difficult time engaging. I felt kind of nervous and like maybe they're going to be judging me for being a lacrosse player. There were lots of, I guess, things in the back of my mind that, you know, I don't think are all that uncommon for an 18- or 19-year-old in college.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: But I guess the point is that, you know, I had a hard time branching out and kind of seeing myself as part of the Dartmouth community, as of the whole Dartmouth community.

LEDDY-CECERE: Because you were part of the lacrosse community.

DOOLEY: Right. Exactly.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Lacrosse community and my fraternity, like those things were separate and...

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, talk a little bit about that. So what sort of prompted your decision to not go the way that most people in the community you were already in were going.

DOOLEY: I guess there had always been a lot of things about this particular fraternity that just didn't line up with who I was.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: I mean, I come from a really, I guess progressive, for lack of a better word, background. And, you know, I went to a Montessori School growing up.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: And, you know, I was around—I was always in very nurturing environments where respect was the standard, where difference was valued and celebrated. So when I came in as a freshman, in

the fraternity where most of the lacrosse players were going, I just didn't see those same values being reflected. It wasn't that I didn't like the guys or that I didn't think they were good people. But I thought that as a social space, it was not very welcoming. It was not very respectful. It was, yes, very intimidating for outsiders, and I didn't want that.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: You know I wanted.... If I was going to be part of a fraternity, I wanted it to be a place where I was comfortable bringing my parents.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Where I felt I wanted to bring my girlfriend, my brothers.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Like my friends who had no idea what they were getting themselves into, I wanted them to be able to walk in and feel comfortable.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: And I also, you know, wanted to be in a place where I felt I could be myself and I wouldn't be judged for it, and I didn't have to fit a specific mold in order to be validated.

LEDDY-CECERE: So did you feel, when you were the first year when you were feeling like a lot of pressure and like a lot—and the idea was to fly under the radar, because that certainly wasn't like flying under the radar. Like to not go where you're supposed to go is not.

DOOLEY: Right.

LEDDY-CECERE: Flying under the radar. So did you feel that when you were doing that, when you were sort of just like... Did you feel that that was successful? Did you get the validation or the approval that you needed? Or did that not work? Or did you get it and you didn't like it? Or did you...

DOOLEY: Yes. I think in a lot of ways it... I definitely did get it at times.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And when I did, you know, when I did receive that validation, I thought, I mean that's what I'd been craving so much, is for guys to tell me like, oh, you're doing the right thing. Or, yes, you've got it together. You're the man.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: But on the occasions when that did happen, it was a very strange kind of empty feeling, and it wasn't very fulfilling.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: You know. And I felt like I was doing, I guess—I don't know. It was just this weird internal tension that I can't really describe. But it's just this kind of light feeling in your chest like this doesn't feel right for me. And so that was a strange thing because I'd been craving social validation. When I did get it, it was like it wasn't that fulfilling.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And so I think after a while—it took me a while—but I eventually realized that my sense of self had to be based on something more substantial than what other people thought of me.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. That's sort of like the definition of a college training for most people.

DOOLEY: Right. Yes, yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: So let's go back to.... You joined this non-lax fraternity. And then keep going from where you were.

DOOLEY: So I joined the fraternity, was really into it, really enjoyed my pledge term. Went through the rest of my sophomore year. Was... I was pretty disciplined about my social life. And I really wanted lacrosse to go well. So I spent a lot of— I didn't go out very much for most of the year. I had a good time. I think towards the end of the year, I was feeling like I just hadn't quite been connecting with people still. I was having a lot of fun, but I didn't feel like a lot of people knew me all that well.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Or that I knew a lot of people all that well. And so I went into my sophomore summer, I lived in my fraternity, and kind of was excited to have this like penultimate Dartmouth experience where you live in your frat, and you party a lot, and you do fun things outside, and you take two classes.

LEDDY-CECERE: Sophomore summer.

DOOLEY: Yes, I was ready to have the quintessential sophomore summer. And it was a lot of fun. It started to drag by about the third week, you know.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: It was like just being hung over a lot and feeling like I just knew everyone on just a, "Hey, how's it going?" basis. And there was just a lot of... Because everyone was partying so much, there was just a lot of malaise. And especially in my fraternity, there would just be a lot of sitting around, just like, oh, man, I wish we had something to do. Well, whatever, we don't have anything to do. So we'll just sit here.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: And looking back is such a bummer because there are so many awesome things to do in the Upper Valley.

LEDDY-CECERE: It's beautiful, yes.

DOOLEY: It's such a great area. And that being said, I did have some great experiences. I went on a cool camping trip with my brothers. Took the Prouty bike race.

LEDDY-CECERE: Oh, that's so cool.

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: I've always wanted to do that. That's really cool.

DOOLEY: Yes. It was fun. And I think it was also—it was just a really good learning experience for me because I think I had thought that... I mean, I'd always thought since I'd come into Dartmouth that if I—it seemed like upperclassmen or especially guys in fraternities had

had it all figured out. And they had some—They had some magical key to happiness that other people didn't have.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And I didn't have it. And once I gained access to those spaces or those friendships or that experience, that I would be as happy as they looked. And once I went through my pledge term and my sophomore summer, I realized that I didn't really like drinking a lot, and that I didn't find a lot of fulfillment in the social scene. And it kind of takes you to push that... I mean it took me—to realize that I had to push it all the way to the extreme.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: To fully understand what my needs were and what—to realize that that's not what I wanted.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. No, I get that. Yes. So then did that cause a change in—Did you seek different communities? Did you identify with different communities? How did that sort of change your status, I guess, at Dartmouth in terms of your own evaluation of that status, not in terms of someone else's?

DOOLEY: So after my sophomore summer, and I went on my abroad term, studied abroad in South Africa.

LEDDY-CECERE: Oh, that's so cool.

DOOLEY: I did... It was like an anthropology and history program in Cape Town.

LEDDY-CECERE: Very cool.

DOOLEY: And it was kind of an opportunity for a clean slate.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, I love that about...

DOOLEY: Yes. And we were living with homestay families which I think was really important because I had lived at home, you know, a few times during breaks from school since I'd left. But your relationship with your family changes so much in the college years because you're, you know, trying to come into your own, all that stuff.

So when I was in South Africa, I lived for five weeks with a grandmother and her grandson. The grandson was like—He was eight. And so I knew how to be a big brother because I had my younger brother. But I hadn’t been a big brother to an eight-year-old since I was, you know, 12. So it was kind of fun to like reconnect with all those—with just like my more caring side.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And the woman I stayed with, his grandmother, was so sweet, and we would eat dinner together every night. And it was like a very slow pace of life. And, you know, neighbors would come over, and we would just sit and talk and just be with each other. And I realized... And also, the other students in my group, we just spent a lot of time being with each other and talking.

And South Africa is such a fascinating place. And I wanted to go there because there were a lot of social issues that fascinated me about it. And so I got to engage intellectually with a lot of stuff I cared about. I got to engage with relationships that I cared about. And so, it was a great experience.

And towards the end, I really started to discover my spiritual life, and that had not been a part of my life at all until then. And, you know, I just sort of started figuring out what was really important to me and what I wanted out of Dartmouth and what I wanted out of my experience in life. And so when I came back, I was just set on developing relationships with really interesting, really caring people.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And so I intentionally—I would try eating lunch at least once a week with someone from a class that I was in and not someone that I knew well. Just someone who I had had a good conversation with or who had made some interesting points in class or just seemed like an interesting person. I tried to go out to lunch with them.

And then in addition to that, I did, what’s it called? The Dartmouth Peer [Program]—the DPP is how I knew it. But it’s a program put on by OPAL. And it’s basically a diversity discussion group. So we would get together I think on Thursday nights, and we would have facilitated discussions about, you know, our backgrounds, identity,

you know, the community at Dartmouth, how we all fit in, how we didn't fit in.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Talk about, you know, what are our preconceived notions of each other because of race or class or social status or whatever. And that was really great. It was a really nice opportunity because I think it gave me confidence in reaching out to people more. I think I had wanted... You know, there were times when I wanted to reach out to people outside of my social group, and I felt like they were going to—They weren't going to give me the time of day because they thought I was, you know, a rich white kid in a fraternity who played lacrosse. [Laughter] And, you know, he's a jerk, so I don't really want to talk to him.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: So it was really nice to see that. If I just brought forth my caring self and was open and interested in other people, that that would be reciprocated.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. That's sort of like an incredible thing to... You know, we all have so many hang-ups to reaching out because you just feel like anytime you reach out, you're going to hit the stereotypes that sort of... Then you make that realization that people like it when you reach out. They will respond well when you reach out. It's the funniest thing, to like hit up. It's so interesting.

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: So when you were doing the OPAL thing with the discussions, did you sort of encounter parts of the Dartmouth community that you had not experienced before? Can you talk about that at all? If not, then we'll move on.

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: Was there anything that surprised you that was here that you didn't know about?

DOOLEY: Let me think. I remember talking a lot about class issues. And I knew that—I'd become much more aware of class at Dartmouth during my sophomore year, especially through... I became a lot

more aware of a lot of elements of Dartmouth's student body my sophomore year, mainly through one history class that I took with Russell Rickford, called the Black Radical Tradition in America. And obviously it was about... You know, it was a history class. But we inevitably would talk about social issues at Dartmouth.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: And I think it was predominantly... I think I was probably one of three white kids in a class of like 12 or 15. It was mostly African-American students. So I definitely got some perspectives from African-American students and students from, you know, lower socio-economic classes. And, you know, it wasn't... And I also— one more thing, too. I did a documentary for a film class on Cutter-Shabazz. So I got to know a lot about that space. And I got to know some of the people who were living there. So I wouldn't say I was... I think it didn't surprise me that there were... It didn't surprise me, the richness and complexity of being from, you know, a nontraditional community at Dartmouth.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: But there was no way I could have anticipated what those issues were like, you know. I mean, I saw a lot—not a lot—but I saw black students on campus here. I saw students who had to work at DDS or who were clearly juggling off-campus jobs. And I knew kids who were on financial aid. But I guess we rarely have frank discussions about where we were coming from and what we're dealing with.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: And I think the best part about DPP was recognizing that everybody has a unique set of challenges and it comes from a multitude of places. Some of it's emotional, some of it's material, some of it's spiritual, some of it's intellectual. And it's useless to try to say that some person or some group has it worse than another group. I mean you can talk about that in objective terms, you know, materially. But it doesn't really help to say, oh, I have it worse than these kids. Or, they're complaining about this stuff and they don't really have it bad.

It's way more useful to listen to each other and try to see how your needs can be met, and see what you can do to help others' needs be met. So, you know, I can't change financial aid packages. But if

a friend of mine is, you know, having a hard time paying for school and has to work at DDS and has to maybe have another off-campus job, maybe I can do something by just being a good friend and listening to them and trying to help share that more spiritual and emotional burden.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. And that’s sort of like a non-superficial trips. That’s like the ideal of trips that we... That’s why it rings false is because I think that you worry. Like on trips, it’s this idea that we’re all equal, but we don’t really understand the differences that make us... Because it’s like what you’re saying, it’s the differences that sort of put us— like we all have challenges, and that puts us... And if we understand that, then we can sort of like be that kind of community that trips wants us to be.

But I think the problem with trips is that you don’t really—when you walk in, you don’t really understand that you don’t have to be the same as everyone. Like you don’t have to be the same for everyone to love you. Like people don’t have to fit a mold, like a lacrosse mold or a whatever mold for people to understand—

DOOLEY: Mm-hmm.

LEDDY-CECERE: ... where you’re coming from. So let’s see. Where were we? Okay. So do you still identify as, you know, like.... This is such a hard question. It seems like you pretty much identified as a lacrosse player your freshman year. That was complicated—

DOOLEY: Yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: ... throughout your sophomore year. How would you sort of situate yourself now?

DOOLEY: My lacrosse season’s over now. But my love for lacrosse and for the lacrosse team never faltered. There were things that frustrated me about it. But I think I always identified first and foremost as a lacrosse player. Now I’m done playing. So, you know, for the last few weeks I don’t know how much my identity has shifted. But I think I always wanted—My goal has been to represent the communities that I’m a part of as an individual. So I’m the captain of the lacrosse team, but that title in and of itself is meaningless. Like I fill that... I mean, that kind of gives people a sense of what I do and what matters to me. But there’s so much more to that.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And so I try to, especially my junior and senior years, would really try to just unapologetically be myself, whether or not that fit into the mold of a lacrosse player.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: And hopefully that would, you know, give the people that I came into contact with the impression that lacrosse players are not all cut and dried.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: They don't all fit into the perfect mold that we expect lacrosse players to be in. Or anyone else for that matter.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: Whether it's varsity athletes or fraternity guys or unaffiliated students.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: I think it's—I very consciously was working against those preconceived social categories and would really try to look for that in other people, too. Kind of help them, you know, just be themselves.

LEDDY-CECERE: As a counter to sort of the experience that you had had your freshman year was like mentors who were not...that you didn't feel sort of accepted by in your... So what does being yourself mean to you here, in this context. Because I know it means different things in different contexts. But senior year, senior spring or whatever, what does that mean to you?

DOOLEY: Like what do I want to do?

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. How is that like or how is that different than how you felt you had to behave, like how does that diverge from freshman year where you were feeling really confined by norms and stuff like that? Like where do you deviate from the norms? Where do you not deviate from the norms?

DOOLEY: I love spending time with friends. I like partying from time to time. But I'm just very comfortable with the fact that I need a long time and that I don't like drinking heavily. And, yes, and I don't really like the really loud, obnoxious behavior that you see a lot at Dartmouth in the social scene.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: That's fine if you want to do that. I'm going to jump around and yell at times, too. But I would do it in like a respectful way. I'm not going to impose on anybody else. I'm not going to make anybody else feel intimidated.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And also I think maybe the biggest change socially is that as an underclassman I would go do social things. I don't know if this is conscious or not. But it was basically because I wanted to feel seen, and I wanted to have social status, and I wanted to be in the right place at the right time with the right people.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: And I wanted to look cool.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And now for me, my social life is purely for my own fulfillment and to connect with people. I just want to... One of the main things I want in life is to just feel connected to other people in a meaningful way. So that's why, when I go out, that's why I go out.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right. Not for face time or whatever.

DOOLEY: I am just not interested in that anymore.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And I think I realized how toxic that can be for yourself, for your sense of self. Because the foundation for your sense of self is so thin there, and whereas the foundation for your sense of self is what you care about and your relationships, then it's a much more peaceful way of being.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes. So has that... Your sort of transitions that you've gone through in terms of your relationship with the Dartmouth community are pretty profound. Do you feel like the Dartmouth community itself—I don't know if you can really, if there's a way to judge this. Do you see any ways that the Dartmouth community itself has changed in your four years here? Rather than, you know, this is how I have interacted with this static community and changed, do you see how the community itself has maybe transformed in certain ways? Or not?

DOOLEY: Well, I mean it's hard to talk about the Dartmouth community because it's 4,000 people.

LEDDY-CECERE: It's huge. Yes.

DOOLEY: I mean, that's just undergrad students. But I've definitely discovered a lot more elements of the Dartmouth community that I didn't even know that they existed as an underclassman. I've also seen other people have similar shifts in their life. So I think that, yes, it's hard from my vantage point to see if things have changed a lot because I do see a lot of underclassmen jumping into the same fast track to like Dartmouth-ness that I was in. And I don't judge that at all, you know. Maybe people do find fulfillment in that. I was a part of it. And it's not like you're ever really totally a part of one thing or not a part of another, you know? I mean it's never one or the other. I mean I still hang out in my fraternity.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: I still play pong every once in a while. And there's no use in totally divorcing yourself.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right. It's not like a rejection of everything that came before you had some sort of like spiritual... Yes.

DOOLEY: Exactly. So, you know, I don't know if I can really answer that question.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes—no. That's sort of how I would have answered it too. Let's make sure we... So in terms of feeling like you fit with Dartmouth or you don't fit with Dartmouth, it sort of almost sounds like... It's interesting to me that when you were trying to fit, you felt more like you didn't fit. Like when you were struggling so hard to fit, it felt empty and like you didn't fit in. Then when you sort of let it go, then

you felt like you did. Is that a fair assessment, or do you not agree with that?

DOOLEY: Yes. No, I agree with that for sure. And I still don't... I was talking with a friend of mine the other day, and we both had this kind of funny moment of acknowledgement where we both said like, you know, I still don't really know where I fit in here. It still hits me sometimes. I still feel like socially anxious or unsure about—I want to fit in.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And maybe that's just like... Maybe that's just, you know, a normal thing on a college campus. Or just in a community in general. And being okay with that is actually so liberating because then you're free to move however you want.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: So what was the question?

LEDDY-CECERE: No, no, that's really great. The idea of that, because I was certainly not feeling like an insider or feeling like an outsider. The idea that what's really important isn't that, it's the mobility, and that to put yourself to care about being an outsider sort of boxes you in, and then to just accept the ways in which the community... You don't feel comfortable in certain spaces allows you to be mobile and move through that community in ways that are ultimately really positive.

DOOLEY: Right.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. I think that's really interesting. Okay. I think we should probably—Are you okay with ending?

DOOLEY: Yes. I think I want to add a little bit more.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, please do.

DOOLEY: I think for a while it did... I did position myself as an outsider to put across the image in my fraternity. And I think this year especially I've realized that you can make a much more positive impact if you're willing to like be a... I mean for example, there have always been things that irked me about my fraternity, and there are things

that irk me about the lacrosse team. And social issues that I care about, like homophobia and sexual assault and just general misogyny. And so, for a while it just made me so angry to see those things that I didn't want to be a part of it. But I think I've come to realize more and more—and I hope more people come to realize this more, especially men—that you have the potential to influence people and to influence groups that need it most. So, yes, it was great for me to, you know, for example, be part of MAV [Mentors Against Violence]. I don't know if that's a great example. But DPP is a good example.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: You know it was really important for me to be there and to build those relationships and to gain confidence in my voice and to experience that really intimate setting. But it was almost more important for me to take those things that I learned, and kind of take that confidence that I gained from that setting and bring it into my fraternity or my lacrosse team where I see a lot of lack in relationships.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: You know? And it wouldn't... It was unhelpful and unproductive for me to say, well, you know, the fraternity system and that whole environment is really toxic and problematic. So I'm just not going to be a part of it at all. It *is* toxic and problematic in some ways in my mind.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: But I am a member of a fraternity. So does it really help for me to just not show up?

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: Or I think it's way more useful to try, against all odds, to make some kind of positive impact on the groups that you're a part of.

LEDDY-CECERE: Sort of transform it. It's sort of like an anti-... Have you ever heard Audre Lorde's thing, "the master's tools can never dismantle the master's house." It's sort of like an... Well, I don't know if it's an anti-Audre. It's sort of a complication in that you're bringing new tools into the same house, rather than... Because I think Audre

Lorde means like don't go back, don't be a part of a fraternity if that system is a broken system.

DOOLEY: Right.

LEDDY-CECERE: But you're saying, if you bring things like from other places back into that, you can transform that from the inside. And not just being like a bystander; but to not engage is to be sort of like a bystander, too, to issues.

DOOLEY: Right. And to not engage is a convenient excuse to not... Because the reason it's difficult to change the groups you're a part of is because your relationships are at stake.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: So I don't want guys in my fraternity to dislike me because I disagree with them.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right. Or say something or... Yes.

DOOLEY: Yes, exactly. But if I position myself as an outsider and I kind of cut myself off from those relationships, then we can just yell at each other from across the...

LEDDY-CECERE: And nobody's changing anyone's mind. Yes, yes.

DOOLEY: I mean at the same time I totally recognize the importance of outsiders because I think the Occupy Movement was really a great thing for this campus. You need people on the outside who are sort of yelling and being very confrontational, and they don't have— Yes, they do have relationships at stake. But they weren't, they haven't... I don't know. I guess I'm not trying to make too many distinctions here. But, you know, I personally didn't have the time or perhaps the interest to be a fully engaged, like full-time political radical on this campus.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: I mean I was playing lacrosse, and I had my school work to take care of.

LEDDY-CECERE: Senior year, where you're doing job stuff and you know...

DOOLEY: Right. And I was writing for the paper.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: I mean it was just... There was no way that I could actually fully commit myself to being an outsider and trying to make change that way. And so, I eventually realized the best way for me to make change was to accept some cognitive dissonance on the social scene.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: And learn how to be more confident challenging people and disagreeing with people who are my friends.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes. Not cutting those friendships off because of challenges and disagreements.

DOOLEY: Because it's uncomfortable.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right, right.

DOOLEY: Being comfortable with discomfort.

LEDDY-CECERE: And it's maybe like what's actually required is that combination of people who are standing as outsiders and yelling. And then people who are inside but also, in their own way, yelling from the inside. Or like... I think that you can't— Like you said. It's like if you create this gap and you have outsiders and you have insiders, and there's no middle ground.

DOOLEY: Right.

LEDDY-CECERE: No one's reaching.

DOOLEY: No one's communicating.

LEDDY-CECERE: Anyone. And it's just like psshh... But if you have people in all of those spaces, like sort of revolving around those spaces, and then you have very radical and then sort of like... I feel like sometimes there's a tendency to devalue. Radicals devalue non-radicals, even non-radicals who support radical viewpoints.

DOOLEY: Mm-hmm. Right.

LEDDY-CECERE: Because it's sort of like you're making this— It makes perfect sense. You're making this commitment that's really difficult and that you're sacrificing things for it. And I think it would probably... Because, you know, when you're in the Occupy tent and you're exhausted and you're whatever. But I think that it's really important to recognize the ways in which different gradations of radicality is what really affects social change and it's not just everyone's being radical and everyone's not being radical.

DOOLEY: Right. Yes. And a lot of those outsiders who are yelling from the outside in were the ones who influenced me.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes.

DOOLEY: So, I mean again, I totally recognize the validity of that.

LEDDY-CECERE: Of that stand.

DOOLEY: Of that position, yes.

LEDDY-CECERE: Right.

DOOLEY: It's really important.

LEDDY-CECERE: But it's not the only way to sort of see the change that you want to see happen.

DOOLEY: Yes. Right. It just wasn't the right mix for me.

LEDDY-CECERE: Yes, yes. Awesome. Right. Thank you so much.

DOOLEY: Sure thing.

LEDDY-CECERE: That was so great. That was awesome.

DOOLEY: That was really fun.

[End of Interview]