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Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World  
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DONIN: Today is June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013. My name is Mary Donin. I'm here in Baker Library with Eric Hatch, Dartmouth Class of 1968. And Eric and I met for 30 seconds yesterday, so I've done no background research on him. Just for the record. [Laughs.]

So, Eric, let's start off just by learning how it is you came to Dartmouth back in 1964. Are you a legacy or did you get the word through your high school guidance counselor, or how'd you come here?

HATCH: We had no high school guidance counselor.

DONIN: Oh, back in those days. No! Sure, you did.

HATCH: We didn't.

DONIN: Oh, you didn't.

HATCH: I went to St. Mark's prep school, which is in Southborough, Massachusetts. St. Mark's provided—fed Harvard, for the most part. And I'll tell you a bit about my class there because it's gonna be directly relevant to what you're driving at. My class consisted of 45 students, of whom 44 graduated. Fifteen of those students went to Harvard, three of us went to Dartmouth, a couple of us went to Yale, and UVA was the dump-off school.

DONIN: Amazing.

HATCH: Now, my grade-point average at St. Mark's was just over an 80, made me—it was a B minus average, which put me seventh in my class of these towering geniuses.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: I was a National Merit finalist. Oh, I should have told you: We had 15 letters of commendation and six finalists amongst this group of 45.

DONIN: Wow.

HATCH: But I had this wonderful grade-point average. I did okay on the college boards. They were around 1,300 when 800 was tops. That's good. And I interviewed tolerably. The thing is, Dartmouth knew all about this hellhole of intellectual activity.

DONIN: Well, you were a feeder school for here, too, right?

HATCH: Yeah.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: And Dartmouth took a look, said, "St. Mark's, B minus average. This guy's been—look at his boards." Early decision.

DONIN: Wow.

HATCH: My roommate, Sam Swisher, similar case. Early decision. *No problemo*. John Pierce, the third in my class at school to come here, was not early decision. He had some options, but he chose here. And made it. All three of us were skiers, although we didn't do that much skiing. Couldn't afford it. But we *were* skiers.

DONIN: You'd grown up skiing.

HATCH: Oh, I did. Sam didn't, but he hung with me and he learned.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: Now he skis fine and his kids are beautiful skiers.

DONIN: So had you been up here to see Dartmouth before you applied?

HATCH: Yeah. My dad drove me up. My father never went to college. He kept getting kicked out of prep schools. [Both chuckle.] He did. Two of them for pranks and one of them for being dead honest when he passed a test he shouldn't have passed, and they accused him of cheating, and he said, "No, I didn't."

DONIN: Oh, dear.

HATCH: Anyway, he's not the point of *this* story. But he came up, and he loved the place, and I loved the place, and he said, "If you get in, I'd really like to see you go here." And I said, "I think it's beautiful, and the skiing's good. You betcha!" [Chuckles.] So that was that.

DONIN: Easy decision.

HATCH: Yeah. And I was A-rated for Harvard and Yale, so—and I didn't want to go to Harvard 'cause I couldn't stand a) the expense or b) the social stuff that went there. Yale would have been okay, but—

DONIN: Mm-hm. So was this a financial stretch for your family to send you to college?

HATCH: You bet.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: I was on scholarship. I was on scholarship at St. Mark's, and I was on scholarship and worked kitchen patrol here.

DONIN: You worked—you had a part-time job.

HATCH: Oh, yeah. I was the fastest dish scraper in the East.

DONIN: Right. Over in what's now Collis.

HATCH: Yes. Well, what's now the Commons.

DONIN: Right, the Commons, that's right; that was your dining hall.

HATCH: That was the dining hall.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: With the Richard Hovey murals that got covered up.

DONIN: Yes. That's another story.

- HATCH: Wrong thing to do, in my opinion. They were very good murals. And just the thing adolescent males needed [chuckles] to see.
- DONIN: Right. [Laughter.] So you had a bunch of pals who arrived here with you.
- HATCH: I had one pal and one friend. And the friend, John and I— John Pierce and I were never close. We weren't hostile. We weren't close.
- DONIN: He was the other one who came from St. Mark's?
- HATCH: From St. Mark's, right. But when I got here, I learned, to my pleasure, that 85 percent of my class came from public schools.
- DONIN: Is that right?
- HATCH: Yes, ma'am.
- HATCH: And I was thrilled by that because I had been—I had turned my back firmly on the social structures that went with schools like St. Mark's. I didn't approve of the caste system that they had. I stopped going to debutante parties and said, "No, thank you. *Nyet.*"
- DONIN: What made you—
- HATCH: I've always regretted it. That was the choice.
- DONIN: Yeah. So why did you take that position? At that young age, why—
- HATCH: Because what I saw was what I thought at the time was and still think, was a massive exercise in hypocrisy, in everything from sexism (which was not a term that existed, but the reality sure did) to social assumptions to, "Where are you folks making your judgments politically? Where are they coming from? Your parents? Well, aren't you thinking for yourself? [Sighs.] You've got an education that equipped you. C'mon, guys."

- DONIN: Well, did you experience this notion of belonging and not belonging?
- HATCH: Oh, I've been an outsider since I was a kid.
- DONIN: I was gonna say, going as a scholarship student to one of these elite private schools, you must have felt somehow—
- HATCH: Sure. And socially I was—my family background was New York social upper class for years and years and centuries. That kind of went poof in the Depression, and it was okay with me because I just didn't buy it. What I valued was the education that I was getting. You know, it's terrific! St. Mark's was—you know, it was a grinder, but it was a worthwhile grinder. You learned to think. You learned to write. And Dartmouth, of course, was far better. [Chuckles.]
- DONIN: And you probably arrived here far better prepared, and this is anecdotally from these interviews—the private school men, at that point, were better prepared. They knew how to write. They knew how to study.
- HATCH: Oh, intellectually it was not gonna be a problem for me, but socially it was a huge change.
- DONIN: From St. Mark's to here?
- HATCH: Absolutely. And the reason was that at St. Mark's your life was largely predetermined. It worked by bells.
- DONIN: Right.
- HATCH: Not here.
- DONIN: You had choices.
- HATCH: Well, I'll tell you, first semester my grades were a B and two D's. I made the mistake of taking German at 8 in the morning. [Chuckles.]
- DONIN: That's your first mistake.

- HATCH: French is native to me, so I thought I could do German. Wrong! And chemistry. And my math just wasn't strong enough.
- DONIN: Mm-hm.
- HATCH: So Professor [Roger] Soderberg, who was my class adviser—I went to see him, and I said, “Look, you know, I'm just not making it.” He said, “What are your grades?” I told him. And he said, “What's going on in chemistry?” I said, “Well, I've got Ken Sharp. He's a graduate student. He's a mentor. He's coaching me, and I'm still not fundamentally getting it.” And he says, “You're working. I know that.” I said, “Yeah, you bet I am. I'm just not doing—something's not clicking here.” And he said, “Well, I advise you to study your German.” And I passed [chuckles] the chemistry course, and I passed the German, so that's why the B and two D's instead of a B and two E's.
- DONIN: Right, right.
- HATCH: My next semester, the grades were A and two C's, then two A's and a B, and thereafter I got A's.
- DONIN: So you got it.
- HATCH: Oh, I worked the system out.
- DONIN: Yep.
- HATCH: I figured out how to—I'm not gonna—I'm bright enough, but...I learned how to game the system. I learned how to listen for key points. I learned that on the first day of any class, your prof is going to give away his or her—and it was all his in those days—thesis, the axe he's grinding, and then everything you read, you sort into pro-thesis, anti-thesis and irrelevant, which eliminates the burden of memory. And then you just make sure that you argue with your professor cogently at least twice a semester. [Snaps fingers.] Job done.
- DONIN: Mm-hm.

HATCH: I mean, that's more cynical than it needs to be, but there *is* a system to it.

DONIN: Yep. So you got the academics pinned down. How 'bout the social?

HATCH: That was harder. I was an active participant in my classes, and I can remember a water fight that went on on the Green, and three guys came after me with buckets and said, "Next time keep your mouth shut in class."

DONIN: Oh, really!

HATCH: Yep.

DONIN: Anti-intellectual.

HATCH: Very much.

DONIN: Aha. So did you take that to heart?

HATCH: Hell, no.

DONIN: Didn't listen to them.

HATCH: I took it to heart emotionally, but I was here to—if I'm engaged in something, I'm gonna ask questions. Nature of the beast.

DONIN: Yup.

HATCH: Can't help it.

DONIN: Plus you're working hard to help pay your tuition.

HATCH: Well, that too.

DONIN: Yeah. So did you decide to go with the whole Greek life thing?

HATCH: Nope. I was rushed by a few, pledged by none and didn't mind that, and I worked out a sort of social membership, it was called, at—what the hell was it? Phi Psi, where I could

park in their lot and go to their parties and pay some fees, but I was not a brother.

DONIN: Oh, interesting. Why?

HATCH: Phi Kappa Psi.

DONIN: I mean, what was—

HATCH: They never pledged me during the time that that was available, but they thought I was okay, so—

DONIN: Uh-huh. So you were sort of an unofficial member.

HATCH: Unofficial member.

DONIN: Ah. And did that become your group of pals, or did your dorm—did you have friends on your floor?

HATCH: I had friends in the dorm.

DONIN: What dorms were you in?

HATCH: Fayerweather all four years. And my various roommates are—well, Sam Swisher is still—you know, I met him when he went to St. Mark's as a day student and hadn't hit puberty yet. And he and I are as still as close as people can be.

DONIN: That's wonderful.

HATCH: That is. It chokes me up to have that kind of a relationship.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: And my other roommate, Dennis Donahue, and I are still good friends. John "Bear" Everett—he was a roommate for one trimester, and we went different ways, but we get along okay. I did have other friends.

DONIN: On the floor or in the dorm?

HATCH: On the floor, in the dorm, and some scattered in other dorms, but they mostly don't come to reunions.



- DONIN: So who became your sort of core group? Was it the guys in Phi Psi?
- HATCH: No, it would have been the guys in Fayerweather. Insofar as I had a core group, that would have been it.
- DONIN: Did you—I mean, I saw on the one profile I saw, you were active in WDCR, right?—the radio station.
- HATCH: Very. I did “The 11 o’clock news, 15 minutes of news, sports and weather, brought to you by Coca-Cola.”
- DONIN: You *do* have a good radio voice.
- HATCH: Well, I had done radio before I came to Dartmouth, so.
- DONIN: At St. Mark’s?
- HATCH: No. My dad owned a 500-watt daytimer.
- DONIN: [Laughs.] Well, you’ve got the perfect voice for it. So was that a group that you became socially—
- HATCH: Again, individuals within that group, but not as a unit.
- DONIN: Right, right.
- HATCH: I was always...attached to but not really *in* most organizations that I had things to do with.
- DONIN: And that was your choice?
- HATCH: I don’t think so. I think that—and I do not know the reasons for this. I was never really trusted.
- DONIN: Trusted?
- HATCH: Trusted. I wasn’t reliable in whatever sense it is kids mean by that. I don’t think I was seen as reliable.
- DONIN: Were you aloof?
- HATCH: I don’t think so, although I could get that way when offended. But I don’t think so. Good question, by the way.

DONIN: But it's fair to say that some people just aren't joiners.

HATCH: Well, I'm not terribly. I mean, I have functioned well on my own since I was 17 and went to France for the summer—16. I had my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in Paris.

DONIN: Was this a summer break when you did it?

HATCH: Yeah.

DONIN: Oh. Great.

HATCH: An aunt had died and left—she left her will in ship shares, which is how the whaling captains did it. And the closer you were to the captain, the more money you got. And she did her will that way based on how closely you were genetically related to her.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

HATCH: So I got enough money to go to Europe for a summer.

DONIN: Oh, that's great.

HATCH: It cost, I think, about twelve hundred bucks total. [Laughs.]

DONIN: Those were the days.

HATCH: Those were the days.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

So had you made up your mind about a major when you got here?

HATCH: No. I thought I was going to be in the sciences. One of the reasons I went to St. Mark's was that they had the strongest science program in the country for biological sciences. And I'd been assuming I was going to wind up being a molecular biologist until I tripped up on the math when I got here. And then I took the line of least resistance, and that was English.

DONIN: Oh, is that right? You enjoyed English.

HATCH: Line of least resistance.

DONIN: Easiest for you.

HATCH: Easiest for me. I love reading. I learned critical thinking skills early on, and they improved, and my writing improved as I went through Dartmouth, largely thanks to Peter Bien.

DONIN: Oh, Peter Bien.

HATCH: One of my favorite people.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: And Peter took one look at me and said, “Your writing is academically excellent, and you don’t breathe life into it. Get over it.” [Laughter.] He was right, so—

DONIN: Yeah. That’s great. He still lives around here, doesn’t he?

HATCH: Oh, does he? I didn’t know!

DONIN: Yeah. I think he’s out at Kendal.

HATCH: I figured he’d be out in his summer place in the Adirondacks by now.

DONIN: Well, I’m pretty sure that they at least spend their winters up at Kendal.

HATCH: How nice to know that.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: He and Chrysanthe were terrific to me. You know, Peter was just a—I thought the world of him.

DONIN: Now, you mentioned another teacher here. Who was it?

HATCH: There were several that I really loved.

DONIN: You wrote in your 40<sup>th</sup> reunion—oh, Henry Terrie.

HATCH: Henry Terrie. Henry Terrie was the type of the literary professor—he was a gentleman, and I mean that in terms of his values as well as his manners. And he encouraged me—I did a paper on *The Golden Bowl* by Henry James, and he encouraged me to think about publishing it. And he also encouraged me to go on for my doctorate in English.

DONIN: Did you do that?

HATCH: Yes.

DONIN: Aha! Right from here?

HATCH: Yep.

DONIN: Wow. And—

HATCH: Funny story. Here we go:

DONIN: Okay.

HATCH: The Sanborn House—if I had a place I belonged, it was Sanborn House.

DONIN: Oh, yes, of course.

HATCH: Where the English—

DONIN: Serving tea—

HATCH: Yes. Tea at Sanborn House was the daily ritual. Fifteen cents got you two cookies and one cup of tea.

DONIN: It hasn't changed much. I think it's 20 cents or maybe 25 now.

HATCH: It's underwritten. Somebody left it in their will.

DONIN: Clearly.

HATCH: Anyway, the great thing about Sanborn House was that you did in fact get to talk to your professors as if they were humans. And that was worth its weight in gold. So I got a postcard one day, a yellow postcard; I remember the color—

from the University of Virginia, saying, “Dear Honor Student, Have you considered coming to UVA for grad school?” You know, “Here’s a little form. Fill it in. How much money would you like to have?” So I wrote down something extravagant, like \$8,000, which was huge.

So I went over to Sanborn House for tea and waved this thing around, and what I got was dead silence. “Eric, UVA is recruiting you? WHAT? You should go! Absolutely, you should go there!” I said, “Why? It’s our dump-off school from St. Mark’s.” “No, no, no, not in English. It’s the number three ranked school in the world.”

DONIN: Oh, for graduate work.

HATCH: Yeah. See, I had no clue. All I had was my St. Mark’s—

DONIN: Your prejudice from St. Mark’s.

HATCH: —where the dumb students go is UVA. [Laughs.] Not that there were any dummies, but—

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: [Laughs.]

DONIN: So you went.

HATCH: Well, I negotiated. And this is likewise a—well, I’ll just roll with it. Went down—I was accepted for graduate studies both at Rutgers and at UVA. And I was trying to negotiate the best deal, which you could do in those days. And finally one March day I went down to UVA, drove from here down, with Charles C. Adams Jr., who was interested in law school there—

DONIN: Yes, I know Charles C. Adams Jr.

HATCH: You do, do you?

DONIN: We’ll talk about that off the tape.

HATCH: Yes, off the tape.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: Anyway, Chuck and I went down there, and here it is, spring. The flowers are in bloom, Mr. Jefferson's academical village is resplendently beautiful, and I walk into this dusty enclave and find Fredson Bowers, the Shakespearean scholar, who was chairman of the department. And he said, "Mr. Hatch, we very much want you to join us here at The University"—"the university"—that's how it was *always* called. And I said, "Well, I would very much like to join you, too, but there's a little matter of funding." And he said, "Mr. Hatch, [clears throat] you know, we've made you the best offer we can. I have no more funds forthcoming. I have no more funds at present, but I do have some sources that I think may open up, and if I do, you will be on the head of the list. Now, no more shenanigans. Are you in or are you out?"

DONIN: Oh!

HATCH: I said, "I'm in." He leaned back in his chair and stretched his arms back over his head and said, "By the way, Mr. Hatch, what do you know about our doctoral program?"

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: I said, "Really very little, sir." And he said, "Well, it's a four-year program. We have 200 students in it, of whom 100 are first year."

DONIN: Oh.

HATCH: I said, "I see." He said, "Oh, I'm sure we'll look forward to seeing you every year."

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: "But there is something called permission to proceed, which you get at the end of your first year." I said, "Well, then, that's the first thing I need to worry about. Thank you very much." And Fredson was as good as his word, and he got me an NDEA Title IV fellowship for twenty-five hundred bucks plus free tuition plus an allowance for housing and—

DONIN: Golly!

HATCH: He was as good as his word.

DONIN: So it was basically a free ride.

HATCH: Pretty much.

DONIN: Almost.

HATCH: Yeah. I had to borrow a little money. My parents were tapped out. But not much.

DONIN: That's—

HATCH: So Fredson kept his word.

DONIN: Yeah. And how was *that* experience?

HATCH: UVA was simultaneously a barrel of fun and totally fear-inducing.

DONIN: That first year especially.

HATCH: That didn't bother me. I got through my first year the way I'd been successful at Dartmouth, which was finding ways to be clever instead of ways to work hard.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: And I got permission to proceed, but I decided to drop out because I wasn't satisfied that I was doing things—doing it right or getting what I should, and I wanted to—so I taught in Connecticut for two years, in high school, where I met my bride-to-be. When she graduated, I started dating her, and 42 years later we are still married.

DONIN: That's wonderful.

HATCH: Yeah. Thank God somebody's earning money!

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: But anyway, that's—I found—and then, so after two years, I went back to UVA without as good a deal, some deal but

nowhere near as good a deal, though that, too, improved. It was very, very competitive.

DONIN: Even in a matter of a couple of years it had become more competitive.

HATCH: Well, it was competitive for financial aid. Once you're in, you're in.

DONIN: Right.

HATCH: And we've got permission to proceed. "Yeah, okay, you're here." But you were ranked as students for financial aid. Luckily, I ranked third in that group, so I got what there was to get. I also was the thirteenth and last person in my class to get a job.

DONIN: Is that right?

HATCH: Yep.

DONIN: Nineteen sixty--well, by then--

HATCH: Nineteen seventy-four.

DONIN: Gee.

HATCH: Yeah.

DONIN: Terrible.

HATCH: And that job was at the University of Cincinnati. It was a three-year terminal contract, so it terminated, and I looked at people clinging to "the profession" (quotations marks) by their fingertips and went and did something else, and I've had a very varied and interesting life.

DONIN: Mmm. So it doesn't speak well for Ph.D.s in English, does it?

HATCH: Sure doesn't.

DONIN: No.



HATCH: And, you know, I forgot—I used to be genuinely pretty expert in some areas, and I'm not now, but at least tags of poetry float through my head from time to time.

DONIN: Mm-hm.

HATCH: It's not always. But I learned how to work. That's what I learned at UVA.

DONIN: Work in terms of academic work?

HATCH: Sit down and grind through it and get that job done and do it systematically and play by the rules, as opposed to skirting the edges of it. And I learned how to do that.

DONIN: Mmm. So this love of English—was that with you before you got to Dartmouth?

HATCH: I was born with it.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Well, it was good you took advantage of it, then.

HATCH: Uncle's a biographer, father's a comic novelist and scriptwriter, grandmother wrote poetry for the *New York Sun*, first cousin has three novels out and a bunch of other things.

DONIN: It's definitely in the genes.

HATCH: It's there. We're all very word-oriented people.

DONIN: Mm-hm. So going back to your four years at Dartmouth, how did belonging to this community change you over those four years?

HATCH: In a number of ways. I gradually got to be a little more relaxed with myself, and I learned to pick friends because I enjoyed them and who they were individually rather than what group they belonged to, so I got okay with that. I didn't feel I was desolate for friends.

DONIN: Did you feel, when you got here, that you were desolate for friends?

- HATCH: Not really, because I had Sam, and I met Dennis Donahue the first night I was up here, and Dennis and I are still friends.
- DONIN: So it got better as you came—
- HATCH: It got better as it went along. Yeah, it did. But, again, I've always been self-reliant enough that friends are important but I can live without them, to an extent, like everybody else, you know? I'm not Robinson Crusoe.
- DONIN: Mm-hm. And how do you perceive that the Dartmouth community as you knew it then has changed to now?
- HATCH: Oh, my God!
- DONIN: And, you know, I'm not talking about coeducation. Obviously, all of that has taken place. But other ways that you've seen that it's changed.
- HATCH: There was a level of anti-intellectualism here that is no longer present. I've told you a little about that. But that was rampant. And that's not true today. These kids are proud of their minds and use 'em, and it's obvious in any conversation you have. And I say, "Yay!"
- DONIN: Well, yes. A number of presidents have made that part of their agenda.
- HATCH: Oh, they've succeeded. And—great! You know, I would have loved to have seen one of my kids go here.
- DONIN: They weren't interested.
- HATCH: Nope.
- DONIN: Fair enough.
- HATCH: Well, the older one is bipolar and can't. The younger one walked on a National Merit Scholarship from St. Olaf's but is now going to go to med school, so she's turned her life around.
- DONIN: She's found her way.

HATCH: Yeah. And she's payin' for it, so—

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: We can't. We had a window, and it closed.

DONIN: Right. Yeah. Well,—

HATCH: So Dartmouth itself has changed. For one thing, the physical landscape is much more dense, with all the buildings. I don't think that's a good thing. I think the more open space was probably better for the college in certain ways. I understand the necessity for it, but—

DONIN: How did its location in general impact you? I mean, did you grow up in the country, in the city?

HATCH: Yes, I grew up in the country, but—

DONIN: So you were comfortable here—

HATCH: I grew up in a place with a village green and surrounded by—with a Congregational church on one end of that green and an Episcopal on the other side of it, and elm trees all up and down. Yeah, this was—and white houses.

DONIN: This was like home.

HATCH: Hey! Yeah! And the regularity of the Greek revival, a style I liked.

DONIN: So this was not different for you.

HATCH: Oh, it was somewhat. This was an academical village.

DONIN: Right.

HATCH: And I loved the Hop.

DONIN: Yeah, and that was new when you were here.

HATCH: Brand new, yep.

DONIN: Right. Lots of good things going on there.

HATCH: Lot of activity.

DONIN: Lot of good things, and I think a focus for a lot of people who before didn't realize how much the arts could impact their life.

HATCH: That's true, too. And I was certainly one of those. I had no idea that in my later years I would be an artist. I had little exposure to music, and now I'm a very serious singer. You know, if I were here now, I would have been hanging out at the creative center all the time.

DONIN: Right.

HATCH: If I knew anything about myself now—because I told you, I was programmed for science.

DONIN: Yep, yep.

HATCH: [Chuckles.] Self-programmed, but programmed.

DONIN: Right. So you didn't discover that—your affinity for the arts—did that start here, or—

HATCH: No, that started afterwards.

DONIN: Afterwards, right.

HATCH: That started in grad school when I got working on the aesthetic movement era.

DONIN: Oh, yeah.

HATCH: You know, Edward Burne-Jones and Swinburne, Rossetti and all that gang.

DONIN: Some of that may have been developmental, too.

HATCH: I think so.

DONIN: In terms of discovering that piece of you.

HATCH: Well, and just physical developmental.

DONIN: That piece of you.

HATCH: Which hemisphere is doin' the work. But, you see, I've—many—one of the things that has helped me in life is that I can speaking engineering and science to ordinary folk and vice versa, so a lot of my jobs have involved translating between those two worlds. And I can do that. It's a gift.

DONIN: Both sides of the brain.

HATCH: So I can write technical stuff that reads very well and stuff that—you know, and vice versa.

DONIN: Mm-hm. That's great.

HATCH: Yeah, it is. It's a gift I had no idea, before I got into dealing with aesthetics, that I had. I knew I could write well, and I knew I got science (except for the math)—

DONIN: Right. [Chuckles.]

HATCH: But I didn't know that much of my life would be spent putting those two together.

DONIN: Yeah. So if you had to describe to your family or whomever, your friends, with your friends from Dartmouth—if you had to describe how you had changed over your four years here and what were the major causes of that change, what would you say?

HATCH: I would say that my appreciation of the outdoors, which had always been high, got higher. I mean, I used to love being up at four in the morning and going down fishing. Because I speak French, I took very few French courses and I saved them for when I really needed a gut course.

DONIN: Oh, yes. [Both chuckle.]

HATCH: I can remember bringing in a freshly-caught bass, wrapped in newspaper, to my 8 a.m. French 8 class and giving it to the professor.

DONIN: Fantastic. I hope he appreciated it.

HATCH: I have no idea if he did or not.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

HATCH: That was the week I got 13 hours of sleep for seven days straight.

DONIN: Ooh! Why?

HATCH: Mostly felt like it, and second, prepping for—

DONIN: Is this exam time?

HATCH: This was exam time, not just the course exams, but you had comprehensive exams. The English department was the last to let them go.

DONIN: They were still doing that then?

HATCH: Yep.

DONIN: Wow. Oof!

HATCH: We were, I think, the end of it. And I did very, very well on them, but I busted my ass getting ready.

DONIN: Mm-hm. Gee!

HATCH: Anyway, back to what did I learn from Dartmouth: I learned in disciplines other than the ones I concentrated on. I took a lot of history courses, I took some sociology courses, I took some psych courses, and I gained knowledge from all of those and realized I was really interested in that stuff. I also learned that: Don't take anything at 8 a.m., let alone German.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: I learned, to some extent, how to listen to people better. I learned better social skills as I went along, not that they were great, but I learned 'em better. And I was truly inspired by,

well, as I said, Henry Terrie, Peter Bien, John Rassias, whom I got to be friends with—

DONIN: Oh, yes. Right.

HATCH: John knows who I am [chuckles], on sight.

DONIN: Mmm. Great.

HATCH: For various reasons. Tom Vargish.

DONIN: Oh, yeah.

HATCH: He was influential on me. And Elmer [Mike?] Choukas whom I had no personal relationships with and whose course I hated but I sure learned some very key stuff from his course on propaganda, and you may not know, but he was head of the propaganda section of OSS in the war, so—

DONIN: Yes. He knew his stuff.

HATCH: This was the horse's mouth. Even if he sounded like the other end of the horse,—

DONIN: Mmm. [Chuckles.]

HATCH: —he knew what he was talking about. And I got a huge amount out of that because it enabled me to distinguish baloney from discourse (and I'm using polite language). And I have always had a good BS detector, but he gave me an intellectual foundation for it. That was a major and useful learning.

DONIN: A lifelong tool.

HATCH: Yeah, a lifelong tool. Does it pass these tests?

DONIN: Right, right. [Chuckles.]

And you also—you became engaged in the academic life significantly—

HATCH: Yes, I did.

DONIN: —since you went on to—

HATCH: Yeah, but I, again, was sort of following a natural fault line. I didn't know what I wanted to do, and here I was getting this free ride to one of the top schools. What the hell? And I—

DONIN: Buy yourself a few more years before you make up your mind.

HATCH: Well, see, you know, I love literature. I've always loved it, and I wanted to see where that would lead. And I like teaching. I've been a teacher much of my life, though much of it for adults and nothin' to do with English—well, except for business writing, which I wrote a book on and taught for years.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HATCH: Business writing for geeks, basically.

DONIN: Oh, yeah. Well, that's a skill.

HATCH: It is a skill that they sure need.

DONIN: Yeah. Especially geeks.

HATCH: But anyway, that was—those are the things that I got out of Dartmouth.

DONIN: That was a lot of learning. Lot of learning.

HATCH: And I learned respect for academics. I mean, I'd been soaking this stuff up at St. Mark's, because it was a place where you learned critical thinking skills. But I learned more respect for it as applicable across a lot of dimensions here at Dartmouth. And that was a useful learning.

DONIN: So you didn't fit the profile at all of sort of the—you know, the prep school, frat boy—

HATCH: No, not at all.

DONIN: Beer-drinking—



- HATCH: Beer-drinking, yes.
- DONIN: Beer-drinking, yes? Okay. Athlete or whatever.
- HATCH: No, and even skiing is a solo sport. I was not in the great skier league, but I was more than competent.
- But, no, I didn't fit it. And to this *day*, I don't feel like I belong in any of the core groups of the class. And that's probably me more than them, more than the folks, because I get along with people. I like my classmates. I love these reunions.
- DONIN: But this far out, are there still sort of core groups—
- HATCH: You bet.
- DONIN: —in a class?
- HATCH: Sure, there are.
- DONIN: Oh! In what sense?
- HATCH: There's the core group that raises money, the core group that gives money—
- DONIN: Oh, fair enough.
- HATCH: —the core group that is wired through national governance or top law, top art, which I'm edging into a little bit. That's why Roger and I wound up being friends, not because we were friends at Dartmouth but friends during reunions.
- DONIN: Yeah, that's great.
- HATCH: And he learned that I'm serious about it.
- DONIN: Yeah. That's a trend that we're seeing a lot of, that people discover classmates that they never had any contact with.
- HATCH: It happens every reunion! And it's great! These are terrific people!
- DONIN: Yeah, it is great.

HATCH: They have learned so much and mellowed so much, but the folks here are not dead from the neck up.

DONIN: Right.

HATCH: And I live in a world where the number of thinking people I deal with in any given month, you can count it on one hand, at least on the level that's the norm around here, and it makes it a delight—

DONIN: To be here.

HATCH: —to swim in that pool for a little bit. You know, I'm tearing up. It means a tremendous amount.

DONIN: Yeah. Well, you're not alone.

HATCH: We ain't dead yet, as my license plate says.

DONIN: Is that what—

HATCH: It says [spells] "NT DED YT."

DONIN: [Laughs.] That's great.

HATCH: I had it changed from "EH PHOTO" to that this year.

DONIN: Oh, "EH PHOTO"—oh, EH Photo. Are you a photographer?

HATCH: Yeah, that's what I do these days.

DONIN: Oh, I didn't know that.

HATCH: I write and I take pictures. I take pictures, and I fix pictures. I pay the bills with photo restoration,—

DONIN: Oh, interesting!

HATCH: —and I pay my soul with fine art and travel photography.

DONIN: We have to talk about that off the tape, too.

HATCH: I'll give you a card.

DONIN: Okay.

So just to wrap up here,—

HATCH: Yeah.

DONIN: I guess we've sort of wrapped up. I mean, what would you say about the impact that belonging to this Dartmouth community, this Dartmouth family, has had on you over the years?

HATCH: It has meant more with every passing year, not because I'm nostalgic but because I get reminded that there are a group of people out there whose roots I understand, whose language I can speak, even if I disagree with them politically—and half of them I do, and half of them I don't. I'm on the liberal side. But it is an extended family, and I feel connected to that family, and it's the only family I've got. I've got, you know, two adult kids. The relatives are pretty much all gone.

DONIN: Mm-hm.

HATCH: And we weren't all that close to begin with. And I've got a terrific wife and a nice dog, but that's it. And one overweight Maine coon cat.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

HATCH: But that's not enough.

DONIN: Well, this is the family you've chosen.

HATCH: Yeah!

DONIN: The family you've been given.

HATCH: Well, I was gifted with it.

DONIN: Yeah.

HATCH: You know, I wasn't making choices about going to college. I was given my choice of where, but I wasn't given my choice of if.

DONIN: Mm-hm.

HATCH: It was just an assumption, and I bought the assumptions.

DONIN: Lucky for you that you did.

HATCH: I tried to unbuy them and take a year off to ski bum, but I got nowhere.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

HATCH: Okay.

DONIN: Great.

HATCH: Is there anything else I can tell you?

DONIN: Nope, that's it. Wonderful. Hold on a second here. Let's turn these off.

**[End of interview.]**