

Dartmouth College Oral History Project  
The War Years at Dartmouth  
Interview with Raymond Truncellito '49  
By Mary Stelle Donin  
April 23, 2008

DONIN: How did you end up going to Dartmouth?

TRUNCELLITO: Actually I was going to Columbia. I had some friends who wanted me to go to Columbia, and I met the head football coach at Columbia who at that time was a gentleman by the name of Lew Little. And he introduced me to the head coach of the New York Giants. So at the ripe old age of 16 I'm over at John Jay Hall in New York City and I'm going to Columbia. Subsequent to that meeting, I bumped into a friend of the family who was a sports writer at one of the local newspapers. And he asked me where I was going to school. It was a basketball game, a big game. And I told him, well, I was probably going to Columbia. And he said, "Did you ever think about going to Dartmouth?" And I said, "No, I applied to Syracuse because the athletic director thought it would be a good idea. And I applied to Columbia, but I did not apply to Dartmouth. He said, "Well, I'd like you to meet a friend of mine who was formerly the athletic trainer at Princeton, who comes from the area; his name is Eddie Zanfrini, who happened to be an Olympic trainer. Outstanding! Way ahead of his peers in terms of knowledge of the human body. And he said, "Why don't you meet him and talk to him. And see perhaps you might be interested in Dartmouth." And I said, "Sure, why not? I'll be glad to do that." So he arranged for an interview up at his office, up at the paper, the newspaper. And we... Eddie was a very nice man. And he brought over some pictures of Hanover.

DONIN: [Laughs]

TRUNCELLITO: Well, I had this thing in my mind that if I was going to college—I lived in New York City; I lived in New Jersey, which was the same as New York City in those days. And I looked at college as being a rural atmosphere with lots of tranquility and not a lot of cars and so forth. And every picture that Eddie showed me was getting greener and greener and greener. So I said, "Yes, gee, this looks like a lovely place." So with other than seeing those pictures, I had never been to New Hampshire. Been to New York, New York City. Never New Hampshire. Ohio. Wesley. And I said I'll apply. And I did. And in those days if you were a pretty good student, you applied to three

schools, you know you're going to get accepted to three schools. I'm not that naïve to think I was that much of a genius.

DONIN: Well, was it also because you were a football star? Were you a football star in high school?

TRUNCELLITO: A little bit.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Well, the football certainly was not a problem. I was an all-county end in Hudson County, New Jersey. And we had a great team. [...] Anyway, that was the reason I went to Dartmouth. I was going to get as good an education at Dartmouth as I would at Columbia. And I wanted to have, like I say, that kind of environment to have my education in.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: It really wasn't to go up there and say, you know—if I made the football team, fine. But I didn't expect great things out of myself.

DONIN: Did the football coach know about you? Did he talk to you before you applied? The Dartmouth coach?

TRUNCELLITO: No. But Mr. Zanfrini did, Eddie Zanfrini did, who was the Dartmouth trainer at the time. He had moved from Princeton to Dartmouth. And that's the reason why he kind of interviewed me. So I'm sure he spoke to the coach who was Tess McLaughry at the time.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Right.

TRUNCELLITO: So things worked out fine.

DONIN: So what'd your family think of that, of you're going so far away?

TRUNCELLITO: I was a maverick in my family. [Laughs] At the time all this is happening, I'm not even 17 years old. My parents had a lot of confidence in my maturity. And they never really questioned. They would question that we had a conversation. But never to the extent...for example, even if I were going to Columbia, I was staying on campus at Columbia. I was not going to go across the Hudson River—no way. And, no, I wanted to have the full college experience.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: So, no, other than handling all the people from Columbia who called my mother up to ask me where was I?

DONIN: Whoops.

TRUNCELLITO: She said, "Ray, they keep calling me up." I said, "Well, just tell them where I am."

DONIN: Yes, yes. So you arrived there in the fall of—

TRUNCELLITO: No, no, no. Summer.

DONIN: Oh, summer!

TRUNCELLITO: We were the last class, to the best of my knowledge, which was matriculated by Ernest Hopkins.

DONIN: Right, right.

TRUNCELLITO: I can see him right today.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And that was the weekend of Fourth of July 1945.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: I graduated from high school June 19<sup>th</sup>. Two weeks later I'm in Hanover as a freshman.

DONIN: Of course. Because at that point they were still running year round. That was almost the end of it.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, yes, yes.

DONIN: So you were on campus then for like VJ-Day.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes.

DONIN: Wow.

TRUNCELLITO: Right. Lot of excitement, I can remember, on the Green.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And, Barbara, you were there at that time. You had not come in yet. You came in in August.

BARBARA: In August, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: I remember that.

DONIN: How exciting!

TRUNCELLITO: All the sailors and Marines.

DONIN: So they were still on campus training, the V-12 or V-5.

TRUNCELLITO: Right. V-12, V-5; I guess it was a V-5. One was, V-12 was Navy, I guess. They had all kinds of Vs. The Army was there. The Navy was there. The Marines were there. They were all there, and they all had their different nomenclature. Yes.

DONIN: Do you remember the day you arrived and what went through your head that day?

TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely. I said, what am I doing here? [Laughter]

DONIN: Did your family drive you up? Or you took a train?

TRUNCELLITO: We took a train. In those days there was still not a lot of gasoline hanging around.

DONIN: No, no.

TRUNCELLITO: We took the old Boston & Maine Railroad up from Grand Central Station in New York City.

DONIN: The Montrealer I think it was called, that train, wasn't it?

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, yes. They called it the Montrealer going north and the Washingtonian going south. Yes.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And I got off at White River Junction. Got on one of those fast buses and got to Hanover.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And my mother and father both came with me.

DONIN: Oh. Were you the oldest child to go to college?

TRUNCELLITO: No. Actually my older brother, who had World War II experience, he matriculated in college before I did.

DONIN: So it wasn't their first goodbye to a child going off to college.

TRUNCELLITO: No, that was really, unfortunately, for him anyway, he was more of a day student in an extension of Rutgers University.

DONIN: Oh, yes, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: That's where he went.

DONIN: So you were the first to go away.

TRUNCELLITO: I was the first one to leave, right.

DONIN: Oh boy.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, I remember my mother.

DONIN: She probably wasn't so happy I bet.

TRUCCELLITO: No.

DONIN: That's what all mother's are supposed to do.

TRUNCELLITO: That's right. [Laughter]

DONIN: So what was your dorm when you were a freshman?

TRUNCELLITO: Russell Sage, 309 Russell Sage. And what's interesting about that is Eddie Zanfrini tipped me off again. Eddie Zanfrini is quite an interesting— If you check the athletic annals of Eddie Zanfrini, he was a wonderful person. And he said, "Ray, the Marines are leaving Russell Sage. They're going to do the whole place over. I suggest

you go in there.” [Laughs] And I did. And a lot of the ‘49ers started there: Russell Sage, Butterfield.

DONIN: Right.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, right.

DONIN: And who were your—do you remember your roommates?

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, sure. Vail Haak was one of them.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: In fact he was the only one at 309 Russell Sage.

DONIN: So the two of you.

TRUNCELLITO: He and I, yes, were there.

DONIN: So July of 1945. So Ernest Martin Hopkins was getting ready to retire.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes.

DONIN: And I guess they’d already chosen John Dickey. I don’t know if they had announced it yet.

TRUNCELLITO: No. But I think, well, it was shortly thereafter. His name, John Sloan Dickey, came in there right in the fall of ‘45.

DONIN: Yes, yes. Did you have to—did you go up and he signed your matriculation card and shake your hand?

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, yes. I still have it. Absolutely.

DONIN: Oh, do you?

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, sure.

DONIN: Oh, cool. Yes. And so how was the adjustment to being away at college?

TRUNCELLITO: Very difficult. It was very difficult. It was probably the worst summer I ever had in my life.

DONIN: Oh.

TRUNCELLITO: And the reason for it was that we were practicing football early in the summer. That's the reason why I matriculated in July instead of in October. Because the season would have started in September, and I would have missed a few games early in the season. So I came in in July. And we practiced. In August we're practicing. And the other reason I was adjusting, academically it's an adjustment, just going from high school into college and you know. That was another thing. The other thing, it was a warm summer up there. Happened to be a warm summer. And the third thing was, you know, I'm 17 on August 19<sup>th</sup> of that year. And I am becoming acquainted with the Marines and Navy and older people with different social objectives. It was an entirely different— Plus I was working two hours a day for my meals.

DONIN: Yes. What were you, in the dining hall?

TRUNCELLITO: In the dining hall, DDA.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: The best dining hall going. God! I tell you, some of my real great classmates came from there.

DONIN: From—

TRUNCELLITO: From that experience.

DONIN: Oh, from working.

TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely. That was wonderful. Ray Rasenberger is another very contributing guy to our class. I don't know if you know Ray.

DONIN: I haven't done him yet.

TRUNCELLITO: But Ray's a wonderful person. He was my other roommate.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TRUNCELLITO: In fact, a little side— This is a little aside. I mentioned to... Somewhere along the line I was being interviewed. I happened to receive the Dartmouth Alumni Award a couple of years ago.

DONIN: Oh! Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And I said never did Vail Haak and Ray Rasenberger ever think that those two guys and myself, all three of us, would receive that award.

DONIN: Oh, that's wonderful.

TRUNCELLITO: Imagine that?

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: That was really strange.

DONIN: And it was just serendipity that the three of you ended up as roommates.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes. Ray came in after Vail. Vail decided to go to the Zeta house. Fraternities were just opening up. So I had a nice suite of rooms at Russell Sage. I didn't mind at all. It was terrific. [Laughter] And then about a year and a half—I guess I was at Russell Sage for a year and a half. And then I went to New Hampshire dorm. And Ray was at New Hampshire. I said, "Ray—" We used to work together at the DDA, Ray Rasenberger and I.

DONIN: How nice.

TRUNCELLITO: And he said, "Let's move together into New Hamp." I said okay. Because I had enjoyed Ray. And it was the beginning of a long-life friendship.

DONIN: So do you remember your coursework there as an undergrad?

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, sure. Absolutely. Which course? Every one of them. [Laughs]

DONIN: Had you already fixed on a major when you were starting?

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, a very interesting question. I had planned to go to Thayer School.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And therefore I was taking a lot of pre-engineering courses, notwithstanding Dartmouth's requirement for a core curriculum in social studies and you know that better than I do. I was going to go to Thayer. So after two and a half years of physics, chemistry, drafting, calculus, I was getting smothered. And I said, this is really not what I wanted to do. I really enjoyed being more in an open kind of occupation, profession, whatever. And I looked at myself in engineering as being kind of stuck in a room someplace drawing things.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: And I said, well, I have to graduate from Dartmouth. That's the first thing I have to do is graduate. I had made a little football dent. And I said, well, you know, I wouldn't mind coaching football someday. Why don't I get an education degree. And I had physics and history were my two minors.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TRUNCELLITO: Physics was a very weak minor—very weak. History was a very good minor.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And the three together... I remember I took more comprehensive exams trying to get through because this was a unique thing. This was kind of created. So I didn't care what I majored in really. I just wanted to get my bachelor's degree and go from there. So that's what I did. Fortunately, when I graduated, the coaches asked me to remain on the campus and be an assistant football coach.

DONIN: Oh! Perfect.

TRUNCELLITO: So I was 20 years old, I'd graduated. I said, "Well, where am I going to go?" Instead of going into high school coaching this would be a big jump. And I took the job. Then I matriculated at Columbia to get my master's degree.

DONIN: In teaching?

TRUNCELLITO: Education administration.

DONIN: Oh, yes, okay. Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Because I'm the kind of guy that, you know, if I'm in the Army, I want to be the general, you know. If I want to be in coaching, I'd probably would enjoy being the athletic director.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And that was a very good move. So it was speaking of two years of coaching. Then I got drafted because I was too young for World War II.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: I got drafted for the Korean War. Stayed in the service three years. Left the service and went back to Dartmouth. They wanted me back after that.

DONIN: Oh.

TRUNCELLITO: And I stayed there for another two years.

DONIN: Wow!

TRUNCELLITO: So I had four years of coaching at Dartmouth, but sandwiched with three years in the service.

DONIN: Yes, yes. So the thing that seems to distinguish the class of '49 is that, first of all they had these different dates when parts of the class finally matriculated.

TRUNCELLITO: Matriculated, right.

DONIN: You were in the early part in the summer of '45.

TRUNCELLITO: Kind of like in the middle. Kind of like in the middle.

DONIN: Then March of '46 they had another batch.

TRUNCELLITO: I think that was the last one.

DONIN: Yes. So there was summer, then there was fall of '45. And then the spring of '46.

TRUNCELLITO: There was spring of '45 also.

DONIN: Wow! So there were like four....

TRUNCELLITO: I think it's four maybe five matriculating dates, yes.

DONIN: Yes. And that was to accommodate, I assume, not only sports requirements like yours, but a lot of these veterans that were returning.

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, sure.

DONIN: And coming back.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, the sports was not a factor really. In my case it was just circumstances. But I think the other things you mentioned, the requirements of the service and so forth, the fact that the school was open 12 months of the year in those days. Which was pretty smart.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: Because when I went to Columbia, I thought, oh, gee, look at all this infrastructure sitting idly at Dartmouth in the summertime. Lot of material.

DONIN: Crazy.

TRUNCELLITO: And they were using it. They had summer session, intersession, all kinds of sessions. And that's really the way Dartmouth was during the war. They used the campus.

DONIN: Well, it was a survival technique because otherwise they weren't going to be able to keep those buildings open.

TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely.

DONIN: It was really good planning on the part of Hopkins.

TRUNCELLITO: Right.

DONIN: How was it for you? I mean you were one of these kids right out of high school, very young. And you alluded to this a minute ago. But your class was made up of this mishmash of young civilian kids right out of high school, 16, 17 years old. And then for instance Gil

[Nelson], whom I talked to this morning, my goodness he was a grown-up mature man returning from the horrors of terrible battles in the war: Battle of the Bulge and everything. And you're all sort of in the same classes and living in the same dorms. It must have been....

TRUNCELLITO: It was very unusual. It reminded me of a few events that I can recall: Standing in front of the inn, and some of these vets would go by and say, "Hi, Bob." I'd say hi. You know maybe on another day, somebody would say, "Hi, Larry." Hi. And they were confusing me with people—these were actual people who were on campus—whom they knew before the war.

DONIN: Oh.

TRUNCELLITO: And after three or four years, you know, you didn't see somebody...Yes. And there was one guy, a very nice fellow. His name was Larry Botnick. He was terrific. He was a football player, halfback. Terrific! And Larry...I can see where people, if they didn't know us, would think we might be....

DONIN: Get mixed up?

TRUNCELLITO: Yes. Might be. And he was married on campus, for example. Just to give you an idea of the difference in ages.

DONIN: Right, right.

TRUNCELLITO: He lived in Wigwam or someplace on campus. I was going to say I could see how that would happen.

DONIN: Now did you have to go through all this sort of freshman nonsense of wearing the beanie and carrying furniture and being nice to the—doing the work of the upperclassmen?

TRUNCELLITO: You know Mary, I was so busy, I came along, and so...I had something about me. I can remember one of the things on my 25<sup>th</sup>: What did Dartmouth do for you?

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Well, it made me grow physically and mature intellectually and I certainly matured socially because you had to in order to survive.

- DONIN: Yes, especially you because you were so young.
- TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely. I remember a couple of upperclassmen. I was coming out of the DDA. And they said, "Where's your beanie at?" I said, "Oh, I didn't get around to getting it." And the other one said, "Oh, are you so-and-so?" And I said, "Yeah." "Oh, okay. When you get a chance, get a beanie." They knew I was on the football team, and that carried a little weight. Don't ask me why. So I was excused from some of those things.
- DONIN: Because of your football prowess.
- TRUNCELLITO: Yes, yes. Although I didn't carry any furniture. I was too busy [Laughs] to carry.
- DONIN: And there was some kind of deal where you had to run the gauntlet?
- TRUNCELLITO: Oh, I did that.
- DONIN: Across the Green?
- TRUNCELLITO: Yes, I did that. I did that. They made me a guard. I was an end when I went to Dartmouth. After that, running through that gauntlet, I became a guard. [Laughter] That's a true story.
- DONIN: That's great.
- TRUNCELLITO: Yes. And I remember running through—that's nothing. And yes, right through. Start at the inn, right by the porch of the inn it was.
- DONIN: Were you intimidated by all these older military guys?
- TRUNCELLITO: No. I had... When you... At that time, you went out for football at Dartmouth, there were at least 150 people trying out for the team.
- DONIN: Wow.
- TRUNCELLITO: And that's without any exaggeration. In fact when I was coaching, we'd have well over a hundred players trying out for the freshman team.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: See, you have to understand in '45 freshmen were allowed to play varsity football. We played varsity football. We had no freshman team. If you didn't play varsity and you were getting some experience, you were on the junior varsity. So a varsity team, a junior varsity team. And we used to go back and forth. And we had two schedules. In '46 when the war is now over and they have a freshman team, they had a freshman A team, which had a schedule. They used to play all the college freshmen. They had a freshmen B team; they used to play all the prep schools. I was fortunate enough to make the varsity my freshman year.

DONIN: But clearly you were accorded more respect than most of the freshmen, it sounds like.

TRUNCELLITO: Well, probably. I suppose like any social entity, you get a little bit more. But nothing that I noticed, you know. I mean I did what everybody else did. It's pretty hard to practice football a couple of hours a day, work in the dining hall a couple of hours a day, do your homework, and try to keep up. That's why I said it was miserable. It was a tough... You know, I knew what I was doing every minute of the day. I had a 20-minute period in the morning; it was time to get the mail. I knew...I knew. And it was wonderful training really. Actually I was in school, some kind of school, from, it would have been my senior year in high school which would have been September of '44 all the way through June of '46.

DONIN: Because you went in the summer of '45.

TRUNCELLITO: And I just kept on going. I actually was on campus three and a half years to get my degree, and I wasn't even 21 yet when I finished. I mean, what's the rush? I was lucky that I could handle it. In the long run, it was very, very... It was a good investment in my future. I remember the coach saying, there was another player on our team who was a terrific football player. His name was Joe Sullivan. Joe passed away. Joe also became a coach. He coached at Georgetown University when he graduated. And he said, a coach who shall remain nameless, too bad we didn't have Joe and Ray another year. Because we were 20. I played against people 25.

DONIN: Yes, old guys.

TRUNCELLITO: I remember one Marine, we were practicing. We were both trying out for the same position. And he said to me, "How old are you?" And I said, "Well, I'm going to be 17 in August or something." And I

said, "How old are you?" And he said, "I'm 26, and I'm quitting."  
[Laughter]

DONIN: Practically ten years older!

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, yes. And you see their requirements were different. Those poor guys in the service, when they came back, I would've said the same thing. What am I doing out here? Going through all the things we did. Many of them were married, had children. They're trying to graduate and get a degree and get prepared for life. Me, I'm just a single guy barely with my nose dry. And the next year it really came— It was a very difficult year, in '46, for civilian football players. The next year, our sophomore year.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Because that year is when all the fellows who played at Dartmouth before the war, came back.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: You can just imagine. I mean we had some outstanding ball players. I mean they were—and they all came at one time. So where I managed to become second string guard my freshman year, on the varsity, the first string guard on the varsity at that time, he and I had to fight to become the third string guards on the same team our second year.

DONIN: Oh, wow.

TRUNCELLITO: You can see the competition was just huge.

DONIN: Yes, yes. How do you think the college...? How do you think they did in sort of mainstreaming this incredibly diverse group of kids that they had on campus, you know, between you youngsters who hadn't seen any war experience and then all these returning vets? Some of them were married, some of them were fathers already and yet they had to manage this whole crowd on this relatively small campus in a fairly intimate setting. You know, Hanover isn't like Columbia. You don't go out and find your life outside the campus. I'm sure there were challenges, not just in the classroom but socially. I assume these mature vets were looking for different sorts of activities and entertainment than you 17-year-olds who had just left home.

TRUNCELLITO: It was a challenge. I used to think about that and I've thought about this many many times because I am interested in education. It was a challenge to Dartmouth to provide an environment to satisfy the needs of that very diverse group. I mean when you have a downtown that consists of one street with three drugstores—

DONIN: Exactly.

TRUNCELLITO: So they did things like the SAE house was our house.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Freshmen. That's where we went to, SAE house.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TRUNCELLITO: That's where we used to hang out. That was kind of a place.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TRUNCELLITO: That was before the Commons.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: The Commons was just beginning. Things were just starting to roll.

DONIN: Back together again after...

TRUNCELLITO: And then C&G was... I don't think we were in C&G. C&G was one of my senior societies.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Right.

TRUNCELLITO: So I was a little familiar with that. But I don't think that played a very big role. So what have we got? We had a lot of intimacy. The fraternities played a very important role in the social life of the college at that time.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Because without the fraternities, there was absolutely—what was it?

DONIN: Nothing to do.

TRUNCELLITO: No. At that particular time. Gradually it got better and better. But Green Key and Vaughn Monroe and the big bands coming in with Winter Carnival and so forth. Actually I had no trouble. My needs were well satisfied, speaking for myself. Well, satisfied. I didn't need that much I guess.

DONIN: Well, you were so busy, who had time to socialize? You know we have an interview with John Dickey that he did after he retired. And he talked about the sort of pressure to provide different activities for the older guys, for the vets.

TRUNCELLITO: Right.

DONIN: I gather he—I don't know whether it was '46 or '47—he opened a, they opened, sort of a pub in the basement of—

TRUNCELLITO: Commons.

DONIN: The Commons where the veterans could go hang out and get beer and be with themselves rather than.... I guess some of them found the fraternities not to their liking just because the guys were too young.

TRUNCELLITO: Probably. You know, like I say, when you have a little bit of notoriety, whether it's deserving or not you have it, I had no problems with fraternities. I could have joined any—I shouldn't say that. But I had a lot of opportunities to join fraternities. And whenever there was a weekend with fraternities, you're welcomed in every house. I had friends all over the campus.

[Pause to change audiocassette.]

DONIN: Okay. So you had no problems because you had opportunities to be in all these fraternities.

TRUNCELLITO: I suppose. I suppose. And a lot of good friends. And they weren't all football players. Just friends in classes and so forth. And I enjoyed myself. I really, really enjoyed myself.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes.

- DONIN: So who were some of the memorable teachers that you remember, professors?
- TRUNCELLITO: Well, of course everybody remembers Lou Stillwell; he used to teach Cowboys and Indians.
- DONIN: Right, right.
- TRUNCELLITO: And then the other gentleman who was fantastic; he taught American history. He was very good. I enjoyed him very much. What was his name? Isn't that awful? His name is Foley, Professor Foley.
- DONIN: Oh, Al Foley.
- TRUNCELLITO: He used to live in in Nashua.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.
- TRUNCELLITO: And he was a nice guy, a real nice guy. And we saw him many times after we graduated. He'd come back at the—outside the Sphinx where we'd all be parking there after football games.
- DONIN: Yes.
- TRUNCELLITO: Very nice man.
- DONIN: Yes.
- TRUNCELLITO: He taught me a couple of things. One of the things he taught me, which is not an issue because it's true, and this is "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." [Laughter]
- DONIN: Right.
- TRUNCELLITO: To me as a young kid, 17, that was quite an impressive remark. Oh, yes, I see what he means, you know. But he was very good. I found most of my professors were really, where I had a great relationship, was in the history department—in the history department. Although I remember Louis Benezet. He was in education. He was the former superintendent of schools in Manchester, NH which I obviously didn't know at that time. I had him. He was an interesting guy. We had some good chemistry teachers. I enjoyed sciences.

But the problem with me was when I was in high school, my aptitude or interests, let's put it that way, was a straight line, I liked everything. I'm like a kid in a candy shop.

BARBARA: What about your German professor.

TRUNCELLITO: Old Schlossmacher.

DONIN: Oh, Schlossmacher.

TRUNCELLITO: Stephan Johann Schlossmacher. Meine Deutsche Lehrer. He was my German teacher.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: He was terrific.

DONIN: He's not the guy that used to have.... There was a German Club where they sang songs?

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, yes. Jawohl. Der Deutsche Verein.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Poor Barbara. He would invite people, some dignitary, from Boston out of the consulate down there. And we'd have a party at the inn. The menu was in German. Everybody there was German—or had some relationship with the German language.

DONIN: Right.

TRUNCELLITO: Except two people: my wife and.... At that time, we were not married, right?

BARBARA: We were married.

TRUNCELLITO: Oh were we? Well, I guess that was our experience after. But the same thing happened during, while we were single. And we had wir sprechen die Deutsch, wir singen die Deutsch, wir lesen die Deutsch. We had to sing. It was a three-hour course. And if you didn't spend ten hours a week in German, you wouldn't pass. He was wonderful. He was wonderful. He gave me a terrific start into the language.

DONIN: Oh, that's great. That's great. Now had Dickey started the Great Issues course while you were there?

TRUNCELLITO: He'd just started it my last semester. You know like I said, I was way too far ahead of myself. And I finished my requirements in January of '49, academic requirements. And he started the program in the fall of '48.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: So for us who had one semester left, it was optional. And it just didn't make sense. I kind of felt disjointed in the middle. But no question it had to be one of the greatest courses that the college has ever created.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: Wonderful. I mean one of the things I say that if I'm on any search committee for anybody in education, I say, how do you establish intellectual curiosity on campus? How do you do that? Because education is a continuous event. And that's what that was. It was the beginning, it was the germ of a wonderful, wonderful reminder of every day you learn something if you can see it. Yes. That was a very very good course. Ray Rasenberger who we mentioned earlier, he was involved with that course. In fact, I think he actually worked in that department before he went to Syracuse, before he became an attorney.

DONIN: And Dickey had access to so many amazing statesmen and scholars.

TRUNCELLITO: Oh! Absolutely.

DONIN: I guess from his connections at the State Department.

TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely.

DONIN: He brought remarkable people to campus.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, yes. I think even at our graduation, we had.... I can remember one of the dignitaries was a senator from Michigan named Vandenburg. Now you don't remember those things anymore. But he brought a lot of people on campus.

DONIN: Did your class make distinctions between those that were regular undergrads like you one and those that were veterans returning, in terms of...? I'm trying to get at the whole idea of the class identity thing. Did people sort of make distinctions between one another? Or was there a good sense of class unity now that the war was over and everybody was coming back? You don't remember that?

TRUNCELLITO: I don't remember that at all. I never... If I enjoyed somebody's company, I didn't ask too many questions about what he did, where he came from. I'm sure that some people did. But Dartmouth was an easy place. I found Dartmouth to be a very democratic college. Democratic in the sense that there were some people, as you would expect, in the class and other classes who came from families with greater financial strength.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Who had more than... The college experience, their fathers, grandfathers, and so forth. And I found that those people were more democratic in their thinking than some other people who were on the campus and thought that they were different than anybody else. If anybody thought he was different than anybody else, I didn't associate with him anyway. I wasn't interested in that person.

DONIN: Right, right.

TRUNCELLITO: I figured he was lucky to be associated with me. [Laughs] That person. The other guy, there was a mutual respect. It was wonderful. So I never felt that way, never felt put down or anything. I mean here I was, I was kidding in the class one time, in the class I happened to go through the chairs like a lot of people in the class. You spoke of other class of '49 presidents. So you go to things. I remember giving a talk about... We have a Pickaxe Award. And at the time I said, you know, you think you fellows had trouble adjusting? Here I am coming from a pure Italian environment. Pure. I mean the food was pure Italian. And I'm adjusting up here and eating Harvard beets, Welsh rarebit. If you don't think that was an adjustment. You know. And of course they laughed.

DONIN: They liked that.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes. Because that was really true. That was really true.

- DONIN: The interesting thing... One of the themes it seems to be emerging from these interviews is that despite the fact that some of the students came in with very, as you alluded to, the socioeconomic difference was far greater than any other difference and yet everybody sort of... That didn't seem to make any difference. After the war was over, a lot of people had no money whatsoever.
- TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely. The GI Bill did a wonderful thing to level the grounds. Wonderful! A lot of fellows who never would have gotten an education, for whatever reason, if it wasn't for the GI Bill. One of the reasons being money. But the GI Bill was a wonderful common denominator. I even used the GI Bill myself at Columbia. I had three years I could use and it helped me get my masters degree.
- DONIN: That was distinctive just at Dartmouth.
- TRUNCELLITO: No. Absolutely.
- DONIN: But it changed... As you say, it leveled the playing field for a lot of students who otherwise might have felt some of the imbalance between the haves and the have-nots. A lot of these guys talk about the fact that they literally came back from the war and continued having to wear their uniforms because that was the best set of clothing they owned.
- TRUNCELLITO: I used to wear... My brother was in the Signal Corps. He had a wonderful jacket. It was a terrific... Joe. It was a wonderful jacket. It was like a three-quarter length and it had a watery colored material and it had a big high collar. Hey, Joe, I can use that. Hanover get chilly in the winter. And I was not a serviceman but I certainly... That's what you saw then.
- DONIN: They made much better... The quality of the clothing the military made was far better than what most people could afford to buy.
- TRUNCELLITO: Absolutely. Looking back, I did not realize how many outstanding service people we had in the class.
- DONIN: Yes.
- TRUNCELLITO: We had some people... I mean, boy, you never would have known it. Guys like Ted Krug. Ted was a classmate, older, much older than I am – probably one of the oldest in the class – who was a Marine

pilot ace. All kinds of people like that. You really have to respect those people.

DONIN: Did you find that either in the classroom or socially, that they were respected in a different way because of their military experiences?

TRUNCELLITO: They might have been. But like I say, I...

DONIN: You didn't notice.

TRUNCELLITO: I didn't notice anything like that.

DONIN: Right.

TRUNCELLITO: Maybe I was walking around with my eyes shut. But I did not notice anything like that.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: The only thing that you noticed were the individual who was a little bit out of the ordinary but in a negative way.

DONIN: Oh, dear.

TRUNCELLITO: And there weren't that many of those people.

DONIN: Right.

TRUNCELLITO: So everything was kind of very, very comfortable.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: Very nice. No trouble.

DONIN: And of course, when you got back, they were bringing back all the...the traditions. You know, Homecoming came back, and Winter Carnival came back.

TRUNCELLITO: Right.

DONIN: Now before you met Barbara, did you have opportunities to do all the, you know, the road trips to visit the ladies' colleges and stuff?

TRUNCELLITO: I did some of that. I did some of that. But again, you know, when do you do those things?

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: You do those things during the football season.

DONIN: Oh.

TRUNCELLITO: I'm in New Haven. I'm in Princeton. [Laughs] I'm at Columbia. I'm at Syracuse. You know you're really.... As an athlete, I can recall one time my freshman year—like I mentioned, I was an end.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TRUNCELLITO: I was ok. I was an end. And a week before the Holy Cross game, which was the first game of the season, varsity game, the coach told me that he's going to make me a guard. Well, I mean, that was a tough... That as an adjustment to me. I mean a mental adjustment, you know. That's the thing I remembered most during my life at Dartmouth: is how things changed, and you had to adjust to that change. And because you did, you became stronger as an individual. So I didn't like that at all. They knew I didn't like that. So the same day that...because how am I going to learn the guard position in a week to play, to get in the Holy Cross game if I ever get in. I'll never get into that game. So what they did was they had already booked a game with Middlebury's varsity. Same day as Holy Cross. Like I say, there's the varsity, and there's the junior varsity. And so they made me captain of the junior varsity.

DONIN: Oh.

TRUNCELLITO: To go out and play Middlebury's varsity.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Well, that was a feather in my cap. I mean here I was like 17 last week, you know. Now I'm the captain of the junior varsity. I said, well, they must think something about me. It gave me—It was great thinking on their part. So I had a friend who was going to Green Mountain College. And since we went up to Middlebury, I got in touch with him and said, "On the way back from the game, I'll stop in and see you." Well, we went to—We had the game. And the game's over. And on the way back... I'd previously asked the bus

driver to let me know when we were near Green Mountain because we had to swing over to Route 4 to go through Woodstock that way. When we got to that intersection, I said, just keep going. [Laughs] I was so tired.

DONIN: Yes, you just....

TRUNCELLITO: I mean you played the whole game. In those days we played both ways. It's not like today, where you're so specialized. We did everything. I was so tired. We just kept on going.

DONIN: You didn't have the energy.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes. So that happened a lot of the times.

DONIN: So you really had a different experience. Being a varsity athlete really is another fulltime job.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes. But it really worked well. I don't like to speak about football, all this football. But that freshman year, when you think of this: 17 in August of 1945, the first college game of any kind I played in was captain of the JVs against Middlebury. Next game I'm on the traveling team; I make the traveling team on the varsity. You know in those days, that was something else. I'm down in Pennsylvania on the traveling team. I didn't get into the game. But I was down there on the traveling team. In fact after the game, one of the local—he was a graduate from Dartmouth; he was a doctor from the area that I was raised in. He noticed me. He said, "Ray! You're down here on the squad!" I said, "Yes, but I didn't play." He said, "What do you mean you didn't play? You're on the squad, you're down here!" To him it was a great achievement. And to me it was, you know, I couldn't appreciate it that way. And the next week we're on the field at Notre Dame.

DONIN: Oh, my God! That's a lot of road time.

TRUNCELLITO: That's right. We used to have Pullman trains.

DONIN: Oh.

TRUNCELLITO: Took us a couple of days to get to South Bend.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And had another experience there. Where I met the captain of my high school football team was at Notre Dame. And he was about five times better football player than I was in high school. He was a terrific player—terrific player! He went to Notre Dame. But he did not have a good experience because he was... The emphasis there was Notre Dame, football, and so forth. He had trouble making the squad and everything. And he ultimately had to leave Notre Dame which was.... See, that wouldn't have happened at Dartmouth.

DONIN: No.

TRUNCELLITO: At Dartmouth, if you didn't make the football team, so, you didn't make it. Go play basketball someplace.

DONIN: Right.

TRUNCELLITO: You know. And so we were up there warming up in South Bend. His name was Frank, and he said, "Ray, how're you doing? Good to see you." So we just shared our experiences and so forth.

DONIN: Stories. Right.

TRUNCELLITO: But I mean he had Notre Dame. The next week I'm back on the junior varsity again playing against Amherst's varsity.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TRUNCELLITO: And we clobbered them. I mean we really—and I personally had a very, very good day.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: So what happens is that same day the varsity's playing Syracuse, and the first string guard got hurt.

DONIN: Oh, there's your chance.

TRUNCELLITO: Monday I'm the first string guard.

DONIN: Oh, my!

TRUNCELLITO: Imagine that! And who are we playing? We're playing Yale the next Saturday.

DONIN: Whoa!

TRUNCELLITO: This is my life. So we played Yale. I'm working with the varsity, first string, all week long. And then the guy that I replaced was a terrific... He was a Marine. A wonderful person who was a great singer; he was a tenor. He used to sing in the church on Sundays. His name was Jim Biggie. A nice guy. So he started the game. He should have started the game and he did. But after about maybe four minutes, he hurt his ankle again. The coach calls up, "Ray!" And my friends say, Ray, he's calling you! So I stumble down the stands at Yale, New Haven, and I'm playing in the game, 40 minutes against Yale.

DONIN: Amazing experience.

TRUNCELLITO: Yeah, and that... Those days, you did those things and you survived. So I have a very...

DONIN: You had a very special, unusual experience.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes. And all it did was it made me mature. [Laughter] It really did.

DONIN: Now did you have any interactions with—Did Dickey come and watch the games?

TRUNCELLITO: All the time. All the time.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TRUNCELLITO: He used to love to come with his dog to the game. And to the practice. He was there all the time.

DONIN: Oh, that's nice.

TRUNCELLITO: Wonderful man. He'd have a lot of private conversations with the players.

DONIN: Oh, nice.

TRUNCELLITO: Lots of. In fact we used to... We visited his house, the whole squad did. I forget which year it was. A party, a regular party up there. The coaches and the players. Not just the players.

DONIN: Wow.

TRUNCELLITO: And I can remember he said, I mentioned—Barbara's heard me say it so many times because it's so true—we had a football dinner; my senior year this was. And he said, "A lot of you people will be leaving." I'm paraphrasing, of course. "You'll leave the campus, and you're going to go back to your communities and become leaders in your communities." And I said to myself, ok.

DONIN: He's right.

TRUNCELLITO: Yes, you do. Good or bad, whatever you do, you do. He was a wonderful person. John Sloan Dickey.

DONIN: He was so eloquent. Reading his speeches. Still gives me goose bumps.

TRUNCELLITO: He was a terrific guy. A terrific man. The thing that I'd like to say, though, if this gets a little bit of a... I don't know where this will be going, this conversation. But people do not understand the fact that the football in the '40s was at the highest level you could play in the country.

DONIN: That's what I gather. Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: They just don't understand that.

DONIN: Yes.

TRUNCELLITO: I mean we, Dartmouth, in 1948, after the '48 season, we lost to Cornell—I can still taste the game—by one point up at Ithaca. It was 26 to 25 and the game was over. I'll never forget it. And Pennsylvania; we lost to Pennsylvania who should have beaten us. We should have beaten Cornell. Pennsylvania should have beaten us, and they did. First game of the season. They were prepared; we were not as prepared as they were. And then Cornell proceeds to beat Pennsylvania. That gives you an idea of the parity. Well, Pennsylvania and Cornell were ranked ahead of us in the country. And we were like 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> in the country. Can you imagine that?

DONIN: That's huge.

TRUNCELLITO: I mean you take Notre Dame who at that time had a monopoly because there were less restrictions on some of these scholarships you could give. The Ivy League gave the same scholarships they

give today, financial need. Technically they give no scholarships of any kind. And you had the big ten. Some of us, three of us, John Jenkins who played with the Baltimore Colts when we graduated.

DONIN: Is that right?

TRUNCELLITO: Oh absolutely. He was left tackle right there and I was right here. He was a terrific football player. He and I and a fellow named Connie Pensavalle who was a quarterback who worked with John Clayton at that time. John Clayton was just coming into his own on our team. We all played in the Blue/Gray game in Montgomery, Alabama.

DONIN: Blue/Gray means...?

TRUNCELLITO: Blue/Gray, north/south, Blue/Gray, Confederates and the Yanks.

DONIN: Oh yes.

TRUNCELLITO: Jefferson Davis Hotel, you know. We three played down there. Joe Sullivan, who like I say, he got the Bulger Lowe trophy for being the outstanding player in New England. He was an outstanding player. He and Armstrong played in the East West game which was a bigger game that same year. Then the next fall Armstrong and Sullivan and myself, we were on the Eastern All-Star team who played the New York Giants.

DONIN: Oh, my gosh!

TRUNCELLITO: And we beat the Giants.

DONIN: Did you?!

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, sure. Oh, absolutely.

DONIN: Fantastic!

TRUNCELLITO: Sure. And that team consisted of primarily Ivy League players. And Army and Navy. BC might have been represented. I was a substitute on that team. Don't misunderstand me. [Laughs]

DONIN: So those were your glory days weren't they? Not you. Those were Dartmouth's glory days in football.

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, absolutely.

DONIN: What about the famous... Was it 1944 when they were so fantastic. What about the game... Forgive me, I don't know anything about football. But something about the fifth down game against Cornell?

TRUNCELLITO: That was before me. Lou Young was the captain of the team. And what happened was Cornell... It was against Cornell and the referees gave Cornell an extra down and because of that extra down, they scored a touchdown and they beat Dartmouth. The following Monday in reviewing the tapes, the president of Cornell called up Dartmouth and says, you won, we didn't. And it was very... It was a terrific example of the way football should be treated.

DONIN: Yes, indeed.

TRUNCELLITO: That was before me. The interesting thing about that though is that I played with two of Lou's brothers. There was Stu Young and Jack Young. Stu was class of '50; a terrific guard. He was a right guard on that team. And Jack Young was class of '47. So there were three brothers that went to Dartmouth who all played football. And their father was the head coach of Pennsylvania.

DONIN: This is a perfect example of how history helps you understand the present because people from outside Dartmouth often say, when they learn that we work at Dartmouth, they say what's with Dartmouth and its obsession with football? And this is why. It makes sense.

TRUNCELLITO: I feel sorry because it was a great spectator sport in those days. It was a great.... I'm not too sure it is today.

DONIN: Right, right.

TRUNCELLITO: People are just too busy doing other things. But they don't, the public did not realize what a terrific medium in which to grow. Oh, gee, the things we had to do.

DONIN: Well, you learn life's lessons in these situations.

TRUNCELLITO: Oh, boy, they were all over the place. What helped me with football was when I was in the Army. Football has always been part of my life. And good or bad, I had some success and I also had some

anything. Don't let anybody kid anybody. When I was in the Army I had... I enlisted, but I won't get into all the details. I enlisted for three... I was drafted, and then I enlisted for three years because I wanted to be an officer. Some of the guys who were in World War II probably would think I was nuts. But that was me, and I was going to be an officer. So waiting to go to OCS, the fellow who used to be the quarterback at UNH knew I was on the campus of Fort Dix, New Jersey. He says, "Ray, I'd like to have you come in and be—come in my company." He was a captain! I was a private. I said, "How am I going to do that? I'm going to OCS." He said, "Yes, but you have to wait to get in and all that stuff." Okay, that started it off. That's when my football experience started, in the Army. So he was the backfield coach, I was the line coach. I could play, he could not play because he was an officer. I had a terrific playing thing. As a result of that, I get into OCS like that. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh!

TRUNCELLITO: I mean like that. Interviewed and here we go. But again, football was wonderful, it was a tremendous help.

**[End of Interview]**