

Dennis L. Brown  
Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World  
May 1, 2013

DONIN: Today is Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. My name is Mary Donin, and we are here in Rauner Library with Dennis L. Brown, who currently is a—tell me your title.

BROWN: Circ/Res Services Assistant, I believe is my title.

DONIN: Circulation Reserves Assistant.

BROWN: Assistant at Baker-[Berry] Library.

DONIN: Baker-Berry. So, Dennis, you are part of the Dartmouth community, and we would like to know first how it is you ended up as an employee here at Dartmouth. I know you've had several different jobs since you've been here. So tell us, first of all, when you started working at Dartmouth and how you came to have the first job that you had.

BROWN: I had applied here several times for employment. I'm from the area. I'm a native from White River Junction and had been at the college for different events over the years and kind of really liked it here and really wanted to come and work here. I had applied several times, and then finally I had applied at Safety & Security. And I didn't hear anything back, and then a friend of mine that I knew that left where I was working at a car dealer in the area, that worked up here at Security—I told him that I never heard back, and he said, "Geez, we really—we're looking for people. We really need somebody and I'll tell them you're interested." And at that time, I got an interview and ultimately the job as a dispatcher at Safety & Security in 2002.

DONIN: Two thousand two. And what had you been doing before? You'd been in a car dealership.

BROWN: Yeah. My work life consists of family business to start with, from the time I was able to turn wrenches. I grew up in the outdoor power equipment business up towards Quechee, a business called Charlie Brown's. Still there today, under

different ownership. So I'd worked there all through high school, and my main purpose in life at that time was to put the new stuff together that came in. Snow blowers, which were so new to everyone back then, came in a box, and the handles and so forth had to be put on 'em, and so that's what I did.

We actually were in that business at a good time. The market had just come out with snow blowers, basically, and it hadn't been saturated like it is today. So mowers and snow blowers were relatively new, and so it was a good time to be in that business.

So I worked there through high school, and then I stayed on there ten years after I was out of high school full time. Had a family falling-out, so I moved on to the car dealer, where I worked there for 14 years, and then up to here.

During that time, I was also in the Army Reserve, and then I moved from that to Army National Guard and did a tour at Desert Storm in 1990-'91.

DONIN: Wow! Well, that must have given you good training to be a Safety & Security officer here.

BROWN: It really did help, yeah, the discipline and wearing the uniform and some security things. Yeah, that was a big help.

DONIN: Mm-hm. So you started here at Safety & Security in 2002. Was Harry Kinne the boss at that point?

BROWN: No, Bob McEwen was here when I started, as a proctor.

DONIN: Yeah, they call him "the proctor."

BROWN: College proctor, yeah.

DONIN: College proctor. And that means he's the sort of chief of police?

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And then Bob McEwen retired, right?

BROWN: Yeah. I was there probably—somewhere near a year and a half, I think. And then Harry took over. And about that same time, I was the first person that Harry had hired. I moved from dispatch to becoming a patrol officer, and I was the first person that was actually hired. You have to go through a process, even though you're there. And so I think I was his first person that was hired.

DONIN: As a patrol officer.

BROWN: Anybody for S&S, you know, when he got there.

DONIN: Yeah. Huh! Great!

So tell us, what was your experience with sort of learning, once you became an employee here—what did you learn about the culture of Dartmouth, what the place was like? I mean, were you surprised by anything that you learned first as a dispatcher and then as a patrol officer?

BROWN: Yeah. That's a good question. I learned so much over at Safety & Security about different student needs and family needs and crises and—geez, the list could go on and on. You know, I dealt with everything from unlocking doors to saving lives.

And when I was dispatching, I had a young female call me once, and it was beginning of freshman term. Her car broke down, and she was crying on the phone, saying, "I'm gonna be late, I'm gonna be late." And she said, "Geez, this is the worst day of my life." And that was *her* crisis at the time, but it just—I thought to myself as I was listening to her—of course, this is very important to her, but at the same time, I'm thinking, *If that's the worst day in your life, things aren't too bad.*

DONIN: Right. Truly. A reflection of her young age, among other things.

BROWN: Yes.

DONIN: Yeah.

So did you—I mean, your focus was obviously the students, but you must have interacted with other members of the community, whether it's staff or—

BROWN: Staff.

DONIN: —faculty?

BROWN: Yeah, everybody: citizens, visitors, of course staff, faculty, students, employees, union employees, all employees. Yup. I responded to I believe it was a faculty member over at Reed Hall one night that had drove her bike—it was dark over there, and she went into, like, a—oh, it's like a bulkhead thing that goes down underneath Reed, that she crashed and went down into and got all banged up.

DONIN: Oh, dear!

BROWN: I took her to the hospital and dropped her off there, and then went back, and then I investigated where—'cause it was so dark. I discovered there was a light out, so I made arrangements to get that fixed. And then things were kind of quiet, so me and a fellow officer took her bike, and her chain fell off when she went over into this ditch kind of thing, concrete thing. And we straightened out her chain and bent her handles back, and I got her bike all fixed up for her, anyways. Or we did. And so when she got back, I let her know about that, that I'd fixed the light and reported all this. And she was very grateful. And that's the kind of service that we try to do over there.

DONIN: Your skill with small machinery and fixing things came in handy.

BROWN: It did. [Laughs.]

DONIN: I bet more than once.

BROWN: Yeah. Certainly did.

DONIN: Yeah. And did you see your job as one of—you know, was it primarily protecting people from harm or was it educating them about sort of—you know, what's allowed and what's not allowed? You know, there are a lot of different ways to

look at the kind of work that you do. It seems to be multifaceted. You're not only—it's not just safety and security, it's sort of being available to do everything.

BROWN: Yeah. I mean, at Security we have a thing where we respond to every call. It can be unlocking a door or a skunk in the building or somebody intoxicated. We respond to every call. It doesn't matter who's there: faculty, citizens or whatever, students.

And so—another thing to keep in mind is that, especially during the evenings, there's not many around, and so if there's something goes wrong, it's basically Safety & Security and the troubleshooters and some custodians. And that's all you've really got here in the evenings.

So back when I first started at Security, we hadn't been unionized yet, and things are different now because I believe they have to have minimum two officers and a supervisor on. But when I was running around here at nights, it was before union. And I had a partner, a female who had trained me and was totally awesome, but she had lupus, and also during that time she had a child, so she was out a lot, and so this left me alone here, running around here at night by myself often. So it's a pretty big campus. You know, you get a couple of fire alarms going and an intox and have to run out to DHMC or whatever, and you can be very busy. You have to prioritize.

DONIN: I'll say. And did you also have to sort of be patrolling the buildings as well? Were you purely responding to the calls?

BROWN: Yeah. At Security we've got dispatchers, patrol officers, night security and investigators and then some supervisors besides that. And so the security guards pretty much do the buildings, so I didn't do that necessarily, unless I was called to go in one for unlocking a door or if there was a call for an alarm or whatever it might be, taking place. So I didn't necessarily patrol the buildings at that time. I was mobile in a vehicle or on foot patrol, providing transports for students that were concerned about safety, medical issues. Again, anything that came up, we responded to.

One of my vivid memories, I guess I'll call it: I had gone out early in my shift one night to a vagrant that was in McCulloch

Hall, and I went over there, and this was a young fellow, and so I talked with him, and I said, “Hey, are you a student here?” And he says, “Yeah, I am.” I said, “Well, why aren’t you in your room?” He had his sleeping bag all out and duffel bag and so forth, in this common room. And so I said, “Why aren’t you in your room?” He says, “Well,”—the story went on, ‘til I really get to the bottom of it, for, like, 45 minutes. But come to find out this student was in crisis.

DONIN: Oh.

BROWN: He wasn’t doing well academically. His parents were coming down on him hard. I think it’s a case where he really didn’t want to be here, but his parents shoved him into it. And so he had been in his room, taking two-liter soda bottles and pounding them on the floor until they exploded. His room was sugar coated, uninhabitable. And so that’s why he moved down into the common room. [Chuckles.]

But I dealt with some psychological issues along the way I found very interesting, and that was one that I really remember, where we—again, I got him some help over at Dick’s House, some counselors, and hopefully that got a lot better for him.

DONIN: So you must have had a lot of interactions with Dick’s House.

BROWN: Lots of interactions with Dick’s House, yup.

DONIN: So is it fair to say, because—this is not an original thought; I read it, I think, in *The D*—that there are two different Dartmouths here. There’s Dartmouth during the day, and then there’s Dartmouth at night. And it’s almost sort of what you were alluding to—

BROWN: [Laughs.]

DONIN: —about, you know, everything’s different at night here.

BROWN: Yeah. The folks I work with at Security—the day shift jobs are much different than the evening ones. Of course, during the day you don’t usually deal with that many intox issues, inebriates and that sort of things. During the day, they

respond to alarms and do some transports, especially for special-needs people and that sort of thing. But it is much different at night. You have the parties and social events, and Wednesday night is house meeting night, and then Friday and Saturdays are always busy party nights, and any other excuse [chuckles] to have a party is party night.

DONIN: Yep. And plus, as you said, there's nobody on campus. I mean, the faculty's all gone away. The staff's all gone away.

BROWN: Right. Right.

DONIN: So it's really you and the students.

BROWN: Pretty much.

DONIN: Yeah.

BROWN: I talk to students. I'd be there on foot patrol or whatever, and more than once I found somebody that was, like, sitting down crying, and I'd go over and talk to them, and some of 'em were purely homesick. I talked to one female one time that—I forget how I started this with her, but she was crying, and I talked to her, and she told me how she was laughing and having fun with her friends but in the inside she was crying and missed home terribly. And we talked for an hour. I was lucky 'cause I didn't have any other calls, so I was able to spend time with her.

And so there was a lot of that. I consider Security to be pretty much, in many cases—this is a big thing. I'm not sure everybody realizes this, but we're surrogate parents in many cases. We're all they've got.

DONIN: Especially in the night.

BROWN: Especially at night.

DONIN: And they probably don't—as this student alluded to, they feel they have to keep their face—you know, their brave face during the day—

BROWN: Sure. Mm-hm.

DONIN: But at night it all falls away.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: And do you wonder why they don't feel that they can go to their friends or to, say, their dorm supervisor or whomever?

BROWN: Yeah. I actually sat in a couple of talks where kids were kind of in crisis with something going on at their community director's office, and learned a lot from the community directors on how they handle things. And later on, when I didn't have the luxury of having community directors, I used some of that skill that they had that I saw when I was talking to kids.

The one thing I tried to do if I was in a situation like that is I'd take off my security hat, and I'd usually take off my jacket, and I'd just get down and would just have a chat. I tried to take the barrier of being an S&S person away. Yeah.

DONIN: That helped.

BROWN: I think so.

DONIN: It makes you seem more approachable.

BROWN: Yeah. That was the goal.

DONIN: Uh-huh. So what does that tell you about these incredibly bright, often privileged, but not always, kids that come here to Dartmouth? It shows a side of them that we don't see—you know, those of us who work here during the day, in an academic setting—we don't usually see that side of them.

BROWN: Yeah. Coming again from Security—I worked there for five and a half years; I'm actually still employed there as a part-time—a special officer. I worked a lacrosse game here last Friday night. I'd never worked lacrosse, so I'd never had seen the game before, so that was all interesting. And it was fun. There was no problems, and it was just a good event to work.

But, yes, I've seen the brightest of the brightest, and I've seen some awful things with students. We had a situation



one time when there was a stolen laptop, I believe in New Hampshire Hall, New Hamp. And responded. There was a stolen laptop, and this was the beginning of freshman term, again, and this laptop turned up missing from a dorm room, which was rare. Usually laptops would disappear from common rooms and places that people had left them out. But this was in a room, and so went over, took a report on it. Just cleared.

And then we get a message back from the complainant that she thought she saw her laptop in somebody else's room. So we went over and checked on it, and it turns out—this is a horrible story, but this is true—the person did take it, this other female, and as she put it, before she got to Dartmouth, she had to have an abortion, so she sold her laptop to pay for it, and that's why she had to steal this other one, so she'd have a laptop. So that's one of the lesser good stories [chuckles] I have to tell.

DONIN: Yeah.

BROWN: But go figure.

DONIN: And it's amazing they feel comfortable enough to tell *you* that story.

BROWN: Yeah. When they're caught pretty much red handed. Some of them never say anything, but other ones just come clean and tell you what's goin' on.

DONIN: It's probably a relief to them, in some ways.

BROWN: Probably. What a traumatic thing all the way around for all.

DONIN: For sure. You wonder how they're able to concentrate on their studies when they've got that kind of stuff going on.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: Yeah. Gee! Well, she got her laptop back, I guess, but you learned a sad story.

Now, you then made the decision to change jobs.

- BROWN: Yes, I did. It was a big decision because I left a family at Safety & Security. I shouldn't say, "I left" 'cause, again, I'm still there part time, but [a] wonderful group over there. I had family over there, so to speak. But my family at home—it was tough because it was all nights and weekends, the times that I was working.
- DONIN: Oh, your schedule was nights and weekends.
- BROWN: Right.
- DONIN: Oh, I get it.
- BROWN: When I started at Safety & Security, they said that no one ever leaves, which didn't turn out to be true, but—
- DONIN: [Chuckles.]
- BROWN: But when I started there, I pretty much knew I'd get the worst of the worst shifts. I worked Thursday through Sunday. We work four 10-hour days, and I worked Thursday through Sunday at the beginning, 10 to 8 a.m., overnight, complete overnights. And then I was lucky enough to get off that. Before I left, I think it was a year and a half or so I moved to 6 to 4 a.m., which I liked that very much. I was busy when I got there and pretty much busy till I left. The 10 to 8 a.m. shift was rough because after 4 or so in the morning, there's usually not too much activity and it gets kind of boring, but you still have to patrol. But the 6 to 4 was much better but still hard on the family.
- DONIN: For sure. And the reason you got that shift is just because you were the new guy on the block, right?
- BROWN: Right.
- DONIN: I mean, everybody has to put in their time—
- BROWN: Yes.
- DONIN: —doing whatever they call it, the graveyard shift.
- BROWN: Yeah. So a job became available over at Facilities at the college key desk, and I applied, and I gave references of

people I was working with over at Security, and they all ran down here and told them incredible lies about me and said how great I was.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

BROWN: And so they hired me anyways. And that worked out good. And I was there—I liked it there very much. But then we had our economic turndown here a few years ago, and thus I was the youngest in the department, and so, no surprise, I was—they had to make cuts and decisions, so I was laid off. And, lucky enough, though, I had support from everyone that I was able to find a half-time job in the Hinman mail room for five months, and so this was half-time. But I was, again, very lucky because, at the same time, somebody over at Security fell down and broke their wrist, so they were short-handed and needed somebody to fill in part time, so while I was working part time at two places, I was pretty much working 40 hours a week, but yet I still wasn't—didn't have full-time benefits 'cause I wasn't full time. So yeah.

The key desk was a great thing. When I took on the job, it was a complete paper system, and before I left there—I think I was there for around two years—I had computerized all the keys. I think there were 6,015 keys, if I remember, 6,015 different kinds of college keys—

DONIN: Whoa!

BROWN: —for our buildings. And so I had computerized all that so you could query a search and so forth that you wasn't able to do before I got there, so I was pretty proud of that.

DONIN: Now, when you say "keys," are you talking about these kind of things, these cards, these access cards?

BROWN: I actually did access cards, too. But, no, I'm talking physical keys.

DONIN: Real keys.

BROWN: Keys keys, yeah.

DONIN: Uh-huh. That's huge! And you learned a whole new set of skills, didn't you?

BROWN: Yeah. I had some experience with Excel but not enough, but I did learn along the way and was able to categorize things into library buildings and McNutt and Parkhurst and so forth, to separate the buildings, or if they're in clusters I can put them in there as a group.

DONIN: And so then how did you end up at the library?

BROWN: Well, I can say this: Of course, I was half time at the mailroom, and Security was nothing permanent in the way I was over there, helping out somebody that was injured. So I was looking for jobs, and one of the first ones that came available was this job that I have at Baker. And never had worked in a library before, but it was a job, and so I thought I'd go over and talk to the folks about it.

And so I interviewed with them, and I felt right at home when I interviewed with them, and the more they talked, the more I'd got interested, and they offered me the job, and I said, *I'm gonna try this*. And I'm darn glad I did because I'm still there, and it's really been great. I've learned a boat load of stuff.

DONIN: Mm-hm. Adding to your many skills that you had already.

BROWN: I guess I'd consider myself somewhat well rounded.  
[Chuckles.]

DONIN: Yeah. I'll say. What is it about working in the library that makes you like it?

BROWN: Um—

DONIN: The hours are probably more suited to your family, to be sure.

BROWN: Yes, that is a positive. The library has all kinds of special programs for employees, whether it's going out for walks, different seminars. You and I, Mary, took a trip to Boston to the zero sort facility through the library. Enjoyed that very, very, very much. Still talk about it and encourage people to do things that we learned that day. It's just been great.

It's great workin' with the students. Again, I get to help people. I'm not saving lives like I was, I think, over at Safety & Security, although there was a student one time that told me she was having chest pains and wondering what to do. Well, I didn't think for a second and I was on the phone and called for help and got her over to Dick's House and got her some help.

DONIN: Oh, golly!

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: So you now get to see students the way we do here, which is in their sort of—they've got themselves together and they're doing their schoolwork, and most of them hopefully are not under the influence of alcohol during the school day.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: So you see the total opposite side of them.

BROWN: Yeah. And that's been good. Talk to students. I've gotten close to a few students, quite a few, actually. Somehow I told a young female not long ago about my service. Somehow we got on the subject of that. And she said she had a brother that was all gung-ho about not going to college and as soon as he got out of high school joining a Special Forces and going in the Army and all that stuff.

Having served for 15 years in service and going to a war in a combat area, I had some experience that probably not a lot of people my age have. There was a half million of us that went over there and, of course, the new ones that are there now, in recent times. But I talked to her quite a bit about that, and I had a lot of pictures that I showed her from my tour over there.

And I'll just say this: Probably my worst experience of that was—I didn't shoot anybody. I was in transportation, so we carried stuff for—I carried everything from water to bombs. But through the ground invasion in Desert Storm, we followed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division up through the neutral zone into Iraq and over to Kuwait, and we were right behind

the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division, basically a moving warehouse. I had a 40-foot tractor trailer, an Army truck, and I had artillery rounds on my truck.

But we were in the aftermath of everything they'd just blown up, and so there was several deceased bodies around, laying around, and many of them charred beyond recognition, really. But there was this one—a wild dog. There were dogs in the desert. You'd go in the middle of nowhere, and there was a dog that had found one of them that was actually eating him. So that, I often think about.

And so I shared all these stories and pictures that I had with this girl, and she went back to her brother, and she talked to him again, and she has since told me that he is giving this a second thought and has calmed down on the gung-ho join the military. Military is good. It helps you in a lot of ways. But keep in mind what you're really there to do can be to kill. And so it's not all the fancy uniforms and stuff you see on TV. It can be a lot more than that. And you never know where you're gonna be. When you sign up and raise your hand, you're gonna go wherever they tell you.

DONIN: Mm-hm. So you did a real service to this young woman and her brother.

BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

DONIN: Not convincing them either way but just making sure he made an informed decision.

BROWN: That's all I was trying to do. I wouldn't tell anybody not to join the service, but just be aware if you do, what you're really getting into, and then that's fine, I think. We need service members.

DONIN: Mm-hm.

BROWN: I was pretty ambitionless as a young lad, and going to basic training and whatnot, I learned to do things that I never thought I could do or never knew I could do, so it helped me a great deal that way.

DONIN: Mm-hm. And, as you say, all these experiences that you've had in the service, working in the equipment shop—it's made you a pretty well-rounded guy.

BROWN: I think so, yeah. Again, Army training. I know that—you can't see my hands, but I'm showing them. They've done or can do most anything as long as it's legal.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

BROWN: So I'm not afraid to do the dirty jobs, or the better ones.

DONIN: Right, right. So you've really entered—your viewpoint of Dartmouth has been seen from so many different vantage points that you must have a very broad view—you know, if somebody had asked you to describe the Dartmouth community and what it was like and what the culture was like, you've got so many vantage points to look at it from.

BROWN: I could say another thing about that. My experience with the Dartmouth community started way, way long time ago. Probably from the time I was in middle school. Went to Hartford near here, in White River. Back then, we used to come up to Dartmouth quite often and go to the Alumni Gym and play basketball, and we went into the Leverone Field House. We ran around in there, and we used their weights. They had weights in there at the time, I remember. And custodians'd be around. I don't ever remember seeing any security people, but custodians'd be around, and they never asked us to leave. There might have been once where guys got to fooling around or something, and then they were asked to leave, but we had pretty much free use of the gym if it wasn't being used, and often it wasn't. And so the upper part—I think where the fitness room is now, I'm talking, where it used to be.

And so I played hockey in high school, and we often—our rink, which was just outside—we had a tennis court that they flooded with fire hoses back then, and so due to the winter conditions and whatnot we often didn't have ice, so we went to Davis Rink. I don't know if you remember.

DONIN: Oh, yeah, right.

BROWN: Where the Leede Arena is now was Davis Rink years ago, and then they built Thompson, and I skated in that as well. But more Davis than Thompson back then. So I really enjoyed Dartmouth at a young age because that was quite a thing, to be able to come up here and use those facilities.

DONIN: So the college was really very open and available to the community.

BROWN: Yeah. I guess I'd say it was totally open. I know it's different today, for good reasons, but back then we were able to do that, and we did come up here a fair amount and use those things.

DONIN: Mm-hm. That's pretty nice.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: So it's really been part of your life since you were a young lad, as you said.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: In one way or another.

BROWN: When I was home in the family business, we sold outdoor power equipment: chain saws, snow blowers and tractors and whatnot, and snowmobiles and all the small equipment, so the college was one of our big customers as well. And back then, Bernard Godfrey was the head of the grounds department, and he's retired now. Unfortunately, I believe he's got Alzheimer's last I knew, or dementia.

DONIN: Aw.

BROWN: So it's a sad story there. But anyways, I came up here one time to—he was interested in getting some leaf blowers for the college, some backpack leaf blowers, but he was concerned about what noise they would put out, so I brought some up, and we kind of tested them out around the buildings and stuff. And I said, "You know, if there was ever a chance, I'd appreciate if we could do a tour." And Bernard did. I made another arrangement, and I was able to tour it. So, again, that was way before I worked up here. But was



very interested. He showed me all kinds of different things outside, mainly grounds stuff and whatnot, but I found that very enjoyable. He was a great guy. I really enjoyed him.

DONIN: So you've been interested in Dartmouth for a long time.

BROWN: Yes, I have. Still am.

DONIN: Yes, and still are, absolutely. And I assume the longer you hang around here, the more you've learned about this place.

BROWN: Yeah. Mostly from Security, because we go in every building. I haven't been in the Life Sciences building yet. I did make it down to the Visual Arts. But during my Security days, we certainly went into every building, and I think I patrolled on foot pretty much—probably every square foot of this campus.

While I was at Security, we did have some spare time, often, and one of my big things is when I became a patrol officer, I was noticing that we had all these beautiful buildings around here, granite and brick buildings and just historic areas, but one of the things that troubled me was that there's a bunch of junk bikes that were hanging around outside these buildings. Some of 'em were missing wheels and had bent things were snowplows hit them and were rusting, and they were just sitting around. So I made it my point as a patrol officer to clean that up, and so I started up a stolen bike plan, and I was actually able to recover—I did an average of 50 bikes a year, of getting bikes and returning them back to students and faculty. Even faculty lost bikes.

DONIN: How did you find out who the owners were?

BROWN: Well, it took some digging on my part, but as a Dartmouth person, student or user of Dartmouth, you're able to register your bikes with the college—

DONIN: Ohh!

BROWN: —so that's the easier part. But many people don't bother to register their bikes, so generally—you know, I don't know how many circles around here a night I made, but I pretty much knew where bikes were, and so if somebody said they lost a red Next bike, I kind of had it figured so if you were a

person that lived down at the River Cluster, I'd go down in the A Lot, on the other side of campus, and start looking, but I'd know if I'd seen that red Next bike or Columbia or whatever it was, laying around. I found bikes like almost instantly when I read the reports that came in about a missing bike. I might even know where they were when I read them.

DONIN: [Laughs.] You were like a walking inventory of all the bikes.

BROWN: Well, again, I really took pleasure in that. I think it was 48 one year I recovered, and then 52 and then 50 and 50, I think. When I left the department, I was close, and I really worked hard those last few nights I was there, and I got to 50, I think it was, so it was about 200 to the number that I recovered.

DONIN: That's amazing!

BROWN: You know, and another challenge to that was as I recovered these bikes—but we didn't have very much storage space over there, so some kids wouldn't pick 'em up, and that was frustrating because I was running out of space in many cases, so I'd—you know, "Please pick it up. Please pick it up." And I'd have to beg 'em to pick up their bike, 'cause I needed more room [chuckles] to recover more bikes. Just recommend to always keep your bike locked. Lock it to something, rather than to itself.

Another Security thing is I was tasked to go down and talk to a person about a stolen bike. Well, the story went bad because it turns out the guy had stolen the bike from somebody, so he had reported his stolen bike stolen [chuckles], so—if you get what I mean.

DONIN: Yes.

BROWN: He had stolen it, and so then he got into trouble for stealing it. But he reported his stolen bike stolen.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

BROWN: That was quite a night.

- DONIN: I mean, you were basically recycling bikes and getting them back to their owners.
- BROWN: Yeah, they could look at it that way. Some of 'em were in such bad shape—and then in that case, sometimes—it didn't happen too often, but I'd ask them, you know, "Can we dispose of it?" And so, again, getting it out of the way. Unfortunately, a lot of students that are here for four years, when they leave, they leave stuff behind, like bikes sometimes, even furniture and all kinds of other stuff. It just gets laid around, and it's kind of sad. And it's nice to be able to recycle that stuff.
- DONIN: For sure. For sure. Has anybody picked up that task since you left Safety & Security?
- BROWN: I don't think so.
- DONIN: Oh, what a shame.
- BROWN: Nobody had an interest in it. But if you ask anybody over there that was there when I was there, and many of 'em are, they'd be well aware of that. The dispatchers used to hate it because it created a lot of extra paperwork for 'em, but oh well.
- DONIN: We could use that service again, because they're just littering the campus.
- BROWN: There was something I signed up for when I started at the library. Each building was going to have its own bike monitor or something?
- DONIN: Yes.
- BROWN: But I don't believe that ever went anywhere.
- DONIN: It never got off the ground.
- BROWN: I signed up for that anyways, but I don't think it ever went anywhere.
- DONIN: No. It's too bad.

BROWN: It needs to be policed. There's a problem there.

DONIN: Yeah, for sure. And I think the sustainability office has tried to get something going as well to keep these things sort of accounted for. I'm afraid it hasn't really gotten off the ground either.

So how do you feel that—who the president is—does that make an impact on what the campus feels like to the students and the staff and the faculty?

BROWN: Oh, well definitely. Oh, definitely. Let's be clear. I love Jim Wright. I have nothing but total respect for Jim Wright. His wife as well. When I first went out on the road over at Security, I had to go over to the president's house 'cause we monitor the president's house. One Old Tuck, it used to be called. And I forget if there was an alarm going off over there or what it was, but I went in, and this lady came out, and I asked her who she was [chuckles], and she says she was Mrs. Wright. But she was so nice about it. She could have been—you know, "Don't you know who I am?" kind of thing. But she was so nice. And that's just how they were.

I transported them. I shadowed 'em at different events, to be a security person with him, or them. And just enjoyed them. They were just wonderful people. He was president when I stepped down full time, so I didn't have as much experience, I guess, with President Kim. I saw him at a few events I was at but didn't have that interaction with him.

DONIN: Mm-hm. And you feel that the attitude of the president trickles down to the community of Dartmouth.

BROWN: Yeah. No surprise, ~~I don't think~~ things certainly changed with President Kim. I mean, right when President Wright had left, we were into—the whole country was in economic turmoil, and so things changed a lot around here then. We experienced the layoffs I mentioned earlier. I'm not, of course, the only one. So a lot of things got changed at that time.

DONIN: Mm-hm. For sure. Now, you said that when you joined Safety & Security, that it had not yet become unionized.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: Did that happen while you were working there?

BROWN: [Chuckles.] Yeah, I'd only been there a short time when somebody pulled me aside and said, "Hey, you know, we're thinking about going union." And I had no experience with unions. I found the whole process very frustrating because I tried to learn about it. I tried to keep an open mind towards it. And so I approached Human Resources and asked, you know, "Why or why not should we have this?" And they said, "Well, we can't advise." And then I talked to the union people. You know, "Why or why not should we have this." And they said, "Well, everything is subject to negotiation, and we can't say anything."

And so it was tough to try to learn why—when I shop for big-ticket items such as a car or something, I'll come up with a checklist of, you know, this one's got this, this and this, and this one's got this, and I decide which one. I wasn't able to really do that with the union set up.

So ultimately it was voted in in the next year or two, so we became unionized, but it was a struggle. It did help in a lot of ways, I guess. It wasn't the cure-all I think everybody was looking for, but I think it did help some of the issues that were going on.

DONIN: Mm-hm. So do you think by having part of the campus unionized and other parts not—does that make people feel sort of divided from each other in any way? Did you experience that?

BROWN: No. No, I don't think it—I—at least from my thinking is we all need each other, and so whether you're a security man, a custodian or a president, we're all in this boat together, I think, in the ride here. And so I just think that I appreciate everybody from I guess the ground up, top down, and so I don't feel that 'as mattered.

DONIN: Do you have the sense that other people feel that they're—whether it's students or your coworkers or faculty—do you have a sense that people often feel that they *don't* belong here or that they're sort of an outsider with certain groups?

BROWN: Yeah. I talk to some students, not often, but I talk to some students that say—they tell me that they just didn't fit in. We had somebody I think that worked—I know they did—work at the library, and they were an alum here, just freshly graduated, and I talked to them a little bit about their experience, and most everybody is very upbeat about it. This person wasn't. Said they just never fit in, and it wasn't a great experience and whatnot. But that's pretty rare. But occasionally I do run into somebody like that.

DONIN: Mm-hm.

BROWN: Can't explain why.

DONIN: I think we all, at some point in our lives, experience that sense of *Ooh, maybe I don't belong here*.

BROWN: Mm-hm.

DONIN: Or *I'm sort of outside the in-group* or whatever.

BROWN: This person was very nice, and I couldn't imagine how they could not feel like they fit because they just seemed so nice. They might have been a little quiet, but very nice anyways.

DONIN: Well, they were lucky they had you to talk to, as well.

So do you think your experience at these various jobs that you've had here, most significantly Safety & Security and the library, 'cause that's where you've spent most of your years—has it granted you a different view of what the Dartmouth community is like? I mean, you must have had one view of the community of Dartmouth when you were working nights and dealing mostly with students and the other Safety & Security people. And then you're suddenly here—you know, the total other side of the clock, during the day and everybody's going about their business, and people are trying to be productive with their days. It must look like two different places to you.

BROWN: Yeah. Working here at nights—we said earlier there's a different place here at night. When I started at Security, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what could happen or

what was likely to happen, but, you know, I dealt with—I shouldn't say "you know," 'cause I've not told it yet, but I dealt with so many situations and pretty much enjoyed all of them. I even made a bed for a woman one time. We were here at graduation, and I think this was over at Richardson Hall, and they had gotten a dorm room to stay for commencement—

DONIN: Oh, yeah.

BROWN: —and the blankets they were given were full of dog hair. I wouldn't have put them on my bed, either. But she stood by, and I rounded up some sheets 'cause the sheets were all bloodstained, too.

DONIN: Ooh!

BROWN: It was a filthy mess. I don't blame her for being upset. But I rounded up some new blankets and some new sheets for her, and, again, the range of Security—we respond to everything.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

BROWN: So I went to give them to her, and she, like, held fast, and I got the message that she wanted me to make her bed, so I did. I took time, and I made it up. It didn't hurt me any. And when I left, she was smiling, and I think she felt she got some good service. And so I've done that.

A bad night: I had a female that jumped out of a third floor window on me at the Panarchy House. And that was a rough night.

DONIN: Oh!

BROWN: This was on School Street, over and down below here. And so that was a rough night.

DONIN: Did she survive?

BROWN: Yeah, she was banged up and whatnot, but she did survive, thankfully. So those things are things that I didn't necessarily know I'd bump into. I believe—I'm not sure if I still hold the

record, but I think I hold the record on bringing the most intoxicated person to Dick's House. This person—I was over at the Choates, and I was on an unrelated call, but I saw these two kids looking around the corner at me, and I thought, *Something must be up*, so I investigated further. And then I went in the men's room, and this one kid is standing there, and he's was gray. He was just kind of standing there, just dopey, and he didn't look right. So I said, "You better come with me."

So we walked over—we got in the cruiser and walked up into Dick's House, second floor of Dick's House, and this kid was walking and talking, but he immediately got sent to the ER because he was way over—if anybody goes to Dick's House, if they're over 3, they go for intoxication poisoning, to DHMC. And he was shipped there immediately.

And so, yeah, these things did surprise me.

DONIN: You weren't kidding that you were saving lives.

BROWN: I saved quite a few, actually, I think, in my time. There was—actually, most of my nights consisted of, like, one big thing that would happen. Well, that night that the female jumped out of the window on me, I had just revived a female over at Bones Gate fraternity, on Webster Ave. She was out cold. I don't know if it was a combination of—I'm sure there was alcohol involved. I'm not sure if there was any other chemicals, but I had just revived her. And it was one where I'd had to do a sternum rub on her. And she was out, out, out.

And just got her in the ambulance and it had gone, and then I'd got a call about somebody on a rooftop over at the Panarchy House. And I figured when I went over there—that's how the call came in. I figured it was somebody that went out an "Exit Only" door or something and locked themselves out on the roof. But then [chuckles] when I got over there, she was threatening to jump because the world was comin' to an end.

What it turned out to be is a same-sex partnership that had just dissolved, and she wasn't happy about it. And I dealt with quite a few of those issues, and I enjoyed working with



people on that stuff. There's some people that are really in crisis over that sort of thing, of learning about themselves and coming out. I'm happy to have been involved in that process for a lot of kids.

DONIN: Well, I keep saying they were lucky to have you nearby.

So did you—I mean, this sounds like you had to make a lot of medical judgments about people's level of being inebriated. How did you learn that?

BROWN: I had some good trainers at Security. It's different at Security nowadays because—and it's probably for the better; I never really worked with them much. But now they have Dartmouth EMS that goes with them—

DONIN: Oh, yes.

BROWN: —that handle all the medical issues. But when I was running around here at night, it was [chuckles] pretty much me, so if I got into that much trouble, I called for Hanover.

DONIN: You'd call the Hanover fire department?

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: Wow.

BROWN: But still, as a first responder, you're there to, you know, at least triage things to get 'em to that point.

DONIN: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

BROWN: Yeah.

DONIN: And you—this is amazing! This was not that long ago. We're talking only ten years ago.

BROWN: Yeah, that's true. Actually, I was here on my eleventh year a couple of days ago.

DONIN: Well, you certainly made a huge difference in the lives of some of these students. I mean, more than just keeping some of them from dying. Do you feel like your relationship

with the college has changed from when you started here as a security officer and now you're a librarian? I mean, how do you feel about Dartmouth as an employer?

BROWN: Well, I mean, things have changed? Yeah, I'm sure they have, because I think people have gotten to know me. You know, of course, getting established and known and so forth, so—going back to the economic downturn and so forth that we had, the employee-employer aspect here has certainly changed. You know, any shortcomings that Dartmouth might have, I still think it's still one of the best places to work in the Upper Valley, so I'm happy to be here.

DONIN: Mmm. Well, I think Dartmouth is obviously happy to have you as well.

And how would you describe who your community is at Dartmouth? Or do you have sort of separate communities? I know you referred to the Safety & Security people as family, and we can use the word "family" as well. How would you describe your Dartmouth family now? It seems to have grown.

BROWN: Yeah. You know, enthusiasm is contagious, and I like to spread that wherever I can. I worked a lacrosse game last Friday night, and one of the event staff that was there was a former—I mean, still works at Facilities, and I got to see her. I hadn't seen her in a long time, so we had a long chat, and—good friends. And so I hopefully have touched everybody wherever I've gone. I try to get to know people.

As far as *who's* in the community that I would be relating to, I'd just say "all" 'cause we're all on the same plan and same game, and so I'd like to get to know everybody if I can.

DONIN: That's a great attitude. So you're definitely not one that is going to be the cause of the many people here we see who feel like, you know, they either don't belong or that they're an outsider. I would say you're one of those who makes them feel like an insider and that they *do* belong.

BROWN: I sure do try my best with that.

- DONIN: Yeah. And do you feel that you've been treated the same way?
- BROWN: Very much so.
- DONIN: Yeah. That's great. So I think—let me just look at my list of questions here, Dennis, and make sure we've covered this. How's your time?
- BROWN: Good. Good.
- DONIN: It's okay?
- BROWN: Yep.
- DONIN: I promised not to keep you more than an hour, and I already lied.
- BROWN: That's all right. I'm enjoying this.
- DONIN: [Laughs.] Good. Let's see. I think—yeah, I think we're done. We've covered it well. Thank you very much. I'm going to turn this off.
- BROWN: Okay.
- DONIN: Unless—you know, I always like to give people a chance to say something final, only if they want to. No pressure.
- BROWN: [Sighs.] I'm just very grateful to be here. Occasionally I hear somebody complaining about Dartmouth and particularly if they've never worked anywhere else—I've been in private business and whatnot, and after coming from that, I think this is a great place to work, and we should all be very grateful to be here. [Laughs.]
- DONIN: Okay. Thank you, Dennis.

**[End of interview.]**