

Eleanor Cassady
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
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DONIN: Today is Friday, September 6th, 2013. My name is Mary Donin, and I'm here at the Collis Center at Dartmouth College with Eleanor Cassady, who's celebrating her birthday today. And, Eleanor, tell us your—what's your title here at Collis?

CASSADY: Supervisor.

DONIN: Supervisor.

CASSADY: Shift supervisor.

DONIN: Shift supervisor.

CASSADY: Yep.

DONIN: Okay, shift supervisor. All right. So what we'd like to hear—just to get started, a little bit of your story about how you ended up at Dartmouth. How long have you been here, and how is it that you ended up coming to Dartmouth, how you learned about Dartmouth?

CASSADY: I started in January of 1996, so I'm working on my 18th year.

DONIN: Wow.

CASSADY: Before that, I had been working at Lake Morey Resort up in Fairlee, where I live. And the owners had sold and financed the sale of the place, and after working with the new owners for a while, I did not care for them, and—other reasons. And I decided to seek employment elsewhere. And a friend of my son's told me they were looking for a supervisor down here, so I came down and finally caught up with the person that did the interviewing, the manager of Collis Café, and came down for an interview and got the job, so here I am.

DONIN: So you were doing the same kind of work at the Lake Morey Resort, then.

CASSADY: Pretty much. I mean, I was one of the dining room managers, and— Of course, that's all fine dining and functions like weddings and all kinds of conferences and that kind of stuff, where here it's very different. It's cafeteria style. It's all students—well, pretty much all students.

DONIN: Are you a cook, yourself?

CASSADY: Oh. At home. [Laughs.]

DONIN: Yeah, yeah. But there seems to be a culture here of people sort of stepping in and helping out when necessary, so could you, like, bake up a batch of cookies or a pot of soup—

CASSADY: I could.

DONIN: —if you had to?

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: Yes. Or get on the line up there and make those fancy breakfast sandwiches?

CASSADY: Oh, I do. I do that all the time when we're shorthanded. I shouldn't say "all the time," but once in a while,—

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: —when we're shorthanded.

DONIN: Yeah. You step in.

CASSADY: Oh, yeah.

DONIN: So what's your job description? I mean, you're a supervisor. You supervise the workers or you supervise the production of the food, or all of that?

CASSADY: Any. Any and all, yes. One of my past managers called me a "working supervisor," where you don't just stand back and fold your arms and supervise.

DONIN: Right.

- CASSADY: You pitch in whenever.
- DONIN: Right. And that seems to be the way it is here in Collis.
- CASSADY: It is, yeah. We're not union. We're the only one that is not union, and I like it being non-union.
- DONIN: So you don't have to— There are no rules about stepping in and helping out.
- CASSADY: No.
- DONIN: There's no violation of—
- CASSADY: No.
- DONIN: —management versus non-management and stuff.
- CASSADY: No.
- DONIN: And what does that do to the atmosphere here?
- CASSADY: I think it makes it much better. I mean, I think if your workers see that you're not afraid to get your hands dirty and you're willing to help out wherever it's needed, I think they have a lot more respect for that position and you as a person and are certainly more willing to cooperate with you, and they understand what's involved in it. I mean, we're so shorthanded sometimes here at times that it's just crazy.
- DONIN: And this place feels more like sort of, you know, a team atmosphere here. Everybody pitches in.
- CASSADY: It's more like a family atmosphere. Yeah, team. Well, we all work pretty well together—you know, it's like a family. We have our little spits and spats and—
- DONIN: [Chuckles.] Indeed.
- CASSADY: —you know, and we have times when we might have one person out, and we have other times we might have four people out on my shift, which is a closing shift. And it isn't like the day shift—your shift ends, you can go home. We

cannot leave until everything is cleaned and put back together. So if we're shorthanded, we work a little faster and a little longer. [Laughs.]

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: So, I mean, I had a young man that worked here when I very first came here, and back then, the manager had us bring those big garbage barges up and empty all the bags out in the trash, and he said, "What are you doing?" And I said, "Well, I'm emptyin' the trash." He said, "Well, you're a supervisor. You shouldn't be doing that."

DONIN: Oh.

CASSADY: I'm like, "Why not? Needs to be done, everybody else is busy." [Chuckles.]

DONIN: And you weren't violating the rules.

CASSADY: No, no.

DONIN: But he just—

CASSADY: He just thought, *Oh, my God, the supervisor!* "You're a supervisor. I've never seen a supervisor do that before." I'm, like, "Needs to be done. What's the big deal?" [Chuckles.]

DONIN: That's a great attitude.

CASSADY: You know? [Chuckles.]

DONIN: So what was it like when you came here 18 years ago? I mean, was it—

CASSADY: Oh, it was a lot different. Of course, the café's just been renovated, and so it was a lot smaller. We didn't have stir fries back then. We didn't make breakfast sandwiches back then.

DONIN: Oh!

CASSADY: The line was altogether different. We *served* everything. We made sandwiches to order. We had the soup area, which we

served. And then we had the hot line, which was an entrée every day.

DONIN: Oh.

CASSADY: And we served that. And so this—the whole—everything we serve here is so different.

DONIN: It's made to order, isn't it?

CASSADY: It's made to order. But we didn't have stir fries. We didn't have breakfast sandwiches. We didn't have omelets back then. Yes, we may have had omelets. I can't even remember, it's been so long. [Laughs.]

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: We might have had omelets. And we had the salad bar. We didn't have the soft serve. We didn't have the ice cream. We didn't have any of that.

DONIN: And does the food change because you're reflecting eating trends or demand of students?

CASSADY: I think a lot of things. I think both. And I think in some instances it was a case of—like, when Courtyard closed for breakfast, that meant we wanted to have more breakfast items available.

DONIN: I see.

CASSADY: So that's when we changed and did the breakfast sandwiches instead of just having omelets and—like I said, I can't remember when we even started omelets, but we had cereal, we had a cobbler or a bread pudding or something, which they still have in the mornings, and all the baked goods. But we've expanded our menu hugely, and changed it.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: We still have an entrée that we offer every day, and we still have soups that we offer, but—

- DONIN: Your soups are legendary.
- CASSADY: Oh, they are, and it doesn't matter who the cook is here. They're all homemade from scratch. The entrée's homemade every day also.
- DONIN: Who comes up with the menus?
- CASSADY: The cooks.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.
- CASSADY: Yeah, Mary Ann's [Milanese] been here for I think 25 years, and she pretty much makes her own menu, what she wants to bake for the week. Dylan [Griffin], who's the cook now that does the entrées and the soups—he comes up with his own menu.
- DONIN: So they bring in their own recipes and stuff?
- CASSADY: Oh, they look—from everywhere: cookbooks, magazines, newspapers, friends. You know, students even bring a recipe in and said, "This is a recipe I really like. Would you try it out?" And if it's something that's feasible, they might try it.
- DONIN: Isn't that great?
- CASSADY: Yes.
- DONIN: It's almost like being at home.
- CASSADY: Oh, it is, yeah. And, I mean, I just had a student apply for a job—well, ask about applying, and she said that Collis is one of the main reasons that she likes this college.
- DONIN: Really!
- CASSADY: Yes. It's kind of odd, and I don't know whether I should say this or not, but I'm going to anyways. We had a student that worked for us. He worked for us all four years he was here. And he was in a psychology course, and one of his things he either was assigned or chose to do was to compare what used to be called Thayer Hall and us with worker satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

DONIN: Oh, how interesting.

CASSADY: And he had forms for people to make out. He asked questions when people came in—students, workers. He interviewed a lot of workers. And they are union, of course, and we are not.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

CASSADY: And it's something I never stopped to think about. In the union you have to bid for your job. Here, you get a job, and if you are hired as a counter worker, you do any and all of it.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: Over there, you have to bid for a job, so this particular time you might have the hot line or you might have the sandwich area or—I don't know how they divide it up into things now—or you might be a dishwasher, or you might be somebody that receives goods and transfers things. And you have to bid for those jobs. So if you have a job you like this year, when the new year comes around, somebody might outbid you that's got seniority, and you have to take a different job that you absolutely hate. Therefore, you may not like your job this year, where you may have loved it last year. And I never stopped to think about it that way.

DONIN: Wow.

CASSADY: It never occurred to me.

DONIN: So they're chosen based on their years of seniority? That's how they get chosen?

CASSADY: I think. I'm not sure how it's done. But somebody can outbid you for whatever qualifications that requires doing that. And, like I said, you might have a position you have for three, four five years, and all of a sudden somebody outbids you and you have to do something else. And this is a position—say, dishwasher. You just hate it. You know, there are certain aspects of the job you like better than others, myself included. And that's what I never contributed their

dissatisfaction to, until somebody pointed that part out to me, and I'm, like, *Wow, I never thought of it that way.*

DONIN: Uh-huh.

CASSADY: So anyways, he did this study, because of all that goes on over there with the bidding,—

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: And whatever the reasons for the dissatisfaction between the workers and the students, compared to here, we were way up here [demonstrates], and they were way down here [demonstrates] on both aspects, which really surprised me.

One of the comments we get here the most is, "We like coming here not only for the food but because everybody's friendly and everybody's helpful." And I think how we are satisfied with our jobs makes a big difference in how we put ourselves out there to everybody.

DONIN: Of course. It's the atmosphere that you're working in—

CASSADY: Right.

DONIN: —that makes up a big piece of job satisfaction.

CASSADY: And we were really worried, some of us were, when we were talking about Collis being opened up and making it bigger, that we were going to lose that—

DONIN: Cozy—

CASSADY: Yeah. But I don't really think we have.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: I really don't.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: Because people still walk around and talk to everybody, and, you know, they'll joke with one person they're more friendly with more so than somebody else, and it's not that far. You

know, we really aren't spread out like Thayer. I mean, '53 is *really* spread out now.

DONIN: It's huge!

CASSADY: It's huge, where we just expanded a little.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: [Laughs.]

DONIN: Well, when you think about it, you're definitely the smallest dining hall, I think. As between Food Court and '53, this place is tiny.

CASSADY: It's small. When I first came here from Lake Morey Inn and I went in, and they showed me that kitchen, I'm, like, *Oh, my God! This is so tiny.*

DONIN: [Laughs.]

CASSADY: Compared to what I was working in. And when they took me out in the bakery, I'm, like, *It looks like a closet!*

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: You know? But the amount of food that comes out of this little space is amazing.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: And how many students we serve in a day is remarkable.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: When I first came here, a seven- or eight-thousand-dollar income day was big. Now we're doing eighteen, twenty.

DONIN: Good grief!

CASSADY: Yeah. I mean, obviously the prices have gone up, so that contributes to part of it.

DONIN: Right.

- CASSADY: But the amount of students we put through here in a day's time is just astronomical for the size that we are and the size kitchen we have.
- DONIN: A popular place.
- CASSADY: It is very, very popular. And everybody loves the baked goods.
- DONIN: Loves the soups.
- CASSADY: Oh, yeah, loves the soup. They like the entrées. They like the fact that they can converse with the staff to order their food.
- DONIN: Yes.
- CASSADY: It isn't just, "I'll have this" or "I'll have that."
- DONIN: Well, you guys are able to also accommodate these special demands that they have—or not necessarily demands, but medical needs—
- CASSADY: Right.
- DONIN: —if somebody's—what do you call it?
- CASSADY: Allergy, gluten free.
- DONIN: Gluten free or diabetic.
- CASSADY: Yeah. Now, like with the allergies,—we used to make the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches up here, and we talked to the bosses long enough to let them realize we were concerned about making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on that same board as we made the other sandwiches.
- DONIN: Yup.
- CASSADY: I mean, even things like a vegetarian coming in. If I just made a roast beef or a turkey sandwich, I immediately change my gloves. Or if they say, "I'm vegetarian. Would you change your gloves?" No problem. We have special pans to

cook gluten free stuff in now. Or anybody with a peanut allergy, because we have peanut sauce.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: So, I mean—and, of course, this is a lot more prevalent now than it used to be when I was growing up. I mean, you hardly ever heard of anybody with all these food allergies.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: And it's just—boomed.

DONIN: But you guys do a pretty good job of accommodating them.

CASSADY: We try. Yes.

DONIN: And it sounds like there's a real sort of one-on-one concern about—

CASSADY: Mm-hm.

DONIN: We were just talking before the tape went on about the new class that's coming in. You've got a whole new thousand kids to figure out: How are we going to feed them, the ones who have special requirements for their food?

CASSADY: And, of course, they have the advantage of going to the dietician over at '53 and discussing their needs.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: And she will let us know who this person is so that they come in and identify themselves to us, we know.

DONIN: You've been given a heads-up.

CASSADY: Right. But we have to be extra careful about anything splashing in their food. Like, if they're having a stir fry done and they're allergic to peanut, you cannot have one sitting right beside it that's got peanut sauce in it.

DONIN: Yup.

- CASSADY: We have to be really, really careful.
- DONIN: Big responsibility.
- CASSADY: It is, especially since one of the other supervisors just heard on the news about this child—I don't remember whether they went out to eat at a restaurant or she was at a camp or what, and she had a very severe allergy to peanuts, and something she ate she did not know had peanut in it—her father was a doctor. She had an EpiPen, I believe, and they used it. She still passed away.
- DONIN: Uh!
- CASSADY: Severe, severe allergy.
- DONIN: Yeah. That's a huge responsibility.
- CASSADY: Mm-hm. It is. It's scary.
- DONIN: Yeah, very.
- CASSADY: You actually hold somebody's life in your hands if they have a severe allergy.
- DONIN: Yep.
- CASSADY: We had a student that came here to work, and because we had peanut sauce, she worked here for a week and she said, "I can't do this. I can't be around—even be around this stuff."
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: And, of course, she didn't tell me she had a peanut allergy 'cause I would certainly never have had her work behind the line!
- DONIN: But that must add—in a funny way, doesn't that add to the value of your job,—
- CASSADY: Oh, you bet.
- DONIN: —that you feel—

- CASSADY: It's important.
- DONIN: —the importance of your job.
- CASSADY: It's very important. Yes, it is.
- DONIN: Right. So let's talk about when you started here. Was it hard to come in as a newcomer and feel like you had, you know, joined a team that accepted you?
- CASSADY: Especially as a supervisor. Because you weren't just working with them; you were supervising them.
- DONIN: How hard is that?
- CASSADY: It was hard. I didn't know anybody here. Of course, I was the new supervisor coming in. They're all lookin' at me and wonderin' what I'm going to make them do or not do—you know, how I'm going to treat them, how I'm going to reprimand them, whatever.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.
- CASSADY: And and I'm, like, *How harsh can I be? How gentle do I need to be?* [Laughs.] And it was a whole different atmosphere for me. I'd never worked a cafeteria area before in my life.
- DONIN: What did you know about Dartmouth, coming in?
- CASSADY: Very little.
- DONIN: Were you intimidated by it at all?
- CASSADY: No, not really. That part didn't bother me.
- DONIN: I mean, any new job is intimidating,—
- CASSADY: Right.
- DONIN: —but some people seem to be put off by the idea—not put off but a little bit apprehensive about what's it like working with these students.

- CASSADY: I don't know if I ever really gave that a thought or worried about it. It wasn't something that I felt I'd have a problem with,—
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: —you know? Because I was so used to working *with* so many high school and college kids at my other job,—
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: —and supervising them and training them that I'm—*Just another group of kids*. [Laughs.] You know?
- DONIN: Right, exactly.
- CASSADY: So that part didn't bother me. I don't think that part really ever scared me or I even thought about it that way.
- DONIN: So you had a period of time where you had to sort of pay your dues and establish your—you know, establish yourself.
- CASSADY: Yeah, yeah. I think one of the first ice breakers was we used to bring this big cart up that we kept in the walk-in with all the backup for the salad bar, and I took out a bucket of hard boiled eggs, and the cover—I wasn't hanging onto it tight enough. The cover came off, and the eggs rolled all over the floor.
- DONIN: [Laughs.]
- CASSADY: And, course, everybody started laughing, and they immediately went, “[Sharp intake of breath]” thinking they shouldn't laugh at a supervisor. And I said, “Go ahead, laugh. It's funny.” [Laughs.]
- DONIN: [Laughs.]
- CASSADY: So, you know, things like that kind of broke the ice and eased me in a little better.
- DONIN: Sure.
- CASSADY: So they figured I wasn't a hard-ass. [Laughs.]

- DONIN: Right, exactly. You're human, just like they are.
- CASSADY: Yes. Right. I figured that they thought, "Oh, maybe we can joke around with this lady." [Laughs.]
- DONIN: Yeah. There's always that sort of trial period in the beginning there, when you start a new job.
- CASSADY: Yes. I mean, it's like when I go back to the inn now, because I still work there part time. I went back after the old owners took it back over.
- DONIN: Uh-hah!
- CASSADY: I mean, I've read this, and I've learned it going to supervisor courses and stuff like that, that people like constructive criticism. They like to know what their job is, and they know what they should and shouldn't do, so they know what they can get away with or try to get away with [laughs] and what they need to do in order to keep a job and not get yelled at. And even if I go up there, still some of the kids will say, "I like working with you because I know what you want done, I know how you want it done, and you don't give us any slack," you know?
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: And I find that here, too. "Well, why do I have to do that?" "Why can't we do it this way?" I said, "Cause this is the way the managers and the supervisors want it done, and this is the way it needs to be done. If you have a problem with it, go talk to the manager."
- DONIN: You're clear about your expectations.
- CASSADY: Yes. And it's hard. It's like telling your kid, "You can't have a new pair of shoes."
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: "There isn't any money," you know? It's, like, "I'm sorry. That can't happen." [Chuckles.]

DONIN: Right. But the workers are right. It's easier on everybody—

CASSADY: Oh, right.

DONIN: —if everything is clear—

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: —and right out on the table.

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: And so there's no room for misunderstanding.

CASSADY: I mean, you know, they're human. They try to get away with stuff they don't necessarily like doing or like doing it the way we ask them to do it, and, like I always tell them, "If you can find an easier, better, more productive way of doing something, by all means bring it up, and we'll talk about it. We'll try it. If it doesn't work, we'll go back to the old way. I'm game for anything."

DONIN: Uh-huh. So you make them feel like they have a voice.

CASSADY: Yes. One thing I'm not very lenient on is sanitation.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: And, course, they're always complaining because I'm too strict about it. But we're serving the public. We're serving all the students, and, like I said, a lot of them have allergies, things they cannot have or shouldn't be doing, and it's just that you have to go by the regulations of sanitation. We all have to go to a food safety course.

DONIN: Do you have to pass inspections of any kind?

CASSADY: Oh, yes. We have health inspections every year. And we pride ourselves that we always got very high marks. They grade it all differently now. It's either a pass or no pass. And before, it was, like, up to 100, I believe, was the score, and we almost always got anywhere from 93 or above.

DONIN: Wow.

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: That takes a lotta effort.

CASSADY: It does. It does.

DONIN: Keeping your eye on everything all the time.

CASSADY: Yes. I mean, one of the workers in here quite a few years ago said, "I wouldn't have your job for anything." He said,—

DONIN: 'Cause it falls on you.

CASSADY: Yes, it does. And not only that, he said, "I couldn't constantly be watching everybody, making sure everybody does stuff, reprimanding people and making sure they go by it after you reprimand them." And it is. It's tough. It's wearing sometimes, you know?

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: But I did it up to the inn for so many years that—and back then—I mean, except for the cooks that went through chef school, nobody ever took a sanitation course up there, and still doesn't. It could be a lot of it due to the fact that the turnover's a lot quicker up there, where people here work, you know, five, eight, ten, twenty years.

DONIN: They learn the job well here.

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: And another reason I came here: I had benefits up there. My employer up there was very, very good to me, and another reason was the good benefits, and that's what a lot of people like to come here for.

DONIN: Sure.

CASSADY: And when they had all that big cutback and were going to do away with a lot of things, I don't blame the people that had

been working here since they were 20 years old, for 30 years, to think, *I've worked here all these years, and these are the benefits I understood I was going to get, and now you're telling me I'm not going to get them?*

DONIN: Changing the rules of the game.

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: Yeah, that was very scary.

CASSADY: It was very scary for a lot of people.

DONIN: Uh-huh. So how is Dartmouth as an employer, "Mother Dartmouth," as they like to call it? [Laughs.]

CASSADY: I mean, you talk to anybody here, and most of the reason most people come here, not only for the job, good pay, is the benefits. I mean, there's so many places that are cutting all their staff back to 30 hours a week so they don't have to pay benefits, you know? It's the name of the game nowadays.

DONIN: Yup.

CASSADY: Cut corners. Cut money. Cut costs. And, I mean, Dartmouth has had to cut back on some stuff, change some of the way that the employees pay for their stuff. It's the way the world is today, you know?

DONIN: Yup, for sure.

CASSADY: Things have changed a lot.

DONIN: Has it changed—can you describe the ways it's changed since you started working here 18 years ago?

CASSADY: Well, they changed insurances, which is always a little scary because you don't know, *Am I going to get the same coverage?* You know?

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: And especially if you have a child or a spouse or something that has a lot of health problems. I think we pay more now

than we used to. Well, you have to. The costs have gone up. Parking's still a problem. Parking will *always* be a problem.
[Laughs.]

DONIN: That's going to be—

CASSADY: Oh, my God, that is one of the worst things about Dartmouth,—

DONIN: A definite hassle.

CASSADY: —is the parking.

DONIN: Yup.

CASSADY: I mean, when you have to come to work an hour before your shift to hopefully find a place within a decent walking distance.

DONIN: Yep.

CASSADY: You know, it's horrible.

DONIN: And it's so ironic 'cause here we are, out in the middle of, you know, the woods of New Hampshire.

CASSADY: Yes.

DONIN: You'd think this would only be a problem when you're in a big urban, crowded area.

CASSADY: Oh, I know.

DONIN: But—

CASSADY: Well, since I've been here—one, two, three, four, five—I think I'm on my fifth or sixth manager in six years. So that's a change every time, you know?

DONIN: Yeah, adjusting to that.

CASSADY: It's a different person, a different set of rules and regulations in their mind, not necessarily policies here at Dartmouth but just things they do—and everybody manages differently.

DONIN: And how much impact does the manager have on the feel of the place?

CASSADY: Oh, a lot, a lot: whether they're strict, whether they sit back and are lackadaisical, whether they're never here, whether they pitch in and help. I mean, all the managers, except for one that only lasted three months, have always pitched in and helped. When I first came here, we had cameras in the café. They weren't for people stealing stuff. They weren't here to check up on the staff. They were here for the purpose of—where they'd look up and see the café full of people, they'd rush up and help. As soon as the kids get out of class, they come eat, and so they would rush up, help us, the busy time would get done, they'd go back down and do what they needed to do in the office. And they do this three, four times a day. And now, even—we used to have a lot of student staff. When I first started here, I had so much student staff I didn't know what to do. And now it has gone practically the opposite.

DONIN: Why?

CASSADY: I don't know what the reason is. A lot of people wonder if it's because more people come that don't need to have jobs. But to me, Dartmouth has changed from more students that are well off and don't need jobs to the opposite end of the spectrum, because so many kids here need money.

DONIN: I think they've increased their financial aid students, students who are getting financial aid.

CASSADY: Oh, yes?

DONIN: So they need to work.

CASSADY: But they like to have jobs where they can sit and study.

DONIN: Hah-hah.

CASSADY: And you cannot do that here.

DONIN: No.

- CASSADY: That is just out of the question.
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: So that's changed, too, having a full staff of students to practically none. I mean, I was working on a schedule where we had so many spots per day and they were, like, two- or three-hour shifts, and I think out of all the spots that I filled—or, I should say, the few spots that I filled, I had 50 empty spots that term.
- DONIN: [Sharp intake of breath.] Really!
- CASSADY: Per week. It was horrible. So we ended up starting to hire more temps, adult workers that weren't students, that were looking for a job, that hadn't been able to find anything or had got laid off or were going back out in the workforce after they got their kids off to school or whatever. So it's shifted from having so much student staff to having practically none.
- DONIN: But because we have more financial aid students, I would think you'd have *more* students now.
- CASSADY: You would think that.
- DONIN: Where have they gone?
- CASSADY: A lot of them go in town. A lot of them get jobs handing out towels at the gym. They can sit there and study in between.
- DONIN: Uh-huh. And the pay is all the same.
- CASSADY: I have no idea about the pay. I don't know about that. I know they have done so many different incentives through Dining Services to attract more students to work, and it helped a little, but some terms it doesn't help that much. So I don't know what the trend is there, why we aren't getting more students.
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: And then every once in a while I'll get a student that works for many terms, still. But that was more prevalent when I first started here. I have kids that I worked with in '96, '97, '98,

that I still keep in touch with by e-mail. It's like losing your kids, you know?

DONIN: It's like that whole family thing we've been talking about.

CASSADY: Yeah, it is. This place becomes sort of a family.

CASSADY: Oh, yeah, yeah. I've got one young lady that's gonna be a junior this year, and she worked with me a couple of terms. We got quite friendly. And she has a lot of food problems. It isn't just gluten; there are other things she can't eat, and there's a lot of things she can't eat. And so in learning about that as we were talking while she was working, when we'd have a down time, she would say all these problems that she had and all these things she couldn't eat. She likes to bake. She likes to cook. And I told her about my raised glazed doughnuts that I make at home, and she said, "Well, I can buy regular flour for that. Can you give me the recipe?" I said, "I'll do better than that. Why don't you come up and make them at my house someday?"

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

CASSADY: So she come up in the fall on a weekend, and we made the raised glazed doughnuts, and she wrote the recipe down. She brought her own flour that she got over to the Co-op, special flour, and when she went back to Wisconsin, her family made them. Her father also has a lot of food problems. So they took pictures, and when she came back, she brought me the sheet of all the different pictures they took of them making doughnuts.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

CASSADY: The process of what stage they were in.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: And she showed it to Mike, and he said, "You know, that makes these kids' day."

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: “When they can do something like that.” And I have all these villages that I set up at home. I have a Halloween-Thanksgiving village. So she helped me set that up. So then we were talking about making jams and jellies and doing all the different kinds and she said, “I’ve never done that before.” I said, “Okay.” So I said, “Next summer, when we have strawberries, you come up.” So she and her girlfriend came up and we picked strawberries. They kept them for themselves because it was so rainy and stuff, I was afraid we’d either hit a rainy day or else the strawberries wouldn’t be worth using. So I picked some and crushed them and froze them.

So we made—I think we made some that day from fresh, actually, because we were able to pick. The strawberries were good. We made a batch of jam, and they couldn’t believe how easy it was.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

CASSADY: And I gave them jam to go home with. Then we went blueberry picking this year.

DONIN: Oh! This is great.

CASSADY: And then her little sister is here as a freshman, and her parents brought her, so I got to meet them, who I had talked to on the phone, because I have unlimited calling for the same price. So when she was at my house, I said, “Call your folks.” So she did. So they came in and met me, and, of course, they brought me a little gift, which,—you know, it’s so nice like that. [Chuckles.]

So her little sister came in, and we’ve already made plans—I have a huge Christmas village. And I think it’s over 500 pieces,—

DONIN: Oh, my goodness.

CASSADY: Counting every little piece. And they won’t be here to help me set it up, but they are going to come after the holidays to my house so they could see the village, and we’re going to figure out what we’re going to do for a project that day. [Laughter.]

DONIN: Isn't this great?

CASSADY: So it's like having your kid come home from college. They're here at college, and the parents are missing them, you know? [Laughs.]

DONIN: Yeah. And imagine the delight the parents must feel, knowing that their girls have this relationship—

CASSADY: I know.

DONIN: —with somebody who's a local—

CASSADY: Yeah.

DONIN: —and who can, you know, have them out to her house and such.

CASSADY: And it's fun, you know? It makes you feel like you are important to them, too.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: [Laughs.]

DONIN: It's a whole different dimension, too. So they're curious—

CASSADY: It is. It is. It isn't just serving them over the line and running them through the cash register and visiting with them; it's being a part of their lives.

DONIN: Well, that brings new meaning to the concept of Mother Dartmouth.

CASSADY: Oh, I know.

DONIN: I mean, you *are* Mother Dartmouth—

CASSADY: [Laughs.]

DONIN: —to them. It's wonderful.

CASSADY: It's fun. It really is.

- DONIN: And it's the—I think it's the atmosphere that they absorb here.
- CASSADY: Oh, it is. Yeah.
- DONIN: And, as you say, the one-on-one connection that you make when the students come in.
- CASSADY: Yes. And, you know,—and they ask about your families and your kids and your grandkids. “Oh, do you have a picture?”
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: And when somebody has a birth—when my granddaughter was—oh! I can't even tell you how many kids—“Oh, how's your little baby?”
- DONIN: Yeah, yeah. It's wonderful.
- So how do you think it is for this new crop that's coming in, and they're gonna have, I assume, some qualms about fitting in and belonging at Dartmouth, and are they gonna find friends. You must be able to read that on their faces when they're coming through the lines.
- CASSADY: Oh, yes sometimes. And, you know, here we have to be so careful about going up and giving somebody a hug or something.
- DONIN: Oh, yeah.
- CASSADY: And so many of these kids need a hug.
- DONIN: They need a hug.
- CASSADY: Oh! It's just like—and sometimes you do. And sometimes they come up to *you* and give you a hug, and you're, like, *Oh!* You know, *Careful. Have to be careful*, you know? Almost to the point of paranoia sometimes, you know? You just don't want anybody misconstruing anything.
- DONIN: Any kind of gesture.

- CASSADY: Right. I mean, it's like that in all the schools: high schools, grammar schools—
- DONIN: Everywhere.
- CASSADY: But, I mean, these kids are *adults*. These aren't kids. These are adults. And they ought to be able to accept a hug from somebody once in a while when *they* want it.
- DONIN: But I think they're adults, but they often still need the TLC that a child requires.
- CASSADY: Yes. I mean, a lot of these kids have never been away from home.
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: A lot of these kids have never had a job.
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: You know? And it's scary for them to come in and try to work with all strangers, knowing, okay, they're being judged not only by us but their fellow students that come in and see them. I mean, every once in a while you'll hear [in a deprecating tone of voice], "Oh, you're working Dining Services?" You know, Dining Services is supposed to be on the lower scale of things, according to a lot of people. I enjoy my job. I'm proud of what I do here. I'm proud of what *we* do. And a lot of people still look down on DDS workers.
- DONIN: So are you talking about students saying that about Dining Services—
- CASSADY: Oh, yeah.
- DONIN: —or other people?
- CASSADY: Students.
- DONIN: Oh, saying to other students—
- CASSADY: Yeah.

- DONIN: "Oh, you're working at Dining Services."
- CASSADY: Yeah.
- DONIN: Oh dear.
- CASSADY: And usually we pitch right in and say, "Yup! This is the most fun place to work, and *you* should be working with us." We try to make it a little more upbeat and a little—
- DONIN: Of course.
- CASSADY: —you know, don't demean what we do here. It's a very important job. If we didn't feed you, where do you think you'd get your food from?
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: [Laughs.]
- DONIN: Exactly.
- CASSADY: And some of the kids just love it, and other kids? It's just not what they need, not what they want. They don't enjoy any aspect of it. They want to be doing something completely different, which is fine. We all have our good points, our strong points and things we just detest doing.
- DONIN: Mm-hm, mm-hm.
- CASSADY: So it works for some; it doesn't for others.
- DONIN: Right. So what are the high points of your job and what are the low points of your job?
- CASSADY: Oh, dear. High points. Just seeing the students every day, seeing how pleased they look when they come in, getting a brownie and then you can see their eyes roll in ecstasy. [Laughter.] Or a smoothie that's—"Oh, my gosh, I haven't had one in these for two weeks." Or if they were gone for a whole term, "I haven't had one of these since last November." You know, it's funny.

The low points. Just when you're so shorthanded that you can't perform your duties and give the students as good a service as they deserve.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: And I work the evening shift, so for some reason, it's always a contrast of day shift-evening shift. There's always that competition thing?

DONIN: Mm-hm.

CASSADY: And there's a lot of drama some days that goes on that I could do without. [Laughs.]

DONIN: Is there, like, an upstairs-downstairs attitude here?

CASSADY: No, it's more day shift-evening shift.

DONIN: Oh, interesting. What's the difference between the two shifts?

CASSADY: What they do for their duties. Like, they open up. And, course, we're the closing shift. We're the cleaning shift.

DONIN: Oh, you get stuck with the—

CASSADY: So a lot of people resent the fact that the day shift can just leave and not have to clean anything, but usually when their shift leaves, they don't have time to clean stuff. They are right in the middle of just getting done, and it's their time to leave, you know?

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: And a lot of people can't understand that. And a lot of people don't understand a lot of things that go on here and just complain about it, knowing it's not going to go anywhere but just for the fact to complain, you know. And just some of the hassles that I've had over the years, some of the really, really difficult people I've had to work with that not only are hard for me to work with but are hard for the rest of the staff to work with.

- DONIN: They don't last very long, do they?
- CASSADY: A lot of them don't.
- DONIN: I can't imagine—
- CASSADY: Unfortunately, a few have, which makes it very difficult for everybody, but eventually they weed themselves out, one way or another. And that's hard. And it's hard having to retrain new staff all the time. And when you get somebody, you kind of hope they're going stay for a while.
- DONIN: Yes, because you invest a lot in their training.
- CASSADY: Yeah, you do. A lot of time, a lot of money, a lot of effort.
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: And then to find out they're only going stay a month and you've got to start all over again.
- DONIN: Oh, yeah. It's not easy.
- CASSADY: And your shift is 1 to 9:30, and more people want to work during the day and have evenings off, especially a family person,—
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: —which is understandable. I would have liked that, myself, in my life, but I've never done that. I've always had such weird shifts.
- DONIN: Right. So speaking of the day and night, do you see—I mean, a lot of students say to us that, you know, Dartmouth changes at night; what it's like here at night is very different than what it's like during the day.
- CASSADY: I think that it has a lot to do probably with the staff, who the staff is, the type of food we put out. Let's say we close omelets and we open up pasta.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.

- CASSADY: Students are busy during the day with their studies, and—
- DONIN: Then at night—
- CASSADY: —at night, unfortunately, we see a lot of drinking. We don't see *them* drinking; we see the results of the drinking.
- DONIN: They come in here looking for food, right?
- CASSADY: They come in looking for food, and unfortunately Sarah has the Late Night. When we close, she reopens for Late Night at Collis, and she sees a lot more of that than we do.
- DONIN: Late Night being what? Say, 9 to 1 or something?
- CASSADY: 9:30 to—well, it's going to be 2 now.
- DONIN: Gee! Oh, so she sees the real—
- CASSADY: She sees—
- DONIN: She sees everybody coming out of the fraternities and sororities.
- CASSADY: Yes, especially on those nights they have the meetings. And it causes a lot of problems.
- DONIN: Yeah. And those are students that appear totally fine during the day but not fine at night.
- CASSADY: Yes.
- DONIN: Wow. So that's a whole different challenge.
- CASSADY: Yes. And that's part of it. I really don't know what contributes to it otherwise. I'm not sure.
- DONIN: It's the alcohol.
- CASSADY: A lot of it.
- DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: And I don't know whether it's the difference in staff, and sometimes it's their whole attitude that changes in the evening, even if they're not drinking. And that could be maybe an action or a reaction from the staff or—I'm not sure.

DONIN: Yeah. Well, I think it's the whole thing about nighttime that everything just looks and feels different.

CASSADY: Yes. A lot of my staff will say—(if I have to park down at Cummings, for instance), "I wouldn't walk down there at that time of the night," when you have to leave at 9:30, quarter of 10. Everything is well lit. There are students out and about all the time. But some of these people would not walk down there if their lives depended on it.

DONIN: Can't you call Safety and Security?

CASSADY: I did that one night. It took 40 minutes for somebody to come walk me to my car, and I said, *Heck with that*.

DONIN: Ah, interesting.

CASSADY: I'm not going to hang around when I don't get out until 9:30, 10 o'clock at night, hang around for 40 minutes for somebody to walk me to my car. I take my chances. You know, it's Hanover.

DONIN: For students, 10 o'clock at night is the middle of the day.

CASSADY: Oh, yeah, sometimes. I don't know how these kids do it. I really don't,—

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: —the ones that do all-nighters, not just once in a blue moon, but I'm talking two or three a week or especially during times when they have to have papers in—

DONIN: Exams and papers.

CASSADY: —or semifinals. Oh, my gosh! I don't know how they do it. I mean, I never went to college and I never had to study like that. I couldn't do it.

- DONIN: It's enormous pressure.
- CASSADY: It is. One of my old managers and I were talking about that one day, how much pressure there is here at Dartmouth for these kids to succeed and to be in so many things and to stretch themselves to such a limit that it's the alcohol or the drugs, unfortunately the suicides and the things that lead up to the tragedies that happen in life. There is so much pressure here.
- DONIN: And social pressure, too.
- CASSADY: Oh, that too, yes.
- DONIN: And these kids who feel that they can't fit in and find their group or—
- CASSADY: Yes.
- DONIN: —will they get into a sorority or won't they get in. That's all—
- CASSADY: That's a lot of pressure, too.
- DONIN: —a lotta pressure.
- CASSADY: It is. And it's hard on a lot of kids. I mean, some of them take it in stride. You know, if they've been one of those popular students in school and they've been involved in sports and had good grades and they've been in the school play and they worked on the school newspaper and they have other outside interests, too, and all their volunteering stuff they have to do nowadays in order to graduate, to get those credits. You know, it's—I don't know how some of the parents do it in high school.
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: When you've got four kids and they're all going in different directions every night.
- DONIN: It's tough.
- CASSADY: And these kids here? I mean,—

- DONIN: They're the cream of the crop here, these kids.
- CASSADY: They still have the same, or worse pressures. They know they're going to an Ivy League school and they'd better perform, you know?
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: And I'm sure they're getting pressure from home, too.
- DONIN: Yup.
- CASSADY: Especially if the parents are having to pay a good share of their education.
- DONIN: Mm-hm.
- CASSADY: "I'm paying \$40,000 a year. You *better* have good marks."
- DONIN: Are you conscious of how the profile of the Dartmouth student has changed so much over the years? You know, women started coming in the early '70s, and then they've tried to diversify the population here by having more foreign students and financial aid students, more students of different religions and ethnicities and colors of skin.
- CASSADY: One thing that amazes me is when we start hearing about how they're writing things on people's walls that they don't like. I don't care how much they say this country does not have racism, whether it's about your race, your sexual orientation, your gender, your religion, it still exists.
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: I don't care that they say it doesn't.
- DONIN: It's hard to believe that it happens here in such an intimate place, too.
- CASSADY: And it's such a threat to such a small group of people that I'm sure they are fearful. And every time I hear it, it's like, *I don't believe this is still happening here.*

- DONIN: And it's probably hard to understand where are these kids because the kids I see every day in Collis are the nicest—
- CASSADY: Oh, I know.
- DONIN: —most open, welcoming, friendly—
- CASSADY: Yeah. Most of the kids that either work with us or come here as customers are nice.
- DONIN: Yeah. Polite.
- CASSADY: You wouldn't know if they came from the poorest family to the most wealthy family, in some instances.
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: I mean, I had one of the girls that worked with me, and her girlfriend said, "Oh, she comes from a very wealthy family." She was not snobbish at all. She was a very nice girl, a hard worker. She didn't care what she did. She didn't care that she worked for Dining Services. Didn't bother her at all, you know? And other people? "I wouldn't work with Dining Services if I had to. I'd go to another college." Some colleges make students work in Dining Services at least one term while they're here. And I say—not because they need to see what we do or how we do it or to think they're working a menial job, but I think they should work here just to see what we do to produce the food that they eat.
- DONIN: Right. And it's probably good for them to be serving their fellow students, I would think.
- CASSADY: I don't think it hurts anybody.
- DONIN: Not at all. You can learn a few good lessons, I think, doing that.
- CASSADY: And even if it is just working for Dining Services and they consider it—"Well, this isn't a real job," I said, "You know what? What are you learning here as a worker? Not as a student, as a worker. You're learning how to serve people, you're learning how to communicate with people, you're learning how to follow instructions, you're learning how to

work as a team. Those are all skills you can take into any job." I said, "So don't tell me you aren't learning things here and this isn't a real job."

And when I've had people contact me from the Peace Corps, from Washington, from Wal-Mart. I don't care, from one end of the workforce to the other, about a student. "Don't tell me this isn't considered a real job, 'cause you put this on your résumé, you better hope that you learn something here."
[Laughs.]

DONIN: For sure.

CASSADY: "That you can take out in the real world."

DONIN: Right. For sure. So, any other ways that Dartmouth has changed over your 18 years here? I mean, we've talked about how the financial piece of it has been altered significantly and your workforce has changed, 'cause there's not enough of them.

CASSADY: And the types of food that we put out.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Right.

CASSADY: You know, I come to work and I go home. I very seldom get involved in doing other things on campus, just because I don't have time.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: And at 9:30, quarter of 10, 10 o'clock at night, I'm ready to go home. I don't want to be here for another two or three hours and drive home at midnight, you know?

DONIN: This is your world, right inside this building.

CASSADY: It is. And if somebody asked me where a certain building is on campus, I don't have a clue because I just don't have the time or the inclination to go find out where it is. I don't go to the Hop to see things because I don't have time, you know?

DONIN: You work nights.

CASSADY: I work nights. I do stuff around my house during the day. I have a second job, sometimes a third job. You know, I have a huge garden in the summertime. I have a family. I have grandchildren now. I just don't have time.

DONIN: So do you have any feeling about how—I mean, does it impact you or the feeling of Collis or your job, who the president is, for instance?

CASSADY: I think we all wonder, maybe worry a little if a new president coming in is going to say, "Okay, we need to cut the workforce." I think that's the main worry when a new president comes in: Is he going to cut the workforce? Is he going cut finances? Is it going to affect us? But overall, I think what he does has more to do with the student life than us.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: I mean, yes, we're a part of it, but unless it directly impacts our café or our jobs, I don't think most of us think too much about it.

DONIN: How much do you see as customers—I mean, obviously your students are your main customer body, but how much do you see faculty and community people coming in here?

CASSADY: Oh, quite a bit. We see a lot of staff, a lot of faculty. I shouldn't say "a lot," 'cause probably in all it isn't a lot, but we see the same ones over and over and over. And it's nice to see them. It's nice to see them come in and chat with us and get friendly. We have one professor that—I don't know if he's retired and comes back and just teaches here and there or what he does, but he's elderly, and when I first started working here, nobody could get him to smile. He wouldn't visit with anybody. And over the course of the years, we've all worked on him.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

CASSADY: And he smiles, he visits with us, and it's just so—it's so nice to see somebody of that age change their whole attitude towards a group of people that he comes in and sees every day.

DONIN: He's mellowed.

CASSADY: He has.

DONIN: With old age.

CASSADY: I think it's part of that, and I think it's that we made an effort—

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: —to draw him out and be more friendly towards us. I don't know whether he didn't think we wanted to be or whether we wouldn't be, whether we just felt he was a professor, so: hands off.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: I don't know, but it's almost comical to see the difference in him.

DONIN: But you've probably worked that kind of magic on a lotta students, too—

CASSADY: Oh, yeah.

DONIN: —if they were very shy or very snooty or whatever.

CASSADY: Yeah.

DONIN: I mean, who can resist the jokes of Collis Ray, for instance?

CASSADY: Oh, gosh!

DONIN: I mean, he'll get anybody to smile.

CASSADY: Oh, yeah. And some people are a little put off by him sometimes.

DONIN: [Chuckles.] 'Cause he's too—[Chuckles.]

CASSADY: He's too "out there."

- DONIN: [Laughs.]
- CASSADY: But sometimes with the shy students—we say, “How are you today?” Or if we see a student at the salad bar talking to somebody and they’re practically in tears because they’re just having such a hard time, and we just go up and say, “Are you having a bad day?” and they just say, “[Imitates someone crying and speaking at the same time.] Oh my God, I wahawahawah.” And it’s like, “You know, you can do this.” And we try to give them a little pep talk for, you know, 15 seconds.
- DONIN: Yeah.
- CASSADY: And when they leave here they’re, like, “Thanks. That helped.” [Laughs.]
- DONIN: That’s great.
- CASSADY: Or just go out and put your arm around ‘em and say, “You’re gonna be okay. Just look at this as a day gone by. You’ll start tomorrow fresh.”
- DONIN: And you must see a lot of that taking place in the dining area there—
- CASSADY: Oh, we do.
- DONIN: —‘cause you can look out and—
- CASSADY: Yes. More so now where we’re so wide open.
- DONIN: Sure.
- CASSADY: But even before, we were right there, you know?
- DONIN: Yup.
- CASSADY: And we see a lot of crazy, funny things go on, too. You know, the crazy outfits. They come in—and, like, the DOC trips for the freshmen.
- DONIN: Oh, my God, the croo!

- CASSADY: Oh, the freshman! I mean, all those crazy outfits—
- DONIN: [Laughs.]
- CASSADY: They used to come in Collis when we were cleaning at the end of the term and do all their skits and learn all their little ditties and all that stuff they were doing, and we would just stand there and go, *Oh, my gosh! I don't believe...*
- DONIN: [Laughs.]
- CASSADY: And these boys—they dress up in tutus and bright pink tights and—
- DONIN: Dye their hair.
- CASSADY: Oh, my gosh! [Laughs.]
- DONIN: It's quite hilarious, isn't it?
- CASSADY: Oh, one thing that *has* changed: They used to—Oh, I can't even remember what they used to call it. It's when girls dressed up like guys and guys dressed up as girls. And they came in here, and they had music, and they had a walk.
- DONIN: Oh, they did, like, a fashion show, didn't they?
- CASSADY: Yes, yes.
- DONIN: Yes. I know what you're talking about, but I can't remember—
- CASSADY: I can't remember what it was called. [TransForm Runway Show.] Well, they don't do that anymore. They don't call it that anymore.
- DONIN: Yes.
- CASSADY: They still do it, and they still do the walk on the stage and the music.
- DONIN: They've renamed it.

CASSADY: Yes. I can't remember now. I don't even remember what they call it now. But it's funny.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: One thing we are lucky enough to see is a lot of the singing groups will come in and perform in the dining room or Common Ground, and we'll pop in just to listen to a song now and then.

DONIN: They're so good.

CASSADY: And some of the dance performances and all that, and when the different groups come in, like the Asian group and they have all their traditional costumes?

DONIN: Yeah. Fantastic.

CASSADY: Oh, my gosh, it's beautiful.

DONIN: It is.

CASSADY: And to watch them do their dances that are traditional to how they grew up.

DONIN: Yup.

CASSADY: It's so nice to see that.

DONIN: It's beautiful.

CASSADY: It is.

DONIN: So if you had to describe *your* Dartmouth community, how would you describe it? Who does it include?

CASSADY: Definitely our workers, all the students that come in—I mean, we have students come in here four, five, six, seven times a day.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

CASSADY: We really do. They'll come in early morning for breakfast, they'll come back and get a muffin and coffee, they'll come

back for lunch, they'll come back for an afternoon snack, they'll come back for dinner and then they'll come back for Late Night.

DONIN: Amazing.

CASSADY: And you see them that many times a day, you—I'm terrible with names, but just to greet them and say, "Oh, you're back here again?" And they'll say, "Yup, this is the only place I eat on campus."

DONIN: Isn't that great?

CASSADY: They don't care what '53 offers. They don't care that they can get all they can eat. They just want to come to Collis. And half of it is standing in that café for 15 or 20 minutes, visiting with everybody.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: Students, workers. Then they'll finally go get their food.
[Laughs.]

DONIN: Right. Well, it's home away from home.

CASSADY: It is. I mean, we have meetings and seminars with the group from Courtyard and '53, training sessions, but, you know, in the almost 18 years I've worked here, I still probably don't know more than a handful o' names.

DONIN: And is there a different sort of personality attached to each of these dining halls?

CASSADY: Oh, yeah.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And can you identify what—I mean, if Collis is Mother Dartmouth, what is '53 or what is Food Court?

CASSADY: [No immediate response.]

DONIN: Can't do it.

CASSADY: I don't know. I can't put a name to it.

DONIN: You haven't been there enough to know.

CASSADY: Well, it isn't so much that as it's just—

DONIN: Maybe they *don't* have a personality.

CASSADY: I don't know. It's just different.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

CASSADY: To me, Courtyard people are a lot more friendly than '53.

DONIN: Uh-huh. It's almost like the size determines this because '53 is the biggest.

CASSADY: Bigger, yes. And we don't really ever have any opportunity to interact with each other, to do anything together, like a fun thing. So we don't ever get to know them.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: So it's just like strangers meetings strangers every time we see them, because it might be six months or a year to have any other contact than to go up and say, "I'll take a hamburger." Because we do go over there and eat occasionally. But we don't do anything together as a group, so there's no way of getting to know each other and getting to learn people's whole attitudes towards life, their jobs, each other, us.

DONIN: So they're definitely not part of *your* Dartmouth family.

CASSADY: Not really.

DONIN: No.

CASSADY: No, and it's too bad.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: It's too bad we don't do something with them as a group a couple, three times a year.

DONIN: Right.

- CASSADY: A picnic, go to the movies, go bowling.
- DONIN: I mean, that's an opportunity to form another sort of family—
- CASSADY: Bigger family.
- DONIN: —and to feel like you belong to something bigger than just Collis.
- CASSADY: Right. I mean, we used to have the Christmas parties over there and all the Dining Services got together. But what happens? You sit with the same people you work with.
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: So we never seem to get that opportunity to ever get to know anybody. I mean, here we spend more time with people we work with [than] we do our families.
- DONIN: [Chuckles.] Yes, that's true.
- CASSADY: We do!
- DONIN: I know.
- CASSADY: And, God knows, we get to know them pretty well.
- DONIN: [Laughs.] Whether you want to or not.
- CASSADY: [Laughs.] Exactly, [Laughter.] Yeah. It's a little strange sometimes.
- DONIN: So I think we're done, unless you have other thoughts you want to share.
- CASSADY: No, I just—I enjoy, really enjoy working here. I enjoy still working at Lake Morey Inn. It's an altogether different type of service, type of atmosphere. And up there, I became really good friends with a lot of people that I worked with 'cause we had a lot of the same—well, a handful of the same people that worked there for many, many years.
- DONIN: That core group.

CASSADY: Yes. And we still get together a couple of times a year, and I still work with some of them.

DONIN: Yeah.

CASSADY: But, you know, it's—I like working with students. I like learning about where they come from, how they grew up, what their families are like, what their traditions are like, especially if they come from another country. And learning from them about foods from where they came from and they make them here to serve.

DONIN: Oh, isn't that great?

CASSADY: It is! I mean, you learn a lot from some of these kids when you work with them and get the opportunity to have a 15-minute downtime to actually talk to them.

DONIN: Right. It's like a window on the world—

CASSADY: It is.

DONIN: —for you.

CASSADY: It is. And, I mean, it's something I never would have had if I hadn't come here.

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: Because, I mean, I work with a lot of Asian ladies in my other job, and we used to get together three, four times a year and have potlucks. And we certainly learned about a lot of their traditions, about their foods, because they'd bring, you know, traditional Asian food.

DONIN: Wonderful.

CASSADY: It was just great, learning about all that stuff. When my son was little—I remember one time we were going to get together, and he said, "Yumi [my Asian friend] coming? Her bring rice?"

DONIN: [Laughs.]

CASSADY: He was just little. He loved rice, and to this day he loves rice. It was so funny.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

CASSADY: I'm, like, "Okay." [Laughs.] But, no, I really like working here. The only thing I don't like about Dartmouth is traveling in the snowstorms.

DONIN: Oh, scary. So scary.

CASSADY: But I would rather drive myself than ride with somebody else because I trust my own driving better. [Chuckles.]

DONIN: Yes, exactly.

CASSADY: And actually, in all the years that I've worked here, I think I've only had maybe half a dozen times when the roads have been extremely bad. One night was a few years ago. They let some of us stay here overnight.

DONIN: Yeah, 'cause if you get out at 10 o'clock at night, that can be really ugly.

CASSADY: It can be. I've had a couple of bad nights—

DONIN: Yes, so they give you rooms at the [Hanover] Inn, right?

CASSADY: Once, I stayed at the Inn. Couldn't sleep all night, but I stayed at the Inn. [Laughs.]

DONIN: Right.

CASSADY: Yes, I've had some nights where I've only gone 25 miles all the way home because the snow was coming down so furiously and the roads were so bad.

DONIN: You can't see the road.

CASSADY: You can't. It just comes right at you, and the plows just can't keep up with it.

DONIN: Right.

- CASSADY: And you never know whether you're on the road or off when it's like that. But I had a few hairy nights.
- DONIN: But you must be considered part of the staff that's, like, — what do they call it? You know. I can't think of the word. Critical staff. You have to be here—
- CASSADY: Oh, yes.
- DONIN: —because you've gotta feed these students.
- CASSADY: They even paid workers one year, when they couldn't get in, when the roads were bad. I came in just the same.
- DONIN: Wow.
- CASSADY: I don't think I've ever called in—I called in one time. I got down as far as Lyme, and the roads had not been plowed. It was freezing rain on top of ice.
- DONIN: [Sharp intake of breath.]
- CASSADY: So I stayed parked for about half an hour, waiting for a plow truck to come through. Nothing came through. So I said, *Well, I'm going keep going*. So I called down here, and they said, "Well, the roads are all bare down here." I said, "Well, let me tell you, they aren't up here. They're glare ice, and they're frozen ruts and ice on top of them." I had such a horrible ride from my house down as far as Lyme and from Lyme down to the Hanover border that I did not know if I was going to make it alive.
- DONIN: Horrendous.
- CASSADY: It was horrendous. That doesn't even cover it.
- DONIN: Right.
- CASSADY: That was the worst—and that was in the daytime! It was just horrible. But now I've learned: I get studded winter tires and what a difference it makes.

DONIN: Yeah, huge. Hard to think about that kind of weather on a day like this, isn't it?

CASSADY: Oh, I know.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

CASSADY: It's gorgeous.

DONIN: It *is* gorgeous. [Laughs.]

CASSADY: Gorgeous. Well, I thank you very much.

DONIN: Thank you, Eleanor.

CASSADY: Hopefully you can keep some of this.

DONIN: Absolutely.

CASSADY: [Laughs.]

[End of interview.]