

N. Bruce Duthu '80
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
November 28, 2012

DONIN: Today is Wednesday, November 28th, 2012. My name is Mary Donin. We are here in Rauner Library with Bruce Duthu and your title here, at this moment, is chair of Native American Studies. Is that right?

DUTHU: Correct.

DONIN: Okay. Although let the record show that you've had many other positions here since you graduated in '80. So, Bruce, just to start off, sort of put it into context, how is it that you ended up coming to Dartmouth back in, whatever, 1976?

DUTHU: Seventy-six.

DONIN: Was there a family connection? Did a high school teacher recommend it to you? How did that happen?

DUTHU: It was a Dartmouth alum, actually, who helped make it happen, a guy by the name of James Bopp, Jim Bopp, who was a Class of '66. Got a job in my community down in Dulac, Louisiana, which is a coastal community in southeastern Louisiana, pretty close to the Gulf of Mexico, which is my tribal community, the Houma tribe. And Jim was the director of the local community center that serviced low-income families in this part of the state, mostly Indian families but poor white, poor black families. So they ran a series of programs like day care centers, nutrition programs, after-school care and so forth.

So Jim and his wife moved from wherever they were living at the time, I think in New Jersey, and ran a lot of these programs. And at the time—this is in the early '70s, when I was still in high school—I worked at the center, as many of us did. I was on the yard crew. I was on the buildings and grounds crew. So we mowed the lawn, painted, whatever they wanted us to do.

And my aunt was the secretary. She was the bookkeeper and the secretary for Jim. And when I got to high school, tenth grade, and I had finished typing—I had taken a course in typing, and I was a very good typist—my aunt asked if I wanted to work in the office as an office aide because she needed some help and she thought I could be helpful to Jim. So I got the job, and I got to work closer with Jim.

And so it started out I was doing his — typing correspondence and so forth, but pretty soon he saw that, as he got to know me better, that I was a pretty bright kid and could do a lot more than just doing correspondence, so he gave me lots of work. And so pretty soon I'm writing reports, I'm drafting things, and so as the months and years got along, he could see that I had a lot on the ball, and so we would talk about, "Well, what do you want to do?"

And I said what most boys in that part of the world said, was, "I'm gonna be a shrimper or work on the oil rigs," even though in my heart I knew I wanted to do neither of those things because it's hard work and I'm pretty lazy at heart. I am! But it's dangerous work as well, very, very hard work. But I really had no idea what else I wanted to do. I really did think at one point, for a long time, that I wanted to become a Catholic priest, and I shared that with him. I said, "Well, it's a predominantly Catholic area. I think I'd like to be a priest" and so forth.

So he began to talk to me about college, and Dartmouth in particular and its historic commitment to Indian education, and that was pretty intriguing, but it really sounded very much like a fantasy. Like, no one from here goes there. And I still knew nothing about the school. I'd never heard of Dartmouth. None of my family had ever heard of Dartmouth.

DONIN: Was college a tradition in your family at that time?

DUTHU: No. No, completing high school was still a big challenge for most kids in the area. The dropout rate was well over 50 percent, probably closer to 75 percent. So very, very few kids were finishing school. This was still—I grew up in an era of the segregated schools in the South, and so from kindergarten through fifth grade, I went to an all-Indian elementary school. Louisiana ran a tripartite public school

system in my parish, so there was a separate school system for blacks, for whites and for Indians. So I went to the all-Indian Dulac Indian school.

Integration, which required another round of federal court cases, finally came to our area in the '60s, and they implemented it in a staged fashion. So the high schools were first. In fact, my aunt, the same aunt that I worked with, was the first Houma Indian to graduate from South Terrebonne High School, which is the one that most of the kids from our area went to. She was the first to graduate. Then they integrated the middle schools, and then finally, by 1969, they integrated the elementary schools. So when I entered sixth grade in 1969, that was the first year that I went to school with black and white kids.

DONIN: Wow.

DUTHU: Yes. So it's not ancient history at all. So, no, going to college was just off the radar for most families. And a school like Dartmouth—although, to be honest, none of us knew really what conceptions like Ivy League meant, so in a way that was good; there was nothing to be intimidated by. It was just entirely foreign, so it was just another degree of foreignness, was that it was in the North, it was far away, it was college, and it was different. All of those things made it seem like an unreachable type of thing.

So by my junior year of high school, I was still in conversation with Jim about it but not really seriously because I still thought it was somewhat of a fantasy. Jim and his wife then left the area and moved back to I think New Jersey, but he kept in touch, kept insisting that I—checking in to see if I had applied. And I kept putting him off or making excuses for not having applied.

And then the last excuse that I used, which was actually the truth, was that we didn't have the money. I grew up in a very, very poor community. Single mom with two boys (I'm the younger), and living with our grandfather. Her dad took us in when she and my dad divorced. So we really had no money. She was a shrimp factory worker, and my grandpa was a shrimper and a trapper and then later a self-taught carpenter.

So I said to Jim, “We don’t have the extra” whatever it was back then, twenty-five, thirty bucks to fling off an application that may never see the light of day. So he sent me a check, payable to Dartmouth College, with a one-word letter: “Apply.”

So I did. And then I started getting a lot more material from Dartmouth, the propaganda, you know. And I felt, *What a missed opportunity*. I just did the application in an afternoon. You know, all these essays, just to get Jim off my back. [Chuckles.] And then I start reading all this background and Dartmouth’s history of Indian education, and all of it sounded fabulous, and the opportunities for off-campus study. Again, I would read some of this to my mom, and she just says, “Well, that just sounds wonderful, but it’s not our world. That’s not what we do.” But she never discouraged me. She just said, “What a wonderful opportunity,” and pretty much leaving it at that. But the implicit kind of unsaid part of our conversation was, “That’s not our world.”

But I was encouraged to apply. By this time, my name apparently got into the Dartmouth system because I had applied, so I got on the radar for the Native American Program, and at the time, the college still ran a program called the Summer Bridge Program for minority students, and I was invited to apply to be a participant in the Bridge Program.

My application status was still not certain at the time. They said, “You were a possible.” I think they gave you a little barometer of, you know, likely, possible, find another school kind of indication. I was in that middle category: still a chance.

But I was accepted into the Bridge Program, and—

DONIN: And that takes place the summer before you start.

DUTHU: Summer before starting fall term, so it’s in between. It’s the bridge between high school and college. And so I was given a chance to fly up to visit Dartmouth in the spring, through the Native American Program and the admissions office program that still continues today. And so it was my first

airplane flight. I'd never been on a plane before, never been to this part of the country before, and it was amazing. Got to sit in classes and meet Native kids from tribes I'd never heard of. Most of them had never heard of my tribe, either.

But those two or three days in Hanover were enough to make me really want this opportunity. I applied to one other school. I applied to a small sectarian school in Louisiana, as a backup, but I really had no interest in going there. It was really Dartmouth or make up some Plan B. And thankfully I got in, eventually. Did the Bridge Program, which was very, very helpful, not so much for the academics, but more for the social acclimation. And I know we're going to talk a lot about community. And the Bridge Program went a long way towards helping us acclimate to the community because there were four Native kids and twenty-eight African-American students on this program. That was the transition into Dartmouth.

DONIN: Wow. When your mother found out, your family found out that you were going to come to Dartmouth, was there any concern that you were going to sort of lose touch with your culture? You were going to a sort of white world, and I assume you'd never—other than your high school experience, when they finally integrated the schools, you were going to be sort of watered down up here.

DUTHU: Yes, it was not a big—we didn't talk about it very much, but, again, like in the early conversations when we were just entertaining the idea of my even applying to go to Dartmouth, there was this unstated concern that moving away might mean that I would stay away or come back in a very different way. And that was based in some actual experience.

So, for example, there were some family members or distant relatives who had left the area earlier for their kids to get an education, and they'd moved to other parts of Louisiana, where if they were light-skinned, as I am, they could pass for white and be admitted into the local schools, and then they would come back—many of these families would come back and not speak our version of French. This is a community that is heavily intermarried between French and Indian

families, so French or an archaic form of French is the first language. It was my first language.

These families would come back and not speak French anymore; they would only speak in English, and so there was already the sense that or this idea that when you leave, you take on the attributes of the broader society, including the language, and so you come back and now you're better than the local folks. And you wanted to show that you were better by pretending that you couldn't speak the language anymore.

And so I think there was that concern that I would go away to a very different place, get a very different kind of educational experience and then maybe come back and be one of those people that rubs it in the family's face: "Look at me, look at me." But we didn't talk about it explicitly.

DONIN: Right. But I can imagine that would be a concern.

DUTHU: Mm-hm. It was.

DONIN: So what did you find when you got here?

DUTHU: Well, it was a very different world. I mean, both the summer that I arrived—we were in a bubble, first of all, because it was the Summer Bridge Program. We did almost everything as a group.

DONIN: Together, uh-huh.

DUTHU: And so that was an artificial kind of exposure or artificial community that I was first immersed in, because we literally traveled in a pack. [Chuckles.] And I think, in hindsight, the organizers probably thought that might not have been a good idea to not have us more fully integrated into the life of the college, because we also took classes together—you know, English or math and a writing course or a study skills course. We were very identifiable, very visible on campus because there was this enclave of young, very, very young, mostly dark-skinned kids who were not really Dartmouth students yet. And so—

DONIN: And just to envision this properly, by this time, Kemeny had—it was year round, so the school was going on in the summer.

DUTHU: Exactly. So summer term was year round. This is 1976, so there were plenty of other Dartmouth students who were here. It was also co-ed, so there were both men and women, mostly men. But the real taste—I guess the taste for the regular community for all of us began, like most students, in the fall, when the new freshman class arrived and you get the full-blown kind of experience.

So a couple of things that stood out for me that were very, very different: One was this sense of welcome. I grew up in, unfortunately, a community where it's very hostile towards people of different races, and so if people—I was used to working or moving in circles where, if I was going beyond the Indian community, people could still be very polite, because they had to be polite—teachers, counselors—and not everyone; some people were genuinely, genuinely interested in your welfare. But if you went to certain stores, for example, in the local community or even in the town, which was the city of Houma, people could know that you were Indian based on, one, you're speaking French; two, what you look like. And so you could tell by their demeanor that they were forcing themselves to be polite, because they're in the public, they're running stores, they're city officials and things like that.

And so I was pretty used to people pretending to be nice to me. Here, I continued to be surprised at how genuinely welcoming people were, that they made me feel like I was wanted here and welcomed here, almost across the board.

The college had done something quite wonderful for those of us on financial aid, which was almost all of the Indian students. They had assigned one financial aid officer to become the expert on the myriad federal regulations that deal with financial aid and American Indian students. And that was a guy named Tony Quimby. And Tony was in the financial aid office for many, many years, and he got to know all these Native students, from the earliest days on, well into the '80s. In fact, when I came back as an administrator in the

'80s, Tony was still working in the admissions office, so to come back and have him as a colleague was just fantastic.

DONIN: So how many of you were there in those days, back in the '70s?

DUTHU: Yes, in the '70s I think the total enrollments from all four classes didn't exceed 45 students—

DONIN: Wow.

DUTHU: —45, 50 students.

DONIN: So, like 11 or 12...

DUTHU: Per class. Yes, there were ten Native students in my class. In the Class of 1980 there were ten. And not all of them were active in the Native American Program. Probably about half, five or six were very active. We would go to meetings, we would hang out, we would live at the Native American house and so forth. We were very identifiable in the community. So that was one thing in terms of being here.

The second thing that was very, very apparent to me was the nature and the quality of the teaching was off the charts from anything I had ever experienced. And I had good teachers in high school. I went to a large public high school. But I was usually in the honors sections of almost all of the classes, and so the teachers were quite good.

DONIN: You got the best of the lot.

DUTHU: I got the best of the lot. And some of them were extraordinary. But this was another notch, as they say, where you just could, through their voice, their delivery, the content of what they were talking about—seemed so immersed in their subject that you wondered, *How many lives have these people lived to be able to know all this stuff?* Since I was still thinking that I was going to become a priest at the time, I quickly began taking religion courses, so religion was my earliest—and Native American Studies, which was still just in its infancy back then—but I took courses with professors like Robert Oden, Charles Stinson.

Two remarkable teachers, particularly Professor Stinson, because my mom also joined me in a class during freshman parents weekend, during the spring. I had talked and talked about this professor, who never brought notes, never brought anything into the classroom. Charles specialized in early church, Christian church doctrine, and history. And so he would talk about the early church fathers: Augustine, Origen, all of these people, like he knew them personally. And he would make all these references, put it in a contemporary context so you could imagine Augustine having a conversation with a contemporary leader or responding to a contemporary issue and immediately let you into that world.

Every class, he would just walk in and just pick up where he had left off the previous class, without skipping a beat. And, again, no notes, no text. And he would just walk around class. And for years after that, my mom would ask me if I had ever taken a class with that man, she says, “Who’d close his eyes and always had his finger up in the air,” like this. [Demonstrates.]

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: You know, she would mock Stinson. He just had an amazing, amazing capacity. And those early moments—I couldn’t imagine how formative they were because now that I’ve become a teacher and an educator, I find that those are the moments that I go back to in my mind when I think about good teachers and who I want to emulate in my own teaching. It’s those folks from the early years. It’s not my law school professors; they were good but not exceptional, none of them. It was my undergraduate teachers at Dartmouth who were passionate about teaching. They lived for this stuff, and I’d never encountered educators who were that passionate about their subject matter.

I did do one of those foreign study programs with Rob Oden, who became my major adviser. I did end up majoring in religion and remember going to the British Museum with Robert, when he would walk us through seeing hieroglyphics and all these things that—he’s reading these rocks. You know, he was an expert in ancient and Near Eastern cultures

and religion and people. So there would be some Sumerian texts—you know, a Rosetta stone type of thing. And he’s reading these rocks, and he says, “Well, this is—” you know, based on—and we’re just looking at each other and said, “This guy! Now he’s showing off.” [Chuckles.]

DONIN: Amazing.

DUTHU: So that made you want—made *me*—I don’t know what impact it had on my fellow students, but that kind of example, which was fairly universal throughout my Dartmouth career—I had very few teachers who I would categorize as poor teachers. You know, they all seemed to really aspire to really get us into their subject matter. They made you want to learn more and work harder because you didn’t want to disappoint, so you wanted to produce work that was really good, and knowing that they would be reading it and giving you critical feedback.

Another professor who really, really stands out for me was Brenda Silver in the English department. Brenda, Lynn Higgins and Mary Kelley were three teachers who helped co-teach the very first women studies course at Dartmouth, and I was in that class. And so we would come together for a general lecture, and then they each handled a break-out group. And I was in Brenda’s break-out group.

And there again, someone who was a masterful teacher, plus she was gorgeous, and we all had cru- —and I’ve told her this, so I’m not telling secrets and stuff. I said, “We all had crushes on you.” You know, you just sat there— [Apparently pantomimes how they stared at her.]

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: What a beautiful woman! She’s still a gorgeous woman.

DONIN: Right.

DUTHU: But listening to this person speak with such eloquence and passion was exciting. And then—and I’ve shared this with her as well—I try, and I fail most of the time, but I try to emulate the kind of feedback that she gave us on papers. Brenda’s style was she would read your paper and then put

a number, always in pencil—and then you'd get a typewritten statement of those comments. So you'd have number one, and you'd look at your Brenda sheet, with copious notes about your sentence. If it was a good sentence, you were told why it was a good, very, very wonderful sentence. If it was not clear or if the material that you were talking about was—you were not fleshing out—you know, capturing what the arguments were, she would explain: "Now, what I'm trying to understand is what are you seeing in this passage? What is it about this passage that motivated you to say what you said? I want to understand how you make this move."

And for the first time, I think, I have someone who is really teaching me, showing me the power of language and the importance of language and being able to use it carefully, treating it like a very precious thing, where she would say—and this is something I would share with my law students years later. As a lawyer, language is your tool. This is what you have, the construction of arguments and all of these sorts of things, and I would go right back to those formative lessons with Brenda—her detail, to being able to say, "Say what you mean." But before you can do that, you really have to understand what it is that you're working with. Sounds so obvious, but when you've got someone who's helping you by giving you all of this kind of a road map to an intellectual framework, it becomes so much more clear.

So, extraordinary teachers. So for me, the community coming into here was I understood what it was like to live in an intellectual community, a life of the mind, to really be open to new ideas in ways that were really exciting.

The hard thing, though, was to be able to go back home. Because of the D-Plan, I was frequently back in Louisiana. It was really hard for me to share with my family in Louisiana what was going on in this world over there. It was almost like I had to keep it in two separate little compartments, that I had my Louisiana world and my New Hampshire world.

There were some people here that I could talk [to] about this difficulty. It was very painful to be able to not kind of share this experience because of that phenomena you noted at the top. It was, like, *I am changing, or I am perceiving*—already, as an 18-, 19-year old—that I like this stuff. *Does that mean*

I'm less Native now, that I'm becoming exactly what my mom might have feared, or my community might have feared?

And I'm sure I would come back to Louisiana and say and present myself in a way that I *was* giving off those—even without meaning to, I was giving off those airs that—*Look at me. You know, I'm doing*—and I was doing something very, very different than anybody—My going to Dartmouth was front-page news in the local community. The headline said: “Duthu’s Journey from Dulac to Dartmouth.”

DONIN: Fantastic.

DUTHU: A lot of alliteration in there.

DONIN: Yes.

DUTHU: And so front-page story that family members clipped and they tell me they still have after all these years, so it was a big thing. But it had its downsides, as well.

DONIN: I want to make sure I understood what you said. There were people here—are you talking about your teachers or your friends that you’d made that you could talk to about transitioning back to home?

DUTHU: The most critical person and office for that kind of conversation was the Native American Program, and this says a lot about why I came back as an administrator. The Native American Program, which at that time was directed by Dave Bonga, who was a Class of '74—Dave was the first alum to head that office, and since David, every director of the NAP has been a Dartmouth alum, with the exception of two people, including the current director, Molly Springer.

Dave had an open-door policy, and because he had gone through the Dartmouth experience himself, had come from a tribal community, he was a great role model that we could go to, and I went to Dave a lot, and we became very close. We're still actually quite close today. I bring him back to guest lecture in my courses because he's a lawyer and talks about tribal court, jurisprudence and so forth.

But in those days, he was the person that I would go to and talk about these particular challenges. So if the challenge was dealing with an issue back home or a community issue here. So, for example, one of the difficulties of bringing a multi-tribal—setting that up, where you have Native kids from all—

DONIN: All over.

DUTHU: —different tribes, is they're discovering how different *they* are. What they have in common is they're Native, but their traditions are very different, their ideas of what it means to be Indian—very, very different, and that also erupted into conflict, where people would eventually mimic the kinds of discourse that happens in Indian country, which is, Well, who are the *real* Indians? Because if you don't speak your native language or if you didn't grow up on the reservation, if you don't look like a stereotypical Native person, you can start ticking the little boxes and say, "The fewer boxes you can tick, the less authentic you are as a Native person."

And so when these discussions would happen and they would look at people—let's say East Coast kids, from tribes that had a long history of intermarriage between African-American and Native American, and say what is it about your background that makes you say that you're Indian? What's the criteria by which you say that you're Indian?

Those were hard discussions. They still are very difficult discussions. None of us had the vocabulary at 18, 19 years old. We had a lot of emotion. We had a lot of feeling about saying, "How dare you say I'm not Indian!" But we really didn't have a vocabulary for having that conversation, so there were a lot of tensions in that community in terms of people who would stop talking to each other or would not be active in the Native community because of these barriers that we had.

So Dave had a tough job, which was, How do you build community when there is such diversity within the community? Which everyone, I think, from the outside of the Indian community saw as a positive. "Look at all these Native kids." But within it, there's all these tensions and frictions and so forth. We still have to manage that, and I think we do it a

lot better now because there's more data. We have a vocabulary now for having that conversation, but back then, this was really tough stuff to do.

DONIN: What was the gender breakdown in those days? I mean, of those 12 or 10 people that are in your class—I mean, there was no parity—

DUTHU: Uh-uh.

DONIN: —until many years later, so I assume it was more men than women.

DUTHU: It was. In my class, I can think of only two women, two Native women in the class, so I think they were the only two. So two women, eight men in a class of 80 who were Native. And other classes, like the one just before me, the Class of '79, had many more women in it, so in terms of those students who elected to be active in the Native community, there was close to parity in terms of the genders, so there were about as many women as men who were, you know, leaders in the student organization, were active on the campus. Some of them were, you know, active in both communities and walked very easily between both communities.

So you got to see—I got to see women in very, very important roles, and learned a lot from them in terms of when *they* go back to their communities what's their role, how do they manage that transition? So, yes, the Native American Program facilitated those kinds of conversations, and then, of course, there was the evening conversations at the Native American House, where we would talk a lot about those kinds of issues.

So that community was so formative for me and helpful to help me navigate, to find a place where I didn't really have to explain myself too often. It was a sanctuary. Not a hideout, but it was a place that made me feel like I could be stronger and make a contribution, even if I felt woefully inadequate sometimes. You know, in my own mind, it was hard—it's hard to overcome things that, in your earlier memory, you still have those days of segregated schools and things like that. You still have things that would come up to say, *I don't*

deserve this or Maybe those people were right. Like, if you got a low grade—for example, if I'd get a B-minus or a C or something like that, I—initially, it would be very easy for those demons from the past to sort of come up and—and so I would feel sorry for myself and say, *Well, maybe I shouldn't be here in the first place.*

So I would remember things—like, when I was a boy—I was about 9 or 10 years old—as a boy, my cousins and I were playing on the side of the bayou. I grew up—all of us grew up right on the bayou, which was the small river and the lifeblood of the community, and we were fishing or something like that. And, out of nowhere, this white guy, driving a big truck zoomed by and stopped and threw a beer bottle at us and yelled an epithet. The N-word for white people to call Native people was sabine, so that's was the racial epithet that they would hurl. They'd say, "He's just a no-good, drunken sabine."

So this guy drove past and threw his beer bottle at us, and it just missed one of us. I don't know if it was me or—and he called us—I forget what it was, but there was the epithet and some swear words.

DONIN: Ugly, ugly stuff.

DUTHU: Ugly stuff. And he drove off. And then we just sort of looked at each other, and then what I remember is we just kept on playing, but I remember that moment of, like, being, you know, just a kid and then this person, with such anger and—like, he could have hurt or maimed one of us or done some damage. Why would you do that to some little kids and stuff?

So sometimes that memory would come up again. I'd have to force myself to say, *Okay, this C that I just got isn't because she's just like that man; it's because I didn't do a good—it's not about me, it's the work, and I need to remember that.* But I had to force myself to make that distinction, that it's not about someone calling me out as, you know, "You're not worth it."

What did make that distinction harder to make was the whole Indian symbol controversy, where some alums and current students, who just couldn't understand why we were not

enamored—why we didn't get it, that the symbol was meant to honor all of us—that is the closest I ever got to being reminded of that guy throwing the beer bottle at me. It's, like, you know, "You're not wanted. If you don't like it here, leave."

DONIN: Was that the message you were given?

DUTHU: Oh, yeah! It was, like, "This was fine. This place was perfectly fine until *you* folks showed up and started stirring up trouble." And this was before the [*Dartmouth*] *Review* was born.

DONIN: What about the Hovey murals? Were they playing a part?

DUTHU: Yes. But at least with the Hoveys we had a context in which we could talk about that, because it was there; they were not living human beings kind of parading around in war paint and feathers and all of this kind of stuff, so they were not a moving target. So there, we could talk about it, debate it and deal with it on its own terms.

This other community stuff was one element that made it very problematic. Again, this is where having allies was just so important, people who taught us how to fight. Michael Dorris was probably the foremost individual who stands out in my mind as the person who took a lot of arrows for all of us. And I only knew later just how much stuff Michael had to contend with from alumni, from even other colleagues, from other elements within the college as to the difficulty of getting his program, Native American Studies, off the ground, and then also being someone to whom Native students could go to for help, not just with our academic issues but, Do we really belong here? Do we fit here?

And Michael—we had this forum, that we still have, called the Native American Council, and the Council, you won't find on any org chart, but we created it organically, so it was a coming together, a forum for the Native American Studies, the program and the students. And so the Council was—we mimicked community systems, where you do things in council. And so we would come together to talk every other week or something like that. It was a regular gathering. And those meetings, beyond just kind of updating each other on what was going on, the day to day, was also the time to air

out. If there was an Indian T-shirt issue, if there was a mascot display at the football game or something like that, we had a chance to talk about it and say, “Now, what are we gonna do about it?”

And Michael was always there to lend great advice. But one thing that he stated over and over again, as a reminder to the students—he says, “Remember, your first job here is to be a student.” So *he* would oftentimes—he says, “I don’t want to displace you. Those of you who want to write a letter to *the D*, knock yourself out. Do that kind of stuff. But remember, when you choose to use your time in that way, you’re not writing the essays or the papers or doing your homework. And then you run the risk of being a self-fulfilling prophecy for those people who think you didn’t belong here in the first place. Your low grades will become a testament that fuels their argument, that you couldn’t cut it here, that you only got in because you’re Indian. Don’t give them that argument.”

So instead of just saying that, he would also say, “Those of us who are the older, the adults in the community—it’s our responsibility to help change this community.” And so *he* would write the letters. *He* would go to the meetings, or come with us to a number of meetings. And so he was an amazingly strong voice for a lot of us in terms of saying, “This is your school. This school was started for you.” And he made us believe it, you know, so whenever we felt kind of low and I would feel that demon, that guy with the beer bottle coming up again, then I would have Michael there as an antidote for that, to say, *No! This is my school, and I’m gonna make my mark here, and there are gonna be these folks who don’t want us here or don’t want us to change what is their Dartmouth or was their Dartmouth experience.*

So for every difficult scenario, there were also these individuals who were here, to be supportive, which played a big part in my choosing, years later, in 1986, to come back to Dartmouth.

Now, somewhere along the way, I decided not to be a priest. There’s a very particular story about that. I was in my sophomore year, so it actually happened pretty quickly. I was still on campus in the summer of 1977, it would be, when I

was very active with the Catholic community at St. Denis, not Aquinas House.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Not Aquinas.

DUTHU: No. And the reason for that was very simple: I felt that I wanted to be part of a parish community that felt like a real parish, so I would tell my mom—I said, “I need to see babies or hear babies crying, and I need to see old people, and I see neither of them at Aquinas. It’s all students.” I said, “it doesn’t feel like a real parish.” So I started going to St. Denis, and the priest there at the time was um, um—I’m spacing out on his name already. But there was a young seminarian who was doing a summer—I don’t know what they call it—apprenticeship or something like that. Marcel, from Canada.

And he and I became close friends, and we would have these wonderful conversations. We’d go to lunch or go for walks, and he was fascinated with my background being Native American but also being Catholic and a French-speaking Indian, so there was a lot of sort of exotic—

DONIN: You were exotic.

DUTHU: —aspects of that for him. But he wasn’t too anthropological, as some people tended to be. He was just curious, and that gave us an entrée into each other’s worlds. But mostly we talked about religion and faith and aspirations. And he would ask, was one of the first to ask repeatedly, “Why do you want to be a priest?” And so my responses tended to be—he summarized it very eloquently. He says, “It sounds like you want to be a priest to pursue a social justice agenda,” because I would describe all of the background that I grew up in and that among those few white people and institutions that seemed able, when they elected to, to make a difference, it was the church because the church had power in Louisiana.

And I talked about a couple of priests in particular, who stood out because of that. One in particular was this old Irish guy named Father Finnegan who, when he was appointed to our parish in the ‘50s, late ‘50s, he was appalled when he walked into the main church. There were two little churches:

the main church and the chapel that was in Dulac. The main church actually had bars nailed on the pews to designate the Indian section—

DONIN: Oh!

DUTHU: —of the church. That was the Indian section. When he walked in with the white parishioners who all made up the church council, and he says, “What’s that?” And they said, “Oh, that’s where the sabbines—” They couldn’t even say Indians; they said, “That’s where the sabbines sit.” And he was, like, “What do you mean?” So they explained. He was furious.

So the first thing he did is he personally undid all the bars, loaded them into his station wagon and drove them to the bishop’s residence in New Orleans, because we were part of the archdiocese of New Orleans then, and he said, “If any of my parishioners ask me where the bars in the pews are, I will send them here so that you can explain why you tolerated that.”

Well, he was like a godsend.

DONIN: Powerful.

DUTHU: Yeah!

DONIN: Really powerful.

DUTHU: That story was—We were, like, “Okay!” He was like a Michael Dorris in my community. He was a fighter. And so when he died, actually, I took five of my aunts—we all went to his funeral. I happened to be home at the time. We all went to pay honor to this guy, Father Finnegan. What a wonderful guy!

So there were stories like that that I shared with Marcel, and so he summed it all up by saying, “So social justice. You want to change things through the church.” He goes, “Well, what about God, service to God and all of that?” I go, “Oh, it’s up there.”

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: Top ten. [Laughs.] Easily. And he says, “You know, I think you would be a wonderful priest,” he says, “but I think you would be a very unhappy priest.” I said, “Why would you say that?” He says, “Because I think the kinds of things that you would want to do as a priest are going to be very difficult to do in that kind of setting, given who you are.” And I didn’t fully understand what he meant, but it was all about the liberation of theology and all of these kinds of things. “What are you doing with the church? Where are you taking the church?” and so forth.

And then, of course, all the constraints, the institutional constraints that would come with that, that he was exactly right. The more I thought about that, the more I thought, *You’re absolutely right*. So by the end of that summer, I had decided not to become a priest. And it just coincidentally happened that I also met Hilda, my wife, now of 30-plus years, the same summer.

DONIN: Wow.

DUTHU: And we fell madly in love, and—

DONIN: Was she a Dartmouth student?

DUTHU: Her sister was. So Therese Ojibway, who was a Class of ’78, was also on campus that summer term, and Hilda was visiting her sister, both at the beginning of the term—they drove out together so my wife could catch a plane to Spain. She was a student at Michigan State University. So to save money, she and her sister drove out east together at the beginning of that summer. Hilda flies off to Spain. I’m still thinking I’m going to be a priest.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: By the time she comes back, I’m not going to be a priest anymore, and she and her sister drive back to Michigan, but the last week or so of that summer was when we really fell madly in love, connected and so forth. And then we were apart for over six months because she went back to Michigan and then I went abroad to do language study abroad as well as the foreign study program in religion with

Rob Oden. This is pre-Skype and e-mail and all this stuff, so we just wrote letters furiously. Almost every day, we wrote to each other.

DONIN: Wow.

DUTHU: And at the end of that fall and winter term—so in the beginning of the spring term, Hilda had saved up her money to meet me in Europe, so we rendezvoused in London, where I had befriended this wonderful family, this couple, an Indian couple, from India, who were relatives of my landlord. They had all immigrated from India years earlier. I even called them Mom and Pop. They had never had children, and we just mutually had this falling in love. Met over Christmas, because I spent Christmas in London, and we just loved each other.

And so after I was done with the trip in France, I went back to London, where Mom and Pop had agreed to let us stay at their—they had a separate flat where Pop did his sign painting. He was a sign painter, and they said, “You can stay in our flat.” Charged us, like, nominal rent, just so they could pay the fuel.

So that’s where we set up—we welcomed Hilda. They were so excited to meet this—because they had really fallen for me, and so they wanted to meet this young woman, so Mom helped me pick out the sheets and everything for welcoming Hilda.

And so that became the beginning of a five-week trip in Europe. So we had the Eurail passes and everything. And so we traveled. We were London for almost a week and then Paris and Barcelona and Rome and Vienna and then through the Alps and then back to Paris and then back to London. In Paris, we were engaged. We got engaged in front of the Arc de Triomphe.

DONIN: Oh!

DUTHU: So we have this big, beautiful painting of it in our house.

When we got back to London, back to Mom and Pop, we were standing at their doorway, and we said, “We have

some exciting news.” We didn’t have to tell them. They hugged each other!

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: Not us. They hugged each other, because they felt, *We helped make all of this happen* and stuff. So Mom and Pop were truly special in our lives.

DONIN: Great story.

DUTHU: So years later, Hil and I—a year later, we got married. We got married in '79. We were both still students. Hil was a senior at Michigan State, and I was a junior here at Dartmouth, but I took two leave terms, went to Michigan, where I worked as a counselor to Indian students in the high school and middle school there while she finished up her degree. And then she and I both came back in the summer of 1979. Then I did summer, fall, winter, spring and graduated right on time with my class.

And by then I needed a Plan B, since Plan A was off the table. The priesthood thing was not going to work out. So law school came to be—and here’s the story about law school: Hil and I were invited to one of these alumni dinners that they do at the Dartmouth Outing Club, but they do them all over the place. You’ve been to your share of these dinners. I call them the “grand seduction dinners,” where they get all these alumni together and woo them and make them feel warm and fuzzy, and then they just [makes sound signifying speed] whip out the check.

So they strategically plant some undergrads at each of these tables, so I’m at one of the tables, where it seemed that all the alums who were there were lawyers, because they’re all talking about their law careers and stuff. So when it came around to the dessert and the conversation turned to, “Well, Bruce, my man, what are you going to be doing after Dartmouth?” And without skipping a beat, I said, “I’m going to be going to law school.” My wife almost swallowed her spoon.

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: She had never heard those words coming out of my mouth. And so on our way home, she was very quiet, and finally—because we lived in Sachem Village here in West Lebanon. So we're driving home. On the way home, she says, "So, law school." I said, "Uh-huh." She goes, "Had we been at the next table with all the doctors, would you be thinking about medical school?" [Laughter.] And she says, "isn't there, like, some test that you have to take, you know, and all of that?" I had done nothing: no LSAT, nothing. So that had to get going right away.

But I did everything, got into law school, and I ended up going to Loyola, a Jesuit school, which I always considered to be a partly—maybe an insurance policy for abandoning the priesthood and at least go to a Catholic school.

So we lived in New Orleans for a total of six years, so law school and then I practiced law, civil litigation, for over three years. And then we had the opportunity to come back to Dartmouth. During that time that I was in private practice, I was invited to join this group called the Native American Visiting Committee, which John Kemeny had actually started. As part of all the setting the framework for welcoming and supporting Native students, they had the foresight to create this advisory body of alumni.

And at the time, during the '70s, the Native American Visiting Committee also included a sitting trustee, who was Bob Kilmarx at the time.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

DUTHU: I think I told you a little bit about Bob—

DONIN: Yes.

DUTHU: —with whom I spoke just a few days ago.

DONIN: That's great.

DUTHU: And so I was on the NAVC, and in the context of one of our meetings, I learned—this would have been 1985 or so—I learned that the sitting director of the Native American Program was going to be stepping down from his role. He

had announced that he was leaving to go to law school. He was going to go to Vermont Law School, in fact. And I jokingly said to the dean of the college, who at the time was Ed Shanahan—I said, “Oh, if Don wants to do the law thing, he and I can switch positions for a while, and I’ll come do his job and he can go do the law thing.” (Just joking.)

During a break, Ed came up, and he says, “Would you seriously consider coming back to Dartmouth?” And I said, “No. I mean, what would possess me to do something like that?” He says, “Well, you’d have a lot to offer.” And he began to talk to me about the possibilities. And so one conversation led to another, and it looked like this might actually be something that could be interesting.

The thing that really—the sweetener was when Michael Green, Professor Michael [David] Green, who was chairing Native American Studies at the time, also joined the conversation and said, “If you were to come, would you be interested in developing and teaching a course in Native Americans and the law? Because we really want to have a law and policy component to NAS. It’s so critical to the experiences of Native peoples.” Well, that was—

DONIN: That did it.

DUTHU: That did it, because then I remembered all these teachers. What came up was Stinson and Oden and Brenda Silver, and to think that I could teach in classrooms where these “gods” taught! But I’m not one of them because I’m paid to be an administrator and I’m moonlighting as a teacher—because I’m not going to get paid, either. They made that point very, very clear: “Administrators don’t get paid.” Fine.

I said, “Happy to do it.” And that’s what brought us up, was this idea that I could come back and make a contribution. We really thought this was going to be a short-term thing. We will do this for two, three years. It was my pay-back to the Native American Program and Dartmouth generally for, even at that early stage, what had been transformative experiences for me and for my family. I met my wife, had a career. All kinds of things had already happened that I felt this need: *I gotta give some of this back. I gotta give it back.*

And then we had no plan for, like, where would we go? Would we go back to Louisiana? That was a possibility. Move to some other area, maybe back to Michigan, where Hilda's family is from? So we were pretty open to lots of other things.

My law partners thought I was completely nuts. You know, "Why would you leave a successful law practice?" et cetera. They couldn't get it. And many members of my family couldn't get it either, because, again, they thought, "How many of us graduate from high school and then get to go to college and then, as the first lawyer in the tribe?" And from their perspective, I'm throwing it all away. I actually had a cousin or the wife of a cousin who said, "Bruce, what a waste!" And then my mom's oldest brother, when he heard that I was leaving the law to come back to Dartmouth to direct the Native American Program—and he says, "What is that job?" And my mom described that it's supporting and—you know, she's trying to articulate it as well as she could, and this is her oldest brother, so she has to be very respectful in terms of our system. They're very respectful to the oldest brother. And he shook his head, and he goes, "So he's gonna be a baby sitter."

DONIN: Oh!

DUTHU: That's how he saw it. He says, "So he's gonna stop being a lawyer so he can go baby sit some Indian kids." And he just couldn't get it. It just didn't resonate for anybody there. But it felt right, and I did have another law partner, who had recently joined our firm. I had switched firms. But this guy—he was a fairly senior member of the firm but, just in the previous two years, had lost a daughter through an automobile accident and had totally changed—unfortunately changed—belatedly changed his outlook on life.

And we had this long conversation where he said—he says, "I follow the path that way too many lawyers follow, which is I try to make as much money—I'm on the fast track. I want to get the best in the best firm with the best salary and the best house, and why have one house when you can have two and all the material aspects of that?" He says, "And thinking that my family is going to wait for me when I get there." He goes, "Well, guess what: There is no 'there.'" He says,

“You’re never going to be satiated.” And he says, “So what happens? Two divorces.” And he says, “I lost my family, and now,” he says, “I’ve lost my daughter forever.” He goes, “I never will get those years back,” he says, because I came in and said, “I don’t know what to do.”

And he says, “Bruce, if I had your youth and your choices, there’s no question. You gotta do this.” He says, “You can always come back to this.” He says, “Don’t let any of these people tell you you’re gonna lose your edge or you’re gonna be off the merry-go-round and you’re never back on the merry-go-round.” He says, “No, you can always come back to this.” He says, “That’s why you got this education, so you will be able to empower, self-empower.” So he says, “What do you got to lose?” I was, like, “Thank you. Thank you.” [Laughs.]

DONIN: Fantastic.

DUTHU: So it’s voices like that. I actually wrote an essay, where I said, “My best hope for my children is that they will have the benefit of these wise voices at just the right time to come in and help you right at those pivotal moments,” because that was a pivotal moment. And it really has made all the difference.

I mean, coming back to a community where now we were going to be residents, so Dartmouth is now my employer. It’s also my *alma mater*. But it’s also now the place where we live and are going to be raising our children, part of the school system. So once I stepped into the classroom, which didn’t happen until the second year—I spent the first year learning how to be a counselor. But that felt, to be honest, very natural. I mean, I just walked in and did what Dave had done for us. Dave was my template. And learning all the other allies that we had to work with and lots of other things that we were able to do, including this project.

So that job kept me very, very busy and brought me into all different kinds of sectors, but the teaching—1987 was the first time that I taught the course. I had spent a good chunk of the first year building it up, developing it, testing it with my colleagues and then offering it. And as soon as I’m in the course of that experience, I was like, *I’m never gonna be a*

lawyer. I remember coming home to Hilda, and I said, “I’m never going to go back to law practice. This is too much fun.”

I remember thinking, *What were the things about being a lawyer that I loved the most when I was in private practice?* And it was the two things that I most routinely got—not criticized, but my partners worried that I was spending too much time in the library and that I spent too much time with clients, chatting with my clients. I liked to communicate about the law, and I loved getting into and learning about the law. I was modeling what I saw here—

DONIN: Exactly.

DUTHU: —people who just *dove in* until you could literally read the rocks, you know, and see what they had to tell you. And my partners would say, “We don’t have the time for all of that stuff. They just need an answer. They need an answer.”

I have to tell you one more story. My senior partner at the first firm I joined was the managing partner of the firm. It was a small firm, about 35 lawyers, general civil litigation. And he was a very well-respected lawyer. He had been the president of the Louisiana Bar and the New Orleans Bar Association. Very prominent guy. Had a reputation for being somewhat of a bear. But, like a lot of bears, he really was cuddly on the inside, but no one—he didn’t let many people see that side.

So when there were five baby lawyers hired that year, 1983, and we were each assigned a mentor, he was my mentor. And Bob did mentoring in a very—he took it—they all took it seriously, and I’m always grateful for that, would always share this with my law students years later at Vermont Law School, saying, “You want to find yourself a place where they take mentoring seriously, because you really don’t know much about being a lawyer even after we’re done with you after three years.”

So one of the things Bob would do, besides a regular luncheon—food is—remember, this is New Orleans. Food is sacred. There’s no such thing as a—you know, there’s no problem with a three-hour lunch there. If we’d come back from a *two*-hour lunch, they’d say, “What’s wrong?”

DONIN: “What went wrong?”

DUTHU: “What went wrong?”

DONIN: [Laughs.]

DUTHU: So he would take me to lunch and chat about being a lawyer. But also he would regularly call me in, or he would pick up the phone—he’s from Shreveport, Louisiana, so he had that northern Louisiana accent. [Imitates his accent]: “Bruce, I want you to bring the Johnson file, and let’s see what we got goin’ in the Johnson file.” I was, like, “Yes, sir, Mr. Leake” and go and get the Johnson file; pray to God I had done something on the Johnson file in the last week. And he would go, and he would walk through every pleading, every correspondence, to see—“Why’d you write that letter? What was the point of this letter?” Okay. He wanted to know everything that I was doing on that letter. “When was your last correspondence?” “How fast do you return phone calls?—all this kind of stuff. So [snaps fingers] on your toes!

My favorite Leake story, though, was when we had a client who wanted to know—we represented lots of shipping companies, and one of our clients had discovered a barge, sunken barge in the Mississippi River. But before they salvaged it, they wanted to know, “What are we getting into? What’s the law, maritime law? Are we assuming debt?”—things like that.

So Mr. Leake put me on the case to produce this thing, and I researched this subject to death, because he wanted an opinion letter. And I wrote a three-page opinion letter, single-spaced. This thing was, I thought, meticulous. Not for Mr. Leake. So I sent him the draft, and the glasses are down here. So he’s looking at it and flips it over. [Imitates a deep sigh.] Puts it back to the front page, takes out his red pen, circles the first paragraph, holds it up and says, “Is the answer here?”

DONIN: Oh.

DUTHU: And I said, “Well, I set it up there.”

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

DUTHU: Then—you know, I was kind of a kooky young guy, and I think he liked that about me, so he tolerated my little—I said, “I set it up there, but then it builds up, and then it gets to the crescendo.” [Laughs.]

DONIN: And he says, “I appreciate it, Bruce,” he says, “but your client is busy. Your client wants an answer. They don’t want a damn law review article.” So he says, “One page.”

DONIN: “One page.”

DUTHU: “And the answer has to be here.”

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

DUTHU: Well, when I started teaching at Vermont Law School, eventually integrating into my torts and criminal law—an exercise where they have to write an opinion letter, and the Leake story would come up.

DONIN: Perfect.

DUTHU: Anyway—

DONIN: That was great.

DUTHU: —being in the classroom allowed me to do those things, the two things that I loved most about being a lawyer, which was the intellectual aspects of that and the communication aspects of that, learning for myself but also being able to share that with other people. And that’s when I went home to Hilda and I said, “I’m done being a lawyer. I want to do this.”

DONIN: You found your niche.

DUTHU: [Laughs.]

DONIN: Yes, yes.

So before we jump into your experience working as an employee here, let’s back up a little bit. How would you describe your relations with the Dartmouth student body, for

starters, outside the Native students you were hanging out with, it sounds like, most of your time?

DUTHU: Mm-hm.

DONIN: Is that fair to say?

DUTHU: Yes. As a student back in the '70s, I had very little connection with the Dartmouth student body outside of the Native and African-American community. And the reason those two communities were—for the Native community, that's the first and most meaningful set of relationships that I built early on. For the African-American community—remember, I was part of the bridge program, so those 28 students by the fall became 128 students, and we became very, very close and remained close throughout our four years at Dartmouth.

John Rich, who is now a trustee, was one of the—John wasn't a "bridgee," but he was one of the first friends that the bridgees made, brought into the bridgee circle. So John and I have been friends—were friends very early on in those years.

Beyond the Native community, probably the closest set of friendships that I made during my student years were those off-campus programs, where you really spent a lot of time with your classmates. We traveled together. We were in class every day. So both in London and in France, those friendships continued when we all got back to Dartmouth, and we would see each other, not as regularly but then you had that kind of experience.

But I didn't do sports. You know, I wasn't in sporting teams. I was not a Hop rat so I had a very limited set of circles there; it was predominantly the Native and African-American community, with these other kind of satellite communities.

DONIN: Now, let's talk about Greek life.

DUTHU: Not on the radar at all. And in those days, the preponderant view of Native students was that the Greek system represented the enemy, in the sense that they were the established order. That's where the hotbed of support for the

Indian symbol resided, was in the Greek system. They were the enemy. [Chuckles.] And if a Native student pledged a fraternity (there were no sororities), they were really outcasts from the Native community. You could not do both.

Now, that was utterly unfair to those students trying to bridge those communities, and thankfully those walls have really gone down, but in those days, you could not be both a member of the Native community and a member of the Greek society, because you had to pick a choice, because you're now part of the enemy. You were part of that system that basically existed to denigrate the presence of Native students here by their embrace of the symbol. You couldn't do both. It was utterly inconsistent.

DONIN: Did you live together?

DUTHU: No. Many of us did live together. The Native American House at the time was one of those old Colonials on North Park Street, which has since been moved.

DONIN: Yes, out to Lyme Road.

DUTHU: Exactly. So the Native American House was at 18 North Park, and right next door to it was the International Student House, and they could only accommodate maybe five, maybe six students if you doubled up some of the rooms. There were always squatters. I was a squatter one term.

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

DUTHU: Actually, for an interim. I lived in the basement. And I did live there a couple of terms. But it was mostly the cultural center. But we were all in dorms and, you know, throughout—

DONIN: Spread around.

DUTHU: Spread around campus and so forth. So we all had our circles of friends outside of that. But I do remember that there were some folks who were very ac— now, people would go to the frats. This here was the irony: Many people would go to the parties but we mostly had parties at the Native American House. And, in fact, this was the disco era, as you might recall—

DONIN: Oh, yes, right.

DUTHU: —during the '70s, so the faculty dinner parties became, in the words of many faculty members, “the hottest ticket on campus” because every term we could invite all of our professors to this social event, where we get to know them outside of the classroom, and the professors loved going to these parties because there was always disco dancing in the basement after the meal.

The meal was usually terrific. Sometimes we would cook it; sometimes we would have it catered. But the house literally was packed. You could not move in the house. Today, it bears no resemblance to what it was like back then, and I tell that to the Native students, and I say, “You guys, our house was much smaller. I recognize that, but you could not walk around. Every room was packed with faculty talking with their students.”

DONIN: Wow.

DUTHU: And then there was the dancing, and they said, “You danced with your faculty?”

DONIN: [Chuckles.]

DUTHU: And I said, “Mostly it was faculty dancing with faculty, but every now and then, for fun, you’d get the mixing and stuff. And, you know, by 11, 12 o’clock, people would be leaving, but you’d spent a good five, six hours together, socializing.

DONIN: That’s amazing!

DUTHU: Oh, it was just wonderful.

DONIN: Was that true with faculty in general, or do you think it was a special relationship with the Native American students?

DUTHU: You know, that’s a good question. We did not hear—in fact, I heard from other faculty that this was actually quite exceptional, that they were invited, as they still are, to lots of other functions, but it did not have that same feeling. And they certainly weren’t there dancing into the hours of the

night, that it was a nice, more prim and proper sit-down chat, and then everyone would leave by 8, 9 o'clock. But at the NAD House, you were there till 11 or midnight, sometimes later. [Laughs.]

DONIN: That's great.

DUTHU: They were fun. They were great parties.

So the Greeks. We had established our own kind of niche, so we didn't really need the Greek society for the social outlets because we'd formed and created our own outlets, and because we saw faculty, so many faculty and staff, we didn't feel like we were missing out on stuff. But, no, the Greek life was very, very different.

But that changed very quickly, because by the time I'm back as program director in 1986, of course now I have to present a much different kind of perspective, and the students, themselves, were already very different, in the sense that they wanted to be part—they were claiming all of Dartmouth, which is exactly what we wanted them to do. You know, "This is your school. Find every nook and cranny," so there were Native students on varsity sports and Hop rats and the [Sanborn tea clique, and the Greek system.

And one of the first students, Class of '91, Taylor Keen, became I think the first Native person who chaired the—what was it called?—the Interfraternity Council—

DONIN: IFC.

DUTHU: IFC. Taylor Keen became the first—to my knowledge was the first Native person to chair that body. While there were some NAD students who were somewhat resentful of his complete embrace of the Greek system, he was well respected within the Native community because he was also still very active in the Native community. And here was a young man who was deeply rooted in his tribal community. He danced at every single Pow-wow. He was also deeply religious and spiritual in his traditional way. He was Cherokee on his dad's side and Omaha on his mom's side. So people respected that he came from rooted sets of cultural perspective.

DONIN: Was he one of the profiles in *First Peoples*?

DUTHU: He was the kid—

DONIN: Oh, that's what I remember.

DUTHU: He was the young man who had talked about his grandmother—

DONIN: Yes. Yes.

DUTHU: —in the film. That's Taylor. So Taylor was just one of these strong leaders and he would talk to NAD stu—and he used his leadership position within the IFC to really talk about building bridges of understanding, so he tackled the Indian symbol head on. He would go into Beta and all these other places and just talk about basically, you know, "This is me. I'm not this cartoon that you put on a T-shirt or something like that. This is me, my culture, my life." And people respected that very, very, very much.

DONIN: So that was a real transition from the years when you were here.

DUTHU: And notice how quickly, yes.

DONIN: You were all self contained.

DUTHU: Absolutely.

DONIN: So in the matter of a decade—

DUTHU: In about a decade, in about a decade the students were coming in and really having a very different kind of sense of orientation, which I thought was quite wonderful, to see that they were claiming all aspects of the Dartmouth community as their own and making an impact in that.

What was also already evident and continued to build and now continues to build is, you know, Dartmouth is producing more and more alumni, Native alumni, so what you see in the '80s is the jelling, the coming together of this alumni network of graduates who are intensely interested in being

supportive of the current students. Some of them became members of the Native American Visiting Committee. Others, their contribution was to come back and participate in the Pow-wow or as guest lecturers. Or sometimes they would say, “I’m back working for this organization or this tribe. We could use an intern. Do you have students that you could—” They were making these connections and creating—so now we’re obviously much more intentional about how we facilitate that kind of communication so that the network of Native alumni, which now exceeds 800, can be a resource for the current students, which now exceed 180, as opposed to the—

DONIN: A hundred and eighty total.

DUTHU: Total. There are about 185 undergraduates at any given time; on average, we’re bringing in 40-plus Native students in each freshman class.

DONIN: And has the outreach changed? I mean, from when John Kemeny was president and he’s often—I don’t know if this is folklore or if it’s really true, if he really did renew the college’s vow to be responsible for educating Native Americans. I mean, that’s sort of the folklore. Is that reality?

DUTHU: It’s real. I mean, it was in his inaugural address. He repeated it multiple times, particularly when there was some backlash and so forth—you know, with the symbol especially. He commissioned a committee that was chaired by Bob Kilmarx in 1972. No, Kemeny really was with us for the long haul. And that commitment also included making sure that the admissions office was doing its part to do outreach. So they created, and still have, a designated position within the admissions office, whose charge includes—it may not be the sole charge; sometimes it *has* been the sole charge—to be the principle organizer for Native American recruitment.

And many times, alums have come back to fill that position. So, yes, that has continued. The office has—ever since Michael Hanitchak—I think Michael was the first person to occupy that role. He was in that role when I—or was one of the first people to occupy that role. Might not have been *the* first one, but Michael was the recruiter in admissions when I

was here in the '70s. And he's still here. [Chuckles.] In the community.

They've always had, in the admissions office, a designated point person for Native American recruitment. That is sometimes shared, so that, for example, if you're a recruiter and your region happens to have the Dakotas or something like that, then the point person may also make visits but will also work with you to make sure that you're covering as much terrain as possible.

This is where the Native American Visiting Committee has been actually very helpful because the admissions office regularly reports—they are among the offices that report to the NAVC when they make their visits to campus. And what they share with the NAVC is the recruiting schedule and contacts and so forth. And what the NAVC is looking for is, Are we still giving attention to the breadth of experience and reality of Indian country? To make sure Dartmouth isn't doing what some of the other big schools do, which is to hit the major metropolitan areas that are proximate to Indian country.

Harvard, for example, Yale—they go to Minneapolis; they might send someone to Albuquerque, Denver—that's Indian recruitment, because educators and students might go to the college fairs that are hosted in those areas. But they're looking at that and saying, "It's fine to do that, but you can't limit yourself to that. You have to send someone to the rez, to the urban Indian centers, not just make them come to you; you go to them."

So they look at that schedule, and there have been some years where they've been critical and say, "This looks like you're walking away a little bit from that commitment to reaching out to areas where none of the other schools, the selective schools are bothering to go. We can't backslide." That's been very helpful for the NAVC to hear those regular reports, monitor and, when appropriate, say, "Pick it up a little bit. You're slacking."

DONIN:

Wow.

DUTHU: And that's been very, very helpful to have. And that report goes directly to the president, so institutionally and structurally, we have been able to point to those kinds of things in sharing with other universities the architecture of Dartmouth's commitment to Native education, that it is pretty well entrenched and begins with the top down type of thing. Most other schools, it really is the bottom up, where you have folks either in student services, sometimes in pockets of the faculty, not even the whole faculty; it could be a part of Ethnic Studies, for example, which is not a model that we approve or would ever endorse because it puts all the sort of—it's the ethnic enclave, and then "Here's some resources. Now fight amongst yourselves as to whether you're going to recruit a Latino Studies or African-American Studies."

Dartmouth has never had that model. I hope we never go to that model. But we can point to an architecture that has consistently been supported from the very, very top, and the NAVC is a critical part of that because it's a way to keep the alumni involved, to monitor, to keep us honest, and also the report goes directly to the president of the college. And other schools really admired that. They said, "Well, that's the right way to do it."

DONIN: So let me ask you about—I assume there's an alumni group to represent the Native American students.

DUTHU: Yes. Big NAD, it's called.

DONIN: Big NAD.

DUTHU: So there's Little NAD, Big NAAAD. Little NAD is the current Native Americans at Dartmouth; Big NAAAD is Native American Alumni Association of Dartmouth.

DONIN: I see.

DUTHU: It's got, like, four A's in it, something like that. [Chuckles.]

DONIN: Yes, okay, that's a good distinction. Okay, Big NAAAD.

So in terms of picturing community, when they come back here just as a group of Native Americans, are they also

coming back as a member of the Dartmouth community in general?

DUTHU: Many of them are. Many of them are. So, for example, many of them will have also made substantial connections with other parts of the college, be it athletics, the arts, the administration. Many of them were interns in different offices. So when they come back, they have a list of people and places where they want to reconnect with, which I think is a positive thing. It means that their sort of entrenchment within the college is not just moored to the Native community. That's a big part of it, but for some Native students, it's not at all a part. They were not active. They were not connected to the Native community. So we don't know what their experiences are if they were never really active with the Native community—what they come back to and who they connect with when they return for reunions or something like that.

We know that in Native American Studies, we will see far more Native students than, for example, might avail themselves of the services of the Native American Program.

DONIN: Uh-huh!

DUTHU: So the NAP is there, which I formerly directed, in the '80s, as the counseling and advising outfit. But not all Native students take advantage of that. However, many Native students, whether they're involved with that or not, or even involved or not with NAD, *will* take Native American Studies courses, and so we may have a connection with them that the other two entities don't have. To me, that's an interesting dynamic, is that by having three quite distinct Native communities, they've got different touchstones, points of contact when they come back as students.

For example, they come back as reunion—they may come back to our offices to say hi because of classes they took with us, but they're not going to necessarily touch base with the either Native communities. So the Native community is actually not the monolithic Native community; it's quite distinct, in the minds of the students.

DONIN: And I noticed, in reading the Andrew Garrod book, that many of them said they really discovered their Native American roots here. Rather than losing them—

DUTHU: Yes.

DONIN: —the flip side happened, that they sort of got much more deeply in touch with who they were.

DUTHU: Mm-hm. Yes.

DONIN: You know, that's such an interesting concept, that both of those things, I suppose, happened. Some sort of leave it behind when they come, and other students discover it for the first time.

DUTHU: Yes, and I think that that is one of the marvelous consequences, frankly, of having a residential college experience, is that you're catching students at these formative developmental stages, where their brains are still forming, we know; their conceptions of their identity is still forming, and for most of them it represents their first time away from home, where they have the time and the freedom to engage in self-discovery unfiltered through Mom, Dad, Grandpa—you know, who you see, what you do and all these kinds of things—they're the authors of that, and the self-discovery is a very common phenomena for I think all Dartmouth students, but for the Native students, it's a very powerful opportunity, and I think partly because they see so many different examples of Native identity and identity formation.

For example, they'll meet kids who were adopted, raised in Anglo families, and doing their own searching, figuring out, you know, *Now that I'm here, I know I'm Native because I've been told I'm Native. I don't have any sense of what that means—or I have a vague sense of what that means, because every few years my family would make a trip to the West* or something like that, whereas the other kid might have been raised on the rez in a very traditional upbringing, to everything in between: kids who have a strong sense of identity but maybe not a strong connection to that; for them, the experience of *Well, I want something different*—it becomes their outlet.

It's a fascinating kind of period to watch them go through. And yet, because they're going through it together, it can also be that kind of cementing experience where they might end up at different points, but they're in the same car [chuckles], kind of talking about that and getting off at different points on the exit ramps or something like that. But it's a fascinating and sometimes difficult—for the reasons that I outlined earlier, where they're bringing some of their baggage—some of them are bringing baggage from home that is kind of their cultural litmus test of authenticity.

So as you're trying to figure out who you are, make sure that, you know, there's this checklist here that says it's not just because you self-identify; it's, will others identify you as Native, based on this weird set of criteria?

DONIN: Is there a sense that they're—and I'm talking about the newer generations—

DUTHU: More current, yes.

DONIN: —of students. By trying to take advantage of everything that Dartmouth has to offer, are they in danger of stepping outside their identity by mixing with all these white people?

DUTHU: No. Well, I mean, I think that for the short term, there is maybe that worry. Some of them may have—it doesn't last very long, because all they need is a quick trip back home and they kind of get reconnected. I mean, there are some little bumps and hiccups along the way, but students will routinely say: at their core, what they discover is that they still hold on to that core sense of who they are. What they've done, though, is added more layers or more shades of meaning to what they value. So they find, as I did when I was here—I found that there was a reason I did well in school, even though I was surrounded by a lot of anti-intellectualism and a lot of anti-Indianism growing up, was I loved the life of the mind. I was curious. I had this intellectual curiosity.

They find that very, very quickly, that that's what they share in common. They're here because they have this desire—many of them went to summer enrichment camps, where

they were willing to take two, three, five, eight weeks of their summer—when other kids are doing soccer, they're doing math camp. And they said, *Now we're with the rest of the weird kids* who loved doing math camp and all this kind of stuff. And they happen to be Indian! So, *other Indians like me.*

What they find is that they were the kids who put a hood over their intellectual sides and can now lift the hood. It doesn't mean that they're putting a hood on their cultural sides; they're carrying that with them. But they will get it bumped and challenged and so forth the way that I did in terms of saying when you take on these new things, is it a zero sum type of thing? And I think what we learn is that, no, cultural identity is much more complex and much richer than that. It *is* this process of adaptation, but you still have this sense of, like, *But I know who I am in my core self of that. I just know that to be happy, I also have to be doing these other kinds of things. But I'm not letting go of these other things.*

As an 18-,19-year-old, I could not probably have even fathomed that it was possible to do all that. It felt like you had to make a choice: *I either will be an Indian or I will be an intellectual*, because I had no models, growing up, as to whether or not you could do both of those. Now, many more of these kids have so many more models, sometimes right in their own homes—like my children.

For my kids, this is a no-brainer because they've grown up with two Indian parents, both of whom have multiple degrees, both of whom have navigated in and out of their communities. So even though they're raised in a predominantly non-Native community, they're around lots of Natives because my students are frequently at our home, so my kids have grown up with lots of Native kids around them.

But when they have all gone off to college, they have also taken with them the sense that they know that they're Native. What they do with that, how they express that sense of Native identity—they're all very different.

My oldest daughter, Lisa, lives in New Jersey, but she's still very active in the Pow-wow circuit; she makes her own

outfits, she dances, and that goes way back to when she was a little girl, when we were first here.

My son went to Penn State, became—during his years there, we called him the “uber Indian” because, even though he is even lighter-skinned than his dad, because he was on his own and Penn State had so few students of color in a huge institution like that—there were very few minority students at state college—so he became very active with race relations issues and working with other communities, ethnic communities and gave him an outlet to say, “Our issues have to be out there,” and he became kind of an activist in that way.

Our youngest daughter—the Indian part of her identity is certainly there, but it’s not foremost. She’s the hippie in the family, so for her—she is connected to the whole world and she wants the whole world to be at peace. Her little van at home is filled with John Lennon stickers and Bob Marley lyrics and all kinds of—she’s our protester. She was on the streets in San Francisco just two weeks ago, protesting the regents meeting for a possible hike in tuition or something like that. She wants to save the world. She’s at Santa Cruz, so—

DONIN: Oh, great place for her.

DUTHU: Great school for her. [Laughs.]

DONIN: *Great* place for her.

DUTHU: So even our own kids have been very different in terms of how they have expressed their sense of indigeneity, from my oldest daughter, who, some would say, is the more traditional one, only because outsiders would see someone performing in an Indian kind of way, and the others much more subtle. I think that’s true of a lot of these kids here. What they do with their—how they manage their sense of indigeneity.

The thing I should point out, though, that has been quite remarkable is—and we need to do some data on this. We need to do a better job of celebrating this fact, but anecdotally, we think that there are more—that something’s

in the water here, that the Native students who come to Dartmouth really do feel a calling to use their education here in service to the Native community, even if they, themselves, did not grow up in a tribal community.

For example, kids who were adopted, Native kids raised in white families, come here. The lights, the synapses about their indigenous side really come alive. And partly it's the classroom experience, partly it's the stimulation of being with other Native kids, where they are now made to feel proud of that and can celebrate that aspect of their—and it becomes a career trend.

So whether they go into education, business, law, medicine, other positions of leadership, we look at who populates the leadership in Indian country, both at the tribal and the non-tribal—state and federal, for example. There are lots of Dartmouth kids in leadership positions.

President Obama—well, some of these alumni—

DONIN: The profiles...

DUTHU: Exactly. A lot of these kids here—Jodi Archambault Gillette is President Obama's White House adviser on Native American issues. You know, she's one of the kids we helped recruit in '91.

Taylor Keen was a former member of the Cherokee National Council. He was the only one, by the way, who voted against—this is a very controversial—still controversial—issue in Indian country. They amended their constitution several years ago, the Cherokee Nation did, to change the membership rules of who is able to claim citizenship rights within the Cherokee Nation. The membership rule was changed to require that you must descend from an ancestor who is Cherokee. Now, that sounds obvious enough, but it masked a very complicated history.

Post-Civil War, when the Cherokee Nation actually aligned itself with the South, the Cherokee citizens also owned slaves. They were slave owners, like many Southern tribal societies, and brought that kind of tradition or practice with

them to Oklahoma when they were removed forcibly in the 1830s.

After the Civil War, the Cherokee Nation, like most of the tribes that fought on the side of the South, signed their own treaties of surrender with the Union, and their treaty in 1866 required that the Cherokee absorb their former slaves as citizens of the Cherokee Nation.

DONIN: Ah.

DUTHU: So they were made to be tribal members. Eventually the government, working with the tribe, developed two sets of rolls: what's known as a Cherokee roll and the Freedman roll. And you were both citizens, but the names were kept distinct. So as long as you had an ancestor on either of those rolls, you were a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. It didn't matter how much blood quantum you had; you had to point to an ancestor on that roll.

In the 1970s, the Cherokee Nation, like many tribes, wanted to repatriate their constitution, make it more, what they felt, was a document that spoke to Cherokee values. And they ultimately voted in—I think this finally happened in the 1990s—a constitution that required that you must trace lineage to a Cherokee ancestor. Well, that meant that if your only connection to the Cherokee Nation was to the Freedmen, you were no longer a member.

Now, a lot of Freedmen had intermarried with Cherokee, which meant that you were still a member. But if you were only able to point to that side— Now that meant functionally, close to 3,000 citizens of the Cherokee Nation would be booted off the rolls because they were only able to trace through the Freedmen.

When that vote came before the council, Taylor was on the council. He was the only member, I believe, to vote against that amendment, and he said, "That's not the Cherokee Nation that I grew up with. My Cherokee Nation is one that honors its whole history," and he says, "This is not what we represent." It cost him his seat in the council. He was not reelected.

DONIN: Wow.

DUTHU: He was not allowed to pray in chamber. They often allowed each council member to open with prayer, and so he was basically marginalized for his vote. And many, many members came up to him and said, “Sorry, you’re on the wrong side on this issue.” So he paid a major political price for that.

I included a reference to that in my latest book, where I talk about the Cherokee/Freedmen issue, and I mention specifically and quote—because Taylor was quoted in *The New York Times* on that vote, and how difficult that was.

When I look back at all these kids that I had as students—Taylor was in my Indian Law class, that very first one.

DONIN: The first class?

DUTHU: In 1987. Taylor was in that class. So was Alvin Warren, Alvin, who became the secretary of Indian Affairs for the State of New Mexico. A lot of these kids—we go back a long way, and I look back, and I just feel so incredibly proud that we have, in a generation—we looked at what happened in one decade. Well, in just over a generation, we have—because of this recommitment, we have been able to produce and populate a cohort of leaders who really see their passion as bringing their talents in service of Indian communities. Whether it’s back to their tribe or another tribe or an organization or a government entity, they’re all over the place.

I was on the phone not too long ago with a very prominent Native activist named Suzan Harjo, who’s been to Dartmouth several times. And Suzan was describing—she was organizing a program through the National Museum of the American Indian on racial stereotypes and mascots and so forth. And it was scheduled for November 1, but because of the hurricane, it got postponed. We’re doing it in February.

And she was talking about a meeting at a number of—and the individuals that were there—she said “So-and-so and So- —” She named everyone, and I said, “You know what all these people have in common, the ones that you just

named?” I said, “They’re all Dartmouth graduates.” She goes, “You know, you’re right!”

DONIN: Amazing.

DUTHU: “What do you guys do up there?” [Laughs.]

DONIN: And that’s a byproduct, probably, that you didn’t—I mean, nobody envisioned that sort of after-effect.

DUTHU: I think some people might have had aspirations that we would be graduating students who could be that leadership. People would go and take on leadership roles. And I think we may have kept that early on. I suspect we kept that a little bit under our hats so that we didn’t appear to be—at least, I suspect; whether this was intentional or not—we didn’t want to sound too imperialistic, that we were doing what [Eleazar] Wheelock had initially wanted to do, which was to Christianize and assimilate Native students. That’s what we were really trying to do here.

Now I think there is absolutely no reason not to pull out the big hats and—

DONIN: Yes, celebrate.

DUTHU: —celebrate it. The alumni magazine I think is still planning to do some sort of a little spotlight profile. Bonnie Barber and others are working on something that, since this is the 40th anniversary of the NAS, gives us a nice opportunity to see what some of our graduates—many of whom—we didn’t have NAS. They couldn’t major in NAS, but they certainly took NAS courses while they were here, and has really informed their life’s work. And that’s been a wonderful—initially a byproduct, but I think it might have been part of the hope, was that folks would be—“This is how we’re making a contribution.”

One thing that we recently—through the council, through the Native American Council—we have made a proposal to the college and said, “Now that both the NAP and NAS have each marked these milestones (40 years), that we ought to be very deliberate about how we craft the next 40 or 50 years.” And our suggestion has been that we be more

intentionally outward in our orientation to tribes, that we look at ways that we can partner with Indian tribes and organizations that work with tribes on ways that we can share resources, expertise and so forth.

And we suggested that the college might think seriously of creating a position and an office that would be the kind of external affairs person, a Dartmouth vice provost for Indian affairs. And this would be the individual who would kind of be the person to find—very strategically, find opportunities where we can work very collaboratively with tribes.

For example, we just recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Indian Health Service, where Dartmouth will partner with the Indian Health Service, where the number two person is a Dartmouth grad, Dr. Susan Karol. She's the chief medical officer. Graduated one year before I did. We knew each other as undergrads, and now here we are, working on this partnership together.

And we envision all kinds of wonderful collaborations coming out of that: shared research, improving health care results in Indian country, improving the pipeline of young Native students going into the health care professions, because there's a lot of gaps and stoppages that happen along the way. But we could be doing the same thing when it comes to economic development in Indian country.

It's happening episodically; there are some people at the Tuck School who are interested in doing those kinds of things. Having an office that goes beyond arts and sciences—i.e., beyond what we do—would be a way to connect the dots of what Dartmouth is doing but really help us stand out in terms of an outward—instead of a very passive “Bring us your children” or “Let us recruit your children; we'll educate them and then wish them well.” That model obviously paid off. It's done very, very well.

But our suggestion to the college is, as we move forward for the next few years, we have to show the world and Indian country in particular and maybe even indigenous communities around the world that we really mean it, that we've got a lot to offer. But we have to be very intentional about that.

My office can't do that—alone, at least. The NAP is certainly not structured to do that. But somewhere—and we're hopeful. I mean we've just floated this out. Karol is obviously—we're in transition, so we don't expect anything really to happen until the new prez comes on board, but I think that would be a very nice thing to have. "Nice"—what a swishy word! I think it would be a very meaningful thing for the college to mark its next phase, to say, "We're going to really go out there and really make things happen, but we want to be partners. We're not going to be just sitting here, waiting, ready to work with the kids willing to come here. We're going to go beat the bushes, looking for opportunities."

DONIN: Think of all the alums you've got now to—

DUTHU: Who could help.

DONIN: —enlist and help with it.

DUTHU: Absolutely. Mm-hm. When I mentioned this to an alum, it's, like, "Why didn't we think of that 20 years ago?" I said, "We weren't ready 20 years ago."

DONIN: Right.

DUTHU: A lot of us were still—we were still making our way. I said, "It has taken a generation for us to get to this position, but now that we're there, many of us are in positions where we have enjoyed the opportunity and the privilege to be in positions of authority. We kind of know how these things can work. We know what the limitations are, but we also know what the opportunities are as well."

Catching someone ten years out of college is too soon. They're still figuring out who they want to be.

DONIN: Right. They're still busy, figuring it out.

DUTHU: Yes. I think now is really a great time for that to happen.

DONIN: So the community that you found here in 1976 has—how do you describe how it's changed—what you found here in '76 and here we are, what, 40 years later, practically—

DUTHU: Yes.

DONIN: How has it changed?

DUTHU: Well, it's changed in a lot of ways. It's also stayed the same in a lot of ways, which is good, and I think for a lot of alums—they want, when we come back or when they come back—because I've lived here—they want to see that the college still looks like the place they left behind, even though they know they'll see new buildings, things like that.

What has changed, in a good way, is that this feeling of uncertainty or even ambiguity about the rightness of recruiting Native students, bringing them here, isolated from their families, sounded very much like the boarding school experience of the 19th century, was actually a good thing to do. Now we know it was a good thing to do. We've got a base of decades of experience to show that something quite positive can happen and does happen here for students.

Back in the '70s there was a lot of searching and saying, "We think it's the right thing." But yet it was very difficult. People had to deal with the Indian symbol, and they were few in numbers, and fits and starts and all of that, so no one, I think, could emerge from that environment [and] feel totally sold that we were doing right by Native students and by Native communities, that we might be, in fact, doing more damage than good.

I think that by persevering, by being willing to adapt, by being willing to grow. For example, the commitment to recruitment, to say, "We're not going to slack off on that"; the commitment to Native American Studies—we have to have a vibrant intellectual institution here; the commitment to an NAP, to say, "We've got to keep this office that provides not just support for Native students but is there as a programming body for the entire campus, that helps create the kind of environment that will be increasingly welcome," and so forth. And when there are these flare-ups, you know who to go to. There's someone that students can go to and say, "What are you guys gonna do about this? Because I got a final Friday, and I can't do all this kind of stuff."

So I think one positive change is that we have grown in our certainty that there's value to the educational mission. We know what that mission is. It's not assimilation. It is intellectual growth and, at the same time, providing the opportunity for this search into identity to take place in a secure, nurturing way. We know it's going to happen and we're more aware of how to have that conversation.

Like I said earlier, we have a vocabulary now that we can help students, help ourselves understand: Here's where you are, and you shouldn't worry because generations of kids before you have gone through the exact same sort of thing, and guess what: They got through it at the other end in great shape if you make it through this period where you just—you don't know what it means. You're not supposed to. [Chuckles.]

DONIN: It's almost like you've developed a roadmap for them.

DUTHU: In some ways, yes, without being too prescriptive.

DONIN: No, no. Right.

DUTHU: And that's the beauty, is that if anything, we can point to an ever-expanding roadmap to say: When we have students who are co-curating the Hood Museum's show on Native American art, it's, like, "Were we doing that in the '70s? Was the museum—" Well, first of all, there *was* no museum. "Were these other entities coming and wanting to play, come to our sandbox and play in our sandbox?" This happens routinely now. That shows me, it shows us that the work that we do and what we represent is of great value here.

I can tell you from first-hand experience, my colleagues at other universities that have Native Studies programs are envious of the kind of resources that we have, first of all, but not just the money; it's the fact that we're in a place where people want to play with us. I mean, I hate to put it in that kind of—but that's what I mean. They really want to—"Can we co-sponsor with you?" "Can we do something together?" "Let's get together and—" There's an exciting kind of charge.

People tell me they feel it when they come to NAS. They say, "You guys have stuff going on there that doesn't even

happen at other departments.” There’s a collegiality, there’s an excitement, there’s a passion. I sense it. I mean, I sense that we have been fortunate to be able to bring people who love working together—you know? I mean, Colin [Calloway] has heard this so many times, when I said, “My big draw in wanting to come back to Dartmouth when I did as a faculty member in 2008, having been at Vermont Law School for 17 years—I never left Dartmouth. I was still coming back and teaching.”

But to want to come back full time was motivated, I think, by a sense that I felt that I had done what I could do as a law professor, and some of the things that I was doing, I was finding myself heading into directions that, while they were exciting and challenging, wasn’t really nurturing in a way that I felt, *Am I doing what I should be doing?* Kind of that, *Am I answering the call?*

I mentioned a while ago that I was the first director of our China program. I was the academic dean at the time. I was the chief academic officer for the law school, and we were just winding down our relationship—very successful partnership with schools in Russia, helping to build the first legal clinics in Russia—that was a Vermont Law School initiative—the first summer schools in environmental law, and now legal clinics that focus on environmentalism and so forth. Those were winding down, but we felt very committed to the idea that we should have an international dimension to our work in environmental energy policy and wanted to find another partner to kind of make that a real venture.

So I pushed that it should be China. I wasn’t alone, but others were putting India and other places—or “Let’s renew the Russia thing” and so forth. Said, “China is what we gotta do.” So I visited. We visited and long story short, we partnered with a school, Sun Yat-Sen University in southern China. Couldn’t find a faculty member to head it up under this grant that we got from USAID, so I became the director of the program for its first year.

Developed the framing documents, all the minutia that you have to do for federal grants and stuff in terms of having objectives, goals, metrics and all of that kind of stuff, and setting it up, hiring a young assistant director, who was a

Chinese law student, who was our translator when we were in Guangzhou. She now, still, is at Vermont Law School, after all these years.

That was exciting. So a couple of trips to China, and we got this program off and going. We got another multi-million-dollar grant. All felt great. But it wasn't nurturing me in the same—I felt, *Okay, I'm really out of my element here. I'm not a Chinese scholar. I'm not an environmentalist. I'm certainly not an internationalist. I love all this kind of stuff, but I'm further and further and further away from the stuff that I feel is my first calling.*

So on sabbatical to Australia, I wrote to Colin. This would have been back in 2007 or something like that. And I was just finishing up my first—my one and only year as director, because I was able to pass it off to another colleague. I said, “Just for kicks and giggles, would there be any possibility of my coming to Dartmouth full time as a faculty member?” I said, “Without a Ph.D. And at my age, I'm not interested in going back to school to get one, particularly if it means making less money than I make already as a law professor.” And he's, like, “Let's talk.” [Chuckles.] So that's what kind of got it started.

And, of course, it needed to get—President Wright had to approve a new faculty line, which he did. That was, for me, a wonderful re-embrace of not only me but the work and what it means to the college. It kind of reminded me of back in 1987, when Mike Green said, “We need this law and policy piece for our program to really be viable, for it to be meaningful, because law pervades Indian country. It's such a big piece of that.” It was that same sort of feeling of: We have to have it. This is the way to ensconce it even more within the program.

So it's been great. To be honest, if you ask my kids, “Do you know when your dad moved from Dartmouth to VLS and back to Dartmouth?” They probably would have no idea.

DONIN: No idea. Right.

DUTHU: Because it felt like, “Well, he was always part of both places. He worked both places. Like, ‘Where are you going today, Dad?’” [Laughs.]

DONIN: Yes, yes.

DUTHU: Because we lived in the same house for almost all these years—you know, the house they grew up in is the house we still live in, and it was, like some days I go to Vermont, some days I go to Dartmouth, and some days I go to both places. And that’s been just great, that I’ve been able to have—

DONIN: A perfect fit.

DUTHU: —really, the good fortune to be part of two wonderful communities. I mean, VLS—I hope it’ll make it, but it truly is a special place.

But coming back here, as I said to Colin, I felt like now I go to work with colleagues who have Native peoples on the brain, and that makes a world of difference. Really. Yep.

DONIN: Great. Okay. I think we’ve covered it.

DUTHU: Good enough for now?

DONIN: Yes, absolutely. Fantastic!

DUTHU: Well, thank you, Mary.

[End of interview.]