

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with George H. Berkowitz
By Mary Stelle Donin
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DONIN: I'm here in a gorgeous part of Boston, the seaport, Boston Harbor, with George H. Berkowitz. A Marine V-12 at Dartmouth, but not a Dartmouth graduate, so I can't say his class, because he's in a class by himself.

BERKOWITZ: Thank you. That was well said Mary. [Laughter]

DONIN: You're one of the trainees that came in through the V-12 program. So can you tell us how you ended up coming to Dartmouth for your training? Did you come right out of high school?

BERKOWITZ: I came right out of high school. And I remember reading about—I always wanted to become an officer. In those days we had military training in high school. The war was going on, and I was captain of military drill. When this opportunity came up that the Marines offered to become officers in the Marine Corps, I could think of nothing better than that I wanted to become an officer. And when I told my mother that I wanted to join the Marine Corps, she was very upset because she thought it was too dangerous.

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: I had a brother who was in the Navy, a lieutenant commander, Navy, who was on active duty in the North Atlantic. And I had another brother who was in the Seabees, construction battalion, and I would be the third one in the service. And she was a very bright woman. When I said I wanted to join the Marines, she said, "I don't want you to join. It's too dangerous. But," she said, "if I tell you to do something else and you join the Army and something happens to you, I'll never forgive myself. So go ahead." And she signed the papers.

DONIN: Oh, because you were under 17?

BERKOWITZ: I was just 17. You had to be 17, you couldn't be 18. If you turned 18, you weren't eligible for this new program.

DONIN: Oh.

BERKOWITZ: This V-12 program.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

BERKOWITZ: The day before I turned 18, I signed.

DONIN: Where did you go to sign up, in Boston?

BERKOWITZ: In Boston, yes. Not far from here. The Fargo Barracks, and it's right over here no more than a couple of blocks away from this building.

DONIN: Amazing.

BERKOWITZ: Yes.

DONIN: And they were advertising obviously.

BERKOWITZ: I'm not sure how it came. It came through the high school obviously, you know, to reach the men that they wanted to have join the Marine Corps. It had to go through the high school.

DONIN: And how is it that they sent you to Dartmouth? I mean did they explain....

BERKOWITZ: Just assigned. We didn't know. We didn't ask or anything. They had your name, and they had your address, and you received your assignment. And fortunately mine was Dartmouth, and of course I was very pleased.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

BERKOWITZ: It wasn't far from home; I lived in Boston. And it wasn't that far from Boston.

DONIN: Did you know anybody that had gone to Dartmouth, or did you know anything about Dartmouth before you got there?

BERKOWITZ: No, no. I knew of Dartmouth, its reputation obviously. A great school. So when I was assigned to Dartmouth, I was pleased, obviously.

- DONIN: Yes, yes. So what was your first impression when you went up there? Did you ride the train up? How'd you get up there?
- BERKOWITZ: Well, we took the train up. But you have to understand it was a very traumatic experience obviously, being away from home.
- DONIN: First time.
- BERKOWITZ: Being in uniform and being in the Marine Corps. And all these things happened at the same time. It's not like when kids going to college today. You know they go off, and Mommy and Daddy give them a kiss, and they go off to school. And they can do anything they want to do. We didn't. We had our assignments the day we got there. And then we had our sergeants who were in charge, drill instructors. So it was a very interesting time for us, but looking back in time, I think it's the way it should be in a sense. You leave the home, your mother and father. And it's maturity. It's a very fast way to gain maturity. And I think one of the problems they have today, when I look around—I go to school at Brandeis and take courses—I see young men and women, not all obviously, but they almost lack the maturity they should have: never worked for a living, they come right out of high school or prep school into a college; and if they don't make it, they go home. If we didn't make it, we went into combat. [Laughs] Great incentive to study.
- DONIN: Yes, I'll say. You guys were all housed in the same—You were all together, the Marines were all housed together, right?
- BERKOWITZ: I believe so, yes, yes.
- DONIN: In a dormitory.
- BERKOWITZ: Yes. And I can remember... This is kind of interesting. When you asked— Now, as I say, it's many years ago.
- DONIN: It was, yes.
- BERKOWITZ: And I can remember Topliff Hall.
- DONIN: Oh, yes.
- BERKOWITZ: For some reason it stands out.
- DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: And I can remember first week I was at Dartmouth, new uniform, and I think we were privates, PFCs. And a drill instructor who was really tough. Marine drill instructors are very, very tough. And I can remember to this day: We got in front of— We're all lined up. And probably the first or second time we ever lined up in the military order. And the drill instructor said, "Right face!" And I turned left face. And he came over to me and looked at me and my nametag, and he said, "Berkowitz!" And I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "You're the dumbest sonofabitch I ever saw." [Laughs] And you know for a week I believed him. It was an indoctrination into the Marine Corps.

DONIN: They're legendary, though, for really being hard on recruits.

BERKOWITZ: Well, they are, and there's a reason for it. You get past it, they want you... It's very, very strict, and it gets.... I think it's one of the things that brings Marines together. They all go through the same difficult training. And, you know, the Army, Navy, very, very large, and they go to different units, different areas of the country. The Marines either go to San Diego to boot camp or Parris Island. So we've all gone through the same experience. And I think this is the thing that brings Marines together. Parris Island, Camp Lejeune, Quantico. We've all been there.

DONIN: You went to Parris Island after you finished at Dartmouth?

BERKOWITZ: Two years at Dartmouth, and then we had boot camp at Parris Island. And then we went up to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to pre-OCS. And then we passed that, we went to Quantico, Virginia, for OCS, Officers' Candidate School. So it was a long period.

DONIN: Long period.

BERKOWITZ: Yes.

DONIN: And you were so young. I mean you weren't even 18 yet.

BERKOWITZ: No. By the time I got out of Dartmouth, I was 19. And then I went down. By the time I finished my—When I went overseas.... I graduated Officers' Candidate School just as the war—I was home on furlough when the war with Japan ended. And I thought I was getting out. I thought well.... And lo and behold I received orders to go to China. And, you know, being very young and, wow, this is a great opportunity.

DONIN: An adventure.

BERKOWITZ: And I tell you what: I think I took a course at Dartmouth in Chinese language, not knowing I was going to end up in China.

DONIN: And that was with Professor Chan.

BERKOWITZ: Chan.

DONIN: Wing-tsit Chan.

BERKOWITZ: Well, yes, and I took this course. And people said, “How come you took Chinese not knowing where you’re going to go?”

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: And I said, “Well, it was very, very simple. Our program was very difficult. We took physics and chemistry. Even if we had no aptitude for it, you had to take them and you had to pass. If you didn’t pass, you were gone. And Dr. Chan taught Chinese language, and his reputation was he never flunked anybody. And I wanted to— Everybody was trying to get in his class. I took Chinese language for one semester. And to this day, I remember... Obviously you remember things. And I ended up in China. And the course was— The best thing that ever happened to me was taking his course in Chinese.

DONIN: Yes. I mean you were ahead of everybody else because you’d had a semester then of Chinese.

BERKOWITZ: I had a semester. But the thing that happened, it was interesting because when I ended up in China as a young second lieutenant, I ended up at Taku. Taku Harbor was maybe 90 miles from Beijing. And we ended up at the harbor and went up to a hospital ship. And they took all, maybe 200 enlisted men up to be billeted that night. And we didn’t know it, but we were going to be assigned that night all over North China. We thought we were going to be billeted and the next day see the colonel. And we went from Guam to North China in a few days, where the temperature in Guam was close to 90, and then China was close to—we ended up in China, Taku, it was close to 30, and we were freezing. So we opened up our locker boxes. There were 20 drunken officers. As I say, we didn’t think we were going to be assigned that night. And then all of a sudden we

were picked up and lo and behold the colonel was standing up in front of us and assigning us to billet, to duty all over North China. And he got to me, and he said, "Berkowitz," and I said, "Yes." He said, "Chinese language." He looked at my resume. He didn't ask me how much. [Laughs] I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Headquarters, First Marine Division, Intelligence, Repatriation Section." It was the best job in North China. And a friend of mine, Ken Coy, in back of me, he was as drunk as I was, he turned around and said, "Well, lieutenant, what do you want?" This is the colonel asking Lieutenant Coy. And Lieutenant Coy, he said, "I want to go with my buddy George." He was assigned to defending a railroad bridge in Manchuria.

DONIN: Oh, my God!

BERKOWITZ: It was the worst duty. And it was just luck, as I say. So I look at Chan and I look at Dartmouth, and I think of Chinese language, Dr. Chan. And I think how wonderful it was and how lucky it was.

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: As I said, Aristotle said, "If you want to be successful, be virtuous." Meaning make good decisions. And one more element, be lucky.

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: That's what he said 2500 years ago. But here's a good example. It was just luck that I took Chinese language, that the colonel looked at my resume and assigned me to the best job in North China.

DONIN: Yes. I'll say.

BERKOWITZ: I had a wonderful time there. It was just a great time for me.

DONIN: Incredible. So were you able to stay—I mean the guys that you were training with at Dartmouth, did you stay in touch with any of them through the war?

BERKOWITZ: Not at all, no. Not at all. We were all assigned different areas, different things.

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: And the most important thing was getting through our training. Some of the officers, some of the kids that went through were offered the chance to go through— We went through OCS at the time of Iwo Jima. And they were offering us the opportunity to go through a blitz OCS. They could do it in half the time and become an officer in half the time. Some of the fellows picked it up. You know instead of going...I'm not sure what the OCS, four or five months; they'd be officers in two months. And they promised to give them a leave to go home and spend 30 days at home. And because of Iwo Jima, they had no time at home. They were flown into combat. And it was horrendous. I have stories. I was called back during the Korean War. And one of the captains I was called back with told me he landed on Iwo Jima. He was two classes in front of me at Quantico. He landed on Iwo Jima as a platoon leader, second lieutenant. He said by the time he arrived at his company, the commanding officer and executive officer were killed. The second commanding officer and executive officer were killed. And they were on their third commanding officer and executive officer. He told me that... He said, "You can't imagine what was is about until you see something like Iwo Jima." He said, "There were more men killed by flying limbs." Now think about it: heads, arms. He said, "People don't know what war is." He was still— And we were called back in 1951. He was still having nightmares. Now think about it. Five years after the war had ended, he was still having.... So when people talk about it, they don't know what war is all about. It's a different story.

DONIN: It takes a lifetime to recover, if that.

BERKOWITZ: Well, yes, yes. You're right. Absolutely right. And these kids coming out of Iraq now, they're having all sorts of mental problems. And the sad part about it is the military don't regard them as wounded. They say it's unfortunate they've had mental problems. And I know this. And that's sad because these kids in a sense are wounded. Their minds. And they're not treating them at all.

DONIN: Mm-mmm. Okay. So let's go back to what you remember about your time at Dartmouth. It was a combination of sort of educating you to be officers, but a lot of that was sort of regular undergraduate classes, wasn't it?

BERKOWITZ: Yes, it was. You know it's interesting. They made us take courses that we had no aptitude for. I mean physics. I sure as heck didn't have any aptitude for physics, but you had to take it.

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: But when I think of Dartmouth, one of the reasons I think Dartmouth in such a positive light is that one other professor that I had at Dartmouth was sort of a mentor, was Louis Benezet. And Louis Benezet he also, he taught Education Six. But his reputation was like Dr. Chan. His reputation was he never flunked anybody. And so everybody's trying to get in his class obviously.

DONIN: What'd he teach?

BERKOWITZ: Education Six. And when we got in the class, I'll never forget—it's kind of interesting how these things stand out in your mind. We got in class, and the very first thing that Louis Benezet said was—Louis Benezet was the superintendent of schools in Michigan, retired. And he went to Dartmouth; he was teaching at Dartmouth. And the very first thing he said: "Gentlemen—" There were no women in the class at this time. He said, "Gentlemen, I'm going to teach you one thing this semester." And you could hear a sigh of relief. He said, "I'm going to teach you how to think." And that's an interesting point because I don't see that in the academic world today. You don't have that. They're teaching English and history, but Louis Benezet taught me to think, and he saved my life in a sense. We had to read a controversial book every week. And we discussed that book. We read... Peter Fuller's father was governor at the time of Sacco Vanzetti. Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in Massachusetts. They were... For espionage or whatever they had. I'm not sure. But Peter Fuller was the son of Alvin T. Fuller, governor of Massachusetts. Well, we read the book about Sacco and Vanzetti. We asked Peter, why did your father allow Sacco and Vanzetti to be executed? His answer was very simple and understandable to a certain point. He said, "He picked a commission." His father did. And he would stand by their decision. And they came back and said they should be executed. But what he didn't say—and we discussed this—who picked the commission was a reflection of Alvin T. Fuller.

DONIN: Oh.

BERKOWITZ: You know we never even thought about that.

DONIN: Right, right.

BERKOWITZ: And so they were executed. And to this day many people think that it was unfair, never should have been. But what it really did, he taught me it's interesting how to think. So that even in the military, if you don't think as an officer, then you can lose a lot of men. And if you don't think in business, you can lose a business. So I go back, and I think of some of the decisions we made, I think of Louis.

DONIN: So you came out of those years at Dartmouth with more skills than just officer skills.

BERKOWITZ: No question about it.

DONIN: Life skills.

BERKOWITZ: No question. I come with good memories of Dartmouth, fine memories of Dartmouth.

DONIN: When you got there, it was a pretty rigorous sort of what do you call it?

BERKOWITZ: Regime?

DONIN: The first few weeks, you know, you had to pass a swim test, and you had to pass all kinds of...

BERKOWITZ: Well, as I say, how traumatic when you think about it. Here's kids right out of high school, not having gone through Marine training. And you're into it all of a sudden overnight. And you get by. If you get by it, you're that much harder and we did. You know we got by it, and it made us realize that no matter how difficult it was, no matter how difficult this training was, we get by this, we'll get by almost anything. We did, that sort of thing. As I said before, that's the sort of thing that's missing in the academic world today is this challenge. And I guess kids coming out of high school, if they don't like the professor, they change professors. If they don't like the school, they change schools. They don't like the roommate, they change roommates. We couldn't do that. We had to abide by the decisions that were made for us. And they weren't bad. It was a good idea. If you're allowed to float all over the place, you're really not going to hone in to what you want to be in life.

DONIN: It kept you very focused, didn't it? I mean just the prospect of the war...

- BERKOWITZ: There's no question about it, we were. We were very young, don't forget, 18 years old.
- DONIN: Very young.
- BERKOWITZ: But we matured fast. As I say, I told you before we started that I attribute much of my success in the business world not only to the Marine Corps but to Dartmouth.
- DONIN: Right. Did you have any memories of President Hopkins when he was there?
- BERKOWITZ: Not very much, no. We didn't notice those things frankly. We were so busy doing what we had to do. We got up early in the morning. We were jogging in the morning. And then we had class. By the time we got to bed at night, we were worn out.
- DONIN: Well, there was like reveille at six o'clock.
- BERKOWITZ: Oh, yes, out in front there. They had to report out in front of the halls.
- DONIN: And marched to breakfast.
- BERKOWITZ: Took attendance, and you had your breakfast. And you didn't have long for it, you know, couldn't sit around. Everything was done in a hurry, I think. It's kind of interesting, but it seems like everything was done in a hurry.
- DONIN: And it was all very condensed because you never had any breaks for like vacations or anything.
- BERKOWITZ: Not like you have today.
- DONIN: You went right through.
- BERKOWITZ: No, not like you have today. But you get conditioned to it. You don't even think about it. You know what you have to do. We knew we were in the military. They were not typical times. And we did what they told us to do. What the orders were, you had 11 months of school, you studied for 11 months.
- DONIN: Yes. Did you get weekend time for any social life?

- BERKOWITZ: Oh, yes. You did. You had time off on the weekends. But you were usually so tired, you didn't do a helluva lot. If you went home.... Things I remember best about hitchhiking down through New Hampshire. I went through Manchester, and in those days, you were wearing your uniform, everybody picked you up. I mean you never had to worry about getting a ride.
- DONIN: Right.
- BERKOWITZ: So I hitchhiked through all the towns all the way down from Hanover right into Boston.
- DONIN: All the way home, right?
- BERKOWITZ: Yes, home.
- DONIN: And what about those legendary road trips to see the ladies' colleges?
- BERKOWITZ: You know something? I never took one. I was so worried about passing.
- DONIN: Good for you.
- BERKOWITZ: I never.... I was really concerned. As I said, I had a friend of mine that took those trips, and he flunked out, and he ended up in Guam, and he was wounded on Guam. He was fighting the Battle of Guam. And to me, women are attractive, but [laughs] we didn't want to go into combat.
- DONIN: No, for sure. And were you able to participate in going to the—I guess the sports were still going.
- BERKOWITZ: We would go, yes. We'd watch, you know, football team was still winning, baseball. We made time for that, they gave us time for that obviously. But certainly much more rigid than it was—than it is today.
- DONIN: Oh, sure.
- BERKOWITZ: I don't think the kids really understand. I really don't. Because how would they understand, you know, what it was like then as compared to what it is now. I think I told you I'm over here at Brandeis. My suggestion... I had a suggestion for mentoring. I think

these kids should be mentored. You know people coming in who have been in business or lawyers, doctors and mentoring.

DONIN: It's a great idea.

BERKOWITZ: And they're just starting it now at Brandeis. But the other thing, I happened to have lunch with the fellow who's head of the— president—of the council at Brandeis. We go way back, and he was just picked to be president of the council. So my suggestion with him—I just keep my mouth shut; I don't say anything to anybody else—but I thought what colleges should be doing, they should be teaching ethics to these kids that come out of high school. They should be sitting them down and making them understand what it is like if they drink too much, if they use drugs or they're womanizing and they spend time away, that they're not going to make it in life. I mean the chances of making it in life aren't very good. And if they could sit down with somebody that really knows what they're talking about.... I'm talking about ethics and doing the right thing and making good decisions, I think that they would do better in school. I really do. And not only do they do better in school, but I think they do better in life. And it's interesting because maturity is what I'm talking about. And Harvard Business School as I understand it; I went through the executive program at Harvard. And the Harvard Business School is starting a new program. And if I remember, it's called the Two Plus Two. Now here's one of the finest schools in the country, business schools in the country. And it's called Two Plus Two. What the Two Plus Two is, they'll go to a junior in college, any college, might be Dartmouth, it might be Brandeis, it could be any college, and say to the student, if you graduate with good scores and go out to work in a good company for two years, you will be automatically admitted to Harvard Business School.

DONIN: Wow.

BERKOWITZ: Well, I know what's the message: The message is they're looking for mature young men and women. Now for them to turn around and say they want them to work for two years, well, the message is obvious. They don't want—I mean a lot of kids coming through there are really not trained, they're not working, they're not what they want.

DONIN: I think a lot of the graduate schools are adopting a policy that's like—it's not a policy. But they tend to look much more favorably on students that have had some work experience.

BERKOWITZ: Yes. It's interesting you say that because there's a vice president of my company, his daughter graduated high school a couple of years ago, and she wanted to work. And she applied to I think a restaurant south of Boston. And then she changed her mind, and she wanted to come to work for us. She didn't tell her father. So she applied to our restaurant. She was accepted there; they didn't know who she was, [Laughs] that the name was the similar. This young lady worked for us, and she blossomed. She developed. She worked with older people. She worked with younger people. She communicates better now. She smiles. She's a more mature person. So my feeling about it, we really have to do something. I think we're losing something when these kids come right out of high school or prep school. One of the problems—I ought to keep my mouth shut—because I think some of the professors have never been out in the business world. They are very bright, they're brilliant many of them. They have a doctorate, they have a master's. But they've never been out in the business world to know what's happening outside their environment. And I think this is very, very important. And they're teaching these kids.... I spoke to one—I'm not sure if I'm talking too much.

DONIN: No. It's great.

BERKOWITZ: I spoke to one professor, and we were talking about lying. I don't lie about anything. I read a Sissela Bok's book about lying. I never lied about anything. She wrote—she was a brilliant woman. And the name of the book is *Lying*. You never lie about anything, and I don't. My wife and I, we don't lie, I don't lie about anything. And it's interesting because I was talking to a professor, and we were talking about lying. And he turned around, and he said, "Well," he said, "it's all right to lie in a courtroom. Lawyers lie." I said, "If they lie, it's not all right to lie. How can you possibly say that?" He said, "It's all right. I know it is." Where I live, there was a retired judge, state judge, and I said to David, I said, "David, tell me what happens if a lawyer lies in court?" He said, "I throw him the hell out of court." I spoke to a lawyer, and I asked him the same question—I go to school with him at Brandeis—he's never. But here's a professor telling me that it's all right to lie. So all of a sudden I went home that night and I said to myself, he's brilliant, but he hasn't been outside the environment that he's working in. And I think it's so important that they do this. And if they're teaching my children—your children—what's right and what's wrong, they should have the

experience of being out in the world or how can they possibly translate that—

DONIN: Into the classroom, right.

BERKOWITZ: In the academic world. That's all I'm saying.

DONIN: Well, they're hiding in that ivory tower that people talk about.

BERKOWITZ: I can say that to you because I'm not in the ivory tower. [Laughter] But it's true if you think about it. I know.

DONIN: Right.

BERKOWITZ: And as I say, I'm on the board at Boston University School of Hospitality. And so I have relationships. I asked one—well, I won't say—but I asked one very high up in one of the schools, why do you keep going up 7 percent a year in tuition? Which means in ten years they go up 70 percent. Now his answer floored me. His answer to that was—and this guy, as I say, was a president—he floored me. He said to me, “Because they're waiting at the doors to get in.” And I said to myself, how in the world—and that's why you go up in price? I said, “Well, if we did the same thing, we'd be getting maybe \$50 for fish and chips.” If they're waiting to get in, keep going up and keep going up. They go up because of the ability to go up. Well, that's the thinking that goes on. And I've sat at board meetings and listened to people who are teaching. And I just think that something has to be done. And of course I'm not big enough to do anything. But I can talk about it.

DONIN: You can definitely talk about it. Absolutely. So let me switch subjects here. I'm assuming you're Jewish.

BERKOWITZ: Your assumption is correct.

DONIN: Some of the alums that I've talked to who were there during the '40s, who were Jewish—

BERKOWITZ: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: —were not treated very nicely. Did you ever have any occasion to be—

BERKOWITZ: Never.

DONIN: --insulted or left out.

BERKOWITZ: Never, never, ever. Even in high school, I think, well, the high school I went to it was Roxbury Memorial in Boston; it's part of Boston. And there was a large Jewish contingent.

DONIN: One of the letters is from that school.

BERKOWITZ: That's right. That's Roxbury Memorial.

DONIN: That's right, yes.

BERKOWITZ: But I was—I think maybe the position I was in...I was a pretty good athlete. Today, my size... I would only be the water boy on a high school team because of my size. But then I was captain of the football team. And I was pretty high up in athletics so they treated you differently. I'm not sure that that's the reason for it or the fact that I could take care of myself in those days. And maybe that's the reason for it. But even at Dartmouth I never had that experience. I had two roommates—it's kind of interesting—the two roommates at Dartmouth, I go back, they were both Bennetts.

DONIN: Bennett?

BERKOWITZ: Bennett. They were both Irish. It's interesting because one was an Orangeman and the other was a Catholic. I guess one was Protestant. And the Protestant used to come in, and the Catholic would be praying. And I can remember, you know, this time... It was different then than it is now. And he would ride him, and they would have arguments. Never fights, but sort of a discussion. But I always remember these things. And they're both Bennetts.

DONIN: Amazing.

BERKOWITZ: Yes. It was. You know at the time I thought it was almost cute, you know. Because they weren't really mad at each other. But they had discussions.

DONIN: Heated discussions.

BERKOWITZ: Heated discussions. That's a good way, yes. Was a heated discussion.

DONIN: Right. Well, that's nice to hear, though, that you never felt any anti-Semitism.

BERKOWITZ: No, no, I never have. And I don't, even today in this environment obviously. But we, this company is very, very sensitive about ethics and how we treat people. And we even have a course in ethics. We're one of the very few companies. We teach ethics: what's right, what's wrong, from busboys up to vice presidents. And everybody has to go through this course. And we treat people the way we want to be treated. We had a group of Irish girls that came over from Ireland when we first opened up in 1968. And that to us was one of the group educations we had. We watched—there were two women, Callahan and McAllister. And McAllister, Anna, just died recently. She worked for us for almost 40 years.

DONIN: Aaw.

BERKOWITZ: And Katie Callahan's still working for us.

DONIN: That's amazing.

BERKOWITZ: And we're having a party for her.

DONIN: Oh.

BERKOWITZ: It's kind of interesting to talk about. But the point I was getting at is that what we learned was a wonderful education, the quality of people. Sometimes people judge people by how much money they have, how much education they have. And all of a sudden you realize it's not what counts. It's the equality of the person. These two women, there was a group of maybe three of them, there were two Irishwomen, they would help each other. One would help each other, and the quality was there. It was a quality you don't find everywhere. And so as we grew up in this business, it made us realize, we judge people for what they are, not how much money they have or how much education they have. And it was a wonderful education. And that's how we handle people. It seems to work.

DONIN: Definitely seems to work. More people ought to live their lives that way.

BERKOWITZ: I think it's part of the.... It's interesting because I think it's part of the restaurant business is that you come in contact—contact—with

people much closer to you. Even customers. You have an opportunity to sit down and talk to customers. You have an opportunity to get very close to employees. Some businesses they sit in an ivory tower, and they dictate and they tell them what they want. Our business you don't. You work with these people. And I tell this story: We have a fellow who worked for us who was an artist. His name is Hyman Bloom. He's 94 years old. They say he's one of the great contemporary artists. And we just bought one of his paintings. And one of the reasons we bought it was relations. He came to Cambridge from Brookline because his doctor told him to eat fish. He had fish twice a day. And he's 94 years old now, so, you know, what?

DONIN: That's a good support of fish, I should say.

BERKOWITZ: Well, and we met so many... We met great doctors, great surgeons. We've met so many nice people through Hyman that would come with him. It was part of our education. When do you have the opportunity to talk with a great artist? And I once asked him: I said—he was talking to Dr. Pollen, who was a great eye surgeon.... I'm sorry I must be talking too much.

DONIN: No, you're not.

BERKOWITZ: Dr. Pollen who was a great eye surgeon at the Eye & Ear Infirmary. And they were sitting down one night, and I had just finished working. I used to cook and manage and do all the jobs. And I sat down with them since we knew each other. And I asked Dr. Pollen, a great eye surgeon, and I asked Hyman Bloom, a great artist, what makes an artist? When do you have an opportunity to ask something like that? And they answered me, they told me: Dr. Pollen said, "What the artist sees through the eyes is translated to the brain. He sees things differently than you do. You look at the sky, he sees five different colors, you see two or one—two." And it's true. And then Hyman spoke up. And he said, "No," he said, "there are other things, too." I said, "What?" He said there are many people that have great talent, but" he said, "you have to work at it." He said, "If you don't work at it, I don't care how much talent you have, it'll never work." He said, "I know of a young boy," he said. And he told this story of a young boy who had great talent, but he preferred baseball. He said, "He'll never be an artist." [Laughter] But it's true. But then where would you ever speak to people like that?

DONIN: I bet.

- BERKOWITZ: So we had an opportunity to do that. And I was telling a story the other day, I was in one of the restaurants. A woman, an older woman, ran up to me, old as I am, and gave me a great big kiss. She said, "Thank you, Mr. Berkowitz," she said, "for doing what you're doing." Sort of a reward. What other businesses can that happen? It's one of the very few businesses where this can happen.
- DONIN: Well, and you're lucky. Not all restaurant businesses are run the way yours are.
- BERKOWITZ: Well, you know, I guess it's true. But I think it goes back when we started this taping. I think it goes back to where your roots are, and there's Dartmouth and Dr. Benezet, Dr. Chan, the Marine Corps. All these things come together. And I think that when you asked me the question why or how we made the decision that made us profitable and let us grow, I think they all come together. And parents, having good parents.
- DONIN: Yes. For sure.
- BERKOWITZ: Teaching you what's right and what's wrong. And all these things come together hopefully.
- DONIN: What became of your brother who went to Dartmouth? Is he in the business with you?
- BERKOWITZ: No, no, no. He went out on his own, and he never really did and accomplished a heck of a lot.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- BERKOWITZ: And we often wondered why. But I think there are a few reasons. I think one of the reasons, as I said, three of us worked for my father, and we received so much input, so much positive things from my father, who was just a great individual, that we all gained from it. And he never worked for my father.
- DONIN: Oh.
- BERKOWITZ: And he was the only one. And it has appeared to me when you asked that question that one of the reasons that he has never really

accomplished things that he could have had was the fact he never had that relationship, and he lost because of it.

DONIN: So there were four brothers.

BERKOWITZ: There are four brothers.

DONIN: Wow.

BERKOWITZ: Yes.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

BERKOWITZ: Dartmouth I think.... As I said to you before, I think it was just a wonderful experience for me.

DONIN: Yes. Well, that's good.

BERKOWITZ: Baker Library, I remember that very well. Hanover Inn. All these things downtown: shopping, those little stores. It's unique, it's a unique area.

DONIN: Do you go back there ever?

BERKOWITZ: We've been back once. Of course I've been so busy I've never had a chance to travel a heck of a lot.

DONIN: I bet. I bet.

BERKOWITZ: But I'm going back, I am. My wife and I were talking about it. We're going to go back. Have they finished the Hanover Inn yet?

DONIN: They're never finishing it. [Laughter] It seems to me. They could use some advice on their food, too. I'll tell you. They should hire you.

BERKOWITZ: That's a shame, though, isn't it? Because you know it's doable.

DONIN: It's an opportunity to have a wonderful place.

BERKOWITZ: People would come from all over, you know that. Because in that area there'd be a magnet for people that want to eat in a very nice environment.

DONIN: Yes, yes, it's true. Did they ever have reunions for the V-12'ers?

BERKOWITZ: Yes. Well, I joined as a program, China veterans. I'm a lifetime member. But I've never gone to any of the meetings. I always say I'm going to.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

BERKOWITZ: But my wife is... She doesn't want to travel that much. When we were younger we traveled a fair amount. But I always seem to miss them for some reason. I put them down on the calendar. I'm going to, I'm going to.

DONIN: Then something else happens.

BERKOWITZ: Then something else happened.

DONIN: Right. And you have memories of those two wonderful professors. Did you stay in touch with any of your classmates?

BERKOWITZ: No.

DONIN: Your V-12 training friends?

BERKOWITZ: No, no. I think what happens is that we all go off in different directions. We all went to boot camp together, and we went up to Camp Lejeune together more or less. Once you get to Quantico, some of them got out of the service at that time, and some went to China. Some of them were picked to go to China like I was.

DONIN: Yes.

BERKOWITZ: And some got out. The only one I kept in contact with was this Ken Coy, the one that went to Manchuria. [Laughs]

DONIN: Poor guy.

BERKOWITZ: He shouldn't drink so much. [Laughter]

DONIN: That's true. Well, I think we've pretty well covered it. Let me just look at my cheat sheet here to see what else, if we've missed anything. No, I think we did pretty well. Pretty well. Unless you have any closing thoughts you want to share with us, I think we've covered it pretty well.

- BERKOWITZ: Yes, I think we did. I would have liked to have gone back and picked up my degree at Dartmouth.
- DONIN: You were probably about halfway there, I would think, right?
- BERKOWITZ: Yes.
- DONIN: You got points for your service as well, right?
- BERKOWITZ: But then as I say, I was so busy working. And you know something? It wasn't bad. I'll take this.
- DONIN: Exactly. It all turned out.
- BERKOWITZ: Well, the experience I've had, I might have been a lawyer. [Laughs] Well, but it's interesting... If you've got a moment, I could tell you.
- DONIN: Yes.
- BERKOWITZ: What happened was I was called back in 1951 during the Korean War. And I was stationed at Quantico, went to school at Quantico. And when I went back to division, and I was getting out in a month, and they assigned me a job of being a defense counsel for a young man. Now, I'd had no experience in law. But it would certainly point me in a different direction. They didn't ask me. They ordered me to be his defense lawyer. And that's what they did in the military. The kid came from New York, and he was picked up by the Jacksonville police for a peeping tom. So I had to defend him. I went to his priest, and I spoke to his priest and found he was a nice young man. I went to his commanding officer, found he was a nice young man. And I defended him in a court-martial, and I got him off.
- DONIN: Wow!
- BERKOWITZ: I got him off, and I was very pleased. I said, boy, that's not bad. And about four weeks later I got a phone call, and I said, "Yes." He said, "Lieutenant, your client was picked up again for peeping tom." [Laughs]
- DONIN: Oh, no!
- BERKOWITZ: I said, Oh, boy! [Laughs] It was quite an experience, though. I said to myself, you know something? I never want to be a lawyer.

- DONIN: But you obviously had very persuasive powers.
- BERKOWITZ: I don't know whether I did or not. I found it interesting. It really was. A different thing altogether for me, you know, to defend somebody in court like that. It felt very good to get him off. It was just that when he went back, and they were going to....
- DONIN: That's a real downer, though. Oh! Well, I hope he got court-martialed that time.
- BERKOWITZ: No, no. I didn't stay around to see.
- DONIN: Right. Okay. Well, this is great. I'm going to turn these off unless you have something else to say.
- BERKOWITZ: No. One other thing I guess maybe as long as I'm bragging—You don't mind, do you?
- DONIN: I love it.
- BERKOWITZ: When I was in China, I went to the Repatriation Center. We repatriated Japanese military and civilians from North China and Korea. And we repatriated 750,000 from our area. I was the assistant repatriation officer. And after six months my commanding officer left, and at the age of 22 I was the repatriation officer in North China.
- DONIN: Wow!
- BERKOWITZ: And it was a wonderful experience. We unloaded three LSTs every day with a thousand repatriates on each LST. So it'd be 3,000. Some going to Korea, most to Japan. And in 1950 I received a phone call. This is four years out of the service. And I received from the Charlestown Navy Yard, China's Second Highest Award, and I never knew I was going to get this.
- DONIN: Really!
- BERKOWITZ: And there was a full-dress parade at the Charlestown Navy Yard. And I got the Nationalist China's second highest award just from working in repatriation.
- DONIN: Getting these people back home.

BERKOWITZ: It was a wonderful experience.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

BERKOWITZ: Wonderful experience.

DONIN: So you really had some amazing assignments in your military career.

BERKOWITZ: Well, a lot of it was luck. And it goes back to Dartmouth. If I hadn't taken Chinese or if I hadn't worked with Louis Benezet, well, these things, I think they come back to play. I really do. I really think that, you know, it's Aristotle again, once again: making good decisions and being lucky. And I think that's exactly what happened. I made some good decisions, and I was lucky.

DONIN: Well, congratulations.

BERKOWITZ: Thank you.

[End of Interview]