

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with George Munroe
By Mary Donin
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MUNROE: I grew up in Joliet, Illinois. I went through high school there and never lived anywhere other than Joliet. In the summer we went up to Michigan for the summer. I had a good high school record, although I was not the valedictorian. We had a large class of 650, and I was the salutatorian. I came home from the graduation ceremony, and my mother said, "You're a disgrace to the family, the first one that hasn't been the valedictorian." Both my father and mother had been, and my uncle had been. So that was sort of a comedown.

DONIN: Oh, dear.

MUNROE: I'd been the most valuable athlete and had a 97.6 average or something. But Thelma Whitgrove had a 98.3.

DONIN: Oh! You still remember her name.

MUNROE: So I've always been supporting the admission of women to Dartmouth. Anyway, when I got ready to go to college, I wanted to play basketball. And my family wanted me to go east and said, in effect.... They rarely told me what to do, but they did tell me you ought to go east and then choose your college. My father had gone to Dartmouth, my uncle had gone to Dartmouth. And I chose Dartmouth as one of them and Princeton as the other, where my role model from high school days, Chuck Winston, had gone and was playing basketball. And I really was torn between the two until I got a letter from Princeton saying—I was accepted at both. But Princeton said, "You really ought to take another course in math so you'll be fully up with everybody. And we'd want you to do that before you come." That meant not going to Michigan for the summer where my girl was. And since I knew neither Dartmouth nor Princeton, I figured, well, I'll go to Dartmouth. And I did.

DONIN: Good decision.

MUNROE: [Laughs] Yes, I've never regretted it.

DONIN: So you actually saw it, though, before you went.

MUNROE: No.

DONIN: No.

MUNROE: My first visit, I got on a train. I took the Commodore Vanderbilt from Chicago to New York on the train. My mother's roommate from Vassar lived in New York, and she and her husband took over my weekend in New York and introduced me to several excellent restaurants and took me to a show and so on. Following which, my mother received a letter from her roommate saying, "It was wonderful having George. I've never seen such marvelous innocence in my life."

DONIN: [Laughs] Nice Midwestern innocent boy.

MUNROE: Yes. So then I took a train up to Hanover where I got in the car with a bunch of guys from...I figure all these guys are all—must be seniors. I mean they're all talking about parties and the women they had. They were really terrific big guys. I got up to Hanover, and in those days we all wore little green freshman caps. And here these same guys, the seniors I saw wearing freshman caps. [Laughter] So I started from deep in the hole, but I came out all right.

DONIN: [Laughs] Did you—what was your dorm when you first were here?

MUNROE: South Mass.

DONIN: South Mass? Uh-huh.

MUNROE: I lived alone.

DONIN: You had a single!?

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: Wow!

MUNROE: That was a family suggestion, that if you get stuck with somebody that you don't want to continue with, it's awkward. And this way you'll be able to choose more freely.

DONIN: Now you were a recruited athlete then?

MUNROE: No.

DONIN: No?

MUNROE: No.

DONIN: But you were...but that's what everybody talks about, that you were this famous athlete.

MUNROE: Yes. Well, I became an All-American basketball player.

DONIN: Who was your coach at the time at Dartmouth?

MUNROE: Ozzie Cowles, the greatest—

DONIN: Oh, yes.

MUNROE: —coach of any sport Dartmouth's ever had, and he's always been short-changed by the college for some reason. Well, Ozzie was there eight years. He finished second in the league the first year. He won seven straight championships. Dartmouth has won a total of ten championships in the entire existence of the college. He won seven of them in those eight years.

DONIN: Incredible.

MUNROE: And I went to a game after I got on the board. I went out to get some popcorn at the half. And coming back I noticed there's a placard or a picture up of Tally Stark, who was a coach at Dartmouth who won—tied for a championship once. And there was a picture and a placard up for Doggie Julian who had two championships in about 20 years. And nothing for Ozzie! So I decided then that I had to do something about that. And didn't do anything for years because I've always been overcommitted. But Joe Vancisin, a Dartmouth '44, who spent his career in basketball coaching at Yale for something like 20 years and then head coach, as an assistant to Ozzie when he went on to the Big Ten from Dartmouth, and Joe was always trying to get Ozzie – not always – but he was at one point trying to get Ozzie into the Hall of Fame and he stirred it up. Still nothing happened. And we finally got a thing going when Ozzie was 94, I think. And we had a big portrait of him painted, and we presented it at the Gathering of the Green, or whatever the dinner is, in Boston. And it was marvelous because he

was still going strong. I mean the guy was there when I arrived; I'm looking around the room, I said, "I guess Ozzie isn't here yet." There was a group over in the corner of guys standing, and in the middle is Ozzie standing there holding forth. He made his first concession to retirement that year by missing the final four playoffs.

DONIN: Unbelievable. [Laughs] He was 94?

MUNROE: He was 94.

DONIN: [Laughs] Great!

MUNROE: But he was terrific. And we were terrific; you can't believe it because there's nothing before or after at Dartmouth that matches it in basketball. So we had a great team. We had five guys from the... Well, we had Gus Broberg one year, an all-time, great Dartmouth basketball player. Three time All-American. Scored 45 foul shots in a row in competition without a miss. And just really great. So we had him. There were three of us in the class of '43. I mean this is my '43 experience is basketball. I found as soon as I got there that Jim Olsen from Glen Ellyn, Illinois, whom I'd played against in high school, was in the freshman class.

DONIN: Amazing.

MUNROE: He got the Chicago Alumni Scholarship Award that Bob McLeod had, and it was only every four years. They gave one scholarship. And McLeod had graduated in '39, and Olsen got his scholarship so he was there. And then we had two guys from Minnesota that Ozzie Cowles had recruited: Stubby Pearson who was Mr. Everything.

DONIN: Oh, Stubby Pearson!

MUNROE: And Stan Skaug. And so we went.... I guess I'll cover basketball, and then we'll do the remainder. We got together and would go down to the gym and horse around, play a little ball. So we had Skaug and Olsen and myself and a couple of other freshmen that we picked up. And the varsity came out. They were defending Ivy League Eastern league champions. And so we said, well, we'll scrimmage it for a little bit. And we jumped out ahead. And the score went on up and kept going. Score went on up, we're still ahead. And they're gradually catching up with us. Finally they got ahead like 51 to 50, and Ozzie blew the whistle and said, "Okay,

that's enough." [Laughter] But we ended up with putting three—they were the defending champions, and we put three of their regulars on the bench by the three freshmen of us.

DONIN: Oh, my goodness! That must have caused some....

MUNROE: And we played with Broberg and who was the other one? I guess Stubby. Stubby, yes. It was Stubby. And we won the Ivy League title. And then I didn't care about the Ivy League much because that's known to be second-rate sports. But I always had the Big Ten up here. So we go out, and we're going to play in the NCAA national tournament, which was just getting started then. This is about the third year it ran. And we represented New England and there were four teams east of the Mississippi: North Carolina and Pittsburgh and Wisconsin. Wisconsin were the Big Ten champions. And we were playing the first game in their field house. And they had about 13,000 of their fans there and 13 of ours. And they beat us 51 to 50. And went on and won the national championship. So next Christmas we played them in Milwaukee, eight games in a row or something, and we clobbered them. Then we went into the national. We won the Ivy League, and we went into the NCAA again. We went to New Orleans. We beat Penn State in the opening round. Kentucky beat Illinois in the other game. And we played Kentucky in the final and beat them 48 to 28. And we went to the final game in Kansas City against Stanford, where we were going to get beat anyway. They were a better team. But we only had five players. I mean, we had to use one substitute. Whitey Meyers, the other forward had sprained his ankle and couldn't start. So we were two points down at the half, but they ran away with it in the second half. But we had four regulars back again; only Stubby left. So we thought we've got a good shot next year. We went down to the Garden; we won the Ivy League again. Then we went down to the Garden. We played DePaul in the first round. They had a guy named George Mikan who'd come from my hometown of Joliet, Illinois. Couldn't make the high school team he was so big; he was six foot ten.

DONIN: Whoa!

MUNROE: Ended up as the basketball player of the first half of the 20th century.

DONIN: Really!

MUNROE: And he was stationing himself in front of the basket and jumping up and catching anything that was headed for the basket. We had this great scheme: We had Olsen pulling out on the side and firing shots from the side. He was tearing the nets off. We were off like two weeks after our season ended before the tournament. He got down in the Garden and took 15 like shots and missed all but one. And the ones we put up that were going in, Mikan caught. [Laughs] It was really terrible. So we lost. They put in this goal tending or anti-goal tending rule as a result of that game, the coaches did. See, there was no such prohibition against what he was doing.

DONIN: Up until then?

MUNROE: Until then.

DONIN: Oh, interesting.

MUNROE: We had to unfortunately play it before they.... And we beat North Carolina. I mean we were a top team. We beat the Big Ten two out of three. We were something like 14 and 0 against New York teams. We beat Seton Hall, St. John's, Seton Hall three times. St. John's, NYU, Fordham, Kentucky, Penn State, North Carolina; big basketball schools. I mean we played with the best.

DONIN: Yes. Phenomenal! Ozzie Cowles must have been just thanking his lucky stars that you three or four or whatever as freshmen walked in there.

MUNROE: Well, no, he brought in the two from Minnesota.

DONIN: Yes, okay. But he didn't know about you.

MUNROE: He didn't know about me.

DONIN: He didn't know about—

MUNROE: And Olsen came in through the Chicago alumni, yes.

DONIN: Fantastic!

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: Did your family come and watch you play?

MUNROE: They came to the Wisconsin game because it's not so far from home. My mother came and the family of my idol that we left in Princeton came and were.... I had about four or five people there.

DONIN: That's great. That is great.

MUNROE: Nobody came to the.... In New Orleans I had my big day: I scored 20 points against Kentucky. Or was it 21? 20 or 21. The Kentucky team only scored 28 points. And Dizzy Dean, you wouldn't know him either. One thing I'm finding as I get older is that generational problem of who knows what? I mean I took my son to a restaurant in our neighborhood. And at the end, I said, "Gee, you know, this restaurant's owned by Joan Bennett's daughter." "Who's Joan Bennett?" he said. [Laughter] And we went to a play.... I'm just rambling. We went to a play in Bridgehampton not too long ago. It's a Noel Coward thing that Gertrude Lawrence and Noel Coward did, dialog mainly. And they're talking about prominent people of the time. And there were a couple in there I wasn't absolutely sure who they were talking about. [Laughter] And I mused about it to my wife, and my older son was there then. And I said, "Let's ask Taylor." Taylor's well read. See if he knows any of these people. So I read the list of ten people, and he knew one.

DONIN: Amazing.

MUNROE: He knew one.

DONIN: Yes, well, the rest is just off the map for us. [Laughs]

MUNROE: Yes. Anyway, that's all beside the point.

DONIN: So that was your basketball career.

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: At Dartmouth, at Dartmouth. Right.

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: So sticking with....so switching to other things besides basketball. So you matriculated in '39.

MUNROE: Uh huh. A year after the great tornado or hurricane took everything down.

DONIN: So you were there for Pearl Harbor?

MUNROE: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Do you remember....

MUNROE: Yes. I was in the basement of Baker Library.

DONIN: Wow.

MUNROE: That's all I remember when the attack was made.

DONIN: And then did President Hopkins—

MUNROE: We did see, when we played New Orleans, like in March, early March after the attack in December, Joe Batchelder, who'd played on Dartmouth teams before the war and had been at Pearl Harbor, an officer on one of the ships, came. So there was a little immediate contact. But by and large it was—everybody signed up. A few people left. But the rest of the people signed up and were told they could stay in school and finish up.

DONIN: Oh, really. So there wasn't this sort of...you didn't sense this sort of, you know, everybody wants to sign up and go immediately. The campus didn't sort of empty out then.

MUNROE: No, no. No. A few of my good friends—one of my good friends—did go. He wanted to go to Annapolis and was still connected in some way with the Navy. And he went in right away and served in the Pacific for longer than the rest of us.

DONIN: Did you sense that faculty and staff were going to sign up, young faculty? Did you lose any of your professors?

MUNROE: No, I don't think so.

DONIN: So did you feel sort of insulated from the war, being up there?

MUNROE: Not exactly. I mean it was a big issue with President Hopkins. He'd been very upset and surprised—this is in the buildup before Pearl Harbor—that the student body opinion seemed to be contrary to making the destroyers available to Britain, taking any steps that were going to involve us in the war.

DONIN: Uh huh.

MUNROE: Whereas he thought that was absolutely right, as correctly he thought. And he was right. And he formed a committee, picked kids that he thought should know better or should have an opinion more like his. And we met in Hoppy's basement. I grew up with the *Chicago Tribune* the rotogravure section came and everything they reported on World War I with piles of dead bodies, four deep, at Verdun and how many hospitals and universities could have been built with the explosives. I mean it was so clear it was an insane exercise to have men trying to storm trenches protected by machinegun fire across an open field. I mean, what sense did it make? And I don't think it was a sense of self-preservation primarily; but a sense that war is not worth it, and you don't fight. Anyway, that was the way some of us felt.

DONIN: That was the students' perception, right.

MUNROE: Not every student either. I mean we had Chuck Bolté going off to fight with the King's Rifles.

DONIN: Right.

MUNROE: And there were people wondering. And once the war started, once the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, we all knew we were in, everybody signed up, a lot of us in the Navy or Navy Air Force or the Army.

DONIN: And at that point, before you graduated, Hopkins had already sort of made the arrangements with the Navy Department to start the officer training school there.

MUNROE: Yes, they came up.

DONIN: Were you aware of this group that arrived to start taking classes and training.

MUNROE: Yes. I remember my last year I was trying to take a color picture of Dartmouth Row; it was a beautiful clear, sunny, bright sunshine day. And I was going to take it, and a guy in a uniform walked into the picture, and I thought, well, I don't want it dated. So I waited while I let him go all the way across. And just when I got ready to

go, another guy started. I ended up with my fingers frozen. But they were there.

DONIN: Marching around.

MUNROE: They were—the first ones I think were...Again, my memory's hazy. I think the first ones were older people who'd gotten commissions. And then the V-5s came in who were—I was a V-7. I don't know what those stood for. I first tried to sign up for the Naval Air Force, and my eyes got where I couldn't see 20/20. And so they said you've got to go in the surface Navy. And a lot of my classmates were in the V-7 program.

DONIN: But that was after you graduated?

MUNROE: No.

DONIN: You trained while you were there?

MUNROE: No, you didn't get any training with these. You just signed up, and you await their call.

DONIN: I see.

MUNROE: When they had enough training facilities to handle the crowd.

DONIN: So you signed up before you graduated, but they told you....

MUNROE: Yes, I signed up pretty soon after....

DONIN: I see.

MUNROE: And everybody did.

DONIN: Everybody did. Oh, okay. Now, my understanding was that Hopkins really did this for economic purposes. That he foresaw the fact that the college would not be able to basically heat the buildings if he hadn't, you know, sort of turned the school over to the Navy as a training ground.

MUNROE: Yes. I think it was a good decision.

DONIN: Yes. It was the largest—my understanding is it was the largest naval training program in the country of the colleges...for the Navy.

MUNROE: Could be. I don't know. I went to Columbia.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

MUNROE: For training. The other guys went to Notre Dame. There was a big group at Columbia.

DONIN: Yes. But your experience, while you were still an undergrad then, was that the school essentially was not all that different. I mean you did your classes mostly with civilians, not with a lot of the....

MUNROE: Oh, yes, all with civilians.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

MUNROE: It was perfectly normal. I mean maybe half a dozen members of our class left earlier.

DONIN: Right.

MUNROE: Most of the class went through the last summer and graduated in January of '43.

DONIN: 'Forty-three, yes.

MUNROE: I stayed out. I worked in a school bus and ambulance factory in the summer and went back basically so I could play another season of basketball.

DONIN: Ah, yes.

MUNROE: Which decision I was uncomfortable about. I felt it was a mistake.

DONIN: Why? Because you felt anxious to get on with your military service?

MUNROE: Uh huh.

DONIN: Yes.

MUNROE: And I remember I talked to Hoppy about it, and he relieved me quite a bit. I mean, he said, "It's fine. It's perfectly okay if you're three months behind some of your classmates." I just wondered although we had our hearts in this basketball, maybe it was a mistake. I

didn't play very well that year either. My junior year I had a great year. I made All-American.

DONIN: Wow!

MUNROE: I mean an All-American team. It was a second team where they had five and five.

DONIN: So at this point they had sort of compressed the terms. I mean they were actually.... The school was running year round by now.

MUNROE: I don't know whether the school ran through the summer. Maybe it did. I know it ran for my class, so they probably had the whole school running.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So what... Do you have any recollections of President Hopkins?

MUNROE: Oh, yes.

DONIN: You interacted with him quite a bit.

MUNROE: Well, yes. We liked one another. He was great.

DONIN: He must have been a basketball fan.

MUNROE: Well, I think he was. I know one time I was dribbling up the court in a game. I knew he was sitting in the stands there. And I changed direction of my dribble. And somebody said, obviously on the other team, "He's palming it!" You know they used to be very careful. You couldn't catch the ball and change. We had to keep it. And I looked. It was somebody on the sidelines, a coach of the other team or something. And I looked at him and said, "Bullshit!" [Laughter] And I saw Hoppy. [Laughter] That wasn't my only... But I got to know him through this—his concern about the....

DONIN: The whole sort of isolationist thing.

MUNROE: Yes. The other thing was Bill Seidman and I did a, I don't know what. I had a senior fellowship without any guidance. And my general theme was the Depression, and I was trying to find out why we had a Depression and how we avoided depressions. And I was trying to read a book on banking. I had an office up in the library. And then I thought I should take—I took two courses at the Tuck

School: statistics and accounting, accounting and statistics. At some point, I guess it must have been through the statistics course, we were supposed to do a project or something. Anyway, Bill Seidman and I ended up doing a project where we were going to measure the effect of a Dartmouth education on the political viewpoint of the students. So we got up this questionnaire. It had a series of questions on different subjects measuring their attitude toward the TVA and unions and other things. And we had always three answers...maybe we had more than three, maybe four answers, which ranged from the rightwing Republican to the far-out liberal, and then two that were closer in here. So we got them, and we tried to correlate them with parents' occupation, part of the country you're from, your major, or your year at Dartmouth. So we got all that data together, and we did the correlations, and there were no correlations whatever with the part of the country, the father, the area of study. But with the year at Dartmouth there was total correlation.

DONIN: Oh!

MUNROE: Moving steadily left, first year, second year, third year, senior year.

DONIN: Really!

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: I think of Dartmouth as being so traditional back in those days. That's so interesting.

MUNROE: No, no, it was very, very clear. So we thought we had discovered something that should be of interest to the president. So just before we got our report up, we had all the data and the conclusions, we played in the tournament, as I said, and lost to DePaul. Then we played the consolation game with NYU, which we won. And as we walked off the court, we got our orders to report for first training in active duty.

DONIN: Wow.

MUNROE: That was like March of '43. So the report for Hoppy never got.... I wrote him a letter and said we've done this report, and I'm sure it's of deep interest to you. [Laughs] And I got a nice letter from him and never got the report to him. I think we did talk about it maybe. Anyway....

DONIN: Fascinating. Now were you in a fraternity?

MUNROE: Yes, I was in two fraternities. We joined the first term of the sophomore year, I believe.

DONIN: Yes.

MUNROE: And I was terrifically honored that Gus Broberg knew who I was, and he and Stubby were both Alpha Delts, and they both said, "Do you want to be an Alpha Delt?" I thought if that's where the basketball players are, probably that's where I want to be. And I had a group of friends that I wanted to be with. So out of innocence or stupid, I signed up for Alpha Delt and found out they weren't going to take any of my friends. [Laughs]

DONIN: Why? They just weren't....

MUNROE: They had other people that were meeting their criteria.

DONIN: Oh.

MUNROE: So I said, wait a minute. That isn't what I thought it was going to be. So I pulled back with the friends, and we all joined Phi Psi, which is now called Panarchy or something.

DONIN: Oh, yes, yes.

MUNROE: Phi Psi had a lot of leaders, too. It was a good place at that time. I don't know where it got off the track. But my relationship with it was limited because when I got in I proposed we sign up Bill Seidman as a member. It turned out he's banned because he's a Jew. So I said, "Well, forget me." And I never really did anything with the fraternity. We had six of us, three basketball players and three other guys, five Midwesterners, one Easterner, lived at 23 Leb Street in a house owned by the Beta House janitor.

DONIN: Ah hah!

MUNROE: We had the second floor.

DONIN: Is it still there, 23 Lebanon?

MUNROE: No, it went down in favor of the motor lodge right away after we left it.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Right, right. Uh-huh. So you never—so you only had to spend.... What, you spent two years in that house? Were you in that house for two years?

MUNROE: Yes, yes.

DONIN: So two years in the dorm and....

MUNROE: No, actually, really only had...I think it was only one year. It looms as the biggest year of our lives through all of this. But some of us had been roommates before. Yes. Actually my sophomore year, once I got out of the single room, I moved in...we got a room that was big and I think there were three or four of us in there: Tub Feeney and Paul Parker, I remember, and I. And then we added the other two basketball players and Seidman when we went off campus.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Yes.

MUNROE: But that was a great year. We played an awful lot of cribbage. I spent a certain amount of time studying between four and seven in the morning after the cribbage ended and the guys went to bed.

DONIN: Oh, my! Because you guys—you had to play basketball the afternoons and evenings.

MUNROE: Yes, in the season. In the fall and the spring we didn't.

DONIN: Now did you participate in all these famous road trips to visit the girls' colleges around.

MUNROE: I never did— Yes, I went to Colby one time I think the first weekend I was on campus. [Laughter]

DONIN: You knew you had catching up to do.

MUNROE: Olsen and I were in the back. A guy had a car with a rumble seat.

DONIN: Oh, yes!

- MUNROE: And he invited us if we wanted to ride in the rumble seat to come to Colby with them. I don't remember being at Colby, but I guess I was there. I know I went somewhere in that rumble seat. [Laughter] It was bitter cold. Oh, God, it was cold. We were huddled in the back there trying to get down underneath.
- DONIN: Long, cold ride. Long, cold ride.
- MUNROE: [Laughter] Oh, God, that was disastrous. But I never went anywhere. Yes, I went to Boston one time. That's right. I hitchhiked to Boston one time for the Harvard weekend.
- DONIN: Hitchhiking was common in those days, I gather, because there just was no cheaper way to get around.
- MUNROE: Yes. I ended up...I went with a guy named Roddie Wolbarst who was in my class. He turned out to be a big drinker. He ended up at some point when he was on the trip, he punched a cement statue or something when he had been drinking.
- DONIN: He probably broke his hand.
- MUNROE: Yes, I think he broke his hand. I remember we ended up with some girls in Boston. And one of them said she lived somewhere out in the sticks. And I said I'd take her home.
- DONIN: Uh-oh.
- MUNROE: And we get in this taxi [laughs], and it goes and goes and goes. And the meter is...It was terrible. Some other guy's roommate recognized me and said, "Dumb guy!" [Laughter]
- DONIN: So do you feel...The later classes often talk about the fact that class unity was sort of affected by the fact that so many of their classmates would go off to war and then come back, and would graduate two or three years later.
- MUNROE: Yes.
- DONIN: It sounds to me like '43 wasn't as.....
- MUNROE: Yes, I think we were the last one not affected that way.
- DONIN: Yes, yes.

MUNROE: We really, as I say, I don't imagine there were more than five or at the most ten members of the class who left before the January graduation of the bigger group.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

MUNROE: And we have a very good sense of class existence and participation.

DONIN: Was Stubby Pearson in your class?

MUNROE: No, he was '42.

DONIN: He's '42, right.

MUNROE: He was going to be an FBI man at first. And then he went into the Naval Air Corps and was flying, I think, a torpedo bomber, and he was shot down at Midway, I think.

DONIN: Yes, very sad.

MUNROE: Do you know where he was killed?

DONIN: I should know because, you know, they gave an—what do you call it?—an honorary degree to him posthumously, oh, not too long ago...five years ago or something.

MUNROE: I'm sorry I missed that.

DONIN: His brother came from Iowa or somewhere.

MUNROE: Minnesota probably.

DONIN: Minnesota?

MUNROE: Iowa? It could be; I don't know.

DONIN: And you know there was a piece on the evening news about it. This was at the height of the.... I think it was, you know, the year that Tom Brokaw's book came out about the greatest generation.

MUNROE: Yes, it was a great idea. Who thought that up?

- DONIN: I think it was a woman in the public affairs office named Laurel Stavis. She fell in love with the story of Stubby Pearson.
- MUNROE: Yes, well, you take a kid off the farm in Minnesota, he came and did everything at Dartmouth.
- DONIN: Phenomenal. And we have a lot of photographs of him as an undergrad. And he was the class—I think he was the valedictorian. Anyway, they—
- MUNROE: And he was class president, and he was football captain, basketball captain.
- DONIN: It was just, you know, incredible. And they had this wonderful ceremony not long ago, and his brother came, and it was a very moving event. You know at commencement time.
- MUNROE: Mm-hmm.
- DONIN: And we have this wonderful little film clip about him now that was prepared.
- MUNROE: Oh, great.
- DONIN: So I should know where he was shot down, and I can't remember.
- MUNROE: It came right away, I think.
- DONIN: It was very soon.
- MUNROE: It must have been Midway, I think, because it was the first major action.
- DONIN: It's a very sad story.
- MUNROE: Those planes were so small.
- DONIN: Easy targets. Anyway, so, thoughts about Dartmouth as an undergrad? It was a good experience.
- MUNROE: Yes, it was a good experience for me because we had that group of seven that were....

DONIN: It made your experience very different than a regular undergrad. I mean sports changes everything, doesn't it? When you're a member of a tight-knit group like that.

MUNROE: Well, the seven were only three basketball players.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. That's true.

MUNROE: So we had a good balance. We did a lot of touch football down there on the triangle across from the stadium. Now it's filled up with something. And we did a lot of cribbage.

DONIN: Cribbage? I haven't heard of cribbage in a long time.

MUNROE: Yes, I haven't either. [Laughter] It was Stan Skaug, I think, brought that in from Minnesota.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

MUNROE: I don't know why, but we've stayed very close together. But we've now lost one of our living members.

DONIN: Oh, gee!

MUNROE: The only real war hero in the crowd.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

MUNROE: He was the sole.... I always thought he was on the battleship Texas at D-Day at the landings. But in looking through this, I found a letter from Charlie Donovan, a classmate, who said he'd turned up a piece from one of our 50th reunion or sometime, when Jim had given his history. He said he was the only one from his—he was in charge of an LST, a landing ship—and he was the only survivor of the LST. And he had climbed up the hill there and gone ashore with the troops and survived, which I didn't realize. Anyway, he's lost now. We can't seem to find him.

DONIN: Oh, literally lost. I mean you don't....

MUNROE: I think he's probably somewhere, but he's lost to us.

DONIN: Oh, gee!

MUNROE: I don't think the college has an address for him.

DONIN: Oh, gee! Mmm! But the rest of you are still all alive and in contact?

MUNROE: No, no. Three of them are gone, four of us are alive. I assume the guy who's lost is still alive. Seidman and Skaug and I are still perking.

DONIN: Great, great.

MUNROE: About ten years ago I got a clipping sent by Stan Colla enclosing a piece from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which described the Stanford team that beat us in the final league tournament. And it reported that four of their starting five were dead. And I told Stan, I thanked Stan for his letter and told him two of ours are gone, too. Now three.

DONIN: So you guys are coming up on your what—65th?

MUNROE: Yes, this fall.

DONIN: Is it in the works? There's going to be one?

MUNROE: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Oh, great! Back at campus, right?

MUNROE: Yes, we have the Inn devoted to us.

DONIN: Oh, great. Yes. I guess the older classes come back in the fall now because you can have the whole Inn to yourselves, I guess.

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: Yes, it's quieter.

MUNROE: I hope they haven't underestimated. I mean I don't know how many we'll get, but it could be a good crowd. There's still quite a few going.

DONIN: Yes.

MUNROE: And we have a mini-reunion every year.

DONIN: Uh huh.

MUNROE: But that's down to about ten or 12 now I think. I can't drive up there anymore. I went last year, and it's just....

DONIN: It's too long.

MUNROE: It's too much of a drive.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. And there's no really good way to.... Have you ever done the flight into Lebanon on one of those little planes?

MUNROE: Oh, regularly. I used to do it regularly.

DONIN: Those planes.... Although they've upgraded the plane now in the last year. It's bigger, and you can actually....

MUNROE: Yes. They've upgraded the airport from what it used to be also.

DONIN: Sort of.

MUNROE: Yes.

DONIN: It's still a little airport, and you've got to fly over those mountains.

MUNROE: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Yes. [Laughs] Okay, I guess we're done.

MUNROE: Okay.

DONIN: Unless you have any other thoughts you want to put on this tape.

MUNROE: No, I don't think so.

DONIN: I'm surprised you still have a voice.

[End of Interview]