

VOICES OF 1968

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press

Transcript of Oral History with Stuart Sharkey

Interview date: May 31, 2022

Interview Location: Recorded over Zoom

Interviewee: Richard Galperin (RG)

Interviewer: Rebecca Johnson Melvin (RJM)

Transcription: Rebecca Johnson Melvin, with additional editing and formatting by John Caldwell

Note: Time stamps generated by Zoom auto transcribing feature.

Time [H:M:S]	Transcript
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[Discussion testing recording set-up. Interview content starts at 24 seconds]

00:00:24.000	RJM: This is May 31, 2022. This is Rebecca Johnson Melvin, and I am here in Morris Library interviewing via Zoom a guest in our project, Voices of 1968. I'd like to ask our guest to introduce himself. Thank you.
00:00:40.390	RG: Good morning, Rebecca, I'm Rich Galperin, and I'm a 1971 graduate of the University of Delaware.
00:00:45.505	RJM: So, can you give us some personal background leading up to 1968? Where were you born, and where did you live then? And where did you go to school before you came to the University of Delaware?
00:00:59.951	RG: I was born and raised here in Wilmington, in the suburbs of Wilmington. I grew up in pretty much a middle-class suburban family. I went to Mount Pleasant High School, graduated in 1967, and matriculated to Delaware in September of 1967.
00:01:25.000	RJM: So, what do you remember about campus life at the time? Academics or the social life, entertainment? What was going on, on campus?
00:01:37.024	RG: Yes, I want to preface my remarks by saying that in the first semester, that is the end of the year 1967, I was what I would describe as kind of a typical homesick kid. Even though I only lived 45 minutes away, I really

wasn't on the campus or involved in social activities or very much aware of what was going on. I devoted myself to my academics.

00:02:08.966 RG: But by January of 1968, when the second semester started, I was fine, and I then became much more engaged, and spent virtually all of my time on the campus, including the weekends. What I think one must understand about 1968, the issue of Delaware, is that at the University of Delaware, in my opinion, at least, the school was behind the curve, so to speak, on political and social issues of the day. Other campuses I had read about, I read in the newspapers and heard on television or radio, were much more active with regard to protests and and rallies. In the early part of 1968, that was not the atmosphere at the University of Delaware, where the atmosphere was still pretty much social.

00:03:02.144 RG: Social life controlled the second semester for freshmen, which was the time to rush fraternities, and, I guess, sororities, and that was a dominant activity on campus. I have a very strong recollection of that going on. Other than that, there were other typical college activities. There were the beginnings of some rallies and some protest, which I'll discuss in a minute. Primarily the Bressler-Meyers affair, I think it came to be known, which was heating up, but it would be inaccurate to describe the campus as any kind of hot bed of social and political activities.

00:03:53.471 RJM: So, you mentioned reading, and I wonder if you could say a little bit more about other information sources. For example, *The Review*, the student newspaper. How did it cover what was going on elsewhere on campus? And did you read *The Heterodoxical Voice*, which was sort of an underground paper? Did you watch the evening news on a regular basis? Which newspapers did you read, or did you read anything

00:04:20.458 RJM: you know, like *Life*, or anything like that?

RG: Alright, we have to begin again by remembering there was no Internet in any way, shape or form.

00:04:26.031 RG: Or where there weren't any cell phones, so communication was a very different world. I was always, what one might say, interested in politics and what was going on. My family was a very liberal family. Always a topic of conversation in high school, in the household, was what was going on. Most of what I learned was from, probably, the newspapers, and that would include the Wilmington paper. I don't know whether in that day it was still a morning and evening instead of editions, or if that was after the merger. But in any event, I read news in the

newspapers quite regularly. I wasn't much on television news during my years on campus. But first of all, television access was limited to everybody. There was one, basically one television per dorm and I lived in a dorm.

00:05:31.157 RG: So that wasn't big. *The Review*, I absolutely read it. In those days, I believe it was a twice-a-week publication, obviously printed since that's the only way it could be disseminated. *The Heterodoxical Voice*, I do not remember when it started. I remember seeing it, and I know that this was a subject that would come up. And I found it very interesting. I think it was primarily an opinion kind of a paper, as opposed to one that had, for example, wire services that would convey information from elsewhere around the country. *The Review* did have wire services, and that was helpful, but mostly I would say my news of the outside world came from the Wilmington papers and occasionally,

00:06:21.436 RG: I would read the *New York Times*.

RJM: So, what was your awareness of student activism on campus? You say it was behind your awareness of activism on other campuses across the country. But what were some of the issues going on here, on the Delaware campus?

00:06:49.652 RG: Yeah. Okay. So, the primary national issue that concerned students was the Vietnam war. Issues of racism, sexism, and other matters that were facing multiple segments of society, were not anywhere close in importance to most students as the Vietnam war. There's one very obvious reason: we were all of age where we would soon be facing whether we're gonna be in that war, and being shipped overseas or not. This, oh, so this was the one area of social activity. There were often rallies. This was a means that I guess still exist today. Plenty of rallies, but they'd be posted on bulletin boards and on trees and by various organizations.

00:07:58.767 RG: SDS, this was a big one, but Student Government also would schedule these rallies that had speakers and talk about the war. Along with the war, was the issue that was brewing with a mandatory ROTC, Reserved Officer Training Corps. In my freshman year there was mandatory ROTC. I think it was two years. I personally was extremely opposed to it, and I, actually refused to do two things. That was, I went to my classes, but I would not do two things. I would not assemble and disassemble a rifle, as we were requested to do, and I would not drill. I found both of those very militaristic, and I was again opposed to the war. So, I had made that clear and didn't do that. I received demerits.

00:08:56.872 RG: But I was not, nothing more serious happened, although some students did have more serious outcomes. Now, this ties in—not my personal experience—but the general issue of ROTC ties in with what I mentioned a few minutes ago, which was the Bressler-Meyers affair. Two young professors took a verbal, public stance against mandatory ROTC, and likewise against the war. The administration was unhappy with this and struggled for a while. I don't know the internal workings, but they struggled for a while, for what activity, what action to take or sanctions to take. And it brewed and that really didn't, I don't think, help anybody. And by the winter or spring of 1968, it was quite heated up, and many of the rallies were in support of these two professors. And there was much to support, to make sure they did not have any sanctions. I don't know the timeline exactly. It's, I'm sure, can be found in *The Review*, etc.

00:10:12.909 RG: But ultimately the University decided not to renew their contracts. And that, as might be expected, further inflamed the student body, and that was the beginning of the University of Delaware really getting into it, the concept of protests and rallies. And student awareness definitely went up a notch with those, with that affair.

00:10:49.368 RJM: Do you remember who organized some of those rallies?

00:10:58.671 RG: They were organized both with specific or organized on-campus groups, such as the Student Government Association, SGA, but much more organized by either impromptu groups or the SDS, which was on campus already, and took this on as

00:11:25.431 RG: a project of great concern to them.

RJM: Do you remember the name Ray Ceci,

00:11:34.501 RJM: in relation to SGA and, I don't know, any other names with SDS, such as George Wolkind?

RG: Yeah, I remember, George. I remember Ray. Both of these people. Neither of these people were people that I, certainly, I didn't socially interact with them, for no reason other than they were older than me, and I didn't know them, but I was well aware of their activities on campus. My recollection is that Ray Ceci, in particular, impressed me with his maturity and the depth of his commitment to the cause, and George Wolkind also. But just my, again this is 50 some years ago, and so that isn't completely, I don't have complete detailed recollection.

00:12:43.160 RG: But I do remember them both. I do remember their willingness to go out on limbs jeopardizing their academic status, and that wasn't a motivation to me and to others. I don't know I can't quantify that to really get into it, deep into students asserting their feelings and their rights.

00:13:00.914 RJM: So, what were these rallies like? Where did they take place?

00:13:18.220 RJM: And you know, who attended them?

RG: A favorite location, I haven't been to the campus for a long time, but what was then the only student center on what we used to call I guess East Campus where the Harrington and Gilbert and Russell dorms were, there was the— I don't know what that building is called now—but on the back steps of it, which faced on Harrington Beach. Do they still call it, a place, Harrington Beach?

00:13:38.235 RJM: Yes, they do. And Perkins Student Center I believe is what you're talking about.

00:13:41.109 RG: Okay, so the backsteps was a favorite place for rallies. I remember vividly being there. They were held at different times of the day. The ones in the evenings were better attended because people were in class. The quantity of people varied greatly from rally to rally, from topic to topic. Again, mostly it was antiwar and pro-professors Bressler and Meyers, but they were, I can remember, a vibe of excitement, of meaningfulness, that this was not, to me, a casual event. These really were places where students could interact and share. Often there would be what was called an open mic. Again a phrase I'm sure still exists, in which, after the primary leaders who organized it, would speak, all others would speak. And it was at that time that I do recall that there would be speakers on other issues.

00:15:01.242 RG: The other issues that would be were racism, the University's view on black students and a black student organization, and the lack of black students. I mean there was, I bet you, there wasn't 1% black students in 1968; I don't have a statistic on that. It was extremely low, and that was a topic. And the black student leaders would speak about that. Women's rights also generated some rally activity, again, rarely with this organization was there a rally for that purpose. But the open mic allowed people to speak on these things. The other area that slowly began to build was one that involved me, as the years went by, was the conflict of *in loco parentis*.

00:16:02.255 RG: Up until my freshman year, this was the way of the world at the University. Basically, the concept was that the University stood in the shoes of our parents. They had morals. They believed they had moral responsibility for us, and to us and to keep track and control of our social activities like our parents would. In those early rallies in 1968. I remember that topic began to come up with what, of course, was a very popular topic, and I'll get into that when when you're ready. But and again, I was actively involved in that.

00:16:46.340 RJM: So, can we go back to ROTC again? I was surprised that you were able to, as an individual, not participate in the gun assembly or the drills. Do you remember the walk-off instance at a ROTC field? And what was that about? And also, were Bressler and Meyers supporting this anti-ROTC stuff? Was that part of their issues?

00:17:16.868 RG: Oh, yeah, they were. Again, they were, they were liberal. They were antiwar. Antiwar and anti-ROTC were pretty much, you know, one and the same perspective. And so, yes, that was what the University was unhappy with them about, because of their antiwar, anti-ROTC stands. The walk-off, that occurred before my personal protest, and that might have you know, given me some feeling of support because that had already happened. I was not involved in that. I don't know, it wasn't my class; I don't remember seeing it. I knew about it pretty much immediately after it happened and I think that's what emboldened me to have my own personal protest. Which again the walk-off students got sanctioned, like one or two or more were kicked off-campus, I believe, or later reinstated.

00:18:25.896 RG: But, when I did my little thing I don't know what, why, again. I remember getting demerits because that was the way we were graded, like we were in the military. And I got lots of demerits but that was all that happened to me.

RJM: Do you remember having to discuss this with your parents, did they understand the demerits and your personal conviction against ROTC?

00:18:47.774 RG: My parents were very liberal people, and my mother, who's 96 and is still alive, is still very liberal. I don't remember this specific conversation that I had. I guess the best way to remember is to say that they weren't angry, and they weren't particularly even upset.

00:19:07.564 RG: I guess that means they supported me.

RJM: Did you have classmates

00:19:16.428

RJM: that also took those personal actions?

RG: No I don't remember that. I remember having for a close friend in the dorm that I'd already made as a friend by this point, who was on the other end of the political spectrum. He was not only in ROTC, but he was destined to become an officer, etc. He stayed in even after it was no longer mandatory, and he and I had some heated discussions with that, what I did, and about the whole whole program. But there was nobody else that I remember, with my little It's hard to picture how this occurred.

00:19:58.691

RG: I just remember sitting there at this long table with all these rifles, and I said, "I'm not doing this." And the student officer said, "You know we have to." And I say "Well, I'm not," so you're gonna get 15 demerits or 100, or whatever the number was, I said, "Okay, you give them to me." And then, the march I remember, the marching and exercising, what I remember about that is that I put on this uniform for the first time. Besides it being unbelievably hot and itchy, because it was still the fall. They took us out there, and we were carrying these weapons on our shoulders, and this was, I knew this was not, this was not for me. Regimentation, first of all, of any kind, was something that was difficult for me, let alone military regimentation. And I just stepped out of line. Again, somebody approached me and said, "You get back in line, Galperin," and I said "I'm not doing this." I was fairly certain I'd be more seriously sanctioned and nothing ever happened.

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RJM: Were you already 18 in the fall of 1967 and registered for the draft?

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RG: That's a good question. Let's see: my birthday is September fourth, the week school would have started; I was born in 1949. So in 1967. That was the year, I guess, I turned 18, right? Yeah. So, I guess the answer is, yes.

00:21:33.513

RJM: So, let's go to the spring of 1968 and what do you remember about the assassination of Martin Luther King on April fourth? What did you know about him before then? And what was the reaction on campus?

00:21:56.996

RG: I knew about Dr. King what I guess most people with any decent amount of awareness of national politics knew, that he was a major advocate of nonviolent protest and for the purpose of increasing the rights of black Americans. I never had found myself in a situation where I ever had a debate or argued with anyone about his cause. Again, in my family it was supported and don't know what else I could tell you about

what I knew about him. I was well aware of his speeches that he gave in D.C. and other no places.

00:22:37.290

RG: I had not really read anything, but I was impressed in many ways. I was well aware of the anti-Martin Luther King feelings in the country in the days of George Wallace, who ran for president, and it was racist in the extreme. I remember his rhetoric against Dr. King. I remember the real hate mongers that spread all kinds of stories, 90 percent untrue about him, and I was horrified by that kind of thing. It's the kind of thing that today is so common on the Internet, that kind of trolling, I guess they call it.

00:23:30.194

RG: But there, in those days, it was done through distributions. I remember a leaflet on the campus before the assassination, a poorly, cheaply-printed leaflet, a racist leaflet that had a caricature of Martin King looking very exaggerated with African American features and the whole list of stories about him. It was an ugly, ugly thing. I remember that. The assassination, and I certainly remember television was in full swing by 1967, and it was all over the TV news. And I was kept very much on top of what was going on with the search for the killer. And as far as what was going on the campus, I again have to say, I do not remember there being any massive activities on the campus. I knew what went on in the city of Wilmington and I'll talk about that. On the campus, unless my recollection is not accurate, everything was low key. Yes, there were vigils.

00:24:50.169

RG: Again, which vigil, similar to our rally, I guess. But nothing more, nothing confrontational. The city, of course, I was well aware of what went on with the National Guard.

RJM: On campus *The Review* reported that there was a Day of Conscience, sort of like a teach-in.

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RJM: Do you remember that, after the assassination?

RG: I've got to say, I remember but it was so low key. It was, in many students' minds, as horrible as it is to say, a day of no classes and not much more. Now, I'm not gonna, again I won't quantify, how many students took this seriously, and how many didn't, but I don't think a casual observer walking through that campus on that Day of Conscience, or whatever it was called, would be impressed with the level of student outreach.

- 00:26:02.680 RJM: So, what was going on in Wilmington and again, with your parents also living in Delaware? Were you communicating with them? Did they have concerns about Wilmington, that you were aware of?
- 00:26:23.677 RG: I lived in the suburbs, not the city. But in the in the late Sixties, the city was still a place where people shopped, went to the movies, government offices, of course, are still there. So, the need to be in the city was not daily for my family, but there was a need. There was time to go down there. The rioting took place in an area that was, I think, called the Valley. This was geographically hardly a valley, but it was the area where I-95 was being constructed through the city between Adams and Jackson Streets. And that area was a low-income, heavily African-American neighborhood.
- 00:27:18.501 RG: In fact, there's a whole story there as to the choice of the route of the highway through the city, which went through that area rather than another quarter mile west, where there was a more affluent neighborhood. In any event, that's where the trouble initially erupted. I think what occurred, and what didn't was not atypical of what was going on in other big cities, where there was—the word “rioting,” I guess, has to be used—to protesting. It was largely, there was a lot of vandalism, a tremendous amount of fires being set, and police weren't and the fire departments weren't willing to go in, which allowed big sections of the city to burn, both residential and Mom and Pop stores. We had a family friend who had an electric supply store, Balloon Electric Supply Company.
- 00:28:15.566 RG: Okay. David Balloon was a son of the owner, and he was one of my classmates and friends, and his store burned to the ground because the fire department would not come in and get rocks thrown at them and whatever else was going on. It was very, very bad in Wilmington. I don't remember how long it lasted. I know that it disrupted the Galperin family lives marginally, but for sure. And then, of course, what made it really worse was that even after things had calmed down, the Governor would not take the National Guard out of the city for forever, it seemed.
- 00:28:54.050 RJM: So, do you think University of Delaware students were aware of that political decision of Governor Terry, to keep the Guard in Wilmington?
- 00:29:10.996 RG: The student body was largely in-state, more-so than now, although I think there still are some regulations within the state how that works now. But then it was largely in-state, so there's no doubt that the student body was well aware of what was going on, you know, half an hour north, in the city. How it impacted individuals, I don't know. I don't have a lot of

recollections of conversations on that. Again, I'm attributing this to a surprising amount of apathy on the campus.

00:30:02.101 RG: I am certain that many students had family and friends that were, you know, in the city. But remember, this was occurring largely in a black neighborhood. The student population was overwhelmingly white and, again, the fact that I was kind of aware of the specifics of that episode with the fire department not coming in was because my friend's father owned the store. I don't know how many other students had that kind of intimate relationship with anything going on in that area.

00:30:43.056 RG: That's the way it was.

RJM: Do you think that students were interested in state politics? Because Governor Terry was up for reelection in the fall, and he was not re-elected.

00:31:06.545 RJM: I'm wondering if there was awareness of the Wilmington Occupation, in terms of student support or engagement with discussions about his election.

RG: The national presidential election coming up in the fall of 1968 did generate quite a bit of activity on the campus and, again, rallies. And speakers came to the campus with regard to national politics. And state representatives and senators also came, but I don't remember nearly the controversy.

00:31:40.311 RG: Of course, that was going on in the 1968 election, which got thrown in turmoil with the assassination of Robert Kennedy in the summer. Remember, in the summer there was nobody on campus as well. There was summer school, but a minimal number of students. But as far as students thinking about state politics, again, I think that it was an issue. It was discussed, but it wasn't anywhere near, it seemed, as

00:32:17.164 RG: important as the national election.

RJM: So, what were you doing that summer?

RG: In the summer of '68 I worked for Brandywine Raceway, long gone. I was a commissary steward. I worked in the daytime unloading food from people that we'd bought the food from, and stocking refrigerators and etc., and then distributing the food to the various parts of the racetrack, from the fancy clubhouse restaurant down to the snack stands. It was a good job. It was up on Naamans Road, for those who don't have any idea

what I'm talking about. It's where the Brandywine Town Center is now and I was living at home.

00:33:15.872

RJM: Were you seeing friends from college at that time?

RG: Sure. I also was still seeing high school friends that were going to other schools. In fact, that's something that allowed me to talk about the comparison.

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RG: I had a very close friend who was at Swarthmore. Again, not far away, but a very highly accredited liberal arts school. And he was deep into political consciousness at that point. I remember, in the summer, many discussions with him and where he was. That's what he wanted to talk about. That's what he wanted to talk to me about, and it was a major part compared to that of another very close friend who went to Duke, another highly acclaimed school. But in the South, and while my friend Jeff was himself very politically active, he had very little talk about his campus, because it was virtually nothing going on down there. But my friend Rich, who was at Swarthmore, was retelling stories of major confrontations on the campus over the war and racism and other issues.

00:34:50.609

RJM: So, what do you remember about June fifth, when Robert Kennedy was assassinated? And, for example, did Rich, your friend, talk about that?

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RG: I had, yes, I remember. I remember, again, I remember that well. These are the kind of things that now stick in people's minds. Look, I'm old enough to remember that Kennedy assassination from, you know five, four or five years earlier. And the Kennedy assassination did not seem to affect, did not seem to be in our minds, to be caused by the general areas of political division in the country.

00:35:57.814

RG: Primarily the war, you know. This was a time when people talked about the generation gap in which conservatism was primarily in the province of the older people. And older to us, of course, you know, was in those days probably 50, or so, and older. And liberalism was with younger people. Robert Kennedy had a strong appeal to young people, and so it was particularly devastating to those who were supporting him. The young people that I knew they were supporting him, but it wasn't an assassination that we related, as we did with Martin King, to a national issue.

00:36:36.969

RG: Sirhan Sirhan, I think, had political motivation involving the issues that were just not on the minds of most people. So I guess what I'm

trying to say, in order to make this a little clearer, is the discussions I had, again, with my friend in Swarthmore and others, was not a reaction to “what does this mean to the world,” or racism, or other issues that were bothering us or the war. I meant we lost a candidate that very many of us had been supporting and

00:37:11.742 candidate.

00:37:24.499 RJM: Did you know anybody that went to Chicago for the Democratic National Convention that summer?

00:37:30.892 RG: I was at that point in my life already a pretty huge fan of the Yippie movement. Jerry Rubin and I’m drawing a blank on the other guy. I did not go, and I don’t think I know anybody that went, but I followed that mess very, very closely, and it was a terrible thing for, you know, the Democratic party and the country as a whole. The televising of the police response to the students, largely student activists, was right there in—I was gonna say in color, probably was in black and white still—but, either way, people saw a very, another really energizing event. As 1968 went on, that would make the campus so much different by the time I went back in the fall of ’68, different from what I’ve been describing in the spring semester in ’68. That convention and the police reaction galvanized many otherwise on-the-fence young people that I knew, people that I talked to toward the end of the summer.

00:39:15.935 RG: And I remember also working at the racetrack. The people that I worked for were, let’s say, an odd crowd. They were itinerant people. Men, all men, that went from track to track, season to season, you know, with the harness racing circuit. And they were extremely conservative, very anti-hippies. They would go on nonstop about “long hairs,” and the other terms used to, you know, just describe the rising number of young people that were really alienated. And I resolved that problem early on by pretty much keeping my mouth shut. Having a discussion with them was fairly pointless. They weren’t well read. They had their reasoning, you know. They believed what they believed, and they didn’t really want to hear any facts or counter-balancing arguments. And my hair was growing long in at that time.

00:40:17.386 RG: It actually grew very long and I took ribbing from that. As far as conversation with those people, I didn’t. But this was the gap. This was the generation gap brought to a real point with the ’68 Democratic Convention.

00:40:33.058 RJM: I was about to ask you about how long your hair was that at that time.

00:40:36.735 RG: Yeah, it was. It was just starting to grow. By the time I graduated it was down to my shoulders. I had, no comments please, very thick, wavy, brownish-black hair, not particularly attractive by any means, an objective judgment, I guess, if attractive can be objective. But it was long and thick at the time I graduated. At this point I was just moving in that direction.

00:41:18.601 RJM: So, when you came back to campus in the fall of 1968 was ROTC still required at that point?

00:41:28.284 RG: That's when, and they had a process of making it not mandatory. It evolved. Those of us that started in the fall of 1967 had to complete our first year. But to not have to do the second year, and I think there was no longer any freshman coming in, in 1968, I believe, did not have mandatory ROTC either. It remained as a voluntary course, although, as the years went by, the antagonism against the military got to a point that it was, ROTC was dropped from most campuses, many campuses across the country. I do not—you're going to ask me—I don't know when Delaware eventually stopped with a military-related requirement and also training course.

00:42:37.592 RJM: So, one of the other issues that had been protested, was the curfew for women students, and I know that you got involved with the Residence Hall Association. So can you talk about what was going on with the dorms? And your involvement.

00:42:48.899 RG: Yeah. Yeah. So, this was the movement generally associated with the concept of *in loco parentis*. I was my dorm president, in the beginning of my sophomore year in 1968, and a year later became president of what was then called the Residence Hall Association.

00:43:12.378 RJM: Which Dorm was that?

RG: I was in Gilbert C. Hall. The building has been torn down. In fact, I think all the Gilbert complex was torn down, just a memory now.

00:43:29.905 RG: But I was the dorm president, and as a result, I was on the, the like, you know, the legislative body of presidents. And this was a hot topic, and the change from women being locked down basically at 9 o'clock at night, to eventually what turned into coed dorms, which I believe did not begin until, I believe, the very end of my time at Delaware. The process

from women being locked down, no visitation of any kind, of no women allowed in a men's dorm, no men allowed in women's dorm. All of this incurred changed incrementally, and I was quite active in all of that.

00:44:32.354 RG: So one of the first changes was the allowance of visitation for very limited periods of time when men could bring women into their rooms. But, of course, the *in loco parentis* concept was still dominant and the idea was you could not close your door if you had a woman in your room. This was the early stages, and they had more specific rules. One rule was the famous "three feet on the ground" rule. I don't know if you wonder what that is. But I want to tell you what that was. At all times if there were two people in the room, three of the four feet had to be touching the ground. This was a way to avoid sexual activity, at least in the eyes or minds of the administration.

00:45:31.132 RG: This was, none of this was monitored that I ever recall, by the way, in the dorm. The dorm RAs were supposed to. And the other rule was that the door had to be open. Well, what does it, "door open" mean? "Door open" was interpreted by administration to mean the width of a standard University of Delaware textbook. There's a subjective term! You know, years later when I became a lawyer, on this, I think of this stuff and I can't believe it. There was nobody that could think through the absurdity of some of this stuff. So we all decided in Gilbert C, as president, that the standard textbook was the so-called Delaware history, a paperback written by a very famous Delaware professor, who taught Delaware history forever and ever.

00:46:18.973 RJM: John Monroe.

RG: Yes, and his book was very small, and so that became our standard textbook, so we could close the door as long as you could slip his textbook in the middle.

00:46:26.985 RG: The next problem was that of course, you can't lock your door if the door was open. And I had an engineering friend who took the metal plate where the door locks against the jamb to the metal shop. He rebuilt it so that the door could lock in an open position. Oh, sure, or whatever. And yeah, he felt that complied with the rule, and again nobody seemed to care. So you see, this attempt to impose moral values on students was, you know, pretty much laughable. Ultimately, we got into the more important issue of the woman's curfew, which eventually got eliminated. Men didn't have a curfew. Women did. That went down. Then the 24-hour open dorms. That was later. We're past 1968 now, but I was, at that point, president of the RHA.

- 00:47:32.758 RG: And I was very involved in getting the faculty, whatever the, I can't remember the name of the committee that controlled this, but I was very active in getting them to vote in favor of 24-hour open dorms. One thing I remember again, some of these stories are a bit anecdotal, but I think they're interesting. When the committee voted to permit 24-hour open dorms, one of the terms was that each dorm had to have a written document indicating that they have voted, that the majority of the students in that dorm wanted open dorms, and it had to include certain rules, normal rules. I realized, as all of the hullabaloo was going on over getting the thing passed, that no one really thought about what these documents would look like.
- 00:48:42.232 RG: So I, one day, on my own, typed up a form with a blank space for the dorm's name, a blank space for the vote, and then a boilerplate set of rules, and I then mimeographed it, enough for one for each dorm, and had them, I don't know how I distributed them. I got them distributed, and then, when the university announced that 24-hour open dorms were in effect, as long as each dorm complied and showed its vote. Within hours, they were done and collected. The administration was shocked and surprised that it happened so fast, but that's what I remember.
- 00:49:27.124 RJM: So, it sounds like this was an important part of your experience at the University of Delaware, to have that involvement and leadership, those changes.
- 00:49:37.440 RG: I was a student activist. I considered myself, I guess. I had long hair. I dressed kind of like what used to be a hippie in those days. I wore my father's [coat]. My father was in World War II; he fought in France, and he came home with an overcoat. I don't know what was the name of the coat, I probably should. But I used to wear that. For some reason, antiwar people wore military jackets. I have no idea why we did that. Some kind of visual protest, and I remember I used to wear that coat in all seasons. It was a heavy coat. But I never considered myself the extreme left wing. I think I rose to student leadership because I tried to maintain a more practical approach. I knew that the *in loco parentis* was something we could really tackle and do something about.
- 00:50:40.956 RG: I don't know what we could do on the campus against the war. There was lots of talk and rhetoric. So the work that I did, I also got involved in the student judicial system. Because I felt students needed more say in how they were treated when there were infractions, and I was a drafter of the first student judicial constitution, and I recall that it gave students a lot of opportunity to judge themselves, up to a point. The University

always maintained an appeal process as well. But anyway. I guess that my activity was very much on-campus, student oriented, as opposed to national issues.

00:51:46.444 RJM: So, I wonder if you have any final thoughts about the significance of 1968 on your life? I think that kind of involvement is certainly an influence.

00:52:02.318 RJM: How do you remember that year, and that time in your life?

RG: It absolutely was a kind of a flexion point. Again, I came in liberal because of my family upbringing. My experience with what was going on elsewhere for example, in Chicago, on our other campuses really bent my feelings more and more to the left and the liberal side.

00:52:39.232 RG: It's hard to separate '68, from '70 which was the year of the Kent State massacre, which was probably, in my life, the most significant event to affect me politically, morally, whatever. And that's how I've been ever since. The campus provided me with an opportunity to make change, again, not on an issue such as the war, but on other issues of importance. And unfortunately for all of us, and maybe not all of us, but as life moves on, you know, the days of rock and roll and protesting, and all of that, kind of fades away.

00:53:34.221 RG: Real life interferes. I went to law school. Again, I had my long hair, and I still got in arguments with professors about political issues. But I knew I had to crack down, you know. Also, remember in '68, the economy was roaring. Jobs were everywhere. Students didn't have to care about, they didn't fear for "what am I gonna do for a living?" It was just a good time. That had changed in the early Seventies. I knew that I had it do well in law school, and to get myself out and get a job. But politically I've remained very much the same. I'm a liberal Democrat and much of this goes back to my days in '68, and on the campus.

00:54:28.386 RJM: So, with the sort of tumultuous events of 1968 and then you mentioned the Kent State incident in 1970, how did you feel when those students were killed? Were you grieving? Were you angry? Was it just distrust? Again, a generation gap?

00:54:54.937 RJM: What? What was the impact of that?

RG: Grief and anger, in equal parts. Grief for the fact that these four students that were killed weren't anywhere, nowhere near the kind of

villain or evil person that the conservative majority was trying to paint students.

00:55:27.297 RG: In fact, you know, two of the students I believe that were killed were literally just walking by when the National Guard opened fire, and, in other words, they weren't even protesting, even peacefully. And the power of the National Guard horrified me, and the lack of training. Very, very, of course, the grief that was unmeasurable. I mean there's this very famous picture, which I'm sure you've seen, of this 14-year-old girl who wasn't a student at Kent State kneeling over the body of a dead student. That picture hit the press within 24 hours, and I remembered it then. And I remember it today almost as if I was there. Actually, I went to Kent State years later to see the place and get, you know, grieve a little bit there. It was a major, a major turning point in my life, and I wish it was a greater changing point in American politics overall.

00:56:32.196 RG: It's a big cycle. We're back there again, in my opinion.

RJM: Do you have children, Rich? And did you ever talk to them about 1968, and this time in your life?

00:56:44.569 RG: Yes, I have two children, a son, a daughter. And my son is 40, and my daughter's 37 next week. And it's a general statement. They politically are very much the way I am, very liberal, very anti-Trump type of Republicanism, although not so much against the Republican party. And I have talked often and generally in the course of where we are today, and relating it back to what was going on in the Sixties. By the way, they both went to the University of Delaware also. As did my daughter-in-law, Delaware. I did, my father did, as did my uncle and aunt, and as did one of my three sisters. So, we are a big Delaware family, very closely involved with Alumni. A lot involved with alumni activities, anyway.

00:57:48.054 RG: So. Yes, I have talked to them quite, quite frequently about what life was like then, what the political tribalism was like, again. Then it was, as always, conservative versus liberal, but it was more an age, an age thing. The world hasn't changed that much and I've talked to them about it.

00:58:12.130 RG: Unfortunately. I need to, too much.

RJM: Oh, I want to thank you for talking with us today, and I appreciate your participation in this project.