

# AL FLEISHMAN

October 4, 1996

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Mame Warren,  
interviewer

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the 4th of October, 1996. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, and I'm with Al Fleishman. I'm just real tickled to finally get with you. I've heard wonderful things about ZBT, and, at this point, you are Mr. ZBT, so I would like you to speak on behalf of all your brothers who came before you, and who came after you, and who were there with you. So what first attracted you to Washington and Lee?

**Fleishman:** I got to Washington and Lee sort of by chance of fate. When I was in high school, we didn't have—I graduated from high school in 1937, and most of the people who would be on the other end of this can't relate to those days, but we didn't have the kind of communication or information about places. Like everybody else, I was in South Carolina, which was a very poor state in those days. I can remember as a child, when I was seven years old, my mother had an open Buick touring car, and I rode in the parade with her and some other people in the car that celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the founding of Anderson, South Carolina, where I was born. In the parade, marching in front of us, was some Confederate veterans, believe it or not. So I go back a long way.

The South was very poor. My great-uncles came down there in the 1880s as peddlers, pack peddlers. They found towns that they liked, and they established a storehouse, and they became a store. The Fleishman family had fifteen or twenty stores in towns in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia, long before most of the chains

were in business. Belk's and Sears and Penney's and people like that weren't even heard of yet.

My father was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and he came down to work for his uncles when was twelve years old, and aunts. My father grew up there working for his Uncle Sam, who was my great-uncle, whom I knew. He was drafted in World War I, was overseas in France, and he came back home.

In those days, among the Jewish people, they generally arranged marriages like you've heard about in the books and "Fiddler on the Roof," and things like that. My father married my mother, who he had been set up to marry. I was born in Anderson, South Carolina, about a year and half after they were married, and I've lived there ever since.

I got to Washington and Lee. I was in the local high school and did real well, was fortunate enough to be valedictorian of my class, which was very unusual, because there were only three to four Jewish kids in the high school at that time, and we received—I know a little something about discrimination and about things like that, and prejudice, and I was fortunate enough to do that.

When I started thinking about colleges, there were four that interested me: University of North Carolina, because some of my relatives had gone there; Duke University, because I heard what a wonderful school it was; and Citadel. Poor me, I would have never been anything at the Citadel. I would have blown the place up, and wound up in the brig, because that wasn't my kind of place.

Our attorney, a man named Leon L. Harris, who was class of '15 at Washington and Lee, he was the family attorney and the store attorney, and Mr. Harris used to tell me about Washington and Lee, and it sounded real interesting to me. I had never seen the place. So he suggested that I apply. And the reason I came to Washington and Lee—of course, in those days, they wouldn't have questioned acceptance. You just showed up with the money and went to school. I received a letter from Washington and Lee

indicating that I would get a hundred-dollar scholarship against the tuition. None of the others made that offer, and that's the reason I came.

Tuition at Washington and Lee my freshman year was \$250, and the other three years, it was \$300 a year. I was fortunate enough to have scholarships all three years, the other three years, so the only tuition I paid was \$150 the first year I came here. Does that tell you how I got to Washington and Lee?

**Warren:** That's a pretty good indication. Well, did you visit the campus before you came?

**Fleishman:** Never saw the place. My mother and father, and we had a gentleman who used to work for us, who used to do driving on long trips, they drove me up here in our family car, which was a 1928 Buick, and they left me here. I'd never been away from home for any length of time. I was sixteen. We only had eleven grades, and I was a little younger than most of the people here. I was in Room 316 in Graham dormitory. I was there by myself, waiting to go to Freshmen Camp. We used to have Freshmen Camp here when I was here, and it was a wonderful thing, because we had three or four days out at—I think it was Cave Mountain Lake. It was wherever the Boy Scout camp was in those days. There were about 150 of my classmates, and we all wore name tags, and we learned to know who was which, and we had all the people from the school speak to us. Dean Gilliam, and, of course, Dr. Gaines, and three or four other of the dignitaries told us about Washington and Lee, and what life at Washington and Lee was like, and what the academics were like.

The first day there—I still hear from two of those people, and I've seen them at our reunions—Charlie Gilbert, and Don Godehn is going to be back for this reunion. We were in the same bunk. It was alphabetical. I was scared to death, and the first day, I had a terrible pain in the side, which I'm sure was psychological, because I just didn't know anybody and didn't want to be away from home.

One thing I forgot to tell you, though. When I was in the dormitory, as soon as I checked in, one of the representatives of Phi Epsilon Pi, which was the other Jewish fraternity – we had Phi Ep and we had ZBT – were the two Jewish fraternities. They knocked at the door, and were real nice to me, and took me to lunch.

Then a fellow named Robert E. Lee, believe it or not, was in my class, and I don't know that he was related to the other Robert E. Lee, but probably. We used to call him "Buzz." He was the guy that won the blanket. He got a Washington and Lee blanket for naming the most people that were in the freshmen class on the last day. I was second. I don't think I got any prize, but he got a wonderful blanket that I remember.

Then also, as we were standing in line for registration, there was a great big guy standing next to me, and I'll never forget it, he had on a wine-colored, or brown, I guess, herringbone tweed suit. I looked at him, and I thought, "Well, this looks like might be a fellow to be friendly with." And this was Marvin Stanley Winter, who was also Jewish. He was from New York. He became a very close friend of mine, and still is.

When we got back, of course, we were busy with the registration, and I'll never forget Dr. Gaines' speech down in Lee Chapel. He introduced the – started telling some of the things – the rest of the class, the other hundred people that weren't there. We had like 280 in our class. The other hundred people who weren't at Freshmen Camp were all there. We came a few days early for orientation. And I'll never forget when he mentioned the University of Virginia, he never called it by the name, he said, "That's the school over the hill from us, in Charlottesville, whose team will be so soundly beat by us," whatever day was coming up.

We also had the wonderful opportunity of hearing Cy Young talk, and Cy Young's mother-in-law was our housemother, Mrs. Neely. And so we were close to Cy Young, and I still see Cy's son, Neely Young, once in a while. Of course, he was named for the family Mrs. Neely was part of.

It was a whole different thing then. The traditions were very well represented, and, of course, again, as like I said, we didn't have the communication or the ability to do some of the things. We had a great newspaper, and I had been on the high school newspaper, and I thought that would be a good thing for me to do, and so I applied to become a reporter, and I worked for the *Ring-tum Phi* all four years I was here.

Eventually, in my quest to do things that people didn't always like, I decided we should – the big entertainment in those days was the State Theater. Everybody was on the show team. You know, "Were you on the show team today?" And most of the fraternity brothers used to go to the movies as soon as they changed, so I thought that would be a good thing. So I wrote a column called "Reviews and Previews" in the newspaper. They wondered how I ever saw all those movies, and I never saw any of them. I used to get the poop sheet that they had, which had the information in advance, the advance sheet.

A wonderful man named Ralph Daves was manager of the theater, and he was the son-in-law of a man named Ike Weinberg, who was sort of our patron saint at ZBT. Mr. Weinberg owns a couple of businesses in town and also several buildings, and he helped us to build the fraternity house. Of course, I was rushed by ZBT, and if you want this information, Mame, I'll tell you about that Rush Week.

**Warren:** Please do.

**Fleishman:** All right. We had two Jewish fraternities. There were nineteen fraternities, I think, when I was there, and everybody – this was something else that bothered people, there were no upper-class dormitories. If you didn't belong to a fraternity, you'd have to room out in town. We didn't have any of these facilities that you have here today. Even when the young ladies used to come for the dances, they had to stay in boarding houses. There were no motels or hotels, well the Robert E. Lee was the only thing.

And so when we had Rush, the Phi Eps – in my class was a man named Bert Schewel, who was very famous here at Washington and Lee. He raised a lot of money

for them and he was a great donor, and his family owned the Schewel Furniture Stores, which are still in Virginia, and his sons are still a part of it. He and his father, and his father's brother, I think, were the people that ran it, and they were very big Washington and Lee supporters, but they were also supporters of Phi Epsilon Pi, which was the other Jewish fraternity.

Also, there was a quota system here. They allowed fifty Jewish young men to be in the total population of 1,000. There were 5 percent. The population of the Jewish people in the United States was 5 percent of the total, so we had a quota. But we all knew it. Of course, nobody talked about it, but we knew that there was a quota as to how many Jewish young men could be here. And so there were fifteen young Jewish fellows in my class when we registered, and, of course, the Phi Eps and the ZBTs rushed us. They didn't rush anybody that was non-Jewish.

When they came to select the pledges, thirteen of the fifteen pledged ZBT. One pledged Phi Ep, and one remained non-fraternity. Of the thirteen pledges, one was Bert Schewel, whose family had supported Phi Epsilon. So there was a big hullabaloo, and his father and his uncle got the other fraternity to protest, "Dirty Rush," so they had two more days of Rush, and it wound up ZBT got twelve, and Phi Ep got Bert Schewel and Bob Younger. And the other guy, Marion Simon didn't pledge, but he pledged our fraternity the next year. Thought that might be of interest to you.

And, of course, the fraternity life is an entirely new thing. In those days, the pledges were like servants. My pledge master was a man named Jim Fishel, who was class of '39, who became a big-time advertising executive. He's still alive. I see him when I go to New York. He's in poor physical shape. He was on the tennis team, and he was a great person. And he was, incidentally, the first Jewish editor of any major publication here on the Washington and Lee campus. He was editor of the *Southern Collegian* in his senior year.

Getting back to the *Ring-tum Phi*, I worked on it all four years. I don't know whether you want to use this or not, but we used to have something called the Big Clique here. You've heard about that before, which were the six major fraternities. I may not have all of them right: ATO, which is no longer here; Phi Delta Theta; Beta Theta Pi; Sigma Nu; Kappa Alpha; and I think maybe Kappa Sig, I don't know. I'm not sure about Sigma Nu. It may have been Sigma Chi. But anyway, there were the six major fraternities out of the nineteen.

Also, when I came here – this is incidental, too – ZBT was last in scholarship. Our class brought them from last to first in one year. We were first in scholarship at the end of our freshman year, and we stayed first or second in scholarship for the four years I was here. We had three members of our class who were Phi Beta Kappa, which was very unusual, out of those twelve pledges I was telling you about.

**Warren:** When you say "first in scholarship," you mean you had the highest grade point average?

**Fleishman:** Yeah, grade point average. I don't know whether they still do that among the fraternities here or not. But I just saw it in the old *Ring-tum Phi*, what we were at the end of the time.

Anyway, to finish up this thing with the *Ring-tum Phi*, we had a young man, who was a freshman with us, whose father was a very famous typographer, named Gilbert Farrar. Fred Farrar was in our class, and Fred was a reporter with us, but he dropped out after the first year or two. Fred was a Beta Theta Pi.

We wound up with three – and I don't know whether you want to use this or not, because it's controversial, I guess, but this is how I saw it. We wound up, we had three Lambda Chis, who were almost as low-grade as a ZBT. We had one ZBT and one non-fraternity person, who were the major staff my junior year, from whom the editor had been selected. And there was an ATO, who was editor, who I won't tell you his name, and he decided that because of the Big Clique arrangement, that they bring Fred

Farrar back and make Fred the editor. And the other five of us got together, and I guess I was the lead in that crowd. I told you, I'm always protesting. I was the lead in that crowd, and we decided that we would resign from the *Ring-tum Phi*, and they wouldn't have a newspaper if they didn't elect Bill Buchanan editor. He was non-fraternity. He had no political clout at all.

So Bill Buchanan, who became the head of your Department of Political Science here, or whatever they call it, politics, and still lives in Lexington, was elected editor, because the other four of us decided that was the thing to do. The person who had been selected, and you better not use his name now – Fred Farrar – because he hates me anyway – I think he does – was not elected editor of the publication board. That was one coup that we felt we were able to do.

Anyway, getting back to the *Ring-tum Phi*, we did a lot of unusual things, and when I found out we didn't have upper-class dormitories – we only had freshmen dormitories – just Graham and Lees. We had no place for the upperclassmen to live at all, except at fraternity houses. And as I told you, something like 85 percent – it's still a high percentage here – of the people who belong to fraternities. And, of course, it was all male. So I wrote an editorial about upper-class dorms, and I was as happy as I could be when they decided to build that upper-class dorm, which was like thirty years later.

And the other thing that I did, I had been in the high school band when I was in high school, and when I got to Washington and Lee, we had a pretty good football team. We used to play big-time football. We played people like Duke, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, some of the big-name schools in this area. Of course, we were a little bitty school, and we used to win a game every now and then, and some of my best friends are the people off the football team, today.

Junie Bishop [phonetic] was the fullback, and Junie made Phil Beta Kappa, and I thought that was absolutely wonderful. And he's always said – and he'll be back for this – he's somebody else you may want to talk to, because he was a football player.



He'll be back for our reunion. He'll be here today. When Junie used to go on the football trips, you know, he missed the days in class, and I always lent him my notes and went over my notes from class with him, and helped him whenever I could, which — he's a pretty smart fellow, and he's always said the reason that he made Phi Beta Kappa was because of my notes, which I don't believe. But anyway, he and I have been close all these years, and I've seen him in all kinds of places.

But I figured Washington and Lee needed to have a band, and we didn't have a band — rag-tag, sort of like you've got now. So I helped organized a band, and we had a forty-piece band, and we used to march and travel with the football team. We got some uniforms. I don't remember how I raised the money for the uniforms, but we got uniforms. We went all over the country with them. One of the games that I remember, we played Maryland in the Baltimore city stadium, where the Baltimore Colts used to play. It held like 55,000 people. You know where I'm talking about?

**Warren:** Memorial Stadium.

**Fleishman:** Yeah. I think Notre Dame used to play Navy there. So anyway, oh, it was in November. I think it was the last game of the season. It may have been Thanksgiving, or the weekend after, or the weekend before, and it was very cold. It snowed like the devil. We marched in our little lightweight uniforms in that snow, with snow up to our ankles. It was so cold, in fact, before the game ended, they brought the buses out on the field for the football teams to sit in while they weren't out on the field. We almost froze to death. There couldn't have been over 500 people in that 50,000 stadium. I remember that. But anyway, I was very proud of that, that we had a band. We had a man named Varna [phonetic], who was the music director before you had a good music department like you have today.

Let's see, what else do I need to — I'm rambling. I don't know what else to tell you.

**Warren:** No, you're doing great.

**Fleishman:** All right. Well, let me see what else I remember. I don't remember a lot about the freshmen year. Our fraternity was last in intermurals, and we brought it way up. I don't know where we were – fifth or sixth. We had a lot of people who were interested in sports, and all of us played. I don't know what I was doing out there. We used to play tag football. The ATOs were always the top crowd, because they were the ones that had the real football players, and they helped the other guys. And we had a great ping-pong team, which I remember. We were good at ping-pong.

**Warren:** Tell me about what life was like in the fraternity house.

**Fleishman:** Well, it's what you make it. That's the way I looked at those things. I never drank. I was always the guy that drove the car, even before they told you to have a driver, and I was always the person that was the bartender. I tended bar. I didn't care anything about the alcoholic beverages, particularly. Not that I had any scruples; it just didn't do anything for me.

The first house party that I remember, the ZBT house used to be on Jackson Avenue. If you know where the Phi Gam house is today, right across the street from the Phi Gam house. The house is still there. That was our first – I'll tell you about that, too. That was our first fraternity house, and it only had room for about ten or twelve people to sleep there. We decided we needed a bigger and larger house, and my freshmen year, Jim Fishel, Alec Loeb, a man named Ned Brown, who has passed away, and we had a fellow named Luria here, whose family was the Luria Iron and Steel people from up in Redding, Pennsylvania, who sold a lot of scrap steel, and they had lots of money, even then. We decided we would build a new fraternity house. So we got together, and we raised \$5,000 from the parents and alumni, and Mr. Weinberg signed a note for us for another \$5,000, and the university lent us \$15,000 and gave us the land. We built a fraternity house for \$30,000.

**Warren:** Where was that?

**Fleishman:** We got in the house in my sophomore year, 1938, we got in the house. We started in '37, started the drive when I first got here. The ZBT house now I think is the Kappa Sig House, across from the Lambda Chis. The ZBT is no longer on the campus.

**Warren:** Where is it on the campus?

**Fleishman:** On Nelson Street, on your way out toward the shopping centers, right before you get there. The hospital is up there, I think, to the right someplace, right before you get there.

Anyway, I was on that committee, too, because I could type. See, a lot of those fancy brothers of mine never took typing, because they were all going to be big executives. I took typing when I was in high school. So I typed many of the letters – most of them, I guess – that got us the money.

ZBT was like any other group of people. You had some people that were introverts and some that were extroverts. I guess you'd call me an extrovert. I'm not too sure exactly what that meant, but I was always involved in stuff. And then I used to study a lot, but not in the fraternity house, because it was hard to do there. My room, the first year I was in that house, didn't get finished until about, oh, I guess the fall of '38. I moved in as a sophomore with my roommates, who were Charlie Thalhimer and Jean Friedberg, and you know Thalhimer from the stores. Charlie was the son of Mr. William Thalhimer, who's president of Thalhimer's. They were convivial, and they had their things that they did, and I had the things that I did. I used to do my studying mostly after supper.

I'll show you sometime, if you want to, in the old commerce building, which is your philosophy and religion building now, or psychology, or politics, I guess. I'm not sure what it is. Newcomb Hall. The library was up there, the commerce library, and that's where I used to study. They always made fun of it. They said they're going to put a plaque on the wall over that seat that I sat in for three years, but that's where I'd be every night, and that's when I did my studying, was when it was quiet.

**Warren:** What was your major?

**Fleishman:** I majored in accounting, but I took everything in the commerce school they had, except two courses. The only courses I didn't take – and I was sorry that I didn't take this one called investments, taught by a man named Lou Adams. And the other was inland transportation, which I'm just as glad I missed. I didn't care anything about that anyway, but I'm sorry I didn't take the investments course. It would have helped me.

**Warren:** Were there any faculty members who were particularly important to you?

**Fleishman:** Yeah, Louis K. Johnson was. Have you heard that name before?

**Warren:** Tell me about him.

**Fleishman:** Well, Louis K. Johnson taught us marketing. I teach marketing today at a community college, and I use his precepts every day. He said some wonderful things, and anybody that ever took marketing from L. K. Johnson will remember him, because he meant a lot to us, and he was here for a long time. He was nice enough to invite me to his retirement dinner after forty years, and the same Bert Schewel that I told you about made the speech at the retirement dinner. Bert was a real character and had wonderful stories to tell about everything. Of course, he took the courses, too, from him. And he had this old beat-up watch that was wrapped in a beautiful package, that he gave to Dr. Johnson as a gift. And really what we had, we had a silver tray, which he had under the table, that we all had signed in the silver, with our names on it. Everybody was there. It was really something when he presented it.

Dr. Johnson and I were friends forever. He was in the Navy, too. I was in the Navy during World War II, and when I got back to the States after a year and a half in the South Pacific – I was fortunate enough to be on a destroyer, and fortunate enough to get back without anything happening – but we participated in every landing in the Solomons from Guadalcanal to Bougainville. Our ship had eleven battle stars, two unit citations, and thank the Lord it wasn't hit a single time.

But anyway, when I got back to the States – I'll back up a little bit – when I graduated, I was a real dumb bunny, a damn fool. I had a two-year scholarship to the Harvard Business School and didn't take it. Get the pistols out and shoot yourself in both sides. But World War II was on the way, and I was terribly in love with somebody, and I could see whether that would interfere with me going into the Navy, which I planned to do, and the other part.

So anyway, after I came back, I was a supply officer. I was in the second supply class at Harvard Business School that the Navy had, and I left for the South Pacific in September 1942. They landed in Guadalcanal, August the 7th of '42, and I was out there a few weeks later. When I finished my service as a supply officer, but they didn't have supply officers on destroyers, which I was on. They would have a supply officer for a squadron or a division of ships. I was a supply officer for two ships, and then down to one. It was considered hazardous duty, because they were sinking like two of those things a week when I was out there.

So when I got back, the Supply Corps was nice enough to suggest that they would give me some kind of duty that I wanted, which almost made me faint. By then I was a lieutenant, full lieutenant. So I requested any Navy yard on the East Coast, and I got the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

In the meantime, when I was on that ship, whenever anything came across, they had requests like you were telling me about what you saw in the *Rockbridge Gazette*, the *Lexington Gazette*, or whatever it is now. They used to advertise for people who had certain specialties. And, of course, my accounting specialty was something I thought was pretty good. So I sent in an application. Never heard anything. It was like in May of '43, never heard anything.

So when I got back to the States – I left the following February. After I got my leave, I was stationed at Philadelphia Navy Yard. I had been there about thirty days

when they called me from the personnel office, and they said, "Lieutenant Fleishman, we got a set of orders for you."

I said, "How the hell can you have orders for me? I just got back. I've only been back three months."

They said, "Well, we got orders."

And so I went up there, and it was orders to the Harvard Business School. It was a new program that they had, called Navy Material Redistribution and Disposal Administration. The war was winding down. This was in '44. They could see the end of the war was imminent, that we would do the contract termination, and pay off the contractors, and get rid of the surplus of whatever they had, and get them back into civilian production. So I had four months up at Harvard, and I was able to get a degree from the business school after all.

**Warren:** That's great.

**Fleishman:** Isn't that a good story? It really happened. And then I finished World War II, of all places, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Warren:** That's great. Now, when we were talking on the phone, you told me a couple of terrific stories about running into Washington and Lee people.

**Fleishman:** Oh, yeah. Well, I'll tell you about some of those, too. But I started to tell you about Junie Bishop, who I was telling you about was the football player. When I was at Harvard, the first trip, in the supply school, I was standing on the corner, waiting across the street, on the Harvard Business School campus. I don't know whether you've ever been there, and I don't know what it looks like now. This was in 1944, I guess—'43—'44, yeah. And these Air Force people there, too, "Off we go into the wild blue yonder," and there was Junie Bishop, walking across. I went up to him. Of course, he was in ranks, he couldn't say anything.

And then, Art Smith, who was a member of my class. I was sitting with a load of supplies on a miserable island named Espiritu Santo. It wasn't all miserable. That was

the island that was the model for *South Pacific* that – oh, you know the guy that wrote all the – oh, he wrote all that stuff, including *Chesapeake*.

**Warren:** Michener.

**Fleishman:** Yeah, that's right. Michener. We knew where the Frenchmen lived and we knew where [unclear] was. There was an island called Savo Island that they used to call [unclear]. But anyway, also, I was sitting on a load of supplies with my working party, waiting for my boat to take us back to our ship, and here comes this fellow. I could see his jeep coming down, and about from his waist up was above – the windshield was down, his waist up was above the jeep, and it was Art Smith.

**Warren:** So you were in the jeep?

**Fleishman:** No, I wasn't in the jeep. I was sitting with a load of supplies on this miserable island on a dock, in the boondocks, really boondocks, waiting for our boat to pick us up. We had gotten some food from one of the warehouses there. I saw this jeep coming down the road, and there was this tall fellow driving. I said, "That's got to be Art Smith. Nobody else is that tall." I got out in the middle of the road, and stopped the jeep, and sure enough, it was Art Smith.

I was standing on the bridge of our ship as we came into an island – well, we came into Samoa. We were in Samoa, in the Fiji Islands. Anyway, I was waiting for the captain to give me orders as to what to do, and I was standing on the bridge while the captain was bringing the ship alongside a cruiser, and there on the bridge of the cruiser was a classmate of mine named Johnny Preston, who's passed away. I used to see them all over.

To get back to Louis K. Johnson, to Dr. Johnson, and all those wonderful things that he taught me, Dr. Johnson was stationed in New York City in the Naval Officer Procurement Office, and his job was to get recruits for naval officers. I found out he was there, and I went to see him, and he and I had dinner. I was stationed in New York for about six or eight weeks while I was in this new program being acclimated to what the

paperwork was like. He and I used to eat dinner together quite often, maybe every other night, when we were in New York. Anybody that ever had him for classes loved him. He was a wonderful, wonderful man, and he taught us a heck of a lot.

The other professor that I remember – I had a wonderful – and maybe you've heard of him. We had an English professor here named Fitzgerald Flournoy. Did you ever hear of that, the Flournoys?

**Warren:** Tell me about him.

**Fleishman:** Okay. Well, Dr. Flournoy was a real character. He was rather rotund, and he wore the most miserable clothes I guess I ever saw. And since I've been teaching in a college, I can understand why he did, because there are certain things that happen. You never know what the weather's going to be, and you leave early in the morning, and you don't know when you're going to get home. But anyway, he taught us freshmen English. Dr. Flournoy – I can remember him now, telling us about Chesterton's *Le P\_\_\_\_\_* [phonetic], "Dim drums throbbing in the hill," half heard, and he'd bang on the lectern. He had a wonderful way of talking.

The other thing I remember about Dr. Flournoy, we had Benny Goodman here for Fancy Dress, 1939, I guess, in the old Doremus Gymnasium, and he was on the upper deck where that little track is, that they run around, if it's still there. I haven't been in Doremus lately. I remember us watching him, he was right above the band, beating time to the music, banging on the metal rails around while Benny Goodman's band was playing. But he was a very interesting character.

I also had Larry Watkins for business English, and that was a man that rode *On Borrowed Time*. You remember about him, I'm sure. Since you're an English person, you know all about that stuff. He was a pretty famous man.

The other thing, I had – let's see. Gosh, I'm trying to remember some of them. Dr. Tucker, who was the dean of the university for a while, and, of course, he was head of the commerce school, but Dr. Tucker taught us a transportation course. I don't



remember exactly what it was, but it was about railroad and truck transportation. The inland transportation course was more about the – anyway, we also had a taxation course that we took from him.

We had Dr. Hancock. I think he's got a building named for him or something. Glover Dunn Hancock. Used to be in the old Newcomb Hall. He taught me money and banking, which was probably the toughest course I had while I was here. And I had a man that I got a real kick out of. I was fortunate enough to make – I only made one B while I was here. Everything else was As except I didn't do very well on my physical ed, but that wasn't important. That didn't count anyway. Because I wouldn't show up half the time. I had other things to do that I figured were more important. This was a man named Bob Gray [phonetic] that taught business law, and I figured up my grades based on the way that we were told on the syllabus as to how they were going to be figured. At the end of the first semester, he had given me a B and I figured my grade was 93, and I went to see him.

I showed him what it was, and he said, "Well, you got an A."

I said, "Aren't you going to change it?"

He said, "Well, you did get an A. Let's call it a 'moral A'."

And that was the only B I got, and I don't know whether this is true or not, but somebody at Washington and Lee told me this, that Bob Gray was picked up by the Secret Service, the FBI, whatever it was, for being a Nazi sympathizer. I don't know whether that's true or not. I could be paranoid, and I probably am about a lot of things, that among them.

Where were we? Talking about professors, weren't we?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Fleishman:** Okay. Who else do I remember very well? Let's see. Hancock. Oh, Dr. Royster, who just died recently, taught us math. Who else were my freshmen teachers? I'm trying to remember who else I had.

**Warren:** Was there anybody who was really exciting in the classroom?

**Fleishman:** Oh, yeah. Johnson was exciting. Oh, I tell you who else was exciting, we had a man named M. O. Phillips, Merten Ogden Phillips [phonetic]. He taught us natural resources. Natural resources, something like that. Business and resources, some course about that. He was very exciting in the classroom. M. O. Phillips. And the most exciting class I had, I was lucky enough, Dr. Gaines would pick twenty-five students that he would teach a philosophy course to every year. They were juniors and seniors. Have you heard this before?

**Warren:** Tell me about it.

**Fleishman:** Dr. Gaines, of course, he was gone a lot of the time. But it was called The Bible as Literature, and I'll never forget it. I still have the textbook. It was very, very interesting. Wonderful, wonderful course, you can imagine, with him in a classroom.

What else? I remember Gilliam pretty well. Oh, and I had geology, too, from – I'm trying to remember. They had two people. Our geology department, even then, was known all over the country. Our classroom was in Washington Hall. There was a lecture room that held like a hundred people. That was the biggest class I had while I was at Washington and Lee, as far as numbers. And I can still remember the geologic time scale, if you want that recited.

**Warren:** Well, tell me about Dr. Gaines as a teacher.

**Fleishman:** Oh, he was just wonderful. He had wonderful stories about everything. Philosophy – he had wonderful philosophy. Somehow, I don't know, we were discussing some part of the Bible. He was talking about the – I guess, they didn't call them Muslims then. I guess it was Islamic – Mohammadism is what it was called in my day – about the view of the female. And I'll never forget that. He said, "The Mohammads believe that a female's body should be completely covered sometimes, but the main thing that they leave uncovered is the eyes. After all, that's the thing that's mostly different about people. You can say a lot about their eyes. They weren't so dumb

after all. The rest of the body's pretty much the same, except different proportions." I remember that part. He didn't say it exactly like that.

But he was an interesting man. He had a wonderful, wonderful philosophy of a lot of things. And see, he came from my part of the country. He was from Duesse [phonetic], South Carolina. I don't know that he went to school at Ersten [phonetic], but his family is still – and there's still some people down there that are related to him, that come in once in awhile and say hello to me, and tell me about Dr. Gaines, believe it or not.

I've met W&L people all over the world, every place I've been. It's always something. This last time, since I've been at this Tri-County Tech, where I'm an add junk faculty member, I tell them I adjunct to the faculty, I teach the marketing courses, and like I told you, I mention L. K. all the time, because he said a couple of things. He said, "Tell the employee, and tell them why," and, "You can eliminate a middleman, but you can't eliminate his function," and "You can't cross the crowd." Those are three of his statements that I use over and over and over again, which are true in marketing, no question about it.

But anyway, since I've been at that tech school, I've organized a trip to New York, to take students to New York City, and, of course, Washington and Lee has helped me in that, too. We take anywhere from twenty – most people I ever had is thirty-eight, and that's too many. Last year we had twenty-two.

And Marvin Winters' son – they have a big real estate operation. They bought a building on 57th Street. If you know New York City, it's on 57th and Fifth. If you know where Harry Winston's jewelry place is, it's the next building over. It's called the Crown Building. It's got all that gold at the top of the building. And they have mostly men's apparel manufacturers' showrooms in there, and Marvin's son, Jimmy, does the presentation, and all the little girls from South Carolina ask me always, "Oh, Mr. Fleishman, is he married?" They love him.

And also through Washington and Lee, last year the alumni office put me in touch with a man who is now president of the New York Stock Exchange, who's class of '61 here. And they did a wonderful presentation for us. We've been going there, but just the visitors' thing. But we actually got into the boardroom, and this gentleman and his assistant actually gave us the real business about what goes on. It was real cute, the way they presented it to us, and, of course, it was real exciting. If you ever watch the CNN program, or the business program, when they show the close of the Stock Exchange, you'll see him. He's a little gray-haired fellow with a beard. Bill Johnson. He's class of '61.

What else can I tell you? About more of life at Washington and Lee, I guess, would be nice.

**Warren:** One thing that I'm very intrigued by, in looking at the *Calyx*, you were on the Christian Council. I am intrigued by that.

**Fleishman:** Well, I've done that. Also, one of my highest accomplishments in Anderson, South Carolina, I spent three years on the board of the Catholic school there. That's almost unheard of.

But anyway, I had a friend here whose name was Harry Philpott, and I think he became a minister. His father was a minister. I don't remember. You'll have to look him up. He was class of '38 or '39. Very, very nice gentleman, and I became interested in some of the things Harry did, and he thought I might be of use to him on the Christian Council. My job mainly was to help him organize the activities that they did, which, nothing wrong with that. And, you know, like I used to tell one of my daughters—I have four children—and my eldest daughter, Margaret, used to have a rough time at school, every now and then, somebody would start picking on her, and, boy, she came home one day in tears, and I said, "What's the matter, Margaret?"

She said, "Daddy, Reed Sharrod [phonetic] called me 'Rabbi' in front of everybody. It upset me."

I said, "Well, the next time somebody says anything like that, you point a finger at him and say, 'Roses are reddish, violets are blueish, if it hadn't been for Jesus, you'd all be Jewish.'" And that's sort of the way I felt about it. I mean, Judaism was a foundation, the beginning of all the other religions. I don't have any argument with any of them. I just figure that the main thing is to do good for people. I don't like for people to tell me that I don't believe correctly, and I won't tell anybody that, either.

But that was the thing about the Christian Council. Whatever activities they had, it was mostly helping out the local people, fund-raising, things like that. What should I say? Golden, silver opportunities for the young people here at W&L, and I believed in it. That's about it.

The main thing is, I was on the *Calyx*. I wrote the sports for the *Calyx*. I was a busy fellow. I was always doing something, and I'm still that way, which is stupid, I guess. Don't have time to smell the roses. And I look around, and I say, "My God, I'm seventy-five already. How did I get there so fast?" I stay busy.

**Warren:** By staying busy. I need to flip the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Warren:** I want to get back to the ZBT House. I want to hear more about what –

**Fleishman:** Well, the ZBT House, in my day – now, my son was here. He graduated in 1970. The ZBT House had changed some, but it was still a good fraternity house. My stepson came here, graduated in '84. His mother was not Jewish, although she converted to Judaism. Now, we were married for quite a while. In fact, she's up here. You going to be at any of these activities tonight?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Fleishman:** All right. She's with me, she'll be here. She and I were divorced in 19 – well, how long? We got married in 1969, and we were divorced in 1981, because she had too many children, and I had too many children. There was always something going on.

But when Henry was here, it was a pretty good house. In my day, it was a great house. We did a lot of good things. We had a lot of good people. We weren't much on sports. We didn't have too many athletes. There's Jay Silverstein, whose name I saw just a few minutes ago in the *Calyx*, was my roommate my senior year. He was a runner. He was on the track team. Jean Friedberg, who was my roommate, was the manager of the basketball team for two years.

We had people who were – I won't say intellectual, I don't know. We had a couple that were intellectual. We had another brother named Ed Cory, who was class of, let's see, '43, I guess. He became ambassador to Ethiopia, and he was a UPI – United Press International – main correspondent for Europe and then for North Africa during World War II. We had a lot of people that wound up in interesting things, and they were interesting people. They were smart and they were fun.

**Warren:** Was it just clear-cut, the Jewish guys went into Jewish fraternities? Were there any Jewish students who went into any other fraternities?

**Fleishman:** Nobody that declared themselves as actively Jewish were even rushed by the other fraternities, and, of course, I can see how that was a – now, in 1970, when my son graduated, I think it was still like that. But when Les was here, it was not.

I went to the national convention. I went to two ZBT national conventions, one in 1938-39, in San Francisco. Charlie Thalimer and his family took me with him, and paid all the expenses for me. I couldn't have gone otherwise. The idea was, his brother was getting married out there, and I was to go to the fraternity convention and look after all the – I was the house manager of the fraternity house for three years. I didn't tell you that. In addition to being – well, the good thing about that is, I got free room and board, see, so again, being a poor boy, I didn't have to pay all those things.

But we went out to the convention, and then there was no question. There was nothing going on. But in 1946 or '47, my wife and I went to the convention in New York, and there were like 1,200 delegates there, and there were only six of us – one of

them was me – that said we didn't feel that ZBT should declare itself non-sectarian. We felt that it should maintain itself as a Jewish fraternity, and if they wanted to take other people, they should, because this way they're not fish or fowl.

There are still ZBT fraternity houses around. Some places they're all Jewish; other places they're not. I don't know that that's important, and I don't know that it's so different, but in the days of the thirties, when I was here, it was very important to me because I didn't know – or I did because of our business and because of the little town I lived in, I didn't know much about what other types of people did, because my home life was different. And we maintained that pretty well. We had a good housemother, Mrs. Neely, when I was here. We maintained a great deal of decorum. We weren't wild with our parties and things like that. We used to have a big party at semester break, where we invited the whole campus, and we used to get six or seven hundred people come in. We had what they call "PJ" now – we used to make purple passion – grain alcohol, grape juice, and some fruit, and it was delicious stuff. It tasted like good fruit juice, until you had about three, and then you'd wind up stiff as this tabletop. I used to kid people. We'd have the whole campus in, and this stuff was so good, they'd drink, and then the next morning, we'd find them stretched out on the lawn. We could pick them up by their ankles. They were still stiff.

And when Henry was here, ZBT was still a force, and they were still good academically. My son was Phi Beta Kappa, too, and I'm very proud of him. He's a big-time surgeon in North Carolina. He went to Washington and Lee, and he had a summer job with one of the teachers in the chemistry department, who wrote a book. Henry helped him with the book, his sophomore-junior year. He got a lot out of Washington and Lee, but, unfortunately, three years ago, his daughter, my granddaughter, was rejected when she applied to Washington and Lee, and it made him very unhappy and me, too.

Of course, again, I started to tell you about the ZBT convention. I didn't finish that. I got up on the floor, one of six or eight people, and protested the fact that they wanted to go non-sectarian. I told you, I've always been, you know, Sancho Pancho. I've always been spinning at windmills about things that looked unimportant. I'm working on a couple of them right now. Trying to get a – we don't have a placement bureau at Tri-County Tech, and this is a community college, and that's what they're there for, is to train people for jobs.

**Warren:** I'm intrigued by these parties. You were the house manager?

**Fleishman:** Yeah. For three years.

**Warren:** So were you in charge of making sure that things went smoothly at these parties?

**Fleishman:** Well, no, that was the social manager. My job was the financial and the food. I'd pay the bills, and make sure the mortgage payment went out, pay the housemother, pay the help. That kind of stuff, buy the food, or supervise the buying of the food. Making sure that we had enough food when we had people in. We used to have to have assessments. We had the dances to pay for the extra food for the dates. Things like that. So my job was budgets and accounting. And we did pretty well. We managed to pay the mortgage payment every month while I was here.

ZBT was a pretty cohesive group in my day. When I was there, we had twenty-four brothers and four cars. When my son was there, they had thirty-two cars and twenty-four brothers. And that's the truth. Everybody had an automobile. There were only four people with automobiles. One of my fraternity brothers, a man named Don Stein, whom I still see, he's retired, lives down in Florida, and has had a pretty tough life, I guess, personally. I see him every time I go to Florida. Played golf with him once. My golf is no good anymore since I've got arthritis. But anyway, Don always had the latest, greatest thing in new cars. His folks had something called Dutchmill Candies in Chicago, which is like Fannie Farmer on this part of the world.



I'll tell you one of my other great adventures. While I was in the band, I had a date with a young lady. Her name was Louise Hannock [phonetic], and she went to Sweet Briar. She was from, I don't know, one of the fancy Oranges in New Jersey – South Orange, East Orange – I lost which one. She came as my date to one of the – or maybe it was Homecoming weekend. Of course, I was in the band, so I couldn't sit with her anywhere. We always had a cocktail party at the fraternity house before the game, and she got absolutely smashed. I couldn't sit with her, except for the half, after we got through marching. I'd go up and spend a few minutes with her, and I went back to the band. So when I got back to the fraternity house after the game was over, she was just looped. And I figured the only thing to do was to get her back to Sweet Briar, and I didn't have a car. So Don had a brand-new Buick convertible, red, wire wheels, red leather. It was ivory-colored, gorgeous. And the only thing I could do was to beg Don, see if he would let me – this was when we had the four cars – if he'd let me take her back to Sweet Briar in his car.

So I took her back, but on the way back, she got sick and threw up all over the car. He never knew about that, and I spent about an hour cleaning that car up when I got back. And he never knew about it. I told him last year when I was down in Florida about it. He said, "I never knew that the car got messed up." So, you know, there were a lot of little things like that, that you don't even think about. But that was real nice of him.

The love of my life I met at Fancy Dress, I guess it was '41.

**Warren:** Tell me about that.

**Fleishman:** All right. Well, she was just here with me last weekend. I went to Fancy Dress. I was something on the Fancy Dress Committee. I think I did the publicity or something. We had these very elaborate costumes. It was a Mardi Gras, some king somebody's court. If you looked in the *Calyx*, you saw them in there. Benny Goodman played. It was really a big-time thing.

I didn't have a date, so one of my fraternity brothers, who knew some people up in the Washington area, was nice enough to get me a date from National Park College. She was a young lady from Greensboro, North Carolina. Her name was Betty Changey [phonetic], and I sort of knew her. She'd been there before on a couple of occasions.

That Fancy Dress used to cost us a lot of money. It used to cost \$50 assessment – what with \$25 assessment, you had to – the costumes cost us twelve dollars. You had to pay six dollars apiece to rent the costumes. This is 1939. Now, it would be like \$500 today. Maybe more, maybe \$1,000. Had to send them a corsage, which was three dollars. And then we had a couple of other things – you had an assessment in the house for extra food, and then the tickets. So it was a big deal.

So anyway, she came with me. She looked lovely at the Fancy Dress Ball. The girls used to stay out in town at these boarding house-type places. Ladies would take them in, and they had to be chaperoned. I took her, and she changed clothes. At the Fancy Dress Ball, there was an intermission, then we'd go back to the dance for another two or three hours. It ended like three o'clock in the morning.

So we went back to the house, and I left her down in the living room while I went upstairs to change out of my Fancy Dress into my tuxedo. When I came back down, she was talking very earnestly with this guy over in the corner, and I said, "Betty, who's this?"

She said, "This is my fiance, Stewart something," or whatever his name was, from the University of Virginia.

I said, "What the hell are you doing here with me?"

She said, "Well, I knew that you had something important to do with Fancy Dress, and I felt you needed an attractive date, and I thought I could do that for you."

I said, "That was real nice of you." And I went back to the dance, and somebody broke on me, and that was the last time I've ever seen her.

So I went back to the fraternity house feeling pretty low, and while I was moping around there in our little activities and bar and whatever we had down in the basement, one of my fraternity brothers, Louis Greentree, came up to me and said, "Fleish, I need a favor."

I said, "What is it, Spay?"

He said, "I'm sick as a dog. I got the flu or something, and I've invited my cousin, who goes to Madison College, to come to Fancy Dress with me, and she's a real nice young lady. Will you see that she gets home all right?"

Well, that was a young lady named Eleanor Pinkus [phonetic], and I fell madly in love with her. I went to see her every weekend. That was my senior year, and I had unlimited cuts. We had Saturday classes, and I never went to Saturday classes. I was always up there on Saturday. She lived in Norfolk, and when I graduated, I went to work at Thalhimer's in Richmond, and I used to go down to Norfolk every weekend, and I asked her several times to marry me. She and I were together in Harrisonburg that Sunday that Pearl Harbor happened. Of course, I just took her back to school immediately, and told her I had to go.

I had applied for the Navy the summer before, but they told me I couldn't see well enough to be an enlisted man, much less an officer. He said, "I'll file your stuff, but forget about it." So I knew they would need me, so I went back to Richmond that same afternoon.

Eventually, when they called me and I finally went on active duty in the Navy, I was stationed in Norfolk for the first couple of months before they sent me up to Harvard for supply school, and I asked her to marry me. I wasn't rich enough for her mother, I think, mainly. Her mother didn't like me. I knew that. And so she left me dangling.

Anyway, in Norfolk, we went to those beach clubs at Virginia Beach. I don't know whether you've ever heard of them or remember them. I think they're all gone

now, but there used to be these beach clubs where you went for dancing and dining. It was real nice. That's all they did. You had a big dance floor.

We were there one night, she and I, and some other people that I knew from Norfolk, from the Navy, and there was a table about as big as this, and then there was a table like over there, and there was this lieutenant jg sitting by himself. I went up to him and I said, "What you doing here by yourself?"

He said, "Oh, everybody's dancing. I don't have a date."

I said, "Come on over and sit with us." And I introduced her to him, okay?

So anyway, I finished my tour of Norfolk, and I left there like in May, went to supply school, and left in September for the South Pacific. When I got to my ship, it took two months for me to get to that destroyer I was assigned to, because nobody knew where it was, and I was assigned to other ships until I got there. I had three big gray – those old-timey gray mail sacks, in the corner of the ward room, waiting for me, and everybody thought I was real important, because there was an ensign on board with all his mail. My mother used to write me every day and sent me the Anderson newspaper, and Pinky used to write me every day, and then I got all of them and put them in order.

Well, Pinky – she was there every day for about two weeks, then every other day, then every third day, then once a week. I had them all by the postmark. Then I got the "Dear John" letter. And she married the guy that I introduced her to. So, you know, that was the end of the world for me. I was seasick and scared to death, and that. It almost ended the world, sure enough. Anyway, I sort of recovered. I'd really forgotten about it, and I'd gotten married to somebody I met on a blind date, who was a WAVE.

Anyway, my father and I were on our way to New York one time, and something happened to the train in Washington. They used to change the trains from – Southern Railroad used to change engines. They had to go on a Pennsylvania engine, or something. We're on the platform there, and here comes Pinky. I hadn't seen her in

twenty years, and we had a nice conversation. That was probably the early sixties, and I hadn't seen her since.

Last year, when I was here for this end of World War II celebration, a person that I knew, I didn't remember, came up to me, she said, "Al Fleishman. I'm Jane Pinkus, Eleanor's cousin."

I said, "Oh, I sort of remember you, Jane."

She said, "Did you know that Sol died about three years ago? Here's Pinky's phone number." So I called her up, and I've seen her a couple of times since. I think that's a W&L story, isn't it? I guess.

**Warren:** It sure is.

**Fleishman:** They'd make a movie out of it. What else you want me to tell you?

**Warren:** That's a great story. I love it.

**Fleishman:** It's true. And I had her back here. She came back with me last weekend.

**Warren:** That's why you forgot to come see me.

**Fleishman:** That's what happened.

**Warren:** I wasn't at all surprised.

**Fleishman:** Well, that's life. I didn't mean to be mean to you.

**Warren:** Oh, I know you didn't. I knew you had other things on your mind.

I'll tell you something really important we haven't talked about.

**Fleishman:** Tell me.

**Warren:** The Honor System.

**Fleishman:** Okay. It was a wonderful thing when I was here. You could leave anything that you owned anywhere, and it would be returned to you. Of course, I've been like that all my life. I've had many occasions when things happened where it would be of value to me that I could tell somebody that they left it, or that they lost it, or look for them. I still do that, and I think Washington and Lee had a lot to do with it. There was no question. We didn't have any problem about that.

We had two or three people dismissed on the Honor System. Of course, it was hush-hush. Nobody ever said anything about it. I wasn't on the Executive Committee. Of course, I knew all the people on there, all the time. But I think it's a wonderful thing.

In my lifetime, I've thought a lot about the things that – especially when we were here last week, about Washington's canal stock. I think that's a wonderful thing. It still goes to value at W&L. And it's hard to relate those precepts, or those principles, or those activities, like what, you know, Robert E. Lee meant – like I told you, I saw real-life Confederate veterans marching. I was born in the South, and I've lived in South Carolina. It was a very poor state. Not any more, but it was. I know that the textile people and the people that came there, that gave jobs to people after the war between the states, were very important to the South, but they've really ripped a lot of folks off along the way. Maybe not deliberately, but they did.

But people can't relate to something like Robert E. Lee. There's just no way you can relate to this guy that had the world by the tail and decided to follow his principles, and to go with the South, whom I'm sure he felt couldn't win, but because he thought that was the right thing to do. I think that was inculcated in us a lot more than it is now. However, W&L has a certain kind of person, even today, and you can see them. They're close, and they may fight one another and disagree while they're here, but when they get out, they're very much the same kind of people. And I think the Honor System had a lot to do with shaping that.

**Warren:** Last question for me. Anything more you want to say, you just go right ahead.

**Fleishman:** No, I said too much already. It's ten after eleven. I think I told Helen Marie I'd pick her up at 11:30.

**Warren:** Tell me, during the coeducation discussion, how did you feel on the issue?

**Fleishman:** What should I say? Lukewarm. It's not like this thing just happened at VMI or the Citadel. I think it's wrong. Having been on a small ship for a long time, it would have been very difficult had we had ladies on board. I didn't say females; I said

ladies. It would have been extremely difficult. I think that certain things in the military are in a life-threatening situation, and I think women are good at a lot of things, you know. We might as well – what should I say? – readjust the male physical being so that they can have babies. That'd be interesting. I think there are certain things, for whatever reason it is, and it's not chauvinism, by any means, that women can't do as well as men. There are a lot of things I know that I can't do as well as a woman.

I think that they've added a lot to W&L. I talked to Bill Buchanan, who's head of your Department of Politics, and who's a close friend of mine even today – hopefully I'll see him today – about this when it happened, and he told me about his classes, how much they spruced up the fellows, that they made them dress nicely, and made them more interested in academics, that the girls are so smart, that they make the fellows feel funny, and they have to hit the books. I'm very proud of the females that I've met that went to Washington and Lee. I think they represent a type of person that Washington and Lee should represent. That's all. What else you want me to tell you?

**Warren:** That's just fine. That'll do it.

**Fleishman:** Okay.

**Warren:** Well, I thank you, sir.

**Fleishman:** And I thank you, ma'am.

**Warren:** I'm really glad we got to get together. You've got wonderful stories. I'm just tickled to have them.

**Fleishman:** I only got started on them. I could probably tell you another hour's worth, but I better not.

**Warren:** Well, thanks a lot.

**Fleishman:** Thank you, Mame.

[End of interview]