



Barry Edward Finkelstein
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It was the first and only time in decades that each of us would give in to an opportunity to sit and speak candidly about life, our work, about family and career. Here we were then, Barry and I, about to have that conversation. We'd known each other since 1970 when he first arrived in the Hamlet of Brentwood, but it was not until this moment that we'd stepped out and away from our preferred patterns of familiar travel along concentric circles in life that we were freed of scratching at the surface of what may have been limited knowledge of one another, to listen and speak about what it was we've learned and can share.

We asked initially, that he identify himself for us giving his full name. He responded with, *Barry Edward Finkelstein*. It was quite likely in our school setting he was known by his knick name Mr. Fink, or simply Fink. The name Barry had at one time belonged to his grandfather, because as explained, in the Jewish religion the first male child is often named after someone in the family who has recently passed. He had no idea where the name Edward had come from and had never even thought to ask. He was residing with his wife Arlene, in Dix Hills that for almost thirty years, they'd both called home; twenty-five years in the same house and five previous years in a first shared residence. When they married, they'd lived in an apartment for one year before moving to Dix Hills, selecting it primarily because of the School District. When Arlene and Barry married, she'd already had children in her first marriage. The two oldest were now Nancy and Christie, who he said, are about thirty-five years old. Kerry is the middle child and she's thirty-two. Together they welcomed Michele and Stacy. Michele is about twenty-five and Stacy twenty-four.

Christie is married and currently teaching in Commack. Nancy will be getting married and she lives in New York City. Kerry is married, lives in Forest Hills and she has two children of her own. Michele is on her own, living in Great Neck, contemplating marriage and is attending Graduate School at Amherst in Massachusetts.

We asked if we were correct in assuming that at various times he had been sharing his home with six women. He answered "Yes", and told us it was always interesting. When they built the new house, he installed a hair dryer outlet in each bedroom. He put telephone outlets in every room and I watched to see that the toilet seat is always down because if it's up, he said, "*I've got trouble*". As far as their talents are concerned each of the girls are very different. Christie is a schoolteacher and very conscientious and even the twins and Nancy are very outgoing. She used to work for Avon. I don't know where she works now at the moment. Kerry is very, very, bright. She just didn't feel like finishing college and went her own way for a while and now she's settling down with two kids for a change so she's in good shape. Michele is a schoolteacher in Brentwood, very bright and she owns a gym, very conscientious and Stacy, she's a free spirit and an Art Major at the University of Massachusetts and she does her own thing while living her own life. Each one is very different, none better or worse than the other, each self sufficient in their own way. As a matter of fact and with a little luck the youngest one in the next ten or twelve years will be able to make a living for herself and I'll be very happy to not have to do so much supporting. All of the others seem to be doing okay. I believe that everybody is a combination of everything that has happened to them and their life experiences, what their friends are, what their individual genes make up are and so forth and to say this one has this from someone else, and that from me, I can't say that, but knock on wood, they will all be capable of earning a living, hopefully, taking care of themselves and being happy.

"We get to see the grandchildren, mostly Kerri and Keith's about once or twice a week". There's a lot of contact there. "Tyler who is four years old and the

youngest, is a very precocious kid, because of his mother who is very bright and whatever, has taught him a lot and his father is also a very bright guy. The bottom line he is a very bright kid and Arlene has had a lot to do with raising him. She is very happy to have the Grandchildren, as a matter of fact they are the most important people in her life”.

Barry was born August 13, 1942 in Brooklyn, in East New York. He lived there until he was about thirteen years old when the family moved to Levittown, on Long Island. While still in East New York he attended PS 109 that was right across the Street from his grandmother’s house. They lived in an apartment right next door. His grandmother and grandfather were first generation immigrants. She owned the four unit family dwelling where she lived. Her husband died when Barry was about two years old. He had no conscious memory of his Grandpa. He and Barry’s grandmother met and married once they were both here. She worked very hard pushing a pushcart and selling food on Blake Avenue. Barry remembered living in the apartment next door when he began attending school. His grandmother’s house was a two story semi-attached dwelling. His grandmother didn’t speak English. His was a first generation immigrant family. They were not poor but worked hard and did what they could while Barry grew up. His kids, he said, had it a lot easier. When he was young he always thought about what he would buy if they were rich when they looked in the stores at things they couldn’t afford. He remembered back to when his father earned thirty-five dollars a week and while it was a livable wage they were not rich by any stretch. That said, they were the first on the block to have a nine-inch RCA black and white TV when it first came out. They invited the whole neighborhood to come in and watch TV. They had a car which was also a rarity at the time. They enjoyed having other nice things as well.

His grandparents had come here initially from Lithuania or Russia. His father’s father was working for the Soviet Navy then and managed to

commandeer an entire ship of people who also came in around the turn of the century. His maternal grandmother, who he grew up with and with whom he was fairly close, lived right next door. His grandfather was in the Soviet Navy and in charge of giving out passes so he gave passes to everyone. Yes, it was illegal, but that's what he had to do to get out of Russia. His Grandmother came from Lithuania. They were poor people, who came to America and worked hard. There were brothers and sisters of his grandparents that the family tried to trace but found no successful way of doing it. One of the problems immigrants ran into to avoid the pogroms in Russia during the period of the Czars - and being Jewish was - there just was no way - You weren't important enough to be on the list of preferred people to escape being noticed and to avoid the Czars armies so, they had to change their names and move to different villages. One village that his father's side of the family came from was not only burnt to the ground but completely obliterated. It no longer existed. All records were erased. As a matter of fact their brothers and sisters changed their names when they came. The name Finkelstein goes back all the way. We did some tracing and there was a Baroness Von Finkelstein in the 1860's in a newspaper article about her but because we were not royalty we would not have been one of those. The other part of the family was Rabinowitz. The Rabinowitz name was changed to Robins and to Roberts and a couple of other things. Names were changed. Even my Grandfather on my mother's side said when he came over and they went through immigration the official didn't spell the name correctly on the papers with the net result that the name came out like Ordanski in American, whereas it was probably something phonetically similar in Russian, but not the same.

Being a little kid, my mother was nice, and everything, you know, the only thing I do remember was that there was a problem when my mother did go to work to earn more income. My grandmother made lunch and my mother made lunch the day before so we either had to have bananas and sour cream for lunch or we had to have lamb stew. To this day I will never eat lamb stew because I think I must have had it for a hundred day in a row.

My mother was a clerk or a typist for a while, and then she ended up working in the County Clerk's Office in Jamaica as we got older. She was interested in family. That was her passion and where her attention was given whenever she was free to focus on what gave her pleasure. It was all about her family. Her kids, her brothers and sisters, everything was family. Very early in the game my father worked in the men's clothing line. He was a Jack-of-all-trades. He did cutting. He was a shipping clerk. He ran the shop. My grandparents were very poor. I don't remember what my grandfather on my father's side did for a living. My grandparent's on my mother's side, I know, pushed a pushcart and sold vegetables for a living. I guess you worked where you could find a job because my father's family was one with eleven kids and everybody went to work to support the family. During World War II my father had worked for the Navy in the Brooklyn Navy Yard as a welder. Prior to that I guess he did anything. After the war my father worked in the men's shipping line until the place where he worked went out of business. He worked for Ripley clothes also. He knew all the big shots for a while. He liked to gamble. He liked the horses, the crap tables, not that he gambled very big because he never did, but he liked the action. He liked the stock market too. He never had any money so there was very little action there for him.

Barry has two brothers and both of them are younger than he is. All of the Jewish Holidays were important in their home and were celebrated when they were children. Passover and Hannukah, were two that were celebrated routinely. When we grew up and everyone got older, he moved to Boston and our parents moved to Florida so it became increasingly more difficult to celebrate the Holidays together but we still tried to maintain traditions.

Arthur is about two and a half years younger than him. He works as a political consultant and he does campaign work for some well-known politicians. He thoroughly enjoys the work he does. His youngest brother Ronny is about ten years younger. He works with Arthur now, running the office when Arthur is out on the road. They both have families and children

I learned a sense of ultimate honesty from my father. My father was as honest a person as you would ever want to meet in your life. He was a man who needed very little and often times had very little, but needed nothing else. He would not cheat anybody out of anything. The very same thing applies to my brothers. We have learned that honesty is an ultimate value. One thing my brother once said to me is *"Don't put anything in writing that you couldn't afford to see printed on the first page of The New York Times."* That's another rule that we've held sacred.

Family life revolved around home. Everything came back to that. We always had food to eat and food was important. Clothes were not important even though my father worked in the clothing line and was able to obtain great materials – *"a cute story if you're interested", I never had a pair of dungarees because a pair of dungarees at that time must have cost about two dollars or three dollars" but I would have the finest wool worsted pants because my father would get the material for nothing, cut it out at home, he would sew it up in the shop and I would have these \$40 or \$50 pants (that would now cost \$300 or \$400) and I used to complain that I wanted a pair of dungarees because I was the only one wearing expensive woolens, whereas the kids all had dungarees." That was what was important to me.)*

I had a very successful uncle on my mother's side of the family. He was her brother and played a large role - somewhat of a role, but basically, everything evolved around family. My father's family was also very honest, very low keyed.

I'm pretty sure I was attending Junior High School when I first decided I was going to become an engineer. I once had a teacher who would say, *"Finkelstein, can you work it out on a slide rule?" So you'd make up a slide rule to work things out."* But basically, I was an engineer first. I was always going to become an engineer I became an Engineer and I became an engineer for five years before I went into teaching. Then the company I had been working for went out of

business. At that point I wasn't too unhappy because I had already priced a one-way ticket to Tahiti due to the pressure and everything else. It was just too much. The people he was dealing with were challenging, yet he was moving up fairly rapidly. He was the second to the Chief Engineer in the company and he would have been a Chief Engineer a year later in another company if he had remained. It was an Electrical Engineering Company primarily Microwave devices, and microwave radar antennas - The people who were "successful" in the field; like one guy who was successful in the company was the CEO of the company hadn't talked with any of his kids for the last ten years. He had a beautiful house, he had a 40 foot boat in Huntington Harbor and the man was worth millions but hadn't talked with his wife and all his kids had run away from home, this was success. Another one who was successful had had a heart attack by the time he was forty, a nervous breakdown by the time he was forty-five, again another success. They measured success primarily in units of money as other people have done. I didn't want that. I decided I would rather be with my family, have a little less money. I said, *"Money I can always make"*. Basically, I said I wanted to spend time with my family. I said, *"That's being a success"*. I said, *"Okay, so I won't have all the toys and I'll make a little less money"*. The company I worked for went out of business.

I was coming home from a party about six months later. It was about 3 am and I was listening to a voice on the radio talking to me and the voice said, what would you do if you learned that you only had six months to live? You immediately get rid of all the trite statements, travel the world, find some girls if you're a guy and vice-versa. I said, *"I'd like to leave a part of me with somebody else"*. And then the question came up, why wait for six months to do that something that you would like to do?

The very next day I applied for teaching positions, and that's how I ended up in Brentwood. Before that I contacted fifteen school districts and asked that they send me an application to teach. One of the districts I contacted was Brentwood. They told me to come down and fill out an application I did and I was hired on the spot.

I had a Bachelors Degree and a Master Degree in Engineering plus half an MBA – a Masters in Business Administration and half way to a Masters Degree in Finance. I had no Education Courses to my credit and no Student Teaching that they waived. My first paycheck when I looked at it from Brentwood and this was even after I had gotten a raise, was – I asked them was this for one week or two? They said this was for one week. I said, *“Oh, I used to make more than this in one, and that was the truth.” All I needed to get was twelve credits in Education. You could have a lot of other things waived. I didn’t have to do student teaching, or whatever. I took my interview in March and I was going to take my Ed. courses in September and they said, “Well you don’t have any ed. courses and I said, “I know, I’ll take them in the summer. And they said, “How do we know”?, Because I’m telling you.” “You don’t have student teaching”, I said, I know and I won’t be taking it. So they took a chance. They hired me.*

Brentwood was not the highest ranked school district on Long Island. It still isn’t. The turnover rate then was about twenty to twenty – five percent a year, but there were other school districts that were hiring too. He has a Bachelor’s Degree from CCNY (City College of New York) in Electrical Engineering, and a Masters Degree from Northeastern University up in Massachusetts and half an MBA at Hofstra and I have more courses at LIU.

My first paying job was delivering some stuff from a fruit stand that was around the corner from my house. I made a quarter an hour give or take a couple of pennies. My other job at about that same time was running sodas for the guys on Saturday and Sunday mornings who played stick ball in the school yard. Sometimes they would throw you a nickel and sometimes you would get the deposit on their bottle and you’d make a buck or two and a buck or two at that time was nice. I was what we’d call today - *‘enterprising’*

As a kid, I liked playing around with things and taking them apart. That was the engineering portion of me. I read everything. I did a lot of reading. I read science fiction magazines, I read about models, we used to go to the library about once a week and take out about eighteen books or so, factual things like anthropology and archeology, a lot of stuff like that. To this day I still enjoy reading about that same subject matter - immensely!

What significant historical events that occurred during your lifetime do you remember as standing out in your memory from the rest? *"I was in City College and a bunch of us were sitting in the lunchroom, talking when someone came running downstairs saying the President's been shot. "Oh, yeah, didn't you know about....big joke, you know! So we ran upstairs, remember City College is in Harlem, parts of which are not necessarily the best neighborhoods in the world, and a couple of cars pulled over and we were listening to the reports on the car radios. We walked up the street, found someone's house that was open, walked inside, perfect strangers, and standing by the television and listening to the reports and people are crying. It was very, very moving. I'll never forget that day"* That was a day that changed people's lives forever. The filter had changed. *"Yeah, but you either had to be a fan of JFK or you were not a fan of JFK but the bottom line was that it was something that had happened in America, and assassination does not occur."* That evening, friends of mine and I drove down to Washington to get on line to wait to get into the rotunda and the line was about twenty blocks long six people deep, and the cops were saying ladies and gentlemen please stand on the sidewalk. We got in on line before midnight and when we just got to the rotunda the dawn had just broken, I still have some photographs of John Kennedy's coffin lying in state in the center of the rotunda. Yes, it was a major event.

Barry admits to being a morning person and early to rise like he has always been. He favors the warmer weather and likes to work outside; work in the yard. His education began in Nursery School in Brownsville, NY where he said he learned a lot of things. From there he matriculated to Kindergarten.

Years later there had been a teacher he had, that given a chance to speak with him today, he would like to have thanked for what he did when he needed positive reinforcement. It was probably in the ninth grade that their paths crossed. It was the first time he had come close to making the honor roll. He needed about two points to his average and this teacher gave him those two points in Geometry in tenth grade that provided the lift he needed. The man's name was Dr. Erra, who later became a Principal and Superintendent of Levittown Schools. Barry never forgot him. All he said was, *"You can do a lot better than that"*. Just a few words were all it took to change a young man's life forever. After that moment his grades had gone up considerably. Maybe that was how in more recent times, he happened to change his trajectory from engineering to education, thereby changing other people's life paths in the balance.

He found languages to be the greatest stumbling block to better grades in school. His own joke about himself was *"English is my second language. No one knows what my first one is"*. *"I have trouble with languages and....I can't spell"*. When he took the aptitude test at City College they did an aptitude test to try to determine where to place people and so on, in abstract and spatial reasoning he scored at the 98th percentile which was the highest number they had, in spelling he scored at the 2% percentile. He went the whole range, from the top of the top to the bottom of the bottom. He applied to Brentwood in 1970. *"They were the first to offer me a job in teaching and I accepted the offer. I learned more about Brentwood after I had accepted their offer of a job than I had known before arriving here. When I was taking an Ed course and the professor asked me where I would be teaching and I said in Brentwood, he shook his head and said, "Oh, oh, not good." And he was the professor and so,...that was at LIU. He was initially*

interviewed by George Gates and was asked, "What happens if you get a better offer, to which he responded, "Well, I'm going to teach! That's what I'm going to do, and as a matter of fact he did get a better offer about two weeks before school started. He was going to make about \$9,000 - \$9,500 here, and I was offered a job for \$30,000. A big choice, but not in teaching... the money made it interesting. It was tempting all right. I'm talking three times the salary. I went away camping for the weekend and made the decision and I gave up the money."

"Brentwood was a different community then than it is today. I believe it was about sixty-five percent white at that time, ten percent to 15% Spanish, maybe 20% black, and the difference was I was dealing with primarily slower kids and they cared and they worked and there was a lot of respect and granted a lot of them were not going to become lawyers or doctors, some were and some did. They were good hard working students, they were good and I enjoyed it immensely. The people I worked with were excellent; they were very nice people. I had no problems. In other words I had no trouble at all."

"A couple of things occurred. I knew my material very well. I was going to come in and make everybody fundamentally understand mathematics as easily as I do because it's all very simple. There's no difficulty whatsoever. You just do this, and this and this and this. My first set of lesson plans I planned to go over stuff in, like, five days. Well, we covered it in about forty minutes because they knew a lot more than I had assumed because I was going to start from the beginning work my way right through it, step by step, very carefully. So that was all modified and changed. It took about thirty days to realize I could not teach mathematics as fundamentally as I understand it. After thirty days you start doing the best you can. You try getting as much across one way. If it doesn't work for everybody you try as much as you can going to a second or third or fourth way and sometimes you go as many as fifteen or twenty different ways. Some people unfortunately don't get it or will never get it. As far as teaching personality wise, if you have the personality you can manage. If you don't have the personality to be a teacher..."

(unintelligible). I always taught math. I refused to teach anything else. I started and taught in the Computer Programming Department. When the first courses came out I taught the first courses. I taught an In-service Course to teach other teachers how to do it. I guess Bob Wilcox also taught it in the Sonderling Building about the same time. Barry told us he was the only one up to that point who knew computers and had ever worked with computers and computer languages. He knew Basic and Fortran. "We didn't get into Cobalt because we didn't get far enough into that to do it." He taught everything from counting up to calculus. He said he even passed French in High School by memorizing 300 pages of the book but acknowledged that wasn't learning. You can do things like that but it's not the same as learning. He taught all grades; Tenth through Twelfth. When he first arrived in Brentwood he said, Ray Newcomb was a member of the Math Department as was Gabe Gengler. Claude Frank was Barry's mentor for the first couple of years. As we were speaking, we asked Barry to elaborate on how he defined his purpose, whatever it might be, for doing whatever he was doing as an educator at this time and in this place, on behalf of students he was currently teaching. He told us,

"In my life there were one or two teachers that made a significant impact (and) if I could do that with one or two or three kids a year, it would be my contribution and my goals. And basically, everything I did was to help the students do better, learn more, be all they can be to give them a head start so that they could achieve whatever goals they had in their lives. If it took extra time, then it took extra time."

"My first year I was Advisor to the Math League Team. I did that for about, seven, eight or nine years. Until I asked to be paid the lowest amount for anyone else in Suffolk County and they said no, so I said no. It was taking up a lot of my time and I thought I should receive at least \$150 or whatever it was that would

have been the lowest stipend for remuneration in Suffolk County for advising a Club and my offer was refused so I declined to serve and shortly thereafter the group folded because no one else wanted to assume responsibility for advising it and no one else did it the way Barry had been advising the Team to do things. We also got involved with The Academic Bowl and that was where he met his wife Arlene. That was where we took five of our kids and competed against other school districts."

"It is often the case that teachers don't get an opportunity to learn that they really have made a significant difference in the lives of students they've helped. We asked Barry, have you? He said: "Yes! I've had lots, everything from Doctors and Lawyers to Engineers. Yes! Lots of people who have said, 'Yes, it is you.' There was a movie making the rounds about someone who had made a difference in the life of someone – a teacher. I get a call from a Chief Engineer up at Eastman Kodak in Rochester NY who says to me, "I saw the movie and here I am a forty-five year old man, calling to speak with the teacher who made a difference for me. Barry told us the kid's name. It was Bill Baum. Perhaps by this time he might have been addressed as Dr. Baum."

"One of my favorite stories about one of the kids who came out of his slowest classes who got a job in the city working in the sheet metal union and he had come back two years after he had graduated to talk and thank me, Why he had to thank me I didn't know. He said because of you this is what I'm doing. He was making at that time about \$35. Per/hr. It was twice, or more, than I was making. He said you taught me how to work hard. Do the work. It's about a lot more than mathematics. It's about life. I've had classes where I've taught them how to be human, how to walk down the hall without punching somebody, how to sit next to one another, how not to call someone else by a name and how if you think you are perfect, not to make fun of someone who looks different, because when you look in the mirror guys, we are all different. There's a lot more than just mathematics."

He appears always to have a half smile on his face, even-tempered, calm on the surface, friendly and emotionally under control, someone seldom angry. I asked him, Barry, what makes you angry? This was his answer: "Actually, I get very angry. I get annoyed. My button is, people who don't try; people who are wasting time; people ripping off the system, whatever, be it teachers, doctors, lawyers, people who are not doing their job".

"I was a member of the Union during my first year as a teacher. Everyone was a member when the Union began here. Tom Brush approached me during that first year and told me that they needed someone on the Negotiation Committee who was familiar with numbers. He asked me if I would become that person to represent the Union. I said yes, to his request a couple of years before I had tenure. As a matter of fact at that time even with the tenure laws I could have been fired for any reason. As a matter of fact when I sat down and they introduced me from across the table and they said, "You don't have tenure. You could be fired". I said, "Well, if you want to fire me for what I do across the table, be my guest, I'll get a job tomorrow. I said, I hope if you're going to fire me, you'll fire me for what I do in my classroom with the kids, not for this. P.S. I wasn't fired, I became very good friends with Mr.DiPietro, and we got along very well. If they had fired me they wouldn't have been punishing me because I would have had another job a week later. I had enough money...that was no problem. I used to have a sign on my desk when I was an engineer that said, "Keep Mouth Shut". I still haven't learned to keep my mouth shut. Guess - I'm a slow learner."

"Then sometime around five years later my degree of participation with the Union changed. What had happened was, the new contract was in process of being negotiated and I went home after working all day with the committee and I went to sleep. When I came in to work the next morning I learned that the new contract had already been signed. Then, during the last contract negotiation I was a party to, I was at home and told to come in and ratify it. That's not the way it's supposed to be, at which point I said, "You don't need me!" Actually, at one

time when I was on the Negotiation Team we were accused of selling out teachers. At which point in the middle of an Executive Board Meeting I made a couple of very loud statements and several guys present had to carry me out of the room...ranting. The contract was good. The contracts we negotiated were all fair and as good as they could be. I found fault with the process, not the people. To be accused of selling someone out is unacceptable. Say it to my face if you feel that way and I'll defend myself against your accusation. I would never do that. By the same token, vote down the contract if you didn't like it. Vote it down. Too many people were too mealy mouthed to do or say anything. Basically, I lost my taste for the process. I saw it changing into a kind of old boy's network where sabbaticals were suddenly given to those who were consistently loyal Union supporters as a reward or payoff. The last President of the Union on whose behalf I served was Jack Zuckermen, he was the first, last and only Union President in Brentwood to whom I gave my trust. Then under Les Black I brought suit against the Union because under the law governing Agency Fees they were allowed to take out dues but not allowed to take out dues used for political purposes so I got in touch with the Right to Work Organization and sued the Union for doing something that was not legal and unjust according to the law as stipulated. It was significant to have accomplished something on the District Level, less so on the Secondary or Primary Levels."

"You need an organization to protect the rights of teachers. I voted to have the union in Brentwood. You need protection for the ordinary person who is not capable of protecting him or herself where there exists an adversarial system of us against them. You need a union of some sort. Is a union perfect? No."

Some people were under the impression when you enter the ivory tower you leave political struggles behind. According to Barry's way of thinking, politics in education is childish. He had previously been involved in the politics at engineering company struggles where he saw the effort was far more sophisticated. He described himself and his brother who was no stranger to political infighting as being reasonably astute at what they both were doing."

We have never had a strike in Brentwood. There are contract negotiations and compromises that have occurred and have worked out fine. *“There is still a very large hierarchy of “them” and “us”; Administrators vs. Teachers, and some of those Administrators are pompous so-and-so’s. Is it because it’s a business? No, ...that’s not it. It’s about power. It’s strictly a power play and if you can’t say no, and if you can’t push people around, you don’t have any power. It’s a sad reality. My opinion of Unions is that you don’t need one in general, if you have an enlightened environment, where people are respectful of everyone else. The concept is a terrible thing – it’s them or us – and if you don’t have an enlightened environment, it’s unfortunate but it shows up”.*

“We should all reflect on our experience as we go through life. I would hope that we all reflect on our experience at least once a week, as in, Should I have done that or, should I have spoken that way to him or her? The bottom line is, - You do what you do at the time. It was the right thing when you decided to do it at the time. Hopefully, you didn’t do it with malice. You didn’t hurt anybody in the process. You didn’t step on anybody to try to get to the next step. I don’t regret an awful lot. For example, I have never applied to be an administrator. I didn’t want to be an administrator. I’m sure I have enough credits to do that but it’s not important. That was not my job and I don’t want to be that. There again, if I couldn’t accomplish the things I wanted to do to help the kids, what am I doing?

“I’m proud of my having been given a “Teacher of the Year Award”, I have a couple of other little things that kids have given me, I have a couple of letters from kids, and those are all of the important items.”

“I put my papers in and made my final decision to retire on the twenty-fourth of June of last year. It was very last minute. I had probably made my decision in the early part of June. It was a big decision to make and a big step to take. For the last year or so actually it was no longer that much fun. Not that my classes were so terrible, I had four very good classes. I just wasn’t enjoying it any

more. Things were changing. Administrators weren't doing what I thought they should be doing – in my opinion. So, I just said I'm going to do it, and I did it. It really didn't feel any different until the seventh or eighth of September when Arlene had to go back to work. Since then, I've certainly missed the people I worked with and that's the only relatively important thing that I do miss. Other than that, it was enough. It was a good decision."

"I never had other jobs while I was teaching except for a couple of summers when I worked for my brother painting the outside of one of his houses. I took the whole summer and I was making a lot of money and one day my kids came over to swim in the pool and I asked myself, "Why am I doing this"? With that realization I used the money to build a pool on my own home for my own kids but that was about the last job I ever took in the summers. That time was for spending it with my family."

"One of my daughters once said to me, "What don't you go back to engineering where you could make a lot more money? I said, "Yes I could." I told her the only thing that would happen next is that we would buy a more expensive car and I'll be working until seven or eight o'clock every night and doing the same projects that I did before."

Was there a favorite time of year for you? "Sometimes, I liked the beginnings and sometimes I liked the ends. Some years I liked the whole year". There were some years I would have quit on any given day. You go through that – whatever! That was about eight, nine, ten years before I retired – and it passes. I asked the meaning of "Agency Fee" and Barry told me it meant that he was not a Union Member but he paid Union Dues and was therefore legally entitled to all the benefits of the Union. He told me," there were at one time about eight or ten others when he started it, and he guessed there were about two or three still left.

"There was actually a time when I debated with myself about either taking over the union or destroying it. I didn't want to run a Union myself. And I did not see anything that would replace it as being any better than what was there, at which point I just dropped the whole idea. I did have some resources available at the time to do some work but I didn't want to do that. At that point I said, they will survive, they are better than nothing and they are doing what they have to do, and I didn't want to do it and I didn't think I could do any better."

Atlas Shrugged a 1957 novel by Ayn Rand was admittedly the one book that probably has had the single greatest impact on his life. Like his youngest brother once said to him a couple of weeks ago, they had been talking about earning money and what he was doing and whatever and his comment was *"at least when I was teaching I was helping some people but now what I'm doing I'm doing strictly for greed and just for the sake of earning money."* Yes, we said, but you're doing it because you're having fun doing it - for you. *"But, there's no other social redeeming value in what I'm presently doing. What I'm doing now is collecting a pension, that helps me, and a couple of other little things that help no one else in the whole world except me...I'm playing a little bit in the Stock Market on the computer ...what they call Day Trading type of thing, but not really Day Trading, more like a couple of day trades and so far I've done reasonably well, but again does it help anybody else? Not in the least"*. Well if its' fun, and you're not hurting anybody else and you have worked very hard for a very long time then you certainly are entitled to some kick-back time to have fun. *"That's why I do it"*.

"The difference between me and a younger someone just approaching the starting line of a career in teaching is that I've lost some of the enthusiasm I had when I started. They still have that enthusiasm. Basically I'd tell them they still have the enthusiasm so reach the ones you can reach and don't worry about the ones you can't reach because you're not going to be able to do anything about that. Give everybody a fair shot. If you accomplish that with the enthusiasm you still have you will do just fine."

“The one thing I got out of those education courses that we were required to take was this. Be yourself. What works for another person may not work for you. Be yourself. Some of the things I’m doing now are very risky and involve a lot of money. If you can’t sleep at night it’s not for you. But yes, five years from now it may sound very materialistic but by then I would like to have accumulated a large sum of money. In that way I plan to make my kids financially independent by that time. But if I were still teaching in the classroom I would not have been able to witness my dream become a reality for me as well as for my family. Thanks to my past I have a viable future still ahead of me. I’ve been blessed with the time I’ve had to be able to try to make my dream come true.”