

# *Richard Brynteson*, by Julie M. Luker

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**Narrator**

**Cole Steinberg**  
**Concordia University, Saint Paul**  
**Interviewer**

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**Transcriber**

**Tuesday, May 29th, 2023**  
**Minnesota**

**CS: Cole Steinberg**

**RB: Richard Brynteson**

**CS:** This is an interview conducted as a part of a larger faculty and student research project initiated by Dr. Julie Luker of Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today is May 23rd, 2023, and I'm here with Richard Brynteson. My name is Cole Steinberg, and I'm an undergraduate student at Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today, I'll be talking to Richard about what life was like growing up in the Twin Cities. During this interview, I'm going to ask you to reflect on your childhood life experiences as they relate to a variety of social topics from that time period. For the purposes of this interview, we have defined childhood as birth through 17 years of age. To begin, please state and spell your full name, including a maiden name if applicable.

**RB:** My name is Richard David Brynteson. R-I-C-H-A-R-D. Middle name David, D-A-V-I-D. Last name Brynteson, B-R-Y-N-T-E-S-O-N.

**CS:** Please identify your race and gender.

**RB:** Male and white. [Born in 1955].

**CS:** Finally, please share where you grew up, such as the name of the neighborhood or a nearby street intersection. Include any major moves you made during this time period.

**RB:** Between the ages of 13 and 18, I lived in West Saint Paul, near the corner of Charlton and Oakdale, which is fairly close to Highway 62 and Charlton. In West Saint Paul and 62, once you go south of there is Sunfish Lake, and out of the Saint Paul jurisdiction. That's where we lived for those years.

**CS:** Thank you. I would like to learn more about your family life. Let's begin with the memories you have for immediate and extended family. Please share some memories that you have about these relationships.

**RB:** Well, at that point, I was living we were living with my mother, my father, my brother and my sister. The great memories are from May and we're talking in May and June and all that. But we we're an athletic family. My dad played Harvard basketball. My brother played basketball at Harvard. He was an ultra-marathoner. My sister was ultimately all-American in soccer. We started there. We had a basketball court in the backyard. Such a big yard. We had little golf holes, and so we'd have, you know, putter and pitching thing. And we play golf back there. We play football back there. We played basketball back there. So, a lot of my fond memories are with my family

doing athletics in the family. What I consider these days is a fairly large backyard and so a lot of happiness there. We also watch football in the fall a lot. And at half time we'd go outside and toss the football. My mother did the gardens, and she always did a great job with, you know, everything from tomatoes to peppers and flowers. That's how we went through high school. Sadly, my senior year, my father just dropped dead, unexpectedly dropped dead. We had a slot machine in the basement and he was playing the slot machine. He got a huge jackpot. And nickels came flying all over and he started laughing and keeled over. Martini in one hand, Pall Mall the other, and died. That kind of threw the whole family off. At this point, my brother is off at college. I was about to go off to college within a year, but that's when the whole thing kind of ended abruptly and kind of badly, to be honest with you, for a lot of reasons. I rode my bike a lot, and in those days, believe it or not, there's Marie Avenue back there, and that's across the road from where you grew up Cole. But you wouldn't understand there. Robert Street and Marie went perpendicular to Robert and Charlton and Marie Street, which now major thoroughfare was a dusty dirt road. Along it across the street where the Target is now and saw some development in 68 and 69, there was still a herd of sheep. And so, I loved riding my bike there and baaing at the sheep. That was the first Target in the history of Target was across Roberts Street there. So, a lot of memories from that I have memories of unlike today at Spring vacation, I'd walk around Roberts Street, have one of the first malls in Minnesota. It was by these standards, it's a small mall, but I go shop to shop trying to get a job for the summer. No way. Because the baby boomers were all in high school trying to get jobs. These days you could go to any shop and get a job because of labor shortages, of course. But then I just hoof it during spring vacation trying to find a summer job. I ended up doing a lot of lawn work there. Another little thing that historically you got to put this in historical context, Cole and this is 68. I moved there. You know, this is after Martin Luther King got shot. This is after Bobby Kennedy got shot. This is after about the time that we left Chicago, right before the big police riots during the Democratic convention. And this country was about to be torn apart, I thought, in 68. I thought it could never get more split until these days. So those are bad times. So, we lived in the relative safety of this, probably what would be called first or second ranking suburb at the time. I wasn't allowed. You'll find this interesting Cole. I was on my bike all the time. I rode my bike, and I still do. I mean, I've already written my bike ten miles this morning like a pedaling bike, not a motorcycle. I was not allowed by my parents to ride in... and I would sometimes ride to high school, which was in Highland Park down the high bridge. So, it was like eight miles to school for me. But I was not allowed to ride anywhere near the Selby Dale because in 68 Selby Dale was the black neighborhood where you'd get your bike stolen and get beat up. It was a dangerous neighborhood you stayed away from. These days it's of course upscale, right? [Laughter] It's changed a lot. So, I remember being fearful. And yet I had a very good friend there, an African American friend who lived there. So, I'd like to go visit her. But, you know, her mother would watch my bike even though it's locked up. It's just it was a different world. West Saint Paul was a very different world than Selby Dale. And for me, it was a fearful kind of thing because I grew up in northern Illinois. I was at age 12 when I first saw my first black person. Okay. Yes, I've seen them on TV. You know, Willie Mays hitting home runs. You know, Bill Russell playing basketball. You know, the Watts riots in 63. But the first time I actually... We drove from northern Illinois into Chicago to go to the museum. And I remember looking out the window saying, there's one now. The first African American person that ever seen. So, it's a different world. But here was the fear thing, and this will probably be interesting to your research. Our neighbors and my parents and our neighbors got together because this is the height of Cold War. One of our neighbors who had a larger plot of land on a hillside, agreed to have a bunker built in the side of the hill because we were afraid of a missile nuclear missile attack from Russia or China at that point. We are going to build a bunker and fill it with water and all those supplies kind of things. We ultimately did not do that, but the fact they had meetings about it and even designed how they built it, where they'd build it tells you a little bit about that time in history and the fear around it. So, I remember the first moon landing. I was with my family and that was 69. One network executive got fired because. Well, it was a dispute about whether you should air the moon landing or an NBA basketball game. He aired in the wrong way and put out the moon landing rather than a basketball game. [Laughter] And he got fired. It was interesting. And by the way, you should know that at that point, research was done

about a year later. And still 25% of Americans believe that the rocket landed in Arizona rather than the moon and thought it was a whole spoof. I was happiest when I was on my bike riding around the neighborhoods. We had a few friends out there, but again, we went to high school in Saint Paul rather than out there in West Saint Paul. So, most of my friends were in Focus Hill area, for instance, and Highland Park. So, I'd have to go in there for that. So, there's ask me some specific questions. I'm losing a little. I don't know what I'm supposed to be telling you about but go ahead.

**CS:** No, that's okay. I kind of have different topics that have questions. And yeah, so we covered family life pretty good, I think. So next, please describe the ways in which your family's economic status influenced your childhood.

**RB:** Well, at that point, my father was president of a company and therefore we were going to Saint Paul Academy. We could afford a private school. At that point, that's where we went. And obviously that led to my college career at Dartmouth and University of Chicago, and ultimately, PhD, because I was well-educated by my parents. My dad had gotten the biggest scholarship in the history of Harvard in 1950. He came from a very impoverished background, and they scraped by. His mother, when the kids weren't looking, would pour water into the milk carton because they couldn't afford food. He always believed that the only way out of poverty was education. So, he and my mom, I mean, he would literally stand over us when we did our homework to make sure you check in on us to make sure we were doing our homework, which felt micro-managing back in the day. And sometimes I get pissed about it. On the other hand, I'm thankful for it because it led to my career in academia, which I love. You know, I've been Concordia 31 years and, you know, Dartmouth and Chicago and all that. I was well prepared to take on some very, very good schools and ultimately get my PhD. So, between athletics I mean my life was... I'd go to school and then athletics. I was all conference in basketball and, you know, things like that. I ran cross country and that would take me till I wouldn't get home till 6:30 or 7:00. Then I studied till ten. And that was my day. Day after day after day. Friday night, I never went out. I was too exhausted. Lie in my bed and read Sports Illustrated and Life magazine, which doesn't exist anymore, but had beautiful pictures at the time. And so that informed. That was my childhood. You know, I didn't do all that much socializing. Part of it is that we're so far out. My friends were in there and I didn't have a car. And of course, my dad's poverty and his ability to get a Harvard degree. You know, and he hitchhiked between Milwaukee and Harvard 13 times to get the school in back. And then I ended up hitchhiking... Well, I didn't have any money. After he died, we didn't have any money. I hitchhiked to Dartmouth and back, you know, not as many times, four or five times. That taught me a certain amount of independence. And ultimately, I ended up hitchhiking all the way to Bolivia, believe it or not. So, it gave me independence and fearlessness, even though I ran into some rogues on the road occasionally who met me harm. But that's life. By the way, it led me to a life where I've been in three civil wars now and shot at and held hostage and a few other things and still alive. So go ahead.

**CS:** Did your mother? Was your mother employed or did she stay home with the family?

**RB:** Early on, she stayed home for the family. But when we were in high school, she worked at the First National Bank of Saint Paul, which is now U.S. Bank, and she was an office manager down there. She was a very organized person. Had she been born in a different generation, she would be, you know, running a Wal-Mart distribution center, totally organized to a tee. But so, she was starting in high school, I think, because we were gone all time. Of course, then she started working down there at First National Bank.

**CS:** Great. Now, I would like to know about your experiences with religion, such as Catholicism, Lutheranism, etc. Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

**RB:** You want me to talk about pre-West Saint Paul or in West Saint Paul or both?

**CS:** You can cover just in general your family's history with religion if there is one. And then particularly if you want to mention West Saint Paul.

**RB:** Well, here you know the basic thing is that we grew up Episcopal. My mother was very strongly involved in the church back in Illinois, and then in West Saint Paul, there is a church right across from what's now Highway 62. It was Highway 110. I had been confirmed in the church, and there in that church I was an acolyte, which meant I carried the cross before the, you know, the choir and all that. So, I was very involved in the church throughout high school. And then yeah, after that, not as much because I was moving around a lot. I was at Dartmouth or Chicago, I was living in Italy, I was living in Israel, and so I didn't have as much connection. But in childhood, you know, every Sunday I'd be at that church, Church of the Good Shepherd. It used to be called. I'm not sure what it's called now. Yeah, very much so. And, you know, my brother and sister also. And now, by the way, went after my dad died and then we moved in... At that point, I was off at college, but my mother moved into the Highland Park area. We joined the Episcopal Church in the Crocus Hill area, and I think this is the 51st year I've been a member there, something like that. So that goes back. I'm an usher. I'm still involved.

**CS:** Okay. Yeah, that kind of helps. My next question I was going to ask how important or relevant is religion to you now as an adult?

**RB:** Very much so. I'm very connected to my church. The men's group at church. Spirituality informs most of my decisions I try to make. So, yeah, very much so.

**CS:** But is there anything else pertinent that you want to address in regard to religion or...

**RB:** Well, I have some deviant. Well, I went working with missionaries down in the Amazon for a while, and so it's very close to a religious community in the Amazon. I had a pet monkey. And yeah, those missionaries I didn't resonate very much with, and I didn't think they were helping the tribes down there. Then at one point I deviated again. I went down to Oklahoma for a kind of a new age community, and I lived there. That was later in adulthood. Which turned into a bit of a cult, and I left when I figured out what was going on. When I was asked to pile body bags and fifteens in the bunkers. [Laughter] So, and you have to look at the context. Again, 1983, there is a movie out called "The Way the World Ends" or something. Everyone and President Reagan was talking about Holocaust and mutual destruction and all that. And so, there are a whole bunch of survivalist communities. And this was kind of one of. But ultimately, I kept coming back to my Episcopal roots. I don't need a prayer book to say every prayer that is said there. It's all memorized through whatever. I love my hymns. To be honest with you, what I do is start out my day and I put hymns on in the morning here at home. So yeah, I guess I think some people say I'm too religious and maybe some people say I'm not religious enough and somehow, I'm in the middle somewhere. But, you know, for instance, last Thursday ushered a funeral of someone I had known for over 50 years. She was 99 years old. And I went to her daughter with her daughter to the prom as a sophomore. And so, yeah, I'm very close to my church and the people over there.

**CS:** Now I'd like to learn more about the neighborhood in which you grew up. If you moved during childhood, you may wish to reflect on more than one neighborhood. This is fine to do, but please indicate as you do it. Please describe what comes to mind when thinking about the neighborhood in which you grew up.

**RB:** Well, one funny thing, because it was so far out, our houses were much further apart and made it very difficult for trick or treating in Halloween. The neighborhood wasn't very cohesive compared to the neighborhood I'd come from in Illinois, where everyone knew everyone, and we'd stayed overnight with everyone. By the time we moved there and part of it was we went to high school elsewhere. We didn't know our neighbors much, to be honest. Hardly at all. You know, the next-door neighbor I knew because I was his lawn boy. I mowed the lawn, did landscaping, and stuff like

that. But other than that. But I remember seeing a fox go through our neighborhood. You know, our lawn. It was still wild enough and deer coming through. And my dad loved it because of the beauty. I mean, we saw mostly trees, not too many houses around us. There was a lot of privacy in our backyard, as I was mentioning earlier. So, it was kind of a bubble outside. And so, to see my friends, I had to go into town, Crocus Hill or Highland Park, like I mentioned. And of course, I went to school in Highland Park. So, my own neighborhood wasn't as important to me as my friends who lived in Highland Park, Crocus Hill or North Oaks, some of them, etc.

**CS:** How safe was your neighborhood when you lived there and what factors made it that way?

**RB:** I don't think people lock their doors. I mean, it was so far away. And to be honest, I'll just be blatant about it. It was all white way out there. You know, you'd never see African American or Mexican. Yes, Hispanic, I guess you'd say that. But it was all white and it was safe. You'd really have to look to find our road. I mean, and some of my father's old friends would come over, they had a hard time this is before GPS. It was hard to find the road that took you to the road that took you to my house, you know, our house. So, it was an incredibly safe neighborhood. I felt I could go walking anywhere any time. I never thought about dangerous... You know, I'm 13-year-old riding my bike anywhere. Not Selby Dale, right. Not that neighborhood. The close part of West Saint Paul's now turned Hispanic. But that's pretty far from the part of West Saint Paul, we lived [in]. So yeah, it was incredibly safe. I don't know if my parents ever locked the doors. I mean, you didn't need to. They didn't worry about me walking around, going out and walking the hillsides and stuff. I mean, that was probably the menace that broke into a... with a friend into an elementary school nearby once and just kick the ball up and down the hallway. We didn't take anything but because we could, you know. So, there's no alarm system or anything like that. But we thought we were cool, you know, so.

**CS:** Next, I would like to learn about the values shared by your family and your neighbors. Values are principles or standards that help guide behavior. What memories come to mind that demonstrate what these values were for your family and your neighbors?

**RB:** Well, I remember, I got in trouble once for buying booze illegally. I stole my older brother's I.D. and bought... Went over to Hudson back in those days. The drinking age here was 21, but over in Wisconsin, it was 19. So, we would go over the Hudson and buy booze. I took my brother's I.D. and then when I was caught by the police, he asked me to spell his middle name and I misspelled it. The dumb shit I am. And my parents were very upset with me. And so, my mother was crying. I thought you were a good boy, you know, all kinds of things. You know, they taught high integrity. There's no way we would have cheated on tests or papers. Education was too important. I mean, the highest value for my dad was education. He didn't care about church much. In fact, he hated the church. In the old days, he was in the Missouri Synod. And what happened in Milwaukee, [Unclear] the Missouri Synod, it happened all over. During the Depression, they would read up front the people who hadn't tithed properly. My grandparents were totally impoverished. They couldn't give money. And so, my dad, when he it was so shameful to have his name read up there. He left the church and never came back and was so mad, which I totally understand, you know, given the context and who he was. My mother was very religious and sang in the choir and that this and that. And she actually worked in churches the last, oh, I'd say 30 years of her life, both St John's and St Clement's both in kind of Crocus Somerville neighborhood. She was the office manager of both of those churches for decades. So that informed me. Hard work. My dad was... And he worked himself to death, quite frankly, trying to start his last business. He had started several businesses successfully in this last one. I think he really worked himself to death. And that's what led to... The values were education and hard work. My mother. Hard work. She was Germanic. You had to be working all the time. Her German ancestry. His was Icelandic and hard work and education were the two pillars of what he believed in, and the family; he loved his children. I mean, he would be working all week, but the weekends he would be with us playing in the back yard, etc. And when someone called from work his line to us, you know, Rich, answer the phone and it's for me, tell

them I died last night at 3 a.m. because he just wanted to be with us. So, he had a high value in family and high value in education, high value and hard work. My mother, hard work, the church, and education. Also, my mother went back. She didn't go to college. In those days a lot of women didn't early, but she finished her degree after 30 years. She went back to the U after my dad died, and finished it at age 50 something, her degree. So, she had, and continued until she ended up in the nursing home where she is now. They have free education at Saint Thomas. Seniors can take classes there. And she did that every spring and every fall. And so, education for her was huge. So, I think those were the key values in our family. And as far as hard work, because we had the big lawn and then we had a big one also and Northern Illinois, when it was time to do yard work, we were all out there. The lawn in West Saint Paul where we grew up, it took us four and a half hours to mow. You'd never buy a riding lawn mower. He was afraid that we would tip over on us. He was he was a lot of fearful about that kind of stuff. And so, my brother and I and he would take turns mowing and my mom and then a couple of the others would be gardening, and a couple of the others would be doing something. We all worked together. And when it was time to leaf rake, we all rake leaves together and pile them up together. So, when it was time to clean the house, we did that together. When it was time to do dishes, we didn't have a dishwasher. So, you know, my dad would delegate. He said, okay, Rich, you wash, Jim, you dry. And Julie, you put her away, you know, kind of thing. So, yeah, the assembly line is going off. So those were the key values, I would say. And also, a key value for him was making money because he grew up impoverished. And quite frankly, here's a key value that we would get milk because he at our dining room table every night were the ghosts of the six aunts and uncles who died of starvation that we had in northern Wisconsin where they came over and Door County, I don't know if you know where that is, northern Wisconsin from Iceland. Grandma had 14 kids, great grandma to me, and six of them died in infancy of starvation. And he remembered that too much. Those would have been his aunts and uncles. The specter of that really... My kids will not starve to death. I'll work as hard as I can to give them the best education so they can have a good material life, because I don't want them to starve to death or their kids to starve to death. You'll hear that if you talk to other people in my age range, that depression was huge. Now, those ones who starved, that was 1890. So that was way before the 1930s depression. My dad remembered the depression and how there wasn't food, you know. Anyway, those and that's so that's how values were driven for him.

**CS:** Yeah. Covers values. Now, I am going to ask you about leisure time. Describe some of the ways in which you, your family and your neighbors are engaged in leisure time when you're growing up.

**RB:** Well, I think I've already mentioned we played football, basketball, and golf in the backyard a lot. We watched football in the winter. 1968, my brother and I got two tickets to the Vikings Packers championship game. Do you want to guess why we got the tickets my dad had? It was 28 below zero and it was an open stadium, [laughter] and we froze our rumps off. It was a good game, but I couldn't. That was before Gore-Tex and things like that. And that's how we ended up with championship tickets, you know. So, I mean, sports were big into my family and then we played a lot of board games. One of them was a football game that I loved, which was a very strategic game. We also played Monopoly in the game "Life", and we had a lot of family time on the living room floor playing those kinds of games. "Scrabble". My mother loved Scrabble. We would skate a lot in the winter. Well, Illinois, we lived right next to a lake, and we skated a lot. Minnesota, not so much because we didn't live right next to a rink of any kind, but it was athletic stuff. Certainly, my parents came to a lot of our basketball games, my brother's and mine and, you know, our cross-country meets. So, that was leisure for them. My dad was an addictive gambler. I mean, that was one problem piece in our family. And so, in our basement, as I think I mentioned, we had a slot machine, we had a roulette table with craps table, and he'd have his friends over from work. He was the president of his company, and his friends would come over two, three or four nights a week and they'd be doing the gambling thing. My poor mother was making hamburgers by the boatload and mixing the martinis, and they'd be gambling and having a great old time. Sometimes I'd join them. I would usually lose some money. So that's how they relaxed a lot. They always had martinis every

night. A lot of that generation, most young adults did. It's very different. I know my dad at lunch, he would have a martini or so, and so would his colleagues. You'd never do that these days. The whole game is different now. I don't know how they function in the afternoon. If I have a beer at lunch, I'm useless, you know. That's what they did, you know. So, there was that drinking gambling culture in our house at night. You know, mostly we were upstairs doing our homework, but it was mostly in the family. It was the board games on the floor or outdoor doing athletic things. I would say we didn't go to movies much. Before St Paul when I lived in northern Illinois. Believe it or not, I really wanted to go to the movies. It was a movie called Help! put up by the Beatles. It was the Beatles' first movie, and we went to the local town because several of my friends and we were 10, 11, 12. There are kids stampeded. There were ambulances that had to show up and take people off because it was so big. We had a small movie theater, and everyone was trying to charge forward. It was the first riot I had been in at age ten and people got hurt really trying to get it to see the Beatles. But anyway, that was earlier. But it gives you a sense of what we did.

**CS:** Was there a local hangout spot in your neighborhood where you could be with your friends? If yes, describe it.

**RB:** No. No.

**CS:** Pretty, pretty rural neighborhood, huh?

**RB:** Yeah. There was no hangout place. No. Okay.

**CS:** Um, what television shows did you watch growing up?

**RB:** The Ed Sullivan Show. Where I first saw the Beatles, of course. Roland Martin Laugh-In, which was a comedy show that was on every Sunday night. It was very funny, actually. There was the Jackie Gleason Show. There was The Honeymooners, which now reruns are coming on, but it could never be shown on TV. So sexist and racist. Totally sexist and racist. So those are the ones I remember. And then the big thing was... You have to understand, this is my dad came home and it must have been. Oh, my God. Probably. 1969 or 1971 with a color TV. That was huge. I mean, color TV only started maybe the mid-sixties and they were really expensive. It was the wide world of Disney on Sunday nights. And it was Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone and all this old history stuff. And we loved those. Those movies were height for us watching that on Sunday evening. I think they watch Lawrence Welk, which is more music and variety show, I guess you'd call it. After school, I liked watching Batman. There was a Green Hornet. Yeah, those were the major programs that I remember. And then, of course, football, baseball, basketball and that.

**CS:** Next, let's discuss your experience with schooling. Please describe what it was like going to school as a child.

**RB:** I loved St Paul Academy in St Paul. I had so many friends. In fact, I was just with through six of them the other day at the one funeral was mentioning We are now, I'm on a committee to put together our 50th reunion, which is this fall, and I'm still very close to many people in my high school class. I loved the intellectual rigor. I loved reading history and reading novels. I stumbled a little bit in math, though. I liked it. I really liked it. I just stumbled later on. We always had to look forward to athletics after all, because at my school you had to do athletics every season. So, it wasn't even a choice. I loved that getting there early and several of us would get there early and hang out together. That was the closest thing I had to a hang out. We'd have a half hour together and these people are still close friends of mine. One lives in New York City. One lives in North Carolina now. But the one in North Carolina just popped in the other day, just out of blue. Text me and say, I'm in the neighborhood. I'm going to come over. It's great. This is 50 years after graduation, of course. So, I loved my high school years. The teachers were friends of mine. I've been to most of their funerals in the last five years, sadly. But they were good lives. But they were



so influential. So, years after I graduate, I still have coffee or lunch with... One of them I visited at my honeymoon up near Seattle. We stayed with them for a couple of days. I mean, that's how close we were. Saint Paul Academy, being smaller than most places, allowed for that closeness. People were very supportive. In my senior year, as I mentioned, my dad dropped dead, and at the time I was at my history class, we had night history class. That's where I learned. My history teacher drove me home that night. The teachers were all very supportive. I went from an A-minus average to a C minus average in one semester, and those C minuses were gifts, I think, because I was so distracted and so overwhelmed with how life had made this turn. Because after my dad died, my mother got very ill, and she was in the hospital for months. I took care of the house and took care of my little sister and farmed her out to someone. That I don't know if this should be on tape, but 50 years ago, they can't put me in jail. But I got creative. I had to pay the bills. So, I took all their booze and sold it to all my friends and used the money to pay bills. Well, I thought I was being creative, but my friend's parents weren't very happy with me at that point, let's just say. That senior year was really awful for me. But people were so supportive. The interesting thing is the time after that that I felt most supported was when my wife died about seven, six years ago. I was at Concordia. Concordia people were the most wonderful and helpful, kept showing up at my house. My faculty friends and staff friends. It's just it was absolutely wonderful. Again, I felt that outpouring. I had that in high school. The high school experience for me was excellent. I did some big projects that I thought were really interesting. The school had a lot of creative things we could do, and I did them like going up to Boundary Waters and camping out and things like that, things that kids usually don't get. So, I'm thankful for my high school education and what a community we have there and a close-knit community. Not that there weren't tensions or are people I didn't like, people who didn't like me. I ran into at an event recently, guy who is older than me, he said, you remember, me and Andy stuffed you head first into the garbage can? [Laughter] No, I'm glad I forgot that one. That one guy lives in Pittsburgh. Another friend was about to see him recently. I tell him I forgive him because he convinced me there was a swimming pool underneath the school and we had a great swim team and for the first month I was in school, I was going, trying to open the doors to find the swimming pool that didn't exist. Was hazing the new guy, you know. But these are people, you know, like I say, I saw a whole bunch of them the other day at the funeral, you know, and it was wonderful to see them. I had a lot of warmth and intellectual. I worked really hard. And back then, by the way, you couldn't really cheat. I mean, these days you can cut and paste those days. You have to go to the library, take a book out, hide in the corner, copy everything. You knew you were cheating, so you didn't know anyway. Go ahead. Next question.

**CS:** Okay. For a final topic, I'm going to ask you to reflect on local and global issues such as war, poverty, discrimination, social unrest, etc. In your opinion, what were some of the biggest local or global issues affecting the people in your neighborhood when you were growing up?

**RB:** Well, clearly, as I've mentioned earlier on, you know, 1968, 1969, 1970 were awful years. It was the Vietnam War, it polarized people. Either you were pro-war, or you were against war. It was hard for people to even dialog about it. So that was huge. You know, immigration wasn't a thing, quite frankly. I mean, civil rights were the thing, but black people were over. There was a segregated city at that point; they redlined that. You probably heard about redlining. And so, there were enclaves of blacks in North Minneapolis and in the Selby-Dale area, which was run down, but now it's totally gentrified. Right. So civil rights were big. The death of Martin Luther King brought that. The Vietnam War, which continued and continued and continued. My dad, he was good friends with the guy who was the undersecretary of state. One day he came back from a business trip in Washington where he had had dinner with his friend, who was the undersecretary of state. That person and this was 1964. Now, he said he told my dad over and over again, you know, we're going to win the Vietnam War within six months. We're going to win. This was 1964. Of course, we'd lost it in 75. So, it just lingered and got worse and worse. 68, of course, was the Tet Offensive, where they kicked our butts and showed us that they weren't going away. And so that was really a polarizing thing. And part of it, I think, my dad wanting us to live out in a distance, kind of part of the city that was spread out and rural almost was that he didn't want us to get hurt. You know, after

all the riots, you know, Detroit, Chicago, etc. Watts. You know, people are getting hurt. And then the anti-Vietnam War in 1970, of course, the Kent State mass... Four students were shot down by the National Guard. My dad was scared to death of us getting involved. The other one was drugs. He was really afraid of us getting involved with drugs because so many kids were and there were a lot of overdose deaths then like there is now with fentanyl. Back then it was LSD and people jump off high buildings and, you know. I still know people who got deeply into drugs who I don't think have ever recovered seriously. They're still alive, but their minds were so wrecked by the drugs of those days, they never totally grew up. So, drugs were big. Vietnam was big. Civil rights was big. Were the three ones that I remember. And of course, fear of Russia and China and the nuclear exchange, like I mentioned, that, you know, creating that bunker. So those are the biggest.

**CS:** Okay. Is there anything local that sticks out to you or.

**RB:** Well, there were riots at the U of M. In fact, one guy I knew from high school was in the paper getting arrested, manning the barricades because they barricaded at the U of M during the riots and they took over one of the halls there. The big student union. They took over the antiwar demonstrators. So that was well, here we did a simulation high school. Two simulations that stick out. One was something that's a UNESCO simulation. That day at lunch, what happened is we walk in lunch and six people would get a bowl of rice and the seventh would get a big plate of food. Those people weren't allowed to share with the other people who just got rice. I just happened to be the seventh person who got a big plate of food, and they were trying to show us how this is the way the world works. And that's so visceral. Now, you know, you forget much of what happened 50 years ago, 50 some years ago. I remember that experiment. I sat in the corner. I felt so guilty for having this big plate of food where all my friends had rice. The other one was, and this was traumatic that you'd never do it again because you get sued. This was a social studies class. We're doing social studies, etc... And suddenly there was a knocking on the door and then the teacher kept on and then knocking and then he got mad and went to open the door and suddenly there were two gunshots and he fell over like he was dead. Then what he did was. Told us to write. Then he got up and we were all. At that point, that would be like PTSD I think these days. We were supposed to write down what happened, and we all had different, you know, some of us there were three knocks at the door, some of us someone else opened the door and he was showing us how witnesses aren't reliable. But this is right in the context of those big assassinations of the sixties.

**CS:** This is the end of our interview. Your responses are invaluable, and we really appreciate that you took the time to do this today. Thank you so much for participating.