

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Project

O.H. 2181

Michelle Lepore-Hagan

Interviewed

By

Lesley Durkin

On

March, 4 2004

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INTERVIEWEE: Michelle Lepore-Hagan

INTERVIEWER: Lesley Durkin

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P: This is an interview with Michelle Lepore-Hagan for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on YSU Project, by Lesley Durkin, at Mrs. Lepore-Hagan's, office in Bliss Hall, on March 4, 2004. At 10:00 a.m. This project was funded by the Ford Foundation.

D: Could you tell me your name?

H: Hi, I'm Michelle Lepore-Hagan.

D: Could you tell me a little bit about yourself? Like when were you born?

H: Oh, you brat! I was born April 4, 1955.

D: You're a spring chicken. Where were you born?

H: I was born in Youngstown, Ohio.

D: Do you know what hospital?

H: I was born at St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

D: How many siblings do you have?

H: I have three siblings, there's four of us in the family.

D: Boys, girls?

H: Two boys and two girls. I'm the second oldest. There's a brother older than me, then myself, then my sister, and my younger brother.

D: What were your parent's names?

H: Jim Lepore was my father, and my mother's name was Jeannie McGarry.

D: And what did they do for a living? What were their jobs?

H: My father was an Art professor at Youngstown State University, and he taught in the city schools before that. In like 1955 when I was born, I think he was teaching at Rayan high school, and maybe teaching at Youngstown College in the evenings. My mother was a full-time mom and housewife, and then went back to school when I was about in sixth grade, and got her degree in teaching from YSU, and then taught kindergarten in Youngstown City Schools. And my father was on the faculty at the University in the College of Fine and Performing Arts in the Art department.

D: Where did your father attend college?

H: He went to the Bauhaus in Chicago, and he went to Ohio State, and he went to Youngstown College. At that time it was called Youngstown College.

D: Your mom is just adorable, she's so cute.

H: I know, she's really sweet.

D: Where did you grow up?

H: We grew up on Grover Drive. It was the last street in Boardman before, it was the street that connected Boardman to Youngstown. So we had a lot of friends that lived on the street that went to Mooney, and at the end of our street, the friends at the end of the street were in city schools, and we were on the other side of the tracks in Boardman. It was a really wonderful neighborhood. Most of the homes were built by the people that were living in them, the neighborhood was full of a lot of post-generation Italian...mostly

Italian, German, Hungarian neighbors that all built there own homes, and moved in them and lived in them, it was a very safe and loving childhood. We played with our friends all the time; every morning we would just run out and play with the Michael's kids up the street and the Dubeks across the street.

D: What is your ethnic background?

H: My mother is Irish and my father is Italian.

D: That's a popular mix these days. Where did attend school, like grade school, high school?

H: I went to Robinwood Lane, and then I went to Boardman Junior High School, and in my freshman year in high school my father had a sabbatical in Arizona and I went to Phoenix West High School for one year, the year that changed my life completely, 1969. It was a very crazy year, it was a hard time in our history, you know, the Vietnam year, and hippies were fighting the war at home, and people were fighting the war in Vietnam, it was horrible. And then I came back and finished at Boardman High School. I was the first class, the class of '73, to go completely from freshman to senior, through the new high school.

D: Did you have like favorite teacher in all those years?

H: I had a couple of favorite teachers in high school?

D: High school, grade school...

H: In grade school it was my kindergarten teacher Mrs. Reed, and then she was also my sixth grade teacher. And I liked her because she understood me, she understood that I was an artsy kind of girl, and she let me do special art projects, and I always think about her. And then in high school I loved our humanities teacher Ron Barron, who left when we graduated and managed Maureen McGovern's career, and moved to L.A. with her, and he had a lot of influence on me. And Mr. Kennedy, who's a part-time teacher at YSU, in English still, he's very young, we loved him. And I loved my art teacher Mr. Rubino in junior high school, and Mrs. Hosa in high school. I guess I had a lot of teachers that I really, really liked, and I never thought about that, but now that you asked me, there were a lot.

D: I'm going to say right now, I remember you were a cheerleader weren't you?

H: One year, yea.

D: Because we thought you were so cool because you were a cheerleader when you were dating Bobby. We were little, we thought you were so cool.

H: Oh, I was a cheerleader for one year, I think in eighth grade. And that's why I said ninth grade changed my life because I went in there, I wanted to be a cheerleader and my life was really different when I came out.

D: Were there any other activities you were in besides being the cheerleader?

H: Yea, I was a member of the photo club. I have no idea where the F-stop is on the camera, and I was like, executive member of photo club at Boardman High School. I painted a lot, I did a lot of painting, and drawing, and photographing, in high school. And I rode my bike, and I didn't wear a bra, and then I got called into the office and had to wear a bra because it was during the days when we were burning our bras.

D: Obviously your parents had some kind of influence on your education, how strong would you say that impact was? The fact that they were both college educated?

H: I guess it was just inherent that we would all go to college. Well, where we went to college was the question, my father said he would pay for us to go to college if we went to YSU, and of course, teaching on the faculty, it cost him \$50.00 to send us here a quarter, so he said if we wanted to go somewhere else we had to figure it out ourselves. So I went to YSU for two years, and then transferred to Ohio University.

D: What was your major?

H: My major at YSU for two years was Art, of course, and then I was also really in love with dancing, and my brother, who was two years older than me, was in school with me at YSU, he was a really good student, he was totally different than me; we took an Astronomy class together and he tortured me. Dr. Young's Astronomy class was infamous for being really difficult, and I got an A in it, and Dr. Young still remembers that he had Jim Lepore's two kids in his Astronomy class, and they both got an A. The only reason I got an A was because my brother was forcing me study, because he was such a studying nut. Anyway he said to me, "Michelle, you know we can major in dance," and I never realized that that was a possibility. So we went off and auditioned at Ohio University, and went to school and we majored in dance, and lived down there for four years. And those were during the times when I could get my entire tuition paid for with the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant, and Ohio Instructional Grant, and no loans at all, all grant and aid, and scholarships.

D: Nice.

H: Nice, I know, that's the way it should be, that's the way it used to be before the Republican presidents came in.

D: You did attend YSU for two years, could you tell me what the campus looked like when you attended it?

H: Our classes were at Clingan Waddel, and Clingan Waddel is now Penguin Place. It was really, it was the coolest Art Department because it was in this old building, you know, down around Lincoln. The Home Ec. Department was in the same building as the Art Department and the Nursing Department, we had like, Home Ec, Nursing, and Art, three areas that should not be put together because, you know, the Art Department was paint splattered, nutty people. But it was great, they all got along with each other and it was really fun. We used to go to a little spot, a little café called The American Eagle, where we drank coffee, and I met my best girlfriend, whose father was the Chairman of the Psychology Department, Paul Beckman was his name, Dr. Beckman, and his daughter was Kristen Beckman. We were freshman, "faculty remission" brats, we called each of ourselves, and Kristen ended up going on to get her PhD in Archeology. She's brilliant and amazing, and she runs a massive company now in Pittsburgh. We used to sit and drink coffee and gossip at the American Eagle. I think Kilcawley had just opened, Kilcawley was just built, and Kristen and I got a job, Phil Hirsch hired us. We were the first student employees in Kilcawley! It was awesome. We worked in the craft center, and we taught people how to make leather crafts, I swear to God, we did leather tooling, and we made leather bags, and you could walk in there and do leather tooling at no cost, it was so amazing.

D: They got rid of your little leatherwear shop in Kilcawley, I wonder why they don't still have it?

H: True.

D: Did you commute, or did you live on campus?

H: No, we commuted. I used to drive into school with my father, and then I would drive in with my brother...oh, my brother lived on campus, he lived in the Hollow, and he lived in the Oval. And I knew a few people who lived on campus, but it wasn't an organized campus living, it was like, in the scary houses surrounding the campus. But that's sort of what it was like at OU also.

D: Obviously you didn't have a problem parking when your dad was a faculty member.

H: Yea, that was not a problem, I don't remember parking being a problem. That's part of the perk that I got.

D: You little brat.

H: I'm the little brat.

D: Where did you buy your books at?

H: Oh, talking about faculty remission again, we bought them at the bookstore in Kilcawley, no wait, yea, I think, was there one on...no it was in Kilcawley, the bookstore was in Kilcawley from the moment that Kilcawley opened, wasn't it? You don't know?

D: Yes it was. I wasn't born, I don't think, in '74, I was just born.

H: Did you like, obviously get them cheaper then?

H: I can't say that!

D: C'mon you can say that, you won't get in trouble now, its like, thirty years later.

H: Well, I just used my dad's discount.

D: What kind of discount did he have?

H: Ten percent, or something.

D: B.S. What was your real discount? Don't even B.S. me!

H: It's true, it was like a ten percent or twenty percent discount. I have no idea, I didn't concentrate on that at all, do you think I cared about my books?

D: Well, you had to spend money.

H: My dad paid for my books because he wasn't paying for my college, and so my parents paid for that, that was really nice.

D: That was very nice.

H: Yes, especially since when I went to OU they didn't even know where I lived, and never gave us any money for anything, so I did it all on my own then, so it was alright.

D: Where there any traditions at YSU that you noticed were being observed?

H: Painting of the rock.

D: Did you ever paint the rock?

H: No.

D: What kind of artist are you?

H: May Day celebrations.

D: What was that?

H: A happy celebration.

D: Well, tell me about the May Day celebration, I want to know about it.

H: Hippies would all get together and there'd be a May Poll, and...

D: Did you participate in this?

H: Yea, I sat outside and it was warm and we sat on the grass and we wore long, hippie skirts, and...

D: Listened to the Grateful Dead...

H: Yea, and there were daisies and that kind of stuff. What other traditions? There was the annual End of the Year OEA faculty party that I remember my parents going to forever. That's a tradition that's still going on and that's still a great party. Now I attend it with my husband, he's invited.

D: That's nice.

H: I know it's funny isn't it? Let's see, what else, what other traditions?

D: Homecoming?

H: Homecoming, I remember that. Football.

D: Was football real big?

H: Football was big, I guess, I didn't pay attention to it.

D: Did you notice any fraternities or sororities being very important to students? Was that like a big deal?

H: If people were in fraternities and sororities they were just not cool in those days. It was like very un-cool to be part of that, as a matter of fact, in high school I was not supposed to...I didn't go to prom because it was just not cool, I didn't do any homecoming or prom, anything, ever, because I was a hippie, I wasn't part of that. And there was a big tradition, ROTC was over in the...why do I remember this, it's probably wrong, but I think it was in the Wick-Pollack Inn, or maybe the Alumni House, somehow I remember it being up here. And their presence on campus was really eerie, because it was during the Vietnam War, and it was really a strange, it was really strange for us, because those kids were going right to jungles in Vietnam, that was crazy.

D: So were there like, anti-war protests on campus?

H: Oh, yea, that was another thing that was happening a lot. And Fuzzy Palumbo was dancing, I remember watching him dance, and he had really long hair, a long afro, and he was flying all over the place, he was dancing in the middle of a big circle of people, it was like a drum circle and we were all clapping and playing. I think he's dead now, I'm not sure.

D: I think he is.

H: Is he? Awww, I bless him.

D: He choreographed some fashion show we had at St. Christine's when I was in like, third grade.

H: Oh, do you remember him then?

D: Yes, I remember Fuzzy Palumbo.

H: He was so cute, he was really...

D: Flamboyant.

H: But he was like, you know, the front of that whole movement, at least in style, I don't know where his politics were, I'm sure his politics were ours.

D: Where were your politics?

H: I was very, I thought I was very political. I worked on the McGovern campaign, when he ran I was in high school actually, so I worked on that campaign, and when we lived in Arizona in 1969 we went to see Jerry Ruben and Abby Hoffman live at Phoenix College. It was wild, and my politics were very against the war, and Democrat, and I use to think I was very political until I married a politician.

D: Yea, you married into the wrong family.

H: I always thought I was political just because I voted, and it was important to vote, and I paid attention, but I didn't realize that I was barely political, now that I live with one of them.

D: Did you read The Jambar a lot? Yes, no, was it around?

H: I think yea it was, and I think that my brother in law Jack Hagan worked for the paper, but you know what was on... what is coming back, and what had a lot of impact on students was The Neon, the yearbook.

D: Really?

H: Yea, I think they're bringing it back.

D: Did you have one?

H: No. I should have. I find them now in garage sales, I should buy them because there's photos of my father from the seventies and he's looked cute.

D: My pictures of my dad from the seventies, he always looks like Charles Manson.

H: Really?

D: He does! I'll have to bring you one. There's this picture of him, me, and Dawn, it's the big...

H: Yea, do you ever see Bobby?

D: Oh, we had notoriously bad hair in this family, lots of it, mine's straightened today. Any memorable instructors while you were at Youngstown State?

H: Yes, I used to love Mrs. Kucinich, no, Mrs. Kasinski, and I loved her, and I called her Kucinich first because of the 2004 election. Mrs. Kasinski was the dance instructor who inspired my brother and I, and now my brother is still dancing, he's a professor at George Mason University in Dance, and it's because of Kasinski, and she passed away also. She was amazing, she was fun, she pulled together a modern dance group...oh I did read the newspaper, I was in the newspaper, now I remember it, there were photos of our dance company in the newspaper so of course I read the newspaper, The Jambar, now I remember it. And I loved all of the Art Department faculty. As my teachers I had Lou Zona, Dr. Hiska, John Naperezni, Al Bright, Jim Luca, Russell Maddock, the thing is they all knew me from when I was little because the Art Department was a very close knit group of people, and they partied together, they'd have picnics, and all of the Art Department kids grew up with each other and knew each other, and still socialize and hang out together, I still see John Naberezni's kids when I go to New York City.

D: So you ended up graduating from OU, what was your degree?

H: I had a B.F.A. in dance from Ohio University.

D: Did you go on to any post-graduate work?

H: No I didn't, I went on to New York City and just danced, and then went to classes, and waited on tables, and...

D: Yet another reason why we thought you were like the coolest person married into the family.

H: Because I danced in a class, remember I told you who was in one of my dance classes...Madonna was a modern dancer, and she was in our dance class, and then she got famous afterwards.

D: She was like, "Piss on you."

H: Yea, "All you modern dancers, I'm moving out of this."

D: Yet another reason why you are the coolest person marrying into the family. Hey when you're like eight, nine years old, you're like, "Wow, what a cool lady."

H: "She was a cheerleader, then she was a dancer, she danced in class with Madonna," you're right it was fun.

D: After you attended YSU, obviously you found a little bit of work in New York City in your field of study, what made you come back to Youngstown State?

H: Actually, that's where I did some post-graduate, so that's why I came back, I wanted to finish my degree in Art, and I started to take some education classes, and I was thinking about maybe going to complete my Master's in Dance, and so I thought I would just take a short hiatus. I was going to always be back in New York City, I knew I would return eventually. I was never really... I had to trick myself, I had to lie to myself and say that I was just leaving for a little break, and I would be back, because I loved New York City, I loved living there, I still do, I love New York.

D: So why did you just decide to stay here?

H: I don't know. I met my husband. I was 29 years old and had not been in Youngstown for seven years, eight years, because I had gone to school then I lived in New York City, so when I moved back to Youngstown the campus looked different, Bliss Hall was here. It wasn't here when I left. My parents had gotten a divorce so I was living between my father's house and my mother's house, and I was 29 years old and a study had just come out that said that if you weren't married by your thirties, do you remember that? About twenty years ago. If you weren't married by your thirties you were never going to get married. And I was panicking because my grandmother was telling me that I was 29 years old and I better get married quickly. And I had no intention of ever getting married, I was perfectly happy and I felt like I was too young to even get married at 29. And I met Bobby Hagan in a bar on Logan Avenue, in like a really seedy place where a bunch of people from the university hung out. And I went to meet an old boyfriend who had a new girlfriend with him, and when I showed up he said, "Oh, by the way, this is my new girlfriend," and introduced us. And then she of course couldn't stand me, like what was I doing on their date, so I was trying to get away from them as quickly as possible, and he said, "Look, there's Bobby Hagan whom I was telling you about, he's over there talking to that nerd." And I looked across the room, and I assumed that Bobby was the nerd, and that the nerd was with Bobby, and I went over there and flirted madly with this guy who wasn't Bobby. Because I always wanted to meet the Hagans, I always wanted to meet somebody from the Hagan family, because we grew up with their cousins the Rose's in Boardman, Michael and Jerry, Jerry was my age, and he died in a tragic accident, that was really sad. But he loved his cousins, and they used to talk about the Hagan family constantly, and I knew they were in politics, and I thought, "They are the cutest family, they're the K-Mart Kennedys, that's what they called themselves. I loved their politics, I loved their sense of humor, I just wanted to meet him, and I flirted madly with the wrong guy. And then Bobby was trying to talk to me, and I kept thinking, "God, this guy really is a nerd, because he's trying to interrupt me, and then I realized I had made a mistake,

and before I left that night I asked him out. I asked him ballroom dancing at Idora Park Masquerade, masquerade ballroom dancing at Idora Park on our first date. And at our date he dropped a twenty-dollar bill when we walked in to pay in the little ticket booth when you walked in the Idora Park ballroom. He went to pay and I pulled him and said, "Quick, my father's winning the prize for the best costume," and he dropped a twenty-dollar bill, and he said that he's been losing his money ever since he met me, ever since then it was a sign that he would just lose money with me. And then on our first date I told him I was going to marry him, and it didn't scare him off, he just hung in there. And then when I turned 30, you'll like this, he gave me half a birthday cake from Sparkle Market, because his kids were coming over, his three children, and he didn't want them to eat too much cake. Now when I turned 29 I was still living in New York City and I'm sure I had champagne and some kind of chocolate tort that was probably a hundred dollars a slice.

D: And you had half a Sparkle cake.

H: And I realized right then that my life was really going to change.

D: How soon after you came back to YSU, met your husband, did you start working here?

H: I was connected to YSU the moment I came back to town. I was taking classes, and then I started to choreograph some dance for the theatre program, and I took maybe a year off when I wasn't involved with classes or choreographing for the theatre program. I spent that year working with my husband on his campaign for State Rep. And then after his election I went back to school, choreographed for a time, and then the position as a staff member, a part-time staff member in the theatre program as the theatre manager.

D: What year was that?

H: 1987.

D: And when did you get your position you have now? Could you tell me what your position is now, exactly?

H: I'm the Director of the Performing Arts Series. My position grew out of the Theatre Management position. I got the Theatre Manager position full-time in 1988, and I also had cancer, bought a house, and had two children, in three years, or something crazy. So, my premonition of my life being different was really true. Then I was a Theatre Manager at Youngstown State University in the Theatre Program from '88 full-time, until three years ago when the Dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, George McCloud, reassigned some staff positions, and took his administrative assistant's position, and created the SMARTS Program, Students Motivated by the Arts, and their location is now downtown above the Powers Auditorium where the old box office was. That's a satellite program of the college, and so there was a need to fill an administrative position to support all of the Arts in this college, so the Dean actually created the Fine and Performing Arts Series, which supports music, theatre, art, dance, opera, the

McDonough. And I work with the special events. I work with all the disciplines in the arts, and I love it. I love it it's the most fun job on campus, and probably in Youngstown. I'm lucky. And it's wonderful to watch the resurgence of our community, it's really important that the University is at the forefront of it, and I really, I feel like we're right there, this College is really important in the restructuring and the redevelopment of our community, and I'm really proud to be a part of the rebirth of Youngstown. And when you see Powers Auditorium filled with people to see the ballet, and you know you had something to do with it, it's really exciting.

D: I took Cane to see B.B. King.

H: Did you? I love that. You see, I think that's really nice.

D: It's nice; it's a nice place.

H: It's amazing, you know, the things that we have here, the facilities that we have in this community, they're a gem they're not in every community. We're very lucky.

D: How do feel the community has changed since, you know, as you were younger, to when you were going to college, to now? How do you feel the community has changed?

H: I really don't think we've changed that much as a group of people. We were working more, the sky was dirty, there was always an orange sunset that was an unnatural orange sunset because of the sulfur in the air, and you know, the mills were running. When I was in college the steel mills were still going. When I came back there was a real depressed feeling in the air, but I think people are strong, and you know, we're fighters, and we like these challenges, and I think that really was a bond for all of us, and I think that, you know, the labor unions and people that fought for the rights of working people became really important in our lives. And I think that's why our community is really strong. And now I think that we're going to make it, and I think the arts will be at the front. I really do, I think the arts could be part of the rebirth of our community.

D: Could you maybe describe to me, how do you feel technology has affected YSU? I mean everything is computers now, has that helped?

H: Oh my God! This is so weird isn't it? Because I don't feel old, but I've been in my job for twenty years, and I'd never thought I'd be at this point. But when I started this job there was no computer on my desk, and I remember having a nightmare that my boss was going to make me put a computer in. I cried, and I dreamed about it, and I worried and worried, and now I'm just, you know, I can't believe I was at that point. And now I love it. I was just talking to somebody today, we're cutting a commercial, we send an MP3 segment of the music, e-mail it to the radio station, we e-mail the text to another place. Maybe in the past I would have liked to have been able to jump out of my office and run, and get in my car, and run over there and meet people and say, "Hi, here's some music you can use." But today I feel so busy that I'm glad that have this technology. I do our graphics, I do all of our artwork like that now, I don't have to spend the time trudging

around, and re-typesetting, and proofing, things get done more quickly, and our product is increasing, we can do more.

D: In your position are you a member of a union?

H: I'm exempt right now.

D: You're exempt? Do you want to be part of the union?

H: Yea, I'd like to be a part of a union, but as a director at YSU you can't be, you're an except administrative staff position. Because I supervise one employee from APAS, the Associative Professional Administrative Staff Association, and I supervise an ACE member and a civil service classified employee. I was part of the APAS.

D: Could you tell me, in all the time you've been at YSU, not as a student, would you say you had any very memorable students that you instructed?

H: Yea, I loved this group of students, I look at the kids that pass through here like in the little herd, and some years we have really, really cool students that are so talented and amazing and just push each other, and other times it drops, it's not as exciting, there's not that enthusiasm. And you know, it's really driven by a couple kids coming together that just really want to do theatre, performing arts, and they create things, and they leave a little bit of themselves when they leave here. The group I'm thinking about was about six years ago. They created the Black Box Program, and so now the students have the format where they direct and produce their own shows, and it was created by a group of really talented, amazing key students, who all live in New York City now. And I see them, we keep in touch, when I go to New York, they come to parties that we have there, and they're acting, and dancing, and one actually has his equity card and he's touring with Broadway shows. I like it.

D: Any good stories you have about the department? Funny stories, any memorable moments over the years that really strike you as something you would probably never forget in your entire life?

H: Oh, my gosh! Really? You want that kind of a story?

D: Yea, sure.

H: I can tell you one. When I first got my job I thought I was so cute, you know, I wore these short mini-skirts, and I had these black tights on, and I ran to the bathroom really fast and pulled my tights up and tucked my skirt into the back of my tights and didn't realize it, and I thought I was so important because I had a job at the University, and I was walking through the lobby, and the whole time my whole rear end was hanging out, with my black tights and my skirt was tucked into it. And I was standing at my door with my back to the lobby, and I felt a tap on my back, and one of the students had come over and said, "Your skirt is tucked in to your leotard." And I shut my door and didn't come

out for hours. That's my crazy story, let me think, what great stories do I have? We have wonderful guest artists, and I think whenever we bring people in from the outside we have wonderful experiences. We had a very successful collaboration with the Moscow Ballet, and we worked with Ballet Western Reserve, and the community, and local businesses, and those events were so memorable, and that was really good, those things. Our Latin Festivals have been great, Jazz performances for the Leonardi Legacy, the very first Leonardi Legacy concert, when all of the alumnus students came back to play a tribute concert for Tony Leonardi. It was so moving; it was a beautiful concert and a very memorable night.

D: Okay, this is a tough one for you, and I want your absolute honest answer. Who do you consider to have been the best President of the University since you've been here?

H: Sweet!

D: Why?

H: Because he...I think they were all good, I think that Humphrey was the first president here when I was here. Really worked hard and tried to...I don't know how to answer, Leslie, you brat!

D: It's written down!

H: Okay, here; Cochran's decisions to move the university in different directions was very important, and President Cochran was very important to this institution because he made us realize that we were an urban university and we needed to do more things in the urban setting that we were in, and we needed to embrace who we were. But I think President Sweet will be able to take us to the next level, which is by developing the 2010 Plan, and to bring outside visionaries in to look at the community, and I think he'll probably make the most impact.

D: You're such a good politician's wife.

H: Well, I believe that really, he'll make the most noticeable changes. And, you know, he's always embraced and supported the things that we do, like the Summer Festival of the Arts, and any of our special events that we do on campus.

D: Have you noticed broader diversity in the faculty over the years?

H: Yes. More people are coming from out of Youngstown. Not as many people are hired from our community as they used to be.

D: Is that a good thing?

H: Yes. It's okay.

D: Why?

H: Because they start to love our community and they start to make a difference and volunteer. And they bring things that they've learned in other communities to Youngstown, and, you know, they tend to be more philanthropic, maybe, they give things back to the community by serving on boards and getting involved. I hope that the new faculty coming in live on the North Side too, and support the inner city neighborhoods.

D: What has been your biggest scholarly achievement at YSU? Like the one thing you're most proud of that you have been able to accomplish while working here.

H: Just being appointed to this position as the Director of the Performing Arts Series. That's a great thing.

D: Do you have any advice for younger colleagues, or anyone interested in teaching, or working in the university setting?

H: I don't understand that question. What do you mean?

D: Someone who would like a position like yours, where they could take their area of interest and be involved in it as a career. What advice would you give them?

H: Okay, thank you for clarifying that.

D: I'm putting my T Comm. degree to work here.

H: This is a growing field. Managing the arts, and having somebody that pulls all the artists together and works with them, this is a great area to be involved in, and you can do it the professional world, but it's a lot more fun in the academic world because you have a lot of support, a lot of built-in support from the academic community, and it's nice to be around this age group. I love students, I love this age group the students are in, and I like being around colleagues that are always trying to improve themselves and always studying in their field.

D: Say Jimmy or Natalia came to you and said, "I want to go to YSU," and those are her two kids. Would you steer them towards YSU, or would you tell them to go to a bigger school?

H: I would tell them what my father told me, "I'll pay for it if you go to YSU." Yes, and you know what? They're already talking about school, and their choices, and they're in seventh and ninth grade. And Youngstown State University is not in their thought pattern already. My daughter wants to major in something that's not offered here, you know, there's not a degree for dance, and that's what she wants to do, so I guess I would not be able to encourage her because we do not have a dance program. But I would not discourage them from being at YSU because I think the undergraduate classes, or an undergraduate degree from YSU, is just as valid or valuable as a degree from Brown

University. Because you are what you're going to push yourself to become, and of course maybe you'll meet more people and networking might be more important for your future at another school, but really, if you're going to choose between Youngstown State and another state school in Ohio, there's no difference, and it's probably even better at YSU because you'd have full-time faculty instead of TA's and graduate assistants teaching classes with a hundred people. You know, you can take a freshman, beginning level class, and have a tenured faculty member, a full professor, teaching, it's not uncommon. And that is uncommon in other universities, but not as YSU. Don't you think so? Didn't you have that?

D: I did have that, well, a couple of classes I had Tom Holden, but that was cool, and he knew my dad, so he was nice to me. He coached him in a softball league, or something, so he was, like, extra nice to me, but mostly professors, yes. What are you, interviewing me?

H: You've got such a funny sense of humor.

D: Anything else you want to add about Youngstown State? Something profound.

H: Something profound? No, I'm just really glad that we're holding on to our older building too, and that we can keep the history of our community, you know, enhancing the campus, the campus is beautiful. The Summer Festival is really fun because people come to the center of the campus, it's probably the most manicured and beautiful campus around, people just don't realize it. Jones Hall is a beautiful building, the Wick-Pollack Inn, the Arms Museum, the Alumni House, Butler Institute of Art being right in the middle of campus. I just think physically our campus is beautiful, and we need to help maintain the restoration of the beautiful buildings. I guess that's what I would say.

D: Okay, thank you very much. This is Michelle Lepore-Hagan, she's a doll.

H: I'm going to kill you, I'm sure! Thank you.