

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Project

O.H. 2184

Dr. June Ladd  
Interviewed  
by  
Jack Lorenzini  
on  
March 16, 2004

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SUBJECT: YSU Project

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P: This is an interview with Dr. June Ladd for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on YSU Project, by Jack Lorenzini, at the limited service faculty office, on March 16, 2004. At 11:30 a.m. This project was funded by the Ford Foundation.

L: When and where were you born?

DL: I was born on June 11, 1956, at Trumbull Memorial Hospital in Trumbull County in the state of Ohio.

L: Do you have any siblings?

DL: Yes, I'm part of a family of five. I have an older sister, Patricia, who's five years older than me. A second sister, Karen, who's three years older. My only brother, Jeff, is just a year older, and my twin sister, Joan, who is deceased. My mother had five children in four-and-a-half years, and the last two were twins.

L: What were your parents' names and occupations?

DL: My mother's name is Orpha Maxine Slick Sauricki, and she worked sporadically throughout her life; she was a press operator in small industrial facilities. My father's primary occupation was a roll turner at the McDonald Work in U.S Steel, but he was a very energetic and ambitious person, as anybody with five young children had to be. He often had his own side businesses. For a while he had Sauricki Service down in Russia Field in Niles, and the motto was, "Sauricki service with a smile." I remember that. And he had his own cement laying and brick laying company, he had a backhoe, and he did lawn working and pretty much any kind of general contracting work. Sometimes he would build houses. He just was always busy doing something; plowing driveways for people. So he had a regular job and then additional work as he could.

L: Did your parents attend college?

DL: No, neither one. My mother didn't even graduate from high school. When she was about sixteen my grandmother, Shirley, had some type of...I don't know....I mean an episode, a collapse, and couldn't take care of herself. My mom quit school and went out to work and help care for her mother. She later went back and got a G.E.D. when we were teenagers, and took a couple classes here at YSU, earning A's and B's. My father graduated from high school during the war years, World War II. After the war he used the G.I. Bill and went to school for roll turning. And my maternal grandfather was a mason, a stone layer, and so my dad also learned that trade.

L: Where did you live?

DL: I lived where I live now, at 1755 Ohltown McDonald Road. My dad built the house, he built it to resell, somebody offered him significantly less, he was offended, never sold it, moved all of us in there. Then a few years back my parents were ready to go on the road and my husband and I were ready to buy a house, so we bought their house after renting it.

L: Can you describe your neighborhood?

DL: Mostly residential, somewhat rural, our back property abuts a field and some wooded area. Mostly it was a lot of young families, large families; many of the families had five or more children in it. It's a very busy, very rambunctious family neighborhood.

L: Can you tell us your ethnic background?

DL: That would be interesting because I'm part Ukrainian, part Pennsylvania Dutch, part Scottish, and a little bit Irish I believe. Mongrel.

L: Where you go to school?

DL: In Mineral Ridge.

L: K thorough twelve?

DL: Yes.

L: Can you describe for us any influential teachers that you had?

DL: In the positive sense I had several influential teachers, but the one that stands out most predominantly would have been Mrs. Francis Gerke. She was our Latin teacher. She was extremely demanding, she brooked no inattention. There were times when I was bored in school. So I was reading *The Godfather* underneath my desk, which was pretty brassy because it was a small classroom. I don't know why I thought she wasn't going to see me, but she saw me and she did a classic Mrs. Gerke where she wagged her finger under my nose, and I never pulled that again. And I also had a very good History teacher, Mr. Thomas Leskovak, and he was very thorough and I quite enjoyed his class. And those were both high school teachers.

L: Do you think Mr. Leskovak had a profound influence your future interest in history?

DL: No, really my interest in history comes from my own reading as a child. Back before there was Sesame Street and T.V. taught kids how to read, our family, particularly my mother was an avid reader. She would take us to McKinley Memorial Library in Niles. In order to get a library card you had to be able to spell your last name. Now I could spell Sauricki by the time I was like four-and-a-half or five so I had a library card. And I read a lot of biographies, I used to read a lot about Egypt, and I liked history. But when I came here I was either going to be an archeologist, an English professor, or a History professor. One of my first quarters at Y.S.U. I met Dr. Agnes Smith and she was my inspiration.

L: How would the library know how your last name was to be spelled?

DL: Because my mom had a card, and all five of us had to be able spell it. Which I think that's quite a bit, to be able to spell Sauricki, you know, and you're not yet five.

L: Even spelling Lorenzini is kind of difficult even today for me.

DL: There are days when Sauricki challenges me.

L: How did your parents influence your education?

DL: Well, basically it went like this; regardless whatever else you were going to do, they said you were going to attend college at least two years, period. You were also going to pay for it yourself, period. Those were their expectations, and that's what it was, and no ands, ifs, or buts.

L: What extracurricular activities did you participate in high school? what sports did you play?

DL: I went to Mineral Ridge, and if one had the desire, one could participate in a whole slew of activities. I played softball and I really stunk at that, they put me in whatever field

the worst person plays in. But we won; we won the Inner County League. I don't know why I played softball, but I did. I participated in Girl's Track, I put the shot and threw the discuss, which seems kind of amazing too, because I'm only 5'2", and it's usually very large, muscular girls that do that, but those were my events and I did well in them. I was in chorus, I had the primary roles in the musicals. I participated in the junior and senior class plays. I was in Beta Club, I was in National Honors Society. I was on the rifle team, I was on the yearbook staff. I was a school librarian, I was in the Drama Club, I just did a whole lot, I'm sure I'm forgetting a half-a-dozen other activities. But the thing that always strikes me is that I was so lousy at softball, and I was still a member of the team. Oh, I was score keeper for basketball too.

L: Wow, you were pretty active in high school.

DL: Yea, and an honor student too.

L: When did you attend YSU?

DL: I started YSU one month after graduating from Mineral Ridge High School, I started in June, 1974, and I took introductory Spanish a whole year, in ten weeks, for my first class. And that was insane.

L: Do you remember any Spanish today?

DL: (Speaks some Spanish).

L: What's that mean?

DL: "Hello, my name is June, what's your name?" And "How are you? I'm fine," something like that, and "sepatas" are shoes.

L: Why did you choose YSU?

DL: I could commute, I could work, I could stay at home, I didn't have to separate from my family or my twin, and it was one of the institutions that offered me a scholarship. So those were my primary reasons.

L: What was your major?

DL: History, and then I minored in Psychology.

L: You mentioned that you had to pay to attend college, before your parents said two years and you would pay for it unless you got a scholarship.

DL: It was our responsibility, right.

L: So the scholarship paid for all of it?

DL: Well, no, it didn't pay for all of it. This is stupid in retrospect, but when you're sixteen or fifteen it makes sense. My older sister, Patricia, whom I looked a lot like, and still do, she was the valedictorian, and in a very small place like Mineral Ridge there's always comparison. There's always somebody to say, "Oh, you're like Patricia." So in an act of rebellion, I chose not to be valedictorian. I chose instead to be salutatorian, so that I wouldn't be compared to my older sister Patricia, which was dumb, because in retrospect I could have gotten more money from the Youngstown Educational Foundation. But as it was I received the majority of my tuition paid through the scholarship. But once I was enrolled for a full year and had a 4.0, got a better Youngstown Educational Foundation Scholarship, and then I got some small, additional scholarships. I also worked part-time jobs, primarily working at Arthur Treacher's, yes, for about two-and-a-half years.

L: Taking a walking tour of the campus as it was when you attended, describe what buildings and grounds looked like.

DL: Okay, thirty years ago where DeBartolo stands now, and Kilcawley Center, was a large, open, gravel parking lot, affectionately called "the mud pit." Ward Beecher was standing, and I think relatively new. There was Jones Hall, there was the old education building, there was a very decrepitated building I think called Ryan Hall, going downtown walking on the hill. I had one class there once in the basement, it was absolutely horrid. There was the Ward Science building, eventually there was Maag Library, and then they began to expand, but those are the ones that I initially remember.

L: Can you describe a typical day on campus?

DL: My typical day?

L: Yes.

DL: Usually I started around eight o'clock and went back to back classes if that was possible. Usually went four days a week if that was possible. I drove here early, studied if I had a break. Or if it had been a particularly long day and I had worked a double a previous day at Arthur Treacher's, once Maag Library was built I would find two very nice, comfortable chairs, they were fabric slung and I put them back to back, lie on them, take my coat, put my head on my purse to keep it safe, and my books, cover it up with my coat, and sleep. And then my primary objective was to just get off of campus and go home. I could never study on campus.

L: Me neither. What activities or clubs did you participate in at YSU?

DL: Not too many because I was working part-time, pursuing a potential husband full-time, I had to maintain a 4.0 scholarship. Let me see, what did I do? Absolutely nothing, I can't think of anything.

L: Where you involved in Phi Alpha Theta?

DL: That was after...that wasn't founded until 1985, and by that time I was on faculty here, and I was one of the charter members. No, not really, I can't remember if we even had History Club. Primarily I came to school, did my work, did my research, and went home, and then worked in a social life.

L: What housing was available to the students then?

DL: I'm not sure what was here. I can remember that there was...I won't say it right, Beuchner, it was called Virgin Hall, because that's where the young girls stayed. I think there was some, after Kilcawley was built, there was some housing available for student athletes. And then there were a number of different frat and sorority houses. Some rental properties along Smokey Hollow and things like that. But nothing like it is today.

L: What was the parking situation for commuters?

DL: The same as the parking situation is today. Poorly maintained parking lots, not very necessarily convenient. Those spaces that would be most convenient and most centrally located are at a premium.

L: Where did you buy your books?

DL: I usually bought them at the YSU Bookstore.

L: Were they expensive?

DL: Again, as it is today; too much money, for too little value, for too little resale value. Yes, they were expensive; especially when you consider that I earned a dollar twenty-five at Arthur Treacher's working as a counter. Oh, but when I was relief manager it was up to a dollar forty-five.

L: I can't imagine a wage like that.

DL: Well, the gas was twenty-five cents a gallon, and a hot-chocolate at Arby's was fifteen cents, so it was a little better, and I'm really frugal.

L: What traditions were observed at YSU? Homecoming? Painting of the rock?

DL: I do believe there was Homecoming. Again, my role here was to get an education, so I don't really know. I know they observed Homecoming. I do remember at some point in time people painting the rock. I do remember an occasional protest; I don't remember when it started. I remember the English Festival being held on campus. As far as for the students, I think that I was probably very typically of an undergrad here in the early to mid-seventies; our life wasn't really on campus, Our life was someplace else. This was a commuter school.

L: What was the protest about?

DL: Different things at different times. Political upheaval, if they had somebody coming on campus who was controversial, I don't honestly remember because I really wasn't involved in YSU, not that aspect of it.

L: Did the university publish a yearbook?

DL: I do believe they had a yearbook. I don't remember when they stopped publishing it. I know I never bought one; by the time I paid for gas and tires, and medicine, clothing, and you know, went to the occasional movie. That shot my budget. I didn't buy a yearbook.

L: Who was your most memorable instructor at YSU?

DL: I don't think I have a single one, I have several. In my major there would have been Agnes Smith, James Rhonda, Bill Jenkins, Lowel Satre, Fred Blue, and Pei Huang. I really had tremendously gifted, and caring, and challenging instructors in the department. Once they found out that I intended to go on...it's not like they cut us any slack before that, but they expected even more, they really pushed us quite a bit. And then in other area I would say there was a Psychology teacher, Dr. Sally Hodgekiss, I took a class from her, Death and Dying, and I believe another class on the Psychology of Marriage. She was a very gifted instructor, cutting-edge in her research, and many of the classes I had with her applied to real life.

L: What was your favorite class?

DL: I liked so many of them. Probably the English and Irish History classes or British Empire that I had with Dr. Agnes Smith and Dr. Lowel Satre.

L: Who was your least favorite teacher?

DL: Well, there was a very interesting professor in the Psychology department, I don't really remember her name, but I do remember that...I'm trying to think of a delicate way to say it...she would come into class, it was an early morning class, she had a suspicious liquid in a thermos that before she'd drink this liquid, she shook, and she shook a lot. After that she no longer shook, and then she had this really ratty wig, and she would tell us a series of sexual exploits about how men wanted her in different capacities and different situations. She was probably my worst teacher.

L: And subsequently that was your worst class at YSU?

DL: It was a class I got a B in. I only received two B's, and I earned that one because at one point I made a remark about her sexual exploits real or imagined, and for that I got a B+ in the class. I earned that, I claimed that.

L: And it was worth the comment?



DL: Probably not. Probably not, but it was typical me, so.

L: How diverse was the student population when you attended?

DL: That's an interesting question. It was beginning to be probably more diverse. There were probably a smattering of students from foreign countries, particularly by the time I was doing my Master's. It was diverse in terms of probably economic background, and having sizable population of people like myself that were working class, first generation college students. There were a smattering of non-traditional students, primarily women, entering. You know, there was some racial diversity, but I think it was really just beginning to be more diverse, or that's my perception.

L: Did you know of any racial confrontations on campus during those years that you attended?

DL: No, not really. The only kind of controversy that I can remember is that when I was early in my undergraduate school there was a woman on campus, who was reported on frequently in The Jambar, who was a practicing white witch. She got a lot of press play in The Jambar, and there was controversy surrounding her. She was in one of my English classes, in fact. Character with a capital CH. She came in to class braless, she would flirt with the teacher outrageously, it was the time when women wore...some women wore the bright, ugly, blue eye shadow, and she had this eye shadow on from below her eye to above her eyebrow. She was a lightning rod for controversy.

L: You graduated with a Bachelor's in 1979, correct?

DL: Yes.

L: Did you attend the graduation ceremony?

DL: Yes I did, I earned that.

L: Can you describe the event?

DL: For me it was pretty exciting because I put myself through school with scholarships, and working part-time. I never received any help other than room and board from my parents, except one time they bought books for my twin sister and me, but that was it. I figured I'd earned that, I'd spent a lot of time. It was pretty exciting, although it was very long and drawn out. We did not walk across the hall or anything, they simply announced our names. If you were an honor student you also got to wear a gold cord. As an undergraduate...I'd been recognized for several different honors, I don't remember them all anymore, but I do know that I got recognized for being in the top one percent of my class. So I do remember that. My parents were on hand, and my grandmother, Florence Shirley, who was very influential in my life, she was able to attend. She was so proud. It was a long, boring ceremony, but I was happy to be there.

L: Who was the keynote speaker? Anyone important?

DL: Couldn't tell you.

L: After you graduated with your Bachelor's, what did you do after? As far as post-graduate work?

DL: I went to YSU to pursue a Master's in history to study British history, and I ended up studying British and American history both. I was awarded a graduate assistantship in the first year in, I worked for Dr. Huang, Dr. Satre, and Dr. Smith.

L: And you earned your doctorate from Carnegie Mellon?

DL: Yes, I entered Carnegie Mellon in 1983, and pursued what's called a Doctorate of Arts, an innovative program which had a teaching component, with an internship in teaching. I had to take College Teaching Methodology. That program was one of the reasons I chose to go to Carnegie Mellon.

L: What was your dissertation on?

DL: My dissertation was a history curriculum dissertation that evolved my development of an active learning unit based on discussion and evidence. I also created a role-playing simulation for teaching women's suffrage, and recreated the 1915/1916 Congressional hearings on the women's suffrage federal amendment. It was called *Shall Women Vote?*

L: Cool.

DL: Yea, I thought it was.

L: After you earned your PhD, when did you come to YSU to teach?

DL: I was actually teaching here part-time as I was pursuing my Doctorate of Arts. So I think it was March, 1983, or March, 1984, I've been here about twenty years.

L: How were you hired?

DL: I spoke to Dr. George Beelen, who was the Chair at the time, because I needed to do a teaching internship, he allowed me to work here part-time, and to have some of my classes videotaped. Unlike many of the graduate students in the Doctoral program at Carnegie Mellon, I wasn't a teaching assistant, or I didn't have any workload. Many of the other students in the Doctoral program at Carnegie Mellon were teaching assistants or research assistants. When I applied there, Agnes Smith and I went down and talked to the director of the graduate program, we asked him what I would have to do for the money. He said, "Come and excel," I said, "Okay, I'll come and excel." I needed a teaching internship, and Dr. Beelen was kind enough to hire me here part-time to teach American history and to allow that to be videotaped, and that counted as my teaching internship.

L: And then why did you stay at YSU?

DL: Primarily involves personal history; in May, 1989, I graduated with my Doctorate from Carnegie Mellon, I was considering possibly moving. My husband, Richard, terrific guy, he said, "Wherever you want to go, whatever you want to pursue, we'll move, you have my support 100%." But unfortunately in November of that same year my twin sister committed suicide. It was a difficult time for my family, difficult for me. My husband and I talked it over, she left behind a six-year old and an eight-year old, and Richard and I decided that nothing I could do career wise would be more important than helping them adjust. And wouldn't say that I was their surrogate mother, I don't think you can really have another mother. I was there when they had chicken pox, and staying part-time gave me the flexibility, so if they were sick I could take care of them. I could go over and make dinner for them, they could come and stay the weekends, come and stay the summer. If I had moved away and had a full-time career, or even a full-time career locally, I just wouldn't have had that flexibility, and they were just more important.

L: How have the students changed since you started at YSU?

DL: The most difficult thing in student change is in just the level of immaturity and self absorption. Within the last five years I've had to become a disciplinarian. I've had to tell people to shhhhh! I've had to tell them to be quiet. That is discouraging. The other discouraging factor is that there is, and part of this entitlement culture, there is this belief that if they pay their money for the class, they therefore should get a passing grade. In addition to that there is the perception that a passing grade is a B or an A. I just recently had an encounter with a student who was explaining to me after she got a C on a paper and a D on the test, that, as if this was a service or a commodity, that it was unacceptable. It was C work and it was D work, but I was supposed to understand that it was my grading that was unacceptable, and her performance, although it was weak, was acceptable, and the problem lie with me. So that is hard. All that aside, we still get large pockets of students who care, who want to be here, who maybe they've never liked history but they decide they like it now, or they tell me they've never liked it but they like it now, and who are willing to rise to the challenge. So as long as I still get a core of those types of students, I'll probably still be teaching part-time. But it's just the overall level of maturity, and then I would say poor preparation. It seems, and I'm not in high school history classes so I don't know, but I suspect that many history teachers walk in, they put up a print-out on the overhead projector, and the student simply copies the notes. Or they fill out worksheets. They memorize a lot of facts and a lot of dates, so that when students come to college and we're asking them to think about how, and why, and so what. We're asking them to look at visual and documentary evidence and analyze it, they're pretty much lost, and they're wondering... I often read in their faces, the ones that are really struggling, a sense of, "Well just tell me what I'm supposed to know. Tell me what I'm supposed to memorize, let me memorize it, regurgitate it on the test, and then you grade me to the degree of my ability to regurgitate to the best of my ability what I think it was that you were talking about." That's a little disconcerting, but overall we still get, and people are free to disagree with me, we still get a large number of diligent students who really do want to excel in the classroom.

L: What are your favorite courses to teach?

DL: Since I only teach the introductory U.S. History now, it would be U.S. 1 and U.S. 2 Turning Points. I have taught Western Humanities too, I've taught the old Western Civilization courses. I probably like early American history the most, but I basically...there's just aspects of it. Jack, you know I like to explore with Lewis and Clark, I always like to travel along the Oregon Trail, I like to work with Rosie the Riveter in World War II, I like to move with people to the suburbs in the 1950's. One thing that I don't like to talk about is the Vietnam War because I lived through that, and I've seen the emotional and psychological devastation of that war. As a rule I don't like to talk about war.

L: What is your favorite lecture to give?

DL: It probably was the Black Death in Western Civilization. Call me morbid, but there's just something very engaging and interesting in talking about the three different strains of the plague, how quickly people died, how science and medical community tried to meet the threat by using garlic to purify the air. When it was realized in France, for example, I believe it was Paris, that those people who were working disposing of the chamber pots, they were not dying of the plague so much, so others began dousing themselves in urine. I like to talk about those things.

L: What about buffalo chips?

DL: I do like to talk about the environmental impact of the buffalo and the Sioux culture, but yes, I like to talk about picking up buffalo chips.

L: You mentioned that the Vietnam War is a subject that you wouldn't want to teach because of the hardships.

DL: I have taught it; I don't like to.

L: What is your least favorite, other than the Vietnam War, to teach?

DL: Probably the American Revolutionary War. I have taught in the past, and what engages me is not necessarily what engages students. I used to teach it using a series of documents and looking at the ideological shift that had to occur, and the new identification that had to occur among colonists so that enough of them were willing to rebel against a legitimate government. And now I don't know why, but students just really couldn't get into the ideological shift as much as I could. I just loved looking at that, and the dilemma, and the movement away from where people define themselves as loyal subjects of the crown, to independent colonists, who had no ties to George III. And that wasn't a very favorite subject of students; therefore it soon became a not-so-favorite subject of mine.

L: You were around when the university made the transmission from quarters to semesters, how has it changed now that we are in semesters versus quarters?

DL: In terms of teaching?

L: In terms of teaching.

DL: I feel it made it more difficult. It's a new course, so maybe that's not a fair comparison, but I find I get to teach less material, there's more of a need to recap and pick up a thread or a thought from a previous class. By the time we hit the twelfth week, you know what? People are just tired. It's like they've hit a brick wall. I look around campus; instructors are tired, students are tired, it's just, "Are we done yet? Because I think I'm done yet." I just get that feeling from students and from teachers, they're just exhausted. And it's very difficult for a student to relate in early May back to what they did in mid-January. If they gave me a vote, or they made me dictator of the university, or if I had a magic wand, we would go back to quarters tomorrow. I liked it much better.

L: Can you describe the impact of technology on YSU?

DL: To date I would say it was limited, I would say we're well behind more progressive campuses like Carnegie Mellon. Only within recent years is there the availability of computer labs, or classes, and the encouragement for us to use them. Just this past year the Foreign Language lab has been expanded and it's been somewhat made available for instructors to use it for the class. The difficulty lies in trying to schedule use of that class; sometimes I can't get it for a whole class. Sometimes I can't get on the day I want it. There is not much opportunity to use technology physically in each classroom. Although our department, for example, we've just purchased a new machine, a smart board, that will give us the availability of digital maps for one classroom out of the many courses that we teach. So it's not just our department but in general around campus there's not the money or funds to have cutting edge technology in each and every classroom. We're even behind in say the e-mail system; just recently within the last two to three years they've come up with a common university e-mail system, and students are dragging their feet in terms of...well...and some instructors, in terms of getting registered and using it. Many campuses have had this for quite a long time. So we're working and improving that area, but more needs to be done.

L: Where were you on September 11?

DL: I was meeting a student at Denny's in Niles to go over her paper. She's a young mother, had a baby, and she lived a significant distance away, so we picked a place in the middle on both our days off. And I was helping her look over her paper. It was an odd situation, we were at Denny's and neither one of us had heard the news. I was in my car driving at the time of the first impact, and then we were at the restaurant at the time the second plane hit the Twin Towers. And the only thing that she and I remarked on is how strange the atmosphere was in the restaurant, that it seemed very subdued, the people seemed distracted, and there was almost nobody there. It was almost...if you looked

outside there was hardly like any traffic seemed to be moving on the main drag in Niles. It was an eerie feeling.

L: On a lighter note, do you have any funny or embarrassing stories to share with us today?

DL: About teaching? You know, I do have an embarrassing story, and this is about me. You know the traditional story where a student can't turn in homework because their dog ate it? About fourteen years ago, my husband and I got a little black lab, Jo-Jo. I was grading a whole set of exams, blue books, and my pup was unhappy that I had been ignoring her. So when I went to get something, I think the dryer went off, and I ran downstairs to change the washer and dryer, and I came back, and Jo-Jo had this young man's exam, his name was Alan, in her mouth. I had to open up her mouth and pull out the bluebook. It was in pieces and it was wet, and it was chewed. I took it, I dried it, and I ironed it, and taped it. The last blue book that I had to give back in class was Alan's. And it was just a shredded up mess. Later, whenever I would see him on campus, he would always laugh at me and ask me if I remembered the day my dog ate his homework. So that was a pretty funny moment in class.

L: Who's your favorite historical figure to study?

DL: Eleanor Roosevelt.

L: Why?

DL: Remarkable woman, had a very unhappy childhood, even though she was a privileged woman. She was part of the "new woman" phenomenon in that she was young, college educated. She lived at a time where being a social housekeeper or social reformer was quite in vogue. She spent a great deal of time working in the tenements. She married Franklin Delano Roosevelt, she was an extremely active First Lady, people either loved her or hated her. I can just see in my mind a political cartoon where there's a mine shaft, and it's all dark, and you only see the miner's lamp and eyeballs, and then under the caption is something like, "Well, how are you Mrs. Roosevelt?" Because she really was Franklin Delano Roosevelt's legs and ears. And then I'm always impressed that during the Depression she got innumerable letters from people with really heartfelt and difficult stories. They felt that they could ask her to help them get a job, or a coat, or a pair of shoes, and she answered each of them. And no matter how busy her social calendar was, she also wrote a newspaper column, *My Day*. So she just was a tremendous force during the Depression. And then I think as a widow of a president she was simply inspiring. She was given a job, an appointment, to work for the U.N. Nobody truly expected her to be a force, nobody truly expected her to be anything but a ceremonial figure. And that was not in her nature. She talked to friends, she talked to different people who were aware of the situation in Europe and about the displacement of now countless people because of the war, and the gut-wrenching issues facing survivors. And in her maiden speech she began to address the U.N. and it affronted some people. They began to leave the auditorium. And someone with less resolve or courage would have just let that defeat them. But she

actually convinced them to return to their seats. Through just sheer will and sheer energy, and genuine belief in the cause, she made the issue of displaced people in post-war-torn Europe one of the major focus points of the U.N. To me she will always be a person I admire, she made Franklin Delano Roosevelt consider issues that he probably wouldn't have considered because of political volatility like the anti-lynching law. During the Depression where a woman working was seen as somebody taking away money from a man, because there was still the perception that women worked for pin-money. She would hold her own press conferences and invite only female reporters. So she just was a very socially active and strong First Lady, and therefore not always popular. But I do have to say this about Eleanor; a couple of years back Hillary Rodham Clinton said that she talked to, or had like a séance, conversation with Eleanor Roosevelt. I never did write Hillary a letter, but I always thought, "Well, if you were going to talk to any First Lady, you chose well." I have no problem with Hillary talking with Eleanor because she had things to say.

L: If there was one word to describe your experience here at YSU, what would it be?

DL: Challenging.

L: Why?

DL: I had professors who challenged me to be the best possible student. YSU has the local perception of being second class, maybe third class, students may not want to go there because there's a perception that you can't get a quality education. My attitude was somewhat different. I didn't...I felt that regardless of where I went I could seek out the best professors, I could seek out a demanding course of study. I could push myself. I could choose professors who would push me and force me to excel. I realize that I did have a very good education here because I had the opportunity when I was finished with my Master's to attend Carnegie Mellon. I was a little bit nervous about going to Carnegie Mellon, because people were going to be in the Doctoral program from all over the world, and from Ivy league schools, and I remember one of my first classes and we had to introduce ourselves, and a very, very snotty and pretentious Ivy League professor, and he said, "And where did you go to school?" Well silly me, Carnegie Mellon is in Pittsburgh, Youngstown State is in Youngstown, it's not like there's a vast geographical distance between the two. So I said, "Well I went to YSU," and he goes, "Well what is a YSU?" I said, "Well Youngstown State University." He let us know in no uncertain terms that a public state education wasn't too terribly impressive. But what I found out is that in my doctoral classes was that I not only held my own, but in many cases the teachers held up my work as an example of excellence. I would write a book review, they'd say, "Let me read you Ladd's book review," or I would hand in a project and they'd say, "Well only Ladd got this whisker and box concept of quantitative analysis. So I felt that my YSU professors challenged me and they did me a great service.

L: Is it challenging even for a professor today?

DL: I think so. I think that YSU allows you to be as involved or as uninvolved in a part-time capacity, because that's all I can speak to, as you care to be. Or at least our department does. Dr. Beelen, Dr. Jenkins, Dr. Pallante, our Chairs, they've always been supportive and encouraging of the adjunct faculty. They've always allowed us to participate in discussions about textbook selections, to be a part of Phi Alpha Theta, and Jack, you know I think they challenge us to try to do our best work in the classroom that we can do.

L: Do you have any advice for younger colleagues, or graduate students who are interested in teaching?

DL: I would say the biggest key is to truly love this and be passionate about, or find something else. It's a very demanding occupation, you have to keep current on historiography, you have to be interested in your subject. Believe me, if you don't care about the advent of airships and mustard gas in World War I, unless you're a tremendously gifted actor or actress, you're not going to fake that in class. And you mentioned the buffalo chips, and you were one of my students and you always laugh and tease me about that, but you know, by God, you remember it. You remember talking about the environmental impact of white settlement on the Great Plains, and what happened to the Sioux traditional way of life as the buffalo declined, and how they used the buffalo, even the chips, and it was the "galloping grocery" store. So if you're passionate about it, then it's not so hard to come to work. I do like coming here, and I think I like meeting the students, and like telling them about history, and the people are real to me.

L: Do you have any regrets?

DL: I regret that I'm not 5'3, I need to be taller. I regret that time flies so quickly, I don't realize that, but in terms of professional regrets, no, not really. About five years ago a former boyfriend called me. He was going to be a comedic writer and I was going to be a professor, and he called and he let me know that he was a very accomplished writer living in New York City. He wondered what I was doing and I told him, and when I got off the phone with him I thought, "You know what? I don't regret it, I've a good career, I've enjoyed it, I've been an influential part in my nephew's and niece's lives, and I'm happy with my choices.

L: Is there anything that you would like to add that we did not cover in this interview today?

DL: Jack Lorenzini was one of my best students.

L: Oh, thank you. Well thank you for your time today; it was a pleasure interviewing you.

DL: Thank you.