

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH DAVID L. MORGAN
CONDUCTED, EDITED, AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT
for the
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Friday, 13 June 2014
Location: KSU Center, Kennesaw State University

TS: Dave, why don't we begin by talking about your background? You must have grown up in the state of Washington, I gather, because you've got a couple of degrees from Washington State University.

DM: Well, no, I was born in California. My dad was in the service, so I started out in California. Then he was transferred to Japan, and we couldn't join him [at first], but we went over to Japan in 1948 and were there until the breakout of the Korean War. In that case we were on a ship crossing the Pacific, heading for San Francisco, when the war broke out. My dad was in meetings all the time on the ship. We didn't find out until later that he was the ranking officer on the ship. The meetings were to decide whether to turn around and go back to Japan or to continue on to San Francisco. Well, they decided to continue on because they were not sure about North Korean submarines. It was a troop ship and was loaded with troops. The name of the ship was the *General Simon B. Buckner*.

We went to San Francisco, then moved back home to southern California, Claremont, California. Then my dad got transferred to Larson Air Force Base in Moses Lake, Washington. So we moved there and lived in base housing. Then dad got transferred to Geiger [Field] Air Force Base in Spokane. We moved to Spokane, and I went to high school in Spokane. A little historical fact I didn't know until my class had its fiftieth anniversary —my high school was named Lewis and Clark High School, and it was the only high school in the country named after Lewis and Clark.

TS: It was the only high school named for both of them together?

DM: Yes, Lewis and Clark. Then I went to Washington State and earned a degree in mathematics.

TS: You must have started there about 1957?

DM: Yes, 1957—got a bachelor's in '61 and a master's in '63 in mathematics. Then I went to Madison, Wisconsin.

TS: You went straight from a master's program?

DM: Yes straight from a master's to a doctorate program in mathematics. I finished there [University of Wisconsin] in 1968.

- TS: So you were just about as traditional as you can get, going straight through.
- DM: Exactly. I went straight through. I did work some very interesting summer jobs—I worked at a cattle ranch in Twin Bridges Montana, and I worked on the railroad in the middle of the state of Washington.
- TS: What made you decide on a career in mathematics?
- DM: I just liked mathematics better than anything else. Something that I remember about that—you had to declare a major by the end of your sophomore year. I went to college thinking I might major in chemistry. I didn't like chemistry—too many bottles to wash. So I declared a major in mathematics because I enjoyed that a lot more. After declaring my major I had to go in and meet the department chairman whose name was Sidney [G.] Hacker [chairman, 1955-1966]. He was a mathematical astronomer and very dour. It was kind of frightening to go in his office. The first thing he said after he introduced himself and I introduced myself was, "You have to work very hard." That was basically it. He was right, but I enjoyed doing that. My senior year I was asked by one of the professors, Theodore Ostrom, to stay on and work with him. He got a large NSF [National Science Foundation] grant for work in finite geometry. From there I went to Madison and finished in non-associative algebra.
- TS: What exactly does that mean?
- DM: Well, when I say the associative law of multiplication, I refer to the property: $a(bc) = (ab)c$. You can group the products differently, but they "produce" the same result. With a non-associative algebra that isn't necessarily true. It was somewhat similar to the algebra connected with the geometry I was working on at Washington State. At Washington State I did some of the algebra, and Professor Ostrom did a lot more of the geometry. I just liked the algebra, so I kept going. I finished at Wisconsin. My thesis was entitled "Jordan Algebras with Minimum Condition." If I could have afforded it, and they would have allowed it, I'd probably still be a graduate student in mathematics.
- TS: Does non-associative math have any applicability?
- DM: It's abstract. There are applications in other areas of mathematics. I never had any interest in any "practical" applications. Jordan algebras were created to try to explain some properties and behavior in particle physics. It turned out that these algebras did not give a good model of the physics, but was of great interest in its own right.
- TS: Did you say Jordan algebras? What does that mean?
- DM: That's the guy's name [E. Pascual Jordan (1902-1980)].

TS: So you just had the love of mathematics.

DM: Yes, I really enjoyed doing it. Upon graduation I got a position as an assistant professor at Georgia Tech. I was at Tech for six years. I didn't get tenure, so I had to leave. I was disappointed.

TS: You didn't do any scholarship?

DM: Yes, well, you had to publish more, and you had to get grants. At that time I was working on publishing things in one area, again non-associative algebra. I got what I thought was some really neat stuff. Then I got a pre-print from a fellow named Kevin McCrimmon [University of Virginia] who is very well known in that area, and he had everything I had plus a whole lot more. So I was discouraged and turned research in different areas. I did get a joint publication with a professor, Gary [M.] Mullet in the business school [College of Industrial Management]. Something about errors in statistical analysis. I think having to leave Tech turned out for the best. I ended up teaching at a private school in Atlanta, Pace Academy, and I enjoyed teaching there. One advantage I got there was I got to coach some track and cross country, and I got to work with one of the best track and cross country coaches, at least in the state. The Atlanta Track Club has an award named after him, the Ray Buckley Award [for Outstanding Female Cross-Country Athlete], and he was super.

TS: Ray Buckley was on the staff at Pace?

DM: Yes. He taught science, I think, and he coached track, cross-country, and basketball. I also coached basketball for seventh grade boys.

TS: So you were his assistant coach?

DM: Yes, in track and cross-country. I also taught part-time at Georgia State for the last couple of years I was at Pace, and they offered me a full-time position—a one-year appointment at Georgia State.

TS: A one-year contract?

DM: Yes. So I went and taught at State.

TS: What year would this be?

DM: In 1976-77. I taught there for a year. Part way through that year Kennesaw State came looking for me. Some of my former students at Georgia Tech were on the faculty here.

TS: I was going to ask you about that because I know that [Stephen E.] Steve Scherer was at Georgia Tech as a student while you were there.

DM: Yes, he was one of my students as was Elaine [M.] Hubbard. I don't think [Thomas R.] Tom Thomson was a student of mine, but I knew him when he was at Georgia Tech.

TS: You knew him as a student, but he didn't take your classes?

DM: I don't think so.

TS: But Elaine took your classes?

DM: Yes, she took several of them. She was an undergraduate at that time. Then there was another guy that I didn't know had anything to do with Kennesaw until I came out here. I taught him. He was in computer science at Tech. They asked somebody to teach a course in universal algebra, mainly for the computer science students, so this guy was one of those students. This was Morgan [L.] Stapleton.

TS: Sure. Morgan was taking classes at Georgia Tech?

DM: Yes, I believe he was in the doctoral program there.

TS: Okay, because he was here on the faculty in the very early days.

DM: Yes, I had him in that class in universal algebra. The Computer Science program wanted a course like that, and I said, "Well, heck, I'll try it."

TS: I guess he had to be working on a doctorate because he had a master's before he came here.

DM: Oh, yes. I had one other student who took some classes. He was in computer science at Georgia Tech, Carl [W.] Johnson. At the time I didn't know he was on the faculty here at Kennesaw. He was a graduate student at Tech, but apparently at the time he was teaching out here. I didn't know that.

TS: Oh, yes, I remember Carl. [He was a charter member of the faculty in 1966]. You had a lot of contacts.

DM: But I didn't know they were here. Another contact I got through running, [M.] Wayne Cutrer. I met him, and he called me up. He knew I was at Georgia State and had a one-year appointment. Wayne asked, "Would you be interested in a position at Kennesaw?" And I said, "Yes." Nothing happened for a little while, and then one day I get a call. He asked, "Are you really interested in a position at Kennesaw College? We'd like to know." I didn't know at that time if they were going to offer me anything or not. I said, "Yes!" And I said, "Excuse me for being a little bit discombobulated"—I don't know what word I used. My divorce had just been granted that afternoon in a judge's chamber in Decatur. Anyway, I

came out here and met with [division chairman, later dean] [Herbert L.] Herb Davis and I met some of the faculty. Last night I was trying to remember all the people I met in the math department. Of course, I knew Wayne, and I knew Steve Scherer. I met Charley [G.] Dobson [Jr.], [Thoma L.] Tom Gooch, and [Donald J.] Don Sparks.

TS: Was Ira Guy on the faculty then?

DM: No.

TS: He was gone by then?

DM: Yes, he was gone. So I met them and talked with them. Of course, I talked to Herb, and then I went back into Atlanta. I met some other people, but I don't remember who. That was the first time. Then they asked me to come out again, and they offered me a position. At that time I met, believe it or not, a person in the English department, Virginia [C.] Hinton.

TS: Was she on a search committee?

DM: No, I was just walking around campus, and she came up to me and introduced herself. When I was at Georgia State, she heard that I was going to come up here, and I vaguely remember she came up to me at Georgia State and introduced herself. [The campus visit] was where I found Morgan Stapleton was here because I had to go meet him. I said, "I know you!" And he said, "Yes." And we talked a little bit. The one I remember most was I met Dr. [Horace W.] Sturgis [president, 1965-1980]. Here's something I'd really like you to know about. I remember walking into his office, and he stood up and introduced himself, and I introduced myself, and we shook hands. And almost the first thing he told me, he said, "If you want to continue to have a job here, you will give no grades that are not deserved. You don't give away grades. We're not going to have grade inflation here." That was impressive; that really impressed me.

TS: Good.

DM: That's what I remember from the first time I met Dr. Sturgis. Then I met some other people. [Daniel J.] Dan Williams was here. Vera [B.] Zalkow was here. I was assigned an office at first right across from hers. It was Tina [H.] Straley's office because Tina was on leave. She was at Auburn.

TS: Vera had originally, according to Dr. Sturgis, been offered the chairmanship of the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, but she didn't want to come at that time back in '66, but later on she wanted to join the faculty and did so.

DM: Oh, very good. There were some other people. I remember talking with Tom and Charley again, and I think Charley asked me, "Do you know anything about

computers?” I said, “No, not really.” He asked if I had ever done any programming. I said, “Not really. I’ve done some paper programming in Fortran”—because I was just interested in it, and I thought it might help me get a job when I left Georgia Tech.

TS: Paper formatting?

DM: Oh, yes, I just did it on paper. At Pace Academy I did a little bit of programming in APL, a programming language. It was developed by IBM. APL stood for A Programming Language, and was highly recursive. I ran it on machines at Pace. That’s what they were teaching their students there, but I never taught any [programming courses]. They said, “Would you be interested?” I said, “I don’t know, could be.”

TS: In teaching a computer science course?

DM: Yes. A couple or three years later they asked, “Would you be interested in teaching in Basic.” I said, “I don’t know any Basic.” And Tom said, “I’ll help you.” So I started learning programming from Tom Gooch, and then I got to teach several classes, the usual teaching load. I think it was four classes.

TS: Well, probably three because they were five hour classes.

DM: Okay, it was probably three. I don’t know; I don’t remember that far back.

TS: Four sounds more like when we went to semesters.

DM: I think I only taught four a few times. I taught three most of the time.

TS: I never taught four on the semester.

DM: I enjoyed teaching those. Believe it or not, one of the classes I enjoyed teaching was Math 099.

TS: Developmental math?

DM: Yes, developmental math. I didn’t know at that time there was 097 and 098, but I don’t think we offered 097 here, just 098 and 099. I enjoyed doing that, and I got to teach most of the classes they offered.

TS: I guess by that time Morgan Stapleton was coordinating the program wasn’t he?

DM: He had something to do with it up at a higher level, but he was not in the math department.

TS: I mean coordinating the developmental studies program.

DM: I guess he was.

TS: I think he was until he left and then Mary Zogby took his place.

DM: That's right.

TS: Let me back up and ask you a few questions. First of all, with your Georgia Tech experience, you were there right at the time that Joseph M. Pettit came in as president [from 1972 to 1986], and that's when they really started emphasizing research.

DM: More research and grants. That's one of the things that happened.

TS: So that was part of why I guess you didn't fit in.

DM: I didn't get tenure; the main reason was not enough research. Students found out that I was leaving—I didn't tell them that I was leaving or why—and they got up a petition that I should stay. That got all the way to the tenure and promotion committee, maybe for the whole college, I don't know. They had a meeting, and I talked to them, and they called in other faculty members. [The reason for not granting tenure] was because, I'm sure, of publications, and I don't have any bones to pick about that at all.

TS: That's the sad part about it that when schools start going toward scholarship that teaching kind of gets lost in the shuffle. People like Steve Scherer make no bones about it. He wanted to come to a place like Kennesaw because he didn't want to do scholarship. Rather, he wanted to do teaching and service.

DM: Yes, and he was a good teacher. I heard that from students when I was at Tech.

TS: No question about it.

DM: Another good one was Tommy Thomson. I know my leaving Georgia Tech turned out for the better—the opportunities I got to teach high school kids and coach and to come and teach out here.

TS: Well, we got some great faculty members over the years that didn't want to go the tenure/promotion at a Research I institution—people like Gary [B.] Roberts and [P. Edward] Ed Bostick.

DM: Oh, yes, and Bowman [O. Davis]. He is the first one I met the first day I came out. I met Bowman in the hall.

TS: But you were telling me earlier that you had applied once before, and they were looking for a department chair?

DM: Yes. I really didn't apply. The chairman of the math department at Georgia Tech [from 1962 to 1970] was Bert Drucker [Bertram Morris Drucker]. [Drucker was a member of the math faculty at Georgia Tech from 1953 until his retirement in 1980]. He knew what was going on, and he contacted somebody out here. I don't know whom.

TS: This was while you were still on the faculty?

DM: This was while I was still at Tech. He suggested that I inquire here, so I came out, I think, a year before that and talked to people. I talked to Herb, and that was about it because it was a very quick trip out when I found the place finally.

TS: Out in the boonies!

DM: Yes, the boonies. I talked to him, but I didn't get a position, but I still had that other year at Tech. But I'm glad I got to come out here. Well, I got a job much later, but I really enjoyed being out here. I was very pleasantly surprised at how good the students were. Well, I'd had Elaine Hubbard in classes down at Tech. She came from here.

TS: Right. She was in the first class I taught here at Kennesaw Junior College [in the fall of 1968].

DM: She was a good student, and I imagine in history also.

TS: Absolutely!

DM: So I came out here and was here for [well over twenty years until I retired in 2002]. I had some heart pains while coaching cross-country and running with the team. Do you want to talk about coaching?

TS: Well, I tell you what—let me do a couple of things to get into that. First of all, why don't you talk about your background in track and field?

DM: Okay. In high school I ran track. I played football in the fall and ran track in the spring. That was my experience in high school. When I went to college at Washington State, I ran track the first year in the spring. Then the next year came around, and I went and told the coach, "I'm not going to be able to do this. I'm having four tests a week." I didn't have time. I was not that good an athlete. I just enjoyed running. The coach [Jack Mooberry, head coach, 1946-1973] was a really nice guy. In the old days I think he held the record for the 220-yard dash at Washington State. So that was my experience until I was at Wisconsin. The last couple of years I was in Madison I was running there.

TS: So you were always running even though you weren't on the team?

DM: Not till the last two years at Madison. Then one of the math professors there, because he knew I had run in high school, said, “Dave, could you help me run?”—because one of the other professors and he had a bet on of who could run a mile in eight minutes first. They were both smokers, and they were quitting.

TS: Eight-minute mile.

DM: I went and ran with Charlie Connolly. His competition was Prabir Roy. He was a topologist. Charlie was a differential equations person. Well, I trained with Charlie through the eight-minute mile before Prabir Roy. In fact, I’m not sure Professor Roy ever got an eight-minute mile.

TS: I used to laugh at people who ran that slowly.

DM: After that I continued running some, and then I said, “Heck, the university has a cross country team; I’m going to go ask the coach if I can run with the team.” I went to his office and talked to him, and he said, “Sure.” I would meet them at the big gym. It’s now been replaced by the Kohl Center.

TS: You probably had eligibility if you had wanted to exercise it.

DM: No, I wasn’t good enough and didn’t have any eligibility. So I went and ran with them—rather, I ran behind them, a long way behind them.

TS: I must say that anybody who runs in Wisconsin must be committed to running once the weather gets cold.

DM: I enjoyed it. I think the coach thought I would run a couple of times and then quit, but I didn’t quit. I kept running. I got lost a few times on the warm up runs because the guys on the team were way ahead. Some of the track guys, half-milers and those, came to run with the cross-country team to get ready for track season. I remember we ran at the Arboretum in Madison, beautiful place to run. The first time I went down there with the team, they left me. I got lost in all the trees and bushes, and I was lucky to find my way back. By the time the track guys came out in the spring, I left them behind. I was able to tag along at the end of the cross-country team. After that I graduated and moved to Atlanta. I was at Tech, and I started running again after three years or so. I ran in Atlanta and have been running ever since.

TS: With the Atlanta Track Club?

DM: At that time I was just running by myself. I didn’t get involved with the Atlanta Track Club until the first Peachtree I ran, which was in 1970-something.

TS: I’m trying to think when the Peachtree started [1970] because I helped to officiate

the first one. It started at the Sears store in Buckhead.

DM: The first one I ran, that's where we started.

TS: I was passing out tongue depressors with people's finish number on it at the end of the race somewhere downtown. I did that only one year.

DM: I think the Peachtree actually started with Jeff Galloway and a couple people. [Galloway won the first Peachtree].

TS: I actually ran against Jeff Galloway in college—maybe in a summer meet. I think he went to school up north somewhere [Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut].

DM: Anyway, I ran the Peachtree, and I think I've run twenty-two Peachtrees.

TS: You ran in twenty-two of them?

DM: Yes, and in the later ones I was part of the staff, working at the Atlanta Track Club. One of the jobs I had was to go pick up the invited runners and drive them around and take them to various places, so I met a lot of the track club people. I also ran in the summer races.

TS: So you just loved track, loved distance running.

DM: Well, I just liked running. I remember the first time I won a medal—in North Atlanta near Riverwood High School. I won a medal, and I remember one of the guys—he just beat me or I just beat him—was [Christopher B.] Chris Schaufele. I didn't know him before that. I was very proud I got a medal. I had gotten some in high school, but I got this. So I just continued running and continued running. When I came to Kennesaw I used to do 100-mile weeks. I'd start here on campus and run out Hickory Grove Road—all the new [subdivisions] weren't in there then—and into Acworth, downtown, and through there and out the other side of Acworth.

TS: You ran from campus to downtown Acworth.

DM: Yes.

TS: And back?

DM: And more. I ran other places.

TS: By way of Hickory Grove?

DM: By way of Hickory Grove. There was almost no traffic. Today you'd get killed.

In fact a long time ago when I was running you'd hardly see any traffic. We'd run on Moon Station Road some of the time. I say we. I'd take the cross-country team on a lot of the roads there. One thing that I do remember associated with cross-country here at Kennesaw—we didn't have any kind of athletic scholarships at the beginning. We had to get people to come run cross-country since Spec [Athletic Director James D. (Spec) Landrum] decided to have cross country as one of the original athletic teams at Kennesaw.

TS: Maybe we ought to put some dates in. We started our athletic program in 1982, and I believe we had a cross-country team that first year.

DM: Yes.

TS: Were you a coach on that team that first year?

DM: Tom Roper [Thomas B. Roper Jr.] and I were the coaches and started the program.

TS: This was 1982, and you'd been on the faculty here for four years at that time.

DM: Yes.

TS: How did you become a coach? Did they recruit you or did you let Spec Landrum know that you wanted to coach?

DM: I wasn't even considering coaching. Now they knew on campus that I went and ran every afternoon.

TS: Was Tom running at that time too?

DM: Yes, Tom also.

TS: He was running every afternoon?

DM: That I don't think so. I think he got into coaching because of Mildred.

TS: Mildred Landrum?

DM: Mildred [W.] Landrum [Spec's wife], who was in the business school [professor of Management]. Tom taught business law.

TS: Oh, so she suggested that he could be the coach of the team?

DM: Apparently, I don't know for sure, but Spec contacted me and knew that I ran.

TS: And offered you a huge salary to be the coach.

DM: Oh, yes! I think zero dollars. I'd run the Turkey Trot [an annual campus road race] every year up to then, so people knew I ran. He just asked, and I said, "Oh, yes, I'd like to do that"—because I enjoyed doing it at Pace Academy. I think probably Spec asked me, "Do you have any experience?" And I said, "Just from Pace Academy." So Tom and I became cross-country coaches. I think there was an article in the campus paper about "we're going to start a team, who's interested?" I remember Tom and I would go around, and if we would see somebody jogging or running on campus, we'd grab them. That's literally what we did. That's how the cross-country program started.

TS: And we weren't even NAIA [National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics] at that time were we? We weren't affiliated with anybody that first year.

DM: I don't think so, but we were certainly in the NAIA very quickly after that [the following year, 1983-1984].

TS: Well, who made out the schedule of what meets you were going to run in?

DM: I think Spec did. Tom and I didn't. The meets were pretty well set up when we came on. When we got enough men and women together we had regular practices. I remember some of the names. Larry Kraska and Tommy Elsey, both from Sprayberry and a few others came to our initial run. I asked them, "Do you want to try to run some?" And they said, "Yes." Well, I overdid it. I took them out on about an eighteen-mile run that first day.

TS: Oh, my. You lost half your team?

DM: No, none of them quit.

TS: That's good. Eighteen miles?

DM: Yep, pretty close to eighteen miles. It was hot, boy it was hot! They all made it, and they continued to run for the team. After Larry Kraska graduated, he was honored as an outstanding and successful alumnus. Of course we had lots of other people on the cross-country teams. [Others pictured in one of the first team photos include Kathy McDonald, Carolyn Oswald, Dawn Arnett, Suzanne Hall, Mark Olah, Sam Boothe, Julie Booth, David Bond, Dave Hilton, and Paul Okerberg. Bond finished in the top 14 at the State Intercollegiate meet. Paul Okerberg finished in the top 3 in several marathons around the country: Atlanta, Marine Corps, Houston, etc.]

TS: I think I saw where your first meet was at Berry College.

DM: Yes. I don't remember for sure, but I think we beat somebody. But something interesting—we had quite a number of student body presidents here at Kennesaw

- State on the cross-country team. I don't remember all their names, but one was Don [H.] Sams. Carolyn Oswald and Jack Kramer were also on the team.
- TS: Don was a student assistant for [Patricia H.] Patti Reggio on her first NIH [National Institutes of Health] Research Opportunity grant [in 1985]—early projects on the marijuana substance [cannabinoids]—not that they were doing anything with marijuana, but computer . . .
- DM: Yes, computer modeling, I think. There was another guy Mark Annenberg who ran for us and was in ROTC. There were several others that were just good students. One that you would be familiar with—Suzanne Hall [Marshall]—also ran cross country.
- TS: Then went on for a doctorate at Emory in history.
- DM: Yes. Last time I knew, she was teaching at Jacksonville State in Alabama, but she was going to leave there because her husband was going to medical school or had just completed medical school. There were some other ones through the years. In the NAIA we could have older people run.
- TS: What does that mean you could have older people run?
- DM: NCAA, at least Division I, you can't have anyone over twenty-four or twenty-five, maybe twenty-eight. In the NAIA and in the NCAA Division II we had people who were running who were in the thirties. Another student who ran for us who was older was Bob Sams, no relation to Don.
- TS: That's discrimination not letting anybody in their thirties or forties run.
- DM: You may have been through the NCAA rule book at least on cross-country,
- TS: No.
- DM: You don't want to. For basketball and football it's unbelievable. But, anyway, we had good students, really fun to work with. Another one who ran for us is on the staff here at Kennesaw State—Lectra Lawhorne—she's in the computer services [Associate CIO and Assistant Vice President of Information Technology]. I think she got Steve's [Steve Scherer] old job, but she ran for us.
- TS: So basically you relied on people that walked onto the team.
- DM: Walked on campus. Then later, maybe after the season was over, we got a little bit of money. So what Tom and I decided to do was we split the money evenly between all the runners that ran for us to help them with their books.
- TS: You're talking about a real little amount.

DM: We just split it up—maybe twenty bucks each, something like that. It wasn't very much, but anything helps.

TS: Did you get any released time?

DM: No release time.

TS: Did you get any credit for it for your annual review?

DM: No, we didn't have annual reviews then. They didn't start for quite a while later.

TS: And no credit for promotion and tenure. So basically you're doing it out of the love of running.

DM: Yes, and to work with the runners and coaching . . .

TS: Basically you're just doing it because you like working with runners and running yourself.

DM: Right.

TS: You were always out running with them.

DM: Oh, yes. In fact, in the first year I could outrun almost all of them. I enjoyed it; they enjoyed it; otherwise they wouldn't have kept going. Tom enjoyed it. Then, of course, when the season was over, I kept running. I ran essentially every day. I shouldn't say essentially. I ran every day. We had a good time. We ran in meets at Berry. Where else did we run? I think we ran at West Georgia and some other places.

TS: Did you check out the campus vans to drive to the meets?

DM: At first they didn't have any campus vans that we could use. We had to go down here off of [US] 41 down by the Navy base and the [Dobbins] Air Force base down there and rent a van. We'd go down there, leave our cars, drive the vans to wherever we were going, come back, pick up our cars and head on home.

TS: So you drove the van.

DM: Yes. Tom drove one, and I drove one. [We coached together for three years, 1982-1984]. We were getting ready to start cross-country season [in 1985], and we showed up and found out we were no longer coaches. Spec got somebody else to do it—[Dave Poteet]. He didn't tell us at all, didn't mention it, and didn't say anything at all. I said, "Tom, I wonder what the heck is going on." Spec was AD and hired [Poteet]. Dave was a really nice guy. I think he coached for one year,

and the same thing happened to him. He thought he was going to coach the next year, and he showed up, and Spec had gotten somebody else—never told anybody. Dave Poteet was a student here, and Dave wasn't aware that nobody knew that he was going to coach. Spec had never informed us. In fact, Dave apologized. He said, "If I'd have known that, I would have said no." I think he coached for one year [1985], [then a man named Bowman coached in 1986], and then Spec retired.

TS: Spec retired in 1987, I believe, and David L. Waples came in.

DM: Dave Waples came in, and [in 1992] he was going to start a program [after cross-country was eliminated as a Kennesaw State intercollegiate sport between 1987 and 1991], and he asked me, "Do you want to coach again?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "I've got somebody for your assistant," and I said, "No, I know somebody who I would want as my assistant, and it was Stan [Stanley G. Sims, a math professor], because Stan and I were running together. I said, "Stan Sims." He said, "Well, I'm going to have to tell the other people that they're not going to coach." And I said, "It's got to be Stan." So Stan was made assistant coach.

TS: You were saying earlier, not on tape, that your first wife must have died very young?

DM: No, we had divorced. We were married for fourteen years, but after we split up, she got sick. She came out and stayed with me and my youngest daughter. I had custody of the girls, and she came and stayed with us until she got too sick. I took her to Grady, and that's where she died.

TS: Okay, so that's the one that you were talking about earlier that you had just gotten a divorce when you were applying at Kennesaw?

DM: Yes.

TS: But, anyway, you married again.

DM: Yes, a few times [laughter]. Anyway, I got married again, and she didn't like me coaching. So I told Stan [in 1994], "You're now the head coach." And he did wonders with it [in an eighteen-year career as head coach that ran from 1994 through 2011]. After a couple of years I told my wife, "I'm going back to coaching. I'll be an assistant coach." And she said, "Okay, if that's what you want to do." So I was Stan's assistant for a number of years. He had some other assistants in there. Believe it or not, one of the assistant coach's names was Benny Morgan. No relation. But then after that I came back and coached with Stan until I retired from Kennesaw in the spring of 2002.

TS: So you were coaching cross country through the fall of 2001.

DM: Yes. I had to have bypass surgery, and that came about the year after I had a stint put in. I was having chest pains when I was running with the team, so I finally went to the doctor, and she put me on a treadmill. After I ran on it for a little while she said, "Get off of there." I turned as white, she said, as her lab coat. So a stint was put in. A year later I had bypass surgery in 2001. Then I came back from that, and I retired in 2002. The heart surgeon said, "I think you have too much stress. I think you ought to retire." I said, "No, I'm going to stick it out till spring." I'm glad I stayed at school. I retired at the end of spring 2002. Even though I was retired I continued helping with the cross country team. Then I moved to Houston. I was running again by then.

TS: After you had the bypass surgery you were running again?

DM: Yes. And from Houston I moved to Colorado Springs in 2007 and continued to run. I ran through the Garden of the Gods almost daily. In fact a couple days a week I'd run up the Baer Trail which goes up to the summit of Pikes Peak. I didn't even get to the really steep part of going up to the top of Pikes Peak. The last part is the steepest. I ran up to about 10,000-something [feet] to a place called Baer Camp, and they had places there where people could camp out.

TS: You're getting to thin air and getting hard to breathe by 10,000 feet.

DM: That never bothered me. Shortly after I moved to Colorado Springs from Texas in August 2007, the Pikes Peak half-marathon (ascent only) was held on a Saturday and the full marathon up and back on Sunday. There was an article in the paper asking for volunteers, so I volunteered for the ascent. The volunteers went up to the summit in a van. Then we helped unload a couple of trucks with supplies and all kinds of other equipment. I felt the air then. The next day I helped at the start and the finish of the full marathon, ascent and descent the next day. (Actually the Pikes Peak "full marathon" is longer than an official marathon.)

TS: So then you come back in 2010?

DM: No, I came back to Georgia in the summer of 2009.

TS: That period where Stan's the coach and you were the assistant in the 1990s we had some pretty good cross country teams.

DM: We did. We went to nationals, and after my bypass I assisted the team, so Stan took me to nationals a couple or three times. That's when Marjo Venalainen won the women's [Division II championship] two years in a row [1999 and 2000, then was second in 2001, and despite an injury did well enough to earn All-American honors for a fourth time in 2002]. One of the nationals I went to was in California. The sponsoring school then was Cal Poly Pomona [California State Polytechnic University-Pomona], and that's where my dad was a professor.

TS: Really?

DM: Yes. He had retired by then.

TS: He was a professor after his Air Force career?

DM: Yes, yes. He was a professor of aerospace engineering. One year I also traveled to northern California, Humboldt State [University], for nationals with the team.

TS: That's where [Southern Polytechnic State University president] Lisa A. Rossbacher is going [as Humboldt State's new president].

DM: Yes, it's beautiful country up there. Another year we went to nationals in Ashland Ohio. We also went to nationals at Slippery Rock [University of Pennsylvania] in those intervening years. So I got to go on some good trips. Of course, I didn't get paid anything. I really didn't want anything. I just wanted to do it because it was fun.

TS: Well, let me ask you about the math department. Of course, when you came here, we didn't have a math department. It was the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Then in 1983 we reorganized, and you got the Department [of Mathematics and Computer Science]. And even then it was a few years before computer science broke off from math. And you said you were teaching computer science?

DM: Well, Charley Dobson and Tom Gooch needed somebody to teach Basic programming [Introduction to Programming]. We had the courses, but we didn't have [a separate computer science] department, so I taught Basic. Then later on, a decision was made to have a computer science department, so Steve [Scherer] and Tom and Charley, Wayne [Cutrer], and [Richard A.] Dick Gayler and I were on a committee to investigate such that possibility. The committee decided that such a program was feasible. What courses should we have? We didn't know. So we looked in various catalogues from many schools and read about their courses and descriptions. Thus we wrote down course names and with their descriptions; some of them we didn't know anything about. We'd make jokes about that. Then we decided we needed an advisor, somebody to guide us. So Tom and Wayne were acquainted with Morris [W.] Roberts from Georgia State and invited him to come out and advise us. So Morris Roberts came out from Georgia State. In the Association for Computing Machinery, he was a big mover in the academic part of that organization. So he came out and helped us organize and determine what the courses should be. He liked all this and told us what we should do. So we got the degree program together. Then the next year, or maybe it was two years we had a proposal together. I believe that Chris was chair of the math department chair at that time.

TS: Chris Schaufele?

DM: Chris Schaufele. Chris was [the first] chair [1983-1985], and then he resigned [and Morris Roberts became department chair in 1985].

TS: I think I remember that Chris resigned as chair because of a big controversy with [President] Betty L. Siegel [and the math department] over whether eventually they were going to water down the math classes. Unlike Dr. Sturgis, she was worried about a pretty high drop out and failure rate in the basic algebra class, and it seems to me that Chris at that time decided he didn't want to be in the middle of that controversy.

DM: Yes. Do you want to address that?

TS: Sure.

DM: Okay, let's address that. I told you what Dr. Sturgis said to me about grade inflation. He retired and Dean [Eugene R.] Huck was acting president for a while. I really like Gene. I called him "Dean" because he was also a dean. I had his son Ben as a student in at least one class.

TS: He's still on campus as an employee [Safety/Risk Management Pro III, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry].

DM: Yes, that's what I understand. Then Betty Siegel was appointed president. The atmosphere changed. Sturgis wasn't going to have any of this grade inflation. "If they can't make it, they can't make it." That was the Tech attitude because he envisioned Kennesaw College at that time being academically strong, and there was no reason it couldn't be. Then Dr. Siegel came in. I remember when she came to a meeting of all of the math department, and she basically said, "The dropout rate is too high. We can't have this happening." Well, Charles [A.] Hill Jr. and I—do you remember Charles—retired naval commander—and he taught math, got the message. You better give higher grades. I mean, the handwriting was on the wall. She said, "Oh, we're not trying to do that." We didn't ask her. To be honest with you, the standards changed, and you better not screw with the standards or you might not have a job.

TS: The standards were lowered, you're saying.

DM: [We heard], "Oh, we don't want to change your standards." But . . .

TS: But in fact . . .

DM: Yes. Now, I agree that the dropout rate was high, and the failure rate was high, but it was no different than any other institution in the United States in mathematics. Percentages were almost exactly the same across the board, no matter where the college was located. So we were not out of line. But I had problems with Betty's philosophy. "Everybody should have a good time, and

- everybody should pass. If they put in the effort, they should pass.” But some students just couldn’t make it. You couldn’t have a pass rate of 70 percent. I mean, there were not that many students that could [do the work]. I think I talked to Gene Huck once about this very briefly—he thought our college algebra and trig was at a graduate level.
- TS: What did you think?
- DM: It’s the same as every other place I’d been.
- TS: Okay, so it wasn’t at a graduate level.
- DM: No, it was a typical college algebra and trig. Later I think that his son had convinced him of that. So it became clear that the standards had changed, and there’s no denying it. Like I say, I had a little trouble with Betty’s feeling that everybody ought to be happy and ought to be successful. I have no problems with students taking a course *many* times until they understand it and pass it. So I don’t think student dismissal is a suitable thing to do. Encourage the students to re-enroll and try again and again if necessary. But I think the university system had rules against that.
- TS: What did you think of Chris Schaufele and Nancy [E.] Zumoff’s Earth Algebra as a way to try to get more people through?
- DM: I think it was successful. I didn’t agree with it. I never taught it. I tutored students in it. I tutored it even after I retired. I would come up to the math department and help students. They’d come by, and I’d help them with it. I didn’t feel it was an appropriate course, but it helped students understand some math, and I changed my attitude some about it. I asked Chris, “Why did you guys do this?” And he said, “They’ve got to be able to pass something.” Then Stan and Marlene [R. Sims], you know, re-wrote the text book.
- TS: I knew Marlene Sims was very much involved with Earth Algebra.
- DM: Yes. And they both did a good job. We just disagreed on philosophy, but I helped students with it and didn’t denigrate it when they came by, but I think the old college algebra and trig was mathematically more appropriate.
- TS: Well, compare 1978 and 2002 where the campus was then, where the campus was when you retired, and what kind of trends did you see in that twenty-four, twenty-five year period, for the better or for the worse.
- DM: Overall, for the better. One thing I should say, when I came here I wasn’t sure how good the students going to be, were they really prepared? I had some of the best students I’ve ever had anywhere here at Kennesaw State.

TS: Wow, compared to Georgia Tech and Pace Academy and all those?

DM: Yes. I had some students here that were the best I've ever taught. One of the best students that I taught that ended up being my wife. When I had to have bypass surgery I was teaching a special topics class in mathematics on what I call calculational logic. It was for math and computer science students. There wasn't anybody else on campus that knew the material but Kathy, my wife, had taken the course from me and then used what she had learned there and used it to take the abstract algebra course that [Ronald C.] Ron Biggers taught. He was impressed. So we got permission for her to take over my special topics course. She was a senior, and she was taking other classes, but she taught the logic course, and from what I heard from some of the students, she did a great job.

Some of the best students I've ever had—the first year I was here I had a student whose name was Cliff Gerdes who ended up working at Charley's company, Systems Atlanta. In fact, I had several students go to work for Charley. Another excellent student was Chris Morris. His mom taught in the business school in accounting, Paula [H.] Morris. Another guy that ended up being Charley's number one employee, in fact, he may be the head of the company, Rick Rutledge. He had almost graduated from the University of Georgia in topology. He came to Kennesaw; he had to come back because I think his dad's health was failing and I think he finished up here. He was one of the best students I've ever had anywhere.

There have been a number of other students who were the best that I've had anywhere, including Tech and even teaching as a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin. I've had some outstanding students. But I think that happens everywhere. Students sometimes can't control where they have to or can go to school, and some of these people are the best I've ever seen.

TS: Basically what you're saying is from 1978 on, there were always good students at Kennesaw.

DM: Oh, yes. And the percentage of them was surprisingly high.

TS: So that didn't change over time?

DM: I think the percentage dropped [over time], but the good students were good students no matter when.

TS: The percentage dropped?

DM: The percentage of excellent students dropped. I believe the percentage of excellent students was higher when I began at Kennesaw. When I began here I would have at least five very good students out of a class of twenty. By the time I retired that's a whole lot different than five good students out of thirty-five or

- forty. I never had a class of all mediocre or poor students. I bet you found the same thing.
- TS: We've had some good students here.
- DM: I think of Suzanne.
- TS: Even in junior college days, Elaine Hubbard.
- DM: Elaine Hubbard most certainly. But I'd say overall, I think the numbers of good students increased, but the percentage decreased some.
- TS: Basically we had good students then, we have good students when you retired, not that big a difference. What about expectations for the job?
- DM: That changed. When I came out here the emphasis was on teaching because that's what I do. I tried research at Tech, and I wasn't successful. At Georgia State I just had a one-year appointment.
- TS: But you're not interested in writing papers that five people are going to read or do a presentation at a conference?
- DM: No. When I was at Tech I did travel to some of the colleges in the University System of Georgia to try to recruit students for graduate school, and I'd give a talk at those places. When I came here I gave a couple of talks at Georgia Tech. When I was here in computer science, Morris Roberts sent me to conferences at the University of Iowa, at Iowa State, and then for a short course for a whole week at Northeast Louisiana, now Louisiana State at Monroe, to attend a course taught by Edsger [W.] Dijkstra, the number one theoretical computer scientist. That was probably the most enlightening course I ever went to. I got to know him because I had lunch every day with Prof. Dijkstra at Monroe. Later he was invited to give a talk at the University of Georgia. I took two students to attend the talk. So we drove over to Athens. The two students were Kurt Schoeneman who was a major in the army. Kurt and I stayed in contact for a while even after he went to Kuwait during the first Gulf War. He'd write letters every once in a while, and we met after he came back. The other student that went to Prof. Dijkstra's presentation was Kathy.
- TS: What was her name at the time?
- DM: Katherine Newlon. She didn't change it when she married me. She said she didn't want to, and I said that was fine. I said, I'm not going to change mine. We had dinner with Professor Dijkstra and his wife and [David] Dave Gries who was on the faculty at Georgia who was quite well known in computer science. He was retired from Cornell University and came down to The University Georgia. He retired from Georgia and went back up to Cornell after a few years. He once

came to Kennesaw and gave a presentation. All of the conferences I attended were very beneficial to me. I attended two other conferences also, one in Cape Canaveral and Norfolk. Both conferences were on “formal methods.”

TS: Basically you like the era of our history where teaching was the focus, and there were a lot of professional development opportunities to go off to conferences, and service was an expectation, and scholarship was encouraged maybe, but not essential.

DM: Exactly. I don't know what it is right now, but for me, anyway, doing that kind of scholarship, I didn't have enough time. Even teaching three classes, I find research pretty hard. I even continued to do some. I'm doing some now, but it's just trivial stuff.

TS: What kept you at Kennesaw for so many years?

DM: I enjoyed it. I made lots of friends here. After they graduated, I would run into former students several times. In fact, one I ran into at the grocery store a couple of months ago, [Dr.] Radwan Ali. He's on the faculty now in Information Systems, and he was a student in a couple of my classes.

TS: He was in a couple of mine.

DM: Was he? He was a really good guy. I enjoyed him. I don't think there's anybody still on the faculty here that was a student of mine [at Georgia Tech] because Elaine [Hubbard] retired I know quite awhile ago, and I know Steve retired. Carl Johnson, I don't know what happened to him.

TS: So how do you evaluate the math department?

DM: When I came here I was impressed—very friendly, very competent. Another guy I failed to mention, Micah [Y.] Chan. He was in the math department. I didn't meet him until I was here for a little while because he was doing statistics. Students came to me about Micah. He was one of the best teachers and would help you with anything that they ever had. I mean, students would rave about him. How he was treated was completely unfairly, especially when he was moved to the School of Business. He got screwed; I'll put it bluntly. They had people there teaching the business statistics, doing things that were wrong. One in particular was publishing papers with some of the most outlandish mathematical statements you'd ever see. But that person isn't here anymore.

TS: But Micah was a good teacher.

DM: Micah, everything I heard from students was they loved him. I think he was a great guy. Like I said, he got screwed.

TS: So a very strong teaching faculty.

DM: Yes. Nobody really had any time to do any research. In mathematics you don't need fancy equipment, or all the labs or anything. You need time. And my interest wasn't [in research]. I'd done my thing and tried, but my real emphasis was on teaching and working with students.

TS: Right. What else do we need to add to the tape?

DM: Well, this is more recent. When I came back from Colorado, I didn't know about this faculty fitness center [Employee Fitness Center]. So Stan brought me over here. He said, "We've got this fitness center. You ought to try it out." I did. I came over here, and except for cross country trips I think I've been here every day since. When I had another stint put in in 2011, I had to miss a couple of weeks.

TS: Well, you're a regular.

DM: Yes, and I enjoy it. I told you, I don't do it for health. I do it because I enjoy it. I enjoy the social interaction and all that, but sometimes I'm the only person there except for the staff.

TS: That's a reflection of the maturity of the institution I guess, that we have an employee fitness center.

DM: Yes. And I think that's great. I should say something else. I think in the first two years I was at Kennesaw, I moved to seven different offices starting with Tina's [Tina H. Straley's] office in the old Science and Math Building, the old one.

TS: Which is the Mathematics and Statistics Building nowadays—next to the library.

DM: That's right, it is. I was in what's now called the English Building; I was in the old Social Sciences Building [currently University College]. There was an upper one and then a lower one, and I had offices in both of those at different times. I had an office in the old Maintenance Building. I don't know if that's still there or not.

TS: The original Maintenance Building became the Music Building.

DM: Right, I don't think I ever had an office there but I may have.

TS: The next Maintenance Building was where the North Parking Deck is now.

DM: Yes, I had an office in there. But anyway, I moved seven times.

TS: Did you ever have an office in the Burruss Building?

DM: Oh yes, I had two different offices there.

TS: Then the new Science Building, did you move over there?

DM: Yes, I was on the fourth floor, and from there I retired, not because of the office moves.

TS: But seven different offices.

DM: That was no big deal. I never unpacked all of my books anyway.

TS: All right, well great.

DM: I can't think of anything else.

TS: Well, thanks for doing the interview.

DM: Thank you.

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