

Brian Bokor Oral History Interview

Interview Conducted by
Severine Stier and Dahlia Krutkovich
March 6, 2019

Collection: Davidson College Archives

Title: Brian Bokor oral history interview, 2019 March 6

Description: Brian Bokor recounts his experiences as Jewish student at Davidson and how it aligned with his experiences as a Jewish man living in the American South. He discusses his experiences as a student athlete and member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity at Davidson College. He talks about his interfaith relationship with his Catholic wife and discusses Jewish identity's precarious position in current American politics.

Biography: Brian Bokor graduated from Davidson in 2001 with a BA in History. He was a member of the varsity football team, earning the Prosser Carnegie Award his senior year. He was also a member of Phi Delta Theta. After Davidson, he attended law school at University of Florida. After working in private practice for 9 years and for a Wall Street bank in New York City, he now is an attorney for Wells Fargo Bank in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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Interview History:

Interviewer: Severine Stier and Dahlia Krutkovich

Transcriber: Taylor Drake

Editors: Taylor Drake

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Setting Description: Zoom call with Brian Bokor in Charlotte, North Carolina and Severine Stier and Dahlia Krutkovich in Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina

Transcript Notes: The following transcript has been edited for brevity and clarity.
BB: Brian Bokor
DK: Dahlia Krutkovich
SS: Severine Stier

Severine Stier: Before we get into just some questions about your experience as a Jewish student at Davidson, we do have some formalities because we'd like to save this interview in the college archives, and in order to do that we need your permission. So just formally do you consent to being recorded during this and do you consent to this interview being transcribed?

Brian Bokor: Sure.

SS: Great and we will give you the opportunity to listen to this if you'd like before we place it in the archives, but this will be used. We're trying to make a website focusing on the interviews we're getting because we're going to do a lot of oral histories throughout the duration of this project. So, I'll keep you posted on where this is actually going and throughout all of the process we'll be completely transparent, and then after this interview I'll send a more formal permission form that you could fill out if that's all right?

BB: Sure.

SS: Great! Okay, so this interview will last for an hour if that's still okay with you, correct?

BB: Yep! I do have to stop at 11, but I have until then so that works.

DK: Wonderful. And then just to situate our recording so the names of our interviewers are Severine Stier and Dahlia Krutkovich. The name of our narrator is Brian Bokor.

BB: Yes.

DK: Wonderful. The location of our interview: you're in Charlotte. We're in Davidson. The date is March 6, 2019, and the purpose of this interview is to archive Jewish experiences at Davidson throughout the history of Jews at the school. So anyway, so getting into things a little bit do you mind telling us about your relationship with Judaism before you arrived at Davidson?

BB: Sure. I grew up in Clearwater, Florida. My dad is Jewish. My mom was born Catholic. Prior to them getting married, my mom converted to Judaism. From birth, I was raised Jewish. I attended Sunday school on a regular basis. I Bar Mitzvah'd. But after about the age of fourteen, I stopped going to confirmation because I got into sports. But we did still attend the Temple on a semi-regular basis, probably once every six weeks and obviously High Holy days and other important events whether it be friends' bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs, we would light a candle on anniversaries of relatives that have passed and stuff like that. I would say probably over the course of the 12-month period, probably 8 to 12 times a year, we would go. That's kind of my experience going through there up until I was 18. So that's kind of my pre-Davidson.

SS: So how did you hear about Davidson? What brought you here?

BB: Okay, so coming from Florida. I should say I played football at Davidson. So, I was being recruited and came up for a recruiting weekend. I had a couple friends from high school that were a little bit older than I that had also come up to play at Davidson, so I stayed with a guy who was my teammate and stuff like that so that's kind of my introduction to college. My high

school football head coach's son was an assistant coach at Davidson. So, just big connections through the football program was kind of how I knew about the school. The first time I came up to Davidson was actually 1994. I was a freshman or sophomore in high school. But I came up because Charlotte was hosting the Final Four, and we had a friend family friend that was at Davidson at the time, so we came up to Davidson, we looked around campus. I remember talking to my parents and saying this is a bit too small. I don't think this would be a good fit for me. Fast forward two years later, and I applied early basically because this became the place I wanted to go. So, I guess that's just the difference between I guess 14 and 17. So yeah, that's kind of my introduction to Davidson.

DK: Awesome, I'm sorry I skipped over something at the beginning. Can you give us the dates you were at Davidson?

BB: Sure, so I graduated high school in '97, and I came in fall of '97 to Davidson, and I graduated in spring of 2001.

DK: Wonderful, thank you. So, before you so before you came to Davidson did you know anything about the college's religious affiliation?

BB: I did just from what I had read in one of your guidebooks about colleges or what have you. I knew that it was loosely affiliated with Presbyterians, but I also was told when I came in and took an official tour one of my parents either asked a question or I asked a question, and they said it was loosely affiliated there is decent [Davidson College Presbyterian Church] on campus but not something you're going to be kind of immersed into it.

DK: Did you think that was correct?

BB: For the most part, sure. I think that when I look back at my experience outside of the classroom at Davidson, my day-to-day interaction was with hallmates, teammates, and fraternity brothers. While I was there, there certainly were folks that would go to [Davidson College Presbyterian Church], but I only stepped into it maybe during orientation once. And maybe two other times over a four-year period. It just wasn't a building that I felt like I you know I ever had a lecture or classroom in. And just avoid the fact that other people were going to services there or had events there didn't affect me personally.

SS: Okay, so was their Jewish life? Was there an active Jewish community on campus? what was Jewish life like?

BB: I would say generally, no. I think during my first or second semester at one point I did receive an email. I can't remember if it was like Tom Shandley or who it was, but I received an email basically saying they were trying to work with UNC Charlotte (I think now they call themselves Charlotte University but then it was UNC Charlotte) about trying to work with their Hillel program and trying to interact more with the Jewish students. It is funny, the email. It came from Tom, and it was not a blind copy, so we could see the rest of individuals that were on the distribution. I think I counted like 19 or 18 recipients. So, at the time we were probably 1,600

- 1,700 students while I was here, but at the time, there were less than 20 that identified themselves as Jewish. So, I kind of got a chuckle out of the small number of recipients there.

I remember responding and saying that I'd be interested in attending events that were held on Davidson's campus, but I probably would not be as interested in going over to Charlotte for those gatherings. And I think we had an introductory meeting that I did attend, and I don't think afterwards either there was much momentum on our side. I think five people showed up. One person was there to ask a bunch of questions and turns of that person was transferring anyway.

DK: Was that person Jewish?

BB: That person was Jewish. I'll try thinking over the next hour the what that person's name was.

DK: Thank you.

BB: So that was, there wasn't much the momentum or the support behind it so it didn't transpire into anything.

DK: So, how did you incorporate any individual practice? Were there Seders on campus? Were there places you could go for Shabbat? How did you celebrate High Holy Days if that was something that you wanted to do?

BB: Sure, so there were--I'm trying to think off-hand--I remember at times that there were, I can't remember if it was the [Davidson College Presbyterian Church] or if it was in the Carolina Inn, but I think there was a least once or twice they would have in essence High Holy day services on campus, and I remember at least going to one, and it was very makeshift. They did have a Rabbi from Charlotte come and lead the service but probably six, seven people total. So, there was no Torah, it was just a reading session per say.

DK: So, would you consider your community in Florida Jewish?

BB: So, Tampa Bay has a large Jewish population. There was a Jewish Community Center, there's a Jewish day school otherwise--I did not attend the day school. I went to a small private school, but it was not a religious affiliated school. But generally speaking, I think the larger cities in Tampa have a pretty good Jewish demographic.

DK: So, did you find Davidson a little isolating in that sense?

BB: In that sense, yes, I think one it's kind of twofold one again as I mentioned after I was Bar Mitzvah'd, I didn't feel like I lost my Jewish identity, but I stopped on a regular basis practicing Judaism due to the fact that Friday nights we have football games, and I was telling my folks, "If I go, I'm not going play at all during the season." So, my parents said, "You're 13, you're an adult, this is for you to make a decision on." And I chose to play sports. So, we, between 14 and 17, probably went to temple less. My Dad would still go, but oftentimes like my parents would go to sporting events together as well as opposed to separating. So that was probably going into my last couple years before I came into Davidson, I stopped the normal practicing as far as

regularly attending the Friday night services, and that's when I went into your Davidson I found myself either having games on Saturday, traveling to away games and not being on campus. So I would say that it was different because all of a sudden I would be one of 19 on campus, but it was not different in the fact that I had started to already make decisions to put other things as more as a priority over my religious practices at the time.

SS: Did you feel like while you were here, you wanted there to be a more formalized Jewish group. Because I know after you left, there was a more formal Student Union did you feel like although there were few you, you would have benefited from you know more intentional group meetings and events and such?

BB: Yes, absolutely.

DK: So, moving more into kind of the cultural atmosphere of the college how did you feel or not feel like Jewish students were included in the college's faith community?

BB: Generally speaking, I think that the college acknowledged the fact that there if there was a small number of Jewish students on campus, but I don't think that the request trying to start Hillel with Charlotte came from a student, I think it was something that Tom Shandley had provided that as an opportunity for... The email came to me, and I didn't know this was kind of in the pipeline or something that was going to be coming in the near future.

So as a result, I think that the college acknowledged the fact that there are not a whole lot of avenues, and they wanted to help out the experience for Jewish students, but I didn't find myself in a situation where I felt, because I'm Jewish there's not opportunities for me because we're fairly close to Charlotte. I actually have a family friend from the Tampa Bay Area that are Jewish that moved to Charlotte and I remember at least once or twice coming down and going to High Holy Day services in Charlotte. I forgot about that until we started speaking about that. So, I came to Charlotte at least once to attend services in the Charlotte region.

DK: Were you talking to other Jewish students at the time about your experience? And what were those conversations like if you were?

BB: Sure, so there was-- I would say so there's a student that I became friendly with. He was a fraternity brother that was also Jewish, and we were Phi Delt, and I think we were the only two. I see what you're doing. Don't laugh.

DK: Sorry, we just have one Jewish Phi Delt now.

BB: Okay. Alright.

DK: Anyway, yeah. So we're very excited that you're Phi Delt.

SS: We're so happy!

DK: No, we're not laughing at you we're just excited. He's great. We love him.

BB: Our reputation precedes us.

DK: Of course.

BB: His name was Mike Kaplan, and he was two years younger, so he would have been the class of '03. He and I were basically the two Jewish students in the Fraternity. So, you talk about 50, 60, 70 guys, inevitably there's going to be, once you really get to know someone well, you're going to find out differences between people and you make jabs from time to time. And I remember talking to Kaplan at the time when he was probably a freshman pledging and I was a junior at the time. And we're both like, you'll probably hear some things from time to time so long as it's in a friendly gesture you know, we have tough skin it's something you might experience to an extent, but if it gets overboard, let me know.

And I think that he appreciated that candor, but I never experienced anything I could point to you as antisemitism or purposefully hurtful, but there was definitely a little bit of you know, kind of playing, kind of messing around with either Kaplan or I just from time to time making statements. For example, we'd be going through this week and we're doing black white beach party. We need to figure out what we need to bring and whatever and some kid would be like maybe see if Kaplan or Bokor have any coupons for this. Stuff like that. And because it came from friends and teammates you kind of laugh it off but they weren't saying that because we were thrifty, they were saying that obviously because we were Jewish. And again, I don't think that that sort of thing was meant to be hurtful as opposed to it was meant to be you know, funny to the rest of the group.

DK: So, to that effect, how did you feel like your non-Jewish peers understood didn't understand Judaism?

BB: I would say that there's probably—they probably didn't understand. I mean they understand the differences that you can read about and textbooks or humanities or but generally speaking I don't think people understood what the religion represented, what it is other than "oh, yeah you guys just like the Old Testament you guys don't read the New Testament". That was kind of the extent of the understanding that I think most folks have on Judaism.

SS: So, with that did you feel like you kind of needed to kind of dilute your Jewish identity um at all or were you comfortable with that identity kind of being like just the way the forms that it took then?

BB: I was comfortable with it. I think that... If you talk about that fact that there were 19 folks who identified themselves, and then when there's a meeting, you know, six showed up there probably is a little bit of delusion. I'd imagine if you just about their general population there probably was maybe 40, 50 that had either one parent that was Jewish or just did not identify themselves, and you typically wouldn't see a whole lot of winter things like High Holy Days. Things that were either announcing it or promoting it. It's kind of silent in the respect of that. I think you could probably walk around campus before you know winter break and you see something that relates to what you're doing for 'Christmas', and I think that's best is just because

you're trying to target 16 or 17 hundred people at a time, more people are going to identify with something like that nature then.

SS: I'm also curious about the chaplain's office at the time. So, Rob Spach was here, who's still currently here's as the Chaplain. Did you feel like the Chaplain's Office was established then? Did it feel like a resource to you, or were there any other people on campus you could talk to you about Judaism who weren't you're on your team or weren't your peers?

BB: I don't think that the Chaplain's office group was that active with respect to reaching out to the extent that I took advantage and tried to utilize it as a resource. It probably would have been good services available. I think if I ever had any incidents that have occurred that would be an avenue, but generally speaking, it was not something that was really promoted all that well or provided opportunities that were well know.

SS: Did you know of any Jewish professors at the time?

BB: I'm trying to think. I feel like, yes, I can't pinpoint. There wouldn't have been a professor that I had deep relationship because they were Jewish I think... I want to say, and I may be wrong on this completely but I think Dr. Susan Roberts, Political Science, I feel like she may have been Jewish, but perhaps not. Again, I was friendly with her, but it had nothing to do with the fact that we were both Jewish.

DK: Would you say there were any major changes in Jewish life at Davidson during your time there? I know that Hill-- we talked about the Jewish Students Union being founded in 2002 I believe? So that was right after your time but was there anything that was more or less difficult while you're at Davidson?

BB: I guess the first part of the question is does did I see any changes. I think the changes really are the fact that's there was at least an outreach or trying to establish something. I don't think there was momentum while I was there. I didn't realize it was 2002 when they established Hillel. I thought it was '03 or '04.

SS: I think it may have been a bit later. We have to check on that. It maybe 2005 now that I'm thinking about it more. But again, I guess it was after your time.

BB: Yes, it was. I felt like if it was 2002 there were definitely some discussions or momentum behind it in '01. But whenever it was, I did not see a lot of changes between '97 and 2001 through new opportunities other than just what they were just trying to you know email and see if there's momentum behind.

As far as difficulties, I don't think there were specific difficulties that I had because I was Jewish. Every opportunity with respect to availability of teachers, services, there was no distinction between you know whether someone was Jewish or not what was available to them. If I so desired, I think I could have gone to church and found some sort of you know--but again it was just not something that I had any interest in on you to explore other religions and honestly I think it was kind of a little bit of an afterthought.

DK: Yeah, I was kind of talking about something is smaller I guess it could be large depending on your practice: taking the day off for Yom Kippur if you're fasting or professors understanding if you needed to submit an assignment late or something like that.

BB: I honestly don't recall. I do remember fasting, and I remember thinking to myself... I remember like at some point being like I cannot wait until 12:01 because I'm going to go to the outpost or whatever because I'm starving, I remember kinda thinking that this is kind of funny. I'm used to breaking fast at someone's house, and now I'm at Commons. So... That was just personal that was not something that was done with a group. Everything was not like a "we're going to break the fast" dinner.

DK: Did you ever try taking anyone?

BB: I don't recall ever having an issue with respect to not attending classes. I think the way I got through Davidson, I remember, I think I missed three classes over the course of four years.

SS & DK: Oh congratulations!

BB: Yeah and that other than obviously traveling for sporting events that was, but I thought to myself either I'm going learn this material with the professors because anything they're going to be address could be on a test or exam and likely will be discussed in class, and because of that, I'm going to go to class. Attending class was just important as actually studying outside of class. So, I really made it a point not to miss class as much as possible. And that was my biggest advantage to learning a lot of information.

DK: We've talked about Judaism as a religious identity, but even thinking about it is like a cultural identity or something that is maybe more pervasive than simply just like what you believe, how did your identity change as a result of being at Davidson? Do you feel like you felt more Jewish after leaving? Or more Jewish while you were here? Or even less Jewish?

BB: So, from a practicing standpoint, I'll divide this up between the practicing and cultural. From a practicing standpoint I found that I had certainly attended temple much less often between the ages of 14 and 22. Some of that is because that was a decision that I made between 14 and 17. Some of it was because I don't get the opportunities or it would have taken much more of an effort - it was not being hopping in the car with mom and dad and riding a mile to Temple.

DK: Right.

BB: It was finding a way to get to Charlotte.

SS: Yea.

BB: This was pre-Uber, and I did have a car I guess three or four years that I was on campus.

SS: Okay so they didn't provide transportation at all?

BB: I don't think so. I don't recall, to be honest with you if they did, it wasn't something that was relayed very well.

DK: I realize now that I was mixing up the date of the foundation of Hillel with the date of the foundation of the temple in Lake Norman, Temple Kol Tikvah. But yes, Hillel was founded later but Kol Tikvah was maybe founded in 2002 or 2003, so yeah so that's so that's what I was thinking of but--

SS: no, yeah I think I think that was early 2000's after you had come, and then the Jewish Student Union was founded in '05, and then Hillel was founded like in 2012. Yeah.

BB: I imagine that having a temple much closer to campus probably makes a pretty big difference... I would not be surprised if today there is a shuttle for High Holy Days that will take students. It's obviously a much easier task. I don't know how well you guys know Charlotte, but there's three temples that I'll sit next to each other in South Charlotte that are probably in 45 to 50 minutes from Davidson. I know that because I currently live about three miles from that area that's the Jewish Community Center area, and when I come up to Davidson for a basketball game or a football game or if I've been on campus, it usually takes 45 to 50 minutes. So generally speaking, trying to get here - and there's probably other temples- but I think generally the largest kind of congregation of three temples that sit next to each other would be that area, and that's about two hours of going down and coming back and then attending. It was not an easy proposition to do on a regular basis.

SS: Yeah, what temple was it that everyone went to in Charlotte?

BB: I think it's temple Beth El and one other temple.

DK: Do you remember if there--

BB: But it's right off Providence Road

SS: Okay

BB: In Charlotte so it's basically right near providence and Fairview is the intersection, and there's a Jewish Community Center, and there's I think a reformed and a conservative temple.

DK: Do you remember if there were any students who kind of cultivated relationships with the temple? And that must have been individually as opposed to actually formally?

SS: So I guess we kind of touched on this but, um what did what like I guess you already responded to this, but like how your faith evolved or changed after your time at Davidson, and whether or not that was informed by not practicing as much here, and I know you said up until you're 21 it was you were less practicing, but like currently like would you attribute to

like changes in the practicing of your faith like to people you had met after Davidson or kind of individual changes? Did you stay in Charlotte after Davidson? Did a location impact your practices after?

BB: Sure, so yeah, my time frame, so I graduated in 2001. For the next two years I lived in Charlotte, and I lived with two guys, former teammates. They were two African Americans who actually at the time started playing the CFL, the Canadian football League, and they were both Christian, but not practicing, and I think at the time just from our standpoint our weekends and everything we did outside of what we're doing with our lives, I would go to work and come home, and they would be working out and trying to live the dream of playing professional football. And during that time period both for them and for me, religion was definitely secondary. I could say during that time period, other than when I was home in Florida, I took my parents if it happened to coincide, but I probably didn't go to Temple during that time period I was in Charlotte, and I would say I don't think they went to church during that two-year period. After two years, I went to University of Florida for law school, which is three years. And during that time period, I lived about a mile from the Hillel house at UF, and that is how I got invited by phone about every Friday night they would have a gathering. You know a rabbi would come in and give a speech at the end of a short small service they would do the blessing of the candles the blessing of the wine, blessing of the bread, and there was a little bit like a happy hour. And from time to time I would go do that, there was a lot more, I mean you talk about University of Florida, not including online students, we're talking about 55,000 students, just by the sheer nature I think there's about four or five thousand members there.

DK: Wow.

SS: Quite the shift.

BB: Yeah, not only did I live close to the house, but it was also a very cool facility. They did tailgates before football games. They did, even though it had nothing to do with Judaism, they would have like a Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras party. They would have tea parties. These would transpire throughout the year and stuff like that. Additionally, both of my parents went to University of Florida. My dad was in a Jewish fraternity. And as a legacy they'd be like "Hey! Come to dinner whenever you want." I rarely took them up on that, but I found that that was much more "oh you're Jewish, we have all these opportunities. Let me get you involved." That was the difference. I mean you look back at it, I went to a college that was affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, so that was nothing I ever expected and didn't receive. But then you go to the University of Florida, which is completely student organization run: as far as 90% of activities outside the classroom. Inevitably, if you have a sampling of four or five thousand students as opposed to nineteen, there's going to be a plethora of activities and opportunities that just weren't available at a school like Davison just due to circumstances.

DK: Yeah, certainly.

BB: So, I would said during that time period, I definitely found myself being much more proactive and going and attending events that cater to Jewish students. Once I graduate from law school, and I moved back to Charlotte around 2006, I was dating a girl that I went to law school

with, and she was born Catholic, and very early on from our dating she said, “I like you. We're getting serious. Before this gets any further I think there's one thing that I want you to understand is I know your mom did, but I have no plans to convert to Judaism,” and I said “that's fine,” and we continue to date, and she kind of gave a fair warning that if I think that's a problem, we could date, but it's never going to go anywhere. Fast forward to today, and that's my wife. She is still practicing Catholicism, and she regularly goes to church, and I still practice Judaism, less than she does, but still on a semi-regular basis.

DK: Awesome. I wonder, did you hear about what happened last semester on Davidson's campus?

BB: Um. Is this the...?

DK: This would be the neo-Nazis.

SS: As we like to call them.

DK: The Twitter Nazis, yeah.

SS: So, what was it like to learn about that? How did you learn about that? Did you feel like the school did a good job of communicating that with you?

BB: These were the students that..? Yeah. The school did an excellent job of all communicating that to all the alumni not just the Jewish alumni.

SS: Yeah, what was it like to learn about it?

BB: Disappointed, obviously, I think that you can look at things, you know, with very as they are and you can look at things with this particular situation, and say that response was swift and appropriate and well thought out, and you can applaud the college for that. But simultaneously, you can also look at the circumstances. My personal belief is especially that I work at Wells Fargo, and I work with a lot of folks in Europe, you see that.

SS & DK: Yeah.

BB: And I think that it's very obviously that's Antisemitism is on the rise in Europe, and that is starting to flow its way over to the United States. I think that... It's interesting I have I have a lot of friends that are on all sides of the spectrum, I think everyone can agree that Trump's an idiot, but other than that, I have focused on hard core Republicans and hard-core Democrats, and all of them in between. I think that my friends that are very liberal say there honestly should be no law where we couldn't invite people in, to give them a better opportunity for life. Folks that support AOC, a representative from New York, when they are promoting or discussing their viewpoints, which can be very left, they are Pro- “freedom for Palestine. Stop Israel occupation”, Because I feel that someone that would be more on the liberal side would typically be Pro African-American rights, pro-women's rights. I mean just across the board, which everyone can agree generally. But I will say that people that are much more liberal in nature, they have a kind of a

stance that is more like anti-Israeli. I feel like at that point they're being somewhat of level. So I think that's something that when you see the rise of antisemitism in the UK, and that kind of increasing over to the US, it's definitely a problem. It's not just something that you read about, and think oh that that's very difficult or disturbing for that community. When it hits Davidson. It hits all.

DK: Do you know anything about the push for Jewish Studies at Davidson?

BB: I'm sorry. One more time?

SS: Jewish Studies.

DK: There's some campus activism right now as far as kind of illuminating Jewish issues, and some of them, I mean, Israel is a Jewish issue from any side I know that some of our more liberal peers are definitely less pro-Israel some of our more evangelical peel peers, which has been a new experience for me, are more pro- Israel, but like I was saying there's some Jewish students getting together and saying in light of what happened last semester and also in response to kind of like a greater kind of campus cultural illiteracy with Judaism with regard to Judaism, People who think that Jews are just people who read the Old Testament, maybe we should be a little more proactive about educating people, and it shouldn't necessarily fall to Jewish students to do that, but rather have someone who can, with a PhD, come in and say well this is what Judaism has been is historically, is now, whatever you want to say. I don't know if you know anything about that.

SS: We sent out a petition, which we can send to you.

BB: Yeah, that would be great. I have not heard about that. You'll both see it when you graduate, Davidson might be reaching out to alumni for a multitude of reasons both of it has to remember what a great time you and

DK: And of course, wouldn't you like to give some money?

BB: But with that being said I think that would be a great addition. I would love to see more platforms for understanding.

DK: Wonderful. We have a couple of questions that we want to get back to you, and then we'll wrap up formally. We know you have to go in a couple of minutes. Yeah so one thing I will that kind of came to me as we were talking about when you your time at UF. Did your parents ever ask you about Jewish life at Davidson, and how are you talking about the experience you have the people who are outside of the college community?

BB: So yes, certainly I think that they would certainly say you know, "hey are you going too fast? Are you doing more services?" and the answer was sometimes yes sometimes no. I mean we would certainly talk about it, but it wasn't something that there was any sort of criticism or showing disappointment or otherwise. And you know what, I'll tell this other really quick story. When I was probably two years out, there was a family that was look--my

dad knew the family--and she was—there was a family I was looking at Davidson, and I think I think her name is Brooke Weihe, she was a year or two younger. Her dad emailed my dad about something he was concerned with about Davidson - the lack of Jewish opportunities or avenues for Jewish students and sending a child to a Presbyterian school feels is disservice and asked my dad, as someone that is Jewish that had their son go through the college for input to make an informed decision on what Davidson is like before she goes off to college next year. And my dad sends me an email saying, I've had this conversation and and I'd like to get back to him with guidance, response, but even though Davidson diluted your Judaism, I think there are opportunities for Jewish students at Davidson. I remember being furious, and I wrote back an email discussing the I think he realized that he is statements went too far, but it did show me what his viewpoint was at that time differences between practicing and the culture and his statement was out of line.

SS: Gotcha. This is slightly more random, but also related to... actually next week, we're bringing in Dr. Ron Linden who, I don't know if you're familiar with the Linden affair which happened in '77, he was a professor of political science who was hired at Davidson, and...

DK: Rather offered a job.

SS: Sorry, was not hired. He, at the time, the college was operating on a policy called Christian tenure, and he was a Jewish professor and basically it stipulated that while he was here he would consciously uphold the Christian tradition.

DK: Essentially, Dr. Linden was denied a job because he was Jewish. We were just wondering if you had a sense of the fact that that was true.

SS: Or that had happened or if you had heard about it on campus, or just mention of it while you were here.

BB: No, I had not. You know what that reminds me of there was a proposal shortly after I graduated to change the bylaws or that's what have been about 2002 or 2003. You guys may know more about this than I can recall offhand. It have changed the bylaws of the college, whether they want to expressly state that it was upholding Christian values or something of that nature right, and that was I that was the first time in the real world where I'm outside my bubble and all of sudden real world issues faced me in a way that didn't when I was protected in private school study, I just felt like that was just such a strange feeling to all of a sudden you know what, put your big-boy pants on, you're an adult now, the coddling is over because this is something that not only am I facing, but I'm facing directly from what I used to consider my bubble.

DK: Yeah, and we'll just ask a little more explicitly for the sake of the archives: did you experience antisemitism, did you hear of antisemitism, we've heard stories of people pledging different frats and having swastikas basically waking up and seeing swastikas on their door, I don't know if it you experience anything that explicit, but besides the couponing...

BB: I think that if I was overly sensitive, the statements that were made I would probably label as such, but I think that when you are close to someone or teammates or what have you

like I used to kid with one of them one of the guys that actually ended up living with for two years, was probably my best friend at Davidson was African American. And I used to tell him, as much as we're hanging out like I'm living on CPT, which he called Color People Time, with you. You know, and that because we would kind of joke about these things amongst each other, but if I didn't know him well enough people could view these statements as racist. But he's my best friend. I certainly heard statements from time to time, but I never said to myself, "this was antisemitism".

DK: Yeah. Of course. We just wanted to ask. Finally, so as we're wrapping up um is there anything else, you'd like us to record today just kind of like extraneous that we didn't touch on, but you feel like could be worthwhile for posterity.

SS: Or thought we didn't ask and should have.

BB: Probably just reiterate that what the initiative but you mentioned, I think that's tremendous and I think it's important. Again, I think that there is a growing problem in the United States of tolerance for antisemitism where not only is it more prevalent events of antisemitism I think than it was 20 years ago, but I think that it doesn't shock the you know the senses to the same extent that it probably would for them. But anytime you try to install these items, you're also going to have some folks that will probably say that this stuff is unnecessary why would we waste our time on that? and I think that that's going to be very interesting to see how this plays out, but I think that the initiative is great!

DK: Yeah! We've seen some positive movement as far as the college committing to hiring a visiting professor and trying to raise money in the meantime for an endowed chair, but we're still in the very early stages, but at the very least the posting is up and there should be someone next semester, which is really awesome.

SS: And also, if you if you think of other people, if other people come to mind If you if you do think of people um, send them send their names our way because we do want to get as many kind of oral history testimonies as we possibly can, but thank you so much.

DK: We really appreciate it.

SS: It's great meeting you.

DK: Absolutely.

SS: So I'll be in touch with the formal permissions forum, and if you would like to tailor that in any way or talk through that I'd be happy to um, and we'll keep you posted on kind of what the final products going to look like, and where your oral history will lie in the archives.

BB: Okay perfect.

SS: Thank you so much!

BB: Thank you guys! I appreciate you guys doing this. This is great.

DK: Absolutely.

SS: Thanks, take care.