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Geoff Calvert, M.D. Interview for the Boonshoft School of Medicine 50th Anniversary Oral History Project

Geoff Calvert

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
Boonshoft School of Medicine 50th Anniversary Oral History Project
Interview with Geoff Calvert (GC)

Interview Date: May 11, 2022

Interviewed by: Kirsten Dilger (KD)

TRANSCRIPT

KD

So, as you know, we're just talking about your medical school career and all the fun stuff that comes with it. So, if you don't mind, just saying your name, your graduating class and then what are you doing right now?

GC

So, my name is Geoff Calvert, and my graduating class was 1983, and currently I work for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I'm located in Cincinnati, and the part of the CDC that I work at is called the World Trade Center Health Program, which is involved with administering a healthcare program for people who either responded to the World Trade Center terrorist attack, or who lived and worked around the World Trade Center. So, I'm the associate director for clinical quality, which means I'm involved with setting policy, procedures, doing a little bit of research, and that's that's pretty much, I think answers your questions.

KD

Absolutely. That's really cool. So, now, going on to the Wright State questions, why did you decide to go to Wright State for medical school?

GC

Oh, well, I had- I got accepted at two medical schools, the one in Toledo and Wright State, and so it was basically I applied to all the schools in Ohio, and those are the two that I got into. So, it was a choice between those two, and I think, yeah, I just preferred Dayton over Toledo.

KD

And what was the application process like?

GC

So, you know, you submitted an application- so I went to undergrad at Ohio University in Athens-

KD

That's where I went to undergrad.

GC

Pardon?

KD

That's where I went to undergrad, too. [*laughs*]

GC

Oh, okay. Yeah, no, I love that. Yeah, Athens was great. So, yeah, just, you know, applied, you have to take the medical... what is it, the MCAT, the Medical College Aptitude Test, and then submit the application, and then I got invited for interviews at- in Dayton. And then you just basically wait to see if you got admitted or not. So, yeah, it was an exciting day when I got the letter of acceptance.

KD

And so, what was that first year like for you at Wright State?

GC

So, I think... yeah, that was, you know... this is going back, what, almost I guess 40 years, so it's-

KD

It's okay.

GC

It's a while back, but yeah. No, I recall it was difficult. It was, yeah, you know, kind of maybe a level, a step up, in terms of just the rigor and time commitments compared to going to college. So, yeah, it was a lot of work, as I recall. So, yeah, it was kind of a struggle, but, you know, you get through.

KD

Yeah, what were the classes like? Do you remember what you took? Ish?

GC

Oh, definitely I remember anatomy. The anatomy lab. And so, like, there were like, oh, what, at least two, maybe four of us per body. And I think we had about a 100 people in the class. So, I guess there were probably 25 bodies in the class. And so, yeah, that was, you know- and just the odor. I think at that time, this is, what, 1979, they were probably using formaldehyde to preserve the bodies, so yeah, the smell was kind of horrendous. And, yeah, I remember one day when we were dissecting the bodies, one of the bodies- I guess they were dissecting the neck- and the head kind of came off, rolled off the table onto the floor. So, that was kind of a strange experience. So, that's... yeah, I mean, I think that's... and then there was like the neuro-anatomy lab, where we just dealt with the brains, that was kind of interesting. Yeah, kind of holding that human brain in your hand. So, definitely, yeah, you know, the anatomy lab, just dissecting the human body, and getting familiar with the... all the details- all the tissues, organs,

vessels, nerves- was pretty fascinating, and then for the rest of it, it was, as I recall, just kind of coursework, going to class, listening to the lectures, taking notes. I remember also in medical school that, you know, unlike undergrad, where I felt like I had to get straight A's to get in the medical school, well, since I was in medical school, I didn't feel like I needed to get straight A's anymore. It was just, I just need to kind of keep the C average, to keep, uh, you know, keep so I could graduate, and I remember, yeah, it was at the time Reagan was president, so, there was the fear of, like, nuclear war, and I was like, you know, this planet might not be around much longer, I'm not going to spend all my time just studying. I want to enjoy my life at this point. So, yeah, I did enough to get to pass.

KD

You're a doctor now, so-

GC

Yeah, I'm a doctor, right. But, you know, definitely enough to... that was kind of, had been my dream since I was very young, I wanted to be a doctor, so I wasn't going to give that up, but I felt like, you know, I could have a more well-rounded experience compared to college, even though going to OU, it has its reputation, but I was like, straight arrow, studying a lot more than my friends when I was an undergrad.

KD

Yeah, you know, you get a well-rounded experience at OU, I would say. *[laughs]*

GC

Oh, yeah.

KD

But Wright State, you know, it doesn't have a hospital attached to it. So, what was it like to work with the community hospitals during like your second and third year?

GC

Oh, I guess that was more like the third and fourth years. Maybe a little bit in the second year.

KD

Yeah.

GC

Because even the first and second years were both classwork, classroom, and I think maybe, as I recall, maybe, you know, in the first and second years, you might have spent like a half day a week at a clinic, maybe in the second year. Not even in the first year. So, it was more the third and fourth years-

KD

Okay.

GC

-and I think... hmm, yeah, you know, we had the VA hospital in Dayton, so that was almost kind of like a university hospital. It was, you know, a government-run hospital, and then, yeah, there was St. Elizabeth's, Miami Valley. So, I think, yeah, I tried to do as many rotations as I could at the VA Hospital, the public hospital, I've always been kind of more interested in public sponsored health care versus the private health care. But, yeah, I don't think that was- I never found that as an issue that we didn't have a like a branded hospital affiliated with the medical school. There was plenty of opportunity for interaction with clinicians in the hospitals and doing the hospital-based rotations. Yeah, and there was that D.O. hospital, too. Grandview?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

-was another hospital there in Dayton.

KD

Yeah, so would you say it was a benefit to your class, to have, like, the community rotations?

GC

You know, that was the only experience I had, so I really can't compare with the experience at other medical schools. But yeah, I think, you know, definitely it was... it enhanced the experience to have that, those community rotations, and having that family medicine focus, I think, was important, and that's probably another reason why I chose Wright State, now that you mentioned it. There was that family medicine focus at Wright State, at least at that time. I'm not sure if that's still the case.

KD

I think so. Kind of, you know.

GC

Are you in medical school?

KD

No, I'm just- I'm in the public history program, so I work with them.

GC

Oh, Okay. Archives.

KD

But my mom works at Miami Valley, and my brother works at Kettering, and my brother is going MPA school, so I have a little bit of medical insight, I would say.

GC

Oh, yeah, okay. Oh, yeah, Kettering was another hospital. I enjoyed going to that hospital, now that you mention it. Because at the time, that was [a] vegetarian, Seventh Day Adventist. Oh, yeah, I just loved the cafeteria there. Yeah, that was great.

KD

Yeah, my brother kind of struggled with it, you know, getting used to it, and he went to Kettering College for a little bit, and he was just like, "Oh, my gosh".

GC

You mean, the diet?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Yeah, no, I loved it. It was great.

KD

And so, moving away from, like, just the academics, can we talk about your classmates and what you did outside of medical school?

GC

Oh, outside of medical school?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Let's see. Well, like, yeah, I guess... yeah, I mean, a lot of my classmates were kind of a clique-y, and I didn't really fit in with most of those cliques. So... but yeah, I had some friends who I would hang out with, or- and I had friends kind of outside of the medical school. So, I guess probably when I was hanging out, I was more with people who were not affiliated with the medical school. Like my girlfriend at the time, she was an artist, so I'd be mostly hanging out with her- she was a painter- and hanging out with, like, her art school friends. Listening to music, going to bars and listening to bands.

KD

Mm hmm. Did you ever do... so I've talked to some other people in your class, and all of them talked about their like football team. Did you ever play football?

GC

No. [Laughs] I was never that big or athletic. No, I was kind of more nerdy.

KD

Yeah. That's fair.

GC

Yeah, and probably, yeah, at OU, too. They never had a good- well, at least when I was going there- the football team was never that good. Always pretty much had a losing season.

KD

No. Our basketball team got good, last year, but-

GC

Uh, huh. But I remember when I was at OU, I was part of the pop concert committee.

KD

Yeah?

GC

In like the first year I was there- this is back in 1975- we brought in, like, Bob Dylan, and his Rolling Thunder Review-

KD

Oh my gosh.

GC

-and we brought in Bruce Springsteen, and the Born to Run tour, and both those concerts were at Memorial Hall, you know, right there on the green. It's just a nice, intimate location, and since I was on the committee that brought those bands in, I had great seats, right? You know, maybe 6 rows back, right in the middle. But it's kind of funny that- are you familiar with Bob Dylan?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

And they did that documentary, Martin Scorsese did a documentary on the whole Rolling Thunder Review?

KD

Yeah, I know what you're talking about. I have not seen it.

GC

Oh, yeah, you should check it out. But when they roll the credits, they show all the places where he performed, and OU is not listed.

KD

Really?

GC

Yeah. I'm like scratching my head, "wait a second".

KD

That's disappointing.

GC

It's not there. Yeah. So, I'm thinking I need to like get online and see if like the, um, what was the... OU Post? The student newspaper? I'm sure they would have had an article about it, like, the next day.

KD

I'm sure.

GC

I need to, like, track it down and see.

KD

Yeah.

GC

Yeah, you know, it's not like my mind is playing tricks on me.

KD

Yeah, like, "I swear I remember this".

GC

Huh

KD

You're like, "I swear I remember this".

GC

Oh, yeah [*laughs*]. Because it was even kind of impromptu, the Bob Dylan one. It was more like, you know, it was, "Hey, Bob Dylan's going to be around next week, can he perform at the university? So it was, yeah, it was definitely not a whole lot of planning.

KD

Mm hmm. Um, so, do you remember, like, match day? Like, how was that, getting into your residency?

GC

Match day? I was actually in, I think, Nepal?

KD

Really?

GC

Nepal or India, on match day. Because, you know, that was the fourth year in medical school, so you could do rotations away from the university.

KD

Mm Hmm.

GC

So, I kind of maximized that. I think you could do, like, up to four months away.

KD

Mm hmm

GC

So, I did two months of that in Nepal.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

And so that was probably like, uh, I'm thinking, like February-March of '83, that fourth year.

KD

Mm Hmm.

GC

And then, since I was over there, I figured it could be a while before I get back to this part of the world, I'm going to take some vacation, so I went to work through India for about six weeks. Or at least... yeah, maybe not quite six weeks. Maybe it was more like two or three weeks. So, yeah, I wasn't actually at the-

KD

Wasn't present.

GC

-at match day.

KD

What was it like to work as, like, a medical student in Nepal, though? Like, what were you doing there?

GC

So, we were doing, uh, like a community health survey-

KD

Mm hmm

GC

-where we went like from... we went to this village where we had to like fly in because there were no roads to the village. We had to like take a prop plane, which landed on a grass field, and then from that grass field, we had to hike a couple of days to get to the village. And once we got to the village, yeah, we lived in tents and we would just go, you know, it was kind of in a valley, and we just went from door to door. We had we local people who were bilingual, spoke English, uh, and the local language, and just, uh, went around and interviewed the people about their health status. So, we did that for about a month, out in the field.

KD

That's really cool.

GC

Oh, I remember just one of the things that really struck me was how clear the sky was, and you'd look up at night and there were so many stars, you really didn't see any blackness between the stars.

KD

Wow.

GC

Just a ceiling of... yeah, it was just amazing. You could see the Milky Way so easily. It was just awe, awe invoking.

KD

Yeah. That's really cool. So, you missed match day, but where did you end up-

GC

I missed match day, yeah.

KD

Yeah. Oh, well. But where did you end up doing your residency?

GC

So, I did my residency at Cook County Hospital in Chicago.

KD

Okay.

GC

So, I knew... yeah, I wanted to go to a public hospital. So, and that was one of the few where I... my primary interest was doing occupational medicine, kind of, uh, health care for workers. But I wanted to- based on the advice of one of my advisors at medical school, he said, "You should also combine that, because that's a preventive medicine residency, and among other clinicians, preventive medicine doesn't hold a whole lot of stature, so you should also combine it with a primary care residency", like family medicine, or internal medicine or pediatrics. So, this is one of the few programs where they combined an internal medicine and a preventive occupational medicine residency, and you could... internal medicine is typically three years, preventive medicine is two years, So, if you get them kind of in a series, it would take me five years. By combining them, it was just a four-year program.

KD

Okay.

GC

So, it saved a year.

KD

Saved a year and you got two different experiences.

GC

Yeah. Boards eligible in both those specialties, plus you got a master's in public health degree in those four years.

KD

Really?

GC

Yeah. So, yeah. There was another program like that up in Detroit.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

But they combined family medicine with occupational medicine.

KD

Wow.

GC

I guess that was more... you know, I never really was jazzed about, like, pediatrics or obstetric gynecology. So, the whole... you know, and then Detroit versus Chicago.

KD

Yeah.

GC

It was like, you know, I prefer doing internal medicine, and I prefer to be in Chicago, the bigger city, compared to Detroit and family medicine, so that's kind of how I chose that, at Cook County. And even when I interviewed up there, we kind of had a gentleman's agreement that I would rank them first and they would rank me first. So, there wasn't any doubt that I would get into the program.

KD

[Laughs] Mm hmm.

GC

So, it wasn't, yeah, it wasn't too... I guess I'm not- I wonder how I even found out, you know, since I was halfway around the world.

KD

That's what I was going to say.

GC

Yeah, probably, you know, I found out once I got back-

KD

Yeah.

GC

-about who I got matched to, but it wasn't like any big mystery or it wasn't like I called my friends. Yeah, there was no one surprised, and so both parties kept up their bargain.

KD

So how do you think Wright State helped you with that early career and residency? Like, did it set you up for success, do you think?

GC

Yeah. I mean, I guess, you know, in my mind all medical schools are basically the same.

They all are basically selling the same product. So, it's kind of like detergent. They're all, you know, you buy a bottle of detergent and it's going to clean your clothes. You know, they all have different names on the bottles. But, you know, I feel like I got a good quality education from Wright State. You know, it wasn't the most prestigious name, but it doesn't have to be, you know? I've got the MD after my name, and it doesn't say MD from Harvard, or MD from Wright State. It's just MD.

KD

And, like, when you are going to Wright State, it was still a fairly new medical school. Like, you were, what-

GC

Yeah, 's the fourth class. Yeah, number four.

KD

So, you guys are setting up their name, right?

GC

We were, yeah. I mean, it wasn't even called the boon... what is it? Boonsh...

KD

Boonshoft.

GC

Boonshoft. Yeah, it was just the Wright State University School of Medicine

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

So, yeah, and that was kind of one of the neat new things, you know, it had a new building, all the faculty were relatively new, they weren't, like, ossified, calcified, and it was all kind of still new for them as well. So, yeah, it was kind of an exciting atmosphere.

KD

Yeah. Did you feel like it was a gamble, though, too, to start out at a fairly new medical school? Or were you just like, "I'm in it. I love the area".

GC

Not really, you know, and like I said, I had had an option between that school or Toledo, and Toledo was also new at the time. I don't think it was maybe roughly the same age. So, yeah, I was just grateful to have the opportunity to get into one of those schools. So, yeah, I wasn't going to be choosy. Yeah, I was just grateful. So, you know, it's still- you kind of wondered how

long is this going to go, given that it's, you know, is it going to succeed? But the state of Ohio poured a lot of money into it, just like they pour a lot of money into all the medical schools and I can't imagine why would they yank the funding and yank the support for it.

KD

Yeah.

GC

Once a public school gets created, I'm not aware of public schools that kind of close down. You hear about that for private schools, private liberal arts colleges, but I am not really aware of public schools kind of being shut down, So, it really wasn't a gamble, I don't think.

KD

Yeah, and like it spread so much. I think the community really liked it at the beginning, just having, you know, medical students coming to the hospitals and stuff.

GC

Yeah, that's true. And, you know, there was also Wright-Patt there, too. That was another hospital.

KD

Yeah.

GC

At the base.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Yeah, I remember I did some rotations there as well. So that was neat. It was a lot easier to get on the base before 9/11.

KD

I just went onto the base recently and we went in with like- like, my teacher works on base, so we went in in her car and I was, I had my ID out and they didn't even check. I was so nervous about it, like, you know, they come in and like stroll up to your car and like, really look at her ID.

GC

Oh, yeah. No, I go to Wright-Patt a lot, because I was in the uniform service.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

For 30 years.

KD

Oh, really?

GC

I was in the Public Health Service. Kind of like, you know, the Surgeon General-

KD

Yeah.

GC

-with those uniforms. it's kind of the head of the Public Health Service.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

So, I was part of that, and I achieved the rank of captain.

KD

Wow, congrats.

GC

And so when I go to Wright-Patt, you know, so I'm a veteran now, so I, have access to all of the bases.

KD

Yeah.

GC

And typically, like, I go up to Columbus maybe like every third week, and because we also have a condo up there. So, you know, I spend time between Cincinnati and Columbus, and a lot of times I'll stop off at Wright-Patt just to do some shopping, and I go through the gate and I get a nice salute from the from the guards, even though I'm retired. But still, you know, it says captain.

KD

[Laughs] Feels good.

GC

Oh, gosh, yeah, it makes me feel really good to get that salute. They really step back and, you know, give me a really nice uh, nice salute.

KD

Yeah, like, "yeah, that's me". So, when did you start that? After your residency? Or like, when?

GC

I started that, yeah, after my residency, when I joined the CDC.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Yeah, I joined, uh, a two-year training program.

KD

Okay.

GC

And back when I joined, that would have been... what? 1987?

KD

Mm Hmm.

GC

You pretty much had to join the- it's called the Commissioned Corps, Public Health Service. You had to join the Commissioned Corps.

KD

Okay.

GC

They kind of railroad you. I mean, I wasn't too excited at the time about, "Oh, being in a uniform service? Why do I have to do that? You know, I'm a conscientious objector. I don't believe in killing people. You gotta understand that". And they, you know, and I said, "I have flat fee. You still want me?", and "Yeah, yeah, we still want you". Because, you know, if you didn't want to join the commission corps, you had to really fight to stay out of it. You know, I wasn't that opposed to it. There were maybe 1 out of the- again, maybe... well, I guess there are about 70 people in my class.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

That was called the Epidemic Intelligence Service. It's a two-year training program in applied epidemiology. And so out of the 70 people in my class, maybe only two or three were not part of

the Commissioned Corps. But there were also some people from- maybe 10% of the class was from a foreign country, and of course they can't be part of that uniform service. But among the U. S. citizens who were in the program, there were probably only 2 or 3 who weren't in that Commissioned Corps.

KD

Okay.

GC

But, you know, just so many of all the benefits that you got being as part of the corps-

KD

Mm hmm, yeah.

GC

You know, I'm glad they kind of railroaded me, and pushed me into it. That was one of those things where, if I had a choice, I probably would have made the wrong decision-

KD

Yeah.

GC

-and wouldn't have joined it. So, yeah, I was grateful that... it was fortuitous that they pushed me into it.

KD

And now you get saluted whenever you go to Wright-Patt.

GC

Now I get saluted, you know, and I'm retired so I've got a pension from them, but then I'm still working full time as a civil servant.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

So-

KD

You're doing good.

GC

I can't complain, yeah.

KD

Yeah.

GC

And, you know, basically almost free healthcare.

KD

See. That's good.

GC

Yeah. It's just, yeah, and the benefits just go on, too. Just being able to go on the base and shop there and take advantage of the resources that they have available.

KD

Yeah. All right, well, any final comments about your experience with the Boonshoft School of Medicine? Anything to keep in the archives forever that you want everyone to hear?

GC

[Laughs] Uh, anything else. So, are you just, like, recording these interviews? Is this kind of like, you know, on NPR they have that- what do they call it, where they record those people, and on, like, Friday mornings...

KD

[Laughs] I know what you mean. So, this is, um- so, I'm a graduate student in the public history program, and this is, like, it's called oral history. It's just getting a personal insight on the history of the first four years, or the first four classes of the Boonshoft School of Medicine. And so I'm interviewing I think 15 people across the four classes, and then, you know, I'm recording this now. Right? Um, and then I'm creating the transcript and putting it- eventually it will go out in the archive, like, in the online archive, and then it is also for the 50th anniversary of the Boonshoft School of Medicine.

JC

What was that part? With the 50th anniversary?

KD

It's for the 50th anniversary. That's why-

GC

Oh, okay.

KD

They kind of like commissioned the archives, I don't know, or like, yeah.

GC

Are you just interviewing people from those first four years?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Just the first four years, oh, okay.

KD

So.

GC

And you put out a call to people, and anybody who volunteered?

KD

Mm hmm, yeah. Her name's Angela, she is like our liaison. She gave me a list of people by class, and so I've just been emailing and emailing, and hoping people agree to come and interview, which I have right now about half, now that I've interviewed you. So, I'm doing pretty good, but I think I've gotten everyone from '83 who wanted to be interviewed interviewed. So. Which is good, you guys are the most, like, enthusiastic about it.

GC

Really [*laughs*]. I guess we were probably, you know, maybe the biggest class of the four, too. I think every year they increased the class size a little bit.

KD

Yeah.

GC

Maybe that has a factor.

KD

Yeah, something like that.

GC

How many people from '83 are getting interviewed?

KD

Um, I think five.

GC

Five?

KD

Yeah.

GC

Out of the 100?

KD

Yeah. What can you do. Because I've interviewed like, James Augustine, and Kris Brickman- he works in Toledo now, so it's funny you mentioned that, um... see, now I'm blanking.

GC

Sure, I know those. Yeah, I remember them.

KD

Yeah, James Augustine played in the football team, so-

GC

At Wright State?

KD

Um, just at like the... they had, like, intramural football or something.

GC

Oh, you mean as part of the medical school?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Yeah, they had, like, tag. Tag football. Yeah, I was never athletic, and like I had those flat feet and stuff.

KD

Yeah.

GC

Yeah.

KD

I can understand that.

GC

Yeah, I was kind of more of a hippy, and hanging out more with, like, the hippies.

KD

Like, the artists and stuff.

GC

The artists, yeah.

KD

So, I think John Lyman is in the '83 class. See, I interview all these people, and then I'm like-okay, where... where am I. Oh, Michael... Michael Aleksei? I probably butchered his last name. But him, James, um...

GC

So, all men, huh?

KD

Yeah! So, I have, like- so there's a woman in '80, and there's, um, there's like one- her name is Cheryl, she's from '82, but her email didn't work. So, it's just like by happenstance that I've been only interviewing men, which is... you know, I want to get, like, a full experience, so hopefully I interview some women soon.

GC

Mm hmm.

KD

Oh, John Lyman's in '80. I was completely wrong about him.

GC

Okay. Yeah, one of my classmates was, um, his name was... I think it was Richard Beers. Rick Beers.

KD

Rick Beers?

GC

Yeah, and he- his dad was on faculty.

KD

Oh, wow.

GC

And his dad, actually, he's the one that gave me that advice about if I do the occupational medicine- that preventive medicine type of residency, to combine it with a primary care residency, and just that little piece of advice really stood well.

KD

Helped you out, right.

GC

Oh, yeah. I'm just so grateful that he gave me that advice, and it was just so true. I've, you know, countless times throughout my career.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

It just... yeah, so just that piece of advice was just so, so, so valuable.

KD

Yeah.

GC

Then there was Dr., um, what's his name? Dr Alter.

KD

Okay.

GC

He was the chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine.

KD

Okay.

GC

And so he was, yeah, he was... you know, I really spent a lot of time with him, and we became friends, and so he also provided me with a lot of advice and just was a great source of support. So, I think you had those two faculty members, they are probably the ones I remember the most.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

But definitely remember them the most, you know, to this day I think about the two of them, and just the gratitude I have for the time that they shared, and the wisdom that they shared with me.

Somehow, yeah, I always try to pay that forward when I have opportunities to deal with- with people in training. It's, um, you know, always try to try to accept the offer to help train-

KD

Students.

GC

Yeah, students and, you know, fellows. Yeah, because, you know, it's a benefit, even to the person who's providing the training, you can learn so much.

KD

Yeah, they say that, like, teaching someone really helps you, like, learn this stuff, which is so- it feels counter intuitive.

GC

Right.

KD

But it feels like it works.

GC

But yeah, when you actually get into it, it's so true. You know, to teach the material, you have to know the material on a very, very, very familiar basis.

KD

Yeah.

GC

So, yeah, you're doing a deep dive on that material so that you're prepared to answer any questions that you might get on it, and also it helps to make the material more interesting, too. If you know a lot about it, you can identify and find interesting twists-

KD

Yeah.

GC

Unique, interesting pieces of information, kind of the pearls of the topic. It's a lot of work. Yeah, it's definitely a lot of work. But, yeah, there's definitely payoffs.

KD

I mean, just the medical world is just a lot of work. Like, you know, I'm just history, but like my whole family is in medicine. Like, everyone has worked at Miami Valley in my family, so it's like, oh, my gosh, how do you remember all this stuff, and like all these diseases and all. Like, it's just so funny.

GC

And it all changes too, you know? They say, like, the half-life of medical knowledge is 4 years. So, everything after four years, half of it's changed. So, it's just constant keeping up with it, which is... that's part of the fascination and the appeal of the whole field. It's everchanging. New discoveries are being made.

KD

Mm hmm. Well, especially when, you know, there's great big worldwide pandemics happening!

GC

Oh, yeah, true. Yeah, and being at the CDC, you know, I get to be at the, um, you know, on the vanguard, on the front lines, dealing with the different issues. So, that's been fun. Like, you know, for the pandemic I worked on the- when the vaccines first came out. So, the last December, of 2020, even before we got approved, I was working on the vaccines, working on tracking the safety of the vaccines. So, I did that for like three months. Yeah. So, you know, I was on board, it was like, yeah, a detail to help out with that, because that's not related to the World Trade Center.

KD

No, no.

GC

So, we were detailed, and did that for like 3 months, from a few weeks before they got approved until like the first few months of experience with it, tracking all the side effects.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

So, yeah, that was pretty cool. And then I was in- when they had the Ebola outbreaks in Africa, I was in Africa working on that, tracking that, that epidemic. That wasn't a pandemic, fortunately.

KD

Yeah, thank God.

GC

But I guess it was kind of a pandemic for them, though.

KD

Not a global one, though.

GC

That was in Liberia. So, yeah, Liberia, Sierra Leone, those countries that... yeah, they were pretty... it was pretty devastating for those countries. So, I get that experience. So, yeah, you

know, responding to hurricanes, like Hurricane Katrina, I was in New Orleans soon after that, helping out with that. The Anthrax attacks back in 2001, I was in DC working and responding to those. So-

KD

You've been all over.

GC

All over, yeah. Yeah.

KD

Alright.

GC

Yeah. A good career.

KD

Yeah. Any questions for me or anything else you want to say?

GC

No, I think you've told me. I was interested about the whole- this whole program, and so, yes, it's fascinating. So, the 50th anniversary, huh? That's going be in 2025, huh?

KD

Mm hmm. I think that's the date they're using. So, yeah, it's coming up, but-

GC

That will be my 50th high school reunion, too.

KD

Wow.

GC

1975 is when I graduated from high school.

KD

Yeah. So, I'm excited about it. I really like doing this project. Because, well, it's easy, because I can just go to my brother and be like, what is this? Like, what are they talking about?

GC

Mm hmm. *[laughs]*

KD

And they get really, like, he gets really excited about it. Even though I'm not really interviewing local people, so he's like, "Oh, I bet I know them", and I'm like- the last person I interviewed lives in Florida, so I'm like, "Well..."

GC

Oh, is it James Augustine?

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

Yeah, yeah, he's in Florida. And he's retired, too, isn't he?

KD

I think he's, like, partially. You know, doctors don't really retire. It's like, "I want to retire, but partially".

GC

But yeah, he used to work in Dayton, as I recall, and then- yeah. It was a good 10 years ago, I think, he retired. I think he just got fed up with medicine?

KD

Yeah. He stuck with- he did stuff with like EMTs, and back and forth from like Florida and Dayton. But again, like, everybody works for a time when they retire. I mean, you're partially retired, and you're still working full-time.

GC

Oh, yeah. Um, yeah. I retired from my one job. *[laughs]*

KD

Yeah, and kept working the other.

GC

Kept working, yeah. Basically came back the next day, working full-time.

KD

There you go.

GC

Yeah, I was, you know, I had to retire in the Commissioned Corps. In the uniformed service, you basically have to retire after 30 years. But I was only 60 at the time, so I was like-

KD

I can still keep going.

GC

I'm not ready to just stay home.

KD

Yeah.

GC

So, and they were willing to keep me, you know, bring me on.

KD

Mm hmm.

GC

So, yeah, I'm still working full-time and enjoy it.

KD

That's good. But I'll let you know if I have any questions about your interview. I will be sending, like, a release form for you sign, it's just basically- it's like the legal stuff, like, I'm okay with having my interview out for the world. And if you have any issue, like, any issues with, like, stuff being put out. Like, you didn't say anything elicit or illegal or anything like that.

GC

No [*laughs*]

KD

So, I think you should be good to go, but you just need to sign the form.

GC

I should be good to go. Yeah. Alright. Well, yeah, feel free to reach out anytime, Kirsten.

KD

Alright. Yeah, it's been fun.

GC

it was a pleasure, thank you. Thanks for the opportunity.

KD

Of course, you have a great day.

GC

You, too. Bye.

KD

Bye.