

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

EAGER: My name is Sabrina Eager, and I am at Baker Library in Hanover New Hampshire, at Dartmouth College campus, and I'm doing a zoom interview with Warner Traynham who is in his home in View Heights in Los Angeles, California. Today is October 24th, 2022, and this is an interview [for the Dartmouth Black] Lives Oral History Project. Hello, Reverend Traynham. Thank you so much for joining me today. First, I'd like to learn a little bit about your childhood. Can you please state when and where you were?

TRAYNHAM: I was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1936.

EAGER: And can you tell me the names of your parents?

TRAYNHAM: Hezekiah and Virginia Traynham.

EAGER: Could you spell those for me?

TRAYNHAM: Virginia. You can spell, I'm sure. Hezekiah is a H E Z E K I A. I'm sorry, that's not correct. H E Z E K I A H. Hezekiah, it's a Biblical name. King of —.

EAGER: King of what?

TRAYNHAM: Judah. In the Bible.

EAGER: And what was it like, growing up in Baltimore?

TRAYNHAM: Well, that is not a simple question to answer. I was born Black in Baltimore when —. Baltimore was in, was part of obviously Maryland, and Maryland was a segregated state so I—. Excuse me. It's the phone. We'll probably have that problem going on. I was born Black in the segregated state of Maryland. I went to segregated schools. I didn't know any better. And I, let's see, what else can I say about what it was like growing up in Maryland. I had a normal childhood. My parents were, my father was a school teacher. My mother was a housewife. My father became principal of a junior high school in Maryland. We were middle class Black people, and I enjoyed my youth in Baltimore.

EAGER: So, you're —. Did you go to the school that your dad was the principal and teacher at? Or was it a different district?

TRAYNHAM: Oh no. No, no, no. They would never have done. Ha ha ha. No, I did not. No. But my father, there were two Black communities in Baltimore, one on the west side and one on the east side. We lived on the west side. One of the things that meant was that

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

whenever when I entered school, and when I finished senior high school, all my teachers knew who my father was. So, the first question I always got when I showed up for class was, "Are you Hezekiah Traynham's son?" And so, I had what is it, what's the phrase? It takes a village to raise a child. Well, all my school teaches new my parent, my father anyway. And so, the feedback loop was complete. Let's put it like that. Okay?

EAGER: Was it a close community growing up?

TRAYNHAM: Happily, I was a good and enthusiastic student, I don't know what my life would have been like if I hadn't been.

EAGER: Did you have any siblings growing up?

TRAYNHAM: No, I was, am only child.

EAGER: What was that like?

TRAYNHAM: What was that like?

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: Well, I spent a lot of time with my parents, number one. And number two, I learned to entertain myself by myself. Number three, there were a number of kids in the neighborhood, not related to me, obviously, but they were my friends and I played with them.

EAGER: Would you have called it a closed community, your neighborhood, or not?

TRAYNHAM: I'm sorry?

EAGER: Would you call it a close community, your neighborhood growing up?

TRAYNHAM: I wouldn't say the community was close. What I would say was people did look out for one another. I have told this story, many times. If I went up to the next block, I've lived in an apartment for the first, through Junior High School. Third floor, apartment in a block of apartment houses. And if I went up to the next block and did something I shouldn't have done, I could pretty well count on one of my neighbors getting a hold of one of my parents, probably my mother because she was at home, so that when I got home, she had already gotten the story. And so, I

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

tried to behave myself. Let's put it like that.

EAGER: So, what was your high school like, in Baltimore?

TRAYNHAM: My high school was named for Frederick Douglass. It was a high school.

Eager: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: I'm not sure what to say about it. I had very good teachers, and I enjoyed my high school career.

EAGER: Would you say like your high school experience had an influence on you deciding to come to Dartmouth? Or how did that decision making process happen while a high school student?

TRAYNHAM: Well, actually, yes. That is one of my favorite stories. As I said, Maryland was a segregated state.

EAGER: Yes.

TRAYNHAM: There were only Black students in my high school. There were only Black teachers in my high school. The connection with Dartmouth is as follows. Well, let me back up for a moment. I met a fellow at church who went to Hamilton College. He was already obviously in Hamilton College. And I also met a fellow who was a neighbor that I had never seen before, who went to Dartmouth. Each one of them spoke up for their college. As a result, I applied to only two colleges: Hamilton College and Dartmouth College. And I wrote the essays and sent them money and so forth. At my high school, my high school counselor told me something I was not aware of, and that was that there was a law on the books in the state of Maryland that said, remember this is a segregated state in 1953, if there was a Black student who wanted to major in a subject which was offered at the white school to which he could not go, that would have been the University of Maryland in College Park, and was not offered in the Black college to which he could go, which would have been Morgan State College, the state of Maryland would pay his tuition to any school in America.

EAGER: Wow.

TRAYNHAM: So, what I did was to get, as I said, I only applied to two colleges. What I did first was to get the catalogs from the University of Maryland and Morgan State College. I would

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

ordinarily have majored in history. I've always been interested in history. I have a whole, several bookcases of history books. But Maryland, both those schools had history majors, so that was out. But then I discovered that the University of Maryland had a philosophy major but the university, but the Morgan State College did not. So, when I entered Dartmouth College I knew the state of Maryland was going to pay my tuition for four years at Dartmouth. And I also knew that I had no choice except to major in philosophy because that's why they were going to pay me, my tuition.

At that point, I knew I was going to be an Episcopal priest. I had figured out that philosophy might possibly be helpful in studying theology, which as it turned out, it was. So, when I entered Dartmouth College, I knew I was going to be an Episcopal priest, and I knew I was going to major in philosophy when I crossed the door sill. I could not change that, and I did very well in philosophy, if I do say so myself. I thoroughly enjoyed the major and I enjoyed the professors in that in that area. Anyway, that's my connection between high school and Dartmouth College. Okay?

EAGER: I can hear myself. Could you lower the volume?

TRAYNHAM: Can I lower the volume? It's too loud?

EAGER: No, don't do that. No, I can just hear myself. Oh, it stopped. Okay, ignore me. Never mind. It was weird feedback. That's all good.

TRAYNHAM: I need to have some volume because I need to hear you.

EAGER: You can still hear me, right?

TRAYNHAM: Yes, go ahead.

EAGER: So, you talked about how you I already knew you wanted to be a priest going into college. What, what helped, how did you decide that? And what was your, what was your church community like at home before Dartmouth, and how did that decision come to be?

TRAYNHAM: All right. Can I excuse myself for a minute? I need to use the restroom and I'll be right back.

TRAYNHAM: Okay. Okay, I'm back. You can turn the recorder back on.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

Where was I?

EAGER: So, I asked, because you said that you had decided to already be an Episcopal priest.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, the ministry. Yes, right. Okay, my parents were members of the Methodist Church. My father was an AME, my mother was an ME, and I went to both those churches until junior high school. By the time, well, toward the end of junior high school I guess, one of the fellows that I played with in the street, in Baltimore, invited me to the Episcopal Church, which he attended, and I went to the Episcopal church, and I really got involved in it in a way in which I hadn't been involved either in the, in either of the Methodist churches. And so, I decided to be confirmed, and the confirmation class went for year, but I learned a great deal about the Episcopal church and I also got to be good friends with the priest, who was the, who conducted the confirmation class and was the Rector of the church. And I became an acolyte, and one thing led to another, and I decided I wanted to be an Episcopal priest. So that decision was made before I entered Dartmouth College, but that's, that's how it became made.

EAGER: Was it one of your closest friends that invited you to the Episcopal?

TRAYNHAM: Actually no, it wasn't. And as a matter of fact, he stopped going to the church. I continued, he's just, you know, fell away, I don't know, I can't account for it. No, he wasn't one of my closest friends. As a matter of fact, he was a little older than I was, but that's what happened.

EAGER: And what did your family think about you switching churches?

TRAYNHAM: They were fine with it. They were fine with it. As a matter of fact, after I became confirmed and became an acolyte they switched and joined my church. So, you know, there's a passage in scripture, which says, a little child shall lead them. Well, I, by my actions, not by anything I said, I encouraged my parents to follow me into the Episcopal church.

EAGER: That's cool. Then once you are at Dartmouth but was that religious community like for you?

TRAYNHAM: When I was at Dartmouth, what was the community like?

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

EAGER: The religious community.

TRAYNHAM: Specifically, the religious community? Oh, actually, the religious community was very interesting at Dartmouth. There is an Episcopal Church still as you may be aware at Dartmouth. Father [Hudder] was the Rector of that church. He was a small, wizened Englishman with a cracked voice. He used to come down the center aisle in the course of the service, shaking people's hands and so forth. Used to make the congregation stop if they were not singing with the kind of enthusiasm he thought they ought to sing with. He was famous for saying "You people are singing like Episcopalians. Sing like Methodists!" He would invariably get them to sing much better. Anyway, so there was a —. Father [Hudder] had an assistant named McBurney, and McBurney was the chaplain to the students. So, and Father [Hudder] and his wife hosted tea. This sounds odd at Dartmouth College. Remember Dartmouth College at the time I attended was an all-male institution. There were no women in sight, in their classes and everything. Except, except for Winter Carnival and Green Key, which I'm sure is still the case. Anyway, you know, that women come up to Dartmouth for those two events. Anyway.

So, there was a group of students who met regularly with the clergy at the, at the Episcopal Church. There was a fellow on campus named, George Cobflesh, and George Cobflesh Worked with the DCU, the Dartmouth Christian Union. And George Cobflesh, I'm forgetting, I've forgotten exactly what his denomination was, but he was Protestant, and George Cobflesh used to hold court in the basement of College Hall. What is now Collis Hall. And everybody when I was a student at Dartmouth passed through the snack bar in the basement of College Hall, because that's where you could pick up a hamburger and a coke. Anyway, George Cobflesh held Court in College Hall. He could be found in College Hall any evening. He was a bachelor sitting there with members of the DCU talking theology.

So, I belonged to both these groups, and it was fascinating. DCU, I got introduced to the DCU because one of the things that used to do was to get groups of students to go out into the Upper Valley and cut wood for elderly people who needed wood for their wood burning stoves. I don't know if anybody still has a wood-burning stove, but in the 50s it seemed like everybody in the Upper Valley had a wood-burning stove that they heated their houses and that they cooked on. And that's how I got introduced to the DCU. Going out. Chopping wood. Yeah, it was a service to the Upper Valley, and from there I got involved in

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

other aspects of the DCU. But those were the two religious groups that I was involved with. The DCU, of course, was a part of Dartmouth College. And of course, the Episcopal Church was a part of the Episcopal Church. Yeah.

EAGER: And did those

TRAYNHAM: Huh?

EAGER: I was going to say, did those ease your transition coming from, especially coming from like an all-Black High School to, then a very, very white Dartmouth. Did your religion help that transition at all?

TRAYNHAM: Did my religion help that transition at all?

EAGER: Or those two communities, finding those.

TRAYNHAM: I'm sorry?

EAGER: Did finding those communities specifically?

TRAYNHAM: Oh. I'm not sure. I adjusted very well to Dartmouth College. I have told people, which is not quite true, I have told people that that the first time I ever sat in a class with white students, was when I entered Dartmouth because before that I went to segregated schools. Before that I did go to segregated schools, but that was not the first time that I ever sat in a class with white students. In senior high school, I think it was probably the last year of senior high school, there was a teacher strike in Baltimore, and the public school system decided, somebody in the, I guess the superintendent, decided to have integrated, to put on integrated class on television. I think it was television. Might just have been radio, I can't tell. We had televisions then. Of course, they were only black and white, but I was selected. I mean, they made up this class. Yeah. I was selected to be in this class. I think there were probably two or three more Black students, and some white students and so forth. Don't ask me what the class was about because I don't remember. But I do remember that there was that class. That was actually the first, I mean, it didn't last very long, but that was actually the first time that I was in a class with white students. But no, when I came to Dartmouth, as I said, I have always been interested in history.

EAGER: Yes.

TRAYNHAM: And I, despite the fact that I grew up in a segregated community,

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

and went to segregated schools, I've always regarded people as people. And one thing I knew about studying history was that white people acted just as wise and just as foolish as Black people. And so, when I entered Dartmouth College, it was not a problem for me. It was for, well, some of the Black students that were my contemporaries, but it never was for me. I'm not quite sure how to account for that except as a result of my study of history. It wasn't religion, really. It was history that enabled me to deal with people as people regardless of what they were. And well, that's, that's the answer that question. Go ahead.

EAGER: Did you end up ever like finding community with the other Black students on campus at the time?

TRAYNHAM: Oh, yes, well, let me say this. At the time, Black students, the administration at Dartmouth College put Black students with Black students in freshman class. I was assigned to Gene Booth [Eugene Lane Booth '57]. So, when I arrived at Dartmouth, I was assigned to a double, and Gene Booth was my roommate. Garvey Clark [Garvey Elliott Clarke '57] was another Black student. There were only four of us in our class. There were twenty-seven hundred students at Dartmouth at the time, but in my freshman class there were only four Black students. Gene Booth became the star of the basketball team, and it was the joke around the college that I was known as Gene Booth's roommate. I didn't have a name. Gene Booth had a name because he was a basketball star. Nobody knew who I was. They just knew I was Gene Booth's roommate. So that was my name. Anyway. So, what did you ask me? You asked me about how did Black students adjust, or—?

EAGER: Well, I was asking if you guys had like a community amongst yourselves.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, right. Yeah. Yes, we had a community amongst ourselves, a community of four! So, I had to deal with other people, obviously, because there were only four Black people in my, in my class. Now, you know, there were other back students.

EAGER: Yes.

TRAYNHAM: But I don't think any class had more than for Black students in it at the time. Yeah.

EAGER: And so, what other organizations did you become really active in besides DCU?

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: Well, let's see. What other organizations did I become active? I was active in the Dartmouth Players. I was not an actor. I have always been interested in the arts, and Tony Dingman ['57], who was a white student, obviously, got me involved in the prop room at the Dartmouth players. I became the prop man extraordinaire. I didn't have to go out and get telephones and ashtrays and things that other prop men, the regular prop men. I got asked first to make an oversized bird cage for the play *Sabrina Fair*. And so, I made it. It was about five feet high. Well, it's got me started. I guess the pièce de résistance that I made for the Dartmouth Players was the crest for, what's the Shakespeare play, parts 1 and 2? The historical play. What is it? Well, one of them. They're not, I think there are only two or three of Shakespeare's historical plays that are divided into two parts. This particular play, I forget words, you know, that's one of the prerogatives of people over 80 years old, we have the right to forget words, and I do. *Henry IV*, I think it was there. Yeah, must be *Henry IV*, parts one and two. Anyway, I made the crest didn't have an eagle head, a lion or something on the top. Funny thing about that crest was that it was an outside thing and, of course, that hung at the back of the stage. You know, it was part of the scenery. And after the play, of course, it went to the prop room like all the props did. And the funny thing was, maybe three or four students, one after another, came up to me and asked me if they could borrow it to decorate their room. I knew what was gonna happen, and of course, it happened. They would take it, and they would keep it for maybe a week, and it would reappear in the prop room. And then somebody else would see it and do the same thing, and the same thing would happen. It was huge. You know, I mean, it was a big thing. It was part of the scenery, you know. On the stage, and of course, you hang something like that on your wall, it takes over the room. They had to bring it back. It was oppressive. It was just funny.

Anyway, I just thought I'd mention that. I think, let me see, was I in any other organizations? No, I think I just went to classes. I was in the two groups, religious groups that I mentioned and the Dartmouth Players,

EAGER: The yearbook mentions that you were in a fraternity.

TRAYNHAM: Oh yes, of course.

EAGER: Was that a big part of your life?

TRAYNHAM: Tau Epsilon Phi. Yes, of course, yes, yes, yes. But that of

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

course was, well, you know, freshmen couldn't pledge fraternities. You had to be a sophomore, right. But I did. Yes, I at the time, again, this is 1954 now. All the frat— well. Excuse me. There were no Black fraternities on campus, number one. And the white fraternities —. Well, there were two kinds of white fraternities. There were locals. You could join a local. There was a local called KKK.

EAGER: They just changed their name this year.

TRAYNHAM: Huh?

EAGER: They just changed their name this year.

TRAYNHAM: They finally got around to changing their name?

EAGER: Finally.

TRAYNHAM: Well, needless to say, that fraternity did not attract a lot of Black students. It was a perfectly fine fraternity. I knew several people who were members. Never crossed my mind to join it. I joined, there were only two Jewish fraternities on campus, and of course, the Jews suffered from the same thing Blacks did, namely exclusion from the fraternities. So, I joined Tau Epsilon Phi, and that was a lot of fun. I found out a lot about Jews, and I made a number of friends of course in the fraternity. I became the one of the two vice presidents of the fraternity in my senior year. Funny stories about that too, but I won't go into that.

EAGER: So, it was a Jewish fraternity that you were a part of?

TRAYNHAM: Oh yes, yes, there were two Jewish fraternities on campus. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Because there were Jews on campus. They couldn't go to the white fraternities. So, they set up their own fraternities: Pi Lam and Tau Epsilon Phi. Pi Lambda Phi actually.

EAGER: And then what was being part of the Greek system, in a very discriminatory system, what was that like? Because I know, I've looked at some of the archives on the discrimination of fraternities at the time. And I know —.

TRAYNHAM: Well, one of the things that the Dartmouth Christian Union did in conjunction with some other groups on campus was to have a, what do you call it? Well, we put an issue up to vote on campus and that was to require the fraternities on campus that had clauses excluding Jews or Blacks or whatever, had to get rid of those clauses or go local within 10 years. It was a big deal

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

because of course, it was also 1954. The Supreme Court had just struck down segregation across the country, and it passed. It was a big deal, like I said, but otherwise, you know, we had the hums, I don't know if they still have hums or not. You know what I'm talking about, you know? Okay, well anyway. For Green Key, you still have Green Key, don't you? Okay. Just checking. For Green Key, all the fraternities used to set up structured choirs, and there was a competition on Green Key that was called the hums. And each fraternity would sing on the steps of Dartmouth Hall through the weekend of Green Key. And they would be judged, and somebody would win the trophy or whatever. And I participated in that. I remember singing, was it something about Judd? Anyway, I was wild. Lifetime ago, but that was fun. And I mean, I don't know, the fraternities got we know. Well, socially, you pretty well had to join a fraternity because there was very little social life outside the fraternities. And the fraternities tended to socialize among themselves. There was some going back and forth but not very much as I recall. So, you know, for Winter Carnival, Green Key, whatever, I went to TEP, you know, and we drank beer, sang songs, did what men do in fraternities. I remember what one —. Oh, well, go ahead.

EAGER: Well, what were you going to say. What was the story you were about to say?

TRAYNHAM: Well, I was just about to say that for one, I remember, I had just said we did what men do in fraternities. And I remember on one occasion, well, let me back up. Tau Epsilon Phi was regarded as an academic fraternity because the Jews at Tau Epsilon Phi worked very hard at doing well in school. And so, we were not quite as wild as some of the other fraternities as a result. But on this particular occasion, we had some kegs, and I remember beers standing that deep on the floor of the basement of Tau Epsilon Phi. That's what I was about to say. The kind of things men do in fraternities.

EAGER: That's a smaller basement though. I think, that was the one all the way at the end of frat row, right? In that house with the pointy top?

TRAYNHAM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was the three —. I think it was the three-story house. Yeah. It's sort of an Adams kind of house. Yeah.

EAGER: Yeah

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: I guess it's still there, huh.

EAGER: Yes. It's now a sorority.

TRAYNHAM: Ah, now it's a sorority. Yeah, yeah. I recall that Tau Epsilon Phi is no longer on the campus.

EAGER: No, we're no longer allowed to have religious affiliated frats to my understanding.

EAGER: Oh, is that right?

EAGER: Yeah, I think. I could be wrong.

EAGER: That was regarded as a religious affiliated frat?

EAGER: Oh, I'm not sure if that's why they no longer exist. But if, I'm unsure. Was it a Jewish fraternity or a frat that tended to have a lot of Jews in it?

TRAYNHAM: Oh, that's a good question. We called it a Jewish fraternity. It only had Jews in it. It could have had gentiles in it, I'm sure, but the other fraternities didn't had Jews in them, I know that. Yeah. Anyway. Go ahead.

EAGER: Were the other Black students in your class also in frats then, and if so, were they in your frat? Or did they tend to —.

TRAYNHAM: My roommate Gene Booth was in Pi Lam. I don't remember about the other two at this point. I think Garvey Clarke was in Pi Lam too.

EAGER: And that was the other —.

TRAYNHAM: Young, the fourth person, never graduated. He left Dartmouth at some point. I can't remember when. I'm sorry?

EAGER: Pi Lam was the other Jewish frat?

TRAYNHAM: Pi Lam was the other Jewish fraternity. Those were the only —. The Jewish fraternities or the local opportunities were the only options for Black people.

EAGER: Well, then what were some of your class experiences like, as a philosophy major, and then also other classes you took.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: What were my class experiences like?

EAGER: Like your courses.

TRAYNHAM: Huh?

EAGER: Your courses.

TRAYNHAM: You mean what kind of courses did I have?

EAGER: Or like what, I guess the types of classes, but also your experience within them.

TRAYNHAM: Well, actually, one of my more salutatory experiences was not in philosophy. My freshman year, I think it may have been the first semester of my freshman. I'm pretty well sure was as a matter of fact. Royal Case Nehemiah. That was my professor in the Classics department. And I took a course freshman year with him. Next to history, mythology was a favorite thing of mine. I figured I knew mythology backwards and forwards. Roman and Greek mythology. My first exam in the class, I got a C+. I expected an A. I was an A student in high school, and I knew mythology. I got a C+. So, I went to see Royal Case Nehemiah, and we had a conversation. Well, one thing about Royal Case Nehemiah is he made fun of Christians. He did this quite deliberately and quite clearly, from the first, from the get-go, you know? He made fun of Christians, and I remember that about him, but that didn't have anything to do with my C+ in whatchacallit. But he explained to me why I got a C+, and I said, all right, I'm not gonna get a C+ in this class, and I didn't. I got a B+. The reason I didn't get an A+ is because in my first exam, I got a C+ so there was no possibility of getting an A+. But I did get a B+. And that taught me that Dartmouth College was going to be a different game from Douglas High School.

There was another, I took a course Government 1, with a little guy, short guy, I can't think of his name at the moment. But anyway, I remember this very distinctly and that was probably the second semester of my freshman year. Sneed. Sneed or Smead, something like that was his name. Of course, I'm sure he's long gone. But anyway, he pointed me out after an exam. I got an A+ in that class. He pointed me out at the end of the exam because he said, you know, the rest of the students should look at Mr. Traynham because Mr. Traynham has read the footnotes in this book, on Government 1. He had to have read the footnotes because he couldn't have answered questions such and such, such and such, and such and such if

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

he hadn't. And the reason I had—he was right. The reason I had read the footnotes was because of my conversation with Royal Case Nehemiah. I was going to play this game, and I was gonna win it. I graduated from Dartmouth with honors in Philosophy and a magna cum laude.

The reason I did was because of Royal Case Nehemiah. That was the smartest course I ever took because, like I said, he made it clear to me that I was not going to cruise to the school, and I didn't. I read the footnotes whenever there was footnotes in a book or whatever. So, when I went into the exam, I knew everything it was possible for me to know to have taken that class in that exam. So, I've tried to minimize the surprises. What else can I say about classes at Dartmouth? Like I said, I enjoyed my, I enjoyed my Dartmouth experience across the board, really. I ran into, at least I cannot remember any racist problems. I may have just suppressed them. Over half a century. I've had plenty of time to forget them if there were any. My experiences were really quite positive. I enjoyed them, like I said, even Royal Case Nehemiah's. Like I said, you know, I profited from that. Yeah, it was a shock.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: It was a shock, but a good shot. You know.

EAGER: I had a similar freshman fall class.

TRAYNHAM: It was the best way to begin my freshman year. That's right. As it turned out. I didn't think so at the moment. Yeah. Yeah. Needless to say, but, you know, anyway.

EAGER: You mentioned that you graduated with honors. Did you write a thesis then?

TRAYNHAM: No. No. Did, we didn't have to write feces then. No. In philosophy, no.

EAGER: Did you do any outside course work related to philosophy or religion or history? Any of those areas or was it mostly just your classes?

TRAYNHAM: No, no. Well, I did write papers. I did a paper on Albert Schweitzer for TSK Scott Curry, who was an Episcopalian. He went to St. Thomas Church. One of the few faculty members that ever walked in the door of any church, I think. Having said that, I just definitely, apropos of nothing in particular, but I

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

remember my surprise, when I first came to Dartmouth, and people started talking about the white church. The white church was painted white. That's why it was called the white church. It was not a white church because only white people went there, like the fraternities, but it was a surprise for a Black person to hear about the white church at Dartmouth College. Well, in Hanover. What else can I say about classes? No, I got along very well with people. Because I had a reputation for being a good student, I had people who asked me to help them with various classes and so forth, and I did. I was very happy to do that. It was known by all the people that I knew that I was going to be an Episcopal priest. I had a friend named Shreibman who was in my fraternity, again, a short guy, who was going to be a rabbi. And so, we both got cornered by people from time to time to discuss religious questions or ethical questions or whatever.

EAGER: Yeah, cool, so then after—.

TRAYNHAM: My Dartmouth experience was very positive. No, I can't account for that fact, but it was. Because I know some Black students whose experiences were not positive. Anyway.

EAGER: How did the isolation of campus, did that affect you at all?

TRAYNHAM: The isolation campus? Well, actually, no. I must say, one of the jobs I had after I began my work life was at Harvard. I was the associate Episcopal chaplain at Harvard, and at Harvard was the first time I ever went skiing. I think it's funny because, of course, I went to Dartmouth College. Most people who go skiing ski at Dartmouth College.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: I never skied at Dartmouth College. I concluded after my college career that when you go to Dartmouth, you are wise to learn how to use the winter, since there's so much of it, but there was more winter then, when I was going to school than there is now because now you can take off the winter term if you want to.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: That was not an option. The only term you took off was the summer vacation. That was of course in the summer. That's the best time to be at Dartmouth and we were never there. I mean that's from my perspective, obviously. If you like to ski, then the winter's the best time.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

EAGER: It's the right perspective.

TRAYNHAM: What was I getting ready to say? Oh, I learned to study in the winter so I went to Baker Library or to the Tower Room, I guess. Yeah. The Baker Library's still there, so the Tower Room must still be there. Or where the paintings are.

EAGER: The Orozco Room.

TRAYNHAM: The Orozco. Yeah. The study room downstairs in the basement. That's what I did for the winner. You know? The winter was a good thing for me because I stayed inside, and I studied, but I never went skiing. I know, for Winter Carnival we built the center of campus snow statues and, of course, each fraternity had a snow statue then. I don't know. They don't do that now?

EAGER: You can sign up with your club to do an ice sculpture now. Yeah, but I don't know any Greek houses that do that. I think they're like the magazines.

TRAYNHAM: Oh really. When I was there that's what the Greek houses did. They did the hums in the —. I've already explained the hums. The hums at Green Key, and they built ice statues in front of their houses, and there was a competition, too. And of course, the freshmen were, too, big builders of the center of campus statue. And the bonfires. They still do the bonfires I'm sure.

EAGER: They're building it right now. It's next weekend.

TRAYNHAM: Everybody loves the bonfires. Yeah, they'll never give up the bonfire.

EAGER: They almost did.

TRAYNHAM: They almost did?

EAGER: The fire department tried to stop it.

TRAYNHAM: The what? The fire department? Really?

EAGER: Yeah. But they just change the shape of it, and now it's okay.

TRAYNHAM: Changed the shape, now it's okay?

EAGER: It's harder to collapse now, so it's safer.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, I see. Yeah, well, if it collapses, the sparks would go

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

everywhere, wouldn't they, yeah. I don't remember us having that problem, but anyway, there was something else I was getting ready to say about that kind of thing. I can't remember. Well, next Question.

EAGER: I can transition to your post Dartmouth life a little now. So, you left Dartmouth already knowing you wanted to be an Episcopal priest. What was the transition then to becoming one after Dartmouth? And how did Dartmouth affect that?

TRAYNHAM: Well, when I graduated from Dartmouth, I had gotten a Reynolds Scholarship from Dartmouth. So, I went for a year. I was for a year recognized student at Oxford. If I had realized that I could have renewed my Reynolds scholarship, I would probably have taken a degree in Oxford because I could have done that in two years, but not in one. So anyway, I went to Oxford as a recognized student for one year. Dr. F. L. Cross was my tutor. He wrote the Dictionary of the Christian Church. He was an extremely reticent, shy man who spent his life organizing conferences. The kind of thing you would expect in an extrovert to do. He was clearly an introvert. But he was a Biblical, a church history scholar. Excuse me. He took, he was in church history. So, I went to Dartmouth. I was, I'm sorry. F. L. Cross was at the House, which is the, forgetting words again. It's the biggest college at Oxford. It was built by Cardinal Wolsey, and he incorporated the Cathedral Church of Oxford into his college.

So, the Cathedral Church of Oxford is the chapel of the college. F.L. Cross suggested to me, that I should come a little early because there was to be a conference on the gospels at Oxford. He was organizing it. And so, I went early and they put me up in University College, which is where Shelley's statue lies and where Shelley, the poet Shelley, attended. I had two large rooms. This is in the fall. I had two large rooms. The living room was probably twice as large as the bedroom, and the bedroom was not small. To heat those two rooms, I had a little electric heater with a single coil. That was the salutatorian introduction to Oxford because when I stayed in those rooms just before the University opened, I almost froze to death because it was colder in my rooms than it was outside in the street. And to heat those two rooms, it was stone. All the buildings in Oxford are stone. Yeah, there is no central heating. They don't believe in central heating. So, when I left university to attend the college, Christ Church was the college, I looked for the smallest room with the largest heater in Oxford. I moved into a room which was tiny by comparison with anything I'd stayed in in whatchamacallit, in University College, and it had two electric heaters. My landlord

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

was an electrician's helper. He had a wife and one child. And I would leave my room and close the door and leave the heater on so that when I came back, I would have a warm room. Invariably, invariably my landlord would go into my room and turn off my heater because he was paying for the heat. I was giving him rent. He was paying for the heat.

Sorry about that. Told you that would happen. I have a well, never mind.

So, oh, the reason that, the only reason I mentioned the business with the congress on the gospels is because of the room, number one. Number two, Jean Daniélou was giving a lecture at the end of the conference on the gospels. He was a famous Roman Catholic scholar, and I was late for this lecture. And so, and the lecture was given in the examination rooms and was on the second story. I remember running up the steps to go in, and I dashed into the room, and this arm came out and caught me. And when I turned around to see who this was, it was the Archbishop of Canterbury. I recognized him because I had watched the coronation of the Queen Elizabeth before I left to go. And there he was talking to who? F.L. Cross. My tutor. I have in my file somewhere, a photograph, which was taken and sent to me, of the back of my head and the face of F.L. Cross and the Archbishop of Canterbury because the photographer, of course, is standing behind me because it was taking pictures of important people.

Anyway, I had a good time at Oxford, and for, there are three vacation times at Oxford. For two of them, I did the continental tour. I went to you know, France and to Spain and to what, Germany and Italy. So, I checked out the continentals. And of course, the third, I came home. That was the long, what they called the long vac, which is the summer vacation. You were supposed to study during those breaks. I didn't study during those breaks; I wasn't taking a degree. So anyway, after that I went to Virginia Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia for three years, and graduated from that institution and was ordained to the diaconate. And then after a year, after nine months actually, I was ordained to the priesthood, and I began to work.

EAGER: So, then what led you to come back to Dartmouth and then end up being —.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, as the dean of the Tucker Foundation?

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

EAGER: Yes.

TRAYNHAM: Well um let's see, I was, when was it? I had, I got a telephone call when I was the — while I was the Rector of St. Cyprian, in Roxbury Massachusetts. I got a telephone call from Don Kreider, who was the vice, who was a vice president and in charge of student affairs. And he called me up, and he said "Warner, how would you like to be the dean of the Tucker Foundation?" And I said "Professor Kreider, I don't know what the Tucker Foundation is." And he said, "Well, if you will invite me by your house, we will make an appointment, and I will come, and I will tell you what the Tucker Foundation is." So, I said, fine. And so, he sat in my kitchen with me, and I'll never forget this. He said "Warner, the Tucker Foundation is whatever the dean of the Tucker Foundation says it is." There is a saying that if you hear that something is too good to be true, it probably is. Well, that's not quite what this turned out to be at least to begin with.

My career at Dartmouth College falls into two parts. I was hired by John Kemeny when he was president. I was forced out by David McLaughlin who succeeded him, John Kemeny. David McLaughlin was president of Dartmouth College after John Kemeny. John Kemeny and I got along fine; David McLaughlin and I did not get along at all. And so, I left. I was in Dartmouth for nine years. I think I overlap with McLaughlin for, I think only two, maybe three. I can't remember. But John Kemeny understood the Tucker Foundation, or at least he understood what the dean of the Tucker Foundation said the Tucker Foundation was. David McLaughlin did not. Being straightforward and simple about it.

I don't know why Don Kreider called me. I never found out why I was chosen for this job. I was the third, no, I was the fourth dean of the Tucker Foundation. First dean of the Tucker Foundation had taught me in the Religion department. I can't recall his name at the moment, but we got along fine when I was a student, and we got along even better when I was dean of the Tucker Foundation because he was still there, and he was on the board with the Tucker Foundation. Unsworth was the next dean, and then Doc Dye was my immediate predecessor. When I came to, well well, I've answered your question, you ask me how I know —.

EAGER: What was it that made their relationship to Kemeny so different than your relationship to McLaughlin?

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: Well, Kemeny and I, well, one of the —. The Tucker Foundation, when I came there, was running a number of placements for students off campus. So, I had to raise funds because the College wasn't paying for those. Most of those, I had to raise funds for those placements and so forth.

EAGER: Placements for what?

TRAYNHAM: Huh?

EAGER: Placements for housing. Was that —?

TRAYNHAM: No. This was the students were sent to what Doc Dye called the "Other America." He's the one, really, who established these fellowships.

EAGER: Okay.

TRAYNHAM: And tutorials and so forth. Dartmouth students were sent to the inner city to learn about the inner city, because most of them were suburbanites, or were assumed to be, and didn't know anything about what he called the "Other America." What he's talking about is Black people and Native Americans, okay? Because we did have a Native American placement in, I think it was Wyoming. Montana, excuse me, Montana. And we had placements in Jersey City, and various other areas and some of them, Dartmouth students tutored students and so forth. You know, they did the kinds of things they could do, you know.

When I came, my first concern was to increase the impact of the Tucker Foundation on campus. Because when I came the world had changed somewhat from when Doc Dye was there, and students were more focused on campus and less focused on the world outside campus. I invented broadsides. There was no regular chapel, I don't imagine that there is now a regular chapel at Dartmouth College. At Harvard, when I was the associate Episcopal chaplain at Harvard, Harvard had a regular Chapel service, and students and faculty came to it. Same was true of Yale. I think, well, I'll stop there because that's all I can think of at the moment. So, I tried a chapel service, a couple of times as a matter of fact. Didn't take, didn't take, you know. People turned out to begin with, and then it just sort of dribbled away.

One of the things that I had begun doing prior to going to Dartmouth was collecting *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*. These were 18th century, English periodicals. They were newspapers before newspapers. They consisted of an

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

essay and some ads. And they were sold for a hay penny or so, during the reign of Queen Anne. Addison and Steele were the authors of those three periodicals. I collected them, I collected the originals, and I collected — I've still got the critical reprints with comments by scholars and so forth. I told my son recently, when I die, you should take those books and sell them to used bookstores. You don't — the rest of my library, which covers the walls of this room is to go to the local branch, the public library, but those should be sold, and then they can divvy up the money. Anyway, because those are harder to come by than the original sheets of *The Spectator*, *the Tatler*, and *The Guardian* actually.

Anyway, I had a brilliant idea one day. I thought it was brilliant and that was to, why didn't I just, you know, if I wanted to have some impact on the campus, write an essay, like the essays in *The Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, and send them to all the students and all the faculty. One member of the faculty, at the end of my tenure, referred to them as my encyclicals. You know the Pope writes encyclicals? Of all the essays which I wrote, the one on homosexuality was the one that made the most impact on campus, and I think whenever anybody who remembers them — I have no idea how many there are in the world, who do remember them — that's the one they remember. People stop me on the street to thank me for writing that. I legitimized the discussion of homosexuality on Dartmouth's campus because there had been no discussion before. The first dean of the Tucker Foundation — Berthold! Berthold, that's what his name was. Berthold. He was in the religion department; he was the first dean. Before I wrote the one on homosexuality, I spoke to him and asked him. Well, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I need to go back further. One of the things I — I'm still answering your, I haven't forgotten what your question was, which was why did I get along with Kemeny and not get along with McLaughlin. Berthold, I'm sorry.

At one point, the dean of students asked me if I would chair a committee on equal opportunity. The committee was supposed to determine the impact of Dartmouth on Black students. That was, I mean, that's why was called equal opportunity. Equal was the operative phrase. Well, and so, at one point we held a hearing in Dartmouth Hall and, what is it, 105? Is that right? 105 Dartmouth Hall. It's the middle room in Dartmouth Hall.

EAGER: They just re-constructed it, so I haven't been inside it since freshman year. I don't know the building numbers anymore.

TRAYNHAM: Oh well, that's interesting. I haven't been back to Dartmouth

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

since, well, I did go back maybe a couple of years after I was the dean. Jim Breeden, who succeeded me, invited me back because he invited all the deans that were living back. All right. Anyway, after that, after that hearing in, I think it's 105, is the middle room right underneath the spire, you know, in Dartmouth Hall. Anyway. I think that's where the great issues were, but you probably don't have those anymore either. No, you don't have them because I didn't have them when I was there as dean.

Anyway, a student came up to me and said, "Since this is a committee on equal opportunity, I think I would like to talk to you about the gay students on campus." Well, this is a surprise to me because he was the first person to mention it, and I'd been at Dartmouth I guess about two or three years at that point. So, I met with him and a couple of other gay students, and I suggested to them that they should, they wanted to form an organization, and so I said, "Well, go to COSO and see if they will fund you." Well, he didn't think they would, and they didn't. So, I said, "Alright. Then we'll fund you." And so, the foundation did. We funded them. And it was a big to-do about that for a little while. You know, people make nasty comments about "bring your lube" and one thing and another and anyway. So, then I had a conversation with Berthold, and Berthold said, I asked him if anybody had ever talked to him about it. And he said he had considered doing something about this, but that, how do I say this? Well, there were reasons why the gay students that he knew did not want to have an organization on campus. Well, obviously, things have changed because now I was being approached by some gay students who did want an organization and then they set up the organization.

EAGER: Do you happen to know what year this is?

TRAYNHAM: What year it was that I wrote —.

EAGER: Or how far into your tenure at least?

TRAYNHAM: Unfortunately, I have sent my copies of the, of the homosexual broadside to Virginia Seminary with all my papers, and I don't remember off the top of my head, tell you the truth. I think it would've been —.

EAGER: I know that the special collections library has a copy of the broadside. So was this happening at the same —.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, it did.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: Yes.

TRAYNHAM: Oh okay, well then you know.

EAGER: Was this the same time as that? Or was this like, the year —. Was this the same year that you published the broadside?

TRAYNHAM: Oh yeah. It would have been about the same year. Yeah. Well, no. The student would probably have come to me the year before I wrote the broadside because I had to do some research. Anyway, so after my conversation with Berthold, I decided I would do the broadside. And I did. And, like I said, it had the kind of impact that I said it had. Third thing. As I was, I tell people, I was the dean, I was hired as the dean of the Tucker Foundation. The chaplaincy was in my gift. So, I named myself the chaplain and I hired two people to do the work of the chaplaincy. So, I was the dean and chaplain at Dartmouth College. Dean of the Tucker foundation, chaplain of Dartmouth College.

One of the things that the chaplain was responsible for doing was for advocating for moral —. Well, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. What the foundation was supposed to do was to be concerned with the moral and spiritual life and influence of the College, okay? John Kemeny understood that. John Kemeny's position with respect to college business was that issues could be debated on campus, fine. But once the Board of Trustees made a decision about any issue, the administration, was supposed to back the trustees' position. Except for the chaplain and dean of the Tucker Foundation. Because since my bailiwick was the moral and spiritual work of the college, if the Tucker, if the trustees made a decision that I did not think was morally advantageous for the College, I could take exception to it after they set the policy.

Well, when I came to Dartmouth, Dartmouth had I think three thousand students who were male. John Kemeny introduced women to the College, which means they added 1,000 women. Now, nobody really, I don't think, ever thought anything could stay like that. 3,000 men, 1000 women. That meant when women applied for the College they applied for one of a thousand positions. Well, I mean, you know, I'm putting the whole thing together. I'm not, obviously, that's not the way it worked. They applied for one quarter of the freshman class is really what it is. Well, of course, the male students didn't like it any better than female students did because the ratio was screwed. All right.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

Several students came to me as the dean of the Tucker Foundation and they said, "don't you think this is ridiculous? This is not the way the college should operate." I was told when I came to Dartmouth that the reason there were 3,000 males and 1,000 women, and that that was the way it was going to stay, was because you had to have three thousand men in order to field a winning football team. That's what they told me. That's really what they told me. Manifestly, that was silly. You're gonna put a football team, you're going to put fielding a football team above equalizing the ratio of men and women in the college. Not going to work. So, students began coming to me saying look at this, this is crazy and I explained to them that the trust—, at that point, the trustees had laid down the law about this. And so, everybody in administration was supposed to back up the trustees — except me.

So, students wanted to hold demonstrations. We did one of the demonstrations. Well, let me back up for a moment. Kemeny had a thing called the PAC. It was made up of all the vice presidents and deans in the college, and it advised, it advised him, excuse me, it advised him about various things. Well, we never really had a discussion about co-education in the PAC that I recall. But I did express myself with respect to the ratio in that group. At one point, because students fielded demonstrations, I was in the demonstration outside the office of John Kemeny. John Kemeny looked out and he saw me among the students. And he said, "oh, what are you doing here Warner." And I said, "I'm demonstrating with the students." And he said, "oh, oh." And we had a conversation subsequently, as you may imagine. And he said he didn't remember my letting him know that I didn't think much of this ratio. I said, "well, I did. And even if you don't remember me saying it before, you now know, that that is my position and my opinion." And John Kemeny said, "I understand, and that is your right because the charge of the Tucker Foundation is to be concerned with something different from what the trustees are dealing with." Okay? Fine.

This is what McLaughlin did not believe or understand. This is why I ended up crossing swords with McLaughlin. He thought that the business of the president was to determine what the Tucker Foundation should do, and he didn't like the idea of the dean of the Tucker Foundation taking positions with respect to moral questions. At one point, he even wrote me a memo saying that what the dean should do, is what the faculty does. Now, the dean was not a member of the faculty. I'm the chaplain of the college. That's one reason I took that office of chaplain. So, it

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

would be clear that, I mean, clergy take positions with respect to moral and social issues.

EAGER: Yep.

TRAYNHAM: Faculty, well, let's take the philosophy faculty for instance, you know. The philosophy faculty teaches the philosophies of various people: Nietzsche, Hegel, Mills and so forth, you know? The clergy don't do that. Our business is not educating people with respect to the realm of ethics. Our business is to take positions as Christians with respect to moral issues. That's what I did. McLaughlin never understood that. He never understood that, or he professed not to understand it if he did, okay? John Kemeny understood it, which is why John Kemeny did not force me out. John Kemeny left the presidency, and he left me there. It was McLaughlin who forced me out.

EAGER: That makes sense.

TRAYNHAM: Because he did not agree with what I did. So, I left because, you know, I had a small boat in a big pond, and McLaughlin's boat was a lot bigger. He could make waves. He raised my, he cut my budget astronomically. I came back from a sabbatical. And the Tucker Foundation, which had a smaller budget, was being cut by much more than any other section of the College. I hit the ceiling. They brought it down, they brought it down. But then they wanted to rework the foundation, and it was just one thing after another. It was obvious, perfectly obvious to everybody, not just to me, but to everybody on campus, that the president didn't want the dean of the Tucker Foundation to continue.

And so, I looked around, I was actually at Dartmouth longer than I expected it to be. I'm really an urbanite. You asked me earlier how I adjusted to being at Dartmouth. I adjusted fine because it was four years, you know? And I mean, I went back home for the summer and so forth, but I'm really an urbanite. I'm not a country boy. I was raised in central Baltimore. I like cities. I live in Los Angeles, second largest city in the country. People ask me how I adjusted to Los Angeles after leaving New Hampshire because I came directly here. I told them I got here in July, at the height of the smog season. I stood, I stepped outside my car and looked around and said, "what took me so long?" That was how I adjusted to Los Angeles.

Anyway, I expected to be at Dartmouth for at least five years because your pension, well, the Episcopal church has a pension system for its clergy. When I started to work for Dartmouth

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

College, I was no longer working for the Episcopal Church. I had been working for the Episcopal Church up until that time, and I went back to working for the Episcopal church after I left Dartmouth. When I left Dartmouth, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. When I got to Dartmouth, my pension, I got a letter from the Episcopal Church pension fund telling me they had frozen my pension. That was a surprise, I hadn't even thought about it, but Dartmouth paid my pension into the TIAA-CREF. Well, so, but my pension would not vest in me until after five years, so I really was pretty well committed to being at Dartmouth for five years. Well, you know, I was at Dartmouth for five years. John Kemeny was still here. Everything went along fine as far as I was concerned. When McLaughlin became president, I couldn't have been with McLaughlin for more than two years, I think. Oh no, 7, 8, 9. No, 3 years, because I took a sabbatical, and then there were two years, because I was at Dartmouth for nine years all total. So, anyway, that —. And so, you know, I really had stayed longer than I anticipated staying. I was the longest serving dean of the Tucker Foundation when I left, I don't know about now but then, you know. I enjoyed that, too. I enjoyed being the dean of the Tucker Foundation. I had a great time. Even the fight with McLaughlin was illuminating,

EAGER: What was the difference between working at Dartmouth and Harvard? I know you were in different positions of —.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, yeah, well, I was employed by Dartmouth. I was not employed by Harvard. I was employed by the Episcopal Church at Harvard, but Rhinelander Foundation was the name of the organization that hired me. I was, I was not hired by —. I was not a corporation appointment. That's all the difference in the world. There's no comparison. Really, no comparison. I say that at Harvard, it was like I was a fly trying to get the attention of an elephant. At Dartmouth, I was a part of the College.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: You know? My office was the whole first floor of what is now Collis Center.

EAGER: Oh wow.

TRAYNHAM: It was then called College Hall. I remember one of the offices of the Alumni Center coming into the foundation at College Hall, and he said, "My God, Warner, you, you, the Tucker Foundation runs from the Green to the river!" But that was an

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

overstatement.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: But we did occupy the entirety of the first floor of College Hall. My children used to walk through those, you know, at the College Center, those big window doors on the, that open off the portico. They used to come in and out of those things when they wanted to avoid dealing with anybody else in the family. My office was right there. I was in administration row. Yeah. Not at Harvard, no comparison at all. At Harvard, I was working for the Episcopal Church. What we had to do was to figure out ways to get the attention of the students at Harvard. At Dartmouth, I had to figure out some of that too, but it was all the difference in the world. I was appointed by the president. I met the president of Harvard, but he did not appoint me.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: He did not pay me. You know, he didn't have to even speak to me. It was all difference in the world, you know. At Harvard, I was an Episcopal priest. At Dartmouth, I was the dean of the Tucker Foundation and the chaplain of the College.

EAGER: How did you perceive the cultures on campus being different though? Like with your relations.

TRAYNHAM: Oh my. Oh, there's no comparison.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: No comparison. It's the difference between Cambridge and Oxford. If you know Cambridge and Oxford, Oxford is a medieval school. It has, every college has walls. The lawns are inside the walls. There are city streets outside, busy streets outside. Oxford is famous for making cars. Cambridge is a Renaissance school. The colleges sit in the lawns. The lawns are outside the college. Dartmouth: the lawns are outside the college, like Cambridge. Harvard: the lawns are inside the schools, like Oxford. Harvard is older than Dartmouth. Oxford is older than Cambridge. That, I mean, that's easy. That's easy. I mean. Harvard is academic with a big A. Dartmouth is a college.

EAGER: How did they? I guess not even so much the difference, but could —? You said you were chair of the committee on equal opportunity?

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: Yes.

EAGER: Well, what were, what was —. One, what was that experience like? And also, considering the fact that you've been a student, and then in two different administrations, how do you perceive the ebbs and flows of Dartmouth's hopes for diversity and making education accessible across the board? It's a big question.

TRAYNHAM: Well, obviously, there were a lot more Black students on campus when I came here as the dean then there were when I was an undergraduate. So, there was progress, quote unquote. It was also true that the faculty, there were many more Black people on the faculty than, I don't remember there being anybody on the faculty when I was an undergraduate. There certainly was nobody that I studied under—.

TRAYNHAM: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: —who was Black on the faculty. As a matter of fact, I'm pretty well confident there were no Black people on the faculty here then. There are a whole lot more Black people on the faculty than when I was an undergraduate, I have no idea what the situation looks like now. But there were also problems that there weren't when I was an undergraduate. It is always the case, from my examination of the world I live in, and particularly the country I live in, that you get, once you get a critical number of Black people, you have problems you never had when you only had a few. A few Black people disappear. A critical mass has to be dealt with. I remember the Black tables. When I was the dean of the Tucker Foundation, invariably, somebody, usually an alumnus or a parent, or sometimes a student, would say things like "why is it that the Black students sit together in Thayer Hall? You still sit in Thayer Hall, don't you?"

EAGER: The engineering? Thayer, Thayer's the engineering school now.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, is it? No. No, always wasn't for their engineering school. What's the refectory called?

EAGER: The what?

TRAYNHAM: The refectory? Where you eat?

EAGER: Oh, it's now —.

TRAYNHAM: The dining hall.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

EAGER: Class of '53 Commons.

TRAYNHAM: Class of '53 Commons. Okay, everything has changed then. That used to be Thayer Hall. There was always the Thayer engineering school. When I was, when I was an undergraduate, there was the Thayer engineering school. Well, okay then, in the, in the dining hall, okay? People would say to me, "why do the Black students all sit together?" I would say "that's not any mystery." Look, at that point in time they grew up in Black communities. Still, most people, most Black people, live in Black communities, for reasons which I won't go into at the moment. They come to a predominantly white school. They were still in decided minority when I was dean of the Tucker Foundation. They get assigned to white students in their rooms. They go to classes, most of which were then still taught by white people—there were many more Black people than before I came, but they still were a minority again. Everything, they're in a white world. [?] You know, and so they have to spend half their time explaining themselves to other people. At some point, they want to be with people they don't have to explain themselves to. That's why there are Black tables.

But if you look carefully in the dining room, not all Black students are sitting at Black tables. Some of them have integrated white tables, which you don't think about. White people think, if you walk into a room and there are Black tables and white tables, the odd things are the white, are the Black tables. Because they've always been surrounded by white people, okay?

I tell people, there was a movie called Little, The Little Bighorn, I think it was called. Little Big Horn. And it was about a white boy who was kidnapped really by some Indians. I don't know if you're familiar with this movie or not. It was a while back, I'm trying to think of, it was this short guy again who was the star of the movie. His name will come to me. Anyway, this boy, this white boy is raised as an Indian, in this movie. And at one point, an old Indian, he and an old Indian, go off because the old Indian is going off to die. Okay? And he's talking about this, the situation of the Indians. Now, early on, we are, we are given to understand that the word Sioux, which is the name of this Indian group means human beings, just human beings. So, at one point, the man says, the great spirits, he is bewailing the fact that the Indians are being displaced, really, and he says, "it seems like the great spirits have made an unlimited number of white people and only a few human beings." Think about that. For the Indian, the human beings are the Indians. It's the white people who are odd.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

The same thing happens with white people and Black people, you know? That's why the white people walk into a white school, see Black tables, and say, "why are they there?" The human beings are sitting all around. These Black people are something different. And why are they segregating themselves? They are not, or if they are, I guess you could say that, that they are, but they are because they're in a white world. And they've got to take some time, they've got to go to classes with white people. They've got to discuss things with white people. They've got to go to stores with white people. They're surrounded by white people. At some point, it's nice to be able to talk to people, to make jokes that they will understand, that they don't have to be, they don't have to be interpreted, you know? To use words that mean something to them and not to the white people, you know, the rest of it. So, but, you know, I can't tell you how many times people have asked me, "why are the Black people, why are the Black people segregating themselves?" And as I said, the movie was the clue to me, you know? The great spirit has made an unlimited number of white people, and only a limited number of human beings. Yeah. He thinks there's a difference between these two groups, too, you know? But the difference is just the opposite of what white people would have thought.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: About the Indians. Anyway.

EAGER: Did you perceive, was there a difference between Kemeny and McLaughlin, specifically?

TRAYNHAM: Did I what? Perceive?

EAGER: Was there a difference in these conversations about Black students when it was Kemeny's presidency versus McLaughlin's?

TRAYNHAM: Oh, I don't know. I never had a conversation with McLaughlin about Black students.

EAGER: Was that the —?

TRAYNHAM: No my, my problem with McLaughlin was that he was a poor administrator. He forced out not just myself. He forced out several other people by second guessing them. He had the reputation that, well, he had, part of it was, well, let me back up for a minute. I remember a member of the faculty saying when Kemeny was president, that most members of the faculty think

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

Kemeny is smarter than they are, and he probably is. That's what the member of the faculty said. Well, I think McLaughlin, I thought, well, I don't know. No, no, I guess I shouldn't have said that way. No, McLaughlin had the reputation of being —. Yeah. He had the reputation of being an intellectual lightweight, okay? And his problem was, he succeeded Kemeny, who had the opposite reputation. I really think that's part of it. They used to say, well, they used to say that if three people go in to see McLaughlin, and each one of them persuades him of their perspective, the last person to see him is the one who will get his perspective implemented.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: You see what I'm saying? Also, McLaughlin would second-guess his own offices. Now, if you were the dean of Students and somebody comes to you with an issue, you know, to adjudicate between students, so forth, and you make the decision, you're the dean of Students. That's your job.

EAGER: Yeah.

TRAYNHAM: And then the parent of that student, who's an alumnus, goes to see the president and wants a different judgment, and the president makes a different judgment, you're not going to keep that dean of Students for very long. Because no, you don't, it's his job. It's not the president's job. You didn't want to be second-guessed. You know, you don't do that, you know? At the most you might call the dean of students in and say, "well, do you really think that's what you should have done?" And if the dean of students says yes, you say, okay. But you certainly don't unilaterally reverse him, you know, because then nobody respects, nobody—. Why don't we go to the dean of students? Let's go to the president! And next thing you know, the dean of students is gone. He's found himself a job where they want him to do what he's supposed to do. So, those were the kinds of problems that I saw with the president, and I pointed them out to him, which, of course, did not make me popular, but it didn't matter at that point anyway. Anyway.

EAGER: And to go quickly back to the —.

TRAYNHAM: Hope I don't get sued for saying that.

EAGER: To go quickly back to the committee —.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: You don't have to put that in the review.

EAGER: Hm?

TRAYNHAM: I said you don't have to put that in the interview.

EAGER: Ah. But to the part of the chair, being the chair on the Committee of Equal Opportunity. What was the, what were the goals of that committee? I mean, besides the obvious ones, and how do you feel it made an impact?

TRAYNHAM: Some students, Black students, had put out a document. I've forgotten now what it was called, but they put out a document with registered complaints about what the College needed to do with respect to Black students and so forth, and then the College decided to set up this committee. I can't, frankly, at this point, I don't recall what the specific determinations of the committee were. But they weren't too far from the, from the suggestions made by the Black students initially. But there, it was wanted to have a committee to look into the business, to get, to take testimony. That's really what we did, you know? To get feedback from individual students and so forth, Black students, mostly right.

EAGER: Do you feel—?

TRAYNHAM: It was not earth shaking, I don't think. Unfortunately.

EAGER: Do you remember your role in the committee besides chairing it? Or what did that entail?

TRAYNHAM: Oh, I just set up meetings with students, and like I said, we ended with the hearing. I think that was the end, I can't remember. Yeah, I'm sure it was.

EAGER: And those are my specific questions but if there's anything else that you'd want to share about your time as a student or your time as dean?

TRAYNHAM: Yeah, I don't think so. But we've pretty well covered things.

EAGER: And I ask one final thing is now in LA. What is your life like now? And I know there's a, is there a medical center named after you as well in your community?

TRAYNHAM: Oh yeah. Excuse me. Oh, you're well informed.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

EAGER: I did some research.

TRAYNHAM: When I came to St. John's in the 80s, there was a thing called St. John's Well Child Center. Well, let me back up for a moment. The parish was known for being active in the community. There was a thing called St. John's Well Child Center. It met in two rooms in the parish hall. It was medical. It was called the Well Child Center because all it dealt with was inoculations, physicals, things like that. But things, which the people in the neighborhood, which when it was set up were Black—by the time I got here, that people were Latinos, but it still did the same work. It recruited doctors who volunteered their services, and it had equipment, which was donated and so forth. It was, somebody called it, at one point, a hole in the wall operation. But for people who didn't have medical insurance and so forth, it was helpful. It was useful.

Well, it went along. I maintained it, and it went along for a while. We had our ups and downs. We lost the insurance for a while, the doctors' insurance, you know? And of course, doctors don't work without insurance. You're crazy to work without insurance as a doctor, so we had to shut it down for a week or two, until we managed to get a new insurer; all kinds of odd, peculiar, but happy things happened. Well, no need to go into. Anyway, we hired a fellow by the name of Jim Mangia. And Jim Mangia, I always say, had the Midas touch. He could make anything turn to gold. It's amazing what you can do with money. The two rooms in the parish hall of St. John's Church, has expanded into, last I heard—I don't want to sell him short—14 different clinics, full clinics, in the Los Angeles city. In the, I'm sorry, in the Los Angeles area because some of them are in cities, you know. Los Angeles is a perforated city. It has cities within its borders. And it's a multimillion-dollar operation. Well, since I was the Rector of the church when we appointed Jim Mangia, after naming several other clinics after various people for reasons best known to Jim Mangia. Oh, I'm sorry, it was, it's also been obviously incorporated, and it is distinct from the from the church at this point—been distinct from the church was some time. It's still called the St. John's Well Child and Family Clinic, it's called now I think. Yeah. Actually, I think they changed the name again. I've forgotten what that is.

But anyway, Jim called me up one day and said they wanted to name a clinic after me. They're naming the clinic, which happens to be closest to the parish. And so, I went to the naming ceremony I guess you can call it, with several politicians and so forth. And yeah, they named the clinic after me.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

The church also, in the Reagan Era, got money from HUD. There was a project in HUD at that time to build housing for the homeless mentally ill. And so, there is another project down Figueroa—the church is on the corner of Figueroa and Adams—several blocks down Figueroa, which houses, I think it's twenty or twenty-five homeless people, and we set that using HUD money. We set that up while I was the Rector also. That's named after a previous Rector of St. John's. They wanted to name it after me, but I said that, you know, you don't name things after people who were the ones who pushed for the thing in the first place. It wasn't with my money. At Dartmouth, you name things for the people who give the money for it, like the Collis Center you see. I wasn't giving any money, so. But anyway, we did do that. Yeah, so, and then we did a number of other community things. Those are the two structural things that we did.

EAGER: Cool. And I just remembered a question that I meant to ask earlier, so it is a little bit of a bounce back, but I saw in an article that you mentioned, that was about you working with Harvard, that you mentioned that you left Harvard partially because you want the institution didn't seem like it was going to change. Do you feel that Dartmouth as an institution is one that is willing to change or is that how you think?

TRAYNHAM: I didn't think —.

EAGER: Was that not you?

TRAYNHAM: That Harvard was what?

EAGER: Was not willing to change, or not —.

TRAYNHAM: Oh, I think, I think all these schools change constantly. Yeah. No I don't think I said that. If I did, I shouldn't have.

EAGER: It was —.

TRAYNHAM: Dartmouth clearly has changed. I mean, I don't know the names of any of the buildings that, actually, the only reason I know, the only reason I know that College Hall is Collis Center is because I got this calendar in the mail the other day. Oh, no, I think, I didn't see much change at Harvard. But I certainly, well, I was only there for two years.

EAGER: Yeah.

Warner Traynham '57
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 24, 2022
Transcribed by Sabrina Eager '23

TRAYNHAM: And I was at Dartmouth for nine, and Dartmouth did change while I was there. I mean, we got rid of the crazy male-female business. But I'm sure, I'm sure Harvard changes it. Yes, it doesn't look like it changes but I'm sure does. It has to, you know? Every place has to. Matter of fact, you know, Harvard is in court right now. Fighting over affirmative action. I have my opinions about that too but we won't go into that because —.

EAGER: I think we're approaching time probably, but would have loved to hear more about your thoughts on that, but thank you so much.