

VDC Interview Transcript

Subject: OhioDance: Early Years

Informants: Jeanne Coen, founding board member of OhioDance, board member of Canton Ballet; Marc Ozanich, former board member and executive director; Dennis Dugan, lighting designer and longstanding board member.

8.22.19

Total Time: 2:59:01

Home of Jeanne Coen in Canton, OH

Key:

Green highlighting: indicates (other) organizations and individuals that might be useful in mapping connections within and outside of the state.

Blue highlighting: titles of works referenced in interview

CF: Candace Feck

MO: Marc Ozanich

JC: Jeanne Coen

DD: Dennis Dugan

JD: Jane D'Angelo (OhioDance Director)

Jess Cavender: (OhioDance videographer)

CF: Okay. I think we're ready to start. Today is August 22, 2019. I'm Candace Feck and I'm talking with Marc Ozanich, Jeanne Coen, and Dennis Dugan. So here we are in Jeanne's home, and we're talking about the history of the OhioDance organization. Obviously, all of us in this room are or have been in various ways deeply engaged with OhioDance, Jeanne especially. But for all of us, we're actually here *because* of your work early on. We want to know more about those beginnings as we try to record the illustrious history of this organization, which has endured for more than four decades. I don't know when you started out if you had any idea that the organization would be going strong in 2019, but in fact, it is.

Jeanne, I think you go back the furthest.

JC: I was at the beginning.

CF: Talk about the beginning.

JC: I've been thinking about that in recent days, trying to remember people, and so forth. In the '60s and '70s, we referred to it as a dance craze. Dance was growing, it was just everywhere, and there was so much excitement. The **Ohio Arts Council** staff was becoming overwhelmed with trying to serve dance organizations in Ohio, and so the staff, **Ira Weiss**,² in particular, approached Gerry

¹ The Ohio Arts Council (OAC), a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. OAC was founded in 1965 to foster and encourage the development of the arts and assist the preservation of Ohio's cultural heritage,

² Hired as OAC's first performing arts coordinator in 1974, Weiss worked with Ohio's community arts agencies and later became the grants office assistant director, finishing his tenure as information systems assistant. Weiss retired from OAC in 2002 after 28 years.

Kettelar,³ who was general manager of **Cleveland Ballet**.⁴ He was kind of like the biggest one in the state, being with that company at that time. A call was made to various organizations and companies and so forth, and a group of people met at the **Columbus Museum of Art**⁵ one day in June, 1976.

I remember the day and the excitement very well, but I'm having trouble remembering the people that were present. But of course, Ira and Jerry were there, and Rod Rubbo⁶ came along with me. He was general manager of **Ohio Ballet**.⁷ And **Melissa Obenauf**⁸ of ŽIVILI was there. Am I pronouncing that correctly still? And Earl, **Earl Silvers**.⁹ In those early days, **Art Jackson**,¹⁰ who was a judge in Dayton, was part of our group and became part of our first board. I'm not sure if he was representing Dayton Ballet, perhaps DCDC (Dayton Contemporary Dance Company), but I remember he was there. **Phyllis Levine**¹¹ was the Executive Director for Cleveland Modern Dance Association.¹² Jerry may have brought along **Karen McNally**, who became the first secretary in lieu

³ Gerald Kettelar, founding President of OhioDance and general manager of Cleveland Ballet.

⁴ Founded in 1972 by Dennis Nahat and Ian "Ernie" Horvath as a dance school, the School of Cleveland Ballet. **Ernie was a native of Cleveland, he came back with Dennis after dancing at American Ballet Theatre.** The company was founded in 1986 as the "San Jose Cleveland Ballet," a co-venture with the ten-year-old Cleveland Ballet that offered the dancers added performing exposure, and each city a ballet company for a shared investment. By 1990, it was the fourth-largest ballet company in the United States, and the largest one that was a co-venture between two cities. **Ernie died of AIDS in 1990.** In 2000, the Cleveland base of operations closed, and over half the dancers along with its headquarters and artistic director/choreographer Dennis Nahat moved to San Jose, CA to continue operations there until its closure in 2016.

⁵ An important anchor of the cultural life of Columbus, Ohio, the Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) was founded in 1878 as the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts. Currently located in downtown Columbus, the permanent collection includes outstanding late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American and European modern works of art.

⁶ Rod Rubbo, Ohio Ballet General Manager and OhioDance treasurer, Rubbo went on to serve as the first Director of the newly established (1970) Canton Cultural Center for the Arts that housed the Canton Civic Ballet, the Players Guild Theatre and the Art Institute (now the Canton Museum of Art). Rubbo served from 1979 – 2004, and developed the Fund for the Arts, established to meet the expenses of the center as well as to provide funding for its five resident organizations. Over his twenty-five year tenure, Rubbo grew the arts campaign from an annual income of \$225,000 to \$1 million.

⁷ Ohio Ballet: co-founded by Heinz Poll and lighting designer Tom Skelton in 1968, the Ohio Ballet (originally, the Chamber Ballet) was an important and nationally acclaimed cultural institution in northeastern Ohio, based at the University of Akron. Under Poll's choreographic direction, the company largely performed his contemporary works, but also included a roster of selected commissions by other notable choreographers. The Ballet closed in 2006.

⁸ Founding Co-Director of ŽIVILI Dance Company, **Columbus Ohio**, in 1973 and a former President of OhioDance, Obenauf's work was devoted to disseminating the culture and arts of the southern Slavic nations, particularly of Croatia. The company she founded with Pamela Lacko Kelley was a one-of-a-kind performing arts organization in Ohio, the only fully professional ethnic dance company in America that performed exclusively the dances, songs, and music of the peoples of the Southern Slavic Nations. The company disbanded in 2006.

⁹ See margin note above

¹⁰ Arthur Jackson served for eleven as a municipal judge in Dayton OH, and served on the board of the fledgling OhioDance before moving to the Seattle area and pursuing other endeavors.

¹¹ As the first employee of Cleveland Modern Dance Association, Levine was hired there in 1973 as Executive Director, and served for approximately five years. She resigned that position to become OhioDance Executive Director from 1978-1985.

¹² CMDA, now DANCECleveland is an organization originally founded in 1956 to provide dance education and to present dance in Cleveland. CMDA/DANCECleveland is a separately featured exhibit of the VDC.

of an executive or manager, but she was really his secretary at Cleveland Ballet. I can't think of other names now ...

CF: That's quite a few!

JC: I jotted a few names while I was thinking (she consults some notes).

JD: Jack Devilditz? I think I gave her the list.

CF: Were there others?

JC: One other that I had noted, **Michael London**.¹³ He was from Dayton and associated, I think, with Dayton Ballet, but one of the Dayton dance companies. He was a performer. In fact, he was a mime artist, as I recall. That was the very first meeting. We all agreed that, yes, we should have something that represented dance in Ohio. We may have called ourselves an alliance at first, but there was a lot of excitement. I was able to dig out my week-at-a-glance calendars from the '70s and look, and I didn't see... I didn't look at very much of that. There wasn't time. I didn't see any meetings the rest of the year, but there were things going on, I know, that we went to Columbus for. But my first notation of a board meeting for our group was in the fall. We decided upon **Association of Ohio Dance Companies**,¹⁴ because at that time, even though we soon accumulated colleges and universities and individuals, we were all representing a dance company. I was a volunteer and a board member for **Canton Ballet**.¹⁵

CF: You say there was a lot of excitement. Do you recall much about how things got divvied up among you, or what you were agreeing to, or what you envisioned being able to accomplish as a group at that point?

JC: Well, I don't recall that we were thinking about the future as much as the present, because that was the concern of Ira Weiss, who was on the OAC staff and representing dance, working with dance groups. But I know that we had meetings and that we selected Jerry Kettelar to be the first president. He was willing to do that. And as I said, his secretary at Cleveland Ballet, Karen McNally, served about six months as secretary of AODC.

¹³ London served as managing director for the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) from 1977-1980. He is currently a management consultant, artistic director, playwright and adjunct faculty member at Wright State University. He was a trustee for the Association of Ohio Dance Companies from 1977-1981, and again 1983-1984, receiving a Trustee award in 1984.

¹⁴ The Association of Ohio Dance Companies (AODC), begun in 1976, was the fledgling organization that flowered into the current statewide service organization, OhioDance.

¹⁵ Canton Ballet (CB) was founded by school director Suanne Ferguson and board president Jane Bingham Fawcett as Canton Civic Ballet in 1965. Cassandra Crowley became school director in 1980 and artistic director in 1981, and remains at the helm of the company and school. CB has been an honor company in Regional Dance America since 1984. In the 2019-20, the performing company members number over 35 junior and senior high school students, while the school has an enrollment of 325 students ages toddler to adult.

CF: Do you recall when the organization shifted to expand into colleges, universities, or other kinds of dance?

JC: Well, I'm sure we had help from OAC staffing getting the word out, but we were trying to add to our numbers, and let everyone in Ohio *know* that we were there and we wanted them to work with us and tell us how we could help, and that kind of thing. So those were the early months of our formation.

CF: I'm trying to think back to those days of pre-digital means of communication, and I wonder how you would have gotten that word out. Do you remember what you did? Was it word of mouth? Was it postcards?

JC: Word of mouth was big. We each went back to our organizations, and it would be likely that each of us were asked to use our own database and try to do some mailing. Back then, that was it.

CF: I probably actually should have had each of you introduce yourselves for the record. Would you mind? Starting with Marc and then coming across.

MO: Marc Ozanich. Let me think. I, for awhile, was with the Ohio Ballet as a dancer. I ended up being a resident choreographer for Cleveland Opera.¹⁶ And my main life was doing work as a professor of dance at the University of Akron.¹⁷

JC: I'm Jeanne Coen, and I have been associated with Canton Ballet for many years as a volunteer and for the past eleven years, actually on the staff. So my title until recently was Marketing and Development Director.

DD: I'm Dennis Dugan. I'm a lighting designer for dance — gosh, since the '70s, so I've seen a lot of changes in that. I worked with Marc at the University of Akron for a number of years. Jeanne, I met through Ohio Dance Organization when she was working with Harriet¹⁸ in the '80s in Cleveland. She'd be coming up there. So that was my first association with OhioDance, doing a festival at Case Western¹⁹ in, I think, '87?

¹⁶ Cleveland Opera, incorporated in 1976, became a leading cultural organization in the city and played an integral part in the revitalization of Cleveland's historic Cleveland Theater. There was considerable overlap between the orchestra personnel of the Cleveland Opera, Cleveland Ballet, and the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, to the mutual advantage of all three organizations. From 2004 until 2010, the company changed directors, names and policies, and was plagued by financial difficulties leading to its eventual demise in 2010.

¹⁷ Located in the industrial northeast quadrant of the state, University of Akron serves approximately 12,000 students. Once home to the Ohio Ballet, its dance program has the distinction of a recent and innovative partnership with the National Choreographic Center, a cutting edge program for forming dance-makers through contact with a series of active choreographers from various parts of the nation and globe.

¹⁸ Harriet C Wadsworth was the daughter of Homer Wadsworth, executive director of the Cleveland Foundation from 1974 to 1983. It appears that both were active in the Cleveland Foundation and other philanthropic ventures that support the arts in the Cleveland area.

¹⁹ Based in Mather Dance Center, dedicated in 1908 as the first gymnasium for what was then known as the College for Women at Case Western Reserve. Dance, an important part of the educational philosophy of the college, was soon integrated in the physical education curriculum, and as has been the pattern in universities across the country, the discipline moved from Physical Education into the Theatre Department, and eventually became an autonomous department. The Dance Program had a significant impact on the

JC: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

DD: And then I've been on the board of OhioDance; I'm a board member currently, and since '98.

CF: That's great, thank you. We learned a little bit, actually, of the story of Jeanne's beginning with Ohio Association of Dance Companies (AODC), and Dennis, but Marc, talk about how you first came into the OhioDance orbit.

MO: Well, I'm one of these people that has, I would say, an emotional memory and not a left brain memory. So dates, and so on, forget it — I have no idea. But back some time ago, I remember somehow I was invited to be on the board. I don't even remember who or how. Mostly, I remember driving in Jeanne's car to these meetings and all that sort of thing. And then eventually I think I became some sort of an officer. I eventually became president for a while. Actually, we ended up on hard times for a bit and Jeanne and I sort of kept the organization going for a couple of years while we mended things and got back on track.

My most vivid memory is sitting in this tiny little dark office with Jeanne behind my back talking about communication. We had an IBM computer and we were doing the membership directory. It was one of those things where you had to press two keys and then something else so that the IBM machine would format it properly. We would work and work and work on that thing. I swear to God, we probably put in eighty hours on that damn thing. And miraculously, Ms. Patience over here (he gestures to Jeanne)... I mean, I was ready to *literally* rip the room apart... and she very calmly said, "You forgot the — whatever symbol it was — here."

JC: "Period after."

MO: ... Yeah, period!

JC: I'm a copy editor.

MO: Anyway... Yeah. Oh, she's amazing. So those are my most vivid memories, and wonderful, wonderful camaraderie with both her and other members in the car, like **Barbara Schubert.**²⁰ I don't know, it just was a wonderful chapter. And then other more capable people came along and kept it going.

CF: Well, I'm sure you were all very capable or we wouldn't be sitting here today. But I wonder if Jeanne perhaps was the person who invited you in. Is there a chance of that?

development of dance throughout Ohio and became a founding member of the National Dance Association. It has also been the home for many major dance events such as several of the annual festivals of OhioDance, including the 25th Anniversary Celebration in 2001.

²⁰ A high school English teacher, Schubert met Heinz Poll in 1972 in the course of working on a Children's Concert with the Cleveland Orchestra, went on to become a board member, Managing Director and eventually Associate Director of Development at Ohio Ballet, Schubert has had a hand in many dance organizations in the northeastern Ohio area, including the editing of Heinz Poll's memoir, *A Time to Dance*, U of Akron Press, 2008.

MO: I don't know. (To JC): Were you? Or was it perhaps *ex-officio*, because of the university?

JC: I think it was more the university, but it might have been Rod's [Rubo] previous connection with Ohio Ballet. And so it may have been a suggestion of his. But when Marc joined the board, being north of my location in Canton, he and sometimes Barbara Schubert, would drive down to the exit on I-77 and park and get in my car. We did that for years. It was wonderful for me not to have to make all those trips by myself.

CF: When you talk about trips, was all of this activity happening in Columbus always, or elsewhere?

JC: No, it wasn't. I remember, we were very young when we had a board meeting at Sinclair College.²¹ I was driving solo from Canton to Dayton, and it was a beautiful sunny day, and of course I was on a time schedule for this meeting, I didn't notice how fast I was going, and I was arrested!

MO: Lead foot!

CF: *Arrested?*

JC: Yeah.

CF: Not just given a ticket?

JC: I was stopped, and the patrolman gave me a choice. I could give him my license — just *give* it to him — or I could go with him into the nearest town and...

MO: ...plead not guilty.

JC: Yes. And so, I'm looking at the time... I did give him my driver's license and I had to send a hefty fine. He couldn't take it on the spot; all he could take was my driver's license. So when my check was received by the proper authority, my license was mailed back to me. But I was really irritated about the whole thing! I remember that when we I arrived at the board meeting at Sinclair, of course, I had to find my way around there; I had never been there. I was Membership Chair at the time, and I hadn't done my homework, but I knew Phyllis [Levine], who was director at the time, would have the information. She told me there were sixty-six members, and that was the extent of my report. I said, "There are sixty-six members of AODC." (she laughs)

MO: I remember that we would meet sometimes halfway between Columbus.

JC: In Mansfield.

MO: Mansfield, right. It was a little... was it an art gallery or...I remember a white building...

²¹ Sinclair Community College, named for David A. Sinclair, a Scottish immigrant and secretary of the Dayton YMCA (1874–1902), who founded the adult training school that eventually became Sinclair College in 1948. Today it is a widely respected and notably large community college, enrolling more than 20,000 students. Its Dance offerings are a part of the Theatre and Dance designation.

JC: Yes. It was an art museum or whatever it was called there. And that was a good central location, of course. It made it easier for Columbus and Cincinnati and Dayton, Cleveland. So we met there numerous times over the years.

MO: Who was the... there was a really nice gal from Cincinnati and she was with one of the companies and I can see her face, small gal. I want to say Jackie, but I'm sure that's wrong.

JD: **Jeanine Kagan**

MO: You got it. Yeah, Jeanine Kagan. She didn't make as many meetings as other people because she was presenting a great deal, but I remember she was a wonderful, *positive* voice. Also, a little bit of a devil's advocate in that we would go flying off somewhere and she would sort of reel us in, as I recall, and say, "What can we *really* do, not twenty years from now, but what can we do right now?"

CF: How often would you have these meetings?

MO: Quarterly?

JC: At some point, they became monthly. I think very soon, like in '78 or '77. Not only that, but we were not only officers and board members, but we all had a committee assignment. And so, there were times when I was driving to Columbus *twice* a month — or driving somewhere, not necessarily Columbus, although our first office that I recall was at the James Thurber House.

MO: Correct.

JC: Remember moving day, with **Nicholas**?²²

MO: Yes.

CF: What happened?

JC: Those boxes that I was talking about, maybe it was with Jane, were... By the time the organization was moving out of the Thurber House, and Marc was on the board, and we had to get all these boxes that had contained minutes and all the paperwork. And of course back then *everything* was paperwork, and it took hours. He brought his teenage son. We filled my car. I had this big car (she laughs). We moved out of the Thurber House, but I don't remember...

MO: Didn't it get stored in your basement or something?

JC: I think that it came to my house at that time.

MO: And it stayed there until the next iteration or place where it was able to go.

JC: In that original group, I spoke of Phyllis Levine from Cleveland Modern Dance and the fact that Karen McNally served only six months. And that's because... I don't know how we accomplished

²² Nicholas Ozanich, then 16-year old son of Marc

this, but Phyllis decided to leave CMDA and be employed as our part-time executive for AODC. She lived in Cleveland Heights and kept an office there, for years — for the duration of her time, which I think was six or seven years.

MO: '78 to '85. And then the office continued to be in Cleveland with Harriet.

JC: Phyllis had some health issues and decided to retire. But prior to that, we were actually employing her full-time, and she did *everything* for us. When Phyllis retired as executive, Andrew Bales²³ was general manager of Cleveland Ballet at that time. We didn't really do much of a search — *any* search — as I recall. He knew about Harriet Wadsworth because of his work with Homer Wadsworth of the Cleveland Foundation, and Harriet was available. And so Andy gave us an office in *his* office and Harriet set up shop there, and she published a newsletter, which I helped her with. I remember driving downtown to Cleveland Ballet three times a week that summer. Harriet was followed by Doreen Dunn.²⁴ Remember Doreen?

MO: I do. Her husband and she used to be in soaps. Am I right?

JC: In what?

MO: Soap opera.

JC: I don't remember that.

MO: Yeah. I'm almost *positive* of this. He's a gorgeous man. She's a drop-dead gorgeous woman. I can remember her pulling up somewhere in Columbus, outside of a big theater. I looked in the car and I said, "Whoa, who is this man?" I mean, he's the typical gorgeous soap type. They had moved to this area because New York was just such a rat race and they wanted a calmer, better life for their son, as I recall. See, *that's* the kind of stuff I remember.

CF: That's interesting — all good.

MO: She was just a lovely, warm person.

JC: I remember a meeting that the three of us had, because we were about to produce a festival at the University of Akron. And so Doreen drove in and we did lunch or had a meeting somewhere to talk about arrangements. But Harriet served for three years, and Andrew left the position in Cleveland. And so that really meant that *we* left the position in Cleveland (laughing), and that's when the office was moved to Columbus. That's how we started in Columbus with our office there. Doreen Dunn was the first executive during those years.

CF: Well, I want to bring Dennis in, because we're into his years by this point.

²³ Andrew R. Bales -- a former manager with New York's Nikolais/Louis Foundation for Dance, the Louis Falco Dance Co., and Joffrey II Ballet – became General Manager of the Cleveland Ballet from 1983-1988.

²⁴ Doreen Dunne was OhioDance executive director 1988-1990

DD: Yeah. The festival, because it was... OhioDance was headquartered in Cleveland, that's when I became involved with it — but minorly; I wasn't on the board. I didn't do any major shake-up or anything. I just went along and went to some meetings that the board had had. And I knew Phyllis Levine, I'd met her on many occasions. Harriet Wadsworth was the one that I worked with the closest, because that was the year that we did the festival at Case Western Reserve University. And coming up with how to choose the performers for the festival, we simply went to the OAC and said, "Who have you given grants to in the field of dance?" And so we selected those people to show what they did on stage at Case. That was also with... I'm blanking here. Susan Miller²⁵ was also *very* involved in those years in dance, and I was involved with Susan and we were doing the repertory project at the time. That was all.

JC: And Karen. Susan and Karen.

DD: Karen Allgire,²⁶ yeah.

DD: That was all around.

DD: Karen Allgire — and Colleen!

MO: Colleen Clark.²⁷

DD: Colleen Clark. Thank you.

MO: I have a few.

DD: Between us we should be able to... And yeah, Karen still teaches...

MO: She does yoga now — major. She has the studios. Gosh. I don't know how many years. Very successful.

DD: Susan, I know, went off and is baking bread.

MO: Colleen Clark had been teaching.

DD: Part-time. At Case, I thought. No?

²⁵ The Repertory Project was a dance company that was formed in 1987 by Susan Miller and Colleen Clark to bring to Cleveland the work of a variety of contemporary choreographers from 1987-2001.

²⁶ Originally from Omaha, NE, Allgire began training in theater and dance, studying theater at Drake University in Des Moines, IA, and dance at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. In 1985, she moved to Cleveland, where she taught dance until 1999, when she began to invest herself more fully in Iyengar Yoga. She is a certified Iyengar Yoga instructor and the co-owner of Green Tara Yoga & Healing Arts in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

²⁷ Colleen Clark, MFA, OCPS1, CIYT, has an MFA in dance from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, is a Level 1 Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher and a certified Relax and Renew Yoga Instructor, and works as an Ohio Certified Drug-Prevention Specialist working with at-risk youth to support them in making healthy lifestyle choices.

MO: I'm not sure of that but I know that she also taught in Karen's studio. She taught yoga, also. She did these really wonderful far-off things. I never saw them, but I remember her telling me about them.

DD: We were at OU together.

MO: Okay. That's why. She's *very* feminist. I remember she talked about this one thing. She was pregnant and covered in mud. That's what I remember. I never saw this...

JC: That was a performance?

MO: Oh yeah. No, not that I saw but...

JC: An art installation?

MO: Yeah, most likely she was...

DD: You're thinking of Cheryl Wallace²⁸

MO: No! Colleen Clark.

DD: Okay. Well, Colleen and Cheryl were also close together. That's an Ohio University (OU) connection.

JC: That's my school!

DD: ...with Gladys Bailin.²⁹

MO: Yes.

DD: Shirley Wimmer³⁰ was running OU back then. That was the cadre that I graduated with, and went to New York. And some of them stayed here. Colleen stayed here.

CF: I seem to recall Colleen and Karen as undergrads at The Ohio State University (OSU) when I was a grad student.

DD: They were at OU for '72 to '75? Somewhere. Not Karen — Colleen and Cheryl Wallace.

MO: I think Karen was at Case Western?

DD: Yes. She was at Case Western.

²⁸ Cheryl Ann Wallace (1952-2006), originally from Cleveland, performed with Contemporary Dance Company in Cincinnati. She was a choreographer, teacher and performer.

²⁹ Bailin was a featured performer with the Nikolais, Murray Louis and Don Redlich dance companies from 1948- 1972, when she moved to Athens, OH, to join the faculty of Ohio University, where she is currently Director Emerita and Distinguished Professor of Dance.

³⁰ Shirley Wimmer (1938 – 2019) founded the Dance Department at OU in 1969.

CF: Quick question. Perhaps quick. You had mentioned hiring somebody to do something for you, which brings up the question of funds. With what were you hiring? How were you supported? Was it membership entirely?

JC: I'm pretty sure we had grant funds from OAC...

MO: Definitely. Definitely.

JC: Other than that, it was membership.

DD: And there was the grant fund because Ira [Weiss] and the whole OAC was very supportive.

MO: And also one of the functions of the organization, which I think actually I used one time, I got an OAC grant, but they were my fiscal...

JC: ...agent.

MO: And that was a service and there was a fair amount of activity with that. And so, people who had no 501c3 or anything like that, we were able to go through Ohio Dance. You know, I can't for the life of me... I don't think we charged for that!

JC: Yes, we did.

MO: Did we? Good for you, Jeanne.

DD: It's always been 10%.

JC: Yes. 10%.

DD: No, we're down to seven now?

JD: 7.5.

JC: Being the fiscal agent meant that we received their grant, their money passed through our organization so they could use our nonprofit status. And I saw on an outline that there was a year in the '80s, that we served as fiscal agent to major organizations, but I didn't understand that, because our service was utilized by individual artists who didn't have non-profit status. Major organizations had... had that status. So that's probably a correction to that line.

CF: Gosh, there are so many things that came up for me while you all were talking, and you're doing a great job of reconstructing history, by the way. I'm interested in something you referred to.

DD: (laughing) *Why* did we rip the walls down?

CF: No, no — although that sounds like a great story. You can perhaps get back to that, but it's more, well, now I have another question about that. Let me ask that one first, because it's probably brief. You mentioned that, I think, right around that time you were going into Cleveland maybe

three times a week, trying to work on this membership directory. You were bigger than sixty-six by then.

JC: Excuse me, but I think you're *combining* a couple of projects...

CF: I could be!

JC: But I *did* go in to assist Harriet with all kinds of things, because she was new — especially when she was new to the organization, I helped orient her. But then I helped write and helped her publish a monthly newsletter, which was our way of communicating to our membership. Also on a list of landmarks or points that Jane sent me, I saw that there was a time for the first membership directory. But that's not quite right because earlier, we did have a membership directory and I typed it on my portable typewriter at a desk in my bedroom... (laughing)... while my husband was trying to get to sleep. And I remember it was *really*, really difficult because I had to have the phone in my hand the whole time, because I would find missing information and then I'd have to call somebody so that the entries in the membership directory... and doing it on a typewriter without Excel or something — was tedious. But I enjoyed it. And I felt very fine about having provided the organization's first membership directory, and by then we had numerous individuals, dance departments of colleges and universities, professional and pre-professional companies involved.

CF: Do you recall the length of the list? The approximate number of members?

JC: Oh, it was probably under 100, but I think this was *after* that meeting at Sinclair where we had 66.

DD: I remember in '85 when I found out about the organization, and met Harriet and Phyllis and all the other people, that it was over 100 at that point. Because you (looking toward Jeanne) had gone away from just being...companies — and gone into individual memberships. And that's when I joined the Ohio dance. So, they got my membership dollars early.

JC: Yeah. That what you're talking about came *after* my membership directory.

DD: Right, right. Because they opened it up to individuals in '84.

CF: Do you recall the decision to do that? Anybody?

DD: Oh, I wasn't there for that.

JC: Well, there were individuals such as myself and another person that should be mentioned along the way is **Kitty**.³¹

MO: Gosh, yes. Oh my god.

³¹ A reference to Katharine “Kitty” MacMillan, of Warren, OH, who was the OD Board Secretary. MacMillan was a long time arts advocate and former dancer.

JC: Catharine with two A's. Catharine McMillan of Warren. There was a pretty professional dance theater in Warren and she was a performer from the vaudeville days. She was even older than I! (laughing)

MO: She was a *force* of nature! A great, fun lady.

JC: But in the beginning she may have joined, she may have been at that initial meeting in Columbus, that formation meeting. I'm remembering now that the place we met in Mansfield was called the **Mansfield Arts Center**.³²

MO: Sounds right.

JC: So it was more than a gallery.

MO: Yes. That's for sure.

CF: You mentioned, let's see, there was a first concert at Case mentioned, and there was a repertory...

MO: First festival.

CF: So tell me about that. *When* did the organization decide they wanted to do a festival?

MO: Well, that would have preceded me, for sure.

DD: Well, '81 is when Kenyon hosted it..

JC: And that's the one I remember leaving a conference. I was attending a conference in Dallas with my husband — an international rotary convention. And we had this festival scheduled and I don't remember how we put it together, but it was our first festival. And I was, I think, incoming president that year, and so I felt very obligated. So I left Dallas a day before our conference was to end and flew back to Canton and figured out where Gambier, Ohio was — and drove there (peels of laughter). And I remember we had Bill Como, William Como, who everybody knew because there was *one* magazine nationally and it was Dance Magazine and he was the publisher. And he was out and about, so he came to cover our first festival, personally. And when I arrived, I was told, "Too bad you didn't get here last night!" Turned out that Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman, who were graduates of Kenyon, had performed there in the theater at Kenyon the evening before. So this was a real *draw* for us. Our festival was officially starting the next day, but we made a *very* big deal of the fact that they would be there and that you could start out early for our festival and attend that performance.

MO: You know that they were supporters of **Pilobolus**,³³ for sure. I think she was on the board, if I'm not mistaken. This is totally not about Ohio Dance, but I remember going to see Pilobolus in

³² Located at 700 Marion Ave., Mansfield, OH, the Mansfield Arts Center is located in the Woodland neighborhood of Mansfield, Ohio, and operated by the Mansfield Fine Arts Guild, which was founded as a non-profit arts organization in 1945. The Center offers rotating exhibits, classes, workshops & community events. -

New York and my son was so small, he was in one of those [carriers] on the front and my daughter would sit on my shoulders and we had tickets to Pilobolus and my son was a little fussy. So I went out in the lobby and my daughter was sitting with my wife and the lady came up the aisle, stopped and looked down at my daughter and said, "This is the right age for children to be coming to the theater." I will never forget that. It was awesome — just as friendly as though she was *anybody*. Lovely, lovely people. Lovely people.

CF: Let's see. Gosh, how old was your daughter at that point?

MO: Well, my son was just hatched. They were three years apart. So, approximately four. And she was used to being in theater because both parents were, and both children were totally good at being quiet, except the baby, who was still too young.

JC: The Coen children, all four of them, started attending Canton Ballet performances when they were three years old. I would just, on the way out the door, I would say, "Grab a pillow off the sofa, we're going." And so I had to smile when you said that you were told that.

CF: Do you recall the thinking behind the staging of a festival? Was that just an obvious move or was it a...

DD: No, the thing that always drew me to the festivals was that everybody from Ohio got to come together in one space and see what other companies were doing, other were working on, and it was a good time to meet all the other people who were involved in dance within the state.

JC: And to show our wares!

DD: And to meet!

MO: It *was* very social. I remember **Stuart Pimsler**,³⁴ for example — the list goes on and on. And I remember Stuart saying very clearly how lovely it was that we were able to get together socially, because everyone was so busy doing their own thing that no one had time to travel 100 miles to see somebody else's work. It just wasn't like that.

DD: Well, it also became the place that everybody could *stop* for a minute because you couldn't go, like Mark said, to travel to see other people's performances. Because everybody's trying to do their own thing. So it gave a focal point.

CF: You okay? So give me that year again for the Kenyon Festival? '81?

DD: '81.

³³ Pilobolus Dance Theatre, a company of international stature, was co-founded by a group of Dartmouth College students in 1971, and continues to perform over 100 choreographic works in more than 60 countries around the world. The signature style of the work comes out of a group creative process, and is marked by strength, athleticism and gymnastic dexterity that often emphasizes exaggerations or distortions of human and non-human life forms.

³⁴ Founded in New York City in 1979, Stuart Pimsler Dance Theater (SDT) is co-directed by Pimsler and Suzanne Costello. The company moved to Minneapolis in 2000, where it is now based.

CF: And you mentioned also, well, it was a repertory concert, right? Because it was the work of lots of people. But you specifically mentioned a repertory concert. I didn't know whether that was-

MO: Well, no, I mentioned the repertory project.

CF: Ahhh, I see.

MO: That was a group of modern dancers in Cleveland that got together and none of them wanted to *be* a choreographer, so they hired people from all across the United States that they thought was an interesting choreography and it was mostly a group of women that dance together. And eventually it became for ballet.

JC: But that was Susan Miller.

MO: Susan Miller.

JC: And Karen Allgire.

DD: Colleen Clark, **Greta Lavart**³⁵, who is a lawyer that still dances. I see her today. And **Chris DiCello**³⁶ from Lake Erie. Another one -- I can see her. I can't remember her name. I see all eight of them, but I would have to go look at some source material to find out all of their names.

MO: They did some very nice, very lovely things. The one that sticks out is the **Binge Quartet**. You remember who did that? A young man. It'll come to me, maybe. Anyway...

DD: Having lit all those shows, you'd think I would...

MO: Too many.

DD: ...but I've run so many shows now that it's hard.

MO: The other thing that happened at those festivals early on was people taught classes.

DD: Right, and just as it is now, there was a class component. So then people got to work with...

MO: Even some choreography classes, improv classes, it was pretty varied, really, depending upon the venue, how many classes were going.

JC: *All over the place!* As president — this is the festival at Case Western — I felt that I needed to attend part of every single function of the festival. I did! I was trying to think of the name of the hotel. It was a residential hotel in Cleveland Heights.

DD: Alcazar.³⁷

³⁵ Greta Levart, founder and director of the Manhattanville College Dance Theatre Department

³⁶ DiCello was Associate Professor, ballet, tap, kinesiology, choreography at Lake Erie College, and is currently part-time dance instructor at Cleveland State University.

JC: Yes. We stayed there. I'd never been in a place like that. Some people live there and had screen doors on their rooms (laughing)!

DD: And we actually had some festival activities there, in their ballroom. So in that period, we tried to find somebody who would host it, to start with, for free. And it was usually a university, not always. Then we would try and build a local committee that would take care of all the housekeeping and the hospitality stuff. And so it was done fairly on the cheap. There wasn't a lot of funding. There was a small honorarium given to the companies to do it as more of a chance together to come to perform for your peers. And it was open to the public, too.

MO: And as I recall, it was in a university that we tried to pick a date where the young people could stay in the dorms.

DD: Right. So that the housing was...

MO: ...as cheap as possible!

JC: Yeah. Dining and housing being provided on campus, of course.

CF: Was it a full weekend of activities? Is that how it worked?

DD: It was usually about three days.

CF: Did you feel that very first one, the one that obliged you to leave Dallas to get yourself to this Gambier, had been a success?

JC: Oh, yes. Yes. I remember that **Steve Ayers** was the manager of Ohio Ballet following Rod Rubbo, so he was there. And my goal was to get there in time for some kind of banquet type event, which opened the festival, and I made it.

CF: Well something, Mark, that you had mentioned earlier, just in passing really, was a period of difficulty for the organization that you and Jeanne had to get through.

MO: The exact details I don't recall, but I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I am an "artiste" — and not a business person. And I think that... As I recall, it was a situation where we had a fair chunk of money and I think — I'm not positive — it was the National Endowment for the Arts. And we got this chunk of money and we were to hand it out to the various people it was supposed to go to. And then we had a whole bunch of other projects, as well. And in *my* mentality, "Oh, here's the budget. Everything's together." And I think that our gal, **Vicky Dumber**,³⁸ was also very young, not very clear on these things. And undoubtedly, I probably just said to her, "Well, you know, it's like I do at home. If we have \$50 for babysitting and \$100 for groceries and we're running

³⁷ Located on 2450 Derbyshire Road in Cleveland Heights, the Alcazar is a neighborhood landmark. Built in 1923, it has a distinctive architectural style, Moorish or Spanish, and is no longer operating as a hotel, but has been converted to apartments.

³⁸ Vickie Dummer served as OhioDance executive director 1990-1992.

a little short here or there, we just do it." Well, that was *not* really kosher, as it were. In fact, it was probably big-time illegal. So the bottom line of it is, about part way through all of this, we woke up to the fact that we had done this, and we were really very chagrined and fortunately, the people at the NEA were lovely and we *could* show that we could balance the books over time, et cetera. And they let us do that. Sadly, in order do that, we had to *really* pull back. And I believe we had to let Vicky go, because we couldn't sustain her at the same time. I'm not sure you want this in your history!

CF: Well, it's an interesting part of institutional history.

JC: I've managed to block that all out!

DD: No, I remember that.

JC: But now I remember.

MO: So Jeanne and I ended up holding the fort together. Everything moved to my office at the University of Akron because I was President, and we became *defacto*, I don't know whether it was just me or the two of us, I believe you were Treasurer.

JC: Not yet.

MO: Not yet — but she was on the board and typical of Jeanne, she comes to the rescue for anything and everyone. And so, I worked as executive director for a period as well as president until that whole thing got smoothed over and straightened out. And I actually still have the little Macintosh computer that came from Vicky and I fired it up this morning, looked at it. Unfortunately the disks, I don't know where they are, but I probably have them. And there was a letter in there from Vicki to the NEA people. It was a very sweet letter. And she said that things were getting straightened around, et cetera. Although I don't have the *reply* to that letter, it was very cordial. So the NEA was *extremely* nice to us. And as a result, we didn't get any sort of bad publicity. They just figured "stupid Mark Ozanich — let him off the hook!" I don't know. But anyway, that was the trouble. And I think I finished out my presidency and then I pulled the covers over my head and said, "I need to be *out* of this. I'm not equipped to do this. Even with Jeanne looking over my shoulder."

CF: Every organization has its ups and downs and it would be false to suggest otherwise.

JC: *Your* presidency was *after* ... I left the board in '91, I think.

MO: Yeah, but you were *always* around.

JC: But I was a volunteer!

MO: You were *always* around.

JC: So I was on the board from '76 or '77 until...

MO: I'm not sure during that period, that Jeanne was *on* the board, is probably why we got our tail-end cracked, frankly. But I do know that during the recovery period, Jeanne was in my office a *good* amount of time, as we sorted through things. And we even did another membership directory. But it was a lot easier because we were on a Mac by then.

JC: Another thing we did, because we had this dream for the organization. Do you remember our dream? Our technological dream?

MO: Which one?

JC: Well, we still were all paper, but Mark had this little computer and we thought, "Oh, it would be so great if *all* of this could be done on the computer." And so we sat down and we started doing long-range planning. And I had been very involved in long-range planning, here in Canton. So I got Mark onto that and we had *fun* doing it.

MO: I remember this meeting where we were all there and there was stuff on the wall and we had ideas...

JC: Brainstorming!

MO: We had pieces of paper, one to four or something like that. And you'd go around with this bunch of post-it's and "Well, I think that's worth a three and that's worth one and that's worth two." And then out of that — Damn, Jeanne! You're the one who taught me how to plan.

JC: I know I did!

MO: I'm serious — the *rest* of my life from that experience forward.

JC: Oh... (disbelieving)

MO: No, it's true! *Big* decisions in my life have come from that. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you very much.

CF: Bravo!

JC: For better or worse.

MO: She's been a teacher in many wonderful ways.

JC: Now, I remember in the office, at the department there at Akron was, I'm having trouble with her name. You spoke of her when we were talking on the phone and how you might...

MO: Vicky? Vicky Dumber?

JC: No. No, no. University of Akron.

DD: Lucinda [Lavelli]?³⁹

JC: Thank you.

MO: Oh, of course.

JC: It was Lucinda who was always sitting at the desk and answering the phone when I was coming and going from Canton.

MO: Talk about a gem, oh my God.

JC: And very supportive and made the computer available to us.

MO: Yeah. Anyway, she has stepped down as a Dean; she was *easily* the best boss I ever had. I worked my behind off for that woman!

DD: I followed her to Akron and we met and we had worked in the 80s.

MO: Beautiful, wonderful, *inspiring* leadership. Great. Anyway, so I fly down to Florida, went to this thing when she stepped down as dean, and it was lovely.

DD: She was also a friend of OhioDance...

CF: Yes.

Well, when you did your long range planning with your post-it notes or however you were doing those numbers, what were you *thinking* about for the organization? And I mean, did you have a mission? What were you trying to accomplish, generally?

MO: Well, that was a part of the planning process was to come up with a mission statement that was... *updated*, I guess the word would be. And we worked and worked on that, I know. And then we had some goals and that then became action plans, et cetera, just endless, and we organized it fairly well. It was shortly after that we sunk in to our problems. So I might even have floating around somewhere that... I remember a yellow piece of paper with the lines, grid, and the various things in there that, Jeanne had then coalesced and put together for us.

JC: But our *big* thing was the computer! We were *just* discovering the computer and what the possibilities could be. And we just thought it would be so fabulous. And we did think that eventually all of our record keeping and daily work would be computerized.

MO: I think we wanted something... I mean, this is before. Some of this thinking is you're *reaching* and because it's not your field, but the idea of a dance database was a dream with, I don't think any

³⁹ Lucinda S. Lavelli served from 2006-2018 as the first female dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Florida. Previously, she served as chairwoman of performing arts and director of dance at Hathaway Brown School in Shaker Heights, director of the School of Dance and later as director of the School of Dance, Theater and Arts Administration at the University of Akron (1997-2002), and as the first provost and vice chancellor for Arts and Academics at North Carolina School of the Arts.

of us really understanding what that even meant. I am now... I mean, my husband is a biostatistician, so I'm starting to get a vague idea of what that *really* is, because medical records have been digitized now for quite some time. And if you want to do research, I mean, literally there are some of these huge databases and they're just full of information and you can *literally* get an idea and you can get into these databases and do amazing research. So just like what you're doing right now, once these ideas are digitized, someone in future may say, "Oh, Ohio State was doing "x" while OhioDance was doing "y" and look how these coalesce." And then, and they pull together these wonderful ideas. And in the medical field, of course, there you find ways to do better treatment of patients. Just like all these people who are surviving cancer right now. I have another friend who's got pancreatic cancer. She is at six months, and her hair is growing back. I mean, I was over there the other day and she came down the stairs and she had her wig off and she says, "I have more hair than you do." I'm serious. And she's amazing. And she should... sorry — *one* year ago, she would've died within two months. I'm not kidding. So that's where all of these records, at least in the medical profession are so incredibly useful. And in future, people trying to do histories can pull these things together. I was a member for a good while of Dance History Scholars.⁴⁰ And we would go to conventions and so forth in it. It was just a pitiful little bit of information that we had to work with. I mean, so little and so little extant material, et cetera. And now you're building extant material for future generations. So this is incredible. You're actually *doing* a part of that dream.

CF: Trying to!

JC: I didn't leave the board when I said I did.

MO: You *didn't*? You lied, Jeanel! You lied!

JC: I have a list of past presidents. And do you remember the woman from Dayton?

MO: Which one? Okay, go on.

JC: Well, her name was Arnecia.⁴¹

MO: Oh, Arnecia. Oh, my God!

JC: Now we're in Columbus in the Riffe...

MO: Riffe, Verne Riffe.

MO: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

⁴⁰ The Society of Dance History Scholars (SDHS) was an academic organization that promoted dance history research. In 2017, it joined with another scholarly organization, the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) to form one current organization, Dance Studies Association (DSA).

⁴¹ Arnecia Patterson, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, executive director OhioDance president 1993-1995.

CF: You're mentioning people. I have a couple to ask you about, because Jane can't figure out who they are. Margaret Tcheng⁴² and Tim Van Leer,⁴³ who were back to back. Please let us know who they were.

JC: Margaret was an educator with Ohio University.

DD: Oh, yes. Right.

JC: And she served just one year. These dates are a little difficult when you're talking fiscal years...

JC: It just gets a little mixed up here. But anyway, I remember Margaret served one year and I don't know why she didn't continue on. She was lovely and did a fine job. And she was followed by Tim Van Leer, and he had a position in the Performing Arts Center or whatever it was called at Ohio State. He was the manager or director of that.

JC: Was it Wexner, then?

MO: I'm pretty sure.

DD: He wasn't part of the Dance Department.

MO: No. No, he was not.

JC: So he was [with the] Wexner Center.⁴⁴ But he was all *gung ho* and we were happy to have him. And as always in dance, we were happy to have a gentleman join our forces. Then I got a call from Tim one day and he called to let me know... I'll tell you why he called, but... He called to let me know that he was moving out of state on a job change. And he had talked with Vickie Blaine⁴⁵ at the OSU Dance Department. And he'd gone ahead and tried to promote the presidency to her, and she said, "I *will* do that *next* year, if Jeanne Coen will finish out your term, I will come in." And so that's why I had a second go around at the presidency, and just for the better part of at one year. And then Vicki came in and I remember she served three years. So '88 through '90 would be all three of those years.

CF: Okay. Let's see...where do we want to go? I am interested in kind of Big Picture reflections... we're sitting here, and it's 2019. A lot of events we're talking about happened quite a while ago. Not as long for Dennis, but really we were going down to the origins.

MO: Yeah. We're looking back in the 90s.

⁴² Margaret Tcheng, Ohio University. 1984 OhioDance president.

⁴³ In addition to serving as OhioDance president in 1985, Van Leer served as Director of Mershon Auditorium, the 3,064-seat presentation venue at The Ohio State University/Wexner, University, from 1977 – 1989. Subsequently, he was executive director for the Lied Center of Kansas.

⁴⁴ The Wexner Center, which opened in 1989, is billed as OSU's "multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art." This confusion with the Mershon Auditorium is understandable, as the Mershon building is now a part of the Wexner Center.

⁴⁵ Vera (Vickie) Blaine (1934 – 2016) was chair of the Department of Dance from 1983 – 1995. *She is a subject in another feature of the VDC.*

CF: And one of my questions is, as you look back what are you *proud* of? What do you see as accomplishments that you oversaw or were a part of?

JC: Well, I'd like to address that. I am *totally* proud of OhioDance and what the organization has accomplished to my knowledge through the years. But the fact that we're *here* forty-three years later, we're here and stronger than ever. So it's not my pride to have alone, of course. So many people, dozens and dozens of people, and counting interested members who may not have served on the board but participated in various projects, probably hundreds of people have a memory of helping out with OhioDance.

MO: I think for me, very personal — being a performer and seeing the ladies on the board of Ohio Ballet and all the work they did and the many hours they put in and seeing what Jeanne had done and kind of partnered with her and in a lot of ways, I think my proudest thing is that after all of these people who supported me as an individual, as they supported all of us, I got a chance to do a little bit of payback. And I think that makes me feel good about myself in that it's a debt that can never *be* repaid but, at least, your pennies on the dollar or something like that. You know what I mean? And that was very important to me. So that would be a *personal* pride as far as the organization is concerned. I think it is incredible that *anything* is going forty-three years later; I don't care *what* it is. Because I've seen so many organizations, businesses, what have you, university programs, et cetera, that have flourished and then just fallen down.

And I think one of the other lessons that I personally got from OhioDance when we hit that bad time was that we agreed that we would do everything we could to save it, but if it *didn't* make it, I philosophically learned that everything has a life cycle and some things just last longer than others. And I think that that was another huge learning point in my life. And one of the things that I think of now is, this is a *chapter* in my life. This is another chapter; this is *another* chapter... And of course the chapters run different lengths: some are like that; some are very long. And it's pretty cool to think that something I was involved with *briefly* really, when you consider forty-three years — I wasn't that active that long, is still going. It's marvelous. It's cool.

JC: I think it's really special that OhioDance is *still* doing what it set out to do. You know, an organization evolves, and activities — emphasis on certain activities — changed through the years. But look at where we are now: everybody in Ohio that's involved with dance knows about OhioDance. And I don't know what the membership is...

DD: As a current board member — and this is also part of the give-back — because my joining the board in '98....

MO: Whoa!

DD: ...and so I'm on twenty years, now. I know they kicked me off for a year. That's what it was — I had to leave for a year, something in the bylaws. But to watch it... I mean, and I've seen it grow from back in the early days when I was just minorly involved — and would do festivals and things — that the festival has become a big event and that we do reach out to much more than we originally started off doing. One of the biggest things I really like about the festival is that we have the kids' component now and we do a *whole* concert of just children performing. And I'll tell you that has actually made me want to continue in dance. I was getting very jaded for a while. And then they have a kids' concert. And you go, "This is why we're *doing* it, because these children are excited to come and see and do dance." That's the joy that dance gives, and we do reach out to a lot more

people. We have members of the board that are from competition schools, which is a whole group of children that we hadn't ever really talked to. A lot of times in the early days, back between the troubles and restarting, it was just about being in a university or a dance company.

MO: Correct.

DD: The individual memberships were just kind of an add-on to itself. So I think that it has grown and it's continuing to grow. And we've been really lucky because we have Jane D'Angelo, who has been our executive director for almost as long as I've been on the board. And having that consistency *really* helps the organization continue to go forward. Having been through a list of the executives that I saw in there, some are better than others, and then the presidents that we've had. I mean, Lucinda was president of the board when I joined and we went on to Neil⁴⁶ and then they saw real growth happen within the organization.

JC: Part of that evolution that we spoke of is that, looking at the beginning, we were about dance and performing and through the years, thanks to our members...

DD: Right. I might mention Kay Davis⁴⁷ and her whole thing about qualifications for teachers...

JC: Yes!

DD: ...and bringing up standards for teachers to be able to teach dance and having that as a requisite for K - 12 education. So, I mean, there've been *really* a great things, in terms of what the board has done, and making this happen for dance.

JC: Probably about the time that the OhioDance award moved from being an award to a solo person, to being divided, dance education really became very much a part of our lingo, and it was no longer all about performing it. Those performers had to *learn* how to do that. And those educators were being drawn into the organization and really providing for much growth and extension with the festivals, as they were presented. I think that's what you were talking about.

Dennis mentioned by-laws, and that brought to mind that in the very beginning we needed something, a document to live by. And I had experience in writing code and bylaws for Canton Ballet, but I learned that William Joseph⁴⁸ of Cleveland — now the late William Joseph — Bill was

⁴⁶ Neil Sapienza is Professor Emeritus in photography/digital imaging at the University of Akron, where he was Associate Dean of UA's College of Arts and Sciences, among other positions. As a graduate student at OSU, he took on the redesign of the OhioDance website as a graduate project, and continues to support the organization in other ways.

⁴⁷ Kathleen (Kaye) Davis, Professor Emerita and former Associate Professor at the University of Akron, had an extensive dance background, including a full scholarship at Jacob's Pillow where she was coached by Ted Shawn. She trained with ballet teacher Margaret Craske, and at Washington State University with Ballet Russe ballerina Ruthanna Boris. She was one of the early pioneers in the regional ballet movement. Mrs. Davis founded and directed the North Dakota Ballet and later performed with the Ohio Ballet. With her B.A. in Dance and M.S. in Education, she has been a prime mover in the new fifth-year option of K-12 certification for dance educators seeking to teach in public schools in Ohio. She is currently involved in research on fitness and eating disorders in the dance population. She formerly served as a member of the OhioDance Board of Trustees.

⁴⁸ William R. Joseph (1946-2012) was a specialist in nonprofit law who volunteered for nonprofits in the Cleveland area, co-founder of Ohio Citizens for the Arts, among many, many achievements and posts in the Cleveland area.

totally into that kind of thing, writing those documents for nonprofit organizations, as a professional. And so he volunteered to do ours and I don't know what form it's in now or how many times it's been changed...

DD: We have changed it multiple times in the twenty years that I've been on the board.

JC: That's part of the evolution.

DD: It is! And we've been able to secure lawyers onto the board now. We have a much more diverse board. So we have a lot more skills brought to it that a lighting designer for dance doesn't have. I mean, I'm not going to write any *legal* opinions. And so, yeah, we've changed a few times to keep up with what the regulations are for a non-profit organization.

CF: Can I ask you, does the name Elaine Valois resonate with you?

JC: Yes.

CF: She was in the Toledo area, and we think that she was perhaps very early, a vice-president? Just wondered about that.

JC: Elaine *was* a board member. And she came by way of Toledo Ballet, which was a pre-professional company, and served for a few years during those — maybe three years — during those early years.

CF: I wonder if she was somebody around the table at the museum meeting...

JC: Hmmm. I don't remember *knowing* her there.

MO: No, no. No. I knew of her via reputation. Not in the time that I was there. But **Carol Griffith** would have been on the board. Gosh, was **Ann Ennis**⁴⁹ ever sat on the board? Do you know? I can't remember.

JC: No.

MO: Okay.

JC: But we were very familiar with Cleveland Modern Dance Association. Ann Ennis was very much *that* organization.

DD: And she was... they were both involved with the Repertory Project...

MO: And **Verb Ballets**.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Co-founder and former president of Cleveland Modern Dance Association (CMDA), now DANCECleveland, where Ennis continues to sit on the board. *Ennis is also featured in the VDC collection that celebrates the CMDA/DANCECleveland.*

⁵⁰ Founded in 1987, Verb Ballets is separately featured in the VDC.

DD: ... which became Verb Ballets. Yes.

MO: Because I see Ann. I bump into her now and again. But Carol Griffith for sure was on the board, wasn't she? Yeah.

DD: Yes. She comes to a lot of **GroundWorks**⁵¹ performances.

JC: I remember being with Carol at that festival in '87.

DD: Yes.

JC: So that would have been her era. Yeah.

DD: And that was when I met Anne Ennis and Carol, and that whole cadre of Cleveland Modern Dance Association people. That's what they originally started, back in the fifties...

JC: Talk about a long history...

CF: '56.

DD: 56? Yes. These women brought people in to learn about what there is in dance that *isn't* in Cleveland.

JC: So CMDA was one of the early really successful presenter organizations, right?

MO: Yeah.

JC: And Phyllis Levine who became our first executive director had been with that organization for years, as I said.

CF: I'm guessing that Jane might have a question or two, because of where she sits with the organization. I also want to ask a big, broad question, since I am sitting in a room full of not only institutional knowledge, but wide expertise in the area of dance in Ohio, so I'm really talking *beyond* this institution of OhioDance. You've seen dance of all kinds come and go in this state. You've seen dance change. You've seen people come and go. And I'm just curious about where you think dance in Ohio is *now*? And from where it has come. What would you name as some of the significant movements leading to the present, I guess?

DD: The only thing I can say about this... After OU, I went to New York, and worked in dance in New York, which meant being on the road more than I was in New York. But when my oldest daughter was born, I knew we couldn't live in New York much longer; we needed to move back where there was childcare and family. And that was one of the things I *worried* about: will I be able to work again in dance and still deal with quality people?

⁵¹ A reference to GroundWorks DanceTheater of Cleveland, which is featured separately in the Virtual Dance Collection.

So, I've seen that dance in Ohio is — one of the things I always say is that we're “number three.” It's a funny thing to say, but New York being one and California being two. But they're much more populous states and they have more dance. However, we have more dance companies, professional companies, pre-professional companies, universities... The quality of dance here is *just* as good as in New York. In fact, I've probably seen more *bad* dance in New York than I do when I go here. I mean, because people here have an integrity that they want to uphold and keep in terms of what they do in the world of dance. And so I think that we're on just the bleeding edges of dance, too.

MO: And I think in all fairness, when I first came here, it was a very steep learning curve to find out that I had *accidentally* lucked out and landed in the state in 1971, I think is when I kind of came to Kent State to teach, where there was this *huge* amount of activity. And at *that* time we were number three.

DD: Right!

MO: So, I mean, if we go back to the '70s, what are we now? That's 30, 40, almost 50 years.

DD: In '72, I went to Ohio University and I had never seen dance truly before, because I was raised in a working class background — there was no *ballet* involved. And I was the stage manager at the Roadhouse Ohio University at the Memorial Auditorium. And the Murray Louis Company came through, and Gladys Bailin had just started teaching at OU. And I watched this performance and I was, like, totally blown away. And I was like, "This is really some cool stuff." And so I said, "I've got to work with this." So I went over to talk to Gladys and started working with the dance department, which was... I was not affiliated, I was in the theater department, but they told me I wasn't allowed to do anything else. And so we just went my own way and got a bachelor of general studies and worked with the dance department for four years. And then they allowed me to come and do that. So, yeah, I think it's been quality ever since.

MO: Yeah. I don't know... life has a way of sometimes doing something very nice for you. And it has been a *great* pleasure to be here. I might say also that the three people in this room — that are together here — are some of the dearest people I know in this profession. And the thing that's so funny is the way we ended up seeing — “Miss Glue” (gesturing toward JC) is right here.

DD: Yes, yes!

JC steps out to take a phone call.

MO: She's an incredible, very humble... but she has held together more stuff than you can shake a stick at.

CF: I sense that!

MO: Yeah. She's one *quality* lady, just amazing.

DD: Yeah.

MO: Did she ever get an award?

JD: Yes.

DD: Yes. Because as a board member, I was bugging Jane about it.

JD: In 1991.

DD: Yes.

MO: Good.

JD: She could probably get *another* one!

DD: And Marc and I received our award the same year.

MO: I think “lifetime achievement,” I think you should consider... I'm serious.

JD: Oh, I know.

DD: I've been *saying* that!

CF: Here we are, we're doing long range-planning.

JD: This is a really good “award” to get, doing this interview, too. I feel this can't be better — because people will be able to *see* her accomplishments.

MO: This is *it*.

DD: Yeah. Because it will be a visual record. It's a history record, which is what I find that this project... at OU **Pat Brooks**⁵² taught dance history. And I think it was one of the most informative things that I ever took at that college... to learn the history of dance. And I learned where my place *was* in the dance world. Having learned a German school of modern dance *ethic* as to how I see dance should be and how you should approach it. I was also fortunate when I worked at the Don Redlich Dance Company in New York. He was a Hanya Holm student, and so in her last years, he brought Hanya in, and as a stage manager/lighting designer, I got to actually light a piece with Hanya Holm, so that takes me back...

MO: That's pretty amazing.

DD: Yeah, that's pretty amazing. So for being in Ohio for this long, and having worked *in dance* my whole career — as a freelance lighting designer — is pretty incredible.

MO: Yeah. The fact that there's been enough business to *sustain* your career.

JC returns after phone call in another room.

CF: Exactly! Let's bring you back in, Jeanne.

JC: Thank you.

⁵² Patricia Brooks (1930 – 2009) served 31 years in the Dance Department at Ohio University in Athens, OH, of which she was one of the founding members.

CF: I don't know that you were here at the beginning of it, but we were just kind of looking at Ohio and all these years, the waves of movement and the continued development of dance in this state. Before I see what Jane might like to ask, I wondered if you had anything to say about the longevity and the proliferation, really, of dance in this state over time?

JC: I'm probably not a good person to answer that, because I'm pretty far removed from that proliferation other than what I read in Jane's wonderful newsletters.

CF: Okay. That's a fair answer. Jane?

JD: So I do have a few questions. I wanted to go back to the beginning of the whole interview when you were talking about Ira Weiss and what he was concerned about and *why* it originally started. And was it *just* Ohio Dance or were there other, or the Association of Ohio Dance Companies, or were there other projects that the arts council was doing? Do you remember that?

JC: Yes. At that time of the formation of the organization, there was *nothing* like it in the state. What was happening because of the increasing popularity of dance as an art form and so forth, Ohio Arts Council was trying to manage all the various proposals that came to the OAC, and there were certain staff members that were committed to arts areas, symphony, and art museum. And Ira was our dance guy on the OAC staff and he really was doing a yeoman's job, which as we gathered together and learned more about all of that, we could appreciate... In fact, he was an early awardee of the organization.

CF: But, Jane, you're interested in whether there were other organizations that came...

JD: I think it was the only one, right?

JC: Nothing like it. Speaking of longevity and evolution and all of that, at the time, there was an organization for symphony groups and I don't know if it still exists, but **Rachel Renkert**⁵³ in Canton was very instrumental — the late Rachel — in the Ohio Symphony Association.⁵⁴ That's probably what it was called is, is that still in existence? And so, organizations of our type would come and go. There was an Ohio Museum Association — that would come forth to serve a particular art form. But I think OhioDance is the grandmother of them all (she laughs).

CF: When did it *become* Ohio Dance? Do you recall?

JC: We have a date — Jane?

JD: 1984.

CF: And do you remember the thinking...

⁵³ Rachel Meredith Fisher Renkert: 1938 – 2007 founding of the Meredith Collection, Inc., a manufacturer of hand-made art tile, which became a division of Ironrock Capital, Inc. but was closed following the recession of 2008. Renkert's creative vision shaped the company's early product lines, drawing on arts and crafts-era and gardening themes.

⁵⁴ The correct designation is the Organization of Ohio Orchestras.

JC: Yes.

DD: The way it was explained to *me* was that they changed the name to OhioDance because they wanted to include other individual members, rather than just be an association of dance *companies*. That was the reason that I heard that the change was made.

JC: But, in the beginning, we had colleges and universities because they had performing groups within their realm and ...

DD: Well, that was the way they explained it to me, when they took my \$20...

JC: I can't think of his last name — Robert... a man who had managed Boston Ballet came to Cleveland. I think he may have followed... Jerry Kettelar went to Chicago, and I think he followed Jerry in that management position in Cleveland. And he decided we needed a pamphlet. And because he said, "What *is* AODC? We're not talking the full name: we all say AODC. What does that *mean*?" And so, somebody came up with a little pamphlet that was hardly more than a flyer, but it had an AODC and a big question mark was the cover art (she laughs). And that would have been our first publication of that sort. And I'll tell you who did it: Canton Ballet's manager at the time was **Bill Anderson**,⁵⁵ and I thought he should be involved. He should be more knowledgeable about what was going on outside of Canton. So, I dragged him to a few meetings — like committee meetings or something like that — and he was present when this gentleman was saying that. So Bill went ahead and did this — just a piece of paper folded twice — created it, and had it printed.

JC: I don't know if we ever produced another one.

JD: Well, you had a logo. So I have that in the file and I think you did have new... I don't know, I'll have to look at the files to see if you had another flyer.

CF: Where you going to add something, Marc?

MO: If you were thinking of organizations, I know one that's very long-lived: **Ohio Music Teacher's Association, OMTA**, has been around for... I don't know... my wife was a member of it.

DD: They produce the competitions.

MO: Yes, and they also, I think they've been allied here and there with **Tuesday Musical Alliance**⁵⁶ and some things like that. I'm not sure, but **Jerry Davidson**,⁵⁷ if he's still around, was a president of

⁵⁵ William "Bill" Anderson. Served as the first full-time manager of Canton Ballet. Anderson hailed from Iowa with an MA in Arts Administration, and came to the Canton position after a national search.

⁵⁶ Based In Akron, OH, Tuesday Musical Association provides premier concert series for the community, a comprehensive educational and scholarship program for young people, and performing and listening opportunities for members and guests. Originally called the Tuesday Afternoon Club, the organization has root since the late 1890s.

⁵⁷ Jerry Davidson (1944-2020), a Professor of Music at Kent State University specializing in teaching Class Piano, is noted as the first male president of Tuesday Musical Association (TMA) in 2006, and received a Voices of Giving award for his dedication in 2010.

that — and then there's a national association, as well. I don't know of anything else, but as far as... I don't know if there's an art teacher's one or anything like that, but I actually could do a little digging and get back to you on that.

CF: Great.

JC: I wanted to comment about the position of executive director. I remember, especially during the earlier years, that that could be a very lonely position. We had a person, and it was Phyllis, and we had a board — but *that* person worked alone, in a usually very *small* office somewhere and board members weren't around on a daily basis. I remember I sometimes would drive to Cleveland and just meet her for lunch, because I was *aware* of that fact — that our director really didn't have colleagues in the office, didn't have additional staff. It's been pretty much a solo entity through the years, am I correct about...

JD: It's changed.

DD: Oh, it's different now, yeah.

JD: It's different because we work on the same floor with other statewide organizations. So I have colleagues that I work with. They're different organizations like VSA⁵⁸... But, I do have a small office alone — yes, it's true. And I'm the sole staff person.

JC: Yes. That's what I was talking about.

JD: And I have people who work contract, like Jess [Cavender].

JC: Our executives had to have the gift of being a *networker* — that was one of the job requirements.

JD: I think that when I was interviewed, they had said, "Can you work autonomously?" And I said, "Yes, that is best — I *love* that. That's what I love about a job."

DD: And you don't have to work the night shift!

JD: Oh yeah? That's not true!

DD: No, no. But I'm saying that's where you usually can be alone, right? Is on the night shift.

CF: Did you want me to say more about that?

JC: I don't know.

CF: Just kind of the nature of the position of executive director...

⁵⁸ Art Possible Ohio (formally VSA Ohio) is the statewide service organization on the arts and disability, working with artists of all ages who have disabilities to make arts and cultural experiences more accessible and inclusive.

JC: Yes, and wanting to give *well-deserved* credit to the persons who have served in this position through the years. I mean, those are the people that really kept us *going* — and continue to do so!

DD: “And continue to do so” — that's very much so!

JC: The board of directors had responsibility, of course — and the legal responsibility, but we always took our direction from our executive...

DD: As the board *still* does today, in Jane. I mean, if Jane wasn't there to tell us what to do, we would be bereft.

JD: Yeah. Everybody always says, "You've got to tell us what to do!" It's like (laughing), "Okay, you come up with some ideas, too."

JC: “Tell me your needs!”

JD: I do have a question: it's about the beginning years, where you said that Ohio Arts Council, when they wanted to start this organization, that they helped to get the word out. Was that a good partnership between OhioDance and OAC? You mentioned that you were there in Ohio to let the dance community know that you were there to help. Can you just give us specific ideas of *how* you helped in those beginning years — helped those dance organizations?

JC: I think networking is the key word here, because not only was the executive director working in what could be a lonely job. There were *many* professionals out there, who were leading organizations and we helped bring those people together. And I think that's why we think of Ohio Dance as a *service organization*: that's our service — that networking and the wonderful projects that can grow out of such networking. The festival is a wonderful example of that kind of *benefit*.

DD: And in the early days, they wanted to try and at least put together at least a list of professionals that you could network with. That was always the biggest thing was the membership...

JC: The resource directory.

DD: Yes, resource directory.

JC: And Jane has that on the list — '87, is it?

DD: Yeah.

JC: The first combined membership and resource directory, and I remember when we were hearing this from our constituency, that there were people out there that not only were sending in dues, membership dues, and participating in festival or participating in the organization as a volunteer, but they wanted other people to *know* what they had. The choreographer wanted the dance companies to know; the educator wanted to network with others.

MO: I can't remember specifically, but I believe there were even hands-on kinds of things like, I'm just going to throw this out there because it insists on being thrown out, but like writing a grant.

DD: Right, yes.

MO: Someone who's brand new, green, never done this, clueless. And there were people who would literally volunteer to help you get a foot started, and I believe that I probably had some help — can't remember at the moment. And I know *you* helped me on a lot of things, but I don't remember *specifically* that particular thing, but that's niggling in my memory...

JC: Who is the woman with the liturgical dance?

MO: Oh, Kathy!

JD: Kathryn Mihelick⁵⁹

MO: Kathryn Mihelick is the one that comes to mind.

JC: Kathryn Mihelick! I can remember, and she was in Cleveland or...

MO: Actually, she lived in Stow.

DD: Right.

JD: Now she's in Hudson.

Okay. Anyway, I remember sitting at my kitchen table with her, because she contacted me. She had a group and they were doing liturgical dance, but she wanted to establish a non-profit organization. And evidently, someone at OAC told her to contact me because I was in on almost the beginning of Canton Ballet in the '60s. And so I want to mention Kathy Mihelick. And that was a perfect example, not only of the broadening of our constituency — into liturgical dance — and I didn't know everything, but I certainly gave her an outline — probably a plan of what to look up (laughing) to start her organization. **Leaven Dance**.⁶⁰

DD: Yes, Leaven Dance.

MO: And I believe that she pulled together to bring some fairly renowned lady. I remember her performing in the stage studio, and I think I'm not sure, but that could have been part of the festival, but anyway, there was literally a teaching component, and then the woman gave a performance, as well. So, there again, it's like one helps the other and then it feeds back into the organization. And

⁵⁹ The OhioDance Membership Directory lists Kathryn Mihelick as Artistic Director of Leaven Dance Company in Stow OH 44224, Founder/Director of Leaven Dance Company, a liturgical dance company, dancer with the Heidt Touring Company and Indianapolis Starlight Musicals; former professor and coordinator of the Dance Major Program at Kent State University and resident choreographer for Porthouse Theatre. Jeanne Coen assisted Kathryn in forming the company as a 501©3

⁶⁰ Leaven, formed in 1989 by Mihelik, Andrea Shearer and Lisa Fogel, describes itself as “a professional dance ensemble whose work addresses spiritual, ethical, social and wholeness issues through performance and worship venues and educational, motivational workshops.”

that hands-on thing, I think, has happened a great deal because of Ohio Dance. And it's quiet, because it's individual — it's A and B — but that's the kind of real help that one gets.

DD: And it was the network. It was just being able to network with finding who there *was* to even talk to, that was doing the same thing. So then, in the early days that's what it was, and it just continued to expand. Because we'd get people on the board after that, who would have different interests and so they'd bring *that* forward into dance. And Kay Davis, who was a colleague of ours at the University of Akron, was one of the ones that, I'll reiterate this, is that were bringing standards to K through 12 teaching.

MO: Which, another point in history is that Maggie Carlson,⁶¹ Kay Davis and myself sat together in my office, brainstorming about our program and certification for dance way back when, and I remember those were fun meetings because I'm a blabber-mouth once you get me spooled up. Kay would sit there very quietly, taking notes and organizing. Maggie and I would be going crazy.

JD: I have one more question, because what I have in the records is that it formed in '76 from 16 dance companies. Would you remember...

JC: Oh, okay!

JD: Yeah. Is that correct?

JC: I think that is, yes.

JD: Okay. Do you know which companies? Or how many can you name?

CF: Well, can we pull that together?

JD: How many could you name?

JC: If only we could get hold of some minutes, which you can!

JD: I can, I can. It would probably all be there, yeah... I would say, Cleveland Ballet...

JC: There was Cleveland Ballet,⁶² Ohio Ballet,⁶³ Dayton Ballet⁶⁴...

MO: DCDC?

⁶¹ Former dancer with Cleveland Ballet and Ohio Ballet, Dr. Margaret Carlson is the founder and director of Verb Ballets, which is featured separately in the VDC.

⁶² founded in 1972 by Dennis Nahat and Ian Horvath as a dance school, the School of Cleveland Ballet, the company was founded in 1986 as the "San Jose Cleveland Ballet," a co-venture with the ten-year-old Cleveland Ballet.

⁶³ co-founded by Heinz Poll and lighting designer Tom Skelton as the Chamber Ballet at the University of Akron and then Ohio Ballet in 1974, the Ohio Ballet closed in 2006. It is separately featured as an exhibit in the VDC.

⁶⁴ The second oldest regional ballet company in the United States, the Dayton Ballet was co-founded in 1927 as the Schwarz School of Dance by the Schwarz sisters, Josephine and Hermene.

JC: I think DCDC.

DD: Canton Ballet.

JC: And yes, the Canton Ballet, the pre-professional companies and the woman that founded Toledo Ballet.

CF: Marie Bollinger Vogt.⁶⁵

JC: Yes, Marie Vogt, She may have *been* there because she would have preceded everybody else — that company was founded in the Middle Ages...

CF: I think Dayton was first, actually.

DD: Dayton was first.

JC: Jo Schwarz⁶⁶. I'm talking about *pre*-professional. Yeah.

MO: What about the Metropolitan Ballet? What's the company in Columbus?

JC: BalletMet.⁶⁷

CF: Oh, BalletMet.

JC: ...which *was* Metropolitan Ballet.

MO: Is that it?

CF: It used to be Columbus Civic Ballet. What about Cleveland Modern Dance Association? Would they have been...

JC: Well, that was a *presenting* organization...

CF: Ah, okay. Hmm...well, they were teaching, and they were doing a *lot* of things...

DD: Yes, but they weren't choreographing...

CF: Gotcha. Okay.

⁶⁵ Marie Bollinger Vogt founded the Toledo Ballet, in 1939; the Toledo School and Ballet Company was the second regional ballet founded in Ohio. Vogt and the Toledo Ballet are featured in a separate exhibit of the VDC.

⁶⁶ Josephine Schwarz (1908-2004), or “Miss Jo” as she was widely known, founded the Schwarz School of Dance, which later became The Dayton Ballet School and Company.

⁶⁷ BalletMet, located in Columbus, OH, is an academy and professional company that has its origins in the early 1970s, with the establishment of the Columbus Civic Ballet. It is featured in a separate exhibit of the VDC.

JD: What about Earl Silvers, who was the manager with Columbus Theater Ballet Association? Would that have been one of them?

JC: He was the vice president for Gerry Kettelar, at the beginning.

JD: But he was with the Columbus Theater Ballet Association, which I've never heard of. Is that true?

JC: CTBA.

JD: And was that one of the beginning organization?

JC: That's not an organization that I'm familiar with today, and I would have heard about it the first time, meeting him at that formation meeting...

JD: Okay. I'll just have to go back...

CF: You mentioned ŽIVILI⁶⁸?

JC: Yes.

MO: Yes!

CF: Would they have been one of the sixteen?

MO: Probably.

JC: Yes.

CF: Okay. Well, we'll have to get those minutes.

MO: Yeah...

CF: You know what I'm hearing through all this, is just that it takes a village and that's what happened: you brought people together and the people that you brought together spoke to each other, connected with each other and went out and more people came and that's what it takes to sustain an organization like this.

MO: Well, I think another thing that's very important — the reality of these kinds of things is you might have sixteen people at the table, four of which actually *do* something. And, I don't mean to be mean about this, but that's reality. It's the same in a dance department or anything else. You have the people who really put their shoulder to the wheel. And they're usually — although, present company excluded — they're usually, if they don't keep busy, they get into trouble. So I think that, that *those* are the people you're really, *really* looking for. The other people will be present, and be *ex-officio*, and

⁶⁸ Established in 1973 by Melissa Obenauf and Pam Lacko Kelley, ŽIVILI was a Columbus-based professional ethnic dance company that performed exclusively the dances, songs, and music of the peoples of the Southern Slavic Nations. The company, which disbanded in 2006, is a separate feature of the VDC.

wanting to put it on their resume. And then *among* those people, there are some real gems, some of whom sustain for years and years and years.

DD: (To JC): We're patting you on the back!

JC: Well, I had no resumé. I wasn't working for anybody!

MO: Yeah. But I mean, really, this is the kind of people who *really* take things forward.

JC: But I know what you mean...For some reason, Earl Silvers did not move from the vice presidency into the presidency. I'm sure that was *his* decision.

JD: I have one more question. I know it's getting long, I don't want to... But do you have any comment about Barbara Schubert and her role?

MO: She was president for a while, once, after me, I think or....

JD: '90 to '91 and she's from Cleveland, is she?

MO: Barbara Schubert was a real supporter financially, fiscally for Ohio Ballet. And her family, again, be careful because this is Marc's vague memory here, but basically, I believe that her husband's father was a big-time lawyer and had some significant money. And, they gave to John Carroll University and what have you — real philanthropy, here. And I know that she gave **Helen Herbrich** Ohio Ballet — that's another name that I remember. Although Helen, to my knowledge, was not involved ever in OhioDance or anything, but she's another one of those ladies when I referred to trying to do a little payback — Barbara is just a love.

JC: Barbara was a patron of the dance arts in a *big* way, and became a member of the board of Ohio Ballet and in *later* years, she became executive director, remember?

MO: Oh my God!

JC: Do you remember that?

MO: Oh, my gosh...

JC: Or general manager or whatever that position was called for Ohio Ballet, when Ohio Ballet was still located in the church on the Akron campus.

MO: Another cute note about that — her husband was a very successful writer, and he wrote women's romance novels. I'm serious!

JC: You know, the ones with the paperbacks, with Danny and/or whatever his name is on the front. We just... That was such a hoot.

MO: I was *floored*. I was floored.

JC: And they had fun with it, I mean — it wasn't any secret.

MO: No.

JC: And it had to be an avocation — he didn't even need to be employed anywhere.

MO: The killer part was if you ever saw them, they're two very tall, quiet people and the idea that he wrote these steamy romance books... (laughing hard). Just too much fun.

JC: I know, a little hard to picture! We did have fun with that. And Barbara also, I remember, again at my kitchen table, Barbara Schubert came to Canton to check out Canton Ballet's *The Nutcracker* at the behest of the OAC. So, the Ohio Arts Council would send people, I don't know what they were called, I don't remember, to...

MO: On-site evaluate. Evaluate.

JC: That was the point of it. Yes. And so Barbara served in that way at a point in time.

MO: Barbara would be very worth talking to. I haven't seen her in years, but she's *very* together. Oh, the other tidbit about Barbara that I just loved, Barbara *hated* to shop, right? And so she bought everything by catalog. Did you know that? Oh yeah, I remember.

MO: I remember. And she would buy things and this was *way* back before Amazon.

JC: This was before online.

CF: J.C. Penny catalogs? Spiegel?

MO: Oh, no, it would have been one of those little ones. LL Bean, or something like that, it would have been. And she was just great fun. And I can remember once or twice I drove, and I can remember Jeanne and her in the backseat going like this (a gesture indicating conversation), and I was in the front seat, I think with Cassandra, and we were going like this (conversational gesture) and of course zoomed right past our exit. Typical!

JC: I remember!

Jess Cavender: OhioDance has ventured into Michigan before!

JD: ...when we were *not* supposed to!

CF: So we have a tradition that we didn't know that you all started.

MO: The bad turn!

JC: I remember standing at the off-ramp at Belden Village Mall, which was your entrance into Canton — one of them. I guess we'd had supper with Barbara, or maybe we just came back from a meeting together — that would have been it. And she got in her car and we watched her go take the wrong on-ramp. And she went straight out, which was South 77. And we had no cell phones then or anything, no way... And we were like, oh my gosh! We had this long day, and all that driving to Columbus and back, and Barbara — she figured it out pretty darn quickly, she told us later.

CF: Well, are you—

JC: I'm done.

CF: Oh, okay. Two things. First thing: is there something you'd like to say or tell that hasn't come up about your years with Ohio Dance, your work with Ohio Dance, your being a beneficiary of Ohio Dance, anything? I mean, you've shared a lot.

JC: I have a question, I'm curious. I was privileged to receive an award and I've worked at home all these years for Canton Ballet in the corner of a bedroom with the files in the closet right next to my table. And so I hung my award inside that closet and it was really quite a handsome design, and I remember going to Hudson with RodRubbo — somehow we had a lead on a design agency that was willing to contribute something to Ohio Dance, and so we met with a guy there. I can remember going up the stairs to the second floor. And I wondered what kind of thing do you use nowadays as an award presentation?

JD: What we do now is we give a piece of artwork that we have acquired usually from VSA Ohio, which works with artists with disabilities, and I also attain letters of commendation from the house and the Senate.

JC: Very nice. In the very beginning, I keep paging through here (her notes) looking for things that I thought I saw. There was a list of the award people.

CF: People in the award committee or the people who received awards?

JC: People who received. I see it now, it's on several pages. Yeah. So our first award was in '79 to Jo Schwartz. And of course she *was* dance in Ohio — she and her sister. And then the next year, it was Ira. And *both* times Rod and I went somewhere to pick out something for Ira, there was a dance photographer whose wife danced with Ohio Ballet, and so Rod knew about...

MO: Are you sure it wasn't **Ott Gangl**?⁶⁹ The photographer Ott Gangl?

JC: Anyway, that's what we gave Ira, along the line of a work of art.

MO: Ott Gangl did a lot of photography for Ohio Ballet. He was on the staff of the Akron Beacon Journal.

JD: I've seen a lot of photos in the OhioDance files with his name on them. So he was with what journal?

MO: He was with Akron Beacon Journal, and undoubtedly they have archives of his stuff, but his photography for the Ballet I'm pretty sure he did that for free — would be my guess.

JD: A lot of people did things for free in the beginning.

⁶⁹ Originally from the former Yugoslavia, Ott Gangl moved to the U.S. at the age of 20, and became a photographer for the Akron Beacon Journal. Retired in 1992, Gangl lives in Green, OH.

The award is retrieved for us to view.

JC: Nobody's dusted it for a while!

JD: Oh, that's really nice.

JC: And so that agency came up with this. (JC shows her award...)

JD: I'd like to take a picture. Oh, I wonder if we should take a photograph of it. Jess has the better camera.

JC: I think this was used for several years, probably until the year that the award was divided, and a dance educator also received recognition.

Jess Cavender: You want to know what's really interesting, we're working on a documentary and working with an animator and the image of Ohio there, that it's like that, it looks just like the animation that we've recently created.

CF: Amazing!

JD: Oh, that's cool!

Jess Cavender: We definitely need to photograph this and have it as a record.

JD: Should she hold it up?

JC: No, it's under glass, so you'll have to be careful how you do it.

CF: And well deserved.

JD: I like that logo.

JC: I was very proud, and very surprised. And I wasn't there that day. And I remember telling Marc that I wouldn't be at the festival because I was going to fly in and out of Evanston on the day — on one of the days of the festival. Because one of my daughters had been recruited to play varsity field hockey at Northwestern, and she had to go in ahead of time, and so being an overindulgent mom, I flew her in and got her situated in a hotel room because her appointment with the coach was first thing in the morning. And anyway, when I told Marc about this — and I was excited about Karen being recruited and all of that — and Marc was *not* happy about Karen. She wasn't, he was *not* happy about any part of that story. And evidently, he already knew what was supposed to take place while I was flying back and forth from Evanston.

JD: It was supposed to be a surprise?

JC: And I missed the presentation of my award to me because of that day.

MO: Yeah. By the time, *if* she was told ahead, it would not have been enough lead time to change the flight.

JC: Yeah. Wouldn't have made any difference, just an unfortunate conflict. And I remember that in Columbus, I was presenter of the award to Andrew Bales whom I spoke of, and that was kind of icky because we had a dinner in Columbus and we were all staying at the Great Southern and we had a nice banquet arranged for Andy, and Cleveland Ballet fired him! So he left, he disappeared from the world as we knew it, but we had this award to present to him. So that I had already been through what you went through, sending the award to a non-present awardee.

MO: We had not lost you, though! There is a big difference.

CF: Well, I guess I just want to thank you all for your work. I'm in a *direct* beneficiary of everything that you've done and we all are, so thank you.

JC: Well, that's lovely to hear.

MO: I would like, thank you for saying that, but anything you've gotten from me was passed *through* me from other people who are a hell of a lot more than I am — some really amazing people. I remember when I got my award, one of the things I said, “Lucy Venable⁷⁰ is sitting right there and I am getting an award that she hasn't, and I'm like, “Oh my,” and I understood why I got an award, but...

DD: I'm glad *you* did because I didn't, then. We were presented the awards the same year.

MO: I know.

DD: And that was just like, “Okay, I'm getting an Ohio Dance award.” I didn't know *why*, but I was like, “okay.” It was at the festival that year.

MO: Yeah, it was a real surprise. And anyway, there are so many people upon whose shoulders we stand. So if you're standing on my way down there, the line is very, very long.

DD: Yes. Well, I think in this business, we all have somebody who has fostered our career.

MO: For sure.

CF: Well, it's the village again, isn't it? I mean, dance is intrinsically a collaborative art form, and it takes a village. So you were part of drawing the village together through this organization. That's *not* a small thing, and the fact that we're sitting here talking about this now — and in my opinion, the great Jane D'Angelo, who has done so much, coming on the heels of what you all have done — it's really something.

Jess Cavender: It was lovely to hear that this idea of creating a database and something that people could get into was a long-term project. Because I walked in right as we were *starting* that, day one, let's build the thing now — we'd all done all the work beforehand. We were in San Diego and so

⁷⁰ Lucy Venable (1926-2019), among many, many accomplishments, was previously a dancer with the Jose Limon Company, became an internationally known dance notator (Labanotation), and served on the faculty of the Department of Dance at the Ohio State University, where she also directed the Dance Notation Bureau Extension. She is separately featured in the OSU feature of the VDC.

many people came to see about the VDC. And there were *multiple* people from different states who were like, “This is the right kind of thing that we need to be doing, so that long-term project has *national* reach.

DD: As a board member, I think that the Virtual Dance Collection is one of the more important things that we did because it's a—

JD: We received an NEA⁷¹ grant.

MO: Oh, wow. This is thrilling.

JD: Three years! We've received it three years in a row from the NEA. But we also received funding from GCAC Greater Columbus Arts Council⁷² and the Ohio Arts Council, to hire a consultant that got us to this point to help us develop it, because we knew we wanted to do something with dance history, and we didn't really know how, or how to scope it, and helped us to create it virtually.

MO: Well, the beautiful thing about starting is that people learn as they go, and as it's used, then your users speak back to you and say, “Well, it'd be great if this were a part of it, or that kind of thing. And that's when it really ignites, that's when it really takes off, is when you get the people who are going to look at it and use it in some way — that they then spin back to you.

JD: We've created school residencies, a documentary film. We're working with ACCAD⁷³ to put animation in the film. And we want to do a book on the residencies, and we're looking at doing a traveling exhibit based on the Virtual Collection. And so at the end of this year, we'll have twenty in the collection. We have a grant in for more, so we'll see how that works (laughing).

CF: (To MO): Are you familiar with this?

MO: No, I live in my own little tiny, tiny thing.

JC: Well, when Jane brought up the subject, I thought this is something I really need to explore, but I was wrapping up my time with Canton Ballet, and orienting a new person, and I couldn't deal with it, but I'm looking forward to that, now that I have time. What I'm wondering is, surely this has national recognition?

JD: Yep, absolutely. We've presented NDEO, National Dance Education,⁷⁴ when it was in San Diego. Thank you. We presented at Dance USA when it came to Cleveland, we presented at...

⁷¹ Founded in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is a national funding agency that works to give people across the United States the opportunity to participate in and experience the arts.

⁷² Incorporated by the Columbus City Council as a non-profit arts agency in 1973, GCAC funds Columbus artists and arts organizations and provides marketing services that support artists and organizations.

⁷³ The Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design at OSU functions as an applied collaboratory for time-based digital media production, both in furthering the excellence of its faculty and graduate students in residence and cultivating its own innovative research agenda clustering around animation and interactive media.

⁷⁴ established in 1998 as a national non-profit organization supporting dance education and dance in the United States, NDEO is a membership services organization that supports dance teachers with programs and

CF: Columbus...

JD: I presented at Arts Midwest.⁷⁵

Jess Cavender: What was the one at OSU?

CF: Dance Studies Association,⁷⁶ which was CORD. So we're going to keep up with that presenting and...

JC: Has the collection been written up somewhere? I mean, does the media — here's the marketing person talking — does the media know about this? [crosstalk , offering statements from the others begging for JC to return to the board and make this happen...]

CF: Well one thing is that the documentary film that we made is the correct length to go on PBS, which will allow it to be shown on stations around Ohio.

JD: And then we want to enter it into film festivals, Sundance. We're already talking about Sundance. I don't know if you know about that, Jess.

JC: We didn't talk about Wilma Salisbury.⁷⁷

CF: I am *always* wanting to talk about Wilma Salisbury. Please!

MO: No, no.

JC: Could we do it another day?

CF: That's fine. We are running late, but she's—

JC: Wilma, for all of her everything, was a *fabulous* advocate of dance. And in those years, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* was probably the major publication in the state. (To her fellow panelists): Would you say that?

DD: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

MO: Yeah.

services. The OhioDance VDC has been presented at two of the NDEO national conferences as of this writing, one in San Diego in 2018 and one, virtually presented due to the Covid pandemic in 2020.

⁷⁵ Based in Minneapolis, MN, Arts Midwest is one of six non-profit regional arts organizations, whose mission is to promote creativity, nurture cultural leadership, and engage people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives.

⁷⁶ Dance Studies Association is a scholarly organization for dance, formed in 2017 out of a merger between two older scholarly organizations, CORD (Congress on Research in Dance) and SDHS (Society of Dance History Scholars).

⁷⁷ Originally trained in music, Salisbury has served as dance & music critic, architecture writer, restaurant reviewer and more recently, dance essayist for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, beginning in 1968.

JC: And I could just see Wilma, if she were around, doing that: writing about this project, the Virtual Dance Collection.

CF: The problem now is what *is* the print media?

DD: There isn't any.

CF: There's so little. That's why the film is such a valuable idea.

DD: Well, this [digital] media is more accessible now than print is. I mean, I grew up in in print, the newspapers and looking at the reviews, and so on.

JC: I mean, there *are* magazines and **Dance Mag**⁷⁸ is still out there, and...

JD: It's a good point. We need to get more out there. If you have an idea of who to reach out to—

CF: I was going to say as a marketing person-- [crosstalk 02:18:42]

JD: Because where I can really think about that...

CF: Dance Magazine *could* do a write up about this, that's true.

JC: **Pointe** Magazine⁷⁹ for a while was—

CF: (To JD): We could consider the three people on that panel⁸⁰ that I moderated at the **Dance/USA**⁸¹ conference — all writers.

JD: I know. I was thinking about that.

MO: Are there any blogs? Is anyone doing any dance blogs?

CF: Lots.

JC: I would imagine.

CF: It's a good point, to look there, as well.

JC: And we don't really have the Collection described all in one place. Do we? I mean—

⁷⁸ Dance Magazine, founded in 1927, is the preeminent trade publication for dance

⁷⁹ Established in 2000, Pointe Magazine is an international magazine aimed toward ballet dancers and students

⁸⁰ VDC oral historian Candace Feck moderated a panel of three dance writers at the Dance/USA conference in Cleveland, 2019. The writers were Norma Porter, founder of *Black Dance Magazine*; Lauren Warnecke, Chicago Tribune critic and resident of the Akron Choreographic Center's Dance Writing Lab; and Professor Gregory King, Kent State University.

⁸¹ Dance/USA is the national service organization for dance, seeking to sustain and advance professional dance by addressing the needs, concerns, and interests of artists, administrators, and organizations. The organization holds an annual conference each year.

JD: A description of it? Well, it's on our website. We have an “About” page that describes the project. Yes.

JC: But I'm talking about the *detail* of it and how many parts of it? When I said, how many parts of it exist, I was going to amend that to say “and *continue* to come into being.” But it's such an interesting, you were in California and somebody out there was doing this kind of thing?

JD: Nobody. This is the first project of its kind in that it's the first *statewide* project that has ever been done of a dance history project.

JC: But nationally?

MO: No. Nothing.

JD: We are the only state, nationally.

JC: This is like a *marketer's dream!*

DD: Yes. Yes. Come on board, Jeanne. We *need* you!

JC: I'm talking about social media.

JD: We have a new person coming on our board, who is a marketer, who's supposed to be fabulous, from Dayton. **Rodney**⁸² recommended her and so, fingers crossed, that she can help us.

CF: The one thing I always say to people about it is that we are a really lean/mean/green team. I mean, we are just the three of us plus videographer Megan Davis Bushway and Patrick Tabatacher, who manages the design and upload of information on the website.

JD: From the University of Akron.

CF: And the fact is, we're constantly *creating*, we're constantly *doing* interviews, transcribing interviews, working on film, working on the book, offering school residencies. And I don't think that we've — maybe Jane has, but to step back as you're doing—

DD: There's been no step-back it's been a constant grinding forward!

CF: And there is some urgency to gather stories before we lose more people...

JC: Well this is part of my point, because we're trying to resurrect some kind of history of the early days of Ohio Dance and let's make sure that Virtual Dance Collection has all that information from the very initial concept to-- [crosstalk 02:21:49]. Just keeping track of everything and—

JD: Quick selfie, everybody!

⁸² A reference to Rodney Veal, current President Executive Director of the Board of OhioDance.

JC: We should take a few pictures of that board and then just maybe some pictures of them. That'd be good. Okay.

CF: Thank you so much for your time. It's been most informative to listen to you.

MO: It's lovely to meet all of you, and (to his colleagues): to reconnect. I haven't seen you in I don't know how long.

JC: Well, it was great. And Dennis lights Canton Ballet, so I always give him a big smooch when I see him. It's been really nice for me to have these two gentlemen today. Not only because I *like* them, but having a conversation, being part of a conversation is so helpful when you're trying to remember.

CF: Absolutely.

JD: Our web master is from the University of Akron, Patrick Tabatcher, and it was Neil Sapienza who originally helped us. Well, he was a grad student at the time, needed a project, helped us redo the whole website for free because it was his graduate project, it was his internship.

JC: Oh, interesting.

JD: Now he's still with us. He created the Virtual Dance Collection. We are his only non-profit, and he still keeps his prices really low.

JC: And he has such an important role in the creation of this project, and that needs to be contained — I mean all the way back to graduate student work.

JD: Yeah. And he did in the beginning it had the dance education site and then the main site and he put it all in one. And you know, who else would it help for that was **Christina Foisie**⁸³ She did a lot of the writing for the dance education part, but now we're redoing it again and I'll be showing that at the meeting on Saturday.

DD: I'll be there at the meeting on Saturday.

CF: I think one of the frustrations for me is that I see how much there is to do. The more you do, the more you say, "Oh, we should talk to this person. Oh, we need to speak to that one" -- there's so much!

DD: I mean, that you got Gladys Bailin involved in this! She's a mentor for me. Her husband, Murray, was an ex-Marine also, and so when I met him, I would have gone off into just being a tech guy, just doing tech stuff. But Murray was out there doing artistic stuff and I thought, "Okay, Murray can do it. Why not?" So I started looking at lighting design. Yeah. Yeah. And so Gladys' recommendation got me my first job in New York.

JC: We have an employee who studied with her at Ohio U and I mean he's—

⁸³ Christina W. Foisie, Instructor, School of Dance, University of Akron. Former OhioDance Board of Trustees.

DD: Angelo Lemmo!⁸⁴

JC: Angelo, yeah and he's been with us for decades, and I was actually... so, this had to be forty years ago. I was taking class at Canton Ballet, and this was the beginning of the adult class program. And I did it for a while until they changed to evening, and I didn't want to go out and dance in the evening. I wanted to drink wine and—

CF: I hear you!

JC: Anyway, I remember Angelo showing up in our little ballet class and he had just graduated.

CF: Thank you so much.

MO: Thank you.

CF: I want to release you from your seats, but we could clearly talk for days.

JC: Without the lights, actually!

CF: You'll remember more things after you leave here today because now the mic is off!

DD: I mean *just* the names, and then all of a sudden...I'll think "I hadn't thought of that person in an age!"

From 2:27 onward, there is discussion between JD and JC, ironing out some dates for the Milestones section.

⁸⁴ Canton Ballet's choreographer in residence since 1991 and a faculty member since 1987. Lemmo is also a freelance choreographer, whose works have appeared nationally and internationally.