



Christian Scott Thorp
ROBS History Project
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Christian (Chris) Thorpe, who we've had the pleasure of knowing for several of our lifetimes, had just begun answering a few initial questions for ROBS History Project Interview. He was interrupted with a technical difficulty as he began telling us how his mom and her sister had married best friends. It was during the (WWII), War years that his mother and father were married immediately prior to him being shipped overseas, as were so many other young men of his age as it happened. The entire balance of the War he spent in England with the Eighth Air Force. He and Jack, that same best friend of his kept in touch throughout the War. Jack was in General Patten's Army and was actually in the Battle of the Bulge. I remember as a kid he would tell stories that would make the hairs stand up on the back of your neck because what he would do was call in artillery so he would actually be close to or behind enemy lines with a radio and a pair of binoculars and he could tell us some stories.

My dad returned to his old job as a meter reader for the Philadelphia Gas Works when he came home after the war. He attended college under the G.I. Bill of Rights, and as I heard all of my life graduated 'Maximum Com Laude,' "*What's the matter with you?*" and actually retired as a Vice President of the Philadelphia Gas works. In the Public Utility World of South Eastern Pennsylvania, his was a success story.

Currently, I have two grown children. I have a son Christian and a daughter Patricia. Christian is an Engineer. Right now he is working for Briggs and Stratton. I had to think for a second because at one time he worked for Fischer Price making and breaking toys, but now he's up in Wisconsin making lawn mowers and things of that ilk. Patricia is a teacher and teaches Kindergarten in Corona, Queens and I'm very happily married to my wife Elita and we are getting ready to celebrate our twelfth year wedding anniversary in May. When people ask, our humorous answer is always that we're a movie.

The life-altering event in my life was, because, you know, where the life altering event was that I was in a tragic accident and lost my wife Joan, with whom I taught, she was a English teacher at East Junior High like forever. My wife Elita had lost her husband in a tragic accident as well. Elita's husband worked for LILCO and he was, really a tragic accident, he was crushed between two LILCO trucks. She tells the story about hearing about the accident by being pulled out of the classroom, yeah, pretty icky stuff. But anyway, fast forwarding to today, the movie part is that dear friends of ours, introduced us and we just hit it off immediately and became a kind of midlife romance that worked out wonderfully for both of us.

Like all kids are very different my two are very different. Chris as a child was very challenging actually, until he moved into his teens. Once he came into puberty, he calmed down quite a bit. He became a much easier kid to be around, but when he was younger he was an imp. If you weren't watching him, lamps were sliding off tables and all kinds of things like that were going on.

Patricia was very different. She was an easy baby to be around. She knew how to handle her father, get the things that she needed but she was a real sweetheart. Nowadays, she recently had a baby and all of her energies when she's not in the classroom are focused upon Oliver Scott who just turned a year in December so he's up and walking and running around. Who does he most resemble? Very interesting questions because there are times when we look at

each other and say, he looks exactly like Christian the grandson, my son's son. There are times when we'll look at each other and say, *"Oh, my heavens, he'll have the same expressions exactly like Christian, the grandson.* He'll have the same facial expressions so like that.... *Maybe he's going to take on that part of the family or the characteristics of... Perhaps we should take the scoreboard out and keep track here because my life has had.....it's had a few events in it. I got married early in college. As a matter of fact I was a senior in college when I got married, I don't know if we want to jump ahead to this or not , but the very first day that I'm in the classroom in Brentwood, which was September 9, 1970, my son was born. It was very stressful because I had come here from Pennsylvania, he was late arriving, so mother and baby to be were still in Pennsylvania and back in those days, the new teachers that were hired to the district were required to attend a week long orientation process. Now, about mid-way through that – now I'm on Long Island, my wife at the time is in labor and is in Williamsburg, Pennsylvania I get a panicked phone call, I'm going to have a baby tonight so I got an okay to skip out on most of the orientation program. So here we are, 'Game Day', she's having a baby and I can't, I really felt at that time that I really can't go, to these people who just hired me and haven't seen me do anything and say, I've gotta leave again. So since the first day of school was technically a Wednesday, I'll be there Friday night so, that part of my life started chaotically, continued chaotically and the marriage really didn't survive some of the cards we were dealt I suppose. So about nine years on, we agreed to have a divorce. We got away from this but I don't want to forget to ask, Do Christopher and Patricia still have a relationship with their mother that they maintain? Oh sure they do!*

So of course, another life changing event is very stressful and painful and all of that. After that incident had passed through my life, Joan came into the picture. I had taught with Joan I guess for about ten years at that point or close to ten years and we had become friends. And she had gone through a divorce almost simultaneously through commiserating and socializing with other people we had just clicked and it happened. Joan and I got married in 1981, and had a wonderful very happy fourteen or fifteen years together before the tragic accident we're

talking about which happened on Valentine's Day. We were coming home from work, on our way out to dinner with a couple of stops in town. At that point in time we lived out in the Riverhead Southampton area and we got within about five miles from home and a young unlicensed driver went through a stop sign and the rest is history. Joanie didn't survive the accident. I was laid up for almost three months between the hospital operation process and then the rehabilitation process it was pretty lengthy. One of the things that came out of that experience that was a real eye opener was the support and the love that poured in my direction and it came from Brentwood. It came from all the people who were family in East Junior High School where I had taught from 1970 to 1986 and then 1987 and 1987 I had gone up to the High School as a Guidance Counselor. Like I said, the outpouring of support was amazing. The response from Joanie's students is hard to describe. Joanie as a former Marine brought something extra special to her work with students as well. It certainly did and I used to hear that all time. My standard line was "How many guys do you know sleep with a Marine?" Yeah, she loved the Marine Corps. Shortly before, actually I guess it was after we had decided to get married is when she formerly left the Corps because she was in the Marine Reserves for a good part of her Career. She was a Major in the Marine Corps upon her retirement from the Corps.

Chris Thorpe was born September 29, 1948, which he said, makes him officially, a Boomer. He gives the place where his family lived as his City of origin, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. What they did trying to make life better for their kids was to move to the Philadelphia equivalent of suburbia which at the time was northeast Philadelphia and was very much considered country. I often tell people that when I was in Junior High School for example, I had a trap line, I would actually put on hip boots in the morning before I went to school and go out and check my trap lines. I would check muskrats and raccoons and this was down the road and across the street from where I lived which was still within the City limits you know? Of course it's much different now but again, it looked like country to

them and it was. I can remember the grade school I went to was literally across the street and next to it was a dairy. A poignant memory I have is walking through that dairy farm pasture on the way to school in the First Grade and being above my ankles in mud; losing my shoes in Summerton, Pennsylvania.

My mother's maiden name was Scott, Ruth Scott to be precise, which happens also to be my middle name, which is my grandson's middle name (Oliver Scott), my daughters son, and if you were around my dad for five minutes you would have asked, "*Who is Scotty*"? because that was my mother's knick name, Scotty. Oh, yes, my mother remembers her parents. She has fond memories of her parents even though she was still a little girl when she lost them both. She remembered not being allowed to attend her father's funeral. It seems that was not unusual when a young child's parent or parents died, perhaps as a means of protecting them from the loss. Chris's Aunt, his mothers sister, remembers sitting on the steps with her older sister holding a photo of her deceased father waiting patiently for him to come home. Her mother died soon after her husband as a result of childbirth. Eleanor was the youngest sister. They remember her coming home but not getting well. Chris thought it might have been as a result of septic shock from the hospital or something like that. At least that was the family story.

My mother loves to talk. She still loves to talk. The moments I remember are her visiting with other family members and loving to tell stories of reminiscence and the good old days with family moments as her focus of attention. She still does that.

I was thinking of my father just the other day when I was posting a picture on my website. I was aware that this week is the official start of the baseball season. Some of those early memories are of dad taking me to the ball park. And that would have been Connie Mac Stadium in Philadelphia to watch the Phillies. Yeah, it was kind of a tradition that we had and even as I got a little older in Junior HS and High School, I would have taken the train to meet him and we'd go to a ball game. Instead of coming home from work I would meet him in downtown Philly and we would go straight to the ball game.

I have a brother Bill and a sister Peggy or Margaret. Peggy is a Nurse and she's married to a Physician and they own a business; a medical practice in Westchester, Pennsylvania, outside of Philly. My brother is an administrator at what I might compare to a kind of BOCES in Indiana, it's called RISE. He's an educator too.

My father was very much into our family history and genealogy about fifteen or twenty years ago when I was dating Aleta, low and behold she had gotten into it as well. The three of us sort of combined everything together and we found some interesting stuff there. It's Irish and English pretty much on my father's side and on my mother's side it's French Canadian but it's really Scots. During that wave of immigration some of the Scots went to Canada. Some others went further south to Maryland and areas in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic States. Chris has deferred to Aleta in so far as their travel is concerned. Her family originates in Sicily and Italy, as a matter of fact we made a trip to Agrigento, Sicily and did almost everything short of knock on doors to locate family connections. We called almost every Zambuto in the phone book attempting to find connections and it was a wonderful experience. One of our fondest travel memories was leaving the group that we were with one Sunday and saying we want to get lost in Agrigento and we did. The friendliness of the people was amazing and they all asked us if we were crazy because we didn't have jackets on. It was late March or early April and it was in the seventies. People were coming out with sweaters and coats and why were you dressed like that? But we didn't find her family, The tour director that we were with was such a nice man. He actually got the phone book for Zambuto and called every Zambuto in the book asking if they had relatives in New York.

I haven't been to Scotland. My father's grandmother came over to America from Ireland during the potato famine. The thing that stymied him was that he could never find a marriage license for her husband because he knew that they were married in upstate Pennsylvania and he kind of gave up because he couldn't find the Holy Grail to get from there to here.

Other formative influences in my life include coaches and teachers. My next door neighbor's father, pre-high school, was my best friend and he lived right next door. His father did stuff that my father didn't do like fishing and hunting that I was very much interested in. I think I learned a lot about fishing from Mr. Winslow who was the gentleman next door that I still love doing today. My choice of career probably came mostly from coaches in my life but mainly from coaches in High School. You really get to know people well in that setting, especially when their open and non-punitive and instead encourage you to grow. To me it just looked like such a rewarding thing to do with your life. I kind of decided early, like in tenth grade in high school that I felt pretty strongly that this was something I would like to do. What really helped me, helped me in the classroom was that, I guess I was a Junior in High School and for three consecutive summers after that I worked in a camp, and I worked in a camp at Cape Cod where I taught swimming. I was a life guard. The first year actually they put me in charge of a sports program and unbeknownst to me a camp is run in a lot of ways like a school. You know, the kids go to classes, they go to swimming for an hour, they would go to arts and crafts for an hour whatever the activities are so that as a person who was teaching swimming for example you would have five or six classes. You know, you would have different levels that you were teaching or you were teaching a first aide course and then they had like general swim. When they gave me cafeteria duty I thought, oh, I've been here before. It really did help me in the classroom with student management, you know, because they don't teach you any of that in college. When you get into the classroom you're on your own. You know some of the techniques that you learn handling large groups of kids.

I would say that there are always very difficult issues with teenage girls trying to decide how to cope with ending a pregnancy or keep it going; and I struggled with that with my Roman Catholic background. I also knew and I'd seen that babies don't make good parents and that kids in poverty having kids is just going to keep it going. So it was difficult for me to walk that line, and you know, to keep saying, "I know you'll make the right decision for you. Have you thought about all the - - - - ?" That's probably the toughest one.

A couple of the most memorable teachers that have crossed paths with me during the course of my life have been first, Gerry Kean, who was the Department Head of Physical Education in my High School. He treated me differently, that's what I can say. It wasn't that he treated me like I was an adult, it was more as if I felt like I was an adult whenever he spoke to me. He didn't talk down to me and he encouraged me. Yes, as I think about it, he was very influential. While we're talking about my physical education memories I can tell you that football and baseball were high among my favorite competitive sports when I was still in school.

I gave Chris a good laugh when I asked him if he remembered his very first job for which he was compensated. *"Yes I do", he said!* There was a lease mill not too far from his house, an Industrial Park down the road and up towards Roosevelt Boulevard there, they would have these machines that would make hair curlers, or at least they would make the sleeves that would go over the hair curlers, big loud machines. This was a factory filled with them and underneath each machine was eight feet by six feet or so, was a large cookie sheet that collected grease, dripping oil, and my first paying job was to get on my hands and knees and clean the oil off the pan. I didn't like it very much. I'd punch in, I'd go and clean the things as fast as I could clean 'em, punch the card and get out of there. You know, it's funny because my parent's to this day still tease me about the job because I wouldn't be home yet when the owner of the factory who was a man with a German accent that my mother would imitate, would call the house for me by asking, *"Var iz da boy? He left!*

Christmas and Thanksgiving were two of the biggest family Holidays. For a number of years Thanksgiving would involve all the aunts and the uncles and all the kids would come over for touch football etc.

I loved Social Studies when I was in school. One of my first choices was to go into Social Studies until it came down to a choice between Physical Education and Social Studies. Until this day I love History. How did he become a Counselor?

Did you ever have a particular toy as a child that was special to you? Yes. It was a fort with Davey Crocket and all the accompanying little plastic figures that came with it including the sections of stockade fences and cast of characters. Probably a favorite toy – that and my baseball glove.

Spring was and still is his favorite season of the year for all the reasons that any one of us might suspect. When I was about twelve years old my parents bought a second home in the Pocono Mountains surrounded by Pine Trees on a Lake. To this very day whenever I smell White Pine, I have a flashback of memory that takes me right back there and I say, *“Oh, that smells like the Poconos.”*

The first school ever I attended was St. Christopher’s Elementary School. In recent years I learned that we have a famous alumni that’s on CNBC almost every day and it’s Chris Matthews; Chris and I attended school together. His brother James was actually in my class. I went to Catholic Elementary School for eight years.

The big decision in my family actually was, *“What are we going to do with him in High School”* because my brother, who is two and a half years older than I, went to the local Catholic High School, which wasn’t very local. He had to take two public buses, he didn’t get a locker, they didn’t have enough room, it was overcrowded and on and on and on. While less than two miles from my house the City of Philadelphia had just constructed their last High School that they had just built but it was brand new in 1962. So I was given the go ahead to go to Public School – my father still laments – I went to George Washington High School in Philadelphia, which was a wonderful experience for me. I graduated from High School in 1966 and went to Lock Haven State School in Pennsylvania which is a Pennsylvania State School. The joke always was, *“Oh, How do you Like Connecticut?”* That’s New Haven. Lock Haven is actually located twenty-five miles east of Penn State. It was a small state college and we had an enrollment of about two thousand students. Again, it was a wonderful experience and I really loved it.

From there I went to Brentwood and following the advice of many colleagues went to Stony Brook University and got into a Graduate Program there, which was really kind of a funny story because I went to Stony Brook University Graduate School and paid 85 cents a credit and people say, *“How did you do that?”* My first job in Brentwood was as a Health Teacher. As luck had it, I was certified as a Health Teacher in Pennsylvania as a Health Teacher and Physical Education and that certification was reciprocal in New York State. So I got a job in New York State. But I never did the paper work. Nobody ever told me I had to do the paperwork and it came around Christmas of my first year teaching and I was called into Central and they said *“You know, you can’t work here anymore after Christmas Vacation because you’re not certified.”* Well, low and behold, I found out about this program. Andy Coccari (RIP 2014) hooked me up with this program called *The Intensive Teacher Training Program*. (ITTP) To get into the program you had to be certified which, hey, I’m not certified, because I didn’t fill out the paperwork, teaching health full time and be working in New York State. So I fit the bill, I signed up. They took me and I got in and got my first thirty credits at Stony Brook University in Health Education for virtually nothing. Then what I did after that was I filled in the rest of the course work requirements to get the Masters Degree from Stony Brook University and then last but not least, the career change that came about in the early or late eighties I decided that I had to get out of the classroom and Guidance was something that really appealed to me as something I would really enjoy so I went to C.W. Post and low and behold got another Masters Degree in Counseling. So, that was the education. Whether or not it made me a smarter person? I don’t think so. Ha! It met the requirements.

Have you ever gone into the State Education Department to see what you have been certified to teach? I think you would be amazed. At some point in time, they added all this other stuff. You know, and all my thinking is, they did that to help out school districts that needed to cover a class here there or some other thing, but yeah, technically I have certificates K–12, Physical Education, and K-12, School Counseling, *“It’s an interesting exercise to see what we are certified in, because they added a lot of stuff and I don’t know where it came from”*.

What's the worst day you ever had? Yes, I think I can give you a day and I believe you were teaching in East Junior High School at the same time. You know, something I'll never forget, I was teaching in a room on the first floor right across from the Front Office. I had the nicest group of kids and one of the kids said, "*Mr. Thorp, what is that?*" I looked outside the window and they're literally on their hands and knees, a Swat Team, Suffolk County Swat Team, soldiers, police officers, that were crawling past my window and of course that was the day when we had that hostage situation and the shooting – and a memory that I'll never, ever, ever forget, was we were asked to escort the kids to staging areas, and I wanna tell you, you were there so you know, those kids evacuated that building and did exactly what they were told to do to the point where I'm still in awe that they did that. But walking out of the far end of the building, it was raining, and walking out and seeing a sea of umbrellas with network TV insignias on them; NBC, ABC, of course it was before CNN and helicopters in the air, that was a pretty rough day. A sidebar to that day is that Steve Howland, who was our Principal, got shot in the face. And Steve came down the stairs – and this was related to me by Joan – who was on Cafeteria Duty in the Small Cafeteria – and he walked past her; she was kind of out in the hall, holding his hand to his face (and as Joan said) with blood running down his fingers. And Joan's comment to him was" "*I can see this day's going down hill fast.*" Ha! Ha!

For years he would tell that story and laugh. Thank goodness he was only grazed by the bullet and wasn't more seriously injured. He could have been. But yeah; it was a day that didn't end well. And it wasn't a day that didn't end until almost a quarter of eleven at night. I think you were still there with us. It was a tough day.

The year I started in Brentwood was 1970 and Fred Weaver was the reason I was there. Fred Weaver was recruiting teachers at Lock Haven in the school cafeteria in the dining hall and I was looking for a job with a family on the way. What I tried to do was line up a couple of interviews within the same couple of

days so I wouldn't miss too many classes and one of the stops was Long Island and one of the stops was Brentwood. I looked at Liverpool, New York and there was another one but I never made it to those interviews because Brentwood offered me a job right then and there. I interviewed with Ed Murphy who went to Lindenhurst after I came to Brentwood. And when the interview concluded Ed said to me, *"We usually don't do this but, - there was a postal strike and many people don't remember the postal strike – the only reason I remember it was because they said, you've got the job but we'll notify you by mail but we don't trust the mail so here is your packet of papers, take this over to Central, they'll hand you a contract - - - and done. Again, as a sidebar - I signed for \$7,200 and started work in September for \$8,000. All my colleagues and classmates were starting at \$6, 600 or \$6,400 in Pennsylvania.*

He remembered a question that he'd been asked during the interview but he added that he felt sorry for the people who were facing interviews today because he had the feeling then that Mr. Murphy had other things on his mind on that day and was being pressed to get finished with the interview and this teacher. The question he asked was: "You're teaching a class and you see a student in the back of the room doing what appears to be heroin in the back of the classroom. What do you do". I presumed that there was some way of communicating to a person outside the class if I needed assistance and he said yes, there were telephones, so I responded okay then, I would call for the nurse. At which point he said, "Okay. Would you like to work here"? It wasn't such a tough question, but....

Truth to tell, in the pit of his stomach Chris was scared to death when he began working in the District. The High School in Northeast Philadelphia had one black student, 'zero' Hispanic students, Philadelphia at the time was not a place where Hispanics at the time were moving or settling. The City at that time was very heavily segregated and you had your white neighborhoods and your black neighborhoods. The college that I went to in upstate Pennsylvania was a pretty conservative school even though it was a state school. I think we had two or three black students and a handful of Hispanic students and that was it. When I walked

Into the classroom in Brentwood, I was looking at an ethnic mix that was foreign to me.

The first few years I worked with Moe Greene. We taught health together and were usually right across the hall from each other. Pete Perlow was across the hall from me for a long time. Nick Schroeder, Marty Reiger and Ron Albaum were among some of my earliest colleagues in Brentwood. The preparation for teaching in the classroom was – “Your comment was - please, please, - They had no clue.” It was laughable. The school districts themselves were unprepared for the demographic shift that occurred in a very short span of years and were therefore also without even a curriculum from the State. Textbooks in many schools were nonexistent and would take years to acquire as building and departments began to build something out of nothing.

I asked Chris to give me his reason for choosing to become a teacher. In other words, I wanted to know how he defined his personal reason for choosing a career in Guidance to become a counselor. *“Honestly? I went to college to become a Physical Education Teacher. And I was told if you give us a year in the classroom we’ll get you in the gym. And they did get me in the gym. It was 1984, fourteen years down the road Steve, was able to squeeze me in and give me two or three Phys. Ed. classes mixed in with the Health Classes. It was a promise kept and I had the perseverance to keep waiting. Yes, I did want it when it came and I enjoyed it very much.”*

You didn’t try keeping in touch with some of your own teachers but did you have any former students of your own maintain their connections with you? Yes, a few of those from the last several years, and from college and what have you...and some of them are teaching.

I was active with the BTA, during what I call - “the Middle Years” – I was at East for a good fifteen or sixteen years, I guess after I was there for about eight

years or so, I became an Alternate Delegate and I remember going to Montauk to one of those conferences and staying at Gurney's Inn. Yep! The Union has always been very good to me. It's hard to describe how I always felt supported. You know, if push came to shove, people were going to be there for you. And when questions would arise, the answers that I got I felt were honest answers. And as I was preparing to retire I had a situation where most of the year that I was fifty five I could have retired prior to that – my birthday is in September – and I remember talking to Joes Hogan. Will they cheat me out of this incentive? Absolutely not. They would never do that. And when he said it, you believed it.

There were a couple of times in the High School where I found myself in a situation where I asked myself, *"How did I get here?"* Where physical altercations --- I remember one in particular, ---- as a sidebar ---- one of the students involved called me from Suffolk County Jail later on asking for ----How can I graduate kind of thing ---- I was in between the two buildings and the fight was starting ----- a student was here----- and a student was here and I was in the middle. Instinctively, I just raised my voice as loud as I could and was very firm about the fact, *"You know, that you don't do this here"*, or whatever I was saying was just coming out of my mouth ----- and it worked. And they walked away. But yeah! There were times.

What made you angry? *"I don't want to say ignorance, but when I see things that are just not right and are perpetuated and they're kept going"* As a quick example, as a Guidance Counselor I was always an advocate of BOCES. I felt as though not everybody is going to college, not everybody is a scholar. It seems as though Educators all want them to be. But we need plumbers and carpenters and electricians. The "system" made kids feel like that was a treat if they let them do that. You know, it got in the way and it wouldn't let them. That made me angry.

The actual date of my retirement was the second week of July 2004. Chris said, *"I think I made a difference"*. He said *"I always found it interesting that you*

never knew where it came from". "Sometimes you would really think that you helped this kid and maybe you didn't". "Somebody would come in later on and say, "I can't tell you how much of a difference it made when you did x or y or z." "We made a difference. A lot of us did". My last assignment was in the Ross Building. I was there for the second part of my career. After the stint in the Tenth Grade Center, you'd follow the kids and we had a rotating deal back then but they asked me to stay on and not to rotate and pick up the next group. So my first couple of years as a Guidance Counselor---I wanted to mention this ----were very rewarding because I had done my internship at East Junior High, the year after I had done my internship Steve Howland as the Building Principal made sure that I had two duty periods in there: a Duty Period and maybe an AIDP Period, he was good that way, so I worked in Guidance at East and then I got the job in the High School at the tenth Grade Center, we picked up those kids. What I'm trying to get to is that I had had those kids as a classroom teacher, I knew those kids from 7th Grade to 12th Grade. That was the class of 1990 and then the class that was after them, I also knew because I had had them in the classroom those other years. I had a total of thirty-four years.

You know I think it was financially time to leave. The things that I really enjoy in life were waiting; traveling, boating, fishing, all of those things were.....more time for that. The most rewarding part of my role as a counselor was coming in to work every day. I worked with a great group of people. It was a wonderful staff to work with. We had fun in the office. What might he have done differently? He would have become a Counselor sooner than he did. What does he find himself missing now? The people, the people, the people. Everybody had a role to play. There was the daily joke, when someone would roll through, there was a period of time and I think you may even have been there in my office in the morning, before school started if you were to stick your head in my office, there were kids on the floor and teachers in the chairs, and it was laughter and everybody had a cup of coffee or a bagel and it was before school started at it was

a lot of fun. I don't miss the angry parent and being in the "gunsight", wanting to do the right thing and having your hands tied, and then being called in and asked....why didn't you do that "Well because, you wouldn't let me", but you're not allowed to say that.

What was there that you would like to have accomplished but for reasons of having your hands tied you couldn't get to or were not permitted to do without someone's granting you their permission. Okay, to answer that question I have to go here:

"I think our biggest failing as educators, is that I think we graduate large groups of unskilled barely qualified to graduate individuals who have nothing to fall back on. You know, they have a seventy five or a sixty five average and they've passed those minimum competency tests and because we had to get them through the tests we couldn't train them in something they could make a living at or make a difference in "

Was there a favorite year? 1990 Why? Those kids graduated. I knew their families, I knew their brothers and sisters. In all the other years I never got a chance to know a group like I got to know that group. I mean I really knew them.

If you were in a position to offer your advice as a counselor to a first year counselor coming into the position you are leaving what would you tell them as the most important advise you can offer as you take leave of Brentwood.? Parental contact.....parental contact.....parental contact.

Complete the sentence: Brentwood's teachers are..... Miracle Workers.

Complete the sentence Brentwood's students are..... Survivors

"I wanted to touch upon the fact that at East Junior High especially there was such a feeling of family and there still is. We grew up together. We watched people get married and have babies. We went through an awful lot of stuff. There were years, about twenty of them where Brentwood didn't hire too many people. So you worked with the same person, the same group of people day in and day out for twenty years you got to know each other pretty well. And it was a nice group. I guess all of Brentwood used to say the same thing",

"We're family...dysfunctional, but family nevertheless" And the same thing is certainly true of the high school. I want to thank Brentwood for giving me the opportunity to work and grow here. They asked me to say something the night that I retired and what I said was:

"Our Principal, Tom O'Brien always used to say, there were days when I didn't want to go to work, but there was never a day when I didn't want to go to work in Brentwood".

My retort to that was, "There was never a day in Brentwood when I didn't find something to make it enjoyable and fun. It's been a wonderful experience."