



Vincent Anthony DiRiggi
ROBS History Project
July 13, 2009 **134**

My name is Vincent Anthony DiRiggi. My first name came from the maternal half of our family. Anthony came from my father's side. The DiRiggi's first started coming out to Brentwood long before moving here from Brooklyn. That was where we lived when my father used to drive the Sisters of St Joseph to their annual Retreats at St. Joseph's Academy. It would be around Easter that they would go on Retreat and needed a ride. My dad would take them here from Brooklyn, and we all went with him in the car. To me this was awesome. I don't know if you ever watched '*Lassie*' on television in the fifties with all the farms and all that. Oh man! It was so amazing to get away from the concrete of Brooklyn. Then eventually my mom and dad had a choice in 1955 to move either to Massapequa or Brentwood. They chose Brentwood. We had a little split level, and my sister who is two years older than I am, started in Third Grade. She was in Fifth Grade and believe it or not, we lived in South Brentwood that was over by Candlewood Road and Brentwood Road, that corner by Wisconsin Avenue. We went to Northeast Elementary and were bussed almost completely across town to the northeast section, which is near the expressway. But of course you wouldn't see that happening today. In the Third Grade I had Mrs. Grabowski, who I had the pleasure of dancing with at her retirement party. That was quite an experience. Back then she was having a baby, and at the mid-year we shifted over to Mrs. Lanchaiten's class.

My mother's maiden name was Lupo, which translates to wolf in Italian. When asked if he had a nickname in high school he referred to his having been in a production of Guys and Dolls for Maury Burns, and his part was acting the role of "Big Julie." His nickname after that became 'Big Vin'. Frank Canerolli to this day still calls me 'Big Vin'.

My mom and dad are now ninety-one and eighty-nine and still living. They are over in East Babylon. My mom is in a retirement home, and my dad lives right around the corner, so he is able to get there daily to see how she's doing and check on her. I go over to visit as much as I can, and so does my aunt who is eighty-seven. My sister lives in Elmont now; she's sixty three and is still working in a bank. She's married and has a daughter who lives out in Mastic Beach. My son who is now thirty-one, is teaching Social Studies in East Middle School in Brentwood. So far things are going well. He enjoys it. That's very important that he does enjoy it. I just hope he gets as much out of history as I did and hopefully maybe his child will teach in Brentwood, and maybe we'll have a one hundred year string going there, you know? Who knows? Eric is my only child with Grace my ex-wife.

Do you see any traces of your own personality in him or qualities that his mother evidences in his behavior? Yes. We both love sports, and even though he sustained an injury in high school, that precluded his continuing to compete beyond high school. I did have the opportunity to coach with him for one year in Rocky Point. We worked together with little seventh graders, and it was a lot of fun to see him into it. I kind of stayed back as much as I could. The kids were great kids. We didn't win many games but we had a great time.

I was born in Queens in Horace Harding Hospital. We lived in Brooklyn, in Williamsburg, by the Domino Sugar plant on the East River. We used to walk down there when I was about seven or eight years old, and we'd throw rocks at the water rats as they were going by. You've gotta' understand these rats ate sugar just to stay alive. They were about the size of cats. So we moved out of there and came to Brentwood when I was about eight years old – half way through third Grade.

I was born in July of 1948. I guess you could call me a 'baby boomer.' Yes and you were also a 'Post War' baby. *"I can remember walking to my aunt's house in Brooklyn, who lived on Boerum Street, Brooklyn, NY exactly geographically how far it was, I couldn't tell you. But my friend and I, I guess we were seven or eight, couldn't have been any older than eight, because I moved out to Brentwood when I was eight. I said, "let's go to my aunt's house", and we walked to my aunt's house and somehow got there, and it was a heck of a walk. I can remember that. Can you imagine an eight year old today or two eight year*

olds walking through Brooklyn by themselves? Or even in Brentwood when I used to have to go to Little League Games, and my mother had to go to work, and my dad was working. I had to hitchhike or walk from Brentwood Road and Candlewood Road to Third Avenue out here where the Little League Field is. I used to hitchhike – eight years old. Could you imagine an eight year old hitchhiking today? It's a different world.

My father and mother were both born in this country. My Grandparents weren't. My father's side is a little foggy there, because his dad left and his mother ran away to become an actress. She used to sing at the Italian feasts. She really wanted to get out there and try to make it big in show business. So, my father was raised by his uncle and aunt and lived with his cousin, who was his companion at the time when he was growing up as a boy. Eventually, my grandmother realized she wouldn't be able to make it successfully as an actress and as a singer and they all got back together. My grandfather has a sister who is still alive in Culver City, California, and I believe she was ninety-one at the time of this interview. His two brothers have both since passed.

My mother's background is easier to talk about, because both grandparents were from Sicily. They came to the states pre WW I right before the war broke out in Europe. My Grandfather Vincenzo, was like a contractor or a bricklayer, and he lost an arm due to his diabetes when he developed an infection, and his doctor had to remove his arm to save his life. He died anyway. He was probably in his mid thirties, and he left four children. I remember my grandmother telling me they were on welfare, and my mom used to have to sleep in the tub. She was small in stature; about four foot eleven. I used to kid her that to fit in that tub she wasn't allowed to grow any taller. She had two brothers and a sister who is still living, and suffice to say, they didn't have it easy. It was a shame, because they were very good people.

I remember my mother used to love to dance. Tony Felicio would have remembered this. They used to attend the local galas together that they had here in Brentwood and Suffolk County. They would dance the Peabody. In a local dance contest they would enter and dance the Peabody. They were pretty good at it. They would always win the bottle of champagne, \$1.19 a bottle - so what, it was a trophy to them! They won it. So I would say she got most of her enjoyment out of dancing and winning that bottle of champagne.

My dad worked hard. He travelled a lot. My father used to take the 6 am train out of Brentwood into the city. He worked as a civilian for the U.S. Army on Governors Island. He would get off the train at the last stop and take a subway to Battery Park, where he would catch the ferry to Governors Island. They used to give him ratings, like he'd be an E5 or an E6 and work himself up. He would take the 6 pm train home to Brentwood, but he wouldn't get home until later, and sometimes when he fell asleep on the train he'd wake up at the end of the line in Ronkonkoma. His was a long hard day. He was given options when he got out of the service as to what he preferred doing. He could have stayed in the Army or gone to work for the Army, and as a civilian that's what he chose to do. He ended up in Washington and New York. When they closed Ft. Jay on Governor's Island he was assigned to work out of Ft. Monmouth, N.J. At that point mom and dad had to move from Brentwood to N.J., and I told him, *"Dad I can't come with you."* It was during the Vietnam War years, and I was attending school at Suffolk Community, and I explained that I had to stay in school or risk being drafted, and I couldn't change colleges as if I were still in high school. They didn't understand that. So for the first time at nineteen years of age, I was totally on my own. It was a lonely time of growing up, because when I woke up there had always been a newspaper and the milk was in the refrigerator. Now I had to buy all that stuff for myself. Eventually I couldn't take that one room apartment, and I moved in with my uncle and my aunt until around Christmas time, when I heard my uncle speaking with my father on the phone, and he was saying, *"We really can't take care of him anymore."* So what I did was, there was a friend of mine who lived down the street here on Candlewood Road; Bob Nocktagall, whose mother had worked for the Brentwood district for years. He was attending a small school called Appalachian State Teachers College, which had become Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. So I asked him, *"Can I play football there?" "Am I too small?"* And he said, *"Yeah! You could play"*. I threw everything I owned in the world in his car, jumped in and headed down there to school. *"I never visited the school or anything. And it's a funny story, I got in, and they had a quarter system. I got in the winter quarter. Thank God they had a quarter system. I could start with everybody else."* He said bring warm clothes. I said, "Are you sure? We're so close to Florida." He said, "Bring warm clothes. " I get down there and all of a sudden there's a snow storm and I found myself walking from the dorm to my class in snow above my waist. I said what the heck did I get myself into? I flew home the next week end and a friend of mine who was tending bar

over there in the Crow Bar on Commack Road, Dennis Bowes, I'm sitting there saying to myself, *"I'm not going back there"*, He said to me, Listen to me, if you don't go back there, you're going to end up in Vietnam. So, what's your choice? Vietnam or the snow? I said, *"You're right"*. So I flew back.

Two weeks later I finished my two quarters, came back here for the summer. The next year I didn't have enough money to come home for Thanksgiving, and I stayed down there. I was really depressed. The first Thanksgiving I was never with my family. My friend and I bought some Kentucky Fried Chicken and I said, *"I can't take this. I'm going down to Blowing Rock"*, which was eight miles away where you could go to get yourself a beer. And I go down there, and I see all these young people like myself...college students who were from the Boone area, but they went to Duke and Carolina State and Wake Forest, and they were home for Thanksgiving. So I got to meet the local people. Then the next summer I stayed down there, and I started spending twelve months a year down there, and I can look into this camera now and say to you that it was the best three and a half years of my life. From that first year of flying home and saying I'm never coming back to never wanting to leave. I actually bought a condo down there. There were four ski resorts. I'm going back this August and renting a place for a month so my dog can run around. He's got a couple of acres he can run around in. Oh, this is very important! I was there in January of 1968. In September of 1968, thirteen people from Brentwood that I had gone to school with and were a little younger than I was came down to school there. We had our own little Brentwood Community, and then we'd get people who visited from Brentwood to come. It was like a TV show. Every weekend there was somebody else popping up. Many of us have remained good friends. We are godfathers and godmothers to our kids etc.

I am the baby in my own family. My sister is two years older than I am. My father used to think that he was the one in control, but it was really my mother who had most of the control. I guess it was the idea of once a week every Sunday we would try to get the family together, and he'd sit at the table, like the Godfather at the table – *"You don't discuss business at the table"*. The table was the place of socialization. That's where you told what you've been doing for the past week since the last time you saw everybody, and what you plan on doing. So, I think my mother gave me the family socialization growing up. My dad I guess was always striving to be secure. I remember coming home and saying, *"Dad, if*

we could open up an Italian Restaurant down in North Carolina, we could make a fortune, because I learned how to make Pizza's at Delmaggies right down the street here on Brentwood Road". But he wouldn't do it, because of the family. We can't leave the family. I'm telling you, they would have been millionaires. There was a guy who did end up doing something like that, and he did very well. My mother could cook. My friends used to line up when they knew she was making meatballs. All of a sudden all the guys I knew would be at my house lined up at the oven, and she'd be giving them meatballs. She loved it. She just loved it. But my dad also had opportunities, but he stayed with the government, because it was security. He had a pension coming. He had his benefits, so rather than take a chance on becoming rich and leave the family, he chose the security of knowing that he'd be able to provide for his family. Perhaps it was generational and a learned response to traumas they'd been through, like the depression.

My uncle Lenny was into sports, and my uncle Louie was also into sports big time. They both had a great deal of influence over me. I guess it would have been a person Like Pat McCarthy who was most responsible for my choice of career. He was my teacher there for a while, and I always had a love of history. The time line and where we came from, and of course I always loved the movies and the history that I learned from movies. I also loved sports and especially football. I figured I could put it all together...coach football, and teach history and social studies, and that's what I did.

My choice to get married may have been one of the most difficult choices I've ever had to make. I saw some people I started out with go on to become Administrators. I just knew that wasn't for me, and then I went into Guidance and I became a Substance Abuse Counselor. It turned out that after I made the choice, thank goodness I set it up the way I did, because I discovered how much I really missed the classroom. I really enjoyed that. Sometimes I wondered if I should have stayed in the classroom as a Social Studies Teacher, because it was the best. You really dealt with the group. And you had groups in Guidance. I know that, and those kids needed that individual help, but there's nothing like the classroom.

I remember my Kindergarten teacher. She was the best. She used to ask me, *"What do you want to do?" "I want to read books about bears."* And I loved animals. One of the things that happened, by the way, was... Do you remember her name? Yes I do. It was Mrs. Siegel. I ran into Kerry Siegel.... One of my first

loves was Mrs. Siegel. Well anyway, that's another story. I'm carrying my little puppy up the stairs in my apartment building and he jumps out of my arms and falls and breaks his leg, and we had to take him to the animal doctor... the Veterinarian, and I saw how he had to put a cast on him, and after a while the cast came off, and the dog was fine...and did you ever do that shield thing in class with your kids? Well I did, and I said the most significant person or place in my life was this Veterinarian, because from that point on I wanted to be an animal doctor or a veterinarian. And of course people you tell that to in the education field, like your teachers will say, *"Well You have to study, and have good grades, It was my motivation as a kid to get good grades and to study, because I wanted to be an animal doctor, until I took my Biology Regent, and that went right out the window, because I was ten years of age"*.

Anyway, so she was very significant. Third Grade, Mrs. Grabowski was important to me, because I went from the Catholic School System to the Public School System. It was a big change, you know? I'd get called on to answer a question, and I'd stand up, and after a while my friends would tackle me because that wasn't required. First I went to Northeast with Mrs. Grabowski, and then I went to St. Ann's, and some of those nuns were very instrumental in my growing up, but I met so many people from Brentwood at that point my own age. We had our own groups, and whatever, and it's lasted for decades. And then at the end of eighth grade I was supposed to go to Seton Hall. Either that or St. John the Baptist or whatever it is, well anyway, Seton Hall. About two weeks before school started I went to my father and said, "Dad, I don't want to go there. I want to go and play football for Brentwood. Well, he went absolutely nuts on me. "What are you talking about? How can you think that?" "Dad, just trust me. I can do this. I'm not going to go out on a limb somewhere. I know I can do this. He said, "They won't care about you over there."Dad, don't worry about it. I can take care of myself." And he let me go— starting at South Junior High and then you went to the High School, and it turned out to be the best move of my life, because from there I met people like Mr. Walker, who was a very strict U.S. Marine type instructor, but he had a heart. We later on coached together and became very good friends; people like Mr. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was my line coach, and he was also my Science Teacher. He went on to become the Superintendent of Schools at Lindenhurst. Ed Murphy was a very significant person in my life, who took a little guy and made him a starting tackle. Going into tenth grade as I said, Mr. McCarthy, we had three teachers that year. We just ran one out after the other. It was a real tough class. I

got hit by a car that year, on Brentwood Road, right in front of my house, and I missed a lot of school and came back, and I saw everybody sitting in rows, and I said, "What are you guys doing? Let's play some cards." And they said, "There's a new guy in town"; Mr. McCarthy. And I'm sitting there, with my feet up on his desk and Pat McCarthy, Mr. McCarthy walks in, and with one swift continuous motion of his right arm and hand, throws my feet off his desk telling me to in no uncertain terms to get my feet off his desk. "Who are you? "I'm Mr. McCarthy", who are you? "I'm DiRiggi." "Well DiRiggi, get in your seat. You're assigned over there." From that point on I never once even looked at him crooked, and I learned more about South East Asian History that I would have from any professor in any college that I've ever attended. The man knew his history, and he inspired me. The same year I failed my Biology Regents my Veterinarian Career was over, and I found a new one.

My first paying job like everybody was a newspaper boy. Then I caddied over at the Brentwood Country Club. The Brentwood Country Club back in 1960 was a Private Club and doctors, lawyers, some of the wealthiest people, most prestigious people around this area on Long Island belonged to that Club. It was not like it is today when it's a public Course, and you don't see half of the things you would see years ago. They don't even have caddy's anymore. They had a swimming pool, and Mr. Galaris was the lifeguard for the summer. He'd walk by and we'd all wave to him and you'd say, "He waved at me", "No, he waved at me" It was just a great place to grow up. From there, I went to the Farmer's Market, *"God, I will never forget that."* The Farmer's Market, for those of you who don't know what it was, was on Brentwood Road and was open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. That was it. But if you worked in the fruit and vegetable section like I did, you had to go in for a half a day on Wednesday to unload the trucks of fruit and vegetables to have everything ready to go on Thursday. I worked three and a half days, fifty eight hours for a dollar an hour. I made \$58. And I was thirteen – fourteen years old in the early sixties and that was a lot of money. I gave my father forty dollars, and I got eighteen dollars, and my father saved it for me, and when I became sixteen, we went partners on my old girlfriend's father's fifty-nine Pontiac Bonneville convertible, and I got it for seven hundred dollars, and I had my car at fifteen and a half or so. I couldn't drive it, but I had it, and I used to wash it every day and polish it every day, and when my sister drove it, it used to drive me crazy. It was an experience. It was a lot of work – fifty eight hours in three days, but I learned a work ethic, you know? It also motivated me to study so

that I didn't have to work like that for the rest of my life. I could go into my stories when Mr. Siler showed up as a customer. If we have time at the end, I'll tell you about it. That's all part of the story so I hope we can get to it.

When I was young, sports were a health thing too. When I was in Brooklyn, I was very hefty, and we used to get up in the morning, and all of us would meet, and we'd play baseball, and then we'd go home for lunch, we'd play in the afternoon, and then we'd have dinner, and then we'd play after dinner and we made up our own outfield wall and hit home runs and it was a lot of fun.

Certainly, every kid loves the summer. When I was in college I used to love the spring, because it started to warm up there in the mountains, and of course the parties were better. Now as I'm getting older, the fall is the preferred season, especially up here on Long Island. You've got to understand, I coached football for over thirty years, and I never had a fall where I was off. You're talking seven days a week, by looking at films and having meetings on Sundays and Monday nights. Your games were on Saturdays. You didn't have a day off, but now that I'm free in the fall, I find that this is the best time to fish, the best time to play golf, it's cooler, it just seems like everything is moved up a month or whatever, you know, and September and October here on Long Island is just the best time.

Elementary school for me was St. Peter and Paul, in Williamsburg Brooklyn, then we moved out here and I went to Northeast Elementary. Mr. Pulovcheck was, I think, the Principal, and then I went to St Ann's from fourth Grade to Eighth Grade, then I came to Brentwood South, Mr. DeBellis, and then to Brentwood High School, from there we were on split session, so the tenth graders went to school in the afternoon, and I practiced football in the morning, and split session was over in my Junior Year in 1964 and graduated in 1966 from the Ross High School. I decided I was going to be an accountant, and I had enrolled in Farmingdale and took accounting. I was going to be the Wizard of Wall Street, but I didn't have the discipline... strength. There were twenty classes and I cut eleven including classes on debiting and crediting. So needless to say I didn't fare well in accounting. It was strange, because I had people in my class who were as old as my parents. You know, it was a night class, and I thought that was very strange, because I wasn't used to that. Then my buddy and I, Frank Cianerelli who graduated in 1966 also, I told him, "Look, we're going to apply to Suffolk Community College, and if we get in, great! If we don't, we'll join the Navy on the

Buddy System. So we shook hands and everything. Well, this is a strange story. I got in and he didn't. We took a night class. I took Social Studies, a history class, got an A in it. He took an English class and he got a 'B' plus or whatever so he got a good grade, but he didn't take the Regents Scholarship test, I took the Regents Scholarship Test, I didn't get a great score but I got an incentive award, and it got me into the college. One little test. That was why I used to tell my students, take every test you can take. You know, it will pay off in the long run. It was an experience that I was able to pass on to others. The thing is, I went to Frank and I said, *"Look, we made an agreement,"* Nah, he said, *"but you got in and I didn't"* I said, *"So what, we'll join the Navy together."* No, he said "You go to college, I'll be careful". So I went to Suffolk Community.

And as I was saying earlier, my parents moved to New Jersey during that time after my first semester. I was living in a one room apartment in Ronkonkoma, and that was when I went to Appalachian State University that next January. I completed my undergraduate degree there and continued taking classes there during the summers for special education. I was one course short of getting my masters, and I said, I don't want to do this, and David Martz talked me out of it. I waited a few years, got married, Grace and I had Eric, and when Eric was about six and was in school, I went to LIU, CW Post and got a Masters in Counseling. My accomplishments credit me with a Masters plus sixty credits, although I have attained closer to 120 credits much more than I'm required to have. I'm certified in Social Studies, Drivers Education, Science, Special Education, and Guidance. Getting my Masters was the source of my greatest pride and my ultimate accomplishment. My son and my family were present when I received my diploma, and hopefully it rubbed off on him. As Vinnie spoke his emotions overcame him, and his eyes teared up, especially when he alluded to how he remembered his father overcome with pride as he was awarded the Masters Degree. He choked back tears as he said, "and my dad was crying".

Had he ever had *a worst emotional day?* There were not many, he said *"not many, thank God"*. What I learned, I learned from William Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar*, not from Brentwood, *"The evil that men do men lives after them. The good is often interred with their bones"*. Brentwood it seemed to me, was reminiscent of a spelling bee. One mistake and you're out of the game. Right on the other side of this wall, me and some Brentwood graduates put up a monument to the kids who were killed in Viet Nam and who we went to school with. I wonder

sometimes if that's ever going to be remembered beyond the time when someone else and I didn't see eye to eye over a disagreement he had.

I graduated in the middle of the year in 1970. The war was still going on, and I had some decisions to make. In the meantime I had to make some money, so I subbed here, then Tom Brush and it might have been yourself. Guy DiPietro had moved up from Department Chair to Central. In those days the Department Chairman had to teach two classes, and Tom Brush was doing it and someone else, I thought it was you, and they said they couldn't do it anymore and they needed somebody to teach those two classes. They were Regents classes, and I said, to get my foot in the door, I'll do it; Eighty dollars a week before taxes and they wouldn't let me sub anymore. So I took the job for ten weeks, fell in love with some Sachem teacher and signed on when Tom Shore left to open a bar; signed on to be a full time teacher in Brentwood, and then I broke up with the girl after I signed up. There was an interview, and it was Dave Martz, Steve Rochester, and Milt Siler and Mr. Woodward. I remember Brentwood when it was all farms, I was a little boy who had pigeons, and it was like one big farm, and I had hamsters, two dogs, what I never could have had in Brooklyn. Football was my primary sport. In the beginning when I was younger I coached track, with Mr. Sabatelle, and we won a number of championships there, most of my training was when I was on the Track Team here was under Dick Simmons. He was an excellent coach. I liked it, and it taught me how to organize. I was the class advisor for the Class of 1979. I used to run ski trips. I was in my twenties teaching in split session in the afternoon session with people like Tom Mc Gloughlin and Denny Bracco, Terri Cousins... some of the greatest teachers the school has ever known, and I did that for my first ten years; and then came the post Chuck Puleo period, and I had to get up earlier and become a man. I got married and had a son by then and stepchildren by then, one of course who was Susan Price before and is the librarian at South. Near the end of the eighties I became a guidance counselor. That was when it became a whole different thing altogether, more serious, because I was the Alcohol and Drug Counselor who worked with many COA children of alcoholics or drug addicts. In the classroom I saw my purpose as on a timeline... I'd like to be here by this date and there by then, but no, if a student had something else to talk about we could take a break here from this and let's help so and so with what's on his or her mind. Sometimes it would get pretty heavy, you know? A child would come in crying or saying *"I found this white powder in my mother's sock draw. I went for socks "....* and then I would always

have to tow the line on *"The child told me this and because this is my job and she loves you and she doesn't want to see you die". "So do not hit her. If you hit her, we go to the authorities. If you can quit, then quit. If you can't, I can get you help. I can assist you in quitting."* And most parents went along with that. Sometimes kids would tell me things about themselves and what they were involved in or their parents, and I wouldn't call the parent. *"I told the Administrators, this was confidential information. You can't make me say something about a student because it's an agreement between me and the student that I cannot break, or they'll never come to talk with me".*

I was the Secretary for the Suffolk County Coaches Association. I eventually, when I got out of coaching Varsity, became a Delegate for my building, thought about going to New York Tech for a degree in Labor Relations and Arbitration, and then got involved in that. I got involved in the Retirement System, and was a representative where we meet in Albany once a year. Nobody twisted my arm. It was something I wanted to do for the teachers of Brentwood.

John, when you retire, nothing gets under your skin, but I guess when some people get to be higher-ups in the field, they change. These are people that you taught with and went fishing with, played touch football with, and they just weren't the same people anymore. It was sad – I felt sad for them, because they lost friends – some good friends.

Well, we were running a fundraiser for the football program, and I was putting these notifications of the fundraiser in the people's mailboxes, and I came up to the high school where I had taught for eighteen years, eighteen years, and I'm starting to fill these mailboxes, and I'm looking at the names, and I swear, I couldn't recognize out of the one hundred names maybe, ten names? And I just knew it was time. There were people who I used to teach with whose sons and daughters were now working here. My own son is. I remember going out after school one time and having a beer, and there were a bunch of twenty-five year old or thirty years olds and they were nice to talk with, but I said, *"What am I doing here?"* The official date of my retirement was July 1st of 2006. My last official assignment was East Middle as my home school, but I worked in the four Middle Schools as the District Substance Abuse Counselor. I worked in Brentwood for a total of thirty-five years. I think the establishment out there of the Viet Nam Memorial at first there was a lot of resistance and I did a lot of leg work, getting

people from the cemetery plots to say they would construct this thing. I gave them a diagram of how I wanted it, and what I wanted on it and blah, blah, blah, and after a couple of years they kiabashed the whole thing. Then George Tally, who was a classmate of mine, but a couple of years older, became the Board of Education President, and I went to him and told him what had happened, and he knew a lot of the kids who were killed. He told me to get it all together again, and he said, *"I'll take care of it"*. So then me and Pat Hughes, and Jerry Curtain and Steve Manzella and a couple of other guys – I hate to leave names out, formed a committee. We met in Dana Gutierrez' office – until we got this thing down, and then the day that we got it put together, it was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen in Brentwood. We had the ROTC Band performing, all the kids, people we hadn't seen in thirty or forty years, and then when the whole thing was over and everybody had to make their speeches and what have you, helicopters flew over the area, George got Frank Antininni who was now a Colonel out in Calverton at the airport, with the National Guard, got the helicopters to fly over and most importantly now these people will be remembered.

One thing I would have changed is, I would have listened more. Truthfully, Brentwood's teachers arethe best. Ninety percent of Brentwood's students are the best. As a footnote now is the time for me to thank all my teachers. If it wasn't for you guys I don't have any idea what would have become of me. I'd hope to be remembered as a person who was always fair and caring.