

Barrett Oral History Project
Interview with Honors Devils

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Interviewers: Emily Holdaway & Joshua Pardhe

Transcribed by: Nathan DeJonge

HOLDAWAY: Wait, okay, my bad. Okay, hello, this is Emily Holdaway and Joshua, interviewing Ivy, Doug, Chris, Abbie, Aashini, and this interview is part of the Barrett Oral History Project. Our goal is to preserve a record of Barrett's history in honor of our 30th anniversary. Thank you so much for taking the time to sit down with us and share your experience. It is November 2nd at 4:22 pm in Vista Del Sol Community Center. Doug, we can start with you for your introduction.

RICE: Sure. My name is Doug Rice. I was in Barrett from 2008 to 2012. And I'm now back at ASU as a grad student in environmental engineering.

CHOKSI: Hi everyone, my name is Aashini Choksi and I'm a senior studying economics and business law at Barrett, so I'm currently a student.

BARDALES: Hi everyone, my name is Abbie Bardales. I was a student at Barrett from 2014 to 2018, so I just graduated this past May. I'm now a Teach for America Corps member teaching 6th grade English Language Arts in Denver, Colorado.

GERBIS: Very cool. My name is Ivy Bohnlein Gerbis, and I was in the University Honors Program from 1992 to 1996, and I am actually the founding member of the Barrett Honors Devils, or just Honors Devils at the time, and I now work for ASU, and I am in the School of Sustainability.

SCHWARTZ: It's tough to follow that one up. My name is Christopher Schwartz, and I was in the Honors College from 2009 to 2011, I believe. And I'm now a doctoral student back at ASU studying archaeology.

HOLDAWAY: Awesome. So, you kind of briefly touched about this, but if you could describe your affiliation with Barrett. I know you all are Honors Devils, so if you can explain your role there.

RICE: All right, I'll start again. I joined Honors Devils the spring of my freshman year, and I participated in it until I graduated.

CHOKSI: I joined the Honors Devils my sophomore year, the fall semester, my sophomore year of college. And as a senior, I am the co-president.

BARDALES: I joined the Honors Devils following my sophomore year and was in the club for three years. I was one of the co-presidents my junior year and then the events coordinator my senior year.

GERBIS: And when I started ASU as a freshman, I noticed that we had a lot of recruitment type events and we had a lot of students who were coming to campus specifically because they wanted to tour the Honors College and they wanted to learn more about our programs. We had people requesting overnight stays and they wanted to visit classrooms and things like that. So, we saw the need to create an organization that would help with that and that would set up these agendas and things like that and basically just act as a recruiting organization for the Honors College in a way that other organizations were recruiting for the university. So, I got together a bunch of friends, we had a big meeting in the common room, and we collected information from people who were interested, and that's how it all got started.

SCHWARTZ: And I joined Honors Devils my second semester of my junior year, I believe. And what was the other part of the question? Was there a second part of that question?

HOLDAWAY: No.

SCHWARTZ: Oh. Well, then that's what I did.

HOLDAWAY: So, what attracted you all to join the Honors College?

GERBIS: I can actually start with that. At the time, ASU and the Honors College at ASU were sort of very scrappy underdogs to what was going on at the U of A. And I really liked that about the program, that there was a lot of exciting stuff going on. It was growing. There was an opportunity to really create something as a foundation that could be built upon in the future. And so when I decided I was going to stay in-state, for me, it was really a natural decision to come to ASU and to join the Honors College.

SCHWARTZ: I can follow that one up, actually. I was supposed to be a freshman at the University of Arizona, and I got pulled to ASU at the very last second, largely by my parents, who wanted me to go to Arizona State. And for a long time, I think, until probably I joined the Honors College, I really struggled to find a home at ASU and didn't really have a close network, didn't have a lot of friends that I was really tight with. And most of my friends had gone on to the University of Arizona. So, once I joined the Honors College, things kind of turned around for me. I kind of found a home, you know, like-minded friends. And I also became a community assistant in The Honors College and that had a big role in it. And then joining Honors Devils was kind of the, you know, icing on the cake. It was a good, really good fit.

BARDALES: I can go. I'm from Denver, Colorado originally, and I desperately wanted to stay in Colorado for college. And I had been convinced to come and visit Barrett because I had gotten a letter from them saying they would pay for my plane tickets to come and visit, so my parents said to come and visit. But when I came and did my visit day, I completely changed my mind about what I wanted to do for college because when I came, I loved the campus, but I was hugely impressed by the community atmosphere in Barrett because when I got to do an overnight stay with a student and actually talk to the students here, I was so impressed that everyone was so focused on school and wanting to be committed and scholarly, but in a really caring and

compassionate way where people were supportive of each other and not acting hyper-competitive. And it was just the community environment that really seemed like the right fit for me.

CHOKSI: Yeah, definitely to kind of build off of that, my older brother went to Barrett, and so I know I'd always visit him when I was in high school and middle school. And I would visit him in Cereus and I would go to the dining hall with him and it was my favorite thing, and Honors Hall was honestly the coolest place I'd ever thought of. They had a ping pong table, like that's awesome. And so, kind of seeing that and realizing that I never toured another school. So, I guess being a tour guide, it's kind of hard to relate because I've never been on a college tour. But I knew from day one that Barrett is what I wanted and I never had to really look anywhere else.

RICE: In some ways, echoing the last, or some of the things that other people said, but really for me when I visited Barrett, that was when I was won over. I was from Oregon, so I was thinking of going to school in Oregon or California, and my mom made me go visit ASU. And it was a good thing she did because I loved it. And I love, I did, I'd say part of it, you can't really talk about Barrett without talking about ASU as well. And I did really like ASU, but Barrett also clearly offered a different experience that some of the other schools that I was interested in were also offering. So, it was a nice mix of both worlds. I could still go to football games on Saturdays, but also have- find friends who cared about talking about intellectual things over dinner, which could be a little harder to find at some of the other dining halls. So, it was a really nice mix.

HOLDAWAY: How would you describe Barrett?

GERBIS: You guys are gonna have to go first on this.

SCHWARTZ: People who have been closer.

BARDALES: I think the word that just like comes to mind for me immediately is the idea of it being a community. And I think it's a community in a lot of different senses. I was a CA as well, and so I worked for housing for three years, and I felt like I was really connected to the on-campus aspect of the Barrett community, but I think that the Barrett community also goes so far beyond that, because even when you talk to Barrett students who live off campus or who are on another ASU campus, there's still that sense of like, oh, you're Barrett, we're this Barrett family, like it's all one big community. So, I think like the word community is a big and broad description, but I think it really applies to the Barrett experience.

SCHWARTZ: You said experience too, and I feel like a shared experience is a good, it's probably a good way to describe it. And just to echo some of the things Doug said, you know, being able to sit and have a conversation about, you know, 16th century Russian poets while you're having dinner is kind of a fun, and something you might not be able to find other places on campus. And I think that comes from a shared experience and taking classes together that are on topics that are broad and intellectually stimulating.

GERBIS: I think one of the things we've successfully done is through all iterations of what the Honors College has been, there's always been the human event. And it has changed. You have different perspectives on it and everything, but that experience of taking that class sticks with you. And I still have my books from Human Event.

SCHWARTZ: I do too.

GERBIS: And actually everybody I know who was in the Honors Program, like college, still has their Human Event books. And it creates like that foundation that you can talk about. Like you can bring these things out and that everybody has a certain level of experience with, the Odyssey or with philosophy or different things. And so, there's that sort of jumping off point. And I think it's a thread that kind of creates that community, not just among the people who are in your class, but everybody who's really ever gone through the program.

CHOKSI: Just to kind of add off of community, I also think supportive is one of the biggest things about Barrett. Not just your peers, but your professors, faculty, staff, advisors. Really, if you have any questions about career goals or weekend plans, there's someone to talk to who will definitely have an idea for you, so I think that's a really big aspect of Barrett.

RICE: Yeah, Chris honed in on the word experience. I think that's a good one too. Everything, I mean, it has a very physical presence on campus, especially now that it's absorbed Vista. If you told me in 2008 that all of Vista would be Barrett, I would have bet you that nah, that wasn't going to happen, but here it is. So, there's a really big physical presence. You have the dining hall, students. But yeah, there is that sort of the less physical aspect to it of talking- meeting people. And also, in terms of opportunities, like the scholarship office helped me a lot. I think that I probably got into research because of my honors project. And yeah, Human Event. That certainly helped me grow intellectually and as a person to be exposed to some works of art that I wouldn't have otherwise maybe found on my own.

GERBIS: It's funny that you talk about the physical presence because when I was in The Honors College, it was McClintock Hall. Like that was, and we all pretty much fit into it. And so, it was just one building around a central courtyard and everybody kept their doors open. And the dean would sort of wander through the courtyard and hang out at the picnic table. And you know, we all knew, everybody knew everybody who lived there. And I joked about how we didn't have to give tours of our residence hall because you could basically just stand in one place and be like, here it is. But even then, it was sort of like that was the hub of everything. We got that hall because the university was going to tear it down anyway. And so, they were like, yeah, sure, honors take it, whatever. And it really became like the heart of the program. And I knew people who had gotten to the point where they knew that they weren't going to meet the qualifications to finish, but they didn't want to leave McClintock, so they stayed in the program because it was just like the best place to be.

HOLDAWAY: That's awesome. Besides being in Honors Devils, did you have any other involvement in Barrett or any special projects that you did while you were in The Honors College?

GERBIS: Time for everybody to talk about your thesis.

SCHWARTZ: I mean a bunch. I think- it sounds like you were also a community assistant. Yeah, I was a community assistant when the new Honors College, the south campus Honors College opened. I should say southeast campus Honors College opened. So that was cool. Did that for three years. That was a great experience. I was also in the community of undergraduate research scholars. I don't know if anyone else did that. That was a really neat... It was like putting together an NSF project summary and really kind of honing your research a little bit. And it was a year-long thing where you coupled like a paid internship that you then kind of drew into an honors thesis and also put together a research poster and all these other things for this class that was all people doing interdisciplinary research that Peggy Nelson led. And that was a really cool experience that I think probably drove me into staying as a graduate student, moving forward with that. What else? I'm sure you guys did a ton of things.

GERBIS: I didn't do much else in Barrett or in the Honors College. I pretty much, I mean, Honors Devils was kind of my full-time job while I was doing it. And then I was involved with other things on campus. I had been involved with START, for example, which is the Student Admissions Relations Team that's kind of formed a little bit of Honors Devils and some other organizations and things like that. But primarily, I was just involved with research. I did do an honors thesis that I eventually used part of for my master's thesis. So, it also worked out really well for me and what I ended up doing in the future.

BARDALES: I was also a community assistant for three years here at Vista del Sol, and I was a senior community assistant for two of those years. So, I was pretty heavily involved in the world of Barrett housing, which is a super exciting, busy, and overwhelming thing, but it was one of the best things that I did in college. And then obviously Honors Devils was my other really big Barrett-specific involvement. I did my honors thesis in classics, which was partially because I was also very involved in our two classics clubs on campus, our Classics Honors Society and our Social Classics Club. And so, I got to kind of draw together my Barrett interests with my classics interests for my thesis, which was a really wonderful and fun experience.

HOLDAWAY: That's awesome.

CHOKSI: I think all of my on-campus involvements right now all relate to admissions, which is kind of funny. So, I've actually, I was part of START for my first three years, and then I'm also the Vice President for Business Ambassadors, which is the business school recruitment team. So, I like to see prospective students all day long.

GERBIS: Lots of free lunches.

CHOKSI: Yes.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Lots of polos.

CHOKSI: One of my goals is to have a family come visit ASU and then I would help them out with START and then do a business master's info session and then give them an Honors College tour and just see them all day and say, if you want to see ASU, you gotta see me. But yeah, and then I also work on campus as a TA.

GERBIS: Oh, cool.

HOLDAWAY: Excellent.

RICE: I'm trying to think back. Really, I think Honors Devils was the main thing I was involved in. I did also take a number of the HON honors courses and those were two of my favorite, or those were some of my favorites, two that really stick out was, one was about life in the universe, like how it came to being. Another was cancer and like new treatments for cancer. So those were classes that, I mean, you just can't take them unless you're in The Honors College, and I had the opportunity to do that in a small setting. And for my thesis, it didn't really have anything to do with my undergrad degree, which was in biology. My thesis was in psychology. I'm not in engineering, so I didn't really relate to any of it, but it was a really unique experience, and I learned a lot about a field that I wouldn't have otherwise known much about.

HOLDAWAY: So, why did you all become Honors Devils?

RICE: Michelle, [unintelligible], but yeah, Michelle. I had a great visit. That was a part of it too. But actually, it was really my visit, which Michelle played a huge role in. But I stayed with an Honors Devil and I came at the very end of the year. So, they were actually doing their end of the year meeting and welcomed me as a prospective student to join them at Chili's, and it was a lot of fun. So, it was pretty, I wanted to get involved with something and it was a natural choice for me to get involved with Honors Devils.

SCHWARTZ: It was Sean Nonnenmacher. That's why I did it. I'm sure you'll be like, yeah. Sean would give the most incredible tours. Just like so excited to do anything. Michelle knows. And I didn't, I honestly knew nothing about Honors Devils, but Sean was a CA with me, and I would like see him giving these tours, having the time of his life with people and be like, what is he doing right? I don't even know who he's talking to, but I'm like, I want to do that. That looks like fun. And he was super connected with the community and had friends everywhere he went. I was like, I want that. That's a cool experience, so I think I was just trying to meet more people, and this seemed like a really good way to get in there and learn more about the community.

BARDALES: I knew when I was coming to Barrett as a freshman that I was going to want to be a tour guide for Barrett because I had such a great time on my visit day, and what had really stood out to me about my visit day was that I got to have lunch with a history major, and I double majored in history and anthropology. And none of the other schools that I went and visited

during my college search process made any effort to connect me with somebody who was in my prospective major. And so that just stood out to me as a really big thing. And so, after that day, I was like, okay, well, wherever I go to school, I'm going to be that history major for that one kid who wants to study history. So, a big part of it for me was like coming and I knew that I wanted to be able to help other people in smaller majors find people who they could connect with when they came to visit. That's awesome.

CHOKSI: I think the first reason was the free polo. That was kind of [unintelligible].

SCHWARTZ: Ooh, the free polo.

CHOKSI: But definitely just kind of sharing my love and passion for the school. And like I said, meeting with prospective families, like they have so many questions and I think the best way for them to learn is to meet like an actual student and talk to them. And so, the fact that ASU does such a good job of no matter what you want to study, like how Abbie was saying that they will have a student there who can share those experiences and kind of helping to be that student in that process.

GERBIS: So, I have a funny story about the polos. And if you were at the reunion last year, you heard this story, but when we first started Honors Devils, we wanted a way to identify ourselves for prospective students, but there was very little budget. There was zero budget, basically. And so, Dean Humphrey was able to find enough to buy 6 polos. And they were all double XLs. And they had the logo, which is a completely unauthorized logo, and you guys can never use it again, and we handed them off. So, if somebody had a visit that day where they were working with a student, they got a polo and they had to wear it over their regular shirt because I had to wash them at the end of the week. And sometimes you would be on a tour, and you'd have to hand it off to the next person. So, you'd ask the student to wait just a second. You'd go find the next person, you'd take the first shirt off and they'd put it on. So, you guys have the luxury of having your own polos with your names on them and everything. And we had community polos that it's, but it was, it identified us as the person they were looking for, so it worked.

HOLDAWAY: What was one of your like favorite stories that you have like as an Honors Devil? What was your favorite, one of your like, a moment that stands out to you?

GERBIS: I just really want to hear these.

SCHWARTZ: The best one I had was I gave a tour. Actually, I don't even remember the tour. I have no recollection of giving this tour. I know that I had given a tour to a student, for sure, because the student found me the next year. We were both living in the... in the dorms and the student found me and was like, oh my God, you're the person who gave this like incredible tour. And they were like, I didn't even want to go to ASU. Like I had no interest in coming and you gave this awesome tour and it was so good and you were so excited and like now I'm here. And I was just like, at the time I'm like, okay, you know, I was like with a group of friends, like, oh, it's so good to see you. I was like totally nice about it, but I feel like that's like a, that's a moment that

stays with you, know, like you did something that someone was so excited about that it maybe changed the course of how they were going to go about their life, so it was cool. It was really cool.

CHOKSI: Yeah, that's definitely the best feeling. And not just like the tours, but when you do like luncheons and some of the special events that we have, meeting with students, I think, I met with a girl who was from South America. And so I think I was asked to do it because I'm minoring in Spanish. And so, let's be real, a minor in Spanish, I'm not fluent. But I was trying my best to talk to her. And just realizing we had so many just random things in common. We both like to do yoga and a couple things like that. And we both wanted to study economics and we had all these things in common. Kind of realizing that Barrett has so many different opportunities and such a diverse population, but still, I could connect with her in broken Spanish over all of these things over one lunch in the dining hall. And so, it's the moments like that where you realize that Barrett really is or can be for anyone.

BARDALES: I would kind of echo that idea of like the best moments are when you find people who are just like you or have things in common with you, like I know I'm sure that we all have funny tour stories of like ridiculous things that happen, but the ones that like I think really stick with you for a long time are knowing like I gave a tour to this student who was from Colorado or a student who also wanted to study history. Like I was always extremely excited when I would get texts from Rita that were like, we have history major coming this week. And I was like, okay, I'm ready. I'm ready for it. So those days when you get to talk to a student who you can really connect with, those were always my favorite memories.

RICE: Yeah, I remember being impressed with a lot of the students. It definitely felt like the quality was getting better, actually, which is what you want to see. I mean, that means that they're going to be a little smarter than I am or my friends are, but it was cool to see Barrett grow. I was my freshman year, I was in the old dorms, not the McClintock one, but like the center complex. And as we moved over to the new dorms, you could really feel like the buzz and the excitement amongst the students that we were giving tours to, so it was fun to see.

GERBIS: I do actually have a story. I was having lunch with a friend of mine and she and I have been friends since she overnighted with me when she was touring The Honors College. And now she is a professor in Kentucky and she's back here doing research. And she's like, you know what, that night that I stayed with you, I thought you were the coolest person ever. And I was like, no one has ever thought I was the coolest person they've ever met. I'm like, I know I'm not the coolest person you've ever met. She's like, no, I thought you were like the best. I thought you were so cool. And I was like, wow, I had no idea. You know, it's that kind of thing where it's like you have this influence on somebody without even knowing it. And then later on, they're like, you changed my life. And it's really amazing to hear that from somebody.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, and I gave some good tours, but I definitely gave some bad tours. You know what I mean? Not every tour was my finest material. So, it's like, you know, you have good

days and you have bad days. And sometimes it's go really well and sometimes you're like, I probably could have gone better. But like, you know, to get that good feedback and have it been a standard thing, not something that stood out in your mind, is just a cool. You probably have some experience, yeah.

HOLDAWAY: So, what were some common events and duties that you had as an Honors Devil?

GERBIS: I think mine were different from yours, because you have to remember this is before everybody had e-mail. Only engineering majors had e-mail. And we didn't have smartphones and we didn't have text messages and stuff. So, the beginning of the semester, everybody filled out an index card that had their name and their major, what room they were in, and it had their class schedule on it. And so if I had a student coming to visit, I had to go through all of the index cards and find the person who was the right major or had the right schedule and try to put together like, okay, they're going to go to Human Event with this person, they're going to go lunch with this person, they're going to do this, and sort of work out the whole thing for the different people who came, and then go to their door and knock on it and say, I got somebody coming, here's a shirt. And then they would take the student around. So it was, the organization was a little bit different then than I think it probably is now.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, maybe a little. Yeah, I don't know, we had the weekly tour rotation. So, in some weeks you were slammed, in some weeks it wasn't too crazy. It was always fun to go to some of the other events. I know there were like awards receptions and things like that. I can't remember the specifics of them now. I feel like it's such a rush, but that was kind of cool. You get to see some new faces and mingle with some students who were doing like some exceptional work and some other kinds of fun things. What else did we do?

CHOKSI: We do a lot of lunch events in the dining hall, so that's always fun. And then the admitted student days or the Sun Devil days, for those students who know they want to come to ACU, that's kind of fun too, because they usually have questions and they're more interested, so that's good.

SCHWARTZ: Well, the big group tours with the admitted student days, right? Yeah, on the Saturday mornings, I remember some of those.

CHOKSI: And sometimes we have 4th graders come and they just want to see it. And so that's also fun when you have a lot younger students who have never heard of a dorm or something like that and they get to see the ping pong table. It excites everyone. And so doing, take- tours like that.

SCHWARTZ: I remember bringing, like when there were anthropology students or whatever major you have, students that would come in who were like freshmen and sophomores in high school. And they're like, oh yeah, I want to study anthropology. I want to do archaeology. And I'm like, man, I wish I had known that when I was a freshman in high school. Like, I just figured

this out. I'm a junior. That's so cool. You could really teach me some things about myself. So those were fun.

HOLDAWAY: What do you think is the biggest change you've seen in Barrett, The Honors College, throughout the years?

GERBIS: It's huge. I mean, that's really, it has grown so much. Not just the number of students, but the number of people who work there. Like having not only your own recruiter, but a whole recruiting team is just, it's- everything is so much bigger and everything is so much better organized. No, I don't want to say that because it wasn't like it was disorganized, but there's so much more support and there's so many more resources and everything. And I think that's good and bad. I think it's really nice for me to hear that even though it's grown, it's kept that sense of community and you guys always feel like you're supported and you feel like you have a place there and everything because I think that's the thing that you're afraid of when you watch something that you care about change, that it will lose the things that make it special. And I feel like Barrett has done a really good job of embracing growth and embracing new things without losing that sort of core of what it's about.

BARDALES: I think that we probably all experienced like different eras of change in Barrett's history. Like I know, for me, my freshman year was either the first or second year that Barrett had just started creeping into Vista. And then being in housing, I got to watch that expansion fully happen to the point where now we're at least close to 100%, if not all the way at 100%. And that was a really exciting change to watch and to be a part of to see the whole upperclassmen half of the on-campus Barrett experience really develop because being on campus was very important to me. And I loved being able to see that happen and come to fruition where we had a really solid upperclassmen Barrett community that could be all together over here at Vista.

GERBIS: And that's funny because I was talking to Dean Jacobs about the new building when they were building it in like 2008. And I said, you're never going to fill that whole building. I mean, we were talking about, okay, if it doesn't fill with honors students, maybe grad students would live there. I'm not sure anybody anticipated that not only would it fill the entire community that fast, but it would start to put tendrils out into other buildings and take over Vista. I don't think anybody could possibly imagine that. He was actually upset about Vista being built because he's like, they got a pool. They're going to pull our students away because they got a pool. And then it turns out you guys were like, all right, yeah, so we'll just colonize the pool. Now it's our pool. And I think that's been really fun to watch. Even just 10 years ago, I don't think anybody expected this to happen.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, I don't know. I saw the transition from center to the new honors college. And then, and it was, that was like, it was normal. I had seen that it was being constructed. I'm like, oh, this is great. The college is expanding. This is going to be a really nice space for it. But for some reason, the move to Vista was super strange for me. I'm like, oh man, they're going to

Vista? Like, how can this happen? So, but I mean, it's cool to see. I mean, it seems like the students are still really extraordinary students. So, it's good that they're making room for more.

HOLDAWAY: What do you think truly made your Barrett experience?

GERBIS: That's a good question.

RICE: I think it was the opportunities that came with being in Barrett. So, there were a few things that you had to do. But for me, it was really the doors that were opened by being in Barrett. And certainly, I could have done a better job of taking advantage of those. There were really a lot of opportunities. But I mentioned research a few times. I did enjoy doing my project and that while I don't want to do research for my whole life, it did make me realize it was something I was interested in and got me involved. I also had a lot of help from the scholarship office, and I ended up doing a Fulbright after graduating. And those were pretty 2 defining components, at least in my early to mid 20s of my personal development. And I don't think I would have done either of those if it wasn't for Barrett.

GERBIS: For me, it's the people that are in my life, that were in my life when I was here and are still in my life, and my best friend is still one of the people I was roommates with. My husband is someone that I knew when I was in The Honors College, although I didn't date him at the time. My best friends, all the people that I'm with all the time, they're still people that I knew when I was here. And even though I moved away and came back, like those bonds stayed and we're still a strong community. And there's also, this is going to be sad, so just forgive me, Michael Cochise Young was the assistant dean when I was here, and I had the opportunity to work for her when I worked for the Flinn Foundation. And she has since passed, unfortunately, but she was at my wedding, and I was very excited. And I had a moment when I was working as the assistant director of the honors program at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. And I had all these students coming up to me at their graduation saying, you made such a difference for me. They were like introducing me to their parents. And they were saying, I got into grad school because of her. I did this because of her. And I realized at that point that all I wanted was to be Michael for someone and to have the same kind of influence on someone that she had on me. And I was able to tell her that. And just to be able to say, I just realize that you did this for me and now I'm doing it for other people, and those people are going to make a difference for other people and it's going to be this unbroken chain of her influence making so many people's lives better. And so, I feel like that's the thing that I get the most from my experience and honors is taking what I learned from the people around me and making things better for other people.

HOLDAWAY: Very well said.

GERBIS: I mean, it's just, it was a really fundamental kind of moment for me.

SCHWARTZ: I think just to follow that up, the people is a really big one for me too. I'm still friends with a lot of honors college students. Spend a lot of time with them, people I love most of my life. And yeah, and I think none of that would have happened if I hadn't lived in the dorms

and been here and on campus and in the honors program. Really helped me find, personally find a community of people that I wanted to be around, I want to spend time around, help me get out of the country and do an internship somewhere that wasn't in the US and kind of get attention from some professors that encouraged me then to go to grad school and do that. But it also helped me to hang out in Michelle's office for like a couple hours on a Friday afternoon and be there hanging out with people and having fun and feeling like I was like a really important part of the community, not just the faculty, not, but also the staff. Like when you're part of the friends of the staff, like what's going on, and you get to show those experiences and meet new people. So, I feel like people are really open in the Honors College. It's a great thing.

GERBIS: Yeah, they create that safe space for you to kind of push yourself out of your comfort zone and know that if you do fall, somebody's back there. Yeah, that's exactly right. But if you don't, you've done something you never expected.

BARDALES: I'll echo it again. The people are the biggest thing by far. I mean, I'm currently living in Denver, Colorado, and I happen to be here right now for homecoming weekend because as I was thinking about it, I was like, yes, I'm coming back because I want to go to a football game and like have a fun ASU experience again, but a lot of what I'm coming back for is to be able to see people. My afternoon today is spent going around and seeing friends, professors, staff members, people who I got to interact with for the last four years. And I think the fact that I still feel so drawn to be here and to see those people speaks a lot to what my Barrett experience was and what those relationships formed were. And I think that down the road five years from now, I'm still going to feel the same way. I'm still going to want to be able to interact with those same people because what Barrett is, that community and those relationships and the experience that you have.

CHOKSI: I- sorry.

GERBIS: Sorry, do you know Peg Perl?

BARDALES: Yes, of course.

GERBIS: So, he's also a former Honors Devil. So, it's even across the years, those relationships, just from being part of this organization.

CHOKSI: Yeah. I was just going to highlight that also it's the culture that Barrett creates and that kind of fostering that sense of success, but also in a non-competitive way. And I think because all the students at Barrett are so successful and so, you know, accomplished in so many things and have all these ambitions, but we're never pitted against each other. We're never thought like, oh, well, I shouldn't apply for this or tell my friend about this because they're going to take a spot away from me. So really kind of getting that mindset of collaboration and community is such a big hallmark of Barrett. And I think that's why we have so many opportunities and why we just keep those relationships forever, because even if someone else got

the internship that I wanted, I never feel bad or resentful because Barrett tells you about all these different opportunities. There's always something out there for you.

GERBIS: That's one of my funny tour stories, actually, is we had a student come and we brought him to lunch with the dean. And so, everybody was there and we were talking and he's, we're like, hey, do you have any questions for us? And he said, what are all of your SAT scores? And it just went dead silent. Like he had just dropped a stink bomb or something and was like, we don't talk about that. I'm like, that is, I know you're in high school right now, but yeah, you leave that behind.

HOLDAWAY: What were some memorable events you attended while you were here?

SCHWARTZ: Like as an Honors Devil or just, more generally?

HOLDAWAY: Just as a Barrett student.

SCHWARTZ: Oh my gosh, okay. Well, no, I just had a...

GERBIS: He's ready.

SCHWARTZ: Michelle's- the hot dog eating contest. Yeah, that was pretty bad. We had like a, well it was like a group hot dog eating contest, right? I know my team won it because I was pounding those hot dogs. No, I would, what I was gonna say, that was, well, that was an extraordinary experience. I don't think I've eaten a hot dog since then, but no, I had- I was taking a buried cities and lost tribes class, and it was Laura Popova taught it, who I still am in contact with. She's awesome. Yeah, she's really cool.

GERBIS: A really classic class.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah. But she was out for the week, and Peggy Nelson was teaching the class. This was like my first, I don't even think I'd switched to being an anthropology major. I just was like, I'm interested in anthropology. It's my junior year, and I changed my major six times. It's whatever. I'll figure it out. But Peggy Nelson's teaching the class, and I have this class session where I'm like talking a lot, and I'm like, oh, maybe I should talk a little bit less. At some point, Peggy was like, Chris, can I talk to you after class? And I'm like, oh man, what did I do? Like, I'm in trouble. This is terrible. And so, I go and talk to her after class and she's like, what are you, you know, what are you doing with your life? What are you doing when you graduate? And I'm like, I don't know, I just started getting interested in archaeology, anthropology. And she's like, well, have you done field school? Are you doing this? Are you doing this? And I think she was just like, I was really excited in the class. And she pulled me after and she's like, well, you've got to come do some field work if you want to be an archaeologist. And I was like, I haven't even thought about being an archaeologist, but I guess this is what I should think about right now. I'm a junior. And I think if she hadn't like picked me out and made me talk to her after class about this, I was supposed to go work that same summer with her on a project in the Mimbres region of New Mexico. But I ended up doing a totally different thing through the Community of

Undergraduate Research Scholars class that she taught, and so it ended up great. But I think if she hadn't pulled me aside and been like, what are you doing with your life? I probably might still be asking, what am I doing with my life? So that was cool.

GERBIS: That was cool. She taught my ASU 101 class, yeah. I was a social anthropology major, and she still remembered me. Like after all this time, I was like, oh wow, congratulations. You know, you're in the honors college now. And she's like, Ivy, you did this great project for my class. And I was like, oh my God. And that's just what she's like. Yeah, she's really cool. I went to my first opera as part of The Honors College, and that was super exciting. I actually, now I really love opera. And I used to, when I worked in Wisconsin, we organized a trip to take our students to Minneapolis to see an opera once a year. And so, I got a chance to share that with people, so that was really exciting. And then I got to meet all kinds of people. Barry Goldwater came to lunch with the dean a couple of times. We got to meet him. And there's always just really interesting people around. And they're bringing lecturers in, and if you have the chance to meet and talk to people, that's just really cool. I had a chance to do a lot of cool stuff like that.

CHOKSI: Yeah, definitely the Centennial Lectures and things like that. I was part of CLAS my sophomore year, and so we would help organize those events, and that was really fun. And then, like you said, like I think it was former Senator John Kyle who came with a lunch with the dean, and they have students that get to talk to him and hang out. And it's a very casual environment, and I think that just is such a cool opportunity for students.

BARDALES: Kind of echoing that, I know I took a class my sophomore year at Barrett. It was an honors section on the history of the US presidency. It was like the coolest class in the world, just in general. But over the course of that class, our class was filmed for C-SPAN one day, which was really cool. And then at another point, John Dean, who was one of the people most directly involved in the Watergate scandals, was coming to Barrett. And so, our class got to have dinner with him and was like, ask him questions and have a conversation with him. And it's all of those like, little things where it's just like, that was just one day in my life, but that was a really incredible thing to get to do. And it was all because those are the connections that Barrett makes for you.

RICE: I too remember going to some interesting lectures, both through Barrett and also just that would be in the greater ASU, but they would be advertised heavily in Barrett, so you'd definitely come across the flyers. This is a bit of a loose interpretation of the question, but it made me think of a life event for me, which is I met my fiancée in the Barrett dining hall. So that is why we'll always have a place in our relationship, Barrett. So, we kind of joke about that sometimes, but it's true. That's where we're met.

GERBIS: And then there's the social things too, the experiences that you have. There was one- it was one night, it was during finals, and you woke up in the morning and the whole sand volleyball court had been transformed into a kingdom. And there were like sandcastles and they had dug out a river and lined it with plastic so that water was in it. And just over the course of

finals, more buildings just popped up. Like nobody played volleyball and everybody just kept building more stuff. And so, you would go out every day and there'd just be more stuff in the sand volleyball court. And that just makes you, it takes some of the stress off to just know that there are these creative, interesting things going on. Even if you don't know what they are, like they're happening all around you. Not that I had anything to do with it.

HOLDAWAY: What do you think is the best thing that you took away from Barrett?

GERBIS: Well, our spouses, apparently.

SCHWARTZ: That's pretty good. I didn't get that. Come on.

RICE: That's definitely my answer. Even if it wasn't my answer, that would be my answer. Yeah, I mean, I think, yeah, my fiancée, some really good friends. I'm meeting, I'm actually meeting up with a friend tonight who I was actually roommates with one year in Barrett. So yeah, I think it's really the people and the relationships. Like, and even just here, like seeing Chris, like man, I can't remember the last time I saw you.

SCHWARTZ: God, it's been ages, yeah.

RICE: I was like, oh that looks like Chris. Like seeing Michelle every once in a while, like, yeah, it's really, I think that is probably the biggest advantage of Barrett's size. It's big enough where there's someone for everyone, but it's also small enough where it has that smaller community and it's not too hard to strike up a conversation with a stranger.

SCHWARTZ: I would also say like a willingness to give back to the community or to anyone who wants, kind of what you were saying earlier, but just to be, open to bringing new people into your community, I think is a big thing that I, as someone who was searching for like a group of people like that, now, I'm like still happy, obviously, to talk to honors students. I don't think they're as interested now that I'm a graduate student and like, but if a potential student wanted to talk, I'd be happy to tell them about the anthropology program and give them a tour. And then to treat other people that same way, to be inclusive, to invite people to come do things with you and your friends or your colleagues. I think that's a big part of what it is, and especially a big part of what Honors Devils was, for sure.

CHOKSI: And also I think that like genuine love for learning, I think a lot of other students have, which really starts, I would say, for me, it started with The Human Event. Like maybe this isn't your major, but we genuinely want you to care about these different issues and taking that, not just for your four years, but going forward, no matter what you're doing. Or if you change your mind, change your major, change your career, you genuinely want to learn something new. And I think Barrett students all kind of fall under that umbrella.

BARDALES: I think, again, the people and the relationships are the biggest takeaway for me, because those are something that I'll have for the whole rest of my life, all of the relationships that I make here at Barrett. I think that Barrett also does a lot just to prepare you for whatever

you're going to be doing in the future. I think that Barrett did a lot in terms of the extracurriculars I was involved in to prepare me for future life. And then academically, Barrett makes sure that you're ready, like you're not just taking honors classes to have more academic rigor, to read more, like there's a very clear purpose to what you're doing and the things you're doing for Barrett in those honors classes, and they're meant to prepare you to go forward. Like I know for a lot of people writing a thesis or their creative project is the next step into grad school. For me, it was more of like just a passion project, but something that I feel like has prepared me to still have academic conversations and to be able to talk to people about those kinds of things, so Barrett, I think, gives you all the relationships and very literally prepares you for your future.

HOLDAWAY: So, Doug, when you met your fiancée, did you just start talking to her at the dining hall or play some game?

RICE: It's kind of a funny story, actually. I'll try not to give too long of a version, but she actually came up and struck a conversation up with me. And just, as like a total idiot, I thought she, I was wearing a shirt that said Dayton, which is where she was born, and my parents went to school there. And so, she's like, are you from Dayton? And I was just like, oh, no, but my parents went to school there, and I just went back to my meal with my friend, and that was in the dining hall. And then a year later, it was like midnight or something, finals week. And I'd just been like studying in the dining hall after class. And I saw this gorgeous woman walk in and I was like looking at her. And then she saw me and I was like, oh my God, I was totally staring, that was really bad. And then I looked up and she was still smiling at me. And I was like, okay, so, and then I saw her again like a week later, and then we started talking. And probably like a year later, she recognized me, but it wasn't until like six months later or something that she was like, oh I think I maybe met you one time. And now she's like, yeah, I totally knew who you were that whole time. It really was in the dining hall that we met like several times. So yeah.

HOLDAWAY: It's so funny. How did you and your husband meet?

GERBIS: Mine is a worse story, I was dating his roommate. We were sort of like the Three Musketeers. Like we did everything together and we had all the same friend group and everything. So, the first relationship obviously didn't work out after I graduated from college, and it was much later. We had just remained friends and we were both single at the same time and we decided to see if it would work. And we hid it from all the rest of our friends in case it didn't, because we didn't want anything to get weird. Yeah, and then we ended up, we ended up getting married.

HOLDAWAY: Where do you see Barrett in 10 years?

CHOKSI: More buildings for sure.

RICE: That seems like a safe bet.

SCHWARTZ: Definitely more buildings.

GERBIS: The whole Tempe campus will be Barrett. Everybody else gets shoved off to like the other campuses. I don't know. I mean, I hope, whatever it is, I hope it'll have the same core to it. I see students are changing and students are more and more involved now with so many things and there's so many demands on their time. And I hope that this will continue to create a community where people come together and do things in person and create that kind of community of support and everything because I think we need it in a world where there's so much demanding our time all the time. It's important to have something that you can go back to and be like, yeah, we stayed up until two in the morning talking about whether Die Hard is a Christmas movie or not, like, these are important conversations that you need to have with people. And those are the kinds of things that I think build those relationships, and so as long as that keeps happening, I think it'll stay strong. Yeah.

RICE: I see Barrett as a good model for how to prepare students for the future. Like when I think of very future oriented technologies or industries. I see a lot of Barrett students in there, while still maintaining this component of a liberal arts education. As you said, everyone takes a human event. Like you still get that foundational education that I think maybe some people that go straight into tech or these more sort of advanced industry type things, there's no, they don't see any reason to bother with that, but Barrett forces you to do that or offers the opportunity depending on where you're at as an 18 year old. But I think that's a really good thing and that I would think Barrett would continue to lead in that sense of providing those opportunities while also maintaining that liberal arts background.

SCHWARTZ: I mean, I was just going to say I hope it doesn't change too much. I think that's exactly what Abbie said, but I, hope it kind of, I think, I hope it retains the same sense of community despite what is probably a very likely growth in size. But yeah, I hope it maintains the same community. I hope it maintains the same values. The Human Event was simultaneously one of the most painful and engaging experiences I've had as a person, I think. So, I mean, I hope it doesn't change too much.

HOLDAWAY: Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences and your stories. Is there any other stories or just personal things that you would like to add at all?

GERBIS: Well there are so many stories.

SCHWARTZ: I know, I'm like, well...

GERBIS: I probably shouldn't tell all of them on camera.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, right.

CHOKSI: I just think that Barrett offers so much to its students and has provided so many opportunities that I think us as Honors Devils and former Honors Devils, it's like the least we can do is to give back and do tours and talk about things like this and talk about how much we love

the college because it really has shaped our future and our lives. And so, if I can take an hour of my day and help someone else join Barrett, then I would love to do that.

GERBIS: I think what characterizes people in Barrett is you start things, right? Like you see a need and you're like, you don't wait for somebody else to do it. You just do it. And so, you know, that's how I started Honors Devils. And that's how my friend Brent started Sparky's Buddies. And that's how somebody else started Blast. And that's how... So, we were always the ones who were looking for a place to do something. And that, I think, is really also essential to the core of what Barrett is all about, is people seeing a need in the world or in their community or in Barrett and saying, I can do something about that and actually doing it.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, I don't think any of us would give tours of somewhere or a place that we didn't really believe in, right? Like, that wouldn't make any sense, so I think it's a testament to Barrett that Ivy just saw this demand and was like, wow, we need this. And that it's kept going for so long. And that people are happy to do it, right? That it's still something we enjoy talking about and thinking about.

CHOKSI: I mean, it's competitive to be a tour guide.

SCHWARTZ: That's exactly right.

GERBIS: That's true.

SCHWARTZ: We're pretty excellent.

CHOKSI: It says a lot.

GERBIS: That floored me when I found that out. Especially when I was just like, wait, people compete to be an Honors Devil?

SCHWARTZ: You don't just put shirts on them?

GERBIS: We had this whole like idea, we were this sort of loose collective, like we didn't have officers, we had a panel of chair people and all this. We had an executive committee instead of having officers. Like we were very much like we want to be the most egalitarian sort of organization that we can. And so, but then still, there's certain people who end up doing the work. But it is, it's to see that it has grown and that it's so important that people come back with their memories and stuff is just so cool. It makes me feel like I have a legacy here, no matter what else I do, that all these happy Honors Devils.

HOLDAWAY: Awesome. Joshua, did you have any follow-up questions?

PARDHE: No.

HOLDAWAY: Well, thank you so much for your time.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Thank you guys, you guys were so professional.

UNKNOWN: I actually have one favor I need to ask from you guys, and I need you guys to record audio for this. For our Innovation Day, we need...

GERBIS: Uh oh, we need to say specific things.

UNKNOWN: Yes.

SCHWARTZ: Oh, no.

PARDHE: All I need is, since there's two guys, I need two guys and two girls, and you guys can volunteer between the three of you. We're kind of using as the pillars of our video for Innovation Day is, because we're highlighting the 30th anniversary of Barrett and everything. We are kind of building it around Barrett is innovative, Barrett is community, Barrett is excellence, Barrett is global. So, what I need is for one of you, for like you to say Barrett is innovative, and kind of speaking right into the mic. And we're going to kind of use that at your voice over a graphic that we're putting. So, I just need you guys to record this, and that's a whole tape from you guys.

SCHWARTZ: Can I say innovative?

PARDHE: Barrett is innovative, yeah. And we will, we're not going to necessarily care, so we want it as clear and speak into the mic. Say it with authority, not like "Barrett is innovative?"

SCHWARTZ: Barrett is innovative.

PARDHE: Yeah, and we can do a couple of takes. Are they recording?

GERBIS: Do it really like super philosophical.