

TRANSCRIPT

SCRC Series: Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project – MC 00191

Field Notes: David T. Swanson (compiled November 2, 2008)

Interviewee: DAVID T. (“DAVID”) SWANSON

Interviewer: Yona R. Owens

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Length: Approximately 53 minutes

This interview for the Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project was conducted at Lewis Clarke’s studio. David Swanson was born in Beirut, Lebanon. His family moved back to North Carolina when he was a small boy. His first interest was in planning and city management, but eventually he settled on landscape architecture and graduated in 1983 with an MLA from North Carolina State University School (now College) of Design. Swanson worked at Lewis Clarke Associates (LCA) when the first master plan for the N.C. Zoo was developed as well as during the Fayetteville Street Mall Project in Raleigh, N.C. In 1988, Swanson founded his own firm, Swanson and Associates, PA. In addition to his practice located in Carrboro, Swanson has been an adjunct professor at NCSU and is teaching site planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

YO: Okay, this is an oral history interview with David Swanson on Thursday, October the thirtieth, 2008 at Lewis Clarke’s studio in Raleigh, North Carolina. Hi, David.

DS: Hi, how you are you?

YO: Fine, thanks. I’d like to start off with our standard first question, tell me a little bit about where you’re from and how you got interested in landscape architecture?

DS: I am currently living in Chapel Hill and I’ve been in North Carolina since 1965. I was born in and raised in Beirut, Lebanon. My family lived there for ten years and my father essentially retired to Chapel Hill. So, I was a boy of ten years old and grew up in the Triangle area or the Chapel Hill side of the Triangle and went through the Chapel Hill school systems. My college years were actually spent at Saint Andrews College in Laurinburg, North Carolina. And we’ll come back to that in a little bit because that was one of the first campuses that Lewis designed as I found out later.

So, at that time I didn’t know much about the profession of landscape architecture. My background in my college years was in environmental sciences or environmental studies and political science and it sort of was nudging me toward planning, the planning end of the profession and I didn’t even know much about that. So I worked as a town planner for three years in the southeastern part of North Carolina as my first professional job and, just out of circumstances, was sort of ending up in a more of a city management role just because of the small town you ended up wearing all different hats. I did that for three years and planning even though we were so small we didn’t really have much to plan. It was a very, very small town but as I was making my career choices about what I wanted to do, I took a stab at the professional

career discovery that they had at Harvard University. It's a good program. I did that for a summer mostly just to learn about what landscape architecture was about and at that point I had a choice to make. I was deciding whether I wanted to go into a career of city planning or city management, to be a city manager or to go in the profession of landscape architecture. So, took a trip. It was actually a pretty easy choice to make and decided to go into landscape architecture. Went to NC State.

YO: What year was that?

DS: That was in 1980 so however many twenty, twenty eight years ago. I can't believe it. [Laughs] So, my first year—and this is what's going to make the full circle here—we took studios, and it was my first or second year—

YO: Was that a four year program or a three year program?

DS: Three year program and so I graduated in 1983. I should give you that background and then I want to kind of make it sequential. So, let me before I go through my later years—it was actually in the early studios where I met Dean Kamphoefner. He would come in. He wasn't affiliated with the school at that time. He had retired, but Dean Kamphoefner—his little office was right in our studio—and he would sort of drift in and do his little whatever he did, piddling around, and then he would drift out. And then occasionally we would interface with him some, but that was my essential interaction with, with the Dean, former dean.

That was interesting times and it was actually during my—I think it was my second or third semester—Lewis was on sabbatical. I'm sorry, somebody else was on sabbatical and they asked Lewis to come in to do some teaching. And he and Dr. John Reuer, I assume those who are listening to this would, would know John Reuer's name. He was an architecture professor at NC State. He has since passed away, but John Reuer and Lewis team taught a studio and I was in that studio and that's how I got to know Lewis initially.

So, to tell the story here, during the course of that semester I asked Lewis if he took on summer or, excuse me, interns or help, you know office help, and he did. So I was able to get my first professional job working in a landscape architecture office working for Lewis while I was in school. So, that was actually my first year and I did that for two years. I was working with Lewis while I was in school. I worked about twenty hours a week and mostly doing models and things. In fact, I'll come back to that a little bit when I start talking about the professional career. So, I graduated in 1983 with a master's in landscape architecture and continued working with Lewis for two years.

YO: Where was the office located at that time?

DS: We were at the Koger Center when I was interning there and I think about that time is when he moved to this location at Glen Eden. Our staff at that time was really small. Of course as you know he had a much larger staff back in the early days.

YO: Do you remember who was on staff then?

DS: I do. Joel Moulin has gone on to other professional careers. In fact, I saw him not long ago. We saw him at the ASLA meeting in New Bern recently. And Susan Suggs was on staff. Susan is still active in the profession. She's down in Beaufort. She has been working for the Town of Beaufort and then I think just recently is working for herself in private practice. Maureen Ritchie left the area and I've continued to stay friends with her and she's moved to Connecticut. Maureen was an excellent landscape architect and there were others. There was the office manager at the time, this was even before Nigel came, was Quinn Tart I want to say.

YO: Yeah.

DS: I remember Quinn because I worked a lot with Quinn directly and I remember some very fond memories of Quinn and actually my, one of my first jobs was building this big model. We'd build it out of chipboard—the cardboard material. Even though Quinn was the office manager, like everything you wear different hats, he would come in and help on the model. This was a very large model. It was quite complicated.

YO: Do you remember what project it was for?

DS: I do. It was Linville Ridge.

YO: Ah.

DS: It's basically a mountain so the model we were building was six feet long by three and a half feet and it was a mountain. So the level of contours that we were carving out was all done by hand. We had to do the natural contours, which of course is all the contours of the mountain as well as the road configurations that we had designed and the golf course and all the rest of it.

It was all done by hand and done out of this chipboard. We had one piece of chipboard and then we'd lay it on top of the other and so on and so forth and it got to be very large, very incredibly heavy. Well, anyway during the middle of that poor Quinn sliced his fingers. I'll never forget that because the matte knife we were using, it just went right across his fingers and—

YO: Oh, no.

DS: —that was one of those events that we—

YO: It was danger in the trade.

DS: —danger exactly, yeah, exactly. So anyway, I want to lose track. I want to finish my little career just so you can kind of wrap that part up. So, I worked there for four years ultimately with Lewis and that was essentially my tenure although I've continued to stay in relationship with Lewis on occasion and certainly with Nigel.

Then, I worked for what at the time was known as Hunter, Reynolds, and Jewell. Sam Reynolds was the principal in charge and still now it's known as Reynolds Jewell. Sam interestingly enough also worked with Lewis and as we'll talk in a few minutes. A lot of the firms that are established in the, I'll say the Triangle area but really throughout, either worked

with Lewis Clarke or Dick Bell. You know that's typically where they would start, get their early years and I was one of those and Sam was in the generation before me.

But anyway they hired me as a project manager and I worked there for four years and that was through 1988 and so exactly twenty years ago I left there and I opened up my own little shop in Chapel Hill. I've been basically working for myself for twenty years as a landscape architecture firm. I won't go into all the details of my professional career there, but it's been a very success. We're a small firm, but it's a successful firm. A large part attributed to the experiences I had in places like here.

Golly, so it's now 2008. So, twenty years later, like a lot of us, I have extracurricular activities in the profession. I've been active in the ASLA and active as the chair of the Alumni Advisory Board for NC State. And then just this past year Nigel Clarke has taken my position. So that's kind of a nice little segue as well. I did that for I think two or four, two or three years and then I've been on that alumni group for six or eight years. Seems like a long time. So, I'm still active in the School.

YO: Are you teaching a course there?

DS: I've taught courses there over the years as an adjunct professor and I'm currently teaching at UNC. So I'm not making the trip over here, but I'm teaching site planning over at Carolina. So anyway, that's my kind of a summary of my professional career and then to also let you know that I am active in other landscape architecture activities and to some degree teaching.

YO: Not retired by any means?

DS: Oh, my gosh, no. No, I'm not, hopefully, old enough to. So, let me talk a little bit about Lewis and I assume that's where you want, do you have other questions?

YO: No, please go ahead.

DS: Or that was your question, okay. So you know, it's interesting how when I describe my track through Lewis' office and then how people like myself started their own firms or even worked at other firms that had some affiliation with Lewis' office, I also often times remember Lewis himself saying that he was sort of like a kindergarten. His office was like a little kindergarten because he was essentially young, right out of school, I say kids, but you know they're young professionals in school or right out of school. They got their experience, they basically cut their teeth, learning from Lewis and getting exposure with the wonderful jobs that he had at the time. Like a lot of offices, you work there for whatever period of time and then go off and do their own thing either establishing their own firm or working at another office.

But I would say a great majority of the people, I could start listing other names, but a lot of folks have gotten their experiences here. I remember years before I was here, his office as I understand it was thirty people, thirty, forty people. I mean, it was much larger back in the seventies and they had the airplane, all that sort of thing that other people can tell you about. That was not my generation.

But I will want to come back to say that when I was there he had scaled back the firm way back to a really pretty small. As I was saying, it was just as Quinn as the office manager and Joel, and Susan, and Maureen, and then there may have been another student or two at the time

as well, but that's just a handful of five or six people. And I felt honored, but it was a real mentor to have Lewis. Joel was a project manager, more senior landscape architect, he interfaced with Lewis somewhat, but he had his own projects. Oh, and of course let me stop a moment. I left out a very important person of Lewis' office which was Wayne McBride and he was the principal with Lewis. They were partners. I failed to mention that, but that was the office at the time.

So, Joel and, and Wayne were primarily doing—

YO: That's Joel who?

DS: Joel Moulin.

YO: Oh, Moulin.

DS: —the person I mentioned before. He was sort of one of the senior landscape architects and, and then Wayne was the principal and he had his own projects and then Lewis had his own projects. And I came along at a time, it wasn't just me but people like me, where I would be sort of like Lewis' right hand man. So, Lewis would come up with the designs and essentially I'd be a draftsman to draw it up. And you know you can't ask for a better way to learn. So, that was a wonderful opportunity to learn both from a design standpoint but as well as all the drawing up, the drafting skills and things that we'd need to learn as we go through our professional careers.

And what an honor to get a chance to work with Lewis in that respect. I can think of some projects now—a lot of them. At the time he was doing the big resort communities and then master land planning, and we did Carolina Trace, and a lot of the Linville projects and I got involved in a lot of the ones down in the Pinehurst area as well as I got a little bit involved with the ones down in the Hilton Head Island area. Those were happening in the early seventies and mid seventies.

My interface with Lewis was he would primarily work out designs and I would tag along as young in school or right out of school kind of person. He would have me meet the clients and then he'd basically do a yellow trash drawing or a study and then hand it over to me and whoever else was in the office to work out the little details. We would kind of take it to that next level and then when presentations and so on either Lewis and or Wayne would be the one to present these things to the clients.

So, it was great. It was wonderful, wonderful times. I think the earlier times when the office was larger they probably had much more structure business-wise than when I was there because it was very casual when we were there. It was and maybe others can speak of another generation before me, but we didn't worry about all the business stuff too much. It was mostly just pleasure and joy of doing good design and working with our clients and so on. So it was great at that early stage in my career and certainly to get to interface with Lewis a little bit.

And I don't know what other questions you have, but I want to make sure I get a little bit about that Saint Andrews experience because—

YO: Sure, I was going to ask you if you could remember some more projects?

DS: Okay, well, this is actually one I didn't work on, but it's one that sort of came back to me and I wanted to speak a little bit about it, is the Saint Andrews College. I think you know when I think of Lewis and the legacy that he's left our profession and the State of North Carolina and

really this whole southeast region, there's several notable projects that I think ought to be highlighted. That's certainly one of them, Saint Andrews. And primarily this happened way before my time in 1959, as I recall. 1958 is when he was going through the design process and I don't know all the details but the college, as was happening at that time, there was an explosion of educational facilities. Educational and academic communities and because of the bulging population boom and there was that generation coming out and there was just this, this explosion of new campuses.

So, Lewis was incredibly active in both community colleges and he was designing so many of the community colleges in the State of North Carolina as well as this master plan for the Saint Andrews College. At that time there weren't that many master plans that were done for new colleges, new, whole brand new campuses. And so, I remember him telling me specifically and, in fact, let me back up and say, even tell you how this came to play or how he was telling me this story.

Of course as I said earlier, I went to Saint Andrews and then later on I was asked to help with some work at Saint Andrews and I said, well, gosh, let me introduce you to the person that designed it to Lewis who, who actually laid out the campus. So, I actually had the vice president of the college, he's now the president of the college, but I had the vice president come up meet right here in the office. In fact, we sat in this very room, Paul Baldasare, and Lewis was kind of enough to take some time and this is only about six years ago. Maybe six, seven years ago, he pulled out all the master plan drawings of the college and he went way back in the room and pulled out the drawings, laid them out all on the table.

We took almost a whole afternoon, in fact after all of it, we went out for dinner and it was so nice. It was a wonderful evening, but Lewis basically described the whole process and it was these things need to be recorded. I mean to have Lewis tell you the story of how that community, how that college was conceived, I think he was telling the founding fathers of the college at the time, they were going to essentially strip it along the highway. You know it was just the practical thing to do. They would take the college buildings and go along the state highway there and build the new buildings. They hired Odell Associates out of Charlotte to design the buildings and it was Lewis', maybe others, but it was through his creativity and his foresight that he said, no, we need to create a new campus. We were going to make an academic campus on this side where all the buildings, the science building, the library and all the academia and those kind of facilities would be on this side and he created this wonderful lake, which was the center piece of the whole campus, Lake Ansley C. Moore as it's known now.

But then on the other side of the lake, which was where all the dormitories were and the cafeteria and the living areas, the community sort of communal spaces of the campus and with this wonderful pedestrian connection in between. And so, it's really just a different concept. Nothing was like that ever done at the time and so, I mean that was really through Lewis'—I mean that was cutting edge back in the late '50s when you think about it. And then you know they built it all at once. It's showing its age now, which is why they're having to renovate and do some things. I mean this is been whatever six, fifty five years, sixty years ago. But anyway I thought that was an interesting story and it was such a wonderful thing to have the college vice president come up and meet Lewis and hear that history.

There's so many other projects that the one's that the office did that I that I personally was involved with that wasn't necessarily through Lewis—the Elon College projects. That was mostly Wayne McBride's work and that was mostly his clients. The ones that I was involved with that was of a land planning side of was the clients called the Fords. Well, they were the

Ford family. Not the Ford of the Ford automobile but that was their name and they had one that was in Kiawah, Kiwi, Kiwi [Keowee Key] which is near Lake Lanier in Georgia, in actually South Carolina, I should say. And it was large golf course land planning resort kind of community and I worked on that one and that was interesting to see the interface between the clients and Lewis and how he worked with them. And then that same client had another one in the Williamsburg area called, I think it was actually called Ford's Colony which is all built now. I mean these are twenty five years old.

YO: Do you remember how many how many acres?

DS: Oh, I would have to think they were probably either fifteen hundred acres or well over a thousand acres.

YO: So, not small projects?

DS: Oh, not small projects at all. No, these are very large. And, the Keowee Island had a very large lake in it. It was around Lake Lanier I think, which is a very large lake in, I guess, South Carolina. But yeah, the projects—and now the ones down in Pinehurst we did one in Pinehurst which gosh, what an honor for a young, right out of school kid to get the opportunity to work with Robert Trent Jones, which is a golf course architect. For anyone listening and, and knows the big name players, Robert Trent Jones himself came to this very office and sat at that very table at the end of the—it was a big working space table and it was just me and Lewis and, and Robert Trent Jones.

YO: Wow.

DS: This is the senior guy, I mean the older guy, and he's the one that designed some of the most notable golf courses in the country.

YO: Was the project you were working Carolina Trace?

DS: Ah, that might have been one of the Carolina Trace projects—was, I think—a Robert Trent Jones course. And then he, I think this particular project was called, Pinehurst International and I don't think it was built. I think it was one of the ones that was master planned in somewhat of a speculative way. I don't remember the circumstances of the how it was, but it was—also whoever the client and I don't even remember the client to be honest with you, but the client probably assembled all the properties and hired Lewis for the master planning and Robert Trent Jones for the golf course architecture and laid it all out.

To be honest with you I don't remember the details after that, but I don't think that one was—something was built there and I don't remember because it was incredibly—it was right off the circle in downtown Pinehurst. You know, the main circle, so in obviously a very prominent location.

Another project I wanted to mention that is a much smaller scale, Lewis worked on it for years and years and years before I was there, was Elizabethan Gardens down in Manteo. I think he's had a long term relationship with the gardens and I imagine he was involved in laying out some aspects of it. I don't even remember, but they asked him like a lot of our current

professional status that now you get called in later on to help with some such and such to help out. So, they called. What happened is, I think, it was Queen Elizabeth herself—oh, gosh I won't remember the whole story—but Queen Elizabeth herself either gave, not her personally but her body if you will the, the royalty, gave to the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo a little structure and it was going to be dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. I hope I'm saying this right. And Lewis was asked to draw a sketch and so, this was one of those when I was a student still, and he'd just do it on trash paper and then I think I actually help draw the perspective—got the perspective right. I think that was my job to help, I think I helped render it because Lewis had a very interesting rendering style. I'm looking up at some of the, these are his pictures, but some of those other artwork is a very, his own unique style.

Another little fun thing that I remember, I personally helped him with. He made little Christmas cards and he did them of sailboats not unlike the one you see here and he created this little sailboat. We would turn that into a sepia paper and then I think Quinn and myself, we turned it into Christmas cards for Lewis. So that was fun.

YO: So you worked very closely with—

DS: Very close, I did. I don't know what other questions you have but what a significant and maybe that needs to—maybe we need to start talking about that, the significance he had to both individual people, people like myself, young people in the early parts of their profession, and to both the people he taught. I mean you know he taught I mean I guess other people and hopefully in your oral histories you've gotten the background of his history. I know a little bit of it. I don't know everything, but I know he started teaching in 1952, I believe.

It was interesting, I remember, him telling the story and maybe this is my interpretation of it, but he was at Harvard and he could have gone anywhere. In fact, Royston and a lot of the other and oh, what's the other fellow who's now in Seattle?

YO: Halprin?

DS: Hal—no, he knew Halprin. He's of that school. You know he went with Halprin and then the, oh, darn it. He's a, I'll think of it in a moment, but anyway the other old time name is—and he could have gone anywhere. And so, I don't remember exactly how he ended up here in the South, but I remember him saying there was nothing going on in the South and they asked him—oh, I guess Dean Kamphoefner—that's how he ended up here. Dean Kamphoefner invited him to teach. That's how he ended up here and so other people, his colleagues said he's crazy to come down here in the South because there's nothing going on. You go to Boston, go to San Francisco, go up and Lewis of course could have gone anywhere.

But Kamphoefner was collecting this wonderful group of young talented professionals for the school, which is early. These are in the early years of the college or the school at the time and Bucky Fuller and all those other people way back then. This is before I was born and so Lewis started back then. I remember him saying that—I guess he taught and then during the course of those early years he also started a young practice. So, he started his and that's where the Saint Andrews College job came in. He was in his thirties, I think, and he got this practice and then got these clients and it built up from there. That's when I mentioned about that Saint Andrews story. It made it very notable because he was so young.

And so yeah, I think it's just a—somebody else needs to tell the story of how he ended up down here in the South. What a difference he made in the South because at that time you think of what was happening in the '50s in North Carolina mostly an agrarian state, tobacco and textiles and furniture. The whole profession of architecture probably wasn't even that significant, certainly landscape architecture wasn't that significant. My own history tells me that Earl Draper was one of the other notable early landscape architects that came down to North Carolina but mostly designing mill towns for the mill villages of all the textile companies. But when Lewis came, and I think he was telling me the story, because the profession wasn't known, he had to go through the education process to explain to people what we as landscape architects do. He had to establish fees because they didn't know how to pay what a landscape architecture did at the time.

YO: Well, nobody's brought that part up—

DS: Oh.

YO: —of him establishing fees.

DS: And I remember him telling me how little they would get paid for jobs. He had to go through an education process to explain to clients so they knew how to pay. We provided a service that had a value, was significant enough to get paid what we should be worth. Otherwise they treated us as landscapers or plant people or something and they just didn't understand what we as landscape architects did.

So, he was in that period of time, we still are there. You know, people don't know what we do as landscape architects, but I mean you know this is 2008, but back in the '50s I have to think that here in the South people just didn't have a clue about what landscape architecture profession was. Here was this wonderful, young, talented would come down and carve out his own little discipline, if you will, working with other architects and other land planning professionals and so on. He, I guess, was fortunate.

Again, way before my time but to get clients like Willie York which is Smedes York's father to do some of the big projects that Willie York used to be mayor of—Smedes York was mayor of Raleigh and I think Willie York was mayor of Raleigh, too, years ago. Big political name in Raleigh. They started the Cameron Village, first shopping center in the Southeast I think. And so Lewis did Willie York's house and I was fortunate enough to see it. It has all been torn down. I think it's a shopping center now. In fact, I know it's a shopping center. It's an ugly shopping center, big shopping mall.

But Lewis did the house and that's what's in these drawing and hopefully are documented somewhere because it has these incredible lakes. I remember seeing the grotto. They told me about the grotto and I was fortunate enough to see. It was abandoned, the house was abandoned at the time I saw it.

YO: What made his designs different from other landscape architects?

DS: Probably a lot of it had to do with his design process and also his clients. So I guess I answered that in a lot of different ways. He had unique clients. His clients and the kind of work he did was of a scale that many other landscape architects didn't do. He did these very large land planning and resort plannings, which at the time you have to remember we don't do this as much

these days. But back in, certainly, the seventies when they were doing the Hilton Head Island Resorts and the clients were people like the Rouse Company, which is a major company up in the Baltimore area and the, what's his name that did the Hilton Head Island? [Charles E. Fraser developed Hilton Head, Bill Gregory did Palmetto Dunes] He was one of the biggest developers of the time and he hired Lewis and a visionary. The developer himself was a visionary to designed land, communities, where [he] respected the land and laying out the roads, laying out the golf courses and all the other to respect the wetlands and all the other—rather than just strip it. I mean they were hiring a landscape architect and they hired Lewis.

He was the one that they looked to and he designed these communities, which looked at the natural features, the natural land forms, and the ecology of the land when that wasn't the thing to do. I mean people just didn't do it back then and certainly back then, that's not to say the resorts weren't I mean—it wasn't unique to Lewis but it was—Lewis was unique to doing resorts in North Carolina and even in the Southeast there weren't that many others. Marvin, Robert Marvin and I guess the Pinkleys down in the Charleston area were probably the two or three others that were doing it. I don't even think Dick Bell was doing that many of that type of developments here in Raleigh. His was colleges and other sort of a different scale of work of the community of landscape architect.

So that was, to answer your question—it's his clients and the kind of work he was doing that made him unique. And his process—when I go back to the process—he had a very, an air about him and a way about him, incredibly creative. I mean, he would just see things. He could see, and I respect this now because I have the twenty five or thirty years of experience to understand where he was coming from, but when somebody draws a line on a piece of paper you know what that line translates to. You know it translates to the grades or representing whatever that, those lines on the piece of paper meant. Well, he knows what it meant because he had the experience and so to somebody to have that experience and then just to translate it in very quick gestures on a piece of paper, laying out a road or laying out a sighting for a house or a building or whatever it is. Then to see it come into the next levels of the progression of the design process, which Lewis did not typically get involved with. He was early on, the early stages, but he didn't get involved in the working drawings as a rule. He would check them but not do them, at least when I was there. So, anyway just that value of his experience and then to translate that into this wonderful design process.

YO: We'll change directions just a little bit. I want to ask you some things about Lewis, you've shared so many things so far, but I have a few other questions. What kind of boss was he?

DS: A bit crazy. [Laughs]

YO: How do you mean a bit crazy?

DS: Well, I mean unconventional. So, when I'm sitting in this very building here at Glen Eden, I have memories of—actually it was that way in the Koger Center as well when Nigel came onboard. Nigel being his son but also—I don't remember Nigel's early enough career but he didn't have the—I mean he was mostly here just as, as a son and also as a helper. Nigel was raising birds at the time. So, I'm coming back to your question about the boss because I have to tell this little segue about Nigel first.

Nigel was raising birds and he had a huge aviary and I don't know how many birds maybe thirty or fifty birds but all kinds. There were parakeets and cockatiels and cockatoos and Lord knows what all but lots of different kinds of birds. So, Nigel gave his dad this great big African Grey parrot and then he would bring other birds in the office. So, here we were sitting at our drafting tables and we'd have a little cockatiel, like a little parakeet sitting on your drafting or in your drafting lamp. And then, Lewis would have his African Grey, I don't remember the bird's name.

YO: Rodney.

DS: Rodney. Of course, thank you. Anyway Rodney, that's right, he had him either sitting on his shoulder or on his head or Lord knows what all, but it'd be there screeching and making all those crazy noises. I think that captures—when I say crazy—I mean that sort of captures the environment that you're working in being unconventional. So, there was the other side of it when he interfaced with his clients and you could see him put his professional hat on and you could really see sales job coming into play when he would be selling a design or kind of going through that. You could see that's not a boss, that's more of his professional, his manner if you will.

But as a boss, gosh, he was a delight. You have to remember I was in my little short, in my career here, in my relatively short years, it was new and I was only here very young so I had a lot of flexibility and leeway. I was basically like his right hand man. It was just wonderful to come in and flexible hours, all that stuff. It was great.

YO: What was an unusual task that he put you to at some time?

DS: Probably moving. One of the challenging tasks was moving all, the whole office from the Koger Center to here, and what is it, thirty five years worth of drawings and I guess they're still here. They're in the back, yeah. And so, it was just me and one other staff person I think at the time, maybe Nigel, I don't remember who all. But that was a job. I remember getting stuff up in the attic. Was the stuff still up in the attic?

YO: Oh, they took it down when they did some remodeling.

DS: Oh, okay, well, anyway.

YO: But there was quite a bit up there.

DS: Well, we had to get it all up in there. What a job. I mean you know just the paper gets very heavy and trying to move paper around and lug things around and set the whole office up and figure out the layout and all that sort of thing. So, that was a task. That wasn't necessarily fun. I was too young and I didn't have enough career or credibility in the office to have an ownership stake or anything and—I mean I was clearly an employee—but I remember them going through the designing of the office and laying out the rooms and how, who was going to go where and how they're and so on that was kind of interesting.

I don't think I went on any of the fun trips. I remember years before I was involved in the office they would go on fun trips and they had Lewis' boat or something and I think they did do

some of that, but I didn't do that. But we did client trips. Those were fun. That's not what I would call a task. Probably the worst task was this moving. [Laughs] Moving is never fun.

YO: Can you think of any other projects you'd like to comment on?

DS: Well, I've covered a diversity of projects. You know the larger scale projects —most of the ones that I interfaced with Lewis. I also interfaced with Wayne McBride as well. Wayne had his own clients so typically they were separate. So, I'm not going to go into those. But the ones that I worked with Lewis on, it was typically the land planning projects and some of the smaller scale— I have to tell you one story though.

This was one that when I was first interning here and it was me and another young girl, I say young girl she was my age but probably in her thirties, she was a mother. Lewis gave her the task of working with one of his former clients. It was an old friend of his who had I guess the Jolly Roger Motel down on the coast, down on one of the Wilmington or Wrightsville Beach or one of those coastal communities. [Topsail] And so Beth—it was Beth Pastore and it was her job to design a billboard of a—and I have, I have to tell you that was the wrong thing to give to Beth. The wrong project because one, designing a billboard—that wasn't the right thing to give to you know—we were in school, we were trying to do grandiose things. So anyway, that was not a pleasant experience for her to do. There's a whole side story to that one, but it kind of goes to show we worked on all kinds of projects. It's typical for an office. You do everything from a small, for a friend client I mean, you would do something like a fav—It was probably more of a favor designing the billboard for the Jolly Roger Motel and he gave it to Beth.

YO: I'm reminded of the North Carolina Zoo because—

DS: Oh, right.

YO: —the signage and some of the printed materials like what's known as the Zoo Booklet, they did that when you were here.

DS: I was there, exactly. And let me tell you that's come full circle because I'm working in fact the meeting I had just before I met with you was over at Frank Harmon's office, which is another architect friend of Lewis' and anybody who's listening to this knows Frank and we're designing together a children's discovery garden at the Zoo. That's just what I've been doing this afternoon. I'm doing four other projects at the Zoo—the Gorilla Habitat, I'm doing a honey bee exhibit, and I'm doing a geyser project at the Zoo.

So, it's gone full circle for me and this is work I'm doing in my own profession. When I worked here, the office was doing the African Pavilion. That was the big—they're getting ready to tear it down amazingly enough—but it was cutting edge architecture at the time. They worked with Hayes Howell down in Southern Pines designing the African Pavilion area. Those were site specific designs that Lewis did later in his career that happen to come when I was there. But just before my career is when he did the master planning for the Zoo and they did the booklet. The wonderful master plan and that was cutting edge at the time. I think that was done in—I want to say early seventies, seventy three, seventy five sometime during that period of time. I've actually got a copy of the booklet that Lewis gave me, which was nice. He, at that time you have to remember this is not—we do it now, we don't even think about it, but you team up with people.

So they teamed up with ecologists and we teamed up with specialist and the Zoo architecture, Zoo exhibits, and all that. So, they put all this team together and that was cutting edge for it's time back in those early seventies. They came up with this wonderful document that is now the master plan for the Zoo, which is still being implemented.

YO: No kidding. How did your experience with Lewis affect your own practice and teaching methods?

DS: More so with practice is where I think it's just part of—I won't even call it my own personal experiences but just more the broader of all the people that came through Lewis' office. People like Sam Reynolds and Dick Paton and, and oh, gosh, LaMarr Bunn and all these other names that came through that have since gone off and done their own offices. Well, if you didn't have experience at working in an office you would know where to get started. So, one, he gave you the experience of working in an office, gave you the experience of working with clients, working as project manager on your own projects. And he gave you that freedom to do it and in a more structured office you wouldn't get the opportunity to do that.

So, through Lewis personally he was very open to sharing and giving you, giving those young people at the time, including myself, opportunity. And so, that more than anything probably has rubbed off on me and I want to share it with the young people that I'm associated with, my cohorts, my mentees if you will, and students. I think that's the way that our profession is going to grow and Lewis rubbed that off on me. We're only going to get better by sharing what we know and he did it with me and I'm so grateful.

YO: What's the one important thing to know about Lewis Clarke?

DS: The one important thing? Well, he's got a good laugh. He's always going to laugh and keep a sense of humor. I think he's got a good perspective on our profession. This, I guess, has to go with just experience. I think a lot of young people now they get too caught up in certainly an environmental movement or all the sustainability that we get so focused in on things, we lose perspective and I think he has that broad perspective and I guess it just goes with history and experience to just have the understanding of how we fit in the overall culture of our larger landscape. I don't know if I'm saying that right, but I think it's very significant and I think that's what makes him unique.

YO: What's the one important thing to know about David Swanson?

DS: Oh, Lordy. [Laughs] Well, you know I hope that it's like a Barack, Barack Obama t-shirt I'm wearing, and he gave us this half hour infomercial last night and then somebody asked him on the commercial, I think it was during that or maybe Katie Couric or one of these things, they gave what would you like to put on your tombstone? I think he said, you're a good dad and you're a good father to his children and a good wife and all that sort of stuff. Well, yes, I hope I can be all that, but I hope that I can be an influence on other people. I think the designs are one thing, the legacy of the landscapes you leave behind. But even that's temporal. You know those things are being erased and it's sad to say, but a lot of the designs that Lewis came up with and even the things I've done, designed, they've been torn down now because there's something else happening. But as much as anything it's the influence that we leave with people in both our

clients and the young people and people like Lewis did with me and hopefully, I will do with other people.

YO: What's the one important thing to know about landscape architecture today?

DS: Probably that there's not one important thing. There's many important things I guess. We are a diverse profession. It's such exciting times. We're in challenging times, but I remember Lewis when he was just, a month, six months ago when they were giving out some awards part of that with Lewis or with Dick Bell and Ken Coulter when they were doing the movie, Lewis gave some little remarks. He was talking to the students. He said, we are in such exciting times with the state the economy is in and all the political turmoil and the world kind of the crazy stuff that's going on in the world, you have to look at it as an opportunity. And we are, the profession of landscape architecture is in such a wonderful and unique position to play a large role in where we're going to head in energy and land and the preservation and how we're going to use our land in the future. It's professions like us and the professions that we're going to interface with that's going to shape that. And the young people who hopefully are listening to this or how ever you're documenting it, will take to heart that we can make a change.

YO: Well, David, I want to thank you for talking with us today.

DS: Well, thank you.

YO: We'll close out with that.

DS: Great, that was fun.

Transcriber: Jennifer Curasi

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