

Interview with Reverend Robert L. Tate by Clark Groome, Diocese of Pennsylvania Oral History Project, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 15, 2018.

CLARK GROOME: We're underway. You were born in New York City, I think.

ROBERT TATE: That's correct, 1950.

CG: Did you grow up in the city?

RT: No, my father was an attorney for Exxon, and commuted to Wilton, Connecticut, so I grew up—except for a couple of years when we went to Tulsa, Oklahoma when I was in 7th and 8th grade, so dad could learn how to do production law and figure out where oil came from. Because he was an expert in antitrust and corporate law. But I grew up in Wilton, Connecticut.

CG: Okay. Where did you go to school before you went to Princeton?

RT: I went to Wilton public schools. I went to Holland Hall in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a couple of years, back to Phillips Exeter Academy, then on to Princeton.

CG: What was your major at Princeton?

RT: I thought it was going to be—I was pre-med, but you couldn't major in pre-med, and I was tired of pre-med and labs, science, even though I was very good at those subjects.

CG: [Laughs]

RT: And so I went looking for a kind of interdisciplinary major, and ended up in the Religion Department because they were so flexible. They really would let me do anything I wanted to do.

CG: Did you grow up an Episcopalian?

RT: Yes.

CG: When did the thought of the ministry, as we used to call it, when did that start?

RT: I can't answer that. In retrospect, I realize that I loved a couple of religion courses at Exeter. I had Frederick Buechner as a teacher. I got the religion prize in my junior year.

CG: Spell that for me?

RT: I'm not sure I can. [Laughs]

CG: Okay.

RT: It's B-U-E-C-H-N-E-R, I think.

CG: Okay.

RT: Or B-E-U. Check it. I also, I loved singing in the church choir when I was young. I was an acolyte.

CG: So, you were a church-goer as a kid, as well?

RT: Oh yeah, my father was senior warden of our parish.

CG: Right.

RT: Later my mother was senior warden, St. Matthew's Church in Wilton. I was sponsored for ordination from there.

CG: So it was the Diocese of Connecticut that sponsored you?

RT: Connecticut. Mm-hm. I was ordained deacon in 1979 by Morgan Portius, the bishop, and ordained priest in 1980.

CG: Okay, but you graduated—all right, so after Princeton, you went to the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale?

RT: Correct.

CG: And graduated from there in 1976?

RT: Right.

CG: Then, I was curious about why there was a three-year span between your graduation and your ordination?

RT: Well, I didn't have a smooth transition through all that period. As I was graduating from Princeton, I knew I didn't want to go right on to medical school. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. And the religion department at Princeton nominated me for a Rockefeller Trial Year Fellowship to go to the divinity school or seminary of my choice if I received the fellowship. So I filled out all the forms and wrote the essays, and to my surprise, was awarded the fellowship.

And my best friend in the religion department, a student, ended up being my best man at my wedding, was going to Yale Divinity School. My advisor and favorite professor, Gene Outka, had also accepted a tenure appointment at Yale Divinity School and would be leaving to go there. So I decided for one year I would try it, and it was the most remarkable year of my life.

CG: You got married that year, didn't you?

RT: That was my first marriage, yeah. I got married to Coreen, my college girlfriend who was a student at University of Connecticut. We went up to the married student apartments at Yale Divinity School, Berkeley. And I had Henri Nouwen as a professor that year. I had Margaret Farley as an Ethics professor that year. I was assigned to be chaplain in an adolescent oncology unit at Yale New Haven Hospital, and suddenly found myself talking to dying adolescents not much younger than I was about God and about religion.

All I knew was at the end of that year I had to stay on. I couldn't leave. So I stayed, and it took me actually four years to get

through Yale, because I did an internship for the last two, as William Sloane Coffin's assistant. He was the university chaplain at Yale.

CG: Yeah, there are going to be a lot of spellings I'll have to get to you when I get the transcripts. I didn't realize you'd been married before.

RT: Yeah.

CG: When did you marry Ann?

RT: I married Ann in 1977.

CG: So the first marriage did not last?

RT: No, it did not last more than a few years.

CG: Doesn't make any difference, but I just—.

RT: Yeah.

CG: So, what did you do after you got out of Berkeley? Because, you didn't go directly to the deaconate.

RT: No, the spring of my fourth year, my last year at Berkeley, again, I didn't know what in the world I wanted to do. I was not on an ordination track. I was thinking about maybe applying to a PhD in religion and literature, theology and literature.

CG: Teach?

RT: And teach. And I was invited to my brother's boarding school, the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut.

CG: Right. Sure.

RT: Where Bill Coffin's kids had gone. I knew a lot of the faculty and students there. I was invited by the headmaster, John Verdery, an Episcopal priest, to come and teach some classes, and give some chapel talks. I did that that spring, and he turned to me at the end of that week and said, "When you graduate what are you going to do?" I said I had no idea. He said, "If you're looking for a job, come and

talk to me.” And so I called him up later that spring and I said, “Were you serious?” And he said, “Absolutely.” So, I went over to Danbury and he offered me a position as chairman of the Religion Department, chaplain—I wasn’t ordained.

CG: But he was.

RT: He was.

CG: So, those things could be taken care of. [Laughs]

RT: Also, I was varsity boys tennis coach. I ended up being varsity girls soccer coach, ran a coffee house, had a wonderful time there. Stayed there for four years.

CG: It’s a very good school.

RT: Yup.

CG: Still is. Okay, so when during this period as chaplain did you decide that you wanted to do the ordination thing?

RT: I was one day confronted by my student-faculty chapel committee. Tom Hackett was the faculty member, and a young woman named Tracy Chapman, who I had gotten to know through the coffee house, was my student chapel proctor. They confronted me, with others, and said, “We don’t understand why you’re not ordained. You’re functioning as our priest, and we think you ought to get ordained, make it real.”

CG: Make it legitimate. [Laughs]

RT: So, I then went to talk to the then-bishop of Connecticut.

CG: Who was it then?

RT: I’m trying to remember. [Pause] It wasn’t Portius, and it became Walmsley, but it was his predecessor, and I’ll have to go back and fill

that in.¹ Anyway, he said basically I'd gone to the wrong seminary, that when Berkeley merged with Yale, it ceased to exist as far as he was concerned.

CG: Yeah, it wasn't an Episcopal seminary; it was non-denominational, wasn't it?

RT: No, it was Episcopal.

CG: Oh, it was?

RT: Berkeley. But he thought it was too liberal. So, I happened to have talked—I thought he might say this, and I thought he might ask that I do an additional Anglican year someplace, because I had not taken enough Anglican courses. And I had actually arranged—at that point I met my wife, my now-wife, Ann, who lives in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin; that's where she's from. I had talked—

CG: Couldn't anybody just have lived in Dallas?

RT: I know.

CG: [Laughs] Named Jones. Sorry.

RT: That's all right. Anyway, I had already talked to several of the faculty at Nashotah House, because she lives right near Nashotah House. That's where she grew up.

CG: Now, that wouldn't be considered too liberal.

RT: Not at all.

CG: [Laughs]

RT: So, he proposed that I do an extra year at General, and I suggested I might take a couple of intensive summer courses at Nashotah House. He knew the faculty members that I had talked to, Jim Dunkley and Bob Cooper, and he agreed to that. So, I did, a wonderful summer at

¹ Warren Hutchins

Nashotah House. And he, on the basis of that work, the following year approved me for the fast track to ordination in Connecticut.

CG: And then the diaconate and the priesthood.

RT: Right.

CG: And after you were ordained into the priesthood your first assignment, if I read the directory correctly, was in Bethlehem (Pennsylvania).

RT: Right. By that point Arthur Walmsley was the new Bishop of Connecticut.

CG: I gather very well thought of.

RT: Oh, just a marvelous bishop! But he said, and I argued with him, that he did not want me to be ordained without having had parish experience. He later retracted that. I pointed out that there were an awful lot of ordained clergy in his diocese who were serving in colleges and secondary schools, and feeling rather disconnected from the diocese.

CG: From the Church, yeah.

RT: So I did argue with him and the commission on ministry, and they finally relented and said that if I wanted to stay at Wooster and be ordained, I could. But I already had started being interviewed by parishes, and this one parish, the Cathedral in Bethlehem, with a wonderful dean, Larry Whittemore—

CG: Yes, he came down and filled in at St. Paul's (Chestnut Hill) when Jim Moodey went to Ohio. Larry was wonderful!

RT: Right. Larry was getting on in age, and right from the get-go said, "I will share everything with you. I'll let you do anything you want to do. You can function as a dean as far as I'm concerned, and I'll back you up." And it was too good to pass up, so.

CG: How long were you there?

RT: Four years.

CG: And then to Washington?

RT: Yup. And then much too early, and young—I was 33 years old—my name had been put in for Christ Church Capitol Hill, Washington.

CG: I thought, is that the Church of the Presidents?

RT: No, that's Lafayette Square.

CG: Okay.

RT: This is a little, tiny church over on the House of Representatives side. Anyway, I interviewed for that. They offered me the position, and we kind of grew up together. They were in kind of an adolescent phase as a parish, and I had never been a rector before, and we learned together.

CG: Who was the bishop down there then?

RT: John Walker was.

CG: That's what I thought.

RT: Who I knew from boarding school circles and experience, so when I went to talk to him, he was terrific. Actually, Ann got offered her position as Chairman of the History Department at the National Cathedral School for Girls before I got offered the position as rector at Christ Church.

CG: Okay.

RT: And, her former French teacher in Wisconsin was the headmaster at National Cathedral. She went in, and to her amazement got offered a teaching position. She was teaching the AP History courses at National Cathedral School.

CG: Which ain't exactly chopped liver.

RT: She thought it was the job of a lifetime.

CG: It's a great place, apparently.

RT: Yup.

CG: During your time as rector, what spread out beyond the church, the parish? What were you involved with there? Because you were involved with a number of things when we get you to Pennsylvania. What were you involved with other than the parish down there? Were you on the standing committee or anything?

RT: No. I did become chairman of the stewardship commission for the diocese. That was really a passion of mine, and I went off to train as a stewardship expert facilitator or consultant. Actually, Ledlie Laughlin was also on the commission with me at the time. We were two young priests in the diocese of—

CG: It is just a small world!

RT: I did get involved with the National Cathedral.

CG: The College of Preachers?

RT: Yeah. I was first a fellow and then faculty member, and I instituted the Associate Faculty Program at the College of Preachers. I loved that place, and then eventually was on the board, and was vice president of the board when we decided to close it down.

CG: Wow. So, you were there for a long time.

RT: Exactly.

CG: Through, as they say, thick and thin.

RT: Exactly. But I loved that institution. I loved it. I taught courses in preaching there. I got to assist just remarkable preachers who came in to do conferences there. Really miss that place. I also got involved in the Nave Clergy Program at the National Cathedral, where one day a

month you were kind of the officer in charge at the whole campus, all of the schools, and the Cathedral itself.

CG: What did they call that?

RT: Nave Clergy Program.

CG: Nave. Okay, I couldn't tell whether it was Nave or Native.

RT: And along with that, if you did that program they offered you a spiritual director at Shalem Spiritual Institute. That was the first time I got really involved in spiritual direction, and that was also just a wonderful experience.

CG: So, twelve years pass, approximately?

RT: Eleven.

CG: Eleven years pass. I've never been good at math.

RT: [Laughs]

CG: What caused you, A, to be looking, and B, to decide that Saint Martin's was the place for you, Saint Martin-in-the-Fields, Chestnut Hill? I mean, ten years is sort of a standard.

RT: Yeah, tenure. I was getting a little restless. We had accomplished a huge amount. The parish had grown enormously.

CG: How much?

RT: We doubled in size in the time I had been there, and was now a pretty healthy, pastoral, edging to be program-size parish. And I was getting a little itchy and wondering what was next. I remember the deployment officer in Washington, and I'm mental blanking on her name. Ruth Libby is her name—came back from a vacancy sharing conference, and said, "There's a parish open in the Diocese of Pennsylvania that I think you would be perfect for." And I said,

“Well, Ann really thinks that this is the opportunity of a lifetime, and isn’t eager to leave. And our kids love Washington.”

CG: How old were they at this point?

RT: Andy was in Pre-K, and Elizabeth was in 8th grade and had been a lifer at Beauvoir and National Cathedral School, and was planning on staying there forever. So I kept getting pressure from Ruth and from the deployment people, the bishop, and up here, Allen Bartlett. And I finally just to get them off my back said, “Okay, I’ll go interview.”

CG: They love you.

RT: And I’d heard good things about the parish. I’d actually known Scott O’Brien, who had been the former rector of Saint Martin’s, had been one of my students at the College of Preachers, and a colleague chaplain when he was at the Westover School, and I was at Wooster.

CG: Yeah, he had had a rough time.

RT: Right. Well, I didn’t know much about that story until I got here.

CG: Oh, okay. But he followed Frank Griswold, and had been Frank’s, Bishop Griswold’s—

RT: Assistant.

CG: —assistant.

RT: Right. And long story short, when Frank got called very suddenly and surprisingly, by his account, to become, to be bishop of Chicago, the vestry, they went through a search, and the search committee nominated a person to be the next rector of Saint Martin’s. The vestry refused to call her because she was a she.

CG: Even though Frank had had a female assistant.

RT: Right. But, to be rector they didn’t feel this was right. I found out—well, I’ll tell the rest of the story later. So, I interviewed. I knew that

Scott had done a terrific job initially in taking over as rector. The vestry refusing to call the woman candidate panicked. People were angry. The committee resigned, I gather, the search committee. And the two wardens went down to then-Bishop Ogilby and asked for permission to call the assistant, Scott.

CG: Which was not, even in those days, was not usually allowed.

RT: Well, and it was double indemnity, because he had been the assistant and now was functioning as the interim. The agreement was when he took over as interim, then he couldn't be a candidate.

CG: That's right.

RT: Bishop Ogilby decided to make an exception, and I later on turned to Allen Bartlett one day and said, "Why did Bishop Ogilby make this exception." Allen looked at me and he said, "Because your parish gives \$100,000 a year to the diocese."

CG: They were dealing with an important parish.

RT: Right. Anyway, Scott did a terrific job at first, I gather. He had married Lally, who I had known at Princeton, who, we didn't date, but we were good friends. She had left Princeton and the Religion Department at Princeton and transferred to Yale, of all places, to marry Scott. When we arrived, we discovered at our closing on this house that Lally lived next door! [Laughs]

CG: If the world gets any smaller, Bob.

RT: So, Lally and Ann became very close friends, walked dogs together every day, and our kids became very close friends. Tim would drive Elizabeth down to Germantown Friends School every day, for a couple of years. Anyway, I came up here, went through the interview.

What had happened was, Scott did very well for two or three years, and then things started falling apart.

CG: Yup.

RT: And he was treated for psychological problems, for alcoholism. His marriage fell apart. People will say that Saint Martin's started reacting, saying, "You're no Frank Griswold." I'm not sure how true that is. I think it just didn't work on both sides.

CG: Well, and Frank was a tough act to follow.

RT: No kidding. Even for me, that's true.

CG: Well, I'll be interested in hearing some of that. Go ahead.

RT: So anyway, Scott, finally his entire staff resigned, and they said at the end he was just barely functioning. So he then resigned from the pulpit the following Sunday, set a terminus date, and by all accounts was just remarkable those next few months. He did a series of adult forums.

CG: The pressure was off, probably.

RT: Right.

CG: And then he died.

RT: Then he left, saying he was going to take a break from parish ministry, and he was actually working with my former prep school chaplain and religion teacher, Fred Buechner, who's a terrific writer. Scott was hoping to be the Episcopal Fred Buechner writer. So he'd been working with Fred for some time already, and he was on his way to Vermont to see Fred when he died of a heart attack at the wheel of his car in Albany, New York.

CG: Yeah. Okay, let's get back to Tate, coming to Saint Martin's. So, you were coming into a situation that was clearly troubled.

RT: Yeah. Dean Evans was the interim, and was doing a good job, but the parish was still pretty much in shock at Scott's death, with a lot of people asking, "Did we kill Scott?" essentially.

CG: There were some people who were asking, as I remember, "Did Scott kill Scott?"

RT: Yeah, exactly. So I came into that situation, Ann and I did, and it was just a mystical first visit.

CG: So, this was just for the—you were still on your first visit?

RT: First visit. On the way back, we had made an agreement that we would each find, try to find, three reasons not to come to Saint Martin's.

CG: It's a good way to do it.

RT: On the way back, in the car, neither of us said anything until we got to about Baltimore, and finally Ann just said, "Okay, let me speak." She just said, "That was amazing. I think we really have to pay attention to this." So, we came back for a second round of interviews, and by the end of that we both knew that this was a call from God. This was—

CG: Yeah. If they called, you were going to go.

RT: Yup.

CG: And they did.

RT: And they did. And our kids, Elizabeth then came to us and said she wasn't—it was fine if we wanted to go to Philadelphia, but she was not—she had already arranged with her godparents to live with them, and continue at National Cathedral School for Girls with her best friend, their daughter, and that we could have a nice time in Philadelphia.

CG: See ya.

RT: [Laughs] So—

CG: Teenagers are fun, aren't they?

RT: We brought them up, and Andy, they interviewed at several schools, and Andy fell in love with Chestnut Hill Academy, loved the uniforms and the formality. Elizabeth couldn't imagine herself at Springside, but she fell in love with the informality of

CG: What about GFS?

RT: —of GFS.

CG: GFS, yeah.

RT: They're very different kids.

CG: Both good schools.

RT: Yeah. So, we did make the transition. A wonderful real estate agent, Loretta Witt, found this house for us, and we just fell in love with it immediately, and have loved it for [24] years.

CG: Okay, so what were your biggest challenges as the new rector at Saint Martin-in-the-Fields?

RT: [Pause] I just took it easy coming in. I didn't make a lot of staff changes. I got a wonderful music director in Ken Lovett.

CG: Oh, boy.

RT: I did have to make one major change in a parish administrator, but we moved to help her retire, and then I brought Karen McLaughlin on as my parish administrator, and we had a wonderful time working together.

CG: She was there till you left, right?

RT: Yeah.

CG: Yeah.

RT: I guess the challenge was, for me, that having come from Exeter; Princeton; Yale; Fairfield County; Wilton, Connecticut; Christ Church Capitol Hill, that I knew this was going to feel an awful lot like home.

CG: Yeah, this was comfortable territory.

RT: Comfortable, yeah. And I was worried about that, because I've always had a kind of love-hate relationship with that background.

CG: I understand that.

RT: Yeah, working with Bill Coffin, being very involved in urban issues the whole time I was in Washington. The whole time I was in Bethlehem, I was involved in redoing a housing project, and was president of the Southside Ministries. We took an old hotel and rehabbed it into a homeless shelter. The same thing happened in Washington, DC, where I was very involved in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Helped redo the Eleanor Wilson Housing Project on Capitol Hill. So coming here, for the first year I was kind of wondering whether they had made a mistake, whether all they wanted was a kind of suburban—

CG: Preppy.

RT: Yeah, preppy, Ivy League rector.

CG: Well, they'd had one in Frank Griswold, hadn't they?

RT: I guess. I've never really gotten to know Frank that well. We've never worked together or overlapped. I've gotten to know him since, and he's become a good friend, but.

CG: Well, you said that there was some vestigial tough act to follow stuff when you came, having to do with Griswold. What did you mean by that?

RT: Yeah. Of course, Frank's enough older than I am that his closest friends in the parish were the ones where they'd brought up all their kids together and gotten to know each other. So they were kind of the old guard when I arrived here.

CG: Right.

RT: After Frank left, and during those Scott O'Brien years a lot of them left, drifted away, were gone by the time I got here. The group that had taken over leadership in the parish during the O'Brien years was really now in charge of Saint Martin's. We used to joke about the Griswoldians, I mean the people who wanted everything to stay just the way it had been during Frank's tenure here, and the certain ways he had instituted of doing the Eucharist in the round at the 9 o'clock service.

CG: Well, he also introduced the Eucharist as the everyday Sunday service.

RT: Right, and that was all over and done with by the time I got there.

CG: Yeah.

RT: There's no question about that. But, people passing the cup to each other in the Communion, everybody at the altar, standing around the altar receiving. Of course, what happened is over the years, during O'Brien years and while I was here, that service, the 9 o'clock service grew, and grew, and grew, until we were finally getting 150 people at that service, and it was almost too large.

CG: This was a family service, yeah.

RT: Yeah. It had originally been sort of the alternative contemporary service to the 11:15 full choir, full sermon Saint Martin's service.

CG: Right.

RT: During my tenure here those services essentially swapped.

CG: Swapped?

RT: I mean, the 9 o'clock became the huge service, and the 11:15, by the time I left there were Sundays when the choir was larger than the congregation. And as Helen White once said to me, she said, "Bob, 11:15's a lot later than it used to be." [Laughs] I knew exactly what she meant.

CG: [Laughs] Helen could put her finger on things, couldn't she?

RT: Yeah. She just started coming to the 9 o'clock service, because she just wanted to be with the kids, and where the action was.

CG: As you arrived here, or two years after you arrived, or a year after you arrived here, Allen Bartlett announced that he was going to call for a coadjutor, and that coadjutor was Charles E. Bennison. He took over after your former rector at Saint Martin's had been elected presiding bishop in 1997, and Bennison took over in 1998. Tell me what—and then we'll get into the meat of this in a second, tell me what, how the two bishops, Bartlett and Bennison, were similar or different, and what it was like working with each one of them?

RT: Well, that's a big question. I might start with my role in some of this. 1997, I believe it was, I became president of the clergy association. We changed the name from PRIDE, to ECAP, to Episcopal Clergy Association of Pennsylvania. Both Glenn Matis and I, and some of the others on the committee were instrumental in bringing a professor from EDS, a professor of congregational development, who had developed quite a reputation—bringing him here as our keynote speaker that spring. We met in the parish hall of Redeemer Bryn Mawr and this professor Bennison just wowed everyone. And then—

CG: He was a very good professor, apparently.

RT: I gather. And then sometime later when, I have no idea who put his name in, but he was known to many clergy.

CG: Sure.

RT: And I remember being excited from what little I knew of him, at his candidacy. But I also knew several of the other candidates, including Pat Thomas, who was a colleague from Washington, D.C.

CG: Well, and John Midwood.

RT: I didn't know John all that well.

CG: No, but I mean he was popular in the diocese.

RT: Oh, very. Yeah.

CG: Justifiably.

RT: I also remember at the meet and greets at the chapel at Episcopal Academy, Charles got up and was just terrific.

CG: Probably without notes.

RT: I'm sure. He'd obviously done his homework and knew an awful lot about the diocese, particular parishes, and could drop names, and remember names. I thought he was just very impressive. I would have to say by that point I knew John Midwood pretty well, and he isn't as charismatic.

CG: No, he was more like Allen Bartlett.

RT: Exactly.

CG: And Bennison would have been a change.

RT: Right. So, I was not surprised when Charles Bennison was elected bishop.

CG: Yeah, because it really boiled down to, as I understand it—correct me if I'm wrong—that it boiled down to Midwood and Bennison.

RT: I think probably, yeah.

CG: Yeah.

RT: My sense was that John Midwood had done a fantastic job with the DCMM clergy, taken them from kind of fighting with each other over a decreasingly—

CG: He was archdeacon at that point, wasn't he?

RT: Exactly.

CG: Yeah.

RT: And he had gotten all those mission parishes working together, designating two or three as diocesan mission with real support, getting terrific mission clergy like Ike Miller and Mary Laney in here, in charge of those parishes. And I gathered right from the beginning that they championed John Midwood's candidacy and were very disappointed when—

CG: He didn't win.

RT: —he didn't win, when Charles Bennison was elected.

CG: They were more disappointed that Midwood didn't win than Bennison won, I think.

RT: I guess.

CG: I think. That's what I've heard in other of these interviews, initially.

RT: I remember a conversation with Mary Laney where she just, she said, "I don't think you helped. I think having the Clergy Association bring Bennison down here, he was a known quantity with a lot of clergy, just as Midwood was." And that may have been decisive in the election, I don't know.

CG: Initially anyway, in terms of dealing with the clergy or dealing with the—dealing with the job, how were Bartlett and Bennison different?

RT: I don't think Allen is comfortable with conflict, and avoids conflict. Having a real peacemaker bishop can be a real asset at times, and I think Allen did play that role, and very well.

CG: He was popular with, or respected by the clergy, I gather?

RT: Yeah, I think there was a sense that things needed shaking up and changing, and that Bishop Bennison would be more of a change agent, and that proved to be true.

CG: Okay. Now we're at Bennison's time. How did he change things?

RT: Very early on when he said that he wanted every parish in the diocese to develop a strategic plan if they didn't have one, and that we were going to share those with each other through publications and through gatherings at the Mann Center, where we all put booths together and shared our strategic plans with each other. Saint Martin's had gone through an extensive strategic planning exercise, so we were prepared to share that at that point. But I knew many parishes that hadn't done any planning in ten years, fifteen years, or forever, and this shook them up a bit. My memory is that we were having focus groups, down at Church House, I think.

CG: Yeah.

RT: At some part in the middle of this process Bishop Bennison produced a videotape that was then presented at these focus groups, and it was essentially Charles Bennison's strategic plan for the diocese.

CG: For the diocese.

RT: My memory's not all that good, but the three Cs of Cathedral, Camp—

CG: What was the third, or fourth?²

RT: Oh, there ended up being four, but originally there were three and then we added a fourth, I think. I'd have to go look at my notes from that. But anyway, the important thing was I think people were a little stunned that the process was short-circuited by that bishop's vision statement.

CG: It really sort of cut things off.

RT: Yeah, in my focus group there was some real anger.

CG: Was this when the anger towards him began, do you think?

RT: I think it was there all along. In the DCMM clergy and their colleagues, I think Charles was on notice from the first day he got here.

CG: Because he wasn't John.

RT: Exactly. Because they wanted some evidence that he really was going to care about the urban parishes, the African American parishes.

CG: The aided parishes.

RT: Yeah, the smaller and aided parishes.

CG: And of course, as bishop he basically serves as rector of those parishes and the person, the clergy there are vicars, and they're just in his stead. So, it's important.

RT: Right. Now, from my perspective in Chestnut Hill, Charles Bennison was just a model bishop. He did a fabulous visitation when he came. I had an excellent relationship with him personally right from the beginning. He asked me to come on as dean a couple of years into his tenure, and at least at the beginning I just loved being dean at Wissahickon.

² The fours Cs were Camp, Cathedral, Congregational Development and Campus Ministry

CG: Well, then another parish could cause trouble and make it a little less pleasant for you.

RT: [Laughs] That's true.

CG: I wouldn't be able to tell you what parish that was. [Laughs]

RT: We'll get to that, but.

CG: No, we don't need to. [Laughs]

RT: I loved Wissahicken as a deanery, going from East Falls and North Philadelphia all the way to Chestnut Hill.

CG: Chestnut Hill.

RT: And the Montgomery County line, and then including—

CG: Germantown?

RT: Yeah, Germantown, and Roxborough, and Manayunk.

CG: Is this deanery—and again, this is history, so people 50 years from now won't know what we were like now—was this probably the most diverse deanery in the diocese?

RT: Maybe racially, economically, in every way.

CG: Yeah. So, the answer is basically, yes. It's a fascinating [deanery]. I mean, I was a deanery representative at one point, and I was amazed at how different all the various parishes were.

RT: Absolutely. I loved going around and working with these different parishes, clergy, vestries. It wasn't an easy time. These parishes were built in a time when people walked to church, or took buggies to church.

CG: So, there were too many buildings

RT: Fourteen different parishes, probably no more than three or four miles from each other. And some of them built out of church fights, like Henry Houston walking out of Christ Church Germantown and

establishing Saint Peter's Germantown a matter of blocks away, in protest.

CG: There were also—it wasn't done by protest, but there were two churches in Chestnut Hill a mile away, both of them very much alive, but formed for very different reasons.

RT: Exactly.

CG: Or by very different circumstances. So, Bennison always said, to my experience, is that we've got too many buildings for too few people. The Episcopal Church was shrinking, was beginning to shrink at that point, with the explosion, I guess, of the Evangelical movement, and the diminishment of denominational loyalty.

RT: Right. While I was dean we closed down Saint Peter's Germantown. We closed down, eventually, Calvary (Germantown). Saint James the Less got in a huge fight with the diocese and eventually was closed down and turned into a school. House of Prayer was struggling to survive all along. Christ and Saint Michael's was on life support.

CG: Yeah, well, it was. It was.

RT: And even Grace Epiphany, Mount Airy, was struggling. Just, it was a really challenging time.

CG: Yeah. You came to the ordained ministry after women had been approved for ordination, because that happened in '76 and it took effect in '79, or whenever it was, with the new Prayer Book.

RT: One part of the story I didn't finish before was, my cousin, Betsy Myers, was a priest—was a deacon in Waterbury, Connecticut, and was invited to be in that first class, and decided to wait until—

CG: Oh, the eleven, the class in 1974.

RT: Right, that were ordained at Church of the Advocate. She waited and was one of the very first priests—

CG: Not legally.

RT: Regularly.

CG: Regularly. M-E-Y-E-R-S, or M-Y-E-R-S?

RT: M-Y-E-R-S.

CG: Okay.

RT: I found out after I came to Saint Martin's. One day my mother called and said, "Oh, I had lunch with your cousin Betsy, and asked her if she'd heard you had been called to Saint Martin's, and asked her if she knew Saint Martin's. She said, 'Not only do I know Saint Martin's, I was sitting in the Chestnut Hill Hotel expecting the vestry to arrive and announce that I was the next rector, and they arrived and told me to go home.'"

CG: Oh.

RT: She was the priest.

CG: She was the one who lost?

RT: The vestry refused to call (her) because she was a she. You talk about small world.

CG: Oh!

RT: [Laughs]

CG: Unbelievable! So, you mentioned Saint James the Less. And of course there was the church in Rosemont, Good Shepherd Rosemont, and there were seven churches altogether that didn't want to have any part of women rectors—and, we haven't even gotten into the gay issue yet—women rectors. During Bartlett's time, if I'm right—correct me

if I'm wrong—just to catch the history, he allowed those churches to fly in another bishop.

RT: Correct.

CG: Bennison originally had said, I gather, that he was going to follow the bishop's policy while he was coadjutor. But when he was no longer coadjutor he said, "Okay, now it's my ballgame. I'm coming to see you." And that's when a lot of tension arose with the Saint James the Less and the other parishes that didn't approve of the women's ordination.

RT: Yeah. I think, whether correctly or not, some of those parishes assumed that Bennison was going to continue Bartlett's policies and had sort of agreed to that if he were elected. I'm not sure that's the case at all. I know he said, "As long as Bartlett is the diocesan—"

CG: That's right.

RT: "—this is his policy." And then once Charles took over as diocesan, for him to say, "Look, canonically, I'm required to do a visitation,"—

CG: Every three years?

RT: —"every three years. We can work this out, but I do insist on some form of visitation."

CG: Okay, so at this point, I mean, the elephant in the room here is the tension between Bartlett and the standing committee.

RT: Bartlett?

CG: I mean Bennison.

RT: Right.

CG: Pardon me. Bennison and the standing committee. What do you think? Was it his style? What do you think caused that primarily? I know there were financial issues, and we'll get to Camp Wapiti in a

minute, but what do you think it was about Charles' personality or administrative style? Was he an autocrat?

RT: You know, I've never enjoyed the political side of the church. I've never run for standing committee. I have been an alternate deputy to General Convention.

CG: Right.

RT: But—

CG: And you were dean.

RT: I was dean. I tried to maintain a position of being friends with, colleagues with, I'll say all sides, because there were multiple sides.

CG: You learned to be a mediator?

RT: Yeah, during those years. I think I was one of the people who remained in dialogue with people who couldn't be in the same room with each other, practically.

CG: Well, I have been told by a number of people on both sides of the issue that the two people who were the most successful in that were you and Carl Metzger.

RT: I appreciate that.

CG: Well, I mean, so obviously that was what you wanted to do. But, what was it that really got people furious about him?

RT: I would have to say, I didn't understand that very well until after Charles had left. And I know I'm leaping way ahead now, but.

CG: That's all right.

RT: When I was invited to work with Ki-Thought Bridge, Katherine Taylor Scott's group, on doing some reconciliation work in the diocese that very much needed to be done. I was trained as a facilitator. And then Bud Holland and I, working together, got to

work with the former standing committees of the diocese, and led them through some workshops. I heard things at that point that I had never heard before.

I'm not in a position to repeat anything in an interview like this, but just to say I heard people's personal stories of how much they had been hurt by Bennison and during the Bennison years. I would have to say, I had no idea, that even in that role of mediator I hadn't gotten that deep with people. So I think I now understand better than I even understood at the time.

CG: Without getting specific about the individuals or individual issues, was it that they felt ignored? Did they feel—I mean, there was some talk about he doesn't pay attention to the money. Camp Wapiti, when he was thrilled about that, some people thought, "Well, maybe it costs too much money. Maybe it's too far away," and he didn't consult widely enough in the diocese. Which of these issues do you think were the ones that were the most critical?

RT: All of the above. I think any number of people had issues, and some of them overlapped, and some didn't. Charles not only always thought he was the smartest person in the room, he usually was the smartest person in the room. And you would think he was listening and taking in information, criticism, and typically he ended up just doing what he wanted to do.

CG: He wanted to do. That's not particularly effective leadership.

RT: No. A very, very strongly directive leadership style, which did not work well with a diocese that was not used to having a bishop running things, running everything.

CG: He was that autocratic?

RT: Right.

CG: Some people have said, and you know Bennison very well, and I do too, that some of this may have been a reflection of him being his father's son. His father was the bishop of Western Michigan, and again, viewed to be autocratic. Whether you know it or not, sometimes the apple really doesn't fall very far from the tree. Did you have any sense that this was, or, that he intended this, or that this was just who he was?

RT: I can't answer that. I mean, I can't psychoanalyze Charles Bennison.

CG: [Laughs] Everybody else does. What do you think the critical—all right, let's go back to the diocese. The diocese, particularly from about 2005 or 2006, because it was right before the General Convention in Columbus, when the standing committee called for his retirement or resignation. Was it ever possible, and the history is elsewhere and we know it, that he was inhibited for a while, and then returned to his job. And then a couple of years, about a year and a half later, he retired under pressure.

Was there ever, from your point of view, in the time that you were involved with this, which was really from the beginning, as a priest in the diocese, was there ever a time when this could have been solved, when his episcopacy could have been saved? Or was it just one of those things where two forces are coming at each other and they're never going to?

RT: From my perspective, he had pushed the purchase of Wapiti and the renovations of the buildings of Wapiti forward. I've heard him say that he never did anything on his own, that he had finance committees and standing committees having to approve every step of the way.

But he was that very strong, directive leader during that time. I think people questioned his use of endowment funds at the time, and he always had the answer for them. I think as frustrations were building up in the diocese, especially as more and more churches were in financial struggle, we were closing more and more churches, I think the frustration over finances was just a bomb ready to go off.

CG: Yeah, it seems like it, doesn't it?

RT: And there was already organized opposition to Bennison, the Concerned Episcopalians group. Then when all the issues with his brother and what had happened in California surfaced, it did seem to me that that was, what's the word I want? That became a way of getting at Bennison when they hadn't been able to get him through—

CG: Through diocesan things.

RT: Through channels, yeah, through the legislative process, or through convention, or through the standing committee.

CG: Two presiding bishops had suggested that maybe the best thing for him and the diocese would be if he would retire.

RT: Right. I was in a strange position at that point, where I'd always had a very good relationship with him personally. I'd made him a set of golf clubs, and we played golf together occasionally. Ann and Joan had become friends. We didn't socialize with them as a couple, but we were friendly with them. And when he asked me in the middle of this process, after he'd been through the first trial and through an appeals trial, and then was at a mitigation hearing where they were talking about what the punishment would be, he asked me if I would be a character reference for him.

And so Martini Shaw and I spoke at that mitigation hearing. I remember saying that I'm not a lawyer, and I'm not a canon lawyer, but as I understand the legal process and the canon law process, I just couldn't understand why the statute of limitations did not apply in this case, especially—

CG: It did, ultimately, right?

RT: Well, ultimately. Those of us who kept saying that all along, and I would try to avoid taking a position on the other issues, just saying, "He wasn't even the perpetrator here; he was the rector who fired the perpetrator."

CG: Right.

RT: As I understood it, that statute of limitations should apply. But when it came back from the House of Bishops final ruling, at General Convention, that they said the statute of limitations did apply, and he was reinstated.

CG: Reinstated.

RT: Then I, at that point, was one of the people who went to Charles and said, "For your sake and for the sake of the diocese, I really think this is the time for you to retire." He was adamant in saying, "No, I need to be the champion of the canons and show the clergy of the church that the canons are there to protect them. The only way I can do that is by coming back."

CG: Both arrogant and accurate, in a way, but also arrogant.

RT: Again, it's [unclear].

CG: Yeah, it seems.

RT: By that point I was, I'd left Saint Martin's, retired from Saint Martin's and come on staff part time at the Cathedral. Again, I was in that

kind of middle mediator position in trying to keep people talking together and working together. Those were not fun years. That was not a happy time.

CG: I wouldn't think so. Okay, let's go back to Saint Martin's. What were you—you were there fourteen years?

RT: Mm-hm.

CG: The standard question: What did you accomplish in those fourteen years? What happened, other than becoming [laughs], and I remember us talking about this in the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver—

RT: Mm-hm.

CG: —becoming a construction engineer, getting the church renovated and back to, in good shape. Other than the physical aspects of it, what are you proudest of, I guess is the best way to ask it, of your time at Saint Martin's?

RT: I guess I'm most proud that we became a model programmatic-size church, parish, in the diocese and in the Episcopal Church. At its height, we had 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10:15, 11:15, and a 5 o'clock, evensong services on a typical Sunday. We had a thriving, huge Sunday school. Youth program ended up taking youth journey, took programs to Guatemala and France. We had an adult forum program that was one of the best I've ever seen. We were doing outreach activity and work. I helped found Germantown Crisis Ministry. We raised a lot of money in the capital campaign, and one of the ways we did that was we took a percentage of that and gave it away, to YouthBuild Charter School, and to Guatemala.

CG: Guatemala was the brother—?

RT: Companion diocese.

CG: Companion diocese.

RT: Yeah. So, what I was going to say is, what I'm proudest of is that we did manage to accomplish all of that. We had a fabulous staff. My greatest accomplishment is just hiring really, really good staff, and then getting out of their way and letting them do their work. We went through a \$3.5 million renovation of the church without people having fights with each other, and not everyone got what they wanted.

CG: And the floor didn't fall into the basement.

RT: No, it almost did. It would have if we hadn't redone the undercroft.

CG: Okay, so while you were there you were also, you had obviously for whatever the reasons established yourself as a figure of some importance in the parish, in the diocese, and the church. And you were involved in a couple of Episcopal searches?

RT: Yeah.

CG: Tell me about those.

RT: Well, the first one, the Diocese of New Hampshire search committee, wanted not to put together a slate with a conservative and a liberal, and a straight and a gay, and, but they wanted four candidates who basically all were extremely liberal, progressive candidates. So I went up there for the interviews. I also knew that my good friend, one of my first seminarians when I was in Washington, DC and she was at Virginia Seminary, Ruth Kirk, was going to be a candidate.

CG: She was then the rector at Saint Peter's Glenside.

RT: Glenside, right. She was the person who first brought me to Chestnut Hill. Before I ever was a candidate at Saint Martin's, the only time I'd been to Chestnut Hill I was—

CG: At Saint Paul's where she was ordained!

RT: No, she brought me up as a vestry consultant.

CG: Oh, okay.

RT: To work with Charles Carter and the vestry.

CG: Small world.

RT: Right. Anyway, I had a terrific experience going through that process in New Hampshire. It was pretty clear—

CG: Gene Robinson was going to win.

RT: Yeah, right from the beginning that—

CG: The hometown guy.

RT: Well, they had a favorite son in Gene Robinson. He'd been archdeacon there for fifteen, seventeen years and done a terrific job. But they also wanted to have three or four other really strong candidates and make sure that he was the right person to be the next bishop of New Hampshire. We knew by the end of the meet-and-greets that he was the frontrunner. I really, really like him, liked him then.

I came back from that experience pretty sure that I wasn't going to be elected, and that that was okay, and feeling more called to parish ministry than ever before. That kind of revitalized my sense of being called to parish ministry as a result of that election. Then of course, when he was elected we had to go to General Convention instead of the approvals going around to all the standing committees.

CG: Right, because it was close enough to General Convention that that's where the dioceses and the bishops approved.

RT: Correct. Yeah, so then at General Convention we had to stand up in front of these hearings and attest that this had been a true, and fair,

and real election, that it wasn't just a put-up job for Gene Robinson. And that was difficult. [Laughs]

CG: Yeah, I would imagine. I would imagine it would be. You were also in another?

RT: I got to the interview stage in Rochester, and I remember [laughs] my daughter had said to me, when I declined to be a candidate in a few other elections, and I'd said to my daughter that I was really feeling called to spend more time in parish ministry, more time with my wife and family, more time up in the Adirondacks, which we love. We have a summer house up there. She heard that I was being interviewed by Rochester, and called me and said, "This makes no sense to me. Why are you being interviewed by Rochester when you've been telling everybody that you—?"

CG: This counters what you've been saying?

RT: And so, I remember getting on this conference call with the search committee—it was before Skype—and just sharing with them that I was really having second thoughts about being a candidate. They were wonderful with me, and just said, "You've got to listen to that call. This may not be right for you." I'd also done a lot of homework, and Rochester at that point had something like 53 clergy in the whole diocese, and 38 of them were part-time.

CG: Wow!

RT: Yeah, and I could see already that that was the direction the Episcopal Church was headed. We're now at a point in this diocese where half the parishes in the diocese are being covered by people like me, over 65, drawing a pension, can only work part-time. That's what's keeping these parishes going at this point.

CG: Yeah.

RT: They're either supply clergy, or they're permanent interims, or they're priests in charge.

CG: Priests in charge.

RT: Yeah.

CG: So, what was it that made you, or encouraged you, or goosed you to say farewell to Saint Martin's? And what is it that you've done since?

RT: Good question. The epiphany for me came at a CREDO conference, and I wanted to do, for my first CREDO, a post-55, kind of thinking about the end of your career-oriented CREDO.

CG: What is a CREDO?

RT: CREDO, it's a very intensive, week-long kind of spiritual, physical, vocational life assessment workshop that you go through with other clergy, with terrific faculty. It's paid for almost completely by the church pension group. I planned on going to one and decided finally to do this post-55 one.

CG: Where do they hold them?

RT: All over the country.

CG: All right. I just wanted to get that one on the record. So, you went to one of those.

RT: Right. Jill Mathis happened to be the vocational faculty member at my CREDO conference, and I remember realizing that I could take early retirement, what we call 55-30—if you're over 55 and you've been ordained 30 years. I'd gone right from college, to seminary, to ordination, so I was eligible, then I could move to part-time ministry, do more consulting. I was already doing quite a bit and loving it.

CG: What were you—tell me about your consulting?

RT: Mostly search consulting, for parishes searching for a rector. I'd been trained by Dick Ullman in that.

CG: Right.

RT: But I was also doing quite a bit of sort of crisis, especially financial crisis consulting, and I'd started doing that back when I was dean of Wissahicken. I would do that with the vestries of the parishes of the deanery.

CG: Parishes of the deanery.

RT: So the word got around, and I was being invited to come in and do vestry retreats, or consult with finance committees, or fundraising committees. And I loved doing that work, so I thought I could cut back to part-time, continue the consulting, and really pay no penalty financially, that I was in a position to do that. That seemed like a no-brainer. So, when I turned 59, I mean, practically the day I was eligible for the 55 and out, 55-30 and out, I took it and started drawing a pension, and initially spent six months just focusing on the consulting.

CG: Right.

RT: And decided that what I really loved doing was working with smaller, struggling parishes. Having spent most of my life in large parishes like Saint Martin's I could have focused on that, but that wasn't where the excitement was for me. We have some other search consultants, for example, like Dick Ullman, who are very, very good at working with those large parishes, so I didn't need to. Then I spent six months just going to a different church every Sunday, getting to hear people preach that I'd never been able to hear preach before, my friends and colleagues all over the diocese.

And then, the day that Judy Sullivan got elected (dean of the cathedral), and I'd known Judy from Saint Paul's (Chestnut Hill) from before she was ordained, we were on boards together, Need and Deed up in Chestnut Hill, and the day she was called I sent her an email saying congratulations. I'm saying no to everybody, because people were asking me to be assistants, or adjuncts, or whatever, in parishes all over the diocese. And I said, "I've been saying no to everybody, but if you would have any interest in a retired priest coming on your staff part-time, we need to talk."

CG: Yeah.

RN: The same day, she sent me an email saying, "I hear you've been saying no to everybody, but if you would ever consider coming on staff at the Cathedral"—

CG: [Laughs] And these crossed in space?

RT: Crossed in space, exactly. [Laughs] So, she and I both thought if ever the holy spirit was at work, because I opened her email and assumed that she had read mine, and she opened my email and assumed that I'd read hers. Neither was true.

CG: How long did you stay in that role?

RT: Eight years.

CG: Eight years? And you've completely retired from that role?

RT: As of June 30th this year (2018) I'm completely retired.

CG: You mentioned—this has absolutely nothing to do with the church—you mentioned along the way that you made golf clubs for Bishop Bennison?

RT: Right.

CG: You make golf clubs?

RT: I have had a hobby of assembling golf clubs and fitting people for golf clubs.

CG: Woods and Irons?

RT: Everything, right. I have a shop downstairs. You can go out and spend thousands and thousands of dollars to be custom fit for golf clubs, but you can also—I can take someone out on a range and in a very short time figure out what flex shaft they need, and what weight clubs, and what length clubs. Then you can order parts through catalogues and assemble them in your shop, and for a fraction of the cost put together a set. So, I've made golf clubs for any number of young kids, and teenagers, and beginning golfers in Chestnut Hill.

CG: What are your other non-church issues?

RT: [Laughs]

CG: Well, what's your handicap?

RT: Right now it's about a twelve, but it's been much lower than that at times.

CG: Were you a par golfer?

RT: No, never.

CG: So, you never were a scratch golfer?

RT: Oh, no. Not even close.

CG: Well, twelve ain't that far.

RT: That's true.

CG: [Laughs] So, what are you up to now?

RT: One of the things I miss the most about Saint Martin's is The Martinis. We had a parish garage band rock group with—

CG: Oh, not the liquid martinis?

RT: No, no, no. The Martinis is the name of the band, and we had several guys in the choir who loved close harmonies, and an insurance expert drummer, and an industrial psychologist, John Tuton, bass player, and a parish Episcopal priest rhythm guitarist. We would play for fundraisers at Springside School, or Chestnut Hill Academy, or Germantown Friends School, or birthday parties, or parish events.

CG: What was your role in this group?

RT: I just played the guitar and the banjo. But that's what I miss when I'm talking about the parish, because I haven't had a group like that since.

CG: And what are you doing in terms of church now?

RT: As of June 30th, I'm not sure. I'm going to stay on at the Cathedral in the congregation.

CG: I was wondering, yeah, okay.

RT: But not every Sunday. Last Sunday I went with Ann to Saint Timothy's, where she's been on the vestry and chaired the search committee. The new rector was there this Sunday and I decided to go.

CG: So you just go wherever?

RT: Yeah. I ran the visual arts program at the Cathedral for eight years, and did—I think we counted at the end—48 different exhibits over the eight years that I was there, and it just came time to let that go. It's nice to just go down there and not have to worry about anything, except just being a parishioner.

CG: During the time after Charles Bennison retired, there were several steps. There was a provisional bishop in Dan Daniels, who was here for two, almost three years, and now we have a new diocesan. First of all, how do you think the process from Charles' retirement to today has gone, and where do you think the diocese is now?

RT: I loved Rodney Michel coming in and just helping calm—

CG: Everybody's favorite uncle, you described him to me, yes.

RT: Yes. Just calming everything and everyone down. Judy came on as dean under Rodney. I thought it was interesting that Dan Daniels had been the chairman of the trial.

CG: The appeal trial.

RT: Yeah, the appeal, the jurist trial. Was interested in becoming bishop here.

CG: He'd been fifteen years, I guess, in North Carolina?

RT: Eastern North Carolina, yeah. I think he brought a different style. There was some tension—better to talk to Judy on this than me. Just, I'm not sure he really understood how to work with a dean, and how to have a cathedral and best use a cathedral. So, as part of the cathedral staff, there were some tensions there.

CG: But, I think personally he connected to the diocese.

RT: And again, he may have overstayed a bit, but I think he did a good job. And then, going into the election, I'm very close friends with Frank Allen, and think he's a terrific, terrific priest. Wasn't sure that he was the right person to be the next bishop, but I wasn't sure that he shouldn't be. I was very open to the other candidates.

CG: Is some of that because there was a lot of talk about: Should we get somebody from outside the diocese?

RT: I think it's part of it. Yeah, we'd been through so—

CG: Who had no skin in the game?

RT: Well, we'd been through so much.

CG: Exactly.

RT: In the last years of this diocese, that it certainly wasn't a bad idea to bring someone in with a fresh perspective. But, I think Frank Allen could have been a terrific bishop.

CG: There's no questioning that.

RT: Yeah. I was not surprised when Daniel Gutierrez was elected. I'd gotten a whiff of that, a sense of that, at the hearings, and I went to several of them. He was very charismatic, very good on his feet. I think his ability and willingness to talk about Jesus, and about kind of a spiritual renewal and revival in the diocese really caught people's imaginations in those hearings. My sense is that he's done an amazing job of affirming a lot of these small, struggling parishes. At the point of his election I knew several parishes that just felt they had no future at all.

CG: And he's energized this?

RT: Oh, totally. I mean, I go into parish after parish now and they just have a whole new sense of mission, and being, and excitement. Yeah, I think he's really turned things around in this diocese.

CG: So, what's ahead for you?

RT: Not sure. Right now I'm preoccupied with some personal family things.

CG: We don't need to get into those.

RT: No. I've been dealing with [my] 91-year-old mother up in Connecticut.

CG: Right.

RT: And, I just need to focus my attention on that for now. [Phone rings] Just let that go.

CG: Are you going to spend more time in the Adirondacks?

RT: Yeah, definitely.

CG: You've been going up there for—[Phone announces caller ID]

RT: The car is at Fred's Car.

CG: [Laughs] Okay.

RT: I'll call them back in a bit. Yeah, we winterized the house up there.

CG: Where exactly is it?

RT: We're north of Upper Saranac Lake, in the lake district, with a lovely house on a lake that's been in my family for years and years. We decided to tear down a non-winterized main cabin and build a winterized palatial place that we just adore. It's my favorite place on Earth. And now that it's winterized we can go up there anytime. Ann's on a schedule at Penn where she doesn't have to be there every day, and there's longer vacations when the kids aren't there.

CG: Yeah, yeah. Is there anything that, in terms of your career or your feelings about the diocese, that we missed? Or, is there anything more you'd like to say? Other than the fact that you've got a lot of spelling checks to do. [Laughter]

RT: We didn't get into, one of the things I am proudest of is at one point when I'd rotated off as president of ECAP, and then I became ECAP's—I got elected to the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Association's board, and in that capacity became their representative to the Standing Commission for Ministry Development of the National Episcopal Church.

CG: At 815?

RT: At 815. Bud Holland was the staff person in charge of that commission. We oversaw all of the seminaries, all of the ordination process, all of the canonical revisions for dealing with ministry. It has

just been a remarkable experience. That was toward the end of my time at Saint Martin's. I was probably as involved in national affairs during that time—

CG: You were deputy, or alternate deputy.

RT: Alternate deputy, yeah.

CG: Which means you had to work when everybody else didn't want it.

RT: Yeah. I got assigned to the committee that was working on the ministry revision, the canons for ministry revisions. And, oh, just a remarkable group, but especially Diana Butler Bass, who ended up writing the whole final paper for us.

CG: It must have been a fascinating time when you were in the active ministry, because we were dealing with women, dealing with a new Prayer Book; it was only a year old when you started. We were dealing with gays in the clergy. Then you ran against the first openly partnered gay priest to be elected bishop. And of course, when the second one was, nobody even made a noise about it. Was it exciting?

RT: Yeah. Never dull. I mean, I just, I loved being involved. But my heart was in parish ministry and pastoral work, and trying to really make a difference at the local level.

[End of Interview]