



Allan Ross

B.L.A 1969

Interviewed by Carter Harrison

I was lucky enough to choose or get placed with you. I've been a resident assistant here at Guelph for a few years now and one of my clusters that I've been a part was for landscape architecture.

Oh cool. Well, you know a little bit about it. And we're real Mavericks. We never, even from the beginning, conformed to the OAC or university. The mentality at the time and I'm sure that probably hasn't really changed, was that landscape architects were an unknown entity. What do you guys really do?

I work with a with a guy on my team this year who is in his fourth year of landscape architecture. He loves it, but he gets asked that question all the time. What do you want to do? Design gardens or do you want to do work for natural resources?

So, what made you want to do landscape architecture? What made you want to take that program?

It was a very circuitous decision. My father was a graduate of Guelph in dairy, so the connection ran in the family, and I always wanted to do architecture but there wasn't a school I wanted to go to in Canada. So, the most available route was to go do an undergraduate program somewhere in Canada and then move over to a graduate school in the states, which worked well for me. I ended up doing 2 graduate degrees at Harvard and I did some stair-stepping – I did a degree in architecture, and I also did a degree in urban design. I couldn't have gotten that kind of a program in Canada. I don't know whether I could today, but back then it just wasn't available.

So, you graduated in 69 and you were the first graduating class of the landscape architecture program?

Yes, we were. We started in 65. We started in the horticulture building and after our first year we moved over to the building which used to be the seeds building associated with OAC. When I was there a couple years ago other than a bit of an addition on the back end it really hasn't changed very much.

I don't think campus has changed much. I had a few family members that attended the school too, and when I first came here in my first year, they kind of toured around like I remember this building. It looks the exact same and they were reminiscing about how Johnston Hall looks and Mills Hall and all that.

What kind of memories did you have when you were back on campus?

To be very honest with you, they worked our tails off. They wanted to make sure that when they pushed the first class out in 69, that we were really well grounded in the discipline, and it was very work intensive. There were ten in my graduating class. We started with 14, graduated 10 and even though none of us really became good close buddies, they were about the closest friendships we had on campus.

It was very difficult to feel like you were part of OAC or the university. The University just started back then too. If I remember correctly, it started its first programs in 1964. OAC, Mac College and the vet school got melded into the university system. It's quite interesting going back there and seeing all the growth over the years and of course, a lot of new buildings that weren't there when we were there. One of my professors while I was at Guelph, was the architect that designed the arts building right beside Johnston Hall, and he was working for firm in Toronto at the time. He was on the campus probably two or three times a week during the construction, and they asked him if he would teach a design studio, and that's how I ended up going to Harvard because he was a Harvard grad and because of his connections. He and I became very close and when I moved to Boston, I babysat for him and his wife several times.

So, would he be considered, one of your mentors them within the program?

Yes, there was two. There was the gentleman that I sent you the picture of - Jack Milliken who was sort of our class mentor and this gentleman his name was John Dyer, and he became my personal mentor. We both moved back to Boston at the same time he started teaching at Harvard, and I took a design studio from him there as well, which was kind of fun.

So, did you have a favorite class? Was it your design studio? Was it anything hands on related?

My big experience at Guelph outside of the school was that I became the cartoonist for the Ontario newspaper. I went to Jack Millikan one day and I said, "Jack, how do I improve my graphic skills?" He said, well, he said you could do a lot of artwork on the side. Then I found out that they were looking for a cartoonist at the time. So, I took it on and worked with them for two years. The design studios were pretty malevolent at the time. To be very honest with you, my entire goal was set on getting

degree in architecture. So, for me it was a good combination of understanding the natural environment before studying the built environment because I look at buildings now totally differently than most architects do in terms of approach, but that's rambling a little bit. Coming back to answer your question, I think the design studios were my favorite. The least favorite courses were horticulture!

Why was that?

I'm not very big into plant materials. In my practice down here in Dallas, I'm able to use full range of my background. On my drawing board right now I'm working on a landscape plan for a school natatorium that we're adding to a school here in Dallas. I don't know if you're familiar the term that natatorium, but it's basically a big swimming pool complex.

That's really cool. I saw that on the with the company that you are a part of Biophilic designs. What is that?

Well, it's an understanding nature and bringing nature into the built environment. It's a big new buzzword that a lot of people are trying to fit into and take on. It goes to my approach to designing and working on buildings, understanding sites, understanding climate, understanding weather, understanding sun movement and it's all part parcel of the design process because I do it so intuitively now but back then I was just learning the buzzwords and the language.

Did you gain this type of like skills while you were here at the university or was this later?

I did a very abrupt career change. I practiced and worked in Ontario for about 18 years, and it was fun. I taught at Ryerson University for 17 years. I was on the architecture faculty there.

I started on the landscape faculty at Guelph when I came back from grad school, but for me it was just too one-dimensional. I got to Ryerson. I was able to teach courses in architecture as well as landscape design and that was more of a challenge for me. My practice, it was interesting. We were very successful. We exploded growth-wise because landscape architecture was such a novelty. We designed most of Erin Mills in the suburb of Mississauga and that was interesting because I used my urban design background and landscape architectural background. But I got stereotyped and it was very difficult to shake that even with a lot of our high-profile clients we were working with. By moving to the U.S., I could start fresh, I could market in a totally different way, and it's been very, very successful. Our two big clients right now, one's a private school. We're got about four schools for them on the go and we do all the work in Dallas for the Catholic Charities. In fact, this morning I was working on a project for them. It's totally different scales: so, Friday afternoon I'm working on a landscape plan for the Natatorium and Friday morning I was designing a six-story building for age restricted seniors, so the diversity is exciting and that's what I really enjoy. So, I've been able to build a career and take a totally different direction, one

that suits my purposes more. It was very interesting because landscape architecture as a profession back in the early 1970s was almost nonexistent. Cities were just really starting to require landscape architects to do work on the various development projects. Architects just considered us bush pushers. We had no input in the initial concepts or in the massing of the sites which was my forte. I slowly worked into it, and I had got clients that respected my capabilities but really didn't understand that we did a lot more than just landscape architecture. I don't know whether the perception has changed a lot. It sounds like from what your comment earlier that people are still questioning well, do you guys just do gardens? Or go to work for the government?

Very much so, it seems like there still seems to be, not necessarily a stigma surrounded landscape architecture, but a very big misconception on what the actual program is.

What did the landscape architecture program mean to you?

There's no question that was a big step for me. It was fun being a pioneer, but then I had a stark realization that career-wise I had to make a move because I just didn't like the pigeon holing. I was up at a national conference in Toronto about three or four years ago, and I came away from that shaking my head. It just doesn't seem that anything's really changed. The public perception of what the profession is doing hasn't changed.

What advice do you have for people who are coming into landscape architecture program who want to be a part of this program but are not sure about what next steps are or what they can get themselves into job-wise, career-wise anything like that?

I'll answer that in a tangential way. I've got a buddy of mine that graduated a year behind me his name's James McGregor. James has a company, he's in Morocco. He went on to graduate school like I did and got his master's degree in tourism in Eco-Management, and he practices in Morocco, and he works all over Africa. He works in the Far East. Right now, he's engaged by Saudi Arabia developing reforestation plan for them. He's always maintained one of the big niches that landscape architects tend to disregard is this whole issue of climate change and what it's doing in perception and what it's doing physically to the world, and we started the Landscape Architecture Alumni Association. There was three of us that started that. There was James, myself, and lady by the name of Virginia Burt but Virginia graduated in, I think, 1984. We had to do a lot of pushing and shoving to get an alumni association started and we ended up working very closely with Dean Van Acker. I don't know whether you know Rene. He's an amazing man. We have so much respect for him. We couldn't have got this association off the ground and as far as we did without his help. James and Virginia and I are on the board and James keeps bringing that there's many more global issues that landscape architects could be dealing with and contributing across the world and every time he brings it up, it falls on deaf ears. It's kind of sad. From a trajectory standpoint, I don't know where the professions going.

It's interesting because you're talking about how so many people that you know have become successful in the field and have done so many different things and have taken their degrees and made great use of them. Do you think that the program itself should be more directed towards current issues like climate change or deforestation? Or do you think it should be more focused on the academic point, or should it be more of a social, economic standpoint?

That's a very leading question. I'm not that close to the school and I am not necessarily really involved in the profession. I'm not a member of professional associations so it's difficult to pigeonhole it. I think Guelph's reputation has been that it's always been a good sticks and bricks and trees kind of program, University of Toronto's program, for example, veered off course and became more of a policy-oriented school. Apart from a start-up school in the Maritimes that's now offering a bachelor's degree, Guelph was the only school with a bachelor's degree in Canada. U of T used to have one, but they phased out their undergraduate program to focus on their Graduate School, which I think is mostly policy. I've not tracked in many years what kinds of careers the graduates are leading themselves into. I do know, for example, that Virginia Burt concentrates on landscapes and gardens, and she is really good at it, she's got an office in Bronte, and she's got an office in Ohio, and she wins garden Design awards left, right and center all over the place and she's won CSLA Awards. She's won an SLA award in the states and so in terms of impacting that traditional base, she's doing a wonderful job. James is doing his thing in Morocco and I'm doing my thing here, which is going back and treating the design professions as a continuum. Apart from that I can't really tell you. There was a guy who came out in the late 70s, his name was Thomas Broom, and he became a well-known golf course designer. My compatriot, Ted Baker, who graduated the year behind me, his side gig was designing golf courses. Ted was a pretty darn good golfer and he just loved being out playing golf. So, he decided he might as well design them.

I mean doing something that you love, right? Doing the golf and then designing a golf course. It brings a lot of joy and a lot of passion into what you do. How did you find yourself enjoying what you're doing more and more as your experiences and your education, and all that kind of stuff continued?

Well, the end goal, as I said earlier, was to study architecture. Landscape architecture was a good stepping stone for that and then I also decided to broaden my base a little bit and study urban design too and between those three areas I've got the built environment well covered. We do a lot of church design which is big in the South. We've got a big church in Omaha, NE. We're working on the several in the Dallas area. We did all the work for a company called Freedom Powersports, which sell jet skis, motorcycles, ATV's, UTP's you name it. We did their work all over Texas and Georgia for a while until they sold it. Back in the day I did DSW shoe warehouse (have you ever heard of this store?) Just imagine a 35,000 square foot

shoe store. I did a 33,000 square foot shoe warehouse for them in San Jose California few years ago, so the types of challenges that I've had career wise have been phenomenal. I'm not pigeonholed into one type of architectural work. We used to do a lot of custom homes when I was in Toronto. I tried branching out and worked for a real estate developer and we did a lot of high-end custom homework - the physical design of them as well as the landscapes. The biggest one was a development in Mississauga of about 50 custom home lots and it became a raging success.

So, when everybody figured out what we were doing, we were moving on to something else and that's when I landed Erin Mills as a major client. We've done a lot of fun things with them. One of the things that really floated my boat, I worked with the Federal Department of Energy in Canada and CMHC and we pioneered low energy building technology, which morphed into green building and LEED and that was a lot of fun. I designed the two biggest projects in Canada using the low energy building technology that we developed. I worked with a group of scientists that were parcelling and packaging the methodology and I was designing the projects to see how well they worked. Up to that point, they had just done a few single-family homes and we took two projects: 1 of 82 units and one of 100 units at Erin Mills and built them as low energy housing projects. They were extraordinarily successful, but the program ended. It was called R2000, and they did exactly what they were intending to do and in the year 2000 they basically shut down, which was kind of unfortunate, but it did become LEED, and everybody's bastardized that whole thing around the world. Now everybody's scrambled to get LEED certified, and they now have silver, platinum and gold rated buildings depending on energy consumption. It's funny because I design that intuitively into all the projects we do, and it becomes a matter of course. We do a lot of multi-family work here and it's funny because some of the techniques we developed in Canada have been applied - it's just sort of the housing standard here.

It's interesting to learn about, like how new energy building techniques and everything is kind of coming into how architecture is being framed and how architecture being done nowadays. Circling back to something I asked you closer to the beginning, you said you never felt really part of the OAC. Is there a reason for that? Was it because it was such a new program, and the OAC was so significantly different or was it something else?

That's a good part of it. That's a good way to put it. OAC is entrenched in all its husbandry, horticulture, type programs and there wasn't a niche where landscape architecture fit into that overall structure and it never has and probably to this day, still hasn't. One thing that the landscape architecture program desperately needs a new building and we've been pushing Rene Van Acker. He's no longer Dean. He's now Interim Vice President of Research for the university. He just got promoted a few months ago, but he was involved in doing a long-term campus plan to look at expanding facilities and hopefully one of the things that they put forward was either an expanded or a new facility for landscape architecture. When they put us in that facility in 1970, 1971, it barely fit us at that time. The student body has tripled in size

and faculty are doubled up in the offices that we used to use. I used to share one when I was teaching there part-time with the gentleman by the name of Larry Webster, which was kind of fun but now they're doubling these people up or tripling them up permanently and so I don't know what the game plan is long term. When we started, I'm going to share something with you here that I think is general knowledge, we didn't get much support from the acting director of the school, I don't know whether he felt that we were treading on his territory or not, but that's why I've made reference earlier to the support that we got from Rene Van Acker as the Dean of OAC. We haven't had a meeting of the Alumni Association for almost two years. We had a board of 10 people; there was a lot of enthusiasm at first; there was a lot of great ideas, what we could do, how we could support the university, how we could get alumni involved but it's interesting because until Virginia and James and I took the initiative, for 40 years, there was nothing. There was no alumni group in landscape architecture at all. I graduated with nine other guys, and I can't tell you where any of them are – that's pretty pathetic. By contrast, my alumni group at Harvard is just off the charts, as you can imagine. They take care of their alumni like you wouldn't believe. We had an event there in Cambridge last year. We'll have another one next September and a bunch of my classmates all showed up for it, and we all had a great time – we went out for dinner and sat around sharing war stories, but I don't know what it is about landscape architecture at Guelph. It doesn't seem to have changed. It just seems that everybody that's in there is aloof and ready to move on to do their own thing. It's difficult. It's difficult to really say what it is, but it's always been this amorphous body that seems to be at the fringe of the university and the fringe of OAC rather than heavily indoctrinated within it. For example, when we were there in school and the university would have alumni weekends and so on, one of my classmates owned a fire truck and he brought it from Whitby one weekend just so he could participate in the alumni parade, and we got pigeonholed as those crazy landscape architects over in the old seed building. At that time, Guelph had a very rural mentality. You had OAC and the Mac College and most of these people were off the farm and campus was nowhere near as cosmopolitan as it is now, so you had that kind of image to deal with as well. Back then, there was only 1900 students between OAC, Mac and OVC.

Now I think incoming first years were close to 5000 scattered across all the different residence buildings and different classes. A friend of mine who is in Landscape Architecture, and someone called him an AGGIE and he said no, I don't associate with the Aggies. I'm not associated with the agricultural. I'm in landscape architecture. We don't associate with that and so it's kind of interesting that you're saying that that is exactly kind of what happened when you were in this program. I don't know if it's just carried through and it's or it's still like there is an underlying tone of, we don't fit in. We're not part of the OAC, we're our own thing, but we're not recognized as such.

What was it like to come on campus and join a brand-new program? What did it feel like for you? Was it intimidating?

Well, it was the sense of the unknown because we had no idea what to expect. You're going to get a kick out of this, our first year of design studio the gentleman that taught the studio was a commercial art illustrator and he had us design a cereal box and we're all wondering: where's the connection? The first-year studio was elementary – it was about design basics. We really didn't get into designing spaces and landscapes until the 2nd year. It was sort of like Star Trek - the Great Unknown and I think we bonded as a group because we knew nothing better. We never felt as if we were part of the OAC, and there was no effort by OAC to make us feel that way. The broad embrace when it came to mixers at the beginning of the year was campus wide. I think I knew more people in arts than I did in OAC.

I just had a stronger affinity for them because that's when the arts programs were starting and there were a lot of students were migrating in from Toronto. It wasn't this broad-based agriculture from rural Ontario kind of thing, and I think we all had more affinity that way. The arts people were in the same boat that we were because they had no idea what to expect - their program was new as well. One of my friends had transferred in from University of Toronto because he flunked a couple of courses. He had partied too hard at Toronto and Guelph allowed him to graduate when he was originally supposed to at University of Toronto. We had two guys from landscape architecture program, the director of the school at the time flunked these two guys and they both said the heck with you and migrated to University of Toronto because it had just started its landscape architecture program and they graduated on time. The school was trying to get tough with its curriculum. That's sort of an obscure way of answering your question, but it gives you a bit of an idea of the tone of things because it was unsure.

Guelph is really known for its vet school and the OAC and business programs.

Do you think since Guelph was pioneering in terms of landscape architecture, that that's one of the programs that it should also be known for?

It should be. I don't know whether it is. I've been down here in the states now for over 30 years and I have no idea of what Guelph's profile is publicly and what its profile is like professionally. I do know that when we were going to school and when I was teaching at Ryerson, we didn't give much credence to the graduates from University of Toronto because they were coming out too broadly educated.

The program Ryerson was canned about 10 years ago - I think. There were three programs in Ontario all at the undergraduate level. Ryerson's was a three- year diploma and it was modeled after the architecture program, which was more technology based. Guelph always had the reputation of graduating well-rounded people that could step into a professional role. At University of Toronto, I've talked to a lot of people over the years that used it slightly differently than I did, they used it to go into something else. Just as a sidebar, I have a passion for history as well, although that passion was killed at the University of Guelph. I had an architectural

history course at Guelph that was terrible. The instructor we had was a civil engineer and a landscape architect, but he was one of these really anal guys and he didn't stay very long. When I got to Harvard, I took Edward Seckler's course, and this guy was incredible in architectural history. I took his course because I was required to take one and I ended up taking three classes in three years from him just because they were so amazing. I read historical fiction a lot. I read a lot about the Renaissance in Italy, the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage. It's sort of inspired me. I've read a whole series on Genghis Khan; I've read a series on Julius Caesar.

Well, it's interesting because obviously our experiences are completely different with how we've experienced things and how we've gone through our time here at Guelph, which is why I really enjoy history because it's not just a way to learn, it's a way to know who's done what and where have they done everything.

Well, here's a perspective for you. I just turned 77 last Saturday. I feel and function like I'm in my 40s and I've never worked harder than I am right now. I don't conceive that I'll ever retire. I've got guys that I ran into at that conference a few years ago that were a couple of years behind me at Guelph. Talking to one of them I said, "What are you doing now?" He said, "Oh, I'm retired, renovating the kitchen of my house and my wife and I are thinking to go going to Europe." He looked like he had one foot in the grave. So, it's one of the things I've enjoyed about working with James and Virginia. Virginia's probably 10-12 years younger than me but she's very passionate with what she does. I know James is in Morocco. I don't know his circumstances, whether he's running a firm now or whether he's doing all his consulting on his own, but it's in my blood. And as long as I keep getting challenging projects, we do a lot of really exciting stuff and no two days are ever the same, that's what keeps me going. I don't think I could ever be a dentist; I'd probably be dead by now.

You're dealing with all these idiot savants in the cities, and the bureaucracy is getting as bad here as it was in Canada. That was one of the reasons I left Canada 30 years ago because the municipalities were getting more and more difficult to work with up there. It was analogous to working in California. But now with all the influx of people from California and the northeast here, we're getting the same stuff that I faced when I was in Canada. So, I don't know what you're familiar with the term, it's called entitlements and it's going through the approvals process on different properties and that's exactly what I'm doing on these four schools right now. Part of the problem I'm having with them is not only dealing with the cities, but also dealing with the consultants that the clients dumped on me but aren't performing. So that's why I say no two days are ever the same.

What's something that helps you get through any of the difficulties when you're in the process of building or planning the different buildings that you are?

It really takes taking a step back and recharging and just examining the situation. One thing I did a lot of before COVID was traveling a lot. I was had fulfilled my

ambition of seeing as much of Europe as I could, and that's where the history thing comes in. That's become a passion of mine, so I've got a ramp that back up again and start balancing the wheel of life. I've been divorced for a long time and that's one of the endemic problems of being a design professional. When you're working so many crazy hours, you tend to compromise your relationships, and I've just chosen this style for the last several years, but it gets old. It gets a little tiring. I'm far too one dimensional, I need to start balancing things. I did make it to Spain back in spring. A buddy of mine from Dallas here built a boutique hotel in western Spain, so I went over to visit him. I've got to re-engage in that whole aspect of things again, because I'm reading all these historical novels, the people, places, and I don't get a chance to go and experience them. If you're into history and interested in the built environment, what really triggered my love of all this as an author by the name of Ross King. Ross is Canadian. He's from Saskatchewan, he's on the faculty, I think, at Cambridge, and he's written a whole bunch of books on the Renaissance. The number one book project that was on my bucket list for years was the Duomo in Florence and building the dome. It's the largest open span structure in the world and they could not figure out how to build the dome. So, the church stood for a couple 100 years with walls and no roof, and Brunelleschi won the design competition to build the structure, and he did. It's phenomenal and I had to see it. Ross wrote a book called *Brunelleschi's Dome*. Brunelleschi was a rock star architect/engineer, and he was the one in the Renaissance period that brought architecture back into prime time after the Middle Ages. So, if you find yourself a niche like that, it's kind of fascinating to follow up on all of this. When I taught at Ryerson, I used to counsel all the guys that were looking at grad school because as I was telling you, they had a good architecture program at Ryerson in technology and those guys coming out of that program at Ryerson, you couldn't touch them in in the real world. They were so well versed in a lot of aspects of design. I sent a lot of them to do master's degrees in design in the US and they've come back and some of them have just been kicking ass career-wise. You might think about looking in the US. The difference between four years of Guelph and three years at Harvard were like night and day, as you can imagine, and the Boston environment, for example, has, I think, 19 colleges and universities within a 20-mile radius and it's a historical feeding frenzy. There's a lot of opportunity there.

In speaking Boston having a historical heritage and you being interested in history. Has the stuff you've learned or the places you've been or the books that you've read about different historical events, has that influenced any of your architecture? Throughout the course of your career have you seen something, or you've read about something like that would be really interesting to try to modernize?

There's a whole movement right now, that started in Scandinavia and it's almost, a backlash against modern architecture in the cities because they've destroyed people places and this is a big issue with me.

I love going to Paris. There was an urban architect by the name of Haussman that redid Paris in the time of Napoleon. Napoleon really didn't like fighting battles in France in these narrow little streets, so he hired Haussman to redesign the whole

interior of Paris. That's when they created the broad alleys and the parks and a lot of different focal points. The style of architecture is unique there - it really is a major people place and that has major influence on me. I don't do a lot of high-density stuff, high-rises, things like that. The street level scale to me is really important and we design a lot of that. In fact, this housing project I'm working on right now with the Catholic Charities, the site is so dense that I'm going to have to put the community space for all the residents on the 2nd floor, about 3500 square feet worth, because I just don't have the space for it on the ground with all the parking and all the ancillary uses. It does have a pervasive effect on how I approach things, for sure, no question about it.

I think learning about the past and bringing the past into what we now do is the really the only way to learn and grow as a society. I think it's so interesting how being an architect yourself and being so fascinated with history and basically the modern or historical marvels that we are still seeing that have been left over from centuries is really a testament to how important architecture is, but how important landscape architecture really is. Understanding how things are supposed to be placed and how things are placed and how they will last.

Do you have any advice to give to any current students within the landscape architecture program?

Yes, define your niche - it's really critical. Just don't step out in the marketplace and take the first thing that comes up comes available. You know there's such a passionate diversity of things that people do.

I mentioned James McGregor doing the ecotourism recreational planning all over Africa and now doing the reforestation study for Saudi Arabia. He's a great example of an extreme, but there are a lot of niches out there that can still be defined and developed. There was a graduate of the program, I can't remember his name, UNESCO retained him develop a sort of a state of the world in the Caribbean and he was doing all this thermal imaging and mapping and all sorts of things, on a broad macro scale. There are a lot of things like that that are available too. It appears as if there's a real identity crisis still. I was asked once, and you're going to love this one, I was asked "Mr. Ross you're a landscape architect. Why do you want to become an architect?" And boy oh boy, I let him have it. He was kind of laughed out of the room because there was a committee of people there. You're dealing with that kind of stigma, public stigma.

During the summers, when I was at Guelph, I worked for the Ontario government. I worked for Lands and Forests, and the gentleman that I worked for, I think, was the Director of Long Range planning. He eventually became the senior guy at the at the Department of Lands and Forest. I was in my third year at Guelph, he put me on the master plan for Algonquin Park, the initial one, and I was on an unlimited budget - I could travel. For three months, I was poking around Algonquin Park and flying with

Bush pilots up there. I would go over to the dock and ask if they were taking supplies out to a base camp somewhere, I'd ask if they had room for me to fly with them, and I'd fly out and back and I'd get a chance to see a lot of the park. That was unbelievable. At that time, they hadn't a clue what to expect in terms of a finished product, and I produced a document that was very generic, obviously, because it can't really do hundreds of thousands of acres study in three months, but the exposure was phenomenal. I could have pursued that as a career when I got back.

I worked my final summer before going off to grad school with an engineering firm in Bramalea and the owner of the civil engineering firm saw a lot of value of having somebody like me involved. He offered me a salary that was twice the going rate at the time to stay and work with them, and I said no. My mindset was on Harvard and that was it - I was out the door at the end of the summer. I think as a discipline, I think that there's a lot of opportunities. People just need to define their own niche and follow it. There's a lot of tried and true. There's a lot of established routes, but I always take my hat off to James and what he's been able to do, and he had to move to Morocco to be able to do it - he couldn't do it from Canada.

Well, I think that's probably some of the best pieces of advice that anyone in such an up-and-coming program could really receive is that, even if people question why you're doing it, there's always a reason to do it and there's always so much opportunity if you're willing to find that opportunity.

Yeah, the one word of advice is being in landscape architecture, you're not going to get rich. You're going to probably have a nice lifestyle and nice income, but like any of the design disciplines, you're not going to get really wealthy.

I think it's going to be interesting to share this with the rest of the class and the rest of the campus so that they understand what your experiences were like. Maybe landscape architecture will finally be recognized as part of the OAC if that's what they choose to be and if not then that's okay too.

There was a lot of talk back several years ago about moving the program out of OAC into one of the associated arts programs, thinking that there was a better fit. The problem with that approach is that we didn't have a bigger champion than Rene Van Acker. As Dean of OAC, he was amazing. Not all former Deans were as positive. Rene sure went out of his way to help landscape architecture. There was a real problem with lack of faculty, and he enabled them to hire quite a few new people.

It's a long-standing program since '69. You've been a part of that program. It continues to be a program that people want to be a part of. So, there must be something going right? There must be something that's worth keeping the program the way it is and keep fighting for the program to be its program.

It's certainly generated a lot of competent and well-known alumni for sure.

As I told you earlier, I was an RA for a cluster for the landscape architecture program. I still see some of those students to this day, and they're still very, very excited to be a part of something that you were a pioneer for. So, from me for them, I would like to say thank you.

So, I would like to thank you for your time and for participating with this interview!

Thanks Carter. Have a good long weekend.

Thank you so much.