

Dan Abramowicz: I'm Dan Abramowicz, from the Graduate School class of 1984. I'm currently the Chief Technology Officer of Crown Holdings, a metal packaging company. I'm the former chair of the APGA, the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni, and a member of the Princetoniana Committee.

Jean Telljohann: That sounds like such a fun Committee, by the way.

Dan Abramowicz: You're right. We've been able to do some interesting things on the Committee. I did a History of the Graduate School Hooding Ceremony last year, which was great because Princeton didn't have the Hooding Ceremony when I was a graduate student. So, it was a nice thing to learn more about. Jean, I really appreciate your help in putting together this history. Can I please ask you to briefly introduce yourself before we begin?

Jean Telljohann: Sure. I'm Jean Telljohann, Class of '81, S81, P11 and P14. Now let's see, what have I been involved with at Princeton? Well, of course, Grand Marshal. I've served two terms as a class officer and was on the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council for several years. I've also been very involved in my region. Right now I'm on the Advisory Council of the Department of French and Italian. And I also Chair the Selection Committee for the Princeton Reach Out 56-81-06 fellowships. These fellowships were established by the Class of '56 and represent a joint effort by the three classes ('56, '81, and '06). So I'm involved in a couple of things still, but the biggest current commitment is Princeton ReachOut.

Dan Abramowicz: That's terrific, you have remained very involved ... thank you for that. And congratulations on having two of your children go through the university. That's pretty exciting.

Jean Telljohann: Yes, for which I'm eternally grateful.

Dan Abramowicz: That's really great. Now, let's discuss your involvement as a Marshal in the P-rade. I believe you were a Grand Marshal from 2013 to 2015. Is that correct?

Jean Telljohann: Yes. I had to look it up myself to be certain. I knew that I had been Grand Marshal the year my daughter graduated, but I had to check the years.

Dan Abramowicz: Very good. And were you a Marshal before you became a Grand Marshal?

Jean Telljohann: Oh, my goodness, yes! Let's hope they aren't going to just start bringing people in off the street! Yes, I was a Marshal for about 20 years. I don't remember the exact first year I served, I think it was around 1987. But the first time I marched in the P-rade was when I was an undergraduate freshman, as a member of the Princeton Marching Band. I was clanging the symbols as part of the percussion section, so I knew the P-rade from that experience.

Dan Abramowicz: That's terrific. Of course, as the member of the band, you got a lot of exercise because you had to go through the P-rade several times.

Jean Telljohann: Thank you for appreciating that.

Dan Abramowicz: How many times?

Jean Telljohann: Three times. And because it was three times and it's hot... Those band jackets are designed for fall football games, not the heat of June on the Princeton campus. So yes, it was an exhausting day, but really fun.

Dan Abramowicz: Perhaps we should find a way to get the band light summer uniforms just for this purpose. They work hard enough.

Jean Telljohann: Yes! Maybe we need to have a few bake sales for that.

Dan Abramowicz: Very good. So now if we could, let's talk a little bit about the role of the Marshals from your perspective. What do you see as their key role?

Jean Telljohann: Well, to maintain some order and structure within the joyful and exuberant spirit of the overall event. Also, to try to keep the time down to... we used to say 3 hours and 15 minutes maximum.

Dan Abramowicz: Your comment about exuberant spirit captures all sorts of very vivid memories for me. You're right. I think that's a great way to put it. Did your role as a Grand Marshal change in any way during your time versus your former experience with the P-rade?

Jean Telljohann: Well, nothing changed in the role during my three-year term as Grand Marshal. But there was something and I had **hoped** to change and maybe one day will still get changed. In response to the very crowded routes, I had hoped to spearhead a committee that would look at changing the route so there'd be a longer route with more room on the sidelines. Because as each successive class is larger and especially with the younger classes and their enthusiasm, we have more and more people coming back every year. There just isn't enough room. Whether the change would involve just adding an extra leg to the current route, or having completely different route, I don't know. There was some discussion about having the P-rade go down into Jadwin Stadium and have the classes that arrived sit in the stadium and watch the other ones arrive. Anyway, we had a few different ideas, but that's something I never got to work on. Now that's for another generation to tackle.

Dan Abramowicz: But you bring up a great point, that every class is larger than the years before. I think there's an increased percentage of people coming back for reunions as well, compounding the problem.

Jean Telljohann: Correct.

Dan Abramowicz: So those two factors together are putting real stress on the logistics of the P-rade, as you know.

Jean Telljohann: Yes.

Dan Abramowicz: Right? I believe that we now have around 100 marshals. Perhaps that would've been close to the number of marchers back at the beginning. So, it's a really different time. I think the university is going to have to think long and hard about that challenge, there's no doubt about it.

Jean Telljohann: Yes.

Dan Abramowicz: Thinking about your time as a Marshal or a Grand Marshal, can you think of some examples of when the Marshals played a particularly valuable role in terms of this success of the P-rade?

Jean Telljohann: Well, there were a number of specific examples. Frequently, there'd be a member of the Old Guard, an elderly alum, who had maybe overdone it that day between the heat and whatever, and they would need some assistance. We often had to help in that way. But one year, one of the golf carts stalled blocking the route. Heather Butts, who is one of my successors as Grand Marshal, had to push the golf cart and get it out of the way. So, she really saved the day.

Dan Abramowicz: A couple of people have referred to Heather's heroic efforts to keep the parade going. So, she obviously made a great impression with that.

Jean Telljohann: Yes, she did!

Dan Abramowicz: And can you recall any times when things backfired a little bit? Ways the Marshals maybe need to think about improving what they do?

Jean Telljohann: Well, there was one year that was really a disaster, but I wouldn't say it was anybody's fault specifically. However, I think communication could be improved. I don't know if you remember the year, I think this was Dan Lopresti's last year as Grand Marshal, when lightning had been spotted. Suddenly we heard... I forget if there were loud speakers or sirens, something telling people to take shelter. The P-rade had really just started and suddenly it was called off, and nobody really knew what was going on. Nobody knew if it was going to be restarted. We didn't then have a system of getting messages out. There were, as a result, some bad feelings among general members of the alumni body afterwards because of the lack of communication about what had happened, and why things couldn't get started again. We've always walked the route first thing in the morning and made determinations based on weather, but never had conditions change so suddenly before; this was all just an unexpected eventuality.

A lot of negative feedback was received on some of the list serves, the email list serves that go out to alumni. No one official really responded to them in an effective way, from my perspective. Anyway, that was really all very unfortunate. So much planning and effort goes into that P-rade, the bands and floats, and the people for whom it's the 25<sup>th</sup> reunion. So, to have it just end like that was unfortunate. And I understand why it happened, but it was still unfortunate. I hope there's just a better communication system at this point.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, as you point out, the circumstances involved in cancelling that P-rade was the fact that lightning strikes were within a certain distance.

Jean Telljohann: Right.

Dan Abramowicz: But of course, most people didn't know that. So, if there was a way to get that message out more clearly, I think people would've felt differently. Those alumni that were a little unhappy would've probably better understood the rationale. I think you're right.

On another note, are there some of your most vivid or fondest memories of the P-rade that you'd like to share?

Jean Telljohann: Sure. Well, this is a personal memory, but my husband brought my elderly mother to see me marching as the Grand Marshal in the P-rade and she was so proud of me, you know? I mean, she was just so proud to see me leading the P-rade. I still remember when I was a child, I heard her laughing with a friend on the phone. She said, "Jeannie said she wants to go to Princeton." She was laughing when she said it because, of course, then there weren't even women at Princeton. But maybe she also thought it was just such a stretch idea ... I don't know. I remember thinking yes, she's laughing. But she was really proud and it was a big day for her. President Tilghman even greeted her. I mean, that was just very meaningful to me.

But more generally, I mean, meeting the oldest living alum at the Old Guard Luncheon on Saturday, down at Princeton Inn, was also a highlight. My daughter says she sees me trying to hold on to be the oldest living alum one day. Let me not wish that on her, as sometimes extreme longevity is not such a gift. Let's see what else ... I mean, it's just beautiful to be part that tremendous history and tradition. I've used this comparison before, but to see the visual history of the university with the Old Guard and then the very homogeneous group of alums. Then as you get to the younger classes, you see a much more

diverse, co-ed group. I think it's just a beautiful, beautiful thing. The creative bands, just everything about it is so much fun.

Dan Abramowicz: I think you're absolutely right. That's really one of the main objectives, right ... to safely have fun? As it turns out, I can really relate to your memory about your mother. I can share a similar memory. Earlier I mentioned there wasn't a Hooding Ceremony when I graduated and then I moved out of the area when I started work. But when I came back and was a Marshal for the first time and marched in the P-rade, my parents came and watched, and they were so proud of me.

Jean Telljohann: Oh!

Dan Abramowicz: As you know, when you make your parents proud and happy, it's worth gold. It's worth more than that ... it's invaluable. So, I have a similar personal memory and I agree with you ... that's a fantastic memory.

Jean Telljohann: That's sweet that you have the same memory to share! I'm trying to think if there's anything else?

Dan Abramowicz: I'm just thinking you were the second female Grand Marshal, correct?

Jean Telljohann: Yes.

Dan Abramowicz: Does that fact bring to mind any memories or anything that you might want to comment on?

Jean Telljohann: Again, I've shared this story in another context, but at my prep school I was one of the very first cohort of girls. So there, I was really aware of being a first in a lot of different ways. At Princeton, however, I wasn't really conscious of being a first so much. So no, that wouldn't really have any particular significance for me. I have a great deal of affection though for the Grand Marshals who went before me ... I really do for Charles Plohn and for Charlie Rose. I also share some wonderful memories with some of the younger alums who were Marshals and with some of the other older ones. I've really made some wonderful friends that way.

Dan Abramowicz: Terrific. In a way, I think it's a compliment to the university that it wasn't a very significant thing that you were a female Grand Marshal.

Jean Telljohann: Right. That's right.

Dan Abramowicz: I think that says something very positive about the university.

Jean Telljohann: Yes, I agree.

Dan Abramowicz: Excellent. Now, is there anything you'd like to add that I didn't think to ask you about or that you'd like to share?

Jean Telljohann: Well, there's just one funny story. I can't remember if this was the first year I was a Flanking Marshal to Charles Plohn, but I had broken my foot and I was in a boot cast. But I was so thrilled that he asked me to be a Flanking Marshal. This was one of the highlights of my accomplishments! So, there was nothing that was going to stop me from being in that P-rade, broken foot or not. But here's the funny thing. The other Flanking Marshal, that same year, Janice Roddenbery, she also had a broken foot. I was out of the cast by the time of the P-rade, but she was in her boot cast and I thought, "Oh, we would've been such a sight, both of us with broken feet in a cast!"

Dan Abramowicz: Wow, that would've been quite a sight. I'm picturing the symmetry, if one was the left leg and one was the right you could've flanked Charles perfectly!

Jean Telljohann: That's right.

Dan Abramowicz: ... in a very symmetric way.

Jean Telljohann: I know. Isn't that funny?

Dan Abramowicz: That is a great story to share and a great memory with which to end.

Jean Telljohann: Have fun with the rest of your interviews. This is really terrific. It's fun to remember these things.

Dan Abramowicz: Yeah. I'm talking to Charles Plohn a little later this week.

Jean Telljohann: Oh, I bet he will have funnier ways of telling stories than I do!

Dan Abramowicz: I've had a very good response. I'm going to be able to talk to about seven Grand Marshals. The interviews are going to be a great resource for the story. Thank you again, Jean.

Jean Telljohann: My pleasure.