

Dan Abramowicz: Let me first please introduce myself ... I'm Dan Abramowicz. I'm with the Graduate School Class of 1984 (or *84) and I'm currently the CTO of Crown Holdings, a global packaging company. And I was a member of the APGA, the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni, for many years and a former President of that organization. And I'm now a member of the Princetoniana Committee and doing this project on the History of the Marshalls.

Charlie Rose: Yes, I certainly remember you ... I know you well.

Dan Abramowicz: I'm lucky enough to know you well because you were the first Grand Marshal that I served under as a Marshal, and really appreciate your help with this project. Charlie, thank you again for agreeing to help. Before we begin, would you please like to introduce yourself?

Charlie Rose: I'm Charlie Rose, Class of '50, rah, rah, rah. I'm currently President of the class, actually President-For-Life. I ran for President at our 25th reunion and the person running against me cheated and got more votes than I did, but he died. So, I became Class President. And then I just amended a few things and just stayed in the role because we couldn't find anyone who wanted to succeed me, and now there aren't that many of us left in the class. The number is ~100 or something like that in the class.

Dan Abramowicz: Well, Charlie, you've had a rich history of volunteer service to the university. Not just you, your family, your heirs, have taken on that tradition and we owe you a real debt of gratitude. And I wanted to just share that with you. And, as I understand it, you have played nearly every Marshal role there is to play in a Parade, Line Marshal, to Area Captain, to Flanking Marshal, and of course as Grand Marshal. That's amazing!

Let's now turn to a discussion of your time as a Grand Marshal, if we can. As I understand it, you were a Grand Marshal for a five-year term, which is a bit unusual, from 2003 to 2007. Is that correct?

Charlie Rose: Sounds right. Grand Marshalls held the position for five years at that time. My predecessor, Arlene Pedovitch '80, who was a roommate of my daughter Chris Parham '80, was Grand Marshal for many years ... it's like they just forgot to replace her! And then someone put me in the position for five years and then Charles Plohn '66 was appointed for three years and then extended to five years. And since then they've thought about it and stuck with 3-year terms.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, that's correct ... the terms are now three years for the most recent Grand Marshalls, Jean Telljohann '81, Dan Lopresti *87 and Heather Butts '94. You really had a rich history as a Grand Marshal. Were you a Marshal before you became a Grand Marshal?

Charlie Rose: Yes, for about 40 years, I think.

Dan Abramowicz: Wow. That's remarkable!

Charlie Rose: Just forever! Stu Duncan '50, who has been my Class Vice-President until he died to last year, had been Grand Marshal succeeding, Frank Gorman '41. And Stu, we used to have our Saturday morning meetings on the porch of the McLean House. There were so few of us and then we moved inside and then I suggested that maybe we needed a bigger place. Now we have an enormous place.

Dan Abramowicz: Well, I'm lucky. There was a great interview of Stu about the P-rade and his time as a Grand Marshal and Stu talked a lot about the history of the Marshals. So, I have that history as a great resource to draw on. But you've had a unique role here. Let me just start by just asking, what do you think is the key role of the Marshals, and has it changed over time?

Charlie Rose: Oh, yes, yes! When I was appointed Grand Marshal, I convened a couple of meetings to go over tightening up the organization of the P-rade, as I realized that we needed better planning. I invited the Marshal area bosses and a few others to a meeting. They used to advertise in the local newspaper asking for people to be Marshals, because they were short of Marshals. I was aggressive in contacting Princetonians who had done something worthwhile for the university to be Marshals, people with roles in the Schools Committee or Annual Giving, Pyne Prize winners, and leaders of different organizations.

Dan Abramowicz: That's a very significant change. So, you changed being a Marshal from "let's just find anyone who's available," even non-alumni, into an honorary position. That was inspired! And you are recognized for putting a lot of effort into rebuilding the Marshal corps, and operating on the basis that being a Marshal is an honor, and inviting people who had done good things in other aspects of Princeton involvement to join the group, which was a very important improvement. As a result, the Marshals are more diversified and much more reflective of the alumni at large. Thank you for that and for your leadership!

Charlie Rose: Yes. We made a lot of changes. With the changes we lost a few members, but not too many. And after a couple of years, we now had enough candidates that I was able to have a group of Marshals in Training.

Dan Abramowicz: What were some other changes you made?

Charlie Rose: I restarted several historic Marshal traditions, like the annual Marshal's Dinner and wearing the official uniform (white pants or skirt and a blue blazer instead of Marshals just wearing their class costumes and a DaVinci hat). I also started some new traditions, including awarding 10-year certificates for loyal Marshals and creating the position of Point Marshal.

Dan Abramowicz: That's quite a legacy ... thank you for that! Given you have been involved in so many P-rades ... and in so many ways, you must have some great memories you could share. Are there one or two memories that are particularly important to you?

Charlie Rose: Of yes! One of the most fun memories I have was just before I became the Grand Marshal. At that time, they repainted the gates at the entrance to the campus, so they looked really good for the reunion. But they painted them so well that you couldn't latch them!

Dan Abramowicz: They wouldn't close or something because of the paint?

Charlie Rose: Yes, the paint was so thick they would not close right. So, my two grandsons got hammers, one from McLean house and one from across the street, and they were chipping away at the gates and that's their first remembrance at Princeton, chipping away at FitzRandolf Gate. And in my first year as Grand Marshal I got two Flanking Marshals, which was traditional. And we went down the route beforehand, in preparation, as they changed the route almost every year. Well we discovered that there was an abrupt right turn and there just wasn't enough room for floats to go around that turn. So, we had the grounds people come out and they took a tree out to widen the turn!

Dan Abramowicz: Wow.

Charlie Rose: They told me afterwards, that they were going to do it anyway. But, what power! That shows how important the P-rade is to the university! Another time, we went up and there was a whole class standing in front of the line of the march, looking the other way. And we went out, my Flanking Marshals went out, and they said, "You have to move." They said, "No, the Marshal has to tell us to move." And one Marshal was Wan Williams and he went out and said, "I'm a Marshall, please move." And that did it! I later learned that the woman who was supposed to be the Marshal in that area went to hear the President give a speech at Alexander and hadn't realized we had no one there. I had to figure out something to prevent this from happening again. So, then I appointed a Flanking Marshall who was Charles Plohn who became the Point Marshal. That's when I created that position. And the Point Marshall would go ahead of the group to make sure we didn't have a lost class or other issues.

Dan Abramowicz: You have really made some important improvements. As you've seen so many changes in the P-rade, what are some others that come to mind?

Charlie Rose: Okay. Well the bands used to sort of wander along and they were very relaxed. And I was marching along my first year as Grand Marshal and I looked back and there was no band. So, I went back to this woman who said, "Well, that's what we do." I said, "If you do it one more time, I'll throw you out." I don't know that I had the ability to throw them out, but she didn't know that! See,

remember I'm an Airborne Colonel and I'm used to giving instructions. Now, full disclosure, I was not Airborne Colonel at the same time, but nobody knows that.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, of course! Can you think of a time when the Marshals played a particularly critical role in the success of the P-raid? Like Dan Lopresti referenced the lightning storm in 2018. Is there an example when you were a Grand Marshal where you thought the Marshals played a particularly important role?

Charlie Rose: Well, let me refer to the lightning storm. I was up in the front because I stayed with my class. Our class was the last one to finish. We went past and were doing our hard right as we ought to do. Then the sirens went off and that was the end of the P-raid. Except no one knew it was because there was lightning. There were lightning warnings coming to the university from eight miles away. But you couldn't see the lightning. But, I stayed under one of the arches of one of the new buildings, and there were people who were going out in the tents and that's like standing under a lightning rod! And I pointed out that they were there. But many classes did continue marching later, after 15 minutes or so.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes. After the skies cleared a bit. Yes, a lot of people then somewhat spontaneously restarted marching.

Charlie Rose: Yes, and there were letters in the Alumni Weekly that the Marshals had ruined the P-raid.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, there were certainly difficult personalities to deal with and that was an especially challenging time. What else would you like to share about the P-raid or being a Grand Marshal? What was it like for you when you were asked to be a Grand Marshal?

Charlie Rose: Oh, I was jumping up and down and whistling Dixie. I was just overjoyed. It was one of my goals, but you wonder, "How do you do it?"

Dan Abramowicz: As you have attended so many P-raids over such a long time span, you've seen the P-raid grow from a relatively small, structured parade into the cacophony of joy and celebration that it is today.

Charlie Rose: ...with a thousand of my best friends, yes! We just have to have, as agency, the kids have to keep their feet off the line of march and the Marshals have to do their duty. They have to perform their function.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, that's certainly important. Given those challenges, I'm interested to understand your view on the question of the size of the P-raid. I was just going to ask; do you think the university can manage an even larger P-raid? It seems to be growing year on year, and the class sizes are growing. Do you think we can accommodate an even larger attendance?

Charlie Rose: Oh yes. But we would have to get rid of this concern that it has to finish in three hours. If it takes four hours and it's tight and well organized, it takes four hours. In my day, the P-rade finished in 3 hours when we had 8,000 participants. We now have over 25,000 come back for the reunions. The only options are to extend the time OR to reduce admissions. If you take in fewer people, you'll have a shorter P-rade. This is sort of cynical and we have to grow with the times. We can't have big gaps in the P-rade. We have those classmates who just stroll along ... and try to motivate them ... and say, "Walk that way."

Dan Abramowicz: You're right. Sometimes it's just a little bit of gentle prodding that's needed to keep people moving. Just because they're so distracted by the opportunity to meet with friends and colleagues they haven't seen for many years, right.

Is there anything else would you like to tell me about the Marshals? Is there anything, or during your time as a Grand Marshal, anything else that you want me to know?

Charlie Rose: Well, I was asked to recommend three people to be considered as Grand Marshal. So, I had as number one, me; as number two, a guy that who was quite old; and my third choice was Charles Plohn. So, they selected Charles Plohn. You have to be clever about these things!

One year, a major reunion class had three people who were not Marshals, who came to a Marshals meeting and got hats and went out and stood in the middle of a P-rade and just blocked the whole thing. So, the class that was supposed to lead off was stagnated. We went down and there was a formal university employee who was standing there. She said, oh, the path is too narrow. Well, why didn't she push them? Push them out a little bit.

Dan Abramowicz: That's an interesting story about the three fake Marshals, somehow trying to hold up the P-rade. I hadn't heard that story before.

Charlie Rose: They had their entire class right there in the middle of the march. And we couldn't move. I finally had to go up to one of them whom I didn't recognize and said, "If you are still here when I get back in five minutes, you'll regret it!" That's was the Airborne Colonel in me coming out again! That's what we do. Anyway, he disappeared, and the class started marching]

But perhaps my fondest memory was in 2005, the year I had my two daughters as Flanking Marshals. I arbitrarily picked from the subgroup and this subgroup was just my two Princeton daughters, Beth '77 and Chris '80. So, I made those two my Flanking Marshals. Wasn't I lucky?

Dan Abramowicz: What an extraordinary opportunity! To be the Grand Marshal and have your two daughters as Flanking Marshals must have been a great experience. I bet that had never happened before and you must have been so proud. What a great memory for you and a wonderful image to end on.

Charlie, it's been a pleasure seeing you again. It's been too long. Thank you for sharing such wonderful memories.

Charlie Rose: Thank you. Bye.

Dan Abramowicz: All right. Thanks again, Charlie.