

Dan Abramowicz: Hugh, let me briefly introduce myself. I'm Dan Abramowicz from the Graduate School Class of 1984. I'm the Chief Technology Officer of Crown Holdings. In terms of my involvement with Princeton since I've left, I've been very involved with the APGA, the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni, over the years. I became President of that organization at some point, and I'm now also on the Princetoniana Committee. As you know, I'm doing a History of the Marshals for the Princetoniana Committee and I greatly appreciate your help. Hugh, it is a pleasure to meet you. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, and would you please provide a brief introduction to yourself.

Hugh Fairman: I'm Hugh Fairman from the Class of '58. I grew up in Princeton, in the town of Princeton and my father worked for the university. He was in fact the Director of Athletics. I went away to school with the intention of coming back to Princeton for undergraduate work. I went through ROTC at Princeton, because in those days we had universal military service, and one had to figure a way that was best for him to meet that requirement. And so, although I should have then gone on to graduate school when I graduated, I didn't. I went into the service for three years to fulfill my commitment to the military. And then, by that time, it was time to get into business and try to make some money rather than to continue my studies.

Dan Abramowicz: Okay, great. Thank you for that.

Hugh Fairman: I spent much the major part of my career in the paint business. And then around the year 2000, I got out of the paint business and got into a sideline of it, which was the assessment of color. As you know, being a chemist like me, color is something that is assessed for quality control purposes and things like that. And I was, through my contacts in the paint business, fairly expert in color assessment. So, I spent the rest of my time as a consultant in the analytical assessment of color.

Dan Abramowicz: Oh, very interesting. Yes, as you point out, we're both chemists. We both spent a lot of time in the Frick Chemical Laboratories building on campus. And I work for Crown, a packaging company, so color is important in my job as well. My company makes, for example, metal packaging like beverage cans and food cans. I can remember conversations I had with Sun Chemical several years ago about how the same color isn't represented the same way on different types of monitors and computers screens. At that time, they were developing software so that the same color would look identical regardless of what equipment it's viewed on. So yes, color is very important. Well, thank you for summarizing your background. Can you now please talk a bit about your tenure as a Grand Marshal. During what years were you a Grand Marshall of the P-rade?

Hugh Fairman: It was a two-year period at the end of the '80s. Which two years, I can't immediately recall, but I sure that they have a record of it in the Maclean House.

Dan Abramowicz: They certainly do. In fact, they provided me with a photograph of the mace and I can see that you're listed as the Grand Marshal for 1987 and 1988. So, as you rightly point out, the latter part of the 1980s.

Hugh Fairman: Yes. How that came about, of course, was that at that time the Grand Marshal was the outgoing or the immediate Past-Chairman of the Reunion Committee in the Graduate Council, or what's called now the Alumni Council. So, I was promoted after a two-year term as Chairman of the Reunion Committee to Grand Marshal. And I think that practice probably only lasted around six years, and I was toward the end of that six-year period. Turk Thacher was the Grand Marshal for a year after me, and then Joe Prather came back and served as Grand Marshal again for about another 5 years. Joe had preceded me as a Grand Marshal in 1985 and 1986. Although it looked like a good idea at first that the Chair of the Reunion Committee would take over as Grand Marshal, it wasn't always successful, as some alumni who were Chairs of the Reunion Committee weren't ideally suited to run the Marshaling outfit. So, they abandoned that policy shortly after my term and selected Grand Marshals another way.

Dan Abramowicz: Well, that's interesting, and that's some of the history that I'm trying to recapture here. I'll certainly make a note about the fact that it was the Past-Chair of the Reunion Committee from the Alumni Council 'automatically' became the Grand Marshal. That's fascinating. I'm curious, were you a Marshal before your term as a Grand Marshal?

Hugh Fairman: Yes. I had been a Marshal for several years before becoming a Grand Marshal. I really don't know what year it was that I first became a Marshal or how long it lasted, but I probably marshaled for a period of perhaps 15 years, from a few years before the late '80s until somewhere in the late '90s, I'd estimate.

Dan Abramowicz: Terrific. I appreciate that background information. And today, most Grand Marshals are selected as a honor for their outstanding service to the university, and most of them have had extensive Marshaling experience, like yourself, before becoming a Grand Marshal. Now, I would like to understand your thinking about the role of the Marshals. What do you see as their key role or function, from your perspective?

Hugh Fairman: Well, when you ask about my perspective, you're talking about the timeframe when I was Grand Marshal, how things were at that time, in the late 80's.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes.

Hugh Fairman: I think things were quite different with the P-rade at that time than it is today. The first thing, and I'm not yet addressing the question as posed, what is the role of the Marshals, but I will come back to that. I'm just giving a little background, I think, for the context of my answer to that question. First of all, the route of the P-rade was different than it is today. In our day, we went

across the campus to 1879 Arch and then down Prospect Street to Roper Lane, down Roper Lane to the stadium, making a half left turn onto Clarke field. The P-rade at that time terminated on Clarke Field.

Now, until you got to Roper Lane, that was pretty much a level walk. And the biggest problem that we had in those days and what the Marshals did mostly in those days, was to keep gaping holes from forming in the line of march. Now today, because most of the parade route is downhill down Elm Drive, I think there's much less of a problem with large gaps forming in the P-rade than there was in our day. In our day, you would get perhaps as much as a 100-yard gap where the next thing would come along might be four ladies pushing baby carriages, followed by another 50-yard gap behind them.

And that had to do with a number of factors, I think. One was that as we got farther and farther away from World War II, fewer and fewer people knew how to march as a marching band or as a marching military unit would do, because fewer and fewer people had been in the military. And then women were allowed into the P-rade. They had officially been excluded from marching prior to that time, but that policy was never completely enforced. Most people didn't want to enforce it because they came to realize that it was a bad policy. And that, of course, diluted the military experience even further. So, although we told graduates and other family members, "Walk four by four, in line, and keep up with the group ahead of you," it just never happened.

Dan Abramowicz: So, that's another piece of fascinating history I didn't realize. Back when you were a graduate in 1958, so in the late '50s, the P-rade was actually still more of a march, as you said, four by four in a line, in a more organized and patterned way than, as you know, it is today, where it's more of a "free for all", with thousands of people milling along in different structures and at different rates.

Hugh Fairman: Well, of course, that's another difference, because, say immediately after the war, there would not have been thousands of marchers. There would've been more like hundreds of marchers in the P-rade. There would not have been more than a thousand, but one would have probably counted them by the hundreds. And so, if you go back to the second half of the '40s decade, the answer to your question is that four graduates would have been walking in a line followed by four graduates, four wide and for as many flanks, or whatever the word is for those lines, because 90% of the graduates had actually served in the military. They would have all gone through two weeks of boot camp and been told how to march. So, it would've been, in the '40s, totally organized and a class would almost look like a military unit.

Dan Abramowicz: I see. Well, that's amazing.

Hugh Fairman: I think they would not have been in lock step, but they would have tried to make themselves into a military unit and they would've at least been conscious of it. Now, by the time you got to the '50s, there would be fewer people marching with formal military training. The younger classes, of course, would

be as they are today, more unruly than the older classes. But all of that has changed. Specifically, a P-rade in the '40s would have looked quite different than it does today.

Dan Abramowicz: Well, thank you for that history. As I said, that was unknown to me and one of the purposes of this project is to try to capture some of that history, so that is very helpful.

I'm also interested to learn if there are any experiences you can think of when Marshals had a really positive impact on the P-rade. Something that happened where the Marshals in some way saved the day or played some role in making sure things went as planned. I'm just curious if you have an example of something like that,

Hugh Fairman: I don't really know of any anecdotes that fit that particular framework. I can't think of one. There must have been some, but I can't think of one at the moment.

Dan Abramowicz: Okay, no problem. Switching gears, what is one or two of your fondest memories of the P-rade and perhaps particularly, your time when you were a Grand Marshal?

Hugh Fairman: Well, I can't really think of a fondest memory. However, I can think of a situation that occurred which is my most lasting memory, my most vivid memory.

Dan Abramowicz: That's another way of thinking about it. Yes, that would be great.

Hugh Fairman: I don't know which of the two years it was that this occurred, but I was, of course, at the head of the P-rade as Grand Marshal and I was in a position where I could stop the parade if we needed, to let people catch up. The biggest problem we had was that gaping hole that I spoke about earlier. And we had radios, as the Marshals do today, where I could be in contact with certain other Marshals who were responsible for blocks behind me. And as we came to the 1879 Arch, I got word over the radio that the oldest graduate, who was carrying his mace, I think the mace had just been introduced in those days, had decided to walk. Although we had provided a golf cart for him, the golf cart was trailing him, ready to pick him up when he was tired of walking. But having decided to walk, he slowly walked down the path and kept losing ground to the end of the 50th reunion class.

He was the first marcher after the 25th reunion who led the P-rade. So, I stopped at the opening of 1879 Arch, stopped the entire P-rade. The band kept playing, and I saw the rest of the 25th reunion class catching up, down on McCosh Walk. And after a minute or so, I radioed back to say, "How are we doing with the eldest alumnus?" "Oh, he's still 200 yards behind." So, I said, "Oh well, I'll hold the march a bit longer." Now, of course, I'm holding up the

President of the University and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and all of the other VIPs. All of them are standing behind me, shuffling their feet, wishing to get this over with, and I'm holding the whole thing up. And of course, they don't have any idea why I've stopped them. I'm not even sure whether this is the right thing to be doing, or if I should just take off and go down Prospect Street where most of the spectators were stationed. Prospect Street is where many would find a place to see the P-rade, rather than come onto campus, because, there were more places to sit. You could sit on a fence in front of Cannon Club or something like that with good visibility. So, it was a good place to see the P-rade, and the majority of the spectators were still ahead of us, waiting for us. It was really a bit stressful, holding up the entire P-rade and being unsure what to do!

Well, time went by, and I just simply couldn't get anyone to tell me that this fellow had caught up. Finally, I said to myself, "We just can't do this, stay here any longer." And so we started off down Prospect Street, went down Roper Lane, onto the ball field and climbed up into the reviewing stand. And behind the 25th reunion class came the **biggest gap** that you could ever see. It must have been 150 yards long and the oldest alumnus was still walking, with his golf cart behind him. Although that is not a warm and fuzzy memory, as your question phrased it, that is my most vivid memory of being a Grand Marshal.

Dan Abramowicz: Very good. Well, I appreciate that memory, Hugh. That's a huge gap! What an experience that was for you!

Before we conclude, is there anything else that you wished I'd asked you about or anything else you want to recall or say about the Grand Marshals or the Marshall or the P-rade?

Hugh Fairman: No, I don't think so. I do see another difference between the present time and the time that I was Grand Marshal, however. And that is that there are probably, I'm guessing now, but I believe there are probably twice as many marchers today as there were in, say, in 1987. And that has of course to do with the larger class size. It has to do with longevity of the alumni body. And I think probably we are getting higher reunion attendance than we got before. That's probably the third factor, in terms of the magnitude of the contributions, but I believe that is true. The problem now is trying to get the P-rade over in a reasonable length of time. It starts at two o'clock and the President of the university may still be standing on the reviewing stand at a quarter of six and the last marcher hasn't gone by yet. So, there is a vast difference in the number of people participating, marching in the P-rade, over the course of my lifetime.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, no doubt. And it's becoming a greater logistical challenge.

Hugh Fairman: Yes.

Dan Abramowicz: One important Marshal objective today is to try to complete the P-rade within a reasonable amount of time. And with more people returning every year, with larger class sizes every year, it's becoming a real challenge and something that I think the university is going to have to seriously consider addressing.

Hugh Fairman: That's right.

Dan Abramowicz: Yes, particularly, I think, with the next live P-rade where several major classes that have been missed will return after the virtual P-rades. I think those classes will come back in even larger numbers. So, the 2022 P-rade, if it is in person as everyone hopes, could set all sorts of records, and from a timing perspective, perhaps not enviable records. But we will do the best we can.

Well, Hugh, thank you again very much. I really do appreciate your taking the time to teach me a bit more about the history of the Marshals and the Grand Marshals and to share your memories.

Hugh Fairman: Fine, Dan. Nice to talk to you.

Dan Abramowicz: Excellent. Hugh, it was a real pleasure meeting you. I appreciate your time and I wish you the very best. Good-bye.