

Project: "What a time we had ... Women remember Drake:

Interviewee: Lisa Brinkmeyer Van Deventer, Drake University, Class of 1998

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Interviewers: Chris Hamburger and Derek Ottesen (JMC 171)

Interviewer: Ok, uh you are the uh, Assistant Director for Iowa Girls High School---ok---and

Lisa: ---The Assistant Director for the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union.

Interviewer: Ok, what-what are the, some of things that you do there---like what are your major responsibilities?

Lisa: Marketing---Farm Bureau is our new corporate sponsor, so I take care of them and make sure they have everything they need and booster signs, tickets---also they've got programs that their funding---so I also implement those. And then also, we've got like, I don't know academic programs, things you need for sports, so [unclear words] handle that. And also like tournament production with like our state basketball tournaments on TV---

Interviewer: ---keeps you busy?

Lisa: Yep, yeah---so I get to do a lot of that fun stuff. But then I don't have a choice, because I was a PR major, so [unclear words]

Interviewer: Yeah, that's good. My-my girl friend's a PR major, so---

Lisa: Yeah, it's a gas---yeah, we all got---

Interviewer: Yeah, she had a lot of fun up there. Ok, uh---where were you born and raised?

Lisa: I was born in Hubbard, Iowa and I lived there my entire life until I came to Drake University. Hubbard's about an hour north of here, a small town.

Interviewer: Yep.

Lisa: So I liked the small-town feel at Drake, 'cause Hubbard has 800 people.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Lisa: So, coming to Des Moines wasn't the culture shock as it could have been going somewhere else---interested---

Interviewer: Yeah, just even being---were there, were there more than 800 people at Drake when you were here? 'Cause you graduated in what, what was---

Lisa: '98, '98. Um, I think they had, I think it was like 7500, I think was kind of what they had---with 3500 undergrads, so it wasn't, it wasn't huge---bigger the number---

Interviewer: Yeah. Uh, where did you attend high school? Hubbard High?

Lisa: Hubbard-Radcliff High School, we merged with a town which was about 7 miles down the road. [unclear words]---the Germans merged with the Norwegians and it was---the kids handled it well--but it was my grandparents that had the hang-up.

Interviewer: Yeah, so did they do that when you were in high school then?

Lisa: Yeah, in my 8th grade year---which we consolidated, so I went to Radcliff for one year and the then high school was in Hubbard, so that's where I finished out my high school career---

Interviewer: How was-how was all that, after you-you played basketball---{Yep} how-how was that? Did you play any other sports?

Lisa: Yep, in a small town, you usually play all the sports---with no trouble, so---

Interviewer: It was softball, volleyball, track---

Lisa: Track, golf and basketball, and [unclear word] of all, I was really lucky, I was on a very good team---and in my class, there were some of us who went onto play collegiate sports. So, we did a pretty good job [unclear word] high school, plus had a lot of fun.

Interviewer: So, did anybody come here with you then?

Lisa: No, um I was the only one who went Division I---there were a couple girls that went to Central, uh a couple girls went to uh NIA schools---another girl went to a junior college.

Interviewer: So, we'll just say you were the 'big shot'---that's, that's my---

Lisa: Well, uh it was supporting staff, that's what it was [laughter].

Interviewer: So, how did---how'd you decide to come to Drake? Was it the small numbers, a teacher?

Lisa: Uh, one was that it was not far from Hubbard. I didn't want to move too far away, I was kind of a home-body {Yeah}---you know I was kind of homesick. Plus, after I came down here and met the coaches, visited with the coaching staff, I think it was a natural fit. And it was a much smaller school, and I wanted to the professors to be able to be there [unclear words] to help me out, and I didn't want to be a number, I wanted to be a name.

Interviewer: Yeah---[unclear words] did you have uh, d'you have definite career aspirations before you came here?

Lisa: Uh, I was going to be an elementary education teacher when I came to Drake. [unclear words] I had started down that path, fortunately at Drake University, in education, education they get you in the classroom in the first year and after that I thought, "I don't know if this is what I want to do." {Yeah} And then actually it was my junior year, [unclear words] I switched to PR.

Interviewer: Yeah, so did you---did you still like [unclear words]---

Lisa: Yes I do---usually in August I wish I was teaching--

Interviewer: Yeah, like during summer break and [unclear words]---

Lisa: But otherwise, I uh, love what I do---PR work---I like [unclear words]

Interviewer: I know, when you're talking to people there's no-no real down time---uh, yeah I agree. Uh, what dorm did you live in?

Lisa: I lived in Stalaker. I lived in Stalaker one ten, then I moved to Stalaker three ten. And then I lived in Stalaker room nine [unclear words] and they were all right in line of six bathrooms every year. And then my junior, no my senior and fifth year, I moved off campus into a house.

Interviewer: What do you think of the dorms---have you been in them at all recently?

Lisa: Uh, I haven't been in GK---but-but I did take a tour of GK last summer---I ran into a guy who worked here--- that's unbelievable, the suites that they have---that's a huge improvement--- a great

marketing tool. Now when I moved into Stalnaker, it was fine---it was clean and neat. When we moved to the basement level my junior year, they'd redone it because guys had lived down there and they just didn't take care of things like they probably should have. But, we got new carpet, new [unclear words]---but, I haven't been back to Stalnaker in years.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's-it's probably still the same---still no air conditioning, still the same tile floors, and---

Lisa: I loved Stalnaker though---it has a great location, it's close to parking lots---

Interviewer: Yeah, but now you gotta---well, that one, now GK's as close to a parking lot as you can get---Stalnaker, still's a little bit of a walk---but still no air conditioning, and---

Lisa: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah---I yeah, that was-that was one thing when I moved and how [unclear words]---there's still no air conditioning---oh, no---and we were on the first floor, but if you wanted to go upstairs to the fourth floor, to a friend's floor, there's just {a huge difference}---yeah. Who's your favorite professor?

Lisa: Oh---I have a couple different ones that I really liked. One of them was probably [sociology professor] Dean Wright; he was very entertaining and I know he still teaches.

Interviewer: Oh yeah---

Lisa: He always did a good job---I like uh---

Interviewer: Did you like [journalism Professor Robert] Woodward?

Lisa: Yes---

Interviewer: [unclear words]

Lisa: ---very entertaining. {Yeah} He always had stories. Oh gosh, there---

Interviewer: Did he talk about his obsession for---over monarch butterflies and Bill Clinton back then?

Lisa: Oh, [unclear words] I've not seen Bob Woodward [unclear words]--I'm sure he knew. Yeah, and there's a lot of professors in the journalism department, and I think after I switched my major, I went into journalism, I knew I had the right fit because I felt like I could mesh with a lot of the professors.

Interviewer: Yeah. Uh, what is your impression of President Maxwell? Was he ar---was he around?

Lisa: Actually, he came the first year after I graduated, when I was a coach. And they're doing a presidential search and he was one of the finalists. And, and in athletics [unclear words] went out with him because he came from an institution where there were no collegiate athletics. So I thought, "Oh great, this isn't going to be good. He's just going to entirely forget about athletics and focus on academics." Which isn't bad, but [unclear words]. And he completely surprised me. He was a huge supporter of women's basketball team and athletics in general. He came to the sporting events, he knew kids by their first names, he had an open door policy. I can't say enough great things about President Maxwell.

Interviewer: As I'm working at the Relays this weekend, moving the hurdles during [unclear words] yeah, he's just running around, helpin' out with everything---and I was like, "Is that President Maxwell?" And we're all pointing, like---it is him.

Lisa: Well, and Madeleine, she comes out and gets so involved in everything he does and remembers names of athletes, and gets into the games---it's-it's a nice asset.

Interviewer: Did you uh, well [unclear words] ok, we'll just have to skip this--- Uh, you weren't in---were you ever in a sorority?

Lisa: No---{unclear words} except for basketball---what we always joke about. {Yeah} No, we---there was a girl on the team that tried to go for a year, but there are so many time commitments for both {Yeah}---that gosh, you know whenever we had a little free time we had to use it on something besides---

Interviewer: Yeah---with everything goin' on---it's-it's hard not to, just living in the dorms alone, so that---

Lisa: We could always jump in our old sorority---we're with these girls all the time---we traveled together, we socialized together---

Interviewer: Yeah---still, it feels that way at least with the soccer team. Like it's always been that way and it seems like it's that way with everybody. So, did you have like any team curfew, like a 48 hour rule or gotta be in your bed by ten [unclear words] and stuff like that?

Lisa: Yep, we were supposed to be in, I think---be back to our rooms, like, coach kind of wanted us back there by around 11. You know she knew we had committees we met on, and study groups. Uh, we were given the option my freshman year, what we wanted to do---did we want to drink during season or not. And I think that we selected the 48 hour rule my freshman year. Every year after that, we voted as a team not to drink at all. So, my sophomore through fifth year, we never drank during the season. And---you know in retrospect I'm glad that we had the discipline to do that--- 'cause there was always fun going on. But for us to go out drinking then practice the next day or the day after that {Yeah}, it-- - we wouldn't have been as good of athletes as we were.

Interviewer: And I saw people get hurt too, coming---

Lisa: Yeah, {Yeah} and everybody knows you're an athlete on campus, too so there's lots of stories that go around---and oh yeah [unclear words]

Interviewer: And it always gets back to someone---

Lisa: We try to stay out of the headlines.

Interviewer: Yeah [unclear words] gonna turn that off---uh, ok that was covered---uh, did you attend any movies at the Varsity?

Lisa: Yes. We went to movies at the Varsity. Again, you know our social calendar was pretty full with basketball and everything else involved with being a college student, but I did go to some movies. And I've gone since then, too. And I probably go to three or four movies at the Varsity a year.

Interviewer: [unclear words]

Lisa: It's neat---and reasonably priced---candy, popcorn, tickets.

Interviewer: Not---not ten bucks, like out at Copper Creek?

Lisa: No---

Interviewer: That would have been like, eight {Oh, yeah} or five something when I went---

Lisa: No---when I took my nephews there for a matinee and it was, I think five seventy five a piece---

Interviewer: Not worth it---too expensive.

Lisa: It is.

Interviewer: Ah, let me see here---describe one of your close friendships with another student.

Lisa: Probably, my best friend coming out of Drake would be Nicole McBean. She came from Chicago and I came from little town, Hubbard. And really Nicole was one of the first Black people I'd ever met and really became good friends with. I mean, on a personal basis, I've met, you know, Black people in my life---but I met Nicole and we both came in the same year to play basketball and we couldn't have been more different. And then after we got to know each other, we realized that we were really similar. {Yeah} And Nicole and I have just been best friends ever since, and I took her to Hubbard and she was probably one of the first *[[audio recording ends – transcript continues from typed document submitted by interviewers]]* black people everybody in Hubbard knew. My family would come to each game and Nicole became the fan favorite. She was so much fun.

Interviewer: What was going on in Des Moines when you were in college? You were there right around the time Columbine [high school shootings] happened. Were you worried about your safety?

Lisa: There was a lot of road construction going on. There had been a few muggings on the east side of campus. Coach [Lisa] Bluder warned us to be safe. I'd walk home at night and never felt scared or threatened. Also when I was on campus that was when the [unclear word] came around. Coach Bluder had a meeting with us before one of our practices. We had heard about it and Coach Bluder trying to be the professional figure took the time aside to tell us about the date rape drug. Half of us were more embarrassed to hear her talking about the date rape drug than anything else, but it was very encouraging for her to inform us.

Interviewer: What are a few memories from your graduation ceremony?

- Lisa:** We had it at Vet's Auditorium. One of the things that amazed me was walking in and seeing the number of people graduating. To me Drake always felt small and intimate and it is. When you see the number of people graduating it makes you feel the magnitude of your class and you never do things as an entire class in college. After seeing the number of people there I thought, "This is a lot bigger than I thought." It showed how neat Drake is and how important academics is here.
- Interviewer:** Did you go right into your job you have now after Drake?
- Lisa:** No, I stayed and coached for a two years with the basketball team. I wasn't going to do it, but after the summer I decided I wasn't ready to leave college athletics. I don't know if it's something I'm ever going to do again because it requires a lot of time.
- Interviewer:** How do you stay in touch with your friends?
- Lisa:** The majority of us e-mail daily, if not weekly, and talk to them on the phone multiple times a week. Several of them have moved back and I think five of us live in the area and we get together a couple times a month. I knew I didn't really want to leave Des Moines and they left and I was like "I hope you guys come back."
- Interviewer:** What would you have done differently if you weren't a basketball player in school?
- Lisa:** I would have been involved with more committees and more extracurricular activities besides basketball. Now I guess in retrospect I could have had more time to be involved. Maybe more weekend road trips. I got to see where most of my friends lived but just to jump in the car and not know where you're going would have been fun.
- Interviewer:** What words of wisdom would you offer this year's senior class?
- Lisa:** I'd tell them to stay in touch with their friends. Never let that friendship flame diminish, because it's sometimes hard to track people down and rekindle that. Always stay active in Drake and know what's going on. There's a lot of people before us that have given to Drake and helped make others' college experiences worthwhile. No matter what you give it's always appreciated, so make sure to give back.
- Interviewer:** What's your best memory from playing basketball?

Lisa: Oh gosh, there's a lot of them. Our biggest rivalry was [Southwest Missouri State]. They would always sell out [their home court] where they played and 9,000 plus people would buy tickets to cheer against us and they only left a little section for the Drake fans. We went down there my sophomore year and beat them on their floor and they were nationally ranked. To hear that place go dead silent with the exception of our busload of fans was great.

Interviewer: What did you think when the [Drake women's basketball] team made the Sweet 16 in '01?

Lisa: That was neat. That was the year after I got done coaching. I knew a lot of the girls and recruited most of them. It was very exciting.