Jay Chapman

Cyclone Marching Band Oral History Project

Interviewed by Doug Lim

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Time stamps reference the video interview.

**DL**: Doug Lim

**JC**: Jay Chapman

[00:00:00]

**DL**: Hi, this is Doug Lim, an interviewer for the Iowa State University Special Collections and University Archives, Iowa State University Cyclone ‘Varsity’ Marching Band Oral History project. Today is Monday, November 27, 2023. I am interviewing Jay Chapman at his home. So, Jay, could you start by telling me about your early life, where you grew up, and that sort of thing?

[00:00:44]

**JC**: Sure. I grew up in Spirit Lake, Iowa, northwest Iowa. Went to Spirit Lake High School, one of four kids in my family. We went to Spirit Lake High School. We had a marching band there that was a pretty good size for the size of the school, the school was maybe four hundred--in high school. We had a marching band that was about a hundred, so marching one hundred. We kind of had this thing where we would learn the opposing teams’ fight songs and we’d play that for the opposing fans that came to games. The band director when I was there was Robert Graves. So, I kind of grew to like marching band up from high school.

**DL**: Yes, very classy. I'm sure the visiting team fans really appreciated that.

**JC**: Yes, they did.

[00:01:48]

**DL**: Can you tell me about how you came to be at Iowa State [Iowa State University]? When and what did you study?

**JC**: Sure. I started at Iowa State in the fall of 1986, and I came to Iowa State majoring in aerospace engineering. It was really interesting to me. Space and engineering were things I really enjoyed. Iowa State had and has a very, very good aerospace engineering program. So, it's kind of an easy thing to just drive a few hours down the road to go to Iowa State. I was in, as I said, aerospace engineering and in the marching band at Iowa State. I got my graduate degree, a master's in aerospace engineering, from Iowa State and so I was in the bands at Iowa State up through the spring of 1993.

**DL**: Okay, and you got your undergrad and your graduate degree all consecutive years?

**JC**: Yep, consecutive years. I took one semester off, kind of, but pretty much all consecutive years.

[00:02:58]

**DL**: Okay, and you were in the marching band for all of those years?

**JC**: I was in marching band all those years. Also, I did concert band as well in like spring semester and then did, of course, all the pep bands that we had at Iowa State. We did basketball pep band, did what was Big 8 [Men's basketball tournament] tournament then and NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] tournament trips when we went. I directed that a couple of years.

Also, one thing that was kind of interesting is, when I was there, we started the pep band for the women's team. Prior to that, there wasn't a pep band for that one. So that was something that was kind of new. This was prior to Bill Fennelly [Iowa State Women’s Basketball Coach (1995-present)] taking over. So, kind of early on, the games weren’t really well attended. But it was kind of fun because if you went to a game and it was televised, like on public television, they'd ask everyone to sit on one half of Hilton Coliseum, so it looked like there were more people there. Then, at halftime, you could go out, and everyone could go through and try and shoot a free throw. If you made a free throw, you got a bag of popcorn. So, it was kind of an interesting little entertainment there for the basketball pep band.

[00:04:28]

**DL**: Do you remember approximately what year the women's pep bands started?

**JC**: I think that might have been--I want to say maybe ‘88 or ‘89, if I had to guess. I remember going to the Big 8 tournament in Salina, Kansas. Which was always an interesting trip, that's an interesting small town. I'm not sure how they ended up getting the women's Big 8 tournament there, but I remember going there for three, four years, so it probably was, you know, late eighties, early nineties if I had to guess.

[00:05:09]

**DL**: Okay, and you mentioned that women's basketball wasn't as popular. How did the student musicians take to the women’s pep band?

**JC**: I think we had a lot of fun, you know, band in general was a lot of fun. But I think that we tried to make it as entertaining as we could for ourselves and for the folks that were there. You cheered on the team, and they had some success. But you tried to make it as fun as possible to make sure that the games were entertaining for everyone.

[00:05:50]

**DL**: Nice! What section of the marching band were you in, and is there anything interesting you'd like to note about that particular section?

**JC**: Sure, so I was a trumpet--third trumpet. Back at that time, you got into the band based upon your date of application. So, the earlier you apply, the better chance you had at getting in. Then you came, and you did auditions, really not for getting into the band but really for part placement. The trumpet section was really a lot of fun. Made a lot of friends, learned a lot about them. There's always this friendly rivalry between, like, the trumpet section and the trombone section. Then there's rivalry between the brass and the woodwinds or whatever. But, yes, we had some really good players in some of my years that were there. Really a lot of fun group, too.

One of the things that was kind of what we did, and I think it's kind of still a thing, is you’d have a rank shirt or maybe even a section shirt. So, you go down, someone designs a t-shirt, everyone gets one and it kind of--you get to see what your rank was like that year because maybe you got all the names on the back. So, it's kind of fun to have those. I’ve got some of those shirts still. It's a good way to kind of reminisce about the people that that were in band at that time.

I also had two stints as a drum major. Once in fall of ‘90 and then again the fall of ‘92. I was drum major for that season, and that was a lot of fun, really interesting being out front of the band. It's kind of almost like a one way mirror. The band kind of sees you and knows you and recognizes you. Then, you maybe recognize the three hundred people that you're associated with in the band, but you don't always remember all of the names and that sort of thing. It really was a great way to kind of meet a lot of people because they’re more than happy to strike up a conversation with you.

[00:08:24]

**DL**: Nice. Do you remember anything about the process of learning shows for marching band? How did you go from getting the drill to learning the music and to putting it all together into a performance?

**JC**: Sure, I remember kind of starting with the music, practicing in the music hall, getting the music at least that first day kind of figured out. I know that when I was there, the director was Roger Cichy [Marching Band Director (1986-1995)], and he had this method of, we’d play it and learn it pretty well early on and then get a recording of it. So, with that recording then--when it came to transition to the field and start to learn it, we could go out there with our--you know, we had paper charts back then--go out there with their charts, find our spots. Then he would play the music and then we would go, kind of, page to page. We could learn the show and learn to get all the movements together without actually having to play the music immediately. Which was a nice way to kind of learn the music. Learn the show and then kind of put those things together.

As we got further on into the week, we’d start to pick the music up into it, kind of blend those two things together. One of the things that got to be a challenge as you got to the end of the season is it would get darker. You know, daylight savings, it’d get earlier, and it’d get darker. I just recall, Roger [Roger Cichy] would be up on the stands directing with a flashlight. That's how you can kind of see him. You couldn't actually see him, but you could see the flashlight that he was doing. So, it was kind of a transition to learning those parts. A lot of it was just repetition, repetition, doing the same thing over and over until you got it right.

[00:10:34]

**DL**: Do you remember where rehearsals took place? How long were rehearsals and how long did you take to learn each show?

**JC**: Sure. I'll kind of take it in reverse order in there. So usually, we’d learn a show in about a week. We typically did marching to a cadence. Then usually “Fights” [“ISU Fights”] at the end. We would have a week to learn the show, typically. Then we’d pick up kind of those pieces to get to the end of the week and then put it all together. There were times when we would redo a show. So, we might do that if we were traveling for an away game. We might take that same show on the road again. So that kind of helped a little bit. Sometimes you’d maybe add something to it, but you wouldn’t have to learn it kind of from scratch.

In terms of practices, [in] Music Hall [Simon Estes Music Hall], we had the rehearsal hall is where we did the music practices. We actually practiced a couple of different places when I was there, for marching. For a long time we practiced marching at the design center [College of Design] area. There’s a building there now, but there's a lot just south of that. The problem was that by the end of the season, we'd marched the grid on there. So, you had mud lines, 8 to 5, where your spacing was. The field at the design center got pretty muddy after a while.

A couple of years later, we ended up practicing at old Clyde Williams Field. At the time, it was a cinder track, and basically, the football field where Clyde Williams used to be--that field was still there. So that was where we would practice most of the time for a couple of years. Then on occasion, depending upon the weather and whatever, there had been times where we would go to the parking lots in between like Hilton Coliseum and Jack Trice Stadium. We'd mark out a field there because maybe we had snow on the practice field, or it just got too muddy. That was a nice solid surface. It's a little bit different trying to practice on a parking lot. You've got the hash lines for all the parking, and then you’ve got our lines that we tried to put out there. But it was a good alternative to when the weather got kind of bad.

[00:13:36]

**DL**: Do you remember who set up the practice fields? The lining, was that physical plant staff or was that student staff or--?

**JC**: Sure, so the physical plant staff, I think, managed--we always had sort of a big tower for the directors to be able to direct from it. I think they were the ones that that put that up at the beginning of the season and took it down at the end. In terms of marking the field, they often did the physical plane--I think kind of, if I recall, marked the main outline of the field like they did the hundred yards and then each five-yard marker. One thing that was important for us was where are you in relation to the number? I'm not going to recall exactly the number of steps, but let's say it's sixteen steps to the middle of a number, that wasn't anything that they marked on the field, so the drum majors would go out, and they would mark out things, and they would put those hash marks out there, put the center of the numbers out there. I just remember we used to have these eight to five sticks, which would measure out how to get five yards marching just right. So, you could use those, you just lay those down on the field and then you can measure out and mark out what those markings were. So, as the primary markings went away over the season, you can use those markers and spray paint, and we even had a little spray paint dispenser where you put the can in there and you just mark the fields that way. It was a combination of people that did it but most of the time, at least when I was drum major, we were the ones that kind of marked it out ahead of practice.

[00:15:33]

**DL**: Can you recall some of the shows you performed? What were some of your favorite performances? Any particular music that sticks out?

**JC**: Yes, a lot, really. I remember my first show was fall of 1986, and we were at Iowa [University of Iowa]. It was like an MTV music show, and one of the songs that we did was “Yankee Rose,” which was a David Lee Roth written song. I think he was maybe doing a concert that evening of the game in Iowa City or somewhere around there, and they wanted him to be on the field for the show. Where it actually turns out that the Iowa State marching band was on the field playing the music, playing “Yankee Rose,” and David Lee Roth comes out of the tunnel or whatever and kind of starts dancing around. We're just all focused on playing the song and watching and the director. But you can just hear that the crowd was not at all paying attention to anything we were doing, it was totally focused on David Lee Roth. I think you can still search for the video online. There's a spot where he goes, and he does a little bit of a dance next to one of the flag girls, and she doesn't miss a beat on her routine, but he's kind of kind of messing around with her. That was one that was a lot of fun. That was my first show, so that kind of leaves a little bit of an impression on you as well. So, that was that was one of them.

Another one I always kind of joke about--and anyone who listens to this who was in band, that year, I think was 1990--when you say “Lambada Hot,” makes you kind of chuckle because we had this show, and we were doing that routine and “Lambada Hot” was--we actually had the music recorded, and that's how it started. I don't know how many times we practice it. We must have issues and problems and really wanted to get it just right. So, we probably practice that a million times, but at the beginning of that, you'd hear--you'd hit the tape, and it would say, “Lambada Hot,” and then we'd start into the show. We did it so many times it got to be kind of an inside joke so that was one that I really remember doing.

I know we did a show where we played “Happy Together,” and Jeff Ruhde and I were-- we marched next to one another. I just remember the way it was charted. We were supposed to get to our spots, and we had probably sixteen beats to probably go like thirty steps. There was almost no way to get to that spot. I just remember Jeff and I trucking across the field at practice trying to get to that spot in time. Every time, we just kind of laughed. Well, we made it just in time every time we barely made it. Just the way it was all charted, that was kind of fun. I know we went up to Minnesota one year, which was kind of neat playing in the Metrodome [sports stadium in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota]. We played along with, I think, Maynard Ferguson [Canadian jazz trumpeter] there. Which was interesting--to do that. Especially in the big echoing confines of the Metrodome at the time. It was really interesting trying to do something like that. That was a fun time.

Road trips were always great, too, and the shows that we did there and a lot of times those shows were the same. Sometimes the ones that we'd done at home, we took that one on the road. But I think the most entertaining show was the Big 8 show. We essentially made fun of a lot of the opposing bands. One was making fun of the Oklahoma Sooners and them playing “Boomer Sooner” [Oklahoma Sooners fight song] all the time. We’d say, Hey, here's the first song, and here's the first drill for the Oklahoma band, and it's ‘Boomer Sooner,’ and here's the second one, and it's ‘Boomer Sooner,’ and the third—” It's just Oklahoma playing “Boomer Sooner” over and over again. Then, I think K-State [Kansas State University] was a very low-key sort of a band, and so we’d try to pretend like we were going to play some really exciting song, and it was some slow, dirge-y, kind of a very unentertaining for a football crowd sort of a song. I think the best part of that was we made fun of the Iowa band and the fact that they wore capes. So, the band all pulled out from underneath their jackets a black garbage bag and tied it around their neck and then played the Iowa fight song marching down the field. So, it was a fun way to just kind of make fun of the other bands. Those were some of the shows that I think I really remember the most.

[00:21:14]

**DL**: Yes, nice. Tell me about the culture of the band when you're in it, and how members of the band, drum majors, and the directors or the university affected the culture of the band.

**JC**: So, I think that the culture of the band—that you can kind of think of it as a family. You know, you spend an hour and a half every day at practice, and you're hanging around the same people all the time. They just kind of get to be family. So, I think the culture started with family. As I mentioned before, there are kind of a little bit of rivalries between sections and whatever, but I think we all got along really well. At that time, the band was a little bit more easygoing. A little bit more off-color, maybe not as politically correct as they probably should have been or would be now. But it was having fun but being good at what you're doing while having fun. When the time came, if we knew that we weren't just quite up to snuff yet and we had to put in that extra practice or put in an extra run-through of something. We did it. We happily did it because we wanted to be good. I think we took a lot of pride in being good. We took pride in entertaining the crowd. It's a football crowd, it's a little bit different crowd to entertain. So, we knew our job, we knew what we needed to do. We wanted to make sure that we did what we were supposed to do. The directors, both Roger Cichy and then director bands, Joseph Christensen, really instilled this sense of quality and perfection in getting it right. Mr. C, as Joe Christensen was called--I really had a lot of respect for him. Just the way that he could get this group of people who weren't music majors and who are there to have fun, but still want to do a good job. He really got us to be our best, to focus on the right things, to make sure that we got done what we needed to do. Roger was the same way, making sure that it was a fun atmosphere, but we were also doing our best all the time. Up and down the line, I think it was great to have leadership in the directors, the drum majors, and really all the right guides and left guides wanting to do the right thing too. I think that it was a culture of having fun but getting the right thing done.

[00:24:22]

**DL**: Okay. Can you tell me about some of your favorite marching band traditions. Any pregame rituals, and if so, what kind of pregame rituals were there?

**JC**: Sure, so, I think one of the traditions that's really neat is the floating ISU--and they still do that now--you start the song off, you play “Fights” and since ISU is [first] read from the west stands then it flips and then you can read it on the east side and that's kind of a neat little thing. The entrance--the cyclones and X-ing, that's been around [since] before I was there and that was really a neat tradition that still continues today. It's a unique style of march that you don't see elsewhere. Some other traditions--you talked about pregame, what was really, really fun was simply the march from where we lined up, which was just outside of Hilton Coliseum, to the stadium. We marched in ranks we played songs, and it was fun to see all of the tailgaters kind of come to the to the middle--there was a middle kind of a driveway in there where you could march through--they would come and kind of cheer on in the center, which is really neat. That still kind of exists now, to a certain extent. There are other things that are a little bit different, but still the excitement of the band with the tailgaters is really pretty neat.

I think one of the fun post-game rituals, which is still around as well too, is the dismissal. It was always almost formed in the style of a question. Something special about that week, maybe something unique about the show or unique about the game, and it would be a dismissal at the very, very end of the game. We’d march back to Hilton Coliseum, if we won a game, we had our hats on backwards, we'd even end up X-ing to the to the stadium or to Hilton Coliseum sometimes. But, doing a dismissal and, you know, What Big 8 university marching band and then something, something, something? and the response was always, Iowa State! Iowa State! A lot of little things. There were little traditions that I think every section had as well. Their own ways of just getting prepared for the week. I think there are even--individual ranks had their own little ritual just before you got started on the field.

I guess one other thing I was just thinking about, which was just fun for me, was Saturday morning dress. So, Saturday morning practice you’d come in costume in some way, shape, or form. Something fun or crazy or unique, and that was your Saturday morning dress, it kind was like the antithesis of, Hey, we're all going to be a homogeneous and wearing the exact same uniform here in a few hours. So, let's be unique, let's be special, let's show who we are with our Saturday morning dress. Then there was always Saturday morning football on the field, and when we played at the stadium, it was artificial turf. It was concrete covered by like maybe three inches of astroturf, and I think probably in the course of the years that I was there [were] probably three broken bones and innumerable busted fingers, or dislocated shoulders, or something like that. But it was fun because you got to play football on a collegiate field. Lots of fun little things that made the band fun and unique.

[00:28:48]

**DL**: You mentioned the after game dismissals. How did those work? My understanding is the drum majors were responsible for making those up. How did those work?

**JC**: Yes, so at least when I was there, and I think it's probably similar now too, although there's probably some differences that have evolved over time. But, once we would line up, we’d march back to Hilton Coliseum, and then at Hilton Coliseum, there's an area there where all the band can kind of congregate, and one of the drum majors would kind of create an impromptu dismissal, and it would be something along the lines of--just making something off the top of my head, “Which big 8 university marching band is tired of playing ‘Lambada Hot?’” and the response to that would be Iowa State! Iowa State! It was something that drum majors had to be a little bit creative on. What I've seen of what's happened lately is it's very much more involved now. They even have to write it all out to kind of plan ahead and be prepared for what that thing is going to be that day so they can get it just right. I kind of like the idea of just going off the cuff at the last minute.

[00:30:17]

**DL**: And as far as the dismissals, was that something that was like planned ahead as far as which drum major would come up with it, or was it like just kind of last minute?

**JC**: Jeff Wellman [Jeffery Brian Wellman, Mechanical Engineering (1986-1991)] was the drum major the first time I was, and he didn't really care to do it. But I think he did it once in a while anyway, but it was always the last minute like, Hey, you got something this time? For us, it was never planned out. It was just kind of--who thinks they've got something witty to say that week, and sometimes it was me sometimes it was Jeff. I'm not sure what the other drum majors--I know that some of them were very, very creative and funny, so it was a lot of fun, some of those drum majors.

[00:31:09]

**DL**: Very cool. Can you tell me about the band uniforms while you were in the band?

**JC**: Sure. I started fall of ‘86, fall of ‘85 was last year for--they were essentially black uniforms with white shakos [a tall, cylindrical military cap, typically with a visor]. The uniforms that I started with were brand new in fall of ‘86. They were a definite departure from the prior uniforms that I would think of as being very seventies and eighties style. These were like cutting-edge, brand-new ones. They had reversible overlays, so you had one side of the overlay on the front said, “Cyclones” and the other one said, maybe, “ISU.” They were primarily carinal, a little bit of gold, a little bit of white. We would wear the white shoes with them, there were no spats or anything. The hat wasn’t what I would call the Q-Tip shako. This was more of a hat--kind of a pseudo-military style hat with a plume that would be inserted into the top of the hat if weather permitted for that. One thing that I remember about that was, the Athletic Department didn't really help with the funding of those uniforms so much. So, after my first year, after each of the home games, we’d kind of go up into the crowd and pass the hat to try and get donations to pay for these uniforms. Which, looking at the status of the old uniforms, it was good that they had new ones brought in. I’m not sure they had all the money for them, but that was one of the things I thought was interesting. We got to go up in the stands and try and get some donations for this. I just thought that was kind of an interesting thing to go along with the brand-new uniforms.

[00:33:27]

**DL**: Yes, that sounds kind of fun! How did the average football fan react?

**JC**: Yes, they liked it. I mean, you know, one thing that I think---the crowd really gets behind the band. They always love the band. It's the halftime show, it's the diversion during the game. Back in the late eighties, early nineties, Iowa State didn’t have many winning records when it came to football and so the band’s job was to entertain the crowd that was there, and I think they were appreciative of that. The crowd was pretty generous, I think, in terms of trying to support the band and its uniforms.

**DL**: Nice.

[pause]

[00:34:32]

**DL:** Can you describe the experience of traveling with the band? Any traditions about traveling? Any funny stories that you have?

**JC**: A ton. I mean, I think that traveling, really, that's when you really, really get to know people that you're hanging out with. We were a group of a little bit less than, I don't know, maybe two seventy-five, I can't remember the exact numbers. But we had buses that we would take away games and so one of the traditions, by the time I got there, was bus number six. It was the last one. That was the fun bus. It was the last one in the group, and that was the one where you would-- if you wanted to go and entertain yourself, so to speak, on your trip to wherever you were going, you wanted to get on bus number six. The trips were college students, and college students trying to entertain themselves, for example, while they're driving overnight across the state of Nebraska to get to Colorado, and there are a finite number of things that one can do while on a bus like that. Right, wrong, or indifferent at that time, on the buses the students were allowed to drink. There were those that would enjoy a beverage or two while traveling. I mentioned Colorado, that was really a fun trip to go out there, went out there a couple of times. The fans aren't exactly the nicest to the marching band or the opposing watching band, but, it's a nice area to go visit, particularly if you're from the state of Iowa. Maybe you haven't seen the mountains like that. That's always an entertaining trip.

We would typically go on a trip and on the Friday play at a high school that Friday night, and then stay with a host family. Which, most of the time, were the parents of a high school band member. Then we’d stay overnight there and that would kind of save a little bit on the expenses of a hotel for the band. You’d get paired up in pairs or groups of four or wherever the house could support. You’d go and get a host family and some of those host families were great, were like, Hey, we got pizza and drinks and stuff for you all. We're going to watch a movie, we're going to play cards, do something fun. Then other ones weren't always so fun. Maybe you got a family--well, you know, Lights out at nine o'clock, and everyone in bed, and it's maybe not as fun for college students. That was a little bit of luck of the draw who you got paired up with. Often times like the night of the game or, depending upon the schedule, we’d stay in a hotel. These are one of those stories that you kind of--the story gets bigger and bigger over time, but I recall staying in a hotel in-- I think it was Lawrence, Kansas, where we had too many marching band members in a pool and by the end of the night, there were more band members in the pool than there was water and the water, unfortunately, spilled over and started to flood the lobby. Of course, the hotel is not too happy with a flooded lobby. So, I think we sometimes got in a little bit of trouble. I'm pretty sure we were never asked back to any hotel that we went and stayed at. It was one-and-done for all of those.

[00:38:46]

**DL**: What stadiums did you perform in? What was it like performing in that stadium? What was it like to perform at ISU stadium compared to performing in other schools?

**JC**: Yes, it kind of goes a little bit back to, I think, the band was really appreciated at Iowa State, so we got some good reactions to our performances. It's nice to get a standing ovation once in a while. I mean, the Iowa State fans really did like the band. I'll contrast that with. Like going to Lawrence, Kansas, there were, when we were there, not a lot of fans in the stands at all. It's weird to be in a stadium that size--it's probably at that time maybe forty-five thousand, and there's maybe fifteen, twenty thousand people there by halftime because the game's not going well for them, and there's no excitement when you're in a big stadium, and there's no one there watching you. Going to Iowa and playing at Kinnick Stadium was always interesting. Not so much for the field in the stadium, but as much as their fans were--I'll say rude is probably the best way I can phrase it. I mean, you got to watch out for cans, and bottles, and hot dogs, and whatever. Like, they would throw whatever you wanted at you, I guess. So, since then, we just had, a few years ago, an issue with the Iowa band not following instructions and not leaving Jack Trice Stadium correctly, and we had an altercation. I think that's pretty much put the end to Iowa coming to Ames and Iowa State going to Iowa City. Maybe that's okay. Maybe that just means you don't have to worry about an instance like that.

It was great playing in Boulder [Colorado]. That's a fun stadium, a great backdrop there. Played up in the Metrodome, like I said, and that one--boy, you got to watch the directors on that one because you could get out of sync pretty easy if you start listening to yourself bouncing off the rafters there at the Metrodome. But that was our official surface at that time, too, so that was a little bit different, we were used to that sort of thing, and so it was weird having a different stadium where you still had astroturf. I think we did a trip to OU [University of Oklahoma]. I think the real entertaining trip to OU, though, was maybe not a regular band trip, but it was--we took a pep band down there in ‘90. Iowa State was playing pretty well that season, we decided to rent a bus and took a bus down to Norman [Oklahoma]. It was college kids being college kids. We stopped at McDonald's, rushed in, got food. It was around Halloween, so we took a pumpkin that they had sitting there. Somebody grabbed the pumpkin and left with it. We went down to the game, Iowa State actually ended up winning that game, 33-31. At that time, Iowa State hadn’t beaten Oklahoma in twenty-some-odd years. So, it was an aberration to say the least, and it was fun to have a little pep band there to kind of cheer the Iowa State crowd on that was there for that upset. Of course, on the way back we stopped at the same McDonald's, and we graciously return the pumpkin. We just happened to leave it there with the final score, 33-31, Iowa State over OU. Just had to leave that there for them. Trips were great. The stadiums were all very different, but I think the stadiums themselves are driven by what kind of fans you have in there and that's why I think Jack Trice Stadium is probably the best because their fans appreciate the band as much as anyone.

[00:43:25]

**DL**: Yes. You mentioned the difference between well-attended, appreciative crowds in certain stadiums and other stadiums being less well-attended, maybe less appreciative. Do you recall if that had any kind of effect on the band's performance, or did the band notice a difference in, like, energy or was it pretty much consistent? We're all professionals and just there to get stuff taken care of.

**JC**: Yes, I think there was a difference. Definitely. I think too, a lot of it depended upon the excitement. Kind of depending a little bit upon how close the game was too. But we always kind of got ourselves hyped up for halftime, and just you get out of the field, and you’re running, doing high fives and getting your rank together and getting excited about that. So, we did that anyway. I think it was really necessary for a place, you know, maybe like Kansas, whether it wasn't as exciting or where you're going somewhere, but as soon as the halftime starts, all the fans have left and they're going to get their soda and hotdogs, and they don't care about halftime at all. We got ourselves pumped up for it. I don't think it really impacted us, but it definitely had a different vibe about it when you've got a half-empty stadium.

[00:45:02]

**DL**: Yes. Did you perform at any special events like bowl games or parades, concerts? What do you remember about any of those other special performances?

**JC**: Sure, so, never made it to a bowl game, when I was there. A couple of times we did a homecoming parade, which it's almost like an after practice parade, which was kind of fun to do. We sometimes were—you know, as big and visible as the marching band is--sometimes we're kind of that front step to the university. So, when there were donor events, or something along those lines, the athletic department or the president's office would call and say*,* Hey, can we have the band, or a chunk of the band come and perform for this event or that event. I know this is kind of more of a pep band sort of thing, but I recall they were doing kind of a Johnny Orr [Iowa State Men’s Basketball Coach (1980-1994)] roast, and so they wanted a pep band for that. So, we would do that. I don't know if we started the tradition, but it is something that is much, much bigger now than when we did it, which was, playing at the coach’s houses and, like, several directors houses at Halloween. We’d go and have a little pep band come, and we’d go to Johnny Orr's place or we go to Jim Walden’s [Head coach of ISU Football (1987- 1994)] house or one of the directors, and we’d go play for them, play fight songs and cheers and stuff on their doorstep. Now if you, if you watch them, almost the entire band is out there doing that and it's a much bigger event. But that's kind of a fun thing to do. Some of those impromptu informal things are as entertaining as anything formal that you'll perform for.

[00:47:30]

**DL**: Okay. What sorts of things set the Iowa State University Cyclone Football ‘Varsity’ Marching Band apart from other marching band programs that you're aware of.

**JC**: So, the ‘Varsity’ is the first thing. We're the only ones that have an actual ‘Varsity’ Band. That's a story that I think others will tell the history of. But I think what sets us apart a little bit is when we were in band, you were in band even though football wasn't great. You were there to do a good job and to perfect your craft. As I look at the band directors since, that continues to be the theme from then until now. Let's be as good as we can. Let's put a quality product out there, but also make it something fun, make it entertaining for a football crowd. You're not going to be able to play all sorts of classical music and think that this crowd is going to enjoy it. We know that this is a unique audience, and so the show you put on has got to be good. It's got to be entertaining, but it's got to be entertaining for that group. I think Iowa State does that really well. It’s definitely in contrast to some marching bands whom--they do what they do because *they* like what they do, and it's maybe not something that their fans really care for. I think that, again, kind of that playing off of the fans getting up and leaving as soon as halftime starts, getting a product that's out there that's good. Since, in the last eight years or so, they're really--the ‘Varsity’ Band as it sits now is really moving towards auditions just to get into the band. So, auditions for music, auditions for marching. It's really, really a tough competition to get in there and the result is you've elevated the level of marching, you've elevated the level of the music, and it makes for a really entertaining sort of performance for the crowd. That's just what has been the mantra, I think, for the band for a long time is, again, having fun and doing a good job.

[00:50:22]

**DL**: Okay. You mentioned you grew up with several siblings. Did any of them go to Iowa State, and were any of them—

**JC**: My sister--yes, I did have one sister. She attended Iowa State. Was here for a short time, was at Iowa State for a short time while I was there. Other two siblings did not attend Iowa State. My sister, who did, was not really a music kind of a person, so was not in band at Iowa State at all.

[00:50:53]

**DL**: Okay. Do you recall any advice that you received from other band members, or did you pass along any advice to band members that came after you?

**JC**: I'm sure that I did share some nuggets of supposed wisdom with people. I hope that I kind of led by example, and so hopefully, they saw what I did and tried to be good at, but still have a good time and try to do the same. I think that, again, kind of going back a little bit to what I said about Joseph Christesen, that he really instilled that he wanted us to be good at what we did, and that was the whole band. I think he did a really nice job of kind of getting that message across to us in the right way.

[00:52:00]

**DL**: Okay. You mentioned that you studied aerospace engineering, and you went on to get your graduate degree at Iowa State. Aerospace engineering that, you know, is not a slouch major. How did you balance a demanding academic career with being in the marching band and all the time demands that that placed on you?

**JC**: Sure, that--I probably could have been better at that. You really do have to budget your time. I mean, that's just like real life. You have to find, How are you going to fit this amount of work into that amount of time. It really means that when you have the time to do the studying, to do the work that you need to do, you need to take that time to do it. Take advantage of the opportunities that you maybe get from others in your classes or others that have come before you. Take advantage of that as much you can. So, you kind of do that kind of work as well. One thing that I made a decision to do was--I probably could have graduated initially one semester earlier. I had kind of a band conflict, though, and I decided, you know, I could graduate now and take this class, or I could be in marching band again and take a little bit easier class and then finish a semester that's a little bit lighter and that was my choice. I mean, I think it worked out okay. You just have to try and, again, make sure you make the time for what's important, definitely.

[00:54:00]

**DL**: Compared to what you know about previous years before you were in marching band, compared that to your years in marching band, and compared to the marching band after you've left Iowa State, how has the marching band changed over the years? Some of the differences that you've noticed.

**JC**: Sure. I think some of the differences are kind of what I was alluding to before--is that especially of late, there's this--while it's still a great family, while it's still a--you know, you make a lot of friendships and they still make the old joke, you get in form one on the field and look around you, odds are your spouse might be around here, it's a fifty-fifty chance, maybe. What's different now, I think, is just that quality of marching and music that is performed because they've instituted this audition process. You know, they have--I can't remember the exact number--but this most recent year, they turned away one hundred people from being in the band. They have what's called State Storm now, and I kind of joke that it’s like the junior varsity band because it's those that didn't make the ‘Varsity’ Band, but there's just so many of them that they have their own smaller group. It's probably, I don't remember an exact number, maybe seventy-five or whatever, but it's a band that they--sometimes they perform at halftime. They participate in playing in the tailgating lots before the game. They play songs throughout the parking lots and kind of get the crowd whipped up for the game. So, that's kind of neat, being able to have the bands in the parking lots before the game. So that's kind of something that's new that they hadn't done before. So, there are some definitely new things that are happening, but a lot of similarities, a lot of traditions, things that were there before I was there, and things that are still there and will be for decades, I'm sure.

[00:56:18]

**DL**: Okay. When you were in band, did the band go through any difficult times that you recall?

**JC**: Yes, I would say the one would be in 1991. That's when they were considering cutting the funds for the marching band and perhaps getting rid of the marching band completely. The sacrifice we made there was we did not get to go on any trips that year. Which is really tough, particularly for someone who is kind of expecting that, like, Hey, every year you get one trip, and that's kind of your thank you for what you're doing. For not having that opportunity, I think that was a little bit of a challenge, I think, to just stay motivated, but I think in true Iowa State form, we're—one, we’re a self-entertaining group to begin with and, Hey, we're not going to go on a trip, big deal. That doesn't mean that we can't put six good shows, seven good shows out on the field this year and do it for the right reason and not just because we want to get a trip out of it. So, that maybe was something that was kind of hard to swallow, but I think that we understood why it was there and we understood the reasons behind it. We sucked it up, and we had a fun year anyway.

[00:57:58]

**DL**: Okay. What does marching band mean to you?

**JC**: It's family. Met my wife there, she was a clarinet player. We do tailgates for every football game, and our tailgate is a group of people that are former band members. It's my college roommate and guy who was the right guide next to me, it's a sousaphone player, a banner, a piccolo, and another trumpet player, and another trumpet player—like, our tailgate is our family, and it’s band, and it's family, and that's what band is. All the band weddings. All of the band gatherings. I think that's what band really ends up being. It's a big family, and you can see that in no better way than what happens at homecoming with Alumni Band. We come back, and it's just like a big family reunion.

[00:59:13]

**DL**: Yes. That's a good lead into the next question. Tell me about your involvement with the Alumni Marching band.

**JC**: Yes, so, I’ve been involved since I graduated in ’93. Was president on two separate occasions, come back for homecoming every year. I think the one thing I really enjoy is--we've been doing this, for now, it's been thirty years--we do Alumni Pep Band, and what that means is when the students are on break, that means that the varsity pep band isn't in town to play at--well, at the time it was just basketball games--but the way it used to be was they'd go around, and they'd find, oh, maybe a local high school band and see if that high school band could come and play. They wouldn't know “Fights,” or if they played it, they played it like at half the tempo or something like that. Over time, athletics realized, Hey, we've got these alums that live in Des Moines area, live in Ames. So now they're asking us to do more and more events. I think this season, between volleyball, wrestling, gymnastics, and men's and women's basketball, we're probably going to play over a dozen games for Iowa State, and that's really kind of fun. It's a great way to try our best to keep the energy up in Hilton Coliseum when the students aren’t around. I think the fans appreciate it. I can't remember the last time that I didn't get a thank you from someone after us playing there. I think, again, Iowa State fans really appreciate the bands and what we do. So, when the Alumni Band is playing for those games, I think it's really very much appreciated. We get called to do all sorts of things. The Des Moines Television Station, *WHO,* does what they call RV TV. So, before the Iowa State - Iowa football game each year, they travel around the state with RV stops, and they say overnight local communities, and they bring out Iowa State and Iowa fans and make it a good celebration of the community. Now we're getting asked to come and play at those events, sometimes a rivalry with the University of Iowa Alumni Band, such as that is, and it’s fun. We get to show our cardinal and gold colors at things throughout the year.

[01:02:20]

**DL**: Right. Yes, I've noticed how the Alumni Band performance opportunities have really grown over the years and I'm really excited that that's growing more and more. What is one of the most memorable experiences you've had from your time in the marching band?

**JC**: I think it's the travels we talked about a little bit. You spend hours on a bus with people, and you make up games to play. You find ways to entertain yourself, and you learn about the people you're with. You make friends with the people you're with. All of the trips had their own unique experiences that just kind of molded the whole picture of being a part of the band. It would be nearly impossible to pick anyone that was so special. I think it's just the whole experience that was really special and great.

[01:03:37]

**DL**: Okay. To kind of close things out, is there anything else you'd like to add to your previous comments about your experience in the marching band or in the Alumni Band?

**JC**: I would just say that I hope that if someone listens to this, they understand what a great experience it was. Really, I think, probably to a person, everyone enjoyed their time in marching band. They had fun in some way, shape, or form. It hopefully molded them to who they were. Even if they're not able to make it back for homecoming or for the pep band stuff, or Alumni Band, I hope that people realize that it was really a fun part of being at Iowa State University. One of the most special times and most special parts of being at Iowa State was the Iowa State Cyclone Football ‘Varsity’ Marching Band.

[01:04:53]

**DL**: Are there any questions that I didn't ask that you wish I would have?

**JC**: I think you did a great job. I think you covered all of them. You probably could make up more stuff and more questions, and [I] could probably talk for hours, but I think you covered it all really well.

[01:05:11]

**DL**: Great. I want to thank you for taking time out of your really busy schedule on this Monday evening to talk about some of your personal history with the marching band and some of your personal experiences with being in the marching band and continuing with the with the Alumni Band activities. Thanks for your time.

**JC**: Thanks, Doug.