Justin Christoffersen

Cyclone Marching Band Oral History Project

Interviewed by Dean Brand

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Time stamps reference the video interview.

**DB**: Dean Brand

**JC**: Justin Christoffersen

[00:00:00]

**DB**: This is Dean Brand, an interviewer for the Iowa State University Special Collections and University Archives Cyclone Marching Band Oral History Project. Today is Monday, October 9, 2023. I am interviewing Justin Christoffersen. Justin is in Marion, Iowa, and I'm in Mitchellville, Iowa. Good. And so, I must since you’re nodding your head.

**JC**: Yes. [laughs]

**DB**: Very good.

**JC:** Long, but you got it.

[00:00:46]

**DB:** Alright. Okay, Justin, could you begin by telling me a little bit about your early life, where you grew up, your family, that kind of thing?

**JC**: Yes, I'll start off with an easy one. Grew up originally in Davenport, Iowa. So, east side of the State. I joke I was born and raised a Hawkeye, and then I turned into a Cyclone. Yes, I chose the right side, I think, because Iowa got boring to watch after a while. [Brand laughs] So, overall, pretty standard upbringing. My parents were never too much into music or band. My mom always liked drum corps because her father really liked it. Went to competitions here and there, but nothing--they weren't actively involved. They didn't play any instruments or were in the band. It was always just I. My dad, never part of it. He was, I'd say, very standard small town Iowa upbringing, so.

So, kind of alongside of that, I was brought into band probably around--it was fourth or fifth grade when elementary schools just brought in a bunch of instruments. They're like, Let's see what you're good with. Let's see what you're not good with. I think it was fourth grade, they brought in orchestra instrument, and I wanted to do that. I think it was violin, was the one that I wanted to do. I think I took one lesson, and my parents said no. [both laugh] So, kind of funny, [inaudable], start there. Then came fourth, fifth grade, where they brought in all the instruments. They gave us--I think it was flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone--and everybody got highly recommended on trombone because they never had enough. Almost nobody got trumpet because I don't think they wanted any more trumpet players. Flute, you either had it or you didn't, and then clarinet was a similar way. I think I got like a recommended, not highly recommended or not recommended [for clarinet], so I kind of just went with that. I think at like a garage sale or estate sale a few months later, me and my parents go and we find this Yamaha plastic clarinet--pretty standard, great beginner one. We bought it there, and that was my clarinet. I still use it to this day. I'm probably going to bring it up for Alumni Band. I used it all the way through high school, all the way through college with the ISUCF‘V’MB [Iowa State University Cyclone Football “Varsity” Marching Band] and even some Alumni Band re-gathering, so it's kind of fun. Started off with clarinet, always kept it. For marching band, transitioned pretty quickly in the bass clarinets because that was the one I felt more at home with. It was something that resonated with me pretty good. I strived with that. I became really good with it. I made a lot of honor bands, even in middle school days. I believe I made an All-State of Iowa Band when I was in eighth grade. Continued that through high school. Got a solo in our marching band show my senior year where they brought back the bass clarinet section for marching bands. That was fun, leading that, being a part of it, and then made All-State twice, for the state of Iowa, at Iowa State University. It was fun to play in Hilton Coliseum with about three hundred other band kids, and I will say, it's really cool being in a concert setting that large. Like, we're used to marching band and that, but just a concert band of three hundred kids is crazy first of all, [laughs] and in Hilton everything rings. It was a fun time. I enjoyed all of it, and then continued that through with college.

With marching band, one of the first things I made sure of, even when I was even visiting colleges, was just how was the music program. I wasn't going to be a music major, I was going to be an engineer. I knew that pretty quickly, but I always asked, “How are the band programs going?” And out of the two or three schools I visited, Iowa State always sounded the most comforting. I think the other main one I remember going to was the University of Purdue, and I told them a few of the band pieces we were playing in high school.

They kind of laughed, saying, “Our concert band attempted that piece,” or like, “They looked at that piece, and then said no.” So, I was at least a little bit iffy on that, but I came to Iowa State. I heard so many good things about the marching band. I've seen some of their stuff before. Iowa State even came to one of my high school—Davenport has a big like, all the bands, all the high schools and middle schools get together, and my senior year in high school, the Iowa State marching band came, and they played one of--I forget what show it was, but the trumpets were right in front of me playing a very good melody. I'm just like, Oh my god, this is great. I think that made the decision pretty easy. Then I even stayed with the concert bands at Iowa State doing symphonic band and wind ensemble, trying out for those bands every year under Dr. Michael Golemo, [Director of Bands and University Professor of Music (1999-present)] who I’m still great friends with. I still love talking to that man every day. He was great. He loved me, loved how I played. Had a fun time with him throughout my entire college career with him. That's at least my background, how I got to where I'm at now.

**DB**: Okay, good. That's quite an accomplishment, though, just to be able to get to All-State, whether it's on the instrument--

**JC**: Especially, yes, the instrument, and eastern side of the state, which has a lot of--you have the Quad Cities, which is so huge--you have Iowa City, who all take private lessons from Iowa, so that's a very hard accomplishment when twenty people are trying out for three spots. I was very lucky to be able to make it twice.

[00:06:07]

**DB**: Okay, so you told us a little bit of how you got to Iowa State. When were you a student at Iowa State, and then what was your major while you were there, or majors?

**JC**: Yes. [laughs] I started a college career fall of 2017. I came in trying to become a mechanical engineer. Stuck with the program, stuck with it for four years, and then COVID happens my senior year--lots of fun stories that we'll get into later there--but went into that, market was looking a little bit iffy even for engineers, which is saying something. I decided to go for a fifth year, and I got my Masters of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering, which is just a little bit more class work. I didn't have to write a thesis or anything like that, something I considered, but it was cool taking those higher-up classes, just seeing into it a little bit, seeing that different ways, and staying with the band at the time as well because I needed an outlet with all this smart thinking that was a part of it. [Brand laughs] Yes, mechanical engineering, I think going into it, I was looking at some program that combined mechanical and electrical engineering, but it just didn't work out. I just stuck to the mechanical route and eventually got to where I am now. Ironically, an Industrial Engineer is my job title now, so I weirdly made my way to somewhere else. [laughs]

**DB:** Okay.

**JC:** So, yes.

[00:07:30]

**DB:** So, what year did you wind up graduating then, ‘22?

**JC:** ’21 and ‘22. So ‘21 was undergrad, ‘22 was graduate. Both spring semesters.

[00:07:45]

**DB**: And then you marched with, what, clarinet while you were in the marching band?

**JC**: Yes, marched with clarinet for four years. Didn't do the fifth year, felt I got everything I wanted out of it, and wanted to focus on my studies. But I did do concert band. I did symphonic band for three years, and then wind ensemble for two more. Lots of fun times with it. Loved every minute of it.

**DB**: Okay, well, good.

[00:08:08]

**DB:** Anything interesting about the clarinet section in the marching band that you remember, or want to make a note of--that we can put on this recording? [Brand laughs]

**JC**: Yes, I got to be careful with what I say sometimes. [laughs] But no, the clarinet section--it's just a hodgepodge of everyone and everything. It's one of those weird sections where we're never heard, but we always try to make ourselves be heard. It's just, we're trying to stand out. There's always way more females than males, but the males are either large, giant people like me. I'm six foot three. There's always six-foot. There was a six-foot-six guy at our time. He was a string bean. It's always like that, or it's always the large or always the short people, and there's good variety of both. But it was a definitely a varied section. You’d get anyone and everything, even majors, you get engineers, you get communications, you get some history people. I still talk with a lot of my section from the time, especially when my year was going through the program, there was a lot of clarinet section spots open my first year, so we kind of grew that section immediately. Then the big transition was my second to third year where we lost all of our leadership, because timing was just everyone was seniors. So, we got to do six new--we called them Guides--and a new section leader on top of it. It was one of those weird, how are we going to get through this? How are we going to stick together with this? I was a part of the leadership team. It was an interesting time. Just how did we put ourselves together because there wasn't many, even higher-ups. I think there was only two or three seniors or super seniors in the clarinet section at that time, but it was always a fun time. We always enjoyed each other's company. We talk a lot still, even just about Iowa State football, basketball, other sports, seeing what some of the football players from our time are doing now because a lot of them are doing phenomenal things in NFL or even in other aspects.

**DB**: Right. Okay. Now, I know you're process was certainly different than mine because I came from the era of strictly paper. [both laugh]

[00:10:33]

**DB**: But what was the process for your era for learning and performing a show? How did you go about getting the drill, and then learning the music, and putting it all together into a wonderful performance that we see every Saturday at home?

**JC**: It's never easy. We can tell you that for sure. [Brand laughs] It's never easy to get, what, three hundred fifty people to do one thing correctly, which practice showed that all the time. I'm trying to think. Yes, my first year, we were still given out paper coordinates, paper sheet music all the time. I think it was the year where we became leadership, is when they transitioned, and Christian Carichner, [Marching Band Director (2017-present)] the director at the time, I think invested in, or started finding through this thing called Ultimate Drill Book. It was an application on everyone's phone. You found out very quick, everyone's on their phone at rehearsal, no matter if you try and stop it or not. It was at least just like a little app on our phone that could just show our dots. It could show everyone else around it. It could show the forms. For even just guides and section leaders, it was really nice. You could highlight your entire section just to see where it was going through. I think it helped us, at least, learn some of these shows quicker, which got to be really vital for how complicated some of our shows were getting, because when I first started it was, I believe, Christian Carichner’s first year, and he was still trying to figure some things out, get it here. Then by the time my junior year hit, he was just on it and knew exactly what to do and pushed us a lot. My high school director kept joking--it's like, “This your last set forty or fifty you’re going to learn in a show,” and by the time I think my junior year hit, some of our books were forty-five, fifty sets just for a half time performance, which is a lot for some of us. You can tell. But it was always entertaining shows. Even just hearing murmurs of what they were going to be throughout the year, just what music we're going to be playing. Christian Carichner always made it exciting, even if it was bringing out a bunch of inflatable dinosaurs to play “Jurassic Park.” [“Theme From Jurassic Park”] [Brand laughs] The first time he did that was--it was too funny, and we made the gates like, just the gates for the dinosaurs in the front. I was in this diagonal, and I can see the dinosaurs straight on, and during rehearsal, I didn't even play “Jurassic Park” I was laughing my butt off too much. He even told us, he goes like, “Guys, you got to play, and you can't laugh.” For some people it's harder than others.

**DB**: Yes, and the dinosaurs made a reappearance last Saturday. [Jack Trice Legacy Game against Oklahoma State (October 7, 2023)]

**JC**: Oh, I was so excited to see that. I know that show was amazing. I saw a video of it. It’s just like, a little homage to little thing I did. It was just cool to be part of it when it first started, hearing all the news stories. I think that Monday or Tuesday rehearsal, he [Christian Carichner] just brought out a list of all the news shows it made [laughs] because it was *very* long. Because it made international news and a few stuff, but like it was just funny seeing how many different things covered us in some way, shape, or form.

**DB:** Yes, it was. [both laugh]

[00:13:43]

**DB:** So now everything is electronic. Am I correct in that?

**JC:** Yes. I think the only thing that isn’t is sheet music still. Some people still choose--and this is still during my time--you could still print out all your music, put it on your flip folder, or you could have it on your phone as well. I think the app had some built-in technology where you could see what specific run you were playing while a move was happening. I don't think we utilize that to its best ability. But it there was still a lot of sheet music out there. Just getting it printed, worrying about printing credits throughout the year was always a funny thing. You'd always ask your engineer friends because they had ten times the amount of credits than they ever needed. So, you know, there is still a lot of paper getting flown about even just for cheers, for anything. We still have our flip folders, which we would slowly get rid of after learning and showing to leadership that we knew our music, we memorized our music, and we don't need flip folders going on to the field. [laughs]

[00:14:41]

**DB**: So, okay. When and where did you practice at?

**JC**: Oh, we always called it the band practice field, but that's not specific at all for anyone. It's by the graveyard [Iowa State Cemetery] on the northwest side of campus, near the Armory as well, just a little bit north of that. There's a nice area for it some times of the year. Sometimes, especially when it's rained, it would turn into a swamp, and you could tell which shows we had to learn in this swamp because they weren't nearly as good as some of the others. There's even some days I think Carichner and leadership had to bring out big pieces of plywood just so it wasn't all mud and water. Just to stomp it down a little bit. Those were fun rehearsals.

**DB**: Oh yes. Yes, yours wasn't near as swampy as our field was, though, when it rained because ours was totally flat.

**JC**: Oh, I've heard some of the stories. Then we've had some times where there's even snow rehearsals where we were marching in the snow, [laughs] and they take spray paint, like bright spray paint, to measure the lines. It was always fun. Snow shows or snow practices were always an interesting time. We'd get the job done.

[00:15:58]

**DB**: How often did you guys rehearse, and how long were the rehearsals?

**JC**: Rehearsals were always pretty consistent. It was every day, Monday through Friday from, I believe it was--five to five thirty was the start time, but they were always rough on that because some kids had classes that went to like five ten, and then traveling time. They usually went to six thirty, so five to six thirty was the scheduled-in time. Then, every now and again, we’d have a Saturday rehearsal or two just whenever we had a bye-week or whenever we were going to go travel to a high school exhibition or something like that. But Carichner was always good--especially if, like we were leading up to a bye-week or after a big victory for it and he knew we were doing well, he'd sometimes give us a Monday off.

[00:16:45]

**DB**: Yes. So then, as far as time to learn the show, it just kind of depended whether the football team was at home back to back to back [laughs] or if they were gone for a week. It gave you a little more room to breathe.

**JC**: Exactly. The beginning of the year was always a little bit stressful because you'd have like three or four in a row, and at that time, we would just put together a half the show, and then bring in the other half further along. Sometimes if we had quick things, we just bring back segments from a show just to make it easier on us. Really smart with learning drill, and especially that first week. Band camp was always a big one, because by the end of band camp, you had to have pregame on the field usually--pregame completely done so we can start learning shows, and hopefully, we're starting to learn a first show. The first show or two was always pretty simple, at least our time. We always just did, what were the summer hits, or something from--like recent songs. I think one was Summer of Love, so it was always an easier show, especially drill-wise, nothing too complicated, but it was always a good time. It was good to lean into that after some of the intensity of pregame because that takes a lot out of you real fast.

[00:18:01]

**DB**: Do you recall some of the shows that you did, and did you have a favorite?

**JC**: There's too many to say all my favorites. Obviously, I mentioned the one with the “Jurassic Park.” That entire show was amazing. It was a John Williams [American composer famous for some of the most recognizable film scores of the twentieth century] show, I believe. Try to remember everything we played. I think we started off with *Star Wars* and made the *Star Wars* logo and a few other things. *ET* was part of it as well. We made the bicycle, and the basket, and the kid, and we put Cy in the basket because, of course, we did. Then obviously, *Jurassic Park*, which--hard to forget that one. Then I remember later that same year, Carichner wanted to do another thing with the inflatables, with not the dinosaurs. I think we did a space show which included “Rocket Man” and we made a rocket, had fire extinguishers, blew off fumes, looked great. Then, I forget the middle song, but the last one we got the dance team involved, and they were in these giant inflatable astronaut and alien suits, [both laugh] and we played “Space Jam.” It was funny, the rehearsal, watching them try to move around in those because I don't think they were ever in them in until that time. That was one of probably my more memorable shows. There was another real early show--I think my freshman year--we had a Thursday night game, so we did a throwback Thursday show. The main thing I remember of that was playing “Titanic” and having our feature twirler and Cy on the front of the ship. Trying to think more. My first homecoming--which the game was amazing anyway, it's when we got awarded the Sudler Trophy for best marching band [2017]--the show was homecoming. It was against, I think the top five ranked TCU [Texas Christian University] team, and we played “1812 Overture,” and Carichner did whatever he could to get as many cannons on the field as possible, including phoning in a few favors for the Armory. They got two of these giant cannons that they left on the side, and then he also bought a few more smaller cannons for that show. Then we utilize them a little bit later on, a few years later. We did a pirate show where it was an Iowa State Ship and an Iowa ship, and we sunk the Iowa ship, [Brand laughs] firing cannons at it while playing “Pirates of the Caribbean.” There’s a lot of memorable stuff.

Then I remember--this was just after my time--I think I went back last year. They did some video game show, and they had so many things on the field, and doing stuff with the color guard, doing stuff with State Storm, the lower band at the time, but they always had a fun time. Those are the ones that come to mind at least immediately. I may have some more later on, more good ones. Oh yes, there's also one [where] we did “William Tell Overture.” We made a giant horse and had saxophones sprint across the field as a log as we jumped over it. [Brand laughs] It was always painful for the saxophones to have to reset every time, and sometimes Carichner would just say, “No, you don't have to do it. [Brand laughs] You don't have to run the eighty yards back to the other side of the field.”

**DB**: Well, that was nice of him.

[00:21:22]

**DB:** Yes. What was the culture of the band, and how was it shaped by the members, or the drum majors, the director, university?

**JC**: Yes. Culture is always just a hard thing to get right, I think it is, just because you don't think about it and if it's good, it comes naturally, which is something I didn't really pay attention to. My high school, we were this serious marching band. We’d perform a really good show, and we're done. We were very serious about everything, and then I come into college, and people are dancing around every little thing. People are going crazy for all of our little cheers, like in the band, and I'm just like, What is going on? [Brand laughs] As a freshman, I was overwhelmed. But I think about two, three weeks in, my parents saw me at one of our first games or two, and they like turned and looked at me just like, Who are you? [Brand laughs] Who are you? Like, what did they do to you? I'm just like, It just happened. I think the best way to describe, even the culture at this, time was just serious fun. Like, we were serious. We wanted to make sure we created these great shows, that they did what they were supposed to do. The audience was entertained. We were never like, Oh, they're here to see the band. We knew, football teams, bands. It’s kind of like that, but we still wanted to at least, like, Hey, maybe at least look at us once or twice. Just see through it, see what we're doing. Try and get the crowd engaged with it as well. That was another big thing Carichner wanted to preach, and we even added to pregame, my—I forget what year it was--but we added a set where we're just cheering, getting the crowd into it by just cheering “Cyclone power” on each side. It's something that started while I was there. Carichner thought he was doing devil's work because he was switching this pregame that hasn't been changed in years, but it was a big hit with all the fans, obviously. It's a great easy cheer to get everyone into it, especially for the football team to come out. It was just good. I think it also included who he got in. We've had multiple times where Jamie Pollard, the athletic director, [Director of Athletics (2005-present)] Matt Campbell, the football coach, [Head Coach (2016-present)] would come in and give us an inspirational talk. Both of them are phenomenal inspirational speakers. You could just tell, they liked us. Another weird thing, they really liked us, and they enjoyed our company. Another thing was every Halloween, the band went trick-or-treating, during our time. We would go to all the coaches’ houses, they would all give us giant candy bars. [Brand laughs] Bill Fennelly [William Fennelly, Women’s Basketball Head Coach (1995-present)] was one of the main ones, and he even was telling us he was writing a book, and he dedicated at least over a chapter or so of just the marching band trick-or-treating at his house. [Brand laughs] Which I thought, I'm like, That's amazing. I need to read his book just to find that one chapter. It was always nice. You could just tell the buy-in from athletics. They loved us. They would support us through almost anything. They would take us wherever the football team went, which was a lot of places during our time, so. [laughs]

**DB**: Right.

[00:24:21]

**DB:** What are some of your favorite traditions, pregame rituals? What were they, if you had any? You know, did you always wear the same socks, or you know—

[laughs]

**JC**: Oh, that’s always a funny one. But now, we always had little things on game days that just make them special, make them different. It's all those little things combined. We didn't really have any big things. It's every section had their own little things here and there, especially when we were just marching around campus, which we did before every home game. We would, after our rehearsal--we always called it a “no case” because you don't bring your instrument case because we're not going to end at the band field. We would usually walk through campus on homecoming. We'd obviously walk through a little bit more campus, and then end up at a pep rally, but it was always good. Every section has their own little things here and there that they do, random chants, some we can and cannot say. Some we were encouraged not to say, some that we were forced to change because of others. The clarinet section wasn't that bad, but some of the ones behind and in front of us had to change a lot of things here and there.

One of my personal favorite ones was--it was, again, that transition time we had with a bunch of new leadership coming in. We even got to the thought of just like, we can change some things that we didn't like, or make up some new things here and there. So, as the clarinet section, I think, almost is by nature, you have to like at least *SpongeBob SquarePants* in some way, shape, or form, or at least know of it. So, our section captain—“our captain” is what we always called him--usually would start off, near the end when everything's calmed down, we're kind of just walking wherever we go, he would he would just start screaming out random *SpongeBob* songs. In about a minute or two, the entire section would join along. [Brand laughs] That was always just a fun little thing, just a little thing that makes game days better. It's just those little things. Then we'd all get in the little sections. Every section had their own thing to hype up their personnel before we would go to run on the field to do pregame. Ours once was we would do a roller coaster with our, usually, captain leading us with it, and it got, at least, so big and so much fun that the drum line would usually come to the clarinet section to start doing stuff. [Brand laughs] Then even, I've done this as well, alumni in the stands are like people are just looking by us as we're about to get ready for pregame and go through to tunnel. They would just come in and join us as well. It's always a fun time. Like, seeing all the other sections do some of their fun stuff, I felt like ours is a little bit special because we could get some other people in on the fun as well. It's just those little things. You don't think about it at the time, and then you're doing them, and you're just like, I wouldn't have this any other way.

**DB**: Oh, good.

[00:27:04]

**DB:** Can you tell me about the band uniforms while you were in band?

**JC**: As I think I've kind of said multiple times, it was another transition time. It was weird. When I first started, I think for two years, it was a solid yellow with the block “I” in the middle and “Cyclones,” kind of basic. I'd say a basic older style, not wool old, but early two-thousands style. Then they kind of changed it to—I got a little poster right there from the Extravaganza--that was, I think, the first year they switched it where it was more of a gradient from white and yellow going down. The shakos looked amazing. That was the one thing that caught my eye immediately. It was another, I think, whites to yellow gradient, and then the red half, and then all our bibs were red. Then, all of that was just cool because we saw the process of them thinking about changing it, and then they actually changed it. I was one of the first ones to wear it because my junior year, when I was a leadership, we always do a little thing for all the new recruits, all the new people who just made it in, and we were the first ones to wear those uniforms. Just the leadership out in Music Hall [Simon Estes Music Hall] showing the rest of them, and that was the reveal not just for the new members, but also for the old members, so they got to see for this uniform for the first time because I don't know how much talk there was about it ahead of time that we were just going to switch your uniforms this year. It happens. Everyone has been in love with them. They feel a lot better. They're more of like an Under-Armor-like material. So, on hot game days, they are a lot more bearable than the old ones were.

**DB**: How are they in the cold? I've got to ask just—

[laughs]

**JC**: Oh, not as good. Not as good, but we got to layer up, but if we ever put on the rain jackets--I was always a fan of the rain jackets because they were at least warm, and I could just throw a bunch of hand warmers or anything like them in there. But the few times we had cold games, especially as clarinets, because we're the only section that had cut-out fingertips. Yes, those were freezing at some point. So, cold game days were never fun.

**DB**: Yes. Yes, I'd agree with that.

[00:29:11]

**DB:** Can you describe the experiences with traveling with the band? Traditions, funny stories--that we can tell?

**JC**: Yes. [laughs] There's a lot of them because we traveled so much because the football team had breakout seasons all four years that was there, which, I mean, phenomenal. I hope it stays that way. I'd like to see it say that way. But we had a great group of players at the time, and it just continued on. Our first trip, I'm trying to think, freshman year, we went to Akron, Ohio to play the Akron Zips [University of Akron] which I didn't realize their mascot was Zips at all, and if you ask me what a zip is, I still don't know what it is, but it has something to do with an orange kangaroo. So, we go to their stadium and we're just like, “What's going on here?” Obviously not a ton of Iowa State fans in the east part of Ohio, but there was still a good amount there. They stuck us in the nosebleed seats--because, of course--just corner by the end zone. I think about halfway through the game, we outnumbered their student section pretty quick. But it was pretty empty, it was pretty empty. I think they knew it was going to happen. But it was still fun, and we still got to perform on the field. We performed a little show, then Akron performed a little show. I'll still remember this because whoever was announcing was just oh-so-close to saying our name correctly. He did not call us the Iowa State University Marching Band, he called us the Ohio State Marching Band. I don't know how it happened, but the announcer was on the field after our show saying, “I'm sorry,” to every single member that walked by him. [Brand laughs] Which I’m like, that's just funny.

Then I think when we were also there, we went to some band--I don't know if it was a competition or celebration thing, but it was a bunch of high school bands--and we come out, we do, I forget what show we did, but it was just a fun show, and we had a great time. Those kids, they seem to have the time of their lives. Every time we went to a high school exhibition, or a competition, or something like that, we just wanted to show how much serious fun, like I said earlier, serious fun college marching band is. I think we did one of those. We did the one in Akron. We did one in Cedar Rapids. We did another one at Ames High School when they did the Little Hawk [mascot of Iowa City High School] game between Ames and Iowa City High. Those were always fun.

That same year, [2017] we made the Liberty Bowl in Memphis, which fun time just making a bowl game because that was the first time in years that Iowa State ever made a bowl game. [laughs] We see everything, and we know we're playing Memphis, so it's like, oh great, home team, home stadium, what could possibly go wrong? We had a fun time. We marched right down the middle of Beale Street [street in downtown Memphis significant to the city’s musical development] and had a lot of fun. The parade was so short, and we were the first ones on. We were begging Carichner to just go around again. So many Iowa State fans. Fun time. That same year we also played “Sweet Caroline” for the marching band, and when we came down to Memphis, the stadium surprisingly was split half blue and half red for the game. After we did our little pregame stuff to the box, which is on the blue side, we turn around, and as we're coming off the field, we play “Sweet Caroline” for the red side. Now, that helped a lot with our fans, seeing all the stuff. Everyone loving it for the game. Then everything that happened was surprisingly a really good game, and we came out with a victory on it somehow. That was a fun one.

My next year, [2018] we went to Iowa, which, I mean, everyone has an Iowa story of something that goes wrong there, and it's never the same. Just trying to hide us away, sticking us in the nose bleeds in a very boring game. I think the final was like nine to six or something like that. [13-3, University of Iowa] Typical Iowa game, as I like to say. But it was just a boring game, nothing eventful there, besides the night before. We went to some high school just north of it, like in between the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Corridor area. [seven-county group near Iowa City and Cedar Rapids] But we had we all had host families, and I remember some of our friends had Iowa State fans, so they were happy to host the bands, but I remember one had some very hardcore Iowa fans. They woke up—I think it was half of our clarinet section--to the Iowa fight song and didn't stop playing it until they left. Which I'm like, fair. So, that was kind of funny, hearing that. That was one of our better years. We made it to the Alamo Bowl in San Antonio. That was yet another phenomenal experience. It was really cool. Every now and then, we got to interact with the other bands and any interaction with the other bands was fun. We were against Washington State, and I think I met up with a few of the trumpets, few of the clarinets on their section. We were all just happy to be there. Like, fun time. I think we were mostly happy because it was, I think, twenty degrees in Ames or Washington, and it was a nice like seventy or eighty in San Antonio with the River Walk [iconic riverside path in downtown San Antonio] right there. We had pep bands play on boats. We marched through, I think, Six Flags down there, and had a fun time. The game wasn't as fun for us, but it was still a great time. That was probably my favorite trip. I keep saying, I always want to go back to San Antonio just because of how good of an experience I had that first time there. It's a city I'd highly recommend visiting, just for the fun of it. They've done it well, and their band had a fun time there the few days we were down there.

Then, my junior year--last time we actually traveled—was, I believe, we went to Kansas State Game, where it was incredibly cold. We didn't like being there, and I think the opening kickoff got returned for a touchdown, and we're like, “This sucks.” And the game never got better. It was one of those late in the year with this “this sucks” type of thing. It was just like, “No, this game's a wash,” and we all went home after all cold, miserable. I think we had a hotel in Topeka and Carichner tried to make it better by getting a bunch of pizza in for everyone, and it kind of worked. Then that year we made—it keeps changing names, but I think then it was the Camping World Bowl in Orlando, which everyone was excited to go to because it was Orlando, and Carichner promised us a day in Disney. So, of course anyone who was a big fan of Disney loved that entire trip. We did march in the Magic Kingdom, I think a day before the game, and then we were there two days later for our day. We were against Notre Dame [University of Notre Dame] at the time, and I think we knew we were going to get our butts kicked, and we did. But I think some of my favorite interactions with other bands came from Notre Dame's. We got into group chats immediately after the game was decided, with Notre Dame clarinets, just trying to plan meetups, trying to plan getting to know each other. Just talking about our own experiences within bands because, I mean, Notre Dame has had their own share of phenomenal experiences as have we, so. It was just cool to interact with them, talk with them. My personal favorite moment from that bowl game was, we both did the parade at the same day, Notre Dame and Iowa State. Iowa State was first. Notre Dame, I think, was further along in the parade. When we were in the park a few days later, it was still a lot of Iowa State, and even neutral fans, or like people who didn't know there was a football game going on but just happened to be at Disney and saw both of us. They saw some of us wearing Iowa State shirts, and one person definitely had no affiliation with either university just goes, “Did you guys march in the parade a few days ago?”

We're like, “Yes, we did. We had a fun time doing all this.”

He goes, “Yes, you guys did look like you're having fun. I’d seen you guys doing all these dances, playing rock paper scissors, having all this fun. You're like, ‘this is a cool marching band,’” and then Notre Dame comes and they're one of the traditionalist marching bands—not that there’s anything wrong with it—but they were just up there, doing their thing. We’re doing our thing. He’s like, “Yes, you guys looked like you were having fun. The other band didn’t look like they were having fun.” I’m just like, [Brand laughs] oh that’s fun. It's funny with it. But yes, and I think the surprising part is--I think it was more because Carichner didn't want us to--we did not take any flights, we did not take any charter planes or anything. We bussed down the entire way. The twenty-four hours to Orlando, the twenty-something hours to San Antonio. Carichner at least always tried to say that it offset the cost so we could get better meals and merchandise. We could spend the money on that instead of flying down there, which, I mean, we got some pretty cool sweatshirts, usually a quarter zip because I think Carichner was obsessed with quarter zips. So, every bowl game we got a quarter zip. But it was always nice getting those bowl game treats, treats from those extra games. Some of them were a little bit iffy as well just because, I think for Orlando, we had the leave on Christmas Day to get there and do all our stuff on time. I mean, some families and some people just like struggled. We got to meet up in Ames, and spending Christmas on a bus is not how some kids imagined it. Then ironically, my birthday is on the thirty-first of December, so half of my twenty-first birthday was spent on a bus coming home from Ames. [Brand laughs] Not the way I imagined it. [laughs]

**DB**: Yes, no doubt.

**JC**: Yes, but lots of fun times. Any time traveling with the band, we at least knew everything was covered. We were going to have a good time no matter where we went. Even if it was what the Little Apple, [Manhattan, Kansas] and then ending up in Topeka, Kansas when it's like twenty, thirty degrees out.

[00:39:01]

**DB**: Yes. So, you performed the whole time in Jack Trice. Am I correct about that?

**JC**: Yes.

[00:39:08]

**DB**: So, what was it like for you to perform in that stadium, and how did performing in Jack Trice compared to some of the other stadiums that you performed in?

**JC**: Yes. Jack Trice, it's a special venue. I think it's just special. Everyone, they even know the band is good. They’ll get into anything we do. It's just really cool seeing this, and as I was part of a high school, I was also with our traveling with the bands. We went to a few NFL stadiums, and I'm like, it's different when it's a band thing versus when it's a football thing. Especially with football--Jack Trice, what sixty, seventy thousand fans you know are going to be there every single week. Every single time, cheering you on no matter what you're doing. Some maybe less because of some of how halftime goes, but it's still cool to see those. Seeing those moments there are great.

Some of those other stadiums, like I said, Akron, pretty empty, but by the time we were there and getting stuff going, there was a lot of Iowa State fans there, too. I remember ironically when we went to Kinnick [University of Iowa’s Kinnick Stadium], when we're coming off the field, I think for, it was either halftime or pregame, but I'm seeing Iowa fans in the first row, first of all applauding for us and saying, “You guys were the better band anyway.” I'm like, Wait, really? [laughs] I'm surprised it's coming from you. I'm like, yes, it wasn't too bad at Iowa. I always think Iowa fans are--they're bad, but I think they get a little bit too bad a reputation sometimes. There’s that, and then even these other venues that we went to--Memphis was just cool, seeing the split when it wasn't a hostile environment. We took over their home stadium without them really realizing it. Playing to our fans was great. San Antonio was a similar way. The Alamo Dome is an interesting venue. It's not designed too much for what it's done, but it sounded good. We sounded good in it. Not as much crowd noise coming back, or crowd interaction with it, just because they're there for the game, or there may be more other fans. But it was still fun to be in, and it’s fun to be in those different situations. Like, I mean, I think some people won't admit it, but I'm the Jack [Jack Trice Stadium] can get old every now and again, just doing it ten times a year. It's just like, sometimes you want a little bit different and just see what else is out there. I think it's interesting to see it, but I still think Jack Trice is one of--they always give us what we give them, so if we give them a good show, they'll let us know pretty quickly. [laughs]

[00:41:44]

**DB**: Okay, good. As far as special events, you talked about bowl games, parades, any concerts that you did. Anything more about any of those performances, other than what you kind of mentioned?

**JC**: Yes, I think the one--I mean, I've been talking about marching band all the time--there was one that really struck with me for concert band. It was originally supposed to be my senior year, so 2020, but then COVID happened, and a lot of schools--we couldn't do a lot. There was two that stand out from those times. Michael Golemo, [Director of Bands and University Professor of Music (1999-present)] originally with the bands for COVID, was just like, How do we do anything? And all universities were facing the same thing. How do we do anything? How do we perform? How do we practice? It was really cool what he came up with at the time. He broke off the band into woodwinds and brass, at the time, and we would at least be working on more like just music for us. Music for a woodwind choir, music for a brass choir. Then, when we would normally have concerts halfway through the semester and at the end of semester, he just got us a spot outside of the campanile or outside of the quad, [Lagomarcino Hall, originally known as the Quadrangle] just in the grass area. If it was a nice day we'd go out there and perform what we've been working on. That was always a ton of fun. It was just like a pop-up concert, it felt like. That was the first main one. Then, after that was my fifth year, where I still did concert band. I think it was 2021. One of the big things that that Doc [Michael Golemo] wanted to do the year before was--it was the hundredth anniversary of John Philip Sousa [American composer and conductor known for his military marches] coming to Iowa State and bringing his band to play for there. So, we wanted to reenact what they played, what they did there. That was a really cool moment, just being a part of it. The only thing that sucked was playing, I think, ten marches back to back to back. [Brand laughs] Those were not fun rehearsals, but Doc at least ensured us no more marches for the rest of the year. [Brand laughs] But it was really cool being in the gymnasium, which is where the band performed at, but just having that all setup.

**DB**: Oh, over the State Gym.

**JC**: Yes, State Gym, that's where it was. Yes, performing in State Gym and just the difference that was from some of the other places we do, and just the historic meanings behind that, was just phenomenal. Hearing stories, hearing things play from them. I think there is now a dedication plaque on somewhere in State Gym on that side where we performed, and they did it as well. I think another cool part of that, besides being in it, was for the finale--which was “Stars and Stripes Forever,” which of course it would be—Doc got Carichner, and they brought the entire brass line for State Gym to come over the half of the track that we [the concert band] were on and join in for the final stretch. Just another one of those cool moments that you're just living in the moment, and it's just amazing, especially from a band standpoint. The amount of historical context that's going on right now that happened a while ago. Doc told us later on, a few companies were looking at us. I think even the John Philips Sousa Foundation [a non-profit dedicated to recognizing the importance of band music] played the video of our performance at the big midwestern clinic [The Midwest Clinic International Band, Orchestra, and Music Conference] for their booth. I'm just like, that's crazy to think about. Just what our concert band did one day—on, I think, Thursday, middle the day--was one of those just weird times, but it's everything almost to a T of what it was when he came for the band. It was just really cool to be a part of it and reenact that. I can see Doc, tear in eye, just like dreams coming true within him. It's just one of those historical moments that I'm like, I'll remember for the rest of my life. Pretty easily.

**DB**: Yes, that was pretty cool, because my wife and I came up for that concert that night. That was fun.

**JC**: Yes. It was a great concert, and I'm just like, of course, it sucks playing marches in band all the time, but I'm like, you get into it. Then the concert was different than any rehearsal we did. Especially playing with it. There was a good euphonium player that was with us as well that played amazingly for it as well. But yes, great time. Loved doing it. That's probably my big, at least, concert band experience. There was supposed to be a--Doc was planning out this giant trip to Japan. He plans international trips every now and then. He usually does a Europe tour, but he was trying to get a Japan trip where we would perform at a few like high school festivals, because that's what they do over there. We would perform with them there. We would perform at Hiroshima as well. He was trying to get that set up and hooked up as well, but then COVID happens, and we can't travel over there. It's just like the one that got taken away from me. [laughs] But I'm still happy I was at least able to be a part of something even like the John Philip Sousa concert. I think that one is meaningful a lot, especially for the university as well, because I know the president was there. Everyone was there. [laugh]

[00:46:59]

**DB**: Yes. What do you think sets the Iowa State University Cyclone Football “Varsity” Marching Band apart from other marching band programs?

**JC**: I think the long name is part of it. [laughs] But yes, I think it's just creativity, just the serious fun that we have. It's the creativity. I know Christian Carichner was getting different drill writers all the time just to give us a show and just to see which one stuck with us, which ones could do some of the more things because--I mean, obviously, Carichner had an obsession with giant inflatable things. [Brand laughs] So, he always loved incorporating those any way he could. But even just getting stuff with there. I don't see a lot of bands do stuff like that, and, I mean, my upbringing was seeing all of the Big Ten bands do all their traditionalist marching and doing stuff like that. It's serious, it's good, and it's done well. But I'm like, the fun that we have with it as well--and I think it even shows just in our pregame. Our pregame, I personally think, is so unique, and so different, and so cool. It's modernized traditional, like we still do the high step, which is a pain to do, but we do it. We do it. We do different marching techniques on the field. We do a lot of technical stuff, the entire time that's doing there. Like I said, [it] takes a lot out of you. But I think just the tradition, that's still there, but add on all this other stuff that we're doing to it. It’s really cool. I think that's something that Carichner has extended on with some of our shows--continue like it's still traditional marching band, but we are taking it to different levels, different heights, and every show is completely unique and cool, and gets the crowd in it in different ways.

[00:48:43]

**DB**: Okay. When you came into the band, did you receive any advice from other band members? Or as you became more senior in the band, pass along anything to the new folks coming into the marching band?

**JC**: One thing I always said was just--especially as a leader--was just stick with it. Stay in band. It's going to be the time of your life. You're going to have fun with it even if you don't make the varsity band. If you make State Storm, you're going to have a fun time. You're going to be right next to us. You're not going to be this lower band that doesn't get seen. No, you're going to be the ones in it. Ironically, the State Storm were the ones in the dinosaur costumes the first time we did it, so like they were a large part of it. They were the ones who went viral. [laughs] We just played the music. But it was really cool. I had friends that initially stuck with the program, and they did really well. My freshman year, there was me from my high school, there's a lot of trumpets, and the trumpet spots were always hard to get. Always a fight for. One of my friends, he made the varsity band, and then all of his other friends made either State Storm or didn't make it, and he just joined with them. Just didn't do the varsity band that year. Then they all quit, and they kept telling me when I talked with them a year or two later that just like, “We miss band.”

I'm like, “Stick with it. Try out again next year. Like, it's not a closed door. It's always an open door.” I have that with a few friends as well. One of my friends, he did pick it up, and then he was only in the band for two, three years, but he still enjoyed it all. One of our good friends from the clarinet section, he made the varsity band same time I did in my freshman year. I saw him the first night of orientation, and I didn't see him again until his third year when he came through auditions again and did it.

He goes like, “I wanted to be a part of this. I saw what it was. I wanted to be a part of it. I was overwhelmed as a college student at the beginning,” because I mean, who isn't? Life changed. And, like, he just stuck with it. Then he did the band for, I think, three years as well. Did State Storm one year, and then just continued it.

So, I tell anyone, “Just stick with it. Stick with it. You're going to have the time of your life, even if you don't make it. Even if you just practice, or even if you just try out one year and don't make it. Just come back.” That was especially hard when I was a leader my first year, because the clarinet section, we had very few spots available. I think we had a total of maybe five spots available out of the thirty or so we usually march. We come up to freshman camp where freshmen learn all the fundamentals and basic, and there's about thirty-five, forty of them. I think as the leaders at the time, all six of us new leaders, we all looked at each other and just go, Oh no. We're going to have to let go of a lot of really good talent. We did our best to just make their audition the best they can. We made sure they stuck with it if they didn't make it their first year, or if they made the lower band. Which still, I think only five or six made State Storm that year. So, it's like you're still cutting way more than half of the entire people who try out. It's just like, just stick with it. Then I saw a few of them again the next year and they just--just stick with it. It's the hardest and easiest thing you can do. It's just stick with it. You're going to have the time of your life, whether you know it or not. You're going to meet so many interesting people that can still be your friends long into the future.

[00:52:19]

**DB:** How did you go about balancing band along with your academic, and any other parts of your life that you had?

[laughs]

**JC:** It's always fun with an engineers, because, what, over half the band is usually engineers, so some of us don't know what we're doing, some of us do know what we're doing. Usually, came study groups there. Again, my freshman year, I struggled. I struggled with academics. It was just one of those reality checks. My advisor—I always had good conversations with him most of the time--but my advisor at one point just goes, “Why are you in two bands? Like, what is this doing for you?”

I'm just like, I didn't tell him explicitly, but I'm like, “Those are the things keeping me sane.” [Brand laughs] Because I wasn't doing too well in some of my other classes, and I think I dropped one of my classes.

But then he just went on a little thing. Just like, “I don't see why all these freshmen come in, they're all doing band. They all overwork themselves, and this happens all the time.”

I'm just like, “No. That's keeping us sane through all this engineering,” and it's just a life change that you got to get used to. I had a new advisor pretty quickly after that, and he was fine with it. I was doing a lot better in my coursework. It's such a hard balance, just trying to figure out—especially an engineering workload is not the same as a lot of others, but even just having a release, a break from it all, was something that I always looked forward to. I did in high school a few time. Just whenever I was mentally not there, I would just go to like a band practice room, or like a solo practice room and just play my instrument. It was a way to express myself in a positive way. Like you said, I think that's what kept me sane during college was just staying in the bands, and I always could look forward to the five o’clock rehearsals, or the ten or eleven thirty rehearsals for symphonic and wind ensemble. I could always look forward to those every week.

[00:54:21]

**DB**: Sure. How do you think the marching band has changed over time? Or has it?

**JC**: I'm just trying to think even just from my time, and I think, just seeing, obviously, Christian Carichner, his start, and what's coming into now. And hearing some of the shows--I'm excited to watch every show that comes out of them, and I'm like, I'm still excited—still excited to see what comes out of them. I mean, last weekend they had a moment show where they just did famous moments in the stadium's history. Obviously, being a part of one of them and seeing them redoing and bigger and better was really cool. I even mentioned going back once or twice a year just to see what the marching band puts on the field like they put on the video game show, which was phenomenal. They play all these Tetris blocks--I'm like, they're just getting bigger and better, and the amount of talent that's coming through the program. I'm sad every year when the auditions come, just because I know they're cutting a lot of good kids. I mean, you want to see all of them do well.

**DB:**  Right.

[00:55:25]

**DB**: Well, you were in the band, and Justin, did the band experience any really difficult times that you can remember?

**JC:** I mean—

**DB:** Or everything seemed to go well other than COVID?

[laughs]

**JC**: Other than COVID, which I mean, was a challenge on its own. I think that's a great lead into what we did during COVID. It was weird because we the band was already set, all the members were there, everything was good to go. We're just trying to figure out what we're going to do. How can we march? Can we march three-fifty even? Can we march them in a State Storm? Carichner was always just very open of what we're doing, what's going to happen. Even our athletic director was very--Jamie Pollard [Director of Athletics, 2005-present] was very helpful with us as well because it was even at a point where a lot of college football games, you would have like, twenty, thirty, maybe 40 percent attendance. Or zero, in some cases. So, it's like, what do you do in that case?

I remember the first game we had that year. It was against was against Louisiana [University of Louisiana at Lafayette]. Not a great game to start off with because we lost it, we lost it in not a great fashion. But it was interesting because the bandstands, where they were at in the north end zone, were also getting renovated because they were trying to put in some more permanent structures instead of the metal stuff that was there. So, even at that time, it's just like, Can we even be there? Can we be somewhere else? Well, Jamie Pollard worked out a deal with us for that game specifically. The entire band could go. We would be standing on this east end zone, and we were spread out. We were all more than six foot away from each other in a lot of cases. [Brand laughs] Forward, back, diagonals, but we took up most of that most of that section right behind that Louisiana sideline, and it was a good time. Then we kind of had to play the entire year by ear because we didn't know what it was going to be. The only guarantee we had was, Carichner worked out, in the newsstands--because I think they were finished, or they just finished them. It was concrete stands. We could fit, with this with the social distancing, I think around sixty to seventy people in it, socially distanced. So, he was trying to figure out, How can we do this? The way that it started was, Okay, here's all of our home games. You're going to have to pick which games you want in order of preference. And he gave preference to seniors, fifth years first. He did it by year. He didn't do if you were a section leader, or captain, or anything like that. He just wanted to make sure, like even us seniors or higher-up classmen, we got the games we wanted to go to or something like that.

So, I remember the first conference game. I forget who was against, but that was one of the more common ones. Then the second one was Oklahoma, which was a big game because we knew they were going to be good. We knew we were going to be good. And it was just--that one filled up quickly, and I was a part of that as well, especially the clarinet section. We had a ton of seniors at that time. That entire section was seniors, and we had the time of our life because that game couldn't have ended better for us because it was just one of those upsets. It was when we knew that team was going to do something special. And we saw it. I think the next two games were a similar way where they only had 60 percent. Then I think the final two games, they either increased or decreased the amount of people that could be in the stands. I think one was a fall break game, so they allowed whoever they wanted to come for that. So, you put in your name. You more than likely got a spot, and we filled out that end zone again. Then the final game, which is also senior day, they offered tickets to some of our parents as well. Originally, it was supposed to be just a, like, football parents and band parents games, but I think they eventually opened up this maybe 20 or 30 percent capacity for it. But there was that.

Like, there's all this. We can talk about playing the stands all the time with giant bags around their clarinet. But he [Christian Carichner] even did some things just to make it feel like a normal marching band again. We split the band in two. You had Gold Band and Cardinal Band, and we still performed a show. We still created two shows that year, for each band, and then we just had some Saturday when the team had a bye or was on the road, we just took the field in--not full uniform, in Class C's, which we called “just the t-shirt and the shorts”--we performed our shows, live-streamed it to anyone who wanted to watch it. Recorded all the videos for everything. I think they recorded them to also play them during halftime of all these games, so he at least made it what--we all did what we could. It wasn't the best, it wasn't the worst, but I think everyone got a satisfying experience out of it, and I definitely did because--I mean, I had that opportunity, Do I want to do a fifth year with my graduate year? But I just said, I got everything out of marching band I wanted to out of my four years, which I think that's all a lot of people can hope for. Especially when you run into a situation like COVID.

**DB:** Sure.

[01:00:34]

**DB:** So, what's the marching band mean to you, Justin?

**JC:** I think just sense of security, family. Just everything with it, it's just--it's mind boggling how every little thing that every person has to think about and do throughout their marching band, everyone else has to do. It's hard enough just to get a few people together to put something together, put a house together, or something like that. But I'm like, you're talking about three hundred, four hundred people that's got to be completely coordinated doing stuff on the field, and if anyone messes up it's going to be obvious. It's just hard to get that. Then that family just extended. We would have so many social times with our sections. Everything would just naturally develop. Nothing was forced. We never forced anyone to go to anything, never forced anyone to do anything they didn't want to. We were always there for each other when we were having hard times in our class work, or just in general, having hard times in life, which happened a lot in any section. Just, everyone's there for you. It's a giant family that you can always rely on whenever you need them.

**DB**: Okay. My video is being really strange. So, anyway.

**JC**: That's fine.

[01:01:54]

**DB**: What's one of the most memorable experiences that you had, while you were in marching band?

**JC**: I’m always like saying this one, but it's just so true. We had a leadership exercise when I was in it. Just like, what was your best moment in marching band, that you were here, and how do we create moments like those again? It just all goes back to my freshman year where, it was at TCU [Texas Christian University] game. We got the Sudler Trophy. We played the “Overture of 1812” with so many cannons, and we got a gigantic win for the program. It was a top-five victory. It was also the sixth win of the year, so it was when we were guaranteed a bowl game for the first time in years, and everything that came around that moment was just really cool to see and get together. Just creating that moment was really cool. Then the field rush was also fun. It was fun, but as a band kid, you're just realizing we're not leaving until all these people on the field are leaving. [Brand laughs] Then, that was fun, and then it happened again my next year when we played--it was a night game against West Virginia, [West Virginia University] and I think that's when the football team debuted their all-black uniforms. West Virginia was coming in on this high because they had one of their best teams in a long time. We *thoroughly* beat them. It was just another one of those moments, just like, being there, seeing the action--and clarinets, almost first or second row. Always good being down there on the field, and like just seeing them, getting to know the football players. There's some really cool things with some of the football players I don't think even some of the band kids see. It's just some of the interactions we have with them is different. Them coming to one of our practices just to come there. Or leadership, including myself, going over and teaching the football players how to sing the fight song and the alma mater was always a fun time. Or one of my personal ones is that I got to know our star tight end at the time, Charlie Kolar, [Mechanical Engineering, 2017-2021] very well because we were in a class together doing a project. It was a semester-long project, so I got to know him very well, and I'm like, “I’m just part of the marching band, you probably don't care about me or don't notice me at all.” But I'm like, “We're there rooting for you every step of the way.” And they know that too.

I mean, he at least reassured us like, “We know. You are our biggest fans, by far.” I'm just like, it's crazy, and it's just like really nice. All the guys were just so nice and down their earth, and just seeing that team, following those team, knowing those people. I hope he does great things. I mean, if he doesn't, he's still a mechanical engineer. So, he's got a good backup.

**DB:** Right.

[01:04:39]

**DB**: Have you had involvement with the Alumni Marching Band then, yet?

**JC**: Yes, I've done it, I think two times, about to be the third time. It's a fun event, just coming back, seeing everything, seeing the band as it is now. Even just talking to all of our friends that we made the time us. Like I said, our clarinet section was large at the time, and a lot of us graduated the same time. We still make it a gathering to come back to. We'll all see each other, spend some time before the game, after the game. Even just talking with each other, seeing where everyone's at a life now. It's just a great gathering to see everyone again. And I always love seeing, especially all the other people who have been there for twenty, thirty, forty years. It's something that I look forward to every year, and I'm just like, I'm going to keep doing this as long as I am able to.

**DB**: Oh, good.

[01:05:31]

**DB:** Are there any questions that I didn't ask that you wish I would have asked? [laughs] Or have we covered everything that--

**JC**: I think we've covered almost everything. [laughs] It’s everything that we should cover.

**DB**: Yes. Okay, good. Well, Justin, I appreciate your time. I'm sure that the Oral History Project appreciates your time.

**JC**: Yes, I'm glad to see how this project turns out.

**DB**: Yes, and listening to what you had to say, because the first two interviews I’ve done are folks that are more my generation and followed shortly after me. So, you're a very young generation, kind of at the other end of the spectrum when it comes to us. So, I’m just going to totally stop my video.

**JC**: Yes, I can't wait to hear some of your guys' old stories, too, just when this project’s completed. Just hearing everyone's story-- because everyone had different cool experiences, but I think we'll all find some common ground no matter what.

**DB**: Yes, very good. So, okay, we're going to finish recording. We thank you, Justin, for your time.

**JC**: Thank you for having me.

**DB**: You’re welcome.