

Houston Asian American Archive
Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University

Interviewee: Dr. Daniel D. Louie
Interviewers: Sara Davis, Priscilla Li
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Transcribed by: Sara Davis, Priscilla Li
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Edited by: Bridget Schilling

Summary:

Born in Kaiping, Guangdong, China, Dr. Daniel Louie immigrated to the United States with his mother in 1947. They arrived in San Francisco, only to be detained and questioned before being released. In 1950, he and his family moved to Leland, Mississippi to join his aunt's business. They did not stay in Leland for long, where schools banned Chinese from attending schools. Dr. Louie continued to face discrimination as a Boy Scout and be discriminated against by his non-Chinese classmates.

After graduating from high school in Houston, Dr. Louie attended Tulane University on a full scholarship majoring in Chemistry. He then received professional degrees from Kansas State University, Arizona State University, and University of Texas. Before going to dental school, he conducted research and taught at several institutions. Dr. Louie has worked in hospitals and had a solo practice, which he retired from in 2011. Dr. Louie is also active in the Houston community, having served on the boards of Teach for America, Red Cross, and March for Dimes, to name a few organizations.

Setting:

The interview took place on November 5, 2017 in the Video/Photography Studio of the Digital Media Commons in Fondren Library.

Key:

DL: Daniel Louie
SD: Sara Davis
PL: Priscilla Li
—: speech cuts off; abrupt stop
...: speech trails off; pause
Italics: emphasis
(?): preceding word may not be accurate
[Brackets]: actions [laughs, sighs, etc.]

Interview Transcript:

SD: We're here in Fondren Library on November 5th. My name's Sara Davis.

PL: My name's Priscilla Li.

SD: And we're here interviewing Dr. Louie for the Houston Asian American Archive. So to begin, can you tell us where you were born, a little bit about your neighborhood, and your childhood?

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DL: Uh, I was born in, I guess in, I guess they call it Kaiping, Guangdong, China, in the village. Um I grew up there, until I was 10. Uh, I don't know you guys know, what relative citizenship means. Because my grandfather, my father, citizens, automatic citizen, when I was born. So I didn't have to uh go through immigration, don't have to go through that, so. Um, I grew up in - 2 years old, my father, my grandfather return to the State, they left my mom and me there. You know why?

SD: No.

DL: This little thing called the Chinese Exclusion Act. My mom is Chinese. I'm American citizen. I have a passport, she can't count. So we were left there, but we lived with my uh maternal grandparents in Hong Kong, the whole time, uh, until 1947, that's when the uh Exclusion Act was repealed 1943, then my mom can come. So that's when uh we came over 1947. Uh, the childhood in the village is very nice, very quiet, no Japanese, no war. But growing up in Hong Kong, when Japanese bomb and invaded Hong Kong, uh I don't think any of you, five years old, would witness murders, killings, uh in the streets by the Japanese. That's very brutal. Uh for years, I don't talk about it, until now. I'm 81, I don't talk about those experience in Hong Kong, the killing, so, we went back to the village, after the Japanese capture Hong Kong, went back to the village. Very quiet, serene, and my, my uh grandparents have a lot of land, so we lived off the land, so it was fine until 1947, then my dad processed us to come here. We landed in San Francisco even though there's no Angel's Island anymore. You understand what Angel Island is?

SD: Mmhm.

DL: There's no longer have Angel Island. But because my mom is Chinese, I was - we were detained for a week.

SD: Both of you?

DL: Both. Even though I'm a citizen, I have - because I'm a minor. Interrogations, interrogations. Are you sure you know, this is where you're from? How many steps to your house? There are no steps to the house. Well, they try to trick you. So, after that, we uh, we live in San Francisco. Uh, you ask what my first job is - my first job was in 1st grade, 10 years old, no English. I don't remember if I have any education in the village or not. Evidently, I have, or I had. I was in 1st grade for uh, oh maybe one semester, then promoted to the 5th grade.

SD: Wow.

DL: So I never had 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade in my life, so.

SD: That's a big promotion.

DL: So promoted to the 5th grade. Uh a real story, I tell you cause for the longest time, I could not distinguish between a cat and a dog. [**SD:** [laughs]] They both three letters. Cat and dog,

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three letters. To make a sentence, I say, "See the cat bark." Well a cat doesn't bark, a dog barks. So it was a struggle really and uh we lived there until um 1950, uh we moved to Mississippi. My father and my aunt go into business, to join my aunt's business in uh Leland, Mississippi. Uh, we were there for 6 months, and we left. The reason we left uh, I could not attend school in Leland, Mississippi. Uh we could not go to the white school, we cannot go to the black school. So we sort of - but it's very unusual - it's a uh what we call local options. Leland, Mississippi will not allow Chinese go, but Greenville, Mississippi, 10 miles away, can. And every city's different. There's a story behind why we can't go to school in Leland. Uh the last person to attend there is Beck Gee, he's in Houston, here.

SD: Oh, okay.

DL: You know Beck.

SD: Mmhm.

DL: Okay, I'm sure - [**SD:** I interviewed him.] He was the last one. The reason is, that he always the number one in his class. I'm sure he told you - 'kay, so I don't have to elaborate that, cause the [inaudible]. Anyway, from that point on, quote, "No more Chinese – no more Chinamen can come to school here." Until my sister in law, when she was in high school they said, "We'll try you guys." "Try, you guys." And they were able to attend school there. So we left. Came here, 1950. My aunt, my other aunt [inaudible]. So we came here in 1950. And uh, we settled down here. We were going to go back to California, but things changed, we been here since - ever since. Uh so I, I attended 8th grade, Hamilton Junior High. You know most people don't understand or don't know about the discrimination, back in the 50s. You guys, probably, never heard of, or did experience, or know what it is. The 50s in Houston is very difficult to live. Uh we cannot buy a house in certain places. Uh I was awarded the uh, uh American Legion Award, I don't know you guys have that or not in school here for junior high.

SD: I don't know.

DL: It's for the top student, graduating class, in uh, in uh American Legion oh, uh, yeah. So, they took it away from me, so here's the excuse. That I did not go to Hamilton all three years. Even though the teachers said I won it, but they took it away. To compound, uh the problem, I was, I was a Star Scout in California, 12 years old, Star Scout. My, my troop in Chinatown - it was a hundred scouts. Came here in the heights, say that they didn't have room for me. So I did not finish my scouting experience. But I still believe in troop - the program. So my sons, are all Eagle Scouts.

SD: Wow.

DL: I was Scout Master for 8 years. I believe in the program even though they jump - dump all over me. 'Kay, uh so, then I went to Reagan. Reagan High School. Now it's Heights High School. I dislike that name - Heights High School. It's John H. Reagan High School. [**SD:** [laughs]] Uh then I graduate from there, eventually. Back in those days, uh we are not into the mainstream with the, the, the Caucasian in their party. So we never - I have never attended parties, I've never

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been to a prom. You guys probably have different experience. I never had a prom. Uh so we usually go to places like uh, uh places like Mississippi, and we all - all the Chinese - they have the same kind of experience. All the Chinese came together, dances get together, get to know each other. So uh my very first job, back to - I think you asked - my very first job was - I had two paper route when I was 11 in San Francisco, two paper routes. And my other experience here I was selling groceries at Lewis and Coker grocery near Reagan. That was my very first job. I lost money in both job.

SD: You lost money?

DL: [laughs] People steal papers back in those days.

SD: Oh.

DL: They slip the paper out and they steal them, so. Um I don't know from then on, uh I graduate, I went to Tulane. When can stop there, I can continue, so — Uh the reason I - I not really hate the Texas schools. I want to get out of dodge. You know what get out of dodge means? Get the hell out of Houston. [**SD:** [laughs]] So 18 years old, you're an adult, in Louisiana. See 18 years, an adult. The reason is I had a full scholarship from Tulane uh, and also, I had a uh similar, same scholarship from Tulane alumni, so all my education was paid for at Tulane. Tuition, room and board, and everything, so. Another reason is, I was going to go to medical school. Tulane, uh you can be accepted into medical school after two years. In the state of Texas - very little-known fact, Asian cannot- no not cannot - usually unwritten law, unwritten rule, they are not accepted into professional schools. No lawy- no law school, no medical school, no dental school in early 50s. That's another reason I went to Tulane. I went there and uh I got accepted into medical school after two years. Uh there's no such thing as premed at Tulane; you have to have a major. Everyone has to have a bona fide major. And so, I'm a chemistry major. My first year of medical school, I hated medical school. [**SD:** [laughs]] And uh biochemistry was a joke. So professor said, "Well you know, you need to find another profession. I don't think you make a good doctor, because your biochemistry is so bad." So I said, "Fine." We part company. And guess what my PhD is in? Biochemistry. [**SD:** [laughs]] And uh get a PhD in biochemistry, did a whole bunch of post docs. I'm not going to go through the details. And I end of teaching - Baylor medical students. So, uh then after a few years, the teaching and research, my father-in-law told my wife - asked my wife, "When is Daniel going to get a job?" [**All:** [laugh]] "When is he going to get a real job?" He didn't think teaching is a real job. So at that point in my career, I decide to go ahead and change career uh either go back to medical school, which I have to move my family back to New Orleans, and I went across the street from Baylor to the dental school and asked whether if it's too old uh a dentist. And the dean says, "No problem. If you can tolerate from an exact science to a non-exact science, go ahead and do it." So I went to dental school - 19-uh-76, maybe I was 43 or 44. I graduated in 1983. And I unfortunately had a cancer tumor and it was - after surgery, it was fine. I had to wait for the five-year survival, before I can apply for orthodontic residency so that's where I end up as an orthodontist for thir- twenty-eight years. Specialize in cleft palate in uh cleft lip patients. So and I retire in 19, not 19. 2011, solo practice. And that's it. My life today. [**SD:** [laughs]] So any special question, I can answer anything you need to answer.

SD: So um when did you join the army?

DL: Oh I did not join the army. I was in medical school. There's a program uh for medical students. I was in the ROTC. Air force ROTC. [**SD:** [Okay.]] But my eyes got so bad, back in those days, I was 2100, I cannot fly as a pilot. But since I'm in medical school, I uh did a commission in Navy as an Ensign in the medical corp. [**SD:** [Okay.]] And then uh, I was Navy reserve for only, never went to active duty, so after a while, they said, "Well we have surplus of medical officers, that's between wars." They said, "Do you want to leave?" I said, "Sure, I want to get the hell out of here." I said, "I want to get out of here. I want to go back to graduate school." [**SD:** Yeah.] So that's when I was discharged, short of 18 months, which I don't get any benefits.

SD: Ohh.

DL: So that's how I was in the Navy.

SD: Okay. And did you meet your wife while you were at Tulane, or in medical school?

DL: No, no I met my wife in the street corner. When you interview my wife, later on when you interview her, she'll tell you the same kind of story. When we were in Leland, when I lived in Leland, well at that time I was 11, not I was 13 maybe. That's 1951 - yeah I'm 13, 14. And I said, I saw that little girl, over there, little buck teeth skinny little girl riding a tricycle. So, that's what I tell people that's when we met. [**SD:** Aww.] Not really, but I did see her, see her then. It's after years later, that the parties that we went to, in Mississippi [**SD:** Okay.]. Also her mom, and, and uh my - her cousins, they're sisters, and I know the cousins, cause they're - they - one, one of the cousin went to [inaudible] so we saw each other. And the other thing is uh it's sort of relative - distant relative. My aunt's husband is related to - it's - it's a vine, it's not a tree - family tree. [**SD:** [laughs]] Okay so we got to know each other. That's how we met.

SD: And when you were living in San Francisco, and Mississippi, what did your parents do for work?

DL: My mom's - well after all these long delays, she had three kids in a row. My brother, my two sisters, one after another. Uh my father is a captain, in the uh Fairmont Hotel - restaurant - [inaudible] Road. He was uh I guess a waiter, captain. That's what he does. My mom stayed home with the three kids. Uh and I roam around the street. [**SD:** [laughs]] Uh I was fearless at that age. My sister, I don't know if you want to record this or not, my sister think that my parents move from San Francisco is they thought that maybe I become a delinquent. [**SD:** [laughs]] Because I belong in, in two different organizations. One is the Boy Scouts, you know is upright. The other is a kung fu club. They said, "Well he's become a delinquent." I think that's - she said that that's true, that's what they told them that we move because they think that I become a delinquent. So, got me out of San Francisco, so. That's how we got out of San Francisco. My dad worked for somebody else. That's why we went to Mississippi to be in business, but I have paper route.

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SD: And while you were in Mississippi, were there a lot of Asian families there or-?

DL: Every - you should take a ride through Mississippi. Every little town in Mississippi in the delta, have a Chinese grocery store.

SD: Okay.

DL: Do you know the reason why there are Chinese grocery stores in black neighborhoods? In Mississippi? Or Arkansas? Or, or Tennessee? You know why? Alright in the old days, um after the Civil War, the African American liberated – so they said we not work in the field anymore, okay. And so they imported Chinese to work in the field. Chinese said, "This is stupid. I don't want to work that hard." [**SD:** [laughs]] So they opened grocery stores in the black neighborhood for two reasons. Uh they give them credit, the blacks, you know, they don't have any money, so they pay them every week when they come in, clear the credit. So the Chinese store give them credit. The white store won't even look at them. So, that's why there are a lot of Chinese in Mississippi. In grocery business, in the early days. And lot of them uhh still there.

SD: So did all the Asians in Mississippi have that same problem where they couldn't go find schools that would accept them?

DL: Like I said, it's local options. Some city you can, some city, you have no problem.

SD: Okay.

DL: But still, uh rather than fight it, there was a court case, sue the state of Mississippi. I'm not going to go into the details, you guys can research that. And they lost. So the Chinese uh, I think - I can't remember the, the lawsuit was Gow - one of the Gow families. G-O-W families. And they sue Mis- the state, and they lost. So the Chinese uh open a Chinese school in Cleveland, Mississippi, so Chinese can go to school there, and don't bother with the public school system. And uh but some of the other cities, they can go to public schools. So it's very different - different cities. Different towns.

SD: And when you were at Tulane, were there a lot of Asian students there or...?

DL: Not many. Uh well percentage wise, not many. Not like now.

SD: Right.

DL: Uhh when I went there - oh there were maybe a handful, 10 at the most.

SD: Oh wow. Okay.

DL: Uh but a lot of Japanese from Hawaii they come to medical school there because Hawaii did not have a medical school at that time. So they have an agreement that sent all of their students to Tulane for medical school. Uh in my class, in Tulane, in my freshman class, maybe 5. It's unlike now, because people in Texas never heard of Tulane. When I went to Tulane, they said, "Where

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the heck is Tulane?" Now you see a lot of Asians from here go to Tulane, so... Not very many in the 50s.

SD: Okay.

DL: But tuition was \$550 a year.

SD: Wow [laughs].

DL: So,

SD: What kind of, um, activities did you participate in, in college?

DL: Uh I'm a nerd. [**SD:** [laughs]] No. Uh I was in tennis in high school. I play - I find myself a very good tennis player. But when I got to Tulane, uh I look at their tennis team. I said, "This is hopeless." They had two Davis cuppers on the team, and my classmate - freshman class, had two up and coming Davis cuppers - they're junior Davis cuppers. And some of the seniors over there, they be lettering for the last three years. I said, "I'm not gonna get beaten up, four years and not get letter." So one day, I was walking back to the dorm across Tulane stadium at that time, and I saw these little green people running around over there. And I said, "What are you guys doing?" "This is the track team." I said, "Oh really?" It looks kind of fun. So I never ran track in high school because tennis always conflict with uh with uh, with uh, uh track. And I don't want to get myself beaten up in football, so. And I cannot hit a curve ball, so I cannot play baseball. So the coach says, "Hey, you want to - you want to be on the track team?" I said, "How do I get there?" He said, "Get on the track, and run down the track." [**SD:** [laughs]] So I did tennis shoes and all, no track shoes. Back in those days, it's a center (?) track, it's not [inaudible], it's gravel. Ran down the track, and came back and he said, "Okay, Louie, you're on." [**SD:** [laughs]] I said, "What does that mean?" "You're on the track team!" [**SD:** [laughs]] I didn't know how fast I was running. He said, "You're on the track team." So uh I ran track, mostly sprints. Back in those days, 100 yards, 220 yards, and 440 relays. Uh anything over 250 yards, is a waste (?) [laughs]. So that's my main thing. I was on the drill team in the Air Force. ROTC. I was on the drill team. Uh. And other activities like Baptist Student Union, all kind of you know, athletic, that's when I did track.

SD: Okay. And did you ever face any sort of discrimination in high school? Or college?

DL: Oh yeah. It's very subtle. Like I said we - in school, they you know they knew who I am.

SD: Right.

DL: Okay. Uh a lot of people want to sit by me because I pull them through classes. Uh, they know I can do well in school. They know me, but I was never invited to any of their parties. Uh like I said Boy Scout thing. Uh they're full. I said, "How can you be full when my troop in California, 100 scout and you only have 25?" You know. And the American Legion Award. Okay. And the uh counselor in high school said, "You don't want to go to medical school. Nobody can come to you. You're Chinese. Nobody will come to you. You don't have enough

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Chinese to come to you, so forget it." And so uh, housing-wise, we cannot buy a house in certain areas. Are you familiar with - well I don't - you know where River Oaks is. You couldn't walk in River Oaks, let alone live there.

DL: Uh when some of my friends' family bought a house in Garden Oaks, River Oaks - in Oak forest, you know where that is? Northwest Houston.

SD: Okay.

DL: But - and my father said, "They red lined it. We cannot buy a house there." My parents cannot buy a house in Timbergrove, until 1963. So that a lot of subtle discriminations, that's not really overt. But it's there, so.

SD: Right.

DL: But you feel it. You experience it. And that's how come I want to do this. A lot of you young people and the new immigrants, have no idea what we gone through, how we suffer. And we, we survive. So. And even in New Orleans, discrimination. So it - it's not until after the 60s, things a little - not loosen up but they not as overt anymore. So.

SD: So, did you find that as time went on, and you entered your professional career, that you faced a lot less of that discrimination?

DL: [sighs] Well, I sort of just put that behind me. I said, "Okay. That's your thing, it's not my thing."

SD: Okay.

DL: I'm gonna do my thing. My motto is - and like I told chi— my kids, and my friends, I said, okay, I tell those people that discriminate against us. "You tell me the rules. How you want the rules to be played. And I'll play by your rules. I'm gonna beat the hell out of you." That's what we did. And that's what a lot of Chinese had done. You know, we all went to college, we all try to beat them in their game.

DL: I would say in the year 2020 all your medical school department gonna be chaired by Chinese, or Asians. You believe that?

SD: I do.

DL: Okay.

SD: Um, so what made you want to become an orthodontist, because you said you changed careers later in life, what sort of drew you to orthodontia?

DL: Well dentistry's a hard profession. You- you sit in the chair all day long. Okay, number one. Uh, I don't wanna do that. And uh, another reason I wanna become an orthodontist, because

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when I- I used to teach in China, uh when I- before I went to residency, I taught in China. Uh I don't speak Chinese, I don't speak Mandarin, I don't speak any Chinese, I always have a translator. I saw a lot of cleft kids. Uh, this one hospital in, in uh Xian- not Xian- Chengdu, four floors of it all cleft kids. So I said I'm gonna go back and do this. And I was fortunate when I finished my residency, my speech professor recruit me to be on the cleft palate team. At St. Joseph one of them and uh Texas Children's. I was on two cleft palate teams for 25 years so I see cleft palate kids- I treat, you know, regular patients also, but I- whenever somebody has a cleft palate patient they send it to me to treat. So uh that- and also for orthodontist you don't have to sit in a chair. Any of you have ortho- braces? Who work on you? Not your doctor, right? The assistant. That's another good thing because assistant does the routine work and uh so- by the way longevities much better being an orthodontist then uh regular dentist.

SD: Uh, switching to a different topic a little bit, uh, when you were raising your own kids did you try to incorporate um, Asian traditions or culture when you were raising them?

DL: Uhh, try [laughs]. Did you parents teach (?) you? I try, uh, but knowing the times have changed, I cannot impose the- the things on my children that my parents impose on me. If- if I did not marry Chinese I would been disowned- out the door. Period. Uh so, but I don't insist that they do it. So finally my wife say okay, but just tell them, I don't care who you marry, just marry [laughs] and find somebody good and go about that. Uh, we observe most of the- most of the Chinese traditions that we think is worth doing, like New Years, you know this sort of thing. But none of the real traditions of Chinese thing. I don't even like to do them myself so. Um I know some of the Chinese here still do that. Some of the Chinese in San Francisco still very very traditional. So um I say you can do what you want and if you want to wear earrings you wear pantyhose [laughs]. That was- that was it, you know. The only constraint I say, you do whatever you want, but if you want to do one thing, you go with the consequence do the other stuff too. So uh, and neither one want to be in science, neither one want to be a dentist, so. That fine, you know, as long as you can have a good career.

SD: So, would you say you identify as Chinese, or American, or Chinese-American?

DL: Alright, I do not like the hyphenated word. I dislike that immensely. Uh I am an American of Chinese dissent.

SD: Okay.

DL: I'm not Chinese first and American- people say I'm Chinese-American, no you're not, you're American of Chinese dissent. You are Ch- American of Chinese dissent. Or are you Chinese or Vietnamese?

SD: I'm Chinese.

DL: You Chinese?

PL: Chinese.

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DL: You say, you born here, you say- you American first, Chinese second- I don't mean to put it second, but- but that's who you are. This is your home, that's who you are. So I'm American of Chinese descent. But I value my Chinese heritage. We trace our family 28 generations. [**SD:** Wow]]We know exactly where we came from. So-

SD: That's amazing. So what organizations are you involved with now, in Houston?

DL: [sighs]

SD: I know there're a lot.

DL: there're a lot. Um actively um, I'm- I'm, well I was past president of Chinese Doctor uh- uh organization- Chinese Doctor Club we called it. I'm still uh involved with Chinese Professional Club. Uh I do not like- let me put it that way- I distance myself from purely Chinese organization. Very early- I don't know if you know Martha Wong or not, Dr. Martha Wong, she- she and I grew up together in- and she said, "Dan, involve yourself outside the Chinese community, it's good to be involved with Chinese community organization, but you need to get yourself outside the- the neighborhood, so to speak, and get yourself involved with other things, like Teach for America, March of Dime, Red Cross." So that's- I'm on those boards, no longer activity, because I've term limited out so those the only two organization I still spent time with.

SD: Okay. Um let's see. How have you seen the population of Asians in Houston change over time?

DL: Oh God, it's gone 180 degrees. And- and it saddens me that- that we have so many fractions. Uh, you know, that's the thing I hate the thing about Chinese-, it- it-it- we try to divide not among- not just among the big community, we divide ourselves in our own community. Uh, it saddens me that well she- he's Taiwanese, he's from the Mainland, he's from Hong Kong, he's ABC, you know, we all here. Why you want to divide yourself, let people jump all over you guys? And pit yourself- pit one against another. And I hope someday they just put away all their differences and say, okay we're one group. Uh, it's gotten worse, really. Before 1960 there not as many immigrants, most of us we're, uh, family came from Southern China, you know, Guangdong. Uh so we all know same kind of values, same kind of thing. Now it's so different that really diverse. Almost to the point of divisive, uh among our communities. Look, even the Chinese community centers, you know how many there are?

SD: A lot...

DL: If I don't like you, I'm gonna start my own. I'm the president, you know what I'm talking about? And so you have organization, got three people, one president, one vice president, that's the organization. And that's just ridiculous to have that. It changed so much that I don't recognize the Chinese communities any more. Back when we were growing up, if I see you when your parents coming into town, we immediately run to you say, where you from? They don't even talk to you now. you stand right next in line. I was stood in line the other day- Academy, go get a shirt. There was a Chinese lady behind me, I try to talk to her, she didn't have

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want to do with it. And so, yeah it's changed so much. So much that- that um, I'm afraid it's gonna get worse.

SD: Besides going back um to teach, have you been back to China since?

DL: Oh, yeah, I used to teach every two years.

SD: Oh, every two years.

DL: Uh I make- used to make- well I'm uh- uh professor, Tianjin Medical School, visiting professor, so I used to teach in Tianjin, Xian, Guilin, Kunming, I used to make the swing every two years.

SD: Okay.

DL: You'd be surprised what I was teaching- dentistry. I said, how about biochemistry, said, no we don't need biochemistry- dentistry [**SD:** [laughs]]. So I used to go every two years uh and I stopped going about 2000 maybe. I started in uh 1986, I stop in 2000- I think all my friends either got purged by the party or they retired. So I don't know anybody anymore, so uh I don't go to China to teach anymore. So I did go quite a few number of years.

SD: Um, and did you find that when you went, people were welcoming to you, even though you didn't speak Chinese, and you were sort of more Americanized by that point?

DL: Its funny. Yes, they welcomed. We- when we stop- when we stay- stay in the Tianjin Medical School, uh, back in 18- uh not 18- 1980s, they're no hotels.

SD: Oh really.

DL: No. Uh, we stay at the- on campus, with a VIP apartment. Two rooms, that's VIP apartment. Got one TV, doesn't work, one bathroom and no- no good running water. We have thermos everywhere, you see those thermos? We take shower with them, we- we drink them, brush our teeth with them. We were there for, on campus for a week, people won't speak to us, they just ignore us. So I finally said, why do they not speak to us, well we look different than- than Chinese in china. They said, we thought- they thought you were Japanese.

SD: Oh, wow.

DL: They still have dislike for the Japanese. They- they thought you were Japanese that's why they didn't speak to you. After they just discover we were not Japanese, I mean they just pour all over us, whatever we want, they would bring it.

SD: That's kinda funny.

DL: They thought we were Japanese. You know I'm- I'm a little heavier than- than the average skinny Chinese over there so. Uh, other than that it's no problem.

SD: And um, what does your wife do?

DL: She's department administrator department of Religious Studies at Rice, for 40 years. And uh essentially, she trained all the chairmen, except the first one. So, she just retired last year, after 40 years. Uh, we both were here, I was here 1973 to 1976 in the biochem department and so she- she stayed 40 years, I went across the street to Baylor in '76 so... So that's what she did 40 years, administrator.

SD: Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

PL: Um I guess a bit towards um when you were at Tulane, um why did you choose to study chemistry?

DL: I was always fascinated by chemistry, even in high school. See, I helped the- the teacher, I was more or less the assistant to the teacher when I was in high school. So I was interested in chemistry. And so when you go to Tulane, you do not have um giveaway classes as premed, you take the regular- if you- you chemistry major you take all the classes that major take- not some you know, nerdy that jerks take, the jocks take, no you take the regular one. And so I was very good in chemistry, and I'll tell you. Well I might have been a delinquent, so when I uh graduate, there were- there were 15 of us went into chemistry my freshman year, there were only 3 of us got degree in chemistry. And so the last day of, of, of school, we synthesized a compound that's hydro- um that's hydrophobic, you know what that means? Hates water. Its explosive stuff. We're supposed to only synthesize a milligram to turn in, but my buddy and I synthesized 12 grams [laughs] [**SD:** [laughs]]. And we partial out into 25 milliliter flask, put alcohol in them, and, uh, that's my delinquent thing coming out. We drive across the causeway, you know the causeway in New Orleans? That- that bridge across the lake. And uh I was driving, he was on the other side. We throw the stuff [laughs] it's like you know, like submarine explosives going. That's- that's a lot of stuff to make that. We supposed to- one milligram- we make all that. So, uh, so I always like chemistry, that's why the medical school bio- medical school biochemistry did not just get along, you know. Here you are, uh four years of chemistry, they want you to measure the pH of milk, I said, what the hell's that got to do with chemistry? So, anyway, that- I always been interested in chemistry, and I was, I think, pretty good at it.

PL: So how did you get your PhD in biochemistry if you didn't do well beforehand?

DL: Uh well, when I left medical school I hated biochemistry because all I can say, biochem is so stupid, I didn't want to be biochemistry. So I went to Arizona State to study under the person that um- uh- his specialty is solid state chemistry. You know, like. And so I went there to study under him. He supposedly a graduate student of this famous guy from Illinois. So I got there, Dr. Gao (?) says, uh I am going to medical school. I said, when? I just left medical school, you're going to medical school. He's a- he's a Mormon, he- he wanted to serve on the state of the [inaudible]. So he decided to go to medical school, so okay here we are, now fortuitously we played football with our faculties, one faculty member happened to be a biochemistry professor, Dr. John Erinson, he's a Rice graduate by the way, he said, Dan I have a grant, I need somebody to work on this grant. I said, not biochemistry, he's- I hate biochemistry, forget it I'm not gonna

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do it. He said, you work in the summer, if you don't like it, that's fine, but you work through the summer, help me with this, until, you know, school starts again. As it turned out, biochemistry stuck. So I continued biochemistry rather than going back to medical school. So, its uh a funny turn of event that got me back into biochemistry.

SD: Now that you're retired, what do you like to do with your free time?

DL: I have no idea [laughs]. No, the last 6 years, if you look through this CV, I was on a board I guess, group called Appraisal Review Board, you know what that is? That is review your parents property tax. See if it's too high or too low, that's what I did for 6 years, so term limited out, so this- next month's the last month I work as that, so I have no idea what I want to do. I think- I talk to people, you know, talk to Tracy Chan maybe, maybe she can find me something to shuffle paper in her court room or something. So I will take- will probably take this next year off. Maybe sort of just, maybe pick up my golf game again, which I neglected, so...

SD: And what would you say is your greatest accomplishment?

DL: Raise my children. Uh I didn't make much money, orthodontist doesn't make money [inaudible]. Raise my children to walk straight, I don't mean walk straight, but you know, uh, not being delinquents or, I always give them too choices, it's like the highway, here is the highway, here are the shoulders, you get on the shoulders you make it back on the highway or you're gonna be in trouble. I say, you get a little leeway, you can do whatever you want within this, just, parameter and that's how I raised them, they both turn out very well.

SD: Are they both still in Houston?

DL: One is in Florida, that's the one that's married. One's in Houston, he's a little particular, I don't think he's ever gonna find a wife. The other one is married with 2 daughters. So, Michael's so particular, uh, I think it's hopeless.

I don't know, you're going through the CV, there's a lot of stuff there. I don't know you wanna see, you've seen it before so.

PL: What's motivated you to become so involved in Houston, the Houston community?

DL: Well, like a said, Martha Wong, we grew up together, she was city council at one time, she's also in legislature. She- she always say, Dan, do you no good just involved with the Chinese community. You need to do- broaden your horizons. So, that's how I- went outside- I met Anne at Teach for America, that's when I first met her. Uh, so, then I was appointed to the Harris Country Hospital board for 7 years, I was there for 7 years. So, different organization, people, it's networking, they- they recruit me to be on those boards and so on. Uh, so people say, why don't you serve on board, I say, I've been there, I've done that, I've had enough. Besides it's expensive to be on the board. Right?

PL: So did you ever have a patient who wouldn't see you because of your- um because you're Chinese?

DL: What?

PL: Um, did you have any patients who wouldn't see you because you were...

DL: No, no. They- my name kinda baffles them. It's not a Chinese- yes it is a Chinese name but its not a very common. In California there a lot of Louie's. I think, what my great-grandfather or something used a paper name. You know about paper name. my name is really Share, thank you, our name is Share. Uh, that's why my middle name is there you notice. So that's our real Chinese name. But people- Chinese know that we are theirs, but to everyone else- uh we could've changed names but nobody else- nobody would know who we are. We've been here four generations, Louies, if we change it now, nobody know who we are. So, all the legal stuff have to be changed, it's too much trouble, just left the Louie there. As long as Chinese community know who we are.

Last chance [laughs]. Fire away. This is worse than my PhD oral [laughs].

PL: I guess, cause you had the opportunity and experience of working in a hospital and also private practice, so what is your view of the difference?

DL: [Sighs] Hospital is more restricted. You have to abide by hospital rule regulations. I have to have a um, a drug license that go all the way to category 2 narcotics, I have to have it to work in hospital, but I have never written one. I refuse to write one. Uh, you have to report to somebody. My own practice, I'm the boss. And also I'm lucky to have good assistants that's been with me for 15, 20 years, they driving from Cosby every day for 15 years. But hospital, you have to- hospitals- hospitals like academics, too much politics. Uh, do you know what the three worst political arenas in your life? I'm gonna educate you guys. Which you think is the worst uh place to, for- where politics the worst?

SD: Sports maybe?

PL: Academia.

DL: Hmm?

PL: Academia, college.

DL: Churches.

SD: Churches?

DL: What you think is second? Academia. What you think is third? Business. Churches' politics is worse than anything. I know, I've been in church politics, church hierarchy, you know deacon all that. Church politics, when I was not a deacon I had no idea what the heck's going on, I was happy as a lark, when- become a deacon I said, all that dirt around here [laughs]. So politic is very, very pervasive in churches, academia and business.

SD: Um, who were some of your role models growing up?

DL: Well, I think this next year I'm gonna write the book. Uh, I am fortunate to have what I call angels along the way. I didn't wanna talk about that. Uh, they were all women. Uh, the first one is, when I was down in California, roaming the streets, cause my mom is too busy taking care of the young ones, I was a delinquent, come to think of it. And so this lady, look like Mary Poppins, dress like Mary Poppins and she speak perfect Cantonese. She was a missionary to China, so she grabbed me and said, you need to come to Sunday school with me. So that's the first angel, well besides my mom, okay, the first angel that got me into first experience with churches, even though I did not stay over there. Uh, and then second one, that really create a lot of [inaudible], Joyce Fan. I don't know, you know her or not. That name will come to you some day, Joyce Fan. Uh, well, Martha, the other one, encouraged me to- Joyce Fan got me going to medical school, dental school. She carried my CV, at that time it's very short, to all the admission places, you need to admit this guy. So Joyce Fan's the other one. Uh, there's a number of them though, they're all women. Uh, ex-girlfriends, taught me what not to do [laughs]. So, uh lot of those- not so much role models, but, but steering in the right direction, when I'm- when I'm at a cross roads they happen to show up. Like when we moved back to Houston, we didn't go to church, this one person that work in, uh, biochemistry department at Baylor, she said, I'm taking your kid to Sunday school, I said like hell you are, if they're going we're going. So there a lot of those women in my life that sort of steer me in the right direction. And so uh, I'll probably throw some in the book when I'm gonna start put together how they really influenced, turn my corner for me. Uh, the role model uh, I ac- academically it was my um, professor at Arizona State, John H- John Erinson he graduated Rice, he's undergraduate, he's the one that steered me to be a good biochemist. And the next influence- influential is my chairman in orthodontics. Then was is it, I said- I should get ready to take the- the board, he said, no you don't want to take another board. You have enough paper in the world, you don't need another piece of paper. He said, all I want you to do is be a good orthodontist and treat your patients well, that's all the advice he gave me. Those are my really significant role models that impact my, my career and my life, more than anything else so. They're a lot, but those stand out more than others.

SD: (To PL) Do you have anything else?

PL: No.

DL: Last chance [laughs].

SD: Okay, I think we've asked all our questions, so thank you so much for sharing.

DL: Good, alright, hope I didn't [inaudible] it up too much.

SD: No, it was perfect.

DL: Alright. Thank you.
[interview ends]