

Burlington High School **Class of 1957**

50th Reunion Project



A u g u s t 2 0 0 7

Dan Simpson

May 9, 1938, Helen O'Brien Simpson began contractions at Bishop DeGoesbriand Hospital in Burlington, Vermont. When the baby began to appear something was wrong. The feet were emerging first. It was a



Dan in 1957 and Dan and Lucy in 2007 when they went to Burlington for the 50th Reunion.

breech birth. The doctors worked with hands and instruments to turn the child around. After nearly 48 hours in labor, the mother and the baby were given the Last Rites of the Roman Catholic Church. Apparently, the baby was not to be denied. On May 11, 1938, Daniel Lester Simpson was born. There were a few problems as a result of the difficult birth, but nothing that was life threatening or debilitating. They brought me home to 159 Pine Street where I lived until I was 12 when we moved to Hinesburg Road in South Burlington.

My mother was the daughter of Patrick O'Brien whose family was in agriculture in South Burlington and Elizabeth Cameron O'Brien. Her cousins are the O'Brien brothers, Danny and Leo, and the many children on the Cameron side.

My father was in the U.S. Army Calvary at Fort Ethan Allen when he met my mother. He was an excellent horseman and boxer, traits that I would aspire to when I grew up. The marriage was short. In 1942, my father, who had not re-enlisted after marriage, rejoined to fight in WW2 in Germany. My Dad was in the Tenth Armored Division of Patton's Third Army. His Combat Command unit was the first to arrive at Bastogne, before the famous 101st Airborne that receives all of the credit, and held the line for several days until reinforcements arrived.

When the war ended, the marriage, which had been "rocky," was over. My Dad seldom returned home and eventually remarried in Germany. Frankly, I did not miss him that much.

I had a wonderful family. My grandmother, Elizabeth O'Brien, was the matriarch. My mother's sister Kate, her husband Rowland Peterson, and their daughters, Betty and Susan, were my extended family. My aunt Kate was my tutor in grammar school and taught me how to swim and to drive a car. My uncle Rowland was like a father to me. He taught me many skills over the years. We hunted, fished, canoed, boated, Indian wrestled,

camped, and did many other outdoor recreations. He taught me how to handle weapons safely and we used to enter competitive turkey shoots. He also taught me how to use tools to make things with my own hands. I learned how to be self-reliant, which really helped me as I grew older, and he taught me the value of hard work, which took quite a while to soak in. My uncle Rowland had no sons, but when his children married, he adopted their husbands and children just as he had done with me. He died last year at the age of 88. We will remember and mourn him until we too must pass on.

I attended Converse School on Pine Street until sixth grade when we moved to South Burlington. Tom Whitney, Joan Papin, Thomas Trieb and I were classmates at Converse. I remember passing by Tom Whitney's house on Pine Street. His family lived north of our block closer to school. I actually had spent a year at Cathedral, but a bout of illness that was initially diagnosed as leukemia kept me out of school for a large part of the year. It was found to be pernicious anemia that is treatable. My grandmother felt I would do better in a public school, so I was transferred and repeated first grade. I



Uncle Rowland and Aunt Kate Peterson



159 Pine Street where I lived in the 1940s. The picture was taken in 2007.

remember the fun of playing in our rhythm band in first and second grades. I played sticks and the triangle.

World War 2 is a time I still remember. Seeing my uncle Buddy, my Mom's brother, and uncle Rowland off to war down at the train station on Main Street, the Air Raid Wardens coming down Pine Street to check for home lighting showing outside, playing the recording of "Remember Pearl Harbor" on our living room Victrola, and the end of the war

when nearly everybody in Burlington got into cars and on the roads the streets blowing their horns.

After the war we played war and cowboys in the streets and yards of Pine, King, Main, and any other streets the battles would carry us. We made our guns from wood and our horses were old brooms. I roller-skated as I got older and built sidewalk racers with scrap lumber and old carriage or cartwheels. In the summer, we also used to walk down King

Street to the Rutland Railroad tracks, cross the drawbridge, and swim at south beach. The big Rutland steam engines were loud and exciting to watch as they passed on the tracks near the beach. What fun we had. In the winter, I drew, built models, read comics, and played with my chemistry sets. I listened every evening to "Terry and the Pirates", "Superman," and many other radio shows. I also remember having a front row seat in my upstairs window on Pine Street when the circus came to town. They used to march their animals and wagons from the Main Street yards down Pine Street to the south end where they set up in a large field. Finally, I remember Saturday matinees at the Flynn and Strong theaters: cowboy, war, sci-fi and horror movies with cartoons and weekly serials. Bring it all back!

I feel sorry for the majority of children of today who have instant gratification. With television they no longer exercise their imaginations, they no longer build models as we did, they do not use tools, no longer build any thing from scratch, or play outdoors. Most hobby stores today sell to a mainly adult patronage. If I had to live all over again, I would still choose to live the way our generation did. Thanks to antibiotics and the Salk polio virus, we were no longer in the danger our parents were once in, yet we had not lost contact with the vitality, imagination, and energy of youth.

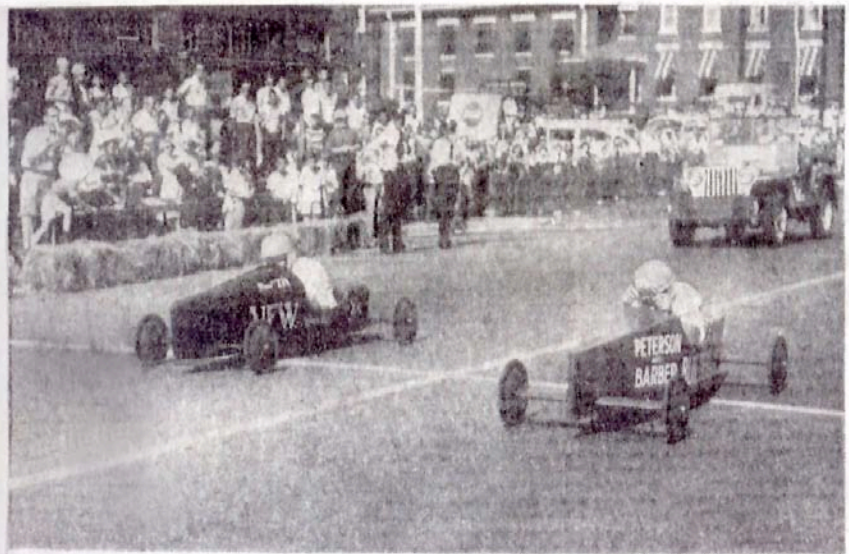
We moved to South Burlington in 1950. When I attended Central School, who was already there? Tom Whitney! His family had moved to South Burlington a year previously. My closest playmates while at Central were Jack Lamson, Jimmy Mee, and Keith Palmer. I played basketball at Central as a much-unused reserve. Mr. Lavalley was our coach and Physical

Education teacher. I really liked him. I loved tumbling. I sure wish I were as nimble again! Jack, Jimmy, and I used to play steal the flag and war games most of the year on a hill near Simpson Court - no relation - off Hinesburg Road and ski there in the winter. My neighbor Keith Palmer and I did many things together.

The Derby

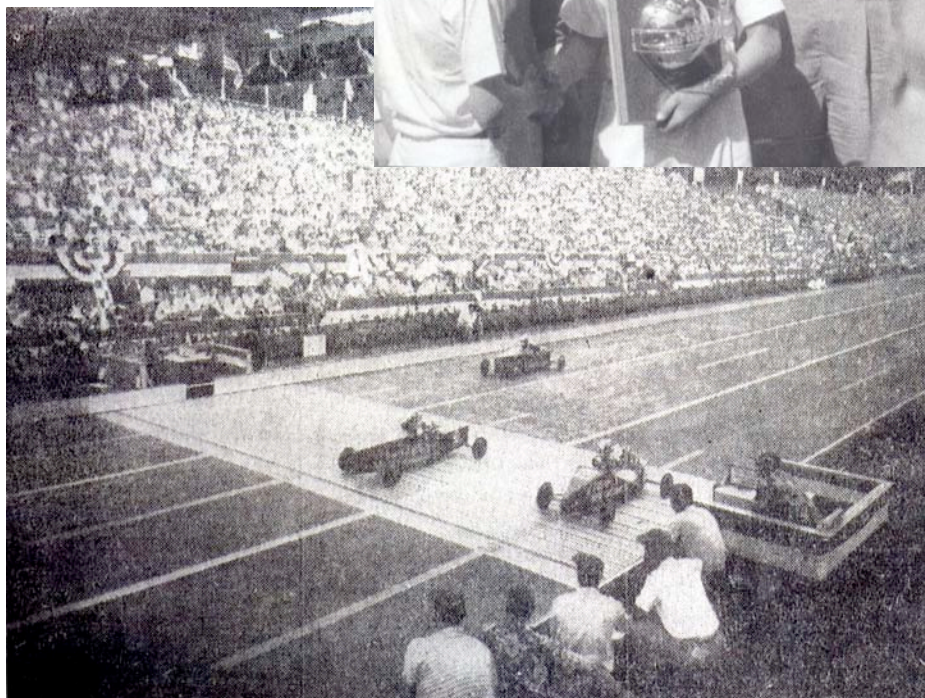
The biggest event in my young life occurred in 1952 when I was at Central School. With the encouragement of my grandmother and the sponsorship of my uncle Rowland's construction

Danny Simpson Crowned Soap Box Derby Champion



THE 1952 SOAP BOX Derby championship was determined in the tight race shown above as Daniel Simpson edged smiling Tommy Hurd of Springfield for the title. The Simpson car is at the right. The race was the second between the pair following a dead heat in the first try.
(More pictures, story on pages 8, 9.)

company, I built a soapbox racer in my uncle Rowland's basement with his tools and entered the Soap Box Derby. Much to my surprise, I won and went to Akron to represent Vermont. I won many prizes in Burlington. At Akron, I won one heat and lost to the boy who came in tenth. What a wonderful experience. After flying - my first time ever - to Akron with Chuck Abair of the Daily News, each Champ was greeted and treated like royalty for a week. I met Jimmy Stewart, Edger Bergen, and Joe E. Lewis the comedian. On the way home, Chuck and I spent the afternoon in Manhattan. We went to the Roxy Theater where the young Tony Bennett was the intermission singer. I shall always remember that experience, for it was the first time in my life that I had ever excelled at anything.



In 1953 our eighth grade class graduated from

Above, receiving the 1952 Soap Box Derby City Champion trophy. Below, I won the first heat at Akron, Ohio, at the national championship in 1952.

Central School and my life at BHS was to begin. Lynn Dawson saved our Central class prophecy in which Jimmy Mee and I were to have built and flown a rocket ship to Venus by 1976. We still have that to work on, but Mars would be my goal now. I would like to live long enough to see man's first landing on Mars.

The high school years

I entered BHS as a ninth grader enrolled in the College Preparatory curriculum in the fall of 1953. My family did not own a car, so I used the thumb to get to school from the corner of Hinesburg and Williston roads in the morning and return at night. Sometimes I caught the bus. It limited my ability to stay after school to join clubs and get to know people better. I remember Latin class as my most hated subject. Who needed a dead language? Of course, duh, it is a major source of the roots of our own language. It took college and hard work to make up for my disdain for Latin at BHS.

During freshman year, after wolfing down my lunch, I used to run down town during lunch period with Layne Prebor, Leo Bergeron, and Bobby Young. We ran everywhere

and had fun. In spite of not studying very hard, I progressed to tenth grade in Senior High. What a difference a little move to another building made! The upper classmen's presence required a more adult like behavior. Layne, Leo, Bobby, and I drifted apart, each pursuing different curricula. Another year of Latin! Oh my! I liked my math classes and Mr. Bull's biology, but I began to drift toward not studying any harder than necessary. This attitude progressed as I advanced, although I loved Mr. Buck's physics and chemistry classes. He was the most influential teacher I had at BHS. He had high standards and expected our best. I did well in his classes. His discipline and high standard were what I needed. During junior year, I started hanging around the "Y." How I loved that place! The snack bar, the social areas, the billiards room and of course the swimming pool. I also enjoyed Coleman's after movies or basketball games. My favorites there were hot chocolate and a grilled cheese sandwich.

I had fun at BHS and served on the student council one year and the prom committee one year. Jimmy Mee and I double dated for the proms during junior and senior years. He was a nice friend. I joined the Vermont Army National Guard with Keith Palmer during junior year at the age of 17 and one-half. My six years of service before I left Vermont to attend graduate school in 1961 would serve me well when the Vietnam War heated up. I also boxed in the Catholic Youth Organization at St. John Vianney Church in South Burlington. It is a good



Jim Mee and I dressed for the Junior Prom in 1956.

thing we had the 16-ounce gloves and headgear. I am afraid I was punched a lot. It was fun though. We played a lot of HORSE and two on two basketball in my yard throughout high school. I also remember

North Beach. In the summer I used to hitch hike to Burlington, walk down to the tracks at Main Street, and follow them to the beach. It was a great place to socialize, meet girls, and of course, swim. The fun was to stop.

In the summer of 1956, I started dating and doubting my ability to go to college. My Dad had promised to help as part of the divorce agreement with my Mom. He informed me that summer to forget his help. That is all I needed, I spent less time at the books during the first semester of

senior year and did poorly. I also applied to UVM. I was in trouble. My mother worked hard as a single parent just keeping us fed, clothed, and a roof over our heads. We had a

I was immature and unmotivated at BHS. But when I started UVM, I realized that with my grandmother's confidence in me and the financial aid she provided, I had a wonderful opportunity to better myself. I matured.



Here is a picture of me in my Vermont National Guard uniform at Camp Drum, New York, in the summer of 1957. I was 18. It seems like yesterday.

lot of help from my grandmother and my aunt Kate and uncle Rowland, but not sufficient funds for me to go to college. My National Guard paycheck was not enough, although it would become useful for expenses and books. My grandmother came to the rescue by providing the funds. She arranged a meeting for me with Dean Clifford who was responsible for admissions. He told me that I would be admitted if I brought up my grades and took the college boards again. I went to work the second semester. I graduated with the class and my diploma had a note. My grades were still being calculated. About a week later I received my College Preparatory diploma with a C+ average. I had fallen from my respectable average of the first 3 years, but I got into UVM that Fall.

I made it to college

In the fall of 1957 I became a freshman enrolled in the Professional Chemist Bachelor of Science program at UVM. Orientation Week and my freshman beanie were exciting portents of what was to come. The beanie gave me a new status. A complete transformation was to happen to me while at UVM. Like the metamorphosis of the caterpillar to the butterfly, a new person would emerge to fly into the future.

I was immature and unmotivated at BHS. But when I started UVM, I realized that with my grandmother's confidence in me and the financial aid she provided, I had a wonderful opportunity to better myself. I matured. I did not want to disappoint my family or myself.

I started UVM with one foot in the hole because of my bad habits at BHS. I had to take college algebra the first semester to make up for my deficiencies and second semester, I had the first semester of calculus with a trigonometry review. I did well in both. The following summer of 1958, I took the second semester of calculus that included a two-week break for National Guard camp. I made up all of the homework and exams. And from that point on I was not behind in math. I never got less than A in any of my math classes. I had learned to work hard. I appreciated then and now the sacrifices of my family to help me. In the fall of 1957, the biggest news was the launching of "Sputnik" by the Soviet Union. It led to profound changes, which unfortunately have not lasted, in the math and science courses taught in high schools in the USA.

Freshman and sophomore years were tough, but I loved every minute, although physical education and English kept me from the Dean's list those two years. I even liked ROTC and would have gone on to the advanced ROTC, but my vision was insufficient. My squad was the best drill squad in our company during sophomore year, but we lost in the Regimental finals. My experience in ROTC and math led to rapid promotion in the National Guard where I became the chief fire control computer in our 105 mm howitzer battery.

While at UVM, I did not have much chance for a social life other than seeing my girlfriend on Saturday nights. We broke up in the summer of 1960, so I joined Lambda Iota fraternity during senior year for social contacts. I ascended through the degrees to full brotherhood in one semester. But I must say I would never do it again. There was too much drinking and partying. Fortunately as a senior it did not affect me, but we lost a lot of our pledge class to flunking out of school.

My junior and senior years at UVM were my best, for I had reached my stride as a student. I made the Dean's List and Senior year was awarded a scholarship by the Chemical Club of New England, a gold medal and recognition from The American Institute of Chemists, and was elected to The Society of the Sigma Xi for my BS research thesis. Chuck Eldred was also a recipient of that honor.

I finished in the top percentile on the Chemistry Graduate Records Exams that were essential for entering graduate school. I did not expect to do so well, but UVM and hard work had prepared me for it.

Off to the moonscape of Iowa

I was accepted at many schools including Princeton, Penn State, Ohio State, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, Iowa State, and Washington University in St. Louis. I had a tough time deciding. Princeton had a great graduate school, but no stipends. Being without the funds, I ruled it out. Since I was leaning toward nuclear and physical chemistry, I chose Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Dr. Cook, the chairman of the UVM chemistry department and my senior year thesis advisor suggested I get out into the world and he felt ISU was a good choice. So, I accepted the ISU appointment for nine months, thinking I would like to go home for the summer the next year.

I spent the summer painting for my uncle Rowland and doing odd jobs to get enough money for the trip to Iowa. In late August of 1961, I started for Iowa in the 1960 Ford my grandmother bought for me with the money I had accumulated that summer. It was a sad trip taking two nights and three days. I was very homesick and the further I drove, the worse it became. I had lived at home all the way through college and I was never away more than two weeks at Camp Drum, NY for National Guard duty.

When I got into Iowa on US 30 on the third day I thought, "Why are you doing this?" and nearly turned around. Have you ever been to Iowa? After Vermont, it was like being on the moon. There were not any mountains in central Iowa, very few trees, just corn and more corn, and no Lake Champlain! Needless to say, I pressed on and arrived in Ames about six that evening with forty dollars in my pocket. I drove onto campus, which was

He asked me how much I needed and I figured about two hundred dollars. He took out his wallet and gave me the whole two hundred and said to take my time paying him back without interest. How often does that happen?

beautiful, and found the chemistry building. What else does any chemist do? I went in and walked around and found a graduate student working in his organic lab, walked in and introduced myself. His name was Dale Brown from California and was finishing up his Ph.D. in organic chemistry. I asked him if he knew of any cheap places to stay while I searched for something permanent and told him my financial situation. Here is the part I want to emphasize about the kindness of others and it did not stop here. Dale said I could stay in his room in the graduate dorms as long as I needed. He said he would inform his roommate and that he would stay with friends. Wow! I accepted and spent several nights in his room. The next day, we had a meeting with the professors and the department chairman where we met our research advisors and heard departmental policies.

Two pieces of news hit hard. One was that we would be paid at the end of the month! "What? Now what do I do," I thought. The other was that, beginning the next day we would be taking qualifying exams in each of the four chemical disciplines to determine if we could take graduate courses or remedial courses. I had met a fellow student, Steve Byrne, from New York University earlier in the day and was sitting with him. I mentioned my plight and that I would have to go to the student loan office. He asked me how much I needed and I figured about two hundred dollars. He took out his wallet and gave me the whole two hundred and said to take my time paying him back without interest. How often does that happen? Steve, another student, and I would become apartment mates when I returned in the summer of 1962.

I found a room and the people said my rent would be due at the end of the month. Again, I was blessed. As for the second piece of news, UVM and hard work had prepared me for those qualifying exams, for I passed them all with high grades. No more remedial courses for me.

I was assigned to Dr. Don S. Martin in the Atomic Energy Commission Laboratory at Iowa State. It required a government Q clearance, which after being investigated by the FBI, I received. We had many atomic weapon secrets in a vault. All of the guards wore pistols and walked the halls 24 hours a day year round. There were watch stations where they had to check in in every area. Their presence would save my life in 1963.

The first year was a struggle because of my homesickness and being behind a financial eight ball but the social life I had begun with Steve and others made up for it. They were nice guys and I did not feel so lonely when with them. My course work did slip. I did not flunk, but was capable of doing better and Dr. Martin, my advisor, did all he could for me to keep me in school. As you will see, he was and is a kind man. I got through that desperate first year and headed home for the summer in 1962.

On the way home, while still in Iowa, both mufflers dropped from the rear hangers on my car. I dragged them about 20 miles to a service station where I used a lot of my travel money to have new mufflers placed on my car. I had enough left for gasoline and coffee at the rest stops and started toward home. In Elkhart, Indiana, I stopped for gasoline and coffee. As I began to leave a guy in a Notre Dame jacket noticed my Vermont plates. He asked for a ride to Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He was welcome to ride because he could help me stay awake and offered to pay for gasoline. Off we went, arriving in Pittsfield the

next morning. Then I went up Route 7 and arrived home after 27 hours non-stop driving except for coffee and gasoline. I went right to bed.

I looked everywhere in Burlington for a summer job and finally found one washing dishes at the Bishop DeGosbriand Hospital. While not loading and unloading a conveyor belt commercial dishwasher, I swept floors, and took pathology lab organs to the incinerator. After two weeks, my grandmother said “Enough! Call your professor and go back to school.” I did. He said he would arrange to have me assigned a full time Junior Chemist for the Atomic Energy Commission and I could take a lighter load while I got my finances and life straightened. I returned to Iowa to work and ultimately did decide to take a Masters degree. I was tired of school, but wanted something for the effort.

In the winter of 1963, while working late in the night at Ames Lab, I was overcome by pain in my lower right abdomen. I passed out and after I came to, I crawled to the elevator, went in, reached up and pressed, “Lobby.” When the door opened the guards came over and helped me up and asked what was wrong. I did not know, so they took me immediately to the emergency room of the local hospital where it was determined that I needed an immediate appendectomy. Those guards’ presence had probably saved my life. I was one of only a few at work that late and the lab was large.

I returned to full status as a student in the fall of 1963. My finances were good and I was no longer homesick. I finished my thesis in November 1965 and after having had many job offers had taken one in Alabama.

While at Iowa State I had made many friends and received much kindness. Dr. Martin and I have been friends since my days there. Lucy and I have visited him and his vivacious wife Marion many times in Venice, Florida. This year I was saddened to hear that their health is failing and that they are selling their winter home in Florida. They are in their late eighties.

My first real job – with the TVA

I had done well enough financially while working and getting my masters at Iowa State University to buy a half-Arabian mare in 1964. I kept her at a boarding stable in Ames. I learned how to ride bareback, English, and Western, but preferred English. Learning to post with the beat was a major accomplishment.

After I received my first job offer, not counting the Junior Chemist job at Iowa State, and ready to graduate, I bought a purebred young Arabian stallion from Como Arabians in Iowa. He was a full younger brother to the National Champion Arabian stallion.

I left Ames in December 1965 to take my first job with the National Fertilizer Development Center of the Tennessee Valley Authority in Mussel Shoals, Alabama.

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The major news stories of the part of the sixties while I was at ISU were the Cuban Missile crisis, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the start of the Vietnam War, the campus and street demonstrations against the war and for civil rights reform. It was a fractious time in our history, but at least the civil rights movement led to needed changes in our country. In 1962, I had received a 1-Y draft classification for enough prior duty and for being an only child. I have Keith Palmer to thank for talking me into joining the Vermont National Guard in 1956.

I left my horses at the stable in Ames while I arranged for them to be shipped to a boarding stable in Alabama. The people at TVA were very helpful. They arranged for me to find a temporary home to rent on Wilson Lake and a veterinarian owned it. When I arrived in Mussel Shoals, he arranged for me to meet the owner of a boarding stable. I found a place to lease in Pleasant Valley, where I was allowed to build stables for my increasing herd. My mare had been bred in Iowa and had her foal and my new stallion. The summer of 1966, after working all day, I built my stables mostly by myself on evenings and weekends. A farmer, Cecille Morgan, from across the road took pity on me and helped me to finish. I returned the favor by helping him to do his haying. My horses were moved to my stables and we were one big happy family with my two dogs and many cats. I was one busy guy. Kindness again had shown itself with people I was meeting. I would be nowhere without their acts of kindness.

I progressed well at TVA and received a raise and promotion in three months. TVA was a separate government agency like the U. S. Postal Service is and was unionized. The professional salaried employees also had a union. I was elected to be the representative for our floor. This included handling grievances and participating in the annual salary negotiations at Gatlinburg, Tennessee. I loved the people at TVA, but I realized I was too far from home, so I contacted a professional agency to help me find a new position closer to home.

While in Alabama, the civil rights bill was passed and the Vietnam War was going prime time, reaching everyone's home on TV. We were about to enter a nightmare period of discord in this country.

Off to Phillip Morris

In late 1966, I was offered a position as an associate research scientist at Philip Morris Inc. in Richmond, Virginia. It was a higher paying position with a company that offered a pension, retirement health care, and profit sharing. They even paid for extra trips, flying first class, to find a place to live near Richmond where I could build stables for my horses. They paid to move my horses and me. When the scientists at PM heard about this through the rumor mill, they wanted to "know who is this guy?" I arrived in May 1967 and was at work less than two weeks when the Arab-Israel war erupted. Then I was no longer a subject of interest.

The company was only the fourth largest tobacco company in the USA, but soon grew to one of the largest consumer product companies in the world. We acquired Kraft Foods,

General Foods, and Miller Brewing within a few short years. I had the typical new employee assignments and gradually began to get more responsibility.

I sold off my horses and dogs in late 1968 and moved to Richmond. It was just too much to do and the horses were a financial drain. Besides mucking the stables and cleaning dog kennels, I did all of the grooming and work on the hoofs for the horses, gave them their shots and medication. My veterinarian had shown me how to do these duties for anything which was not serious.

I met Lucy, the wind beneath my wings

I met my wife at church in May 1969 and we started dating in July after having had a bout with mononucleosis and viral meningitis that hospitalized me for several weeks. That July, the USA succeeded in the first lunar landing. Those were exciting times as Chuck Eldred has described. I

married Lucy Varsho at the Catholic Sacred Heart Cathedral in Richmond, Virginia in April 1970. We lived in a high-rise apartment building in downtown Richmond until 1972 when we bought our first house and lived there for 22 years.

In the mid 1970's, we bought a CAL 24 one-design racing sloop. We had lessons included and I read books on sailing. We joined a yacht club and raced that boat for a couple of years,

but we lived so far from where it was kept, we decided to sell it. We loved it, but could not make full use of it. I still have the desire to get back into sailing, although only cruising.



Lucy in our Cal 24 racing sloop.

At Philip Morris, I was involved in many exciting projects on special assignment with the Manufacturing Engineering Department that led to substantial cost savings. The most important one in the seventies was a method using carbon dioxide to impregnate friable material at low temperatures in a batch process. The gas was stored at high pressure and transferred to a receiver at ambient pressure. This resulted in cooling and formation of a hydrated form of dry ice within the friable material. The impregnated material was then transferred for further processing. My function was to determine the physics including sonic flow and shock waves and to write a computer program for this in order to determine the presence of shock waves that could cause the transfer pipes to shake and crack, develop a pipe size for the connections, and the valve sizes. It took about three months to write and debug. A physicist worked with me to help work out the equations for the compressible flow and shock waves as the gas expanded from reservoir to receiver which took several more months. We succeeded in the assignment, tested it in a pilot plant, and the orders for starting the construction were issued. I was able to do this

because Phillip Morris had been sending me to Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other places for several years for short courses in chemical engineering and numerical methods for solving differential equations.

I became a project leader with 12 people reporting to me shortly after our success with the problem I described and had been promoted. In the summer 1978 while in Williamsburg, Virginia, just after returning from a tour of Italy, Lucy and I were taking a walk through the chemistry building at William and Mary. Something about the atmosphere and aura of the labs and classrooms caused me to remark to Lucy, “I am going back to school to get my Ph.D. in chemistry.

I will go to Virginia Commonwealth University and Medical College of Virginia in Richmond.” These two state schools had merged a few years earlier and Virginia was granting large sums to grow the university into a class with UVA, Virginia Tech, and William and Mary. Today it has many doctorate programs in many fields. Its reputation is still not that of the other three, but they had a head start of many years.

I started slowly by taking one course per semester and research. I had originally wanted to major in physical chemistry, but after a year, I switched to analytical for my doctorate. I increased my course load the next two years and began my research that would require self study of biochemistry and microbiology. I still was working, but with a smaller group to supervise and going to school at night. I usually got home about ten p.m., studied until about 2 a.m. and got up at 6:30 a.m. to go to work. Fortunately my health remained good. In 1981, I had completed all of my course work, passed my cumulative

exams and had permission from Philip Morris to go on a paid sabbatical to complete my research. It would require about 18 more months to complete the work.

Then the bottom fell out! I had been handling bacteria and blood samples and, about a month before my cumulative exams, I had stuck myself with a syringe I was using to transfer samples to a biological reactor. I had contracted Hepatitis B! I thought I had the flu. My doctor saw my yellow eyes and had me admitted to the hospital. I was there for three weeks and it was touch and go for about a week. Finally, I responded to the treatment and wanted to eat. The doctors were amazed at my constitution. I finally got back to work and in November took my oral examination and defended my proposed

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doctoral research successfully. Whew! Ironically, 1981 was the year that a new vaccine for Hepatitis B was allowed by the FDA to be used. Too late for me! However, I have not had any problems because I did everything the doctors had told me during my recovery and after. It mainly consists of proper nutrition and drinking very little alcohol.

Getting closer to my Ph.D.

In January 1982, I began my sabbatical. I completed the work, wrote three papers that were published in analytical journals, began writing my dissertation, and returned to full time work in mid 1983. It took the last months of 1982 and the rest of 1983 to write my dissertation. I defended it in February 1984 and graduated in May 1984. I had a 4.0 average and was honored by Phi Kappa Phi, which is a scientific honor society. My graduation was marred by the death of my Mom on May 7, 1984. We flew up to Vermont, handled the funeral arrangements, my Mom's affairs, and returned to Richmond after my Mom's funeral. I graduated Saturday, May 12, 1984. What a time of mixed emotions!

The title of my Ph.D. dissertation is "Potentiometric Microbiological Assays of Antibiotics." The goal was the development of a rapid, quantitative assay of biologically active compounds. Gas sensing electrodes for ammonia and carbon dioxide were used to measure the decrease in metabolic production in these gases by bacteria of various types in suspension with solutions bearing antibiotics as our model bioactive agents.

This method could be applied to environmental water, soil samples, blood plasma, or gas phase aerosols to quickly assay bioactive compounds. Such compounds are drugs or toxins in the environment, in air, water or soil. I used water and blood plasma as model examples, but it would not be difficult to extend the media to dirt or aerosol samples.

We had an Air Force contract in late 1982, but my mentor was recruited heavily by industry and accepted a position at Dupont in Delaware. I was left to finish and to write papers and my dissertation on my own. I sent drafts to him by slow mail - no computer networking then - and finally completed everything. It was a large responsibility to continue by myself, but I managed. Thank you uncle Rowland for teaching me about hard work and self-reliance. The instrumental method was superseded in the late 1980's by solid-state sensors, but the application to the microbiological assays of bioactive compounds is still valid.

Back to work

When I returned to work, I worked in a biological area and developed a thin layer chromatographic method to separate certain sugars from plants for further analysis by another technique with which I could determine the molecular weights. A molecular biologist and I started a group to determine certain genes in plants that controlled various plant compounds. This was exciting, for the field of molecular biology was just starting to grow in the mid 1980's. My experience with microbiology and biochemistry and more short courses, one where I returned to Iowa State to learn gene-sequencing methods, was beneficial. The molecular biologist I worked with was from India and was brilliant. He now is at the national Institute of Health in Washington, D.C. I learned a lot from him.

After about a year, the program was growing, and people of more specialized backgrounds were brought into the group.

The thin layer chromatographic technique I used was to separate and quantify various compounds in plant material for flavors. It is a method commonly used by natural product-plant-chemists to separate bioactive compounds from plants. The goal is to characterize their bioactivity, molecular formula, molecular weight, and structure. Ultimately, with this information, one could develop a synthesis of a useful bioactive compound. It could be a drug to cure cancer, antibiotic, or treatment of some disease other than cancer. It could also be a perfume or flavor compound.

I decided to return to the applied physics division where I remained until my retirement in 1993. I continued taking short courses in Chemical Engineering. In the late 1980's, the company wanted to use supercritical carbon dioxide to extract various compounds from friable plant materials. Initially, a down flow batch process was attempted, but it compacted the friable material too much. A famous chemical engineer was brought in and suggested we use a fluidized bed. What? With supercritical carbon dioxide? It had never been done!

I got the assignment and help from an associate who had a Ph.D. in theoretical chemistry to develop the equations. I wrote the program in dimensionless form to make it more useful and generated pressure-flow rate equations. I had to have data for the drag coefficients of the friable materials and obtained that data by experimental and theoretical methods. We demonstrated the resulting data in a pilot plant and were correct. I also designed the flow distribution plate for the inlets to the vessels. A \$200 million dollar plant was built on the basis of these results.

The supercritical carbon dioxide extraction method could be used to separate compounds that are soluble in the medium for removal of undesirable compounds or to separate and concentrate desirable compounds from plant materials on a large-scale industrial basis. It was a technical and engineering success. The company, after spending the money and operating the plant for a few years, decided for reasons that I cannot discuss, to end it. The plant was converted for other purposes. The method is still valid.

While at Phillip Morris, when not working on some of the items mentioned, I did mostly mathematical and computer modeling of heterogeneous combustion, gas phase filtration, and other processes.

When I retired at the age of 55 on October 1, 1993, I had had a career in which I was involved with many aspects of science and a great retirement package. Lucy and I lead a very comfortable life that I will describe in the last part of my story.

In the late 1960's, the tragic murders of Dr. Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy occurred. The Vietnam War became a nightmare. In the 1970's, the ending of the Vietnam War, Watergate and the resignation of Richard Nixon, the gasoline shortage, and inflation were the major events of record. The most memorable news events of the

1980's were the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II and glasnost with the Soviet Union. We have had to learn to cope with all of these matters and to carry on with our lives.

Off to retirement

In 1993, Philip Morris, Inc. offered a retirement package that was extremely generous. Five years each were added to our ages and years of employment. This meant a larger pension and no actuarial penalties. We received lifetime health and drug coverage for spouses and ourselves.

On October 1, 1993, I joined the ranks of the retired at age 55. That did not mean sitting around waiting for the undertaker. Lucy and I now would have more time to travel and to join many organizations. However, we spent the first year repainting the rooms in our house and doing other things to update it for selling.

In August 1994, we put the house on the market thinking we had a lot of time to search for a new place to move. Wrong! We sold the house in two days with a request to be out in a month. We found an apartment, moved most of our 22 years of accumulation - mostly my books and hobbies - to a storage unit, rented a large van, and moved ourselves to the apartment. Meanwhile, we had found a contractor and a lot in Powhatan, about 20 miles from our old home. We thought we wanted to downsize so we had a Cape built with a basement. We moved in in December 1994. This time, we hired a moving company. The house was nice and on a two acre wooded lot.

I had been having hip problems for a few years and the moving of the heavy furniture finished it off, so in May 1995 I had a total left hip replacement. After a few months, I was like new. I do not understand people who limp through life rather than getting knee or hip replacements.

In 1997, Lucy and I decided to build a new and much larger home. We bought another lot here in Powhatan and gave our contractor our plans. Well, what a frustrating experience selling that Cape was. Because of the explosive growth of Powhatan there were many new homes for sale and ours was not positioned well in price, it took several realtors and three years to sell that house. The demand was for larger homes. Finally, a young couple saw it and fell in love with it. They still live there. We sold it in August 2000. Hooray!! So, again we moved into a rental house for seven months in the beautiful village of Powhatan Courthouse. While there, Lucy became a member of the Powhatan Woman's Club. I was active in the Knights of Columbus having attained the Fourth Degree. We enjoyed our stay in that house, finally our new home was completed in April 2001 and we occupied it the last week of April 2001.

We finally started traveling

Our first trip was a three-week bus tour to the canyon lands in the Southwest. We wanted to see the country from the ground. We had always flown over it, but what can you see at 30,000 feet? It was a wonderful trip. The bus started in Richmond, Virginia and went by way of I-

**Paris is my favorite
European city.
Boston is my
favorite city in the
entire world.**

40 west. We stopped in Oklahoma City for a night and visited the Federal Building bomb site. One had to see the area in person in order to fully appreciate the effect of that truck bomb. Buildings were damaged for about two blocks around. The Grand Canyon was spectacular, but there are other canyons that are also beautiful. I was most impressed with the Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado where a large number of American native cliff dwellings are located. The most time we spent anywhere was Santa Fe, New Mexico where we stayed for two nights. We went to many parks, dams, and man-made lakes. We returned by I-70 east to I-64 and home. The continental divide pass on I-70 in Colorado was spectacular. During the trip, I reflected on how diverse the terrain and people are as well as on the distances between the western and eastern metropolitan areas of our wonderful homeland. Yet, we are held together by our government and the melting pot of combined cultures.

Our travels continued with a one week excursion to London, which we had also visited in 1974, a week in New York, a three week trip to central Europe - Austria, the southeastern edge of Germany, Czech Republic, and Hungary - followed a year later when we spent three weeks in France, and finally, a couple of years later, nearly three weeks in Scotland. We also have spent much time in Florida in the fall over a twenty-year period. I loved all of the places we visited, but Paris is my favorite European city. Boston is my favorite city in the entire world. I have spent many wonderful weeks there over the years that I went to MIT for short courses.

Genealogy

Since moving to this house, we have become members of a multitude of organizations. Some are historical; some are the arts, and social organizations. Being three quarters of Scottish ancestry, and the remainder Irish, we are members of the Scottish Society of Richmond and the Irish Society of Richmond. I am currently the Comptroller for the Scottish Society. Lucy and I have been doing our respective genealogies. She has had more luck and has traced her family, French, German, and Austrian back several centuries. In 1665, her ancestral French grandfather, Eustace Prevost, migrated from Normandy to Quebec, Canada, as a soldier in Louis XIV's army to defend Quebec City from the Indians. The first mayor of Montreal, Jacques Viger, was a descendant of Eustache. His mother was a Prevost. I, on the other hand, have met with some frustration with my father's paternal branch. I have traced his maternal branch to Natick, Massachusetts and Scotland. My mother's paternal branch is the O'Briens and they were easily traced to Ireland. On her maternal side, the Camerons can be traced to Rouses Point, New York



Lucy and I dressed for the Robert Burns celebration in 2007. I am wearing the Cameron Clan kilt and tie.

in 1850 and had migrated from Canada where I have a problem tracing them. There many Camerons then and now. I am a member of Clan Cameron and Clan Lamont.

Hobbies and fun projects

I have continued with my hobbies and reading. I build model tanks, artillery, and model airplanes. I also collect American Flyer trains and accessories. My reading consists of math, physics, chemistry, military history and fiction, and mysteries. I have found science fiction to be boring and sophomoric so I read very little of it. I also have an extensive collection of antique chemistry sets, artillery fire control equipment, and military manuals. I especially enjoy studying WW2 era Naval gunnery where analog computers were used to calculate the trajectory for a ton and a half projectile to hit a moving ship miles away. The math and mechanics are fascinating.

In early 2000, I had a really fun job for a friend's company doing a qualitative analysis of an aerosol generated during plasma deposition of a metal. The high temperatures and mix of the spray with air produced a compound, an oxide. I was asked to sample and determine the composition of the aerosol. My fee was lunch for each day I worked. I used my test tubes from my chemistry sets, my UVM and BHS qualitative analysis books, and reagents I had the company order for the analysis. My experience with sampling and analyzing aerosols during my career was beneficial. I succeeded in determining the oxide.

This analysis I did for my friend's company was for litigation purposes. But, the work demonstrated the method of aerosol sampling for classical qualitative analysis. Many methods today are totally instrumental and have much interference from compounds that may also be active in the range used for the compound of interest. They need calibration and can be expensive and time consuming. Sometimes, the simple and quite specific classical chemistry methods, with the proper reagents and care, will provide the information needed quickly and cheaply.

My heroes

My heroes are my wife Lucy, who is the wind beneath my wings, my uncle Rowland Peterson, who was like a father to me and taught me many things, my aunt Kate O'Brien Peterson, who was like my second mother, my grandmother Elizabeth Cameron O'Brien, who inspired me to better myself and gave me hope, and my mother, Helen O'Brien Simpson, who as a single parent did her best to raise me correctly.

Other heroes, whose work has had a profound effect upon the lives of all humanity, are Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and Jonas Salk, who developed the first Polio



My grandmother Elizabeth Cameron O'Brien, my wife Lucy and my mom, Helen O'Brien Simpson, in the summer of 1970. Young cousins are in the back.

vaccine, and James Watson and Francis Crick, who discovered the DNA helix.

Words of Advice to the Young

One's journey through life is analogous to setting out on a long trip to destinations that are generally not necessarily those that were our goals. Life is full of surprises, some are pleasant and some are not. How does one cope? As we journey along we are faced with choices. The ones we make when we first begin are very important. Why? Our final state in life is a product of all of the important ones we made in our lives. Those choices that are most important are the simplest to express in words from the song my cousin Sue Peterson Tibaud's son Todd Tibaud, a songwriter/musician, wrote and sang as a eulogy to his grandfather, my uncle Rowland, last year. They were words of advice uncle Rowland had expressed to all of us, to me, his daughters, and, grandchildren. They are words about how to live and to be happy.

“There are only two things in life I want you to know. The first one is never give up; the second is never grow old. Never grow old ‘for the boy that is inside of you is the man you should be. Let your heart guide you and never take more than you need.’” - Todd Tibaud, 2006.

If one thinks about those words, they are like guideposts to lead you through life.

Never give up obviously means to work hard at whatever your choices are and to fulfill them and not to allow setbacks, which will come, to discourage you. Pick yourself up, as you did as a child when you had a spill, and continue on. Always think young. For instance, at the age of forty, I started and completed my education for a Ph.D. in chemistry while holding a full time job. I did not think of how old I was, how long it would take, how tired I would become, or how old I would be when I finished. I never gave up. I let my heart and the boy inside, whose enthusiastic outlook on life was my “little engine that could” be my guides.

Never take more than you need? That means that we should not be greedy or selfish. Always leave something for others. Kindness to others is a result of that advice. You will be rewarded in ways that money cannot buy. You will be a happy person in your life as you journey along to your sunset.

The 50th Reunion

Our return to Vermont this year for the 50th class reunion was our first in many years. I found Burlington and Vermont more beautiful than ever. The new lakefront park is beautiful. I even had time to go to Beansies bus at Battery Park to enjoy the great French fries and dogs. I used to go there at least once a week in the summer when I was at UVM. I had a girlfriend who lived near there. It was nice to see old classmates whom I have not seen in 50 years. Tom Whitney, Barbara Willard McDonough, and the reunion committee are to be thanked and congratulated for the wonderful evening. The reunion with my two cousins, Betty Peterson Goldberg, Susan Peterson Tibaud, and their families was a time Lucy and I will cherish. We have decided to visit for a couple of weeks every year for as long as we are able.

Finally, best wishes to all of my old classmates. I am looking forward to seeing you again at the 55th reunion. I am sorry to have stayed away for so long.

The Benefits of Writing My Story

I was not interested in writing my story when Tom Whitney first requested it of me. I did not feel I had anything unique to tell. But after having seen the CD and book he had prepared for our 55th Class Reunion, I realized how wrong I was. All of the stories were interesting and all were different. When I saw Tom at our reunion, I told him how sorry I was for not having participated. He asked me if I would still be interested because he was planning to expand the CD with more stories and to prepare a 55th Reunion book. I said yes. When we had returned home, we began our correspondence and I started my story. Tom showed a genuine interest in my efforts and asked questions which helped me to write it.

I am happy now for having participated. Before I had done this, I had written many scientific papers, reports, and dissertations. I had never thought about my very busy life in an integrated way. That is, what was important to me, what had I done, what had I learned about who Daniel Lester Simpson was and is now? We can not be the persons we were when we graduated in 1957. So, how had I changed and what do I value from my experiences? The story that I, with Tom's help, have written is a distillation and summary of who I was when at BHS, who I became as I matured, and who I am now. The experience has been a wonderful learning process for me and my family with whom I have shared the later editions. Having spent my life away from home since graduating from UVM in 1961 and being older than my cousins, who are all that remain of our family, my family did not really know about all of my experiences. I had never shared them. Now, they understand the difficulties and triumphs I have experienced. I also have a better appreciation of my life and my accomplishments.

To summarize, by writing this story and thinking about all of the times shared in my extended family, I have come to value my family for more than just being relatives, but for the love we shared with one another as we grew up and now as our own lives are nearing an end. It was the support and love of my extended family that helped to form my values and help me start my life in a positive manner. This story is a tribute to my family and to my wife Lucy, with whom I have shared 37 years of those experiences. Thank you Thomas Whitney for your kind help in this endeavor.

Based upon my own experience in writing my story, I feel that all of those who have not done so, should make an attempt to share your experiences and wisdom. You may not think you have anything to say, as did I, but with Tom's help your own experiences will flow forth as you write. Try it you will love and value the experience. You will learn from it.

Daniel Lester Simpson, Ph.D.
BHS, Class of 1957

