

John Dycus

Co-founder of UT Arlington's Handicapped Students Association and Arlington Handicapped Association, former advisor for the UT Arlington *Shorthorn*

*Interview conducted by
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in 2013 in Arlington, Texas
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Disability Studies Minor
Special Collections and Archives
University of Texas at Arlington
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Biography

John Dycus was born in 1949 and grew up in Arlington and Fort Worth, Texas. He obtained his K-12 education in Fort Worth, attending Paschal High School, class of 1965. Between kindergarten through eighth grade, Dycus attended special education classes, which were not offered when he reached high school at Paschal High. After graduating high school he attended the University of Texas at Arlington and graduated in 1970.

While in college, he met the charismatic Sam Provence and Jim Hayes and advocated with them for independent living and other disability rights in the Arlington area. He was one of the founders of Helping Restore Ability (HRA, originally the Arlington Handicapped Association). He served as president of the board in the 1980s. In 1997, HRA named him their Man of the Year. In the 1970s, Dycus served on the Texas Developmental Disabilities Council, which is a governor-appointed committee that advises the state legislature on policies related to disability and people with disabilities. In 1974, he was given a Governor's Citation for his work on the council.

Apart from his activism, he worked for thirty-five years as student advisor for the UTA student newspaper, *The Shorthorn*, and a copy-editor for the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*. Most recently, in 2010, Dycus received the prestigious Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Professional Member Award journalism from the Society of Professional Journalists; Dycus also served two consecutive terms as president for the organization's Fort Worth chapter.

Topics discussed

- Background biography

- Schooling
 - Experiences in K-12 public school: special education and mainstreaming
 - Accessibility at UT Arlington and early assistive technology
 - Jim Hayes
 - Diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy
 - Improvements and continuing gaps in accessibility
 - Jim Hayes' work on improving accessibility at UT Arlington
 - Access to extracurricular activities
 - Working at *The Shorthorn*
 - Career in journalism after graduating from UTA
 - Society for Professional Journalism
 - UT Arlington's attitude towards people with disabilities
 - UT Arlington alum and disability rights activist Joe Rowe
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Shaffer

This is Miles Shaffer. The date is November 8, 2013. The time is 10:37 am, and this is interview number one with Mr. John Dycus.

Hello, John.

Dycus

Hey.

Shaffer

It's a privilege to do this interview with you, and if you don't mind could you state your full name?

Dycus

I wondered why you wanted to know that. It's John William. John William Dycus.

Shaffer

Okay. Thank you, sir.

Dycus

Sure.

Shaffer

Before we begin, I would like to get this interview transcribed and into the university archives.

Dycus

Sure.

Shaffer

With your permission we would love to do that.

Dycus

Sure. Do it.

Shaffer

It would be a very great thing to have.

Dycus

You know anybody in archives?

Shaffer

Yes sir.

Dycus

Do you know Claire Galloway in archives?

Shaffer

I know a few people. I know more faces than I do names.

Dycus

You'll meet Claire Galloway in archives. Brilliant. She's a wonderful librarian, wonderful archivist, and she's hot. You'll meet Claire Galloway.

Shaffer

<topic> Background biography </topic>
Alrighty.

If we just begin with a little bit of background information, your story, where you were born, raised, things like that.

Dycus

Born in Mineral Wells at "The Crazy Hotel," and the building still stands. It was the Crazy Water [Hotel], but known to the locals as "The Crazy Hotel" in 1948. That's where the clinic was, so that's why my mother was there.

<topic>Experiences in K-12 public school: special education and mainstreaming</topic>
I grew up in Fort Worth, went to Paschal [High School], and then UTA...Arlington State College. For purposes of this, Paschal, then, was.... Special education in the Fort Worth school system stopped at junior high, so I was in a special ed program [before that]. There weren't near as many of us then...as many people with disabilities going to school.

Shaffer

Yes.

Dycus

My classrooms would have all kinds of developmental disabilities. Some...no, no retardation exactly, but some young people who weren't going to be able to make it. Never the less we were all grouped together with brilliant and dedicated and empathetic teachers. This special ed program ended after junior high, so I went into Paschal with...there were no handicapped student liaisons or anything like that.

Shaffer

Yeah.

Dycus

There was nobody there to make it easier, nobody there to assign someone to take your notes.

Shaffer

Yeah.

Dycus

...which I think we've done that for years. That was a good thing, Miles, because it forced me to interact. It forced me to ask the person sitting next to me in homeroom, that would be Allan Johnson, to push me up the ramp into the Biology class, and once in Biology I had to ask someone, I had to learn how to do that. "Could you take me to math?" you know? If it was a girl, I couldn't ask a girl, hadn't gotten through that yet. It had to be a guy. Those were good things to be forced to learn, so that was high school. That extended to an extent at UTA.

I graduated high school in '65, started at UTA that year. We lived in south Fort Worth on a street that connected Kmart to Seminary South. Seminary South is still there, it's a Carnival or Fiesta market. It's that huge mall on Seminary Drive, Seminary Drive and 35, in Fort Worth.

Shaffer

Okay.

Dycus

It's undergone a dramatic transformation to reflect the clientele. That may be the first mall in Fort Worth. Anyway, I lived on that street. The street that connected it to the...well it's Felix on the north.

<topic> Accessibility at UT Arlington and early assistive technology </topic>

Then my mother would drive me to UTA and help me get to class. I don't want to jump ahead of myself right now.... I was on the newspaper staff at UTA, and that office was in the basement of the Student Center. There was no public elevator; there was a private elevator in the back of the building which is still there, still being used. She would push me and I would go downstairs. I had to leave at five so that the...before the bookstore ladies went home because they had the key just to let me through to the elevator.

I got a motorized chair in 1969 and things really changed then. We had to get a van that we would load it into. This was all trailblazing stuff. Nobody was buying vans for wheelchairs. Lifts and ramps and the chair itself was not as good. I've only had two chairs my whole life. This is the second one; this is about 40 years old give or take.

Shaffer

Really?

Dycus

Back then, my dad went to Dallas to the rentals aluminum place and bought me some ramps. That's how I got in and out of the house because it was up three little bitty steps at the front and that's how I got into the van. My mother would drive me to there, get out, and position these ramps and I would back out and then go on to class. I printed you out a map there, I'm not sure that's necessary, but that's the map of the campus.

Shaffer

Oh wow.

Dycus

Picture, and that's from yesterday, but all of this mall that we take for granted was not there then. You know where Woolf Hall is, engineering building?

Shaffer

Yes sir.

Dycus

Okay, picture, we may not need the map for this, picture the northwest corner of Woolf Hall. Behind the building there, to the north of the building was a parking lot. There was a street that ran down beside Woolf Hall. All this mall didn't exist back then, of course. The streets

that went by, we would drive up on to that street, she would let me out on the curb there on the right, and when I had the motorized chair I would go on my way.

She would either stay there, or read, or nap, or go back home and do a load of clothes and come back. The heroine in this story, the hero is my mother, not me. I learned, my first class, one of those years was in the Science Building, which is still there, still called Science Building, maybe Science Hall.... I had a sociology class in there in that big amphitheater room on the ground floor, north side of the building. She [his mother] would stand behind the door when the class let out and peer inside there to make sure I was able to get out. That's before I had the motorized chair and I had to ask somebody to give me a push up the ramp and let's go wherever. I think I went from there to the library or something. She would stand there, she didn't want me to know, and she was watching me to make sure I got out okay.

The motorized chair opened up a lot of possibilities. One of your questions on your thing you sent me, how accommodating.... A theme of this story has to be UTA's attitude toward people with physical limitations, and it's always been superb, at least me. I think UTA moved a couple classes, if I recall. One of them was in Ransom Hall, which didn't have an elevator then and they moved it to the ground floor. There were never any questions, they were happy to do it.

Shaffer

Yeah. And this was in the '60s?

Dycus

Yeah, '65, six, seven, eight, nine. There were always ramps at these curbs, and remember now, we had streets and not a mall, so you have to have ramps. The service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega, which I assume is still on campus.... Alpha Phi Omega as a service project built a whole bunch of wooden ramps. There was always close-in parking even in the '60s, always. So UTA's attitude toward folks in wheelchairs—and vision issues, I can't speak for vision issues so I can't say they were pioneers there—but they certainly were on the wheelchair side.

Shaffer

<topic>Jim Hayes</topic>

Did you know Mr. Hayes, Jim Hayes?

Dycus

Yes I knew Jim Hayes real well.

I wrote the first accurate story on Jim Hayes, in that, and he told me.... Jim Hayes was a rock star in the wheelchair game almost from the very beginning. He was this supremely adjusted, vigorous, well-spoken, ambitious, fiercely-determined character, but he was faking it for like the first ten years. He wasn't nearly as together as he presented to people. I wrote that, based on him telling me that, and he said, "Man, you're the only one that ever got it right." He did, he did indeed do all those great things, but he was a lot more scared than he let on, but yes I knew Hayes, I knew Hayes well.

(shuffling around) where is it? Is there a green kind of rubber band (motorized wheelchair noises) one of those bracelet wrist things hanging on the grate back there? There used to be.... Hayes fixed my chair once late one afternoon.

Shaffer

Really?

Dycus

I was over in...and I kept it on there for a long time to remind me of it, I was over in that PE building and it was like 5 o'clock, and my van was over on the other side of the campus and my foot pedal broke. I was unable to, I mean it sounds like a small thing, but I couldn't go. I couldn't.

You're the same way, you have to be. In that, if I'm packaged correctly, you know, I can walk to Dallas, if I'm set up right...but if I'm off balance, or in this case, if my foot is dragging, no, it won't work. Hayes stayed there, and we combed through his junk drawer and he came up with one of those...blue bracelets and I think it was a WWJD, and to quote Jim Hayes, "Finally a use for this." Don't take it the wrong way. He patched up my pedal, and I got to my van and went home.

I knew Hayes well. Hayes was a phenomenal person and he was a terrific athlete, a great basketball player, and he ran track until the doctors made him stop...because his lesions, they said, "If you keep on going, you could snap something, you could scrape something, you could end it all to where you can't do anything." That's when he became a coach, and he was a good coach.

Doug Garner at UTA can tell you all about Hayes and his former players. You could stick a pin in Hayes' bicep and he wouldn't feel it. Hayes was a quadriplegic, but you would never know it if you looked at him because he acted like a paraplegic. He acted like there was nothing wrong with his arms but that was far from truth. He was just the most determined character I ever knew.... What else?

Shaffer

<topic>Diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy</topic>

Yeah. If we could retract, if you wouldn't mind discussing your diagnosis?

Dycus

Cerebral Palsy (CP). Cerebral Palsy from birth, real common. Speech impediments are also common, and vision issues. There's several kinds, like half a dozen kinds of CP. You have the athetoid version where your arms are moving around. That's what we think of when we think of spastic.

Shaffer

Mmhmm.

Dycus

We think of Joe Cocker singing, you know, where you've got all this excess motion and bad speech. Then you've got a more rigid kind and that's me. Yeah, cerebral palsy from birth...and there's no diagnosis beyond that. That's just what it is.

Shaffer

<topic>Improvements and continuing gaps in accessibility</topic>

What about, let's say, your early times? Times that you remember going back to elementary school, any architectural barriers or things that had to do with access physically in schools and things like that?

Dycus

I don't recall any school issues, but I'm sure there must've been. Now curb cuts were a latter day phenomenon. I mean, you didn't, you just didn't cross the street downtown because...you just didn't. There were no curb cuts, we take 'em for granted, they didn't exist. That was a huge thing. That was a big change when that came about.

Shaffer

Yeah.

Dycus

Bathrooms, to this day, are not done correctly in most places. We have all these codes in place, but I can find a flaw with every bathroom door. If there is a bathroom door, it ain't gonna work right, and the lavatory handles are probably not correct, as good as they could be. The only bathroom door is the one that doesn't exist, so we've made progress in some ways, great progress in some ways, and not much in others.

I guess curb cuts, in terms of moving about, curb cuts are the biggest thing that we didn't have then. When I got a motorized chair, Miles, I even have a picture of this...picture of the campus, you know where Nedderman Hall is?

Shaffer

Yes sir.

Dycus

Okay, it doesn't exist. Put that out of your mind, it doesn't exist. Across the street there is an entrance to the parking lot, and that entrance has always been there, even when they redid the street they kept that entrance. This is across the street from Nedderman Hall. On the east side of Nedderman was a parking lot, and another entrance obviously. So when I got my motorized chair, if I'm going to cross Cooper Street, the only way I can do it, I either gotta go all the way down to Mitchell, or... (Doorbell rings and door opens)

(Good Morning!) Come in Judy! Judy this is Miles from UTA, Miles this is Judy.

[Break in recording]

Dycus

Is this your machine?

Shaffer

There we go. If you could restate that with, starting with UTA Radio?

Dycus

Yeah I wanted to be a radio student, but I couldn't. I couldn't work it into the schedule, I had a very small window of opportunity and it just didn't happen.

We were talking about crossing the street. Since there were no curb cuts you had to do a driveway on this side, and you had to have a driveway on the other side. So you had to have some place to go. TCU [Texas Christian University] was bad about that in the '70s; they would have a curb cut on one corner and not on the other. So, okay fine, here we go, now what do we do? I thought that was pretty exciting that I could cross the street in the middle of the street, and that's just jaywalking, straight up. You look this way and look that way, man, don't see anybody, there you go. You may have to sit in the middle there for a while, there was no island, no median, you were just in the middle. As soon as they cleared that right side you would keep on going.

Then I would go to eat at a little hamburger place there; the building is still there.

(Phone rings) You wanna get that?

Then I would walk up the street to see a basketball game at the basketball arena in Texas Hall, which is still there.

(Another person says "Hello?")

Shaffer

You would eat at this burger place?

Dycus

Yeah and then walk up the street to see a basketball game at Texas Hall. Boy that was very very exciting, very exciting. My parents would pick me up when the game was over, load me into the van, and we'd go back home to south Fort Worth. Then we moved over here, and we've been over here about 37-38 years.

Shaffer

<topic>Jim Hayes' work on improving accessibility at UT Arlington</topic>

Do you ever remember, or could you discuss any of the times you had to make something happen to...in order to gain access to your education? Say that it be, put in a ramp, or even.... I don't know if you worked along side with Jim Hayes or advised Jim Hayes with gaining access to...

Dycus

Hayes was the activist, and I was not, and still not I don't suppose. Hayes was the one lobbying for the curb cuts, and Hayes was the one who put together.... See, he was employed on the campus as the Handicapped Students Director—director of that office. Then he was that and coach, then he quit that and became coach full time.

If Hayes was awake, he was drumbeating for disability rights, environmental improvements, and architectural changes. He arranged and we promoted on campus a...put the faculty in a wheelchair for a day.

Shaffer

Really?

Dycus

We did that. The Vice President of Student Affairs, and they would be led around the campus with a blindfold to emulate vision impairment. We had a picture in *The Shorthorn*, the UTA newspaper, of Dr. Nedderman, the president, a fabulous man sitting in a wheelchair at a row of urinals, and he's got this look on his face like, "Well, well, what do I do now?" A classic picture. Hayes was the one doing all of that, I really wasn't. There was trailblazing work being done but I wasn't doing it, somebody else was and I was benefiting from it.

Shaffer

Would you say it was, obviously I know the answer, but would you say it was very effective?

Dycus

Oh, yeah, of course it was. It was society-wide, it wasn't just happening in Arlington, Texas.

Shaffer

Yes.

Dycus

As awareness grew of these needs, then they were met, slowly...not slowly...not fast enough in some cases, but the needs were being met. They made all the changes. Where would we be now without curb cuts? So...

Shaffer

Do you remember any legislation perhaps being passed?

Dycus

You asked that question on your list. I don't remember anything. There may have been, there very well may have been, but I don't...I wasn't paying attention.

Shaffer

<topic>Access to extracurricular activities</topic>

Is there anything that you wanted to participate in, and because of physical barriers you didn't get to?

Dycus

No, no. My approach has always been, and for better or for worse, the things I do well, I emphasize in my life and the things I don't do well, I don't mess with. Now if everybody has that attitude, there would never be a Jim Hayes. You know? I'm not advocating that you be like that, Miles.

Shaffer

Yes.

Dycus

It's worked for me. I was good with words, I was good at editing stories, so that's what I wound up making a living at. I never would have made it, I don't think, as a wheelchair basketball player. I just didn't go in that direction.

Barriers to things I wanted to do...I mentioned there was a barrier getting to the student newspaper, *The Shorthorn*. I went to work for *The Shorthorn* in about 1967-8. I had had a journalism class in high school and liked it. We saw this and maybe, "Why not try that at school?" It was in the basement of the student center where... Hold on...

(phone rings and recording cuts)

Shaffer

You were discussing being down in the basement.

Dycus

<topic>Working at *The Shorthorn*</topic>

Basement? Yeah to get to the...the director of...the guy who ran *The Shorthorn*, the faculty person was an English department fella' named Paul Blakney. I asked Mr. Blakney...well Mr. Blakney told me, "If you can find out a way to get down here, I will put you to work." So we did.

My mother, before I had the electric chair, she would push me and go down this elevator, the freight elevator at the back of the Student Center, and we would wind our way through what was the bookstore warehouse, and it's now *The Shorthorn*—have you ever been to *The Shorthorn* office?

Shaffer

No sir.

Dycus

Well go sometime. In my era that was the bookstore warehouse. It was piled to the ceiling with books. *The Shorthorn* office was where the student government area is now. We would wind through the warehouse and get me into the student publications. Then I had to leave by five because the bookstore ladies went home and they had the key, so that was a barrier, but we got around it.

Shaffer

<topic>Attitudes toward people with disabilities</topic>
Yeah.

In your own words could you maybe give a depiction of your experience and what attitudes were towards those with disabilities, especially even for you from a young age as your disability became more prevalent?

Dycus

I've never been ostracized, never been bullied, never been made fun of, and I think that's partly because I treat people the way I want to be treated, so they do. That's the response I get. Now we seem to meaner these days as a society than we were in the '50s, '60s, and '70s. I don't know what the case is now, I don't know how you've been treated or how you've been observed.

All I can personally tell you is how I was treated, and I remember every occasion where I thought someone was making fun of me and it's three of them in 65 years. Two of them were in high school, and the guy said some snarky stupid thing, but there was no meanness in it, I still remember that. There was another occasion, similar; I think he was making fun of my voice, which was pretty high pitched, whiny then. I remember one of my students at UTA at a staff meeting one afternoon doing kind of a mock of me and my boss, but he was a sweet kid, meant nothing by it.

That's the only three times that I can tell you that I know of that somebody was rude or ugly to me because I'm in a wheelchair, so.... It is just not a factor in my life, never has been.

Shaffer

<topic>Career in journalism after graduating from UTA</topic>
Very good.

So after.... Let's see, you graduated in about '69 or around '70?

Dycus

I graduated high school in '65, UTA in '70.

Shaffer

After that what did you do?

Dycus

I was an accounting major at UTA because that is where they put people in wheelchairs in the '60s, '70s because "You can do it sitting down."

I graduated in accounting, but I didn't know much and I had no...I didn't know what I wanted to do. I didn't want to do that, I knew that. I had worked for the newspaper at UTA as a student for about the last three years as a copy-editor. I had created the copy-editor position because I couldn't...remember now, I'm downstairs, I couldn't go upstairs and interview people, and I couldn't take notes fast enough, I didn't think. It was just a symbiotic thing.

My peers on the newspaper staff..."You people go upstairs and write the stories, gather the information, write the story, bring it to me...the story, and I'll help you make it better." That's

how I became a copy-editor.... Tell me the...this is awful, I'm getting old. What was the question again?

Shaffer

What did you do after you graduated? No problem.

Dycus

Oh. Yeah. Yeah. Immediately after I graduated I reviewed movies for *The Star-Telegram* for about a month while the main movie reviewer was on sabbatical to go play Felix in *The Odd Couple* in community theatre. You ever seen *The Odd Couple*?

Shaffer

No sir.

Dycus

No sir? Okay, well, he was out for a month and then somebody...he started hearing, true story...someone was asking, "Who is this guy doing movies, man? He's really good."

The fellow cut short his acting gig and came back to work, at which point I was unemployed, and this was probably June of 1970. The lady...and then that summer, the lady who would become my boss at UTA for 27 years, she was hired to be director of student publications. She went to work then, late summer of 1970, and she didn't have any money, no budget, and needed help of course. I still had some friends on the newspaper staff and they were saying, "Why don't you call this guy?" She did, and I went down there and applied and became...that's how I went to work for *The Shorthorn* as a student in 1970.

I retired from there 28 years later, so that's how careers are born. I never studied...we didn't have [a] journalism major, but I didn't... I studied accounting, but I learned how to do it and so wound up doing it for a career.

Shaffer

Could you maybe even discuss some of the other things you were involved in?

Dycus

Chess Club! I wasn't very good, but I was on the chess club, and then *The Shorthorn* was the dominant extracurricular thing... What else did I do? I think that's all I did.

That's pretty much it. Let me give you a warning here, it's twenty minutes after eleven. The young man that helps us get food on the table is coming over at 11:30, so if we don't finish this, I would be happy to meet you on campus some day.

Shaffer

Okay. Yeah.

Dycus

My mother is 92 and in great shape for 92, but not much memory. I don't like leaving her alone, just because, but the afternoons...afternoons we could put something together, I could meet you at UTA, and we could do something in the student center, find an empty room, or something if we don't finish here.

Shaffer

Yeah...yeah.

Dycus

Anyway, what else? We still got ten minutes, what else?

Shaffer

<topic>Society for Professional Journalism</topic>

Anything that you would like to share in regards to disability? I read that you were the president of the JPC?

Dycus

SPJ? That's what I do now in my spare time, maintain the Society for Professional Journalism, the Fort Worth chapter. I was president for two terms back in the late 90s. I was in journalism my whole career working at the Star-Telegram, briefly. Seven years on Friday nights, I would go in when they needed extra help on Friday nights. Not sports, people always say "Oh you're one of those sports guys?" No, I was the main desk. I did that, drove over there and drove back home...one in the morning.

Right now I am overseeing her and a lot of SPJ work. I've tried trading commodities and I'm not good at that either. We have a very good life here, we're very good fortunate to be able to do all we can do still.

<topic>Accessible vans and driving</topic>

We have a van, made by.... I've had two vans my life, two wheelchairs, two vans. The first one was built by my father and a flight test engineer at General Dynamics called Bob Baker. I'm not sure it was GD, it might've been someplace else. Mr. Baker and my dad built this van and then we moved it over here, and a man named Bill Medder, an old hot-rodder helped modify it to make it actually work. When that van wore out, a man at Advanced Mobility Systems got Tucker and his brother Bruce to build the one that I'm driving now, and it's been driving since 1994.

I used to drive a whole lot. I've driven to San Antonio and back. I came back from San Antonio one afternoon in a forty knot headwind, I remember that. I spent one summer at UT Austin, I drove down stayed in the dorm. That was exciting. That was 1980.

I don't drive as much now because I tend to stay home.

<topic>UT Arlington's attitude towards people with disabilities</topic>

I wrote my obituary several years ago. Everybody should have his own obituary written. Maybe I should send that to you.

This isn't really a story about me, it's about issues. How we've changed, I cannot say enough that UTA's attitude toward people with disabilities when I was there was

outstanding...outstanding without being condescending, they didn't make it too easy. I've always wondered what would've happened to me if, when I got to high school, there was an office there that would provide me there with everything that I needed, instead of me having to ask, having to learn to ask. I think that was a good thing for me to have to do.

I don't think that happens, I think in high school you got help, you may have help in junior high. Laws have changed, and attitudes have changed. You have to be careful we don't make it easier than it should be or than it needs to be. UTA was very exceptional to me and I think to the other people from that era.... Do you have other interviews planned with people?

Shaffer

<topic>Future interviews</topic>

Yes, I've interviewed Mrs. Penny Acrey.

Dycus

Do you need more people to interview?

Shaffer

If you have suggestions I would definitely like to...

Dycus

Donna Anderson would be a good one, I can send you her email. Donna was a student, I don't think with me, I think she was after me. She's blind. I want to say almost totally blind. She's married, has two kids who are now grown, or almost grown. She lives not far from here. She would have a different set of issues, but I think some of the same responses, I think she would tell you that UTA was a great place to be in the seventies. I'll send you her email. She loves to talk. Donna would bring a lot, and she'll give you a lot of good stuff I would think.

<topic>UT Arlington alum and disability rights activist Joe Rowe</topic>

As a matter of fact, I want to give you a book that you may read certainly, and I want you to give it to Sarah Rose. If you don't have time to read it now, then give it to Sarah now and she can read it and give it back to you.

It was written by a man named Joe Rowe, R-O-W-E. He is a huge story all by himself. Joe had polio when he was five, and never learned how to write with his hands so he learned how to write with his feet...taught himself to write with his feet.

I have an image of Joe in his van holding a drill in his feet drilling holes in the roof to mount a stereo. I can still see that. Joe drove with his feet. He's in a wheelchair, obviously.... Lost all the...his muscles from his waist up...waist to his Adam's apple. He can't breathe unaided, he has not taken an unaided breath since he was five, and you sixty-five or sixty-seven now.... Iron lung at night, I guess, and then an aspiration machine or air pump. He holds a thing in his teeth...

Shaffer

Like a BiPAP? [Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure]

Dycus

Yeah, he grips it in his teeth and it blows air in his lungs. That's how he manages, but he has accomplished so many things.

The book is inspirational is cliché, but the book is truly inspirational. You take that...when Andrew comes back in we'll get him to grab a copy. Joe can't drive here anymore, but he would sure be... I'm going to try to get him...for a special occasion; I think he could arrange transportation. He needs to come over here and do this Gerald Saxon thing. You can't do Joe in thirty minutes. Joe is six hours, Donna is two. Both of those people stand out in my mind, they would be very appropriate for this.

I don't know if any of us are typical, I don't know if my reactions are typical or atypical. I didn't think of them at the time, I was just living. Just like you, you get up in the morning and do what you do, and it's the way you do it and you don't think much about it. It all came out, it all came out fine.

Now you've got muscular dystrophy I'm assuming.

Shaffer

Yes sir.

Dycus

You're managing real well, getting around real well.

Shaffer

Thank you.

Dycus

Dorm? Are you a dorm guy?

Shaffer

Apartment.

Dycus

Apartment? Everyone needs to live in a dorm once, but only once. One semester is plenty.

Do you walk to campus? Drive to campus?

Shaffer

This bad boy.

Dycus

Do you live with Andrew or does he just come in?

Shaffer

We live together.

Dycus

You look like a really nice guy, you're lucky to have.... I have a cousin who we had the same deal with but we never did live close together like this. That's a good thing.

Shaffer

Is there anything else that I missed or that you would like to state?

Dycus

Nothing comes to mind. You can't condense sixty-five years in forty-five minutes. Are there anecdotes I can tell you, sure, but maybe we got some high points here. You transcribe this and see if there's something else you want, and then let's get with Sarah and find out when she's going to do this Gerald Saxon thing. Are you aware of that? Saxon used to be the head librarian, and now retired from that and is still active with the University, and has done oral histories. Librarians are real big on things like that so they want to do oral history. Maybe I'm supposed to speak to his class.

Shaffer

I'm aware of him and his scholarship and the things that he does. I think that's it for now. I will definitely get back to you and we might schedule another interview.

Dycus

Let's talk about that..

[Recording stops abruptly]