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## Richard G. Walker

Richard Walker  
*Cedarville University*

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## Interview with Richard Walker

February 21, 2018

- Speaker 1: So, can you tell us the story of how you came to Cedarville?
- Dick Walker: Okay. Well, when I was working at Camp Patmos ... It's a camp here in Ohio, up on Kelley's Island. During my college years I was going to Bowling Green State University. Dr. Jeremiah would come to camp as a speaker. During that time we would talk about the future, and I was looking at maybe a full-time camp position sometime, and so Dr. Jeremiah, we kind of plotted a strategy, "Okay, Dick," he would say, "Finish your degree at Bowling Green. At the present time, there's no reason to drop out. Do your military," because at that time, all of us young men, we didn't need a career services office, we just picked which branch of the service we were going to during the Vietnam time period.
- Dick Walker: And then after you get done with your military, then you could consider coming to Cedarville to get additional Bible training and other kind of training that would prepare you, maybe, for a full-time camp position. So, I finished my degree at Bowling Green. I did my service in the Navy. During that spring of 1970, I applied for the camp's activities job at Cedarville, along with a good friend, Ken Nichols, and they gave the job to Ken.
- Dick Walker: But anyhow, Don Rickard, who was the new Dean of Students at that time, called me up at camp and he said, "Dick, we know you're still coming to Cedarville, so you can come and we'll give \$35 a week to help with intermurals. So that was my introduction to Cedarville. That first year, I worked in the snack shop. I did other part-time things. Probably the highlight of that first year at Cedarville is I met my wife.
- Speaker 1: Very cool.
- Dick Walker: Okay, and so she tracked me down. But that's how I came, why I came, with the anticipation ... no anticipation of working at Cedarville long-term, okay? I mean, that wasn't really on the ... I didn't have any experience in working at a college or anything like that. But during that first year, and even into the second year, the second year I became a head resident at a dorm. Cedar Park. Cedar Park is the married student housing down at the south end of town.
- Dick Walker: At that time, that was the main freshman dorm, so you talk about kids who might complain about walking from Brock to Chucks. I mean, those kids had a longer, in the freshman, and many of them weren't allowed to have cars. So, the college occasionally provided a van that was no longer suited to the highway that they could use as transportation. So I was head resident at that dorm for

three years. My wife and I had gotten married that summer of '71, and so we moved in as our first year of marriage, head residents, and my wife would say, "Not a good idea." I didn't pay much attention to her. She had to get up early in the morning and I was staying up late at night with the guys.

Dick Walker: But anyhow, that's how we got off to a start, and so after 3 years ... The fall of '72, Ken Nichols was given a position in counseling. The trustees approved that and then they said, "Well, Dick, would you still like to do activities?" And so I said, "Fine." And I did activities for a couple of years, and then I became Dean of Men for 10 years and then went back into activities and so that was kind of the progression, and it included a lot of different kind of program development and things like that but job wise.

Dick Walker: You know, why Cedarville? I would say, in part, Dr. Jeremiah played a key role in that. Don Rickard, as my boss for over 30 years, played a key role in that kind of thing, in terms of my coming, staying. The job developed here and there weren't a lot of camp positions, so it made sense. I was married. I seemed to be doing well at some of the activities and some of the other things, so God just seemed to direct to stay here. Does that make sense?

Speaker 1: Yeah, that is so cool, though. That you met your wife and everything. Can you tell me the story of-

Dick Walker: Pardon?

Speaker 1: Can you tell me the story of how you met your wife?

Dick Walker: Well, I don't know. We ended up working in the snack shop together before we started dating. I don't know if that's where I met her. There's different people who'll take credit for introducing us. But it was one of these things. Our first date was like January 9th of '71. We got engaged April 9th and we got married in August. But we were both old enough to move in that direction.

Speaker 1: Very cool. Wow. So, besides your wife, what was it about Cedarville that attracted you?

Dick Walker: Well, like I say, I came for probably training. That was the specific reason to come to Cedarville. Now, there were other things. I mean, I came to Cedarville when I was in a high school youth group. Went to basketball games in Alford Auditorium. You're beginning to see how old I am, okay? My sister and her husband were on the staff here. Coach King, and the ... You probably don't know him. I mean, he's been gone for a while but the cross-country course is named after him.

Dick Walker: So they were here. My brother had gotten out of the Army about the same time I got out of the Navy and he moved to the area. Now, he taught at Central State for the first few years and later came and taught at Cedarville for over 30 years.

And so we had just opportunities here for myself, for other family members. You know, my kids were born here. I have two kids, they were born here in Cedarville, and eventually go through the school system, graduated from Cedarville and right now they both still live in the Cedarville area with my six grandkids.

Dick Walker: But anyhow, the reason to come initially was training for possible camp work, and then the opportunities here seemed to fit what I was looking for in camp, in the activities, intramurals, and then I went into the Dean of Men position which was a little bit different position than activities and created a different kind of relationship with students, but I felt if you treated the guys with respect ... If I would've talked to graduates from the '70s, they would kind of say, "Okay, Dick, what I remember about you is when I walked past you on the sidewalk my first day on campus, you called me my name."

Speaker 1: Wow, first day.

Dick Walker: Yeah. And they would say, "Who was that that just called me by name?" But I don't remember intentionally looking at pictures. At that time, all freshmen submitted pictures with their application, but through the process of working through housing and things like that, you saw the pictures a lot. And apparently, based on comments from students, that's one of the things they remembered. And I always felt that was important, that if you can call somebody by name, it changes the welcome factor in terms of things, and that became a key part of the Getting Started program, which I initiated in ... We always had freshman orientation, but in 1985, we initiated, we called it Getting Started, with small groups.

Dick Walker: The focus, in my mind, of the small groups was on the second day of school, it would be neat if there was at least a group of 10 to 15 kids who knew you by name. And that's one of the satisfying things about is that there's some major components of that Getting Started program as we developed over ... and my part in it, for 30 years, and now it's still being tweaked by Brian and others but it's the idea of the small groups is just a key part of that whole introduction to Cedarville and starting off with a group of kids. There are couples that met in their small groups. All kinds of stories about small groups. Some good, some bad. Some small groups that died the next day. They just never connected. But that's how a part of that got started.

Speaker 1: Okay. Wow, that's so cool, that you had an opportunity to start at the beginning of when it all started. So, speaking of relationships, can you tell us about any relationships that have meant a lot to you here at Cedarville?

Dick Walker: Well, I mentioned Dr. Jeremiah. His support for me and his counsel for me were very important in my introduction to Cedarville, before I got here and after I got here. Don Rickard became a personal friend. He was my boss. We did things for years as couples and just to see him support the kind of programming that I was

trying to develop to support the students at Cedarville, and just the friendship. And then Dr. Dixon, when he became president, he became a very close friend and even today, we continue to get together when he comes back to the area.

Dick Walker: And then there would be any number of faculty and staff. I mean, you have, like we could sit here in the hallway and see Dan Estes walk by and Tom Hutchison walk by. Those three administrators, and a name that is familiar with a lot of people on campus right now would be like Jeff Beste, the alumni director. He worked for me for 15 years, and Scott Van Loo, vice president for admissions. I'm not sure what his exact title is, but director of admissions. We brought him back here to become the director of the student union when Stevens Student Center opened up.

Dick Walker: And just to see how God has directed in the lives of people here and then as they move on into ministry or other places. It's kind of fun to keep track. There are some good things about Facebook. There are some bad things about Facebook. But one of the good things is you're able to track a lot of these kids, their families, their ministries. You're talking about ... There are group pictures here and things like that of people and then you'd get chapel speakers.

Dick Walker: Like this year, the alumnus of the year was Pete Lillback. He spoke in chapel. He's the president of Westminster Seminary. And we laugh about it. I remember, I met him when he was a camper at Camp Patmos and so when he visited the Isle of Patmos on a tour with some of the people from Westminster, he sent me some pieces of things from the isle of Patmos just because of our connection at Patmos.

Dick Walker: But just to see God use the Cedarville connection and just that I had a piece of that. I wasn't necessarily the most important part of it, but my desire for anybody who leaves Cedarville is that they would leave with a group of friends for life. And there's some examples of guys who get together every year or every other year, and girls the same way. Friendships that they had at Cedarville, and that's something that goes beyond the classroom.

Dick Walker: So, a lot of the programming we did, in terms of, we did more programming, we did parents weekends and family weekends and dads weekends and moms weekends and Little Sibs. And I think they had a bigger role at maybe 15 years ago than they do today, because so many of the programs today, I think the admissions office has created CU Fridays, or other academic days and that's become, probably rightfully so, a more important reason for parents and their families to visit for an academic related event versus strictly a social event. And so they limited the number of things, but it's changed a little bit of the kind of things but the size of the school has changed the nature of attendance at different kind of things.

Dick Walker: There used to be bigger crowds at a number of events than we have today, even though it was ... But one, there were less things to do so you went to where

your friends were. You know, like Little Sibs this past weekend had 12 hundred at the basketball game. I can remember when we would had 35 hundred at the Little Sibs basketball game. That doesn't show a reflection on the basketball team. It's a change in the culture and the choices that you have. The students have ... there's more commitment to their organizations that are major related. You guys are doing more in broadcasting as an organization and you go to MP ... MB. What, the National Broadcasting, Christian Broadcasters, Leightenheimer takes some of you guys to some of those kind ... But there's more things going on and those kind of things and there's less say, "Okay, I'm going to the ball game tonight because that's where my friends are." You're still doing some things with your friends, but it's not as focused on like a ball game.

Speaker 1: That's fascinating.

Dick Walker: And it's just, it's a change in culture. It's not a good or bad. It's just something that has changed the nature of the school.

Speaker 1: You mentioned earlier that the relationships at Cedarville are the keys and it's shifted and changed throughout the time, and it's just interesting to me how you can see how, throughout the time, how it's changed.

Dick Walker: Right. Well, I think there's the big scope of attendance at things, but the relationships are ... Like, when probably almost every week I have some kind of interaction with an alumni who's back in the area, okay. Some of that's initiated by me. Some of that's initiated by them. But again, it's like what's pretty cool on Facebook is you'll see a picture of these two couples getting together who were in school together 10 years ago or 20 years ago, and now they're ... Or, you know, for this, which weekend was it when they had the track weekend? Recruiting track runners from high school, they had a high school meet. Two or three of the parents were here with their kids to be in the meet, but they were students together.

Dick Walker: And not all of our alumnis' kids are going to come to Cedarville, but some of them do and it's just kind of neat to see how God works and draws some of them back. And to see ... you have and we go through, like, I look at it and I say, "Wow, where are all the old people?" You know, like the people from my timeframe that worked here maybe 20, 30, 40 years.

Dick Walker: Well, we still have the generation behind us with the Jim Leightenheimers, the Wes Bakers. Wes just retired. And Tom Mach, and you know, wow, there's still that group of people who have invested years in the Cedarville experience all with that same goal, whether you want to say for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ, but they're investing in students to see how they can be a part of preparing them for the next step and being involved in that stage after Cedarville all around the United States. Whether it's Atlanta or whatever. I mean, that's what's kind of fun for me to still live here and that provides me with a different view than people who've moved on to other locations.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's very interesting to listen to you and hear your stories and things like that. Do you want to go onto question four?

Dick Walker: Pardon?

Speaker 1: Would you be okay with going onto question four, because you mentioned earlier that-

Dick Walker: Well, that's up to ... I don't want to ... We don't want to violate any of your ... But anyhow, there are some ... One of the things that's kind of an interesting piece of the Cedarville history and part of it's become an icon in a lot of ways, it's the Rock.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Dick Walker: Okay. And this is a picture of the Rock, down by the hardware, on its way to campus in 1978. And I'm in the car behind it but at that time it was placed over down behind where it is now, the Tyler building. That was the cafeteria and the gym at that time. They moved it over to the Student Center in about in 2000 or something like that, one of the classes.

Dick Walker: But CZ, which was painted on it, was a student group at that time. Kind of a spirit group. They wore coveralls and ski masks and would run around at night, after hours, or maybe not always after hours but to generate enthusiasm for events just to encourage people. They would put snacks on the outside of the window in the library and so students would run outside and go get the snacks.

Speaker 1: That's awesome.

Dick Walker: And there were all kind of ... But the Rock, if you imagine, how often that's been painted in almost 40 years. I used to tell people that when it came to campus, it was only about the size of a football. But it's peeled off and whatnot, but that has been a focal point that a lot of people, if they think of something about Cedarville, that they can remember, "Well, the Rock was painted with a message about this. A message about that."

Dick Walker: And that's something that ... and one of the things that ... Excuse me. We ended up making molds and made hundreds of rocks shaped like that out of a plaster of Paris type thing and used them as thank you notes, used them as welcome to new students, and even a better thing was we ended up having a candy shop, Marie's. They made a mold that was the shape of the Rock, and so you know, there was a lot of people that don't have a place in their office for a plaster of Paris Rock but if you give them a chocolate Rock-

Speaker 1: There you go.

Dick Walker: There you go. And just recently I was talking to one of the faculty members who works with students on ... What are they? 3M printers? The printers that ... But anyhow. He made probably the most accurate Rock on one of these 3M printers or whatever they use them for.

Dick Walker: You know, the Rock came in the fall of '78, brought by a group that CZ was kind of a spirit-oriented thing and so if you can imagine how often something like that's been painted, and there a couple of interesting stories that I didn't tell before. One, some students at one point hot wired a bulldozer when they were doing some construction at what would be the science center. You know, the old science center, whatever ... The old science building. And they came over and they pushed the Rock about maybe 25, 30 yards.

Dick Walker: And I think one other time, somebody managed to tip it over, but it was designed, the size of it was on purpose to be a little bit impractical for anybody to try to move it or whatever. We had had a spirit log before that, but the spirit log, the problem was it was too mobile, but it was mobile enough that it was dangerous. I mean, it was big enough that it could really hurt somebody but it was small enough that a group of 20 people might be able to move it. Well, the Rock took away most of that kind of thing but it's been used for birthdays, for greetings, for promotion of different kind of things, and it was moved by the college, I think the class of ... one of the classes. I don't know what it says on the ... There's a seal out by the rock that would say that class, what they did. They didn't bring the rock to campus. They paid to move the rock from the other side of campus to over in its current location.

Dick Walker: But it's been fun to see that continue as a legitimate way to make expression and encourage friends and organizations and that kind of thing.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Thank you so much for your time, and thank you for your interview. I learned so much. This is so exciting. I would love to hear more some time.

Dick Walker: Well, you know, Cedarville has been a major ... Cedarville has primarily been my adult life. 1970 to even today, I still interact with the people that I met at Cedarville as a primary connecting point. I'm enthused when I see alumni and faculty and staff interacting with their friends and with the people that they've met at Cedarville as a source of encouragement for them, that they're going through difficult times, there's a friend there to help and do it celebrating. Just the other day, there was a picture posted of Facebook of a couple that got married eight years ago. Now they got married later in life. I'm going to say in their 30s.

Dick Walker: But the wedding was like, there were like, I forget, over a hundred alumni at the wedding and it was just kind of neat to see that kind of thing. They were in the mission field, and they've got two little kids. Most of their friends are bringing

their kids to college. They're still at the stage where they're preschool. So they're going to be a little bit behind on some of that, but it's kind of fun to see them interact and that kind of thing. Okay.

Speaker 1: Okay. Thank you so much.

Dick Walker: And in the keeping with the tradition of Marie's chocolates. It's some of the best chocolate in Ohio.

Speaker 1: No way. Thank you.

Dick Walker: There are people, if you talk to the right people, there are construction crews, that used to be construction on campus, and they'll meet me someplace and they'll say, "Didn't you bring us ice cream while we were building?" That kind of thing. Marie's used to get a lot of business from me while I was at the college and the college still does. But anyhow, enjoy something sweet from today.

Speaker 1: Thank you. This entire thing was sweet. This was nice. Thank you so much.

Dick Walker: Thank you.