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Loren Reno

Loren M. Reno

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Interview with Loren Reno

Spring 2019

- Andrew Harris: All right. Well we are here with General Loren Reno, Air Force Retired and you have done quite a few things here at the college over the years, General Reno. What are some of the things you've done?
- Loren Reno: To be clear, it's Lieutenant General, Retired.
- Andrew Harris: Lieutenant General. Okay, let's fix that.
- Loren Reno: And I came back to Cedarville in 2012. I came as the Dean of the School of Business and Professor of Management, taught for three years. Continued teaching the next two, '15 to '17 as the Vice President for Academics. And then from summer of '17 to the present, continuing to teach in the School of Business. But I'm the senior advisor in the Office of the President.
- Andrew Harris: That is quite a history of different roles. So thank you so much for being here with us and for doing this interview. We're just really excited to hear your personal history of Cedarville, which I know goes back to your youth.
- Andrew Harris: So let's start with the story of how you came to Cedarville because you came to Cedarville several times.
- Loren Reno: I did. I came to Cedarville in 1953 with my father and mother and four brothers. Dad was on the faculty at then Cedarville College. As it began having moved from Cleveland and took over from the Presbyterians in the same year. So dad was on the faculty for the first couple of years and so I was just a town boy. I lived in town. I went to the elementary school and then junior high and then high school and after I graduated from high school in 1966, I came to Cedarville College the second time as a student and I finished in four years. I had a major in comprehensive science and education, so it was a science heavy major with a education teaching certification. I played basketball, I worked in the radio station.
- Loren Reno: I worked in the precursor of Chuck's, so had a lot of experience on campus. I taught school for three years in nearby Jamestown. I taught eighth, ninth and 10th grade physical science and biology and I coached basketball and football. I felt led by the Lord to join the Air Force in the fall of 1973 at the end of the Vietnam War and went to navigator training, flew into Vietnam right at the end of the war and then stayed in for 38 years, most of it as a logistician and retired in February of 2012. And I came back to Cedarville for the third time as a faculty member and as the Dean of the School of Business starting in August of 2012.

Andrew Harris: Now when we talked last time together, you told this great story about some of your childhood friends that would be names that I think that some people watching the video would know and would you tell those for us again?

Loren Reno: Sure, of course. My best friend in junior high and high school was Jim Jeremiah, not James T, but his son Jim. Jim and I were classmates. We played basketball together in high school. We played basketball together in college. I lived off campus at home over on Bridge Street my freshman year and then moved into the dorm my sophomore year. And Jim was my roommate. Jim became the best man in my wedding. So we were good friends. And I remember back when I was in the second grade, seven years old, this would've been in October of 1955, the Lord was working on me, convicting me of my sin and my need for salvation. And I came home from school one day and neither father nor mother were home and none of my brothers were home. And I'd been churched all my seven years. And so I knew what the rapture was and I figured the rapture had come and I'd been left behind.

Loren Reno: So I decided I'd call the Jeremiah's house, my best friend, Jim. So I called the Jeremiah's house and figured if anybody was home then the rapture probably hadn't come. So I called and Mrs. Jeremiah answered. I don't remember how I got out of the phone call, but it was just a short time thereafter that I opened my heart to the Lord. And it was in a Bible club that was being run by college girls in what is now Harriman Hall at the corner of Chillicothe and Main Street, on the northeast corner of that intersection, big white house. And there was a missionary from Africa, French equatorial Africa at the time, her name was Esther Lindemann. She wasn't even five feet tall. And she taught us a flannelgraph story. She taught us a course in Swahili. I don't remember either of those, but she must've said John 3:16 10 times.

Loren Reno: And every time she came to the word, whosoever, her stubby little finger was pointing right at me. We were sitting cross legged on the floor in the main living room of what's now Herrmann Hall. And it was then that I realized that God does not have any grandchildren, that he died for me and I needed to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Not dependent on my parents or my brothers, but something that I needed to do. And so that afternoon in November of 1955 I opened my heart to the Lord. So Jim Jeremiah is very special to me. His dad was, Jim's dad, long before he was, I thought of him as the college president. I watched his older brother, Dave, David Jeremiah, and now Dr. David Jeremiah, play basketball in high school. I watched him play in college when I was just a school boy going to school across the street from what's now the university.

Andrew Harris: That is amazing. Fantastic. You know, clearly you have a really powerful history with Cedarville. And the next question that I ask is what attracted you to Cedarville? I think a lot of people might assume that just because you grew up here and were steeped in the culture of Cedarville, that that was something assumed. But I have an idea that perhaps you have some very specific things that you would like to tell us about that.

Loren Reno: Originally when my family came to Cedarville, I just traveled in the car as a young boy would, five years old. And then when I came as a student, it was the nearest college and I wanted to play basketball. And thought I could and was fortunate enough to play for four years at the college back in the day. But the third time when I came back as a faculty member, Cedarville was in my veins. And after having served in the Air Force for so long, at the stage I was in life, I thought there couldn't be anything better than finding an opportunity to pour myself and my experiences and my love for the Lord into other young people. And so when I had the opportunity to come and be in the School of Business and teach and do other things, then I jumped at it.

Loren Reno: So the attraction was really the opportunity to pour into the lives of young people. And so now it's teaching the undergraduates. I teach a senior level course, 4,000 level course. It's called Applied Leadership. It's open not only to business majors but to majors of other kinds. I also teach a leader development program for the University where faculty members and staff members can learn how to lead on a practical basis.

Loren Reno: My wife and I have students over to our house now. We're taping this on the 1st of April in 2019. We had a group of about 30 Alpha Chi members over to our house Friday night and served them hamburgers and hotdogs and we always end up talking about things that are on their minds and on their hearts. We have another, the girls track team is coming over this week on Wednesday night, so we love to have young people over the house. I love to teach and I love to mentor. There are several individuals and groups here at the university, some students, some are other that I enjoy mentoring and talking with them and pouring into them and praying with them and encouraging them along the right path to follow in their life.

Andrew Harris: Well, can you tell us about some of those relationships that you have formed over your time here at Cedarville. Faculty and staff or students with your history here as a child, maybe some of those townspeople or friends and family that have meant a lot to you as part of the Cedarville community.

Loren Reno: I think of three names. The first is Doctor Don Callan. I always called him Coach. I called him Coach long before he was my coach when I was in high school. His property, he lived on Palmer Drive and that was adjacent to the field that we owned out behind our house, just east of what's now the water reservoir. So I knew him, I watched him coach and he came when I was, it must have been sixth or seventh grade. He came to be the speaker at a youth retreat and he talked about having traveled with Venture for Victory Basketball. That's using basketball as an evangelism tool. He talked about traveling in what we called the Orient then, but it's in the East Asia and the Pacific region and he had been to Taiwan. He'd been to China. I don't remember where else he went, but he talked about using basketball as a tool for evangelism and that captivated me.

Loren Reno: I continued playing when I came to Cedarville and then at the end of the Cedarville time, I had opportunity with Coach Callan to go on the first mission,

Missionary Internship Service Basketball team to the Philippines and it was in the summer of '71. Coach Callan led the team. I went on the team with six or eight other guys. We went to Japan and Hong Kong and Taiwan and the Philippines. As I recall, we were gone about eight weeks. We played sometimes, usually one game a day, sometimes two. I remember on occasion we played three games in a day, but we would play the first half. We would give testimonies and sing some gospel choruses at half time. And then when the game was done, we'd head for the exits and pass out tracts and talk to young people or whoever came to the game about the Lord, about their need for salvation and just try to witness and minister.

Loren Reno: So I did that in summer '71. Coach let me take the team in '72 and again in '73. Then I joined the Air Force, but I was stationed in the Philippines a few years later. And so Coach asked me if I could take some leave, vacation time, and join the team when they were over in the Philippines, which I did. So great memories with Coach Callan and he was instrumental in starting what became Cedarville's Missionary Internship Service Program, now is Global Outreach. It's much broader than just basketball teams to the Philippines. It's a lot of different athletic teams. It's individuals, it's small groups. My children all came to Cedarville and one of my children, my middle son, Joseph, went on a MIS trip to Germany when he was a student, a generation later. So that was special. So Coach Callan is certainly one.

Loren Reno: A second one would be Dr. Cliff Johnson. Dr. Johnson passed away in May of 2018, but he was a very close friend and a huge influence on my life when I was here at Cedarville. When I decided to join the Air Force in 1973, there were a lot of people that didn't understand. Why would a godly Christian successful school teacher join the military during the Vietnam War? And Dr. Johnson who had been in World War II had been in the Air Force, the Army Air Corps at the time and had been a pilot. He understood completely the need for believers to not only be in the military, but to be in all walks of life and he supported me. He supported me so much that over the years he would come to the bases where I was assigned. He would come to my promotion ceremonies, he would come to my assumption of command ceremonies. He was a frequent visitor to our home and to a lot of my career, even including my retirement time.

Loren Reno: His first wife Eunice, passed away and he married Dr. Pam Johnson and she just picked up with him as he had been doing before. So a great impact on me, Dr. Cliff Johnson and his wife, Pam. And the third one I would have mentioned is Dr. Don Baumann. Dr. Baumann was a faculty member, but he taught chemistry, he taught sciences. He had been a successful scientist and chemist with Borden's Milk back in the day. This is back before he came to Cedarville. And he just had a very gentle spirit and yet he was excellent in what he did. And that became a role model and something that I tried to emulate, to have a gentle spirit, but to be excellent. And I have to insert it somewhere in this recording, but it was the Lord that put his hand on me that gave me success in the Air Force. And since it was not of my own doing at all, it was the Lord deciding to put his hand on a

town boy from Cedarville. And those are some of the folks that had a real impact on me.

Andrew Harris: Maybe now since we're talking about it would be a good time to ask. How did your Cedarville college experience aid you as you went into military service?

Loren Reno: I think everything I needed ... Someone wrote a book, Everything I Needed for Life, I Learned in Kindergarten. I think everything I needed to lead well in the Air Force, I learned on the basketball floor and I learned it from Coach Callan. I learned about self-discipline. I learned about appreciation. I learned about following the rules. I learned about team work, learned about patience. I learned about the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Learned about disappointment, learned about hard work. I just, I learned a lot on the basketball court and Coach Callan was always looking for a way to help us understand that it was God's hand on us. He gave us the talent, he gave us the drive. He gave us the ability to play, to get along with others, and then to use all of those basketball skills in the mission field.

Loren Reno: So I trace it back to my time on the basketball court, but also in leadership positions at Cedarville as a student. So practicing leadership and learning those skills as a late teenager and early twenties-something young man, they translated directly and were very helpful to me in the Air Force as an officer.

Andrew Harris: What were some of the organizations that you were a part of at Cedarville?

Loren Reno: You're checking an old man's memory here. Certainly basketball and I was in what we call the Varsity Club or Varsity C, it was a varsity organization where men who had earned letters, as I recall, it was just men, I don't think we had women in the Varsity Club back in the day. But once we had earned varsity letters in soccer or basketball or baseball or track, and those are about the only sports we had at the time. We might've had a golf team, I can't remember. I was in Alpha Chi and an officer. I was the SGA representative for freshman, sophomore, junior classes and so was on what we called the Student Council at the time. It's now SGA. My senior year, I was the Supreme Justice of the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, which mitigated traffic, not traffic, but parking tickets. And it was a place where students could come and appeal tickets or demerits or things like that they received.

Loren Reno: I also sat on a discipline committee with the Dean of Students. They had several faculty members, a couple of deans and one student. And it just kind of helped to bring a student flavor into their deliberations. And so I had the privilege of doing that. So those are some of the things.

Andrew Harris: So to what degree was that Supreme Court student led? Was it a mix of student and faculty or staff, or was it-

Loren Reno: That court was all students.

Andrew Harris: Wow.

Loren Reno: I can't remember. There might've been five or seven on it. We didn't pack the court, like they talk about doing in real life now. And it was just an additional duty. We only met on occasion when it was needed, but it was a just a way for students to redress.

Andrew Harris: Take ownership of the- That's a really interesting little tidbit of Cedarville history there.

Loren Reno: I'm not sure I would advocate that now. I think the opportunities that students have to appeal those sorts of things are certainly adequate now.

Andrew Harris: Right. What are the moments in your experience here at Cedarville that help define what Cedarville means to you? I mean, they don't necessarily have to be the big events, even a small event.

Loren Reno: I think of two things. One would be students seeking to go on Global Outreach trips. Something really happens when you go on a Global Outreach trip. On some occasions those young men and women decide and commit and follow through on being full-time missionaries or pastors. Other times, those who go become so interested in missions that it affects their giving for the rest of their adult life. I've seen this happen over the years. Guys that I went to the mission field with on MIS trip back in the day are now just, they sit on the mission board of their church. They support missionaries that come through their churches. It's just been a life-changing event to participate in that, either career-altering or life-changing in the way they approach and support missions.

Loren Reno: The second thing would be the way students at Cedarville nowadays seek mentoring. I think of three guys that have sought me out and we've spent scores of hours together. Corbin Edmonds was the first one. Corbin graduated around 2014, give or take a year. He went on to earn his CPA, certified public accountant. He won the President's Trophy the year he graduated, but Corbin just had and has a wonderful heart for the Lord. And he would come to me, we would meet weekly or biweekly and he would have a list of questions every week, faithfully have a list of questions. What do you think about this? What does the Bible say about that? Has this ever been a problem in your life? And we just were as transparent with each other as we possibly could be and I really treasured those times.

Loren Reno: A second young man was Paul Danielson. Paul graduated probably in 2016 or '17, he is now an officer in the US Air Force. He is a pilot and he is flying helicopters for the US Air Force and probably for special operations command. But Paul, the son of an Air Force colonel, sought me out early and for several years he and I would meet weekly or biweekly and we would do the same kinds of things as I mentioned about Corbin.

Loren Reno: And the third young man that I would mention, and these are not the only ones, there have been several dozen others. One that I'm currently meeting with is Justin Lough. Justin is a senior, Justin is the son of the Director of Word of Life, but Justin doesn't wear that on his sleeve at all. He is a very serious, intellectually talented young man who I am just delighted in meeting with regularly. And again, we talk about the same things. And my goal is to prepare them even better to live for the Lord when they leave Cedarville.

Loren Reno: But those are three young men that come to mind that have really sought out personal mentoring on a serious basis. They've been prepared and it wasn't to win favor or anything, they just really wanted to meet with an older believer.

Andrew Harris: Well, just one last question. As you think back on these events, these moments, these relationships, how have they helped shape you into the person you are today?

Loren Reno: I think the relationships that I had with the likes of Coach Callan and Dr. Johnson and Dr. Baumann have helped me understand that they who went before me and now they're either octogenarians or in glory, gave of their time to help and to encourage a young man. And now I've turned from a young man into an older man and now it's my turn. And I don't do it out of duty, I do it out of opportunity and it's a real pleasure and a privilege to pour into these young men.

Loren Reno: To a lesser extent, I do a lot of that in my class. My class is not about teaching people to get an A in the class. My class is about preparing them to graduate a better leader than when they walked into my class on the first day. And to be bold in their faith and to be wise like Daniel, like Joseph, to serve well. It says in Proverbs, seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall not stand before average men. He shall stand before kings. And so as Dr. Johnson and Coach Callan, Dr. Bowman helped prepare me to stand literally before presidents and generals and admirals, I want to prepare these young, young men and women at Cedarville to stand before kings, not before average men.

Andrew Harris: Thank you very much. General. It's been a pleasure.

Loren Reno: Thank you.