

Interview Transcript

Narrator: Duane “Dewey” Kuhn (DK)

Interviewer: Jennifer Muthanna (JM)

Date: March 8, 2012

Location: Hillsboro, Oregon

Transcribed by: Jennifer Muthanna, March 15, 2012 and March 27-30, 2012

Note to auditor: I have checked the spelling of names that are not highlighted.

One audio file, 71 minutes, 17 seconds = 1 hour, 11 minutes

Time Code	Transcription
	Audio File, 1 hour, 11 minutes
0:00:00-	<p>JM: Okay, I think if we just leave it there, it'll be fine.</p> <p>DK: Okay.</p> <p>JM: Okay, so, this is Jennifer Muthanna and I'm with Dwayne Kuhn or “Dewey” Kuhn from Rodgers Instruments. So, today is March 8, 2012 and this interview is for the Washington County Museum Oral History Project that's documenting the tech industry in Washington County. So, Duane or Dewey?</p> <p>DK: Dewey. That's fine.</p> <p>JM: Dewey? Okay. So, Dewey, is it okay if we record the interview?</p> <p>DK: Sure.</p> <p>JM: Great. Thanks. So, we're starting by asking people to state their name, their first and last name, and their place of birth, and their date of birth.</p> <p>Name, birth place, birthdate</p> <p>DK: It's actually Duane Kuhn. Redwing, Minnesota. October 5th, 1941. But, everybody calls me Dewey.</p>

<p>Development of interest in music and organs</p> <p>Redwing, Minnesota</p> <p>Rose Morley, organ teacher</p>	<p>JM: Okay, thanks. So, during the pre-interview, you'd mentioned that you attended the University of Wisconsin and that you were pursuing music education. And so, I'm interested in...about your educational background. Can you tell me more about that?</p> <p>DK: Well, I actually started with my grandmother who was a music teacher. She played in church and she played for the silent movies. And my hometown of Redwing, Minnesota, which is a town on the Mississippi River, is actually quite a famous town...not a large town...but Redwing Shoes is one of their famous products. But, one of their claim to fame was they had one of the first municipal-owned auditoriums in the United States. It was a party by the name of Mr. Sheldon who had given the money for this. And as part of this civic auditorium there was a wonderful pipe organ in there and in the early days, of course, they had an organist accompany the silent movies and my grandmother was one of those. I started taking lessons from her...piano lessons...and after a short time she said, "You need to go with a different teacher instead of myself. I'm going to take you to a teacher that I know very well." She took me to a teacher by the name of Rose Morley who, at the time, probably was in her seventies and she had a little Volkswagen Beetle car. She was organist at the Catholic church in Redwing...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmmm.</p> <p>DK: ...and one of the first things she asked me was, "What do you want to do with your music with learning how to play the organ?" "Well, I want to be like my grandmother. I want to play in church and I want to play for the movies." And she said, "Well, if you're going to learn to do that," she said, "we'll need to go to all the different churches in town and make sure that you're acquainted with the organ and actually play a service in each." And, I look back and realize how I was touched by this person, Rose Morley, that took such an interest in my playing the organ and I think it was a very unique experience the</p>
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fact that, when I look back, and she took me to like ten or twelve churches in the town and, ultimately, I played as service or mass at each of those services...so it was a very, very unique experience.

JM: So, how old were you then?

DK: I would have been junior...senior...in high school, so sixteen...seventeen...eighteen. I was going to be an industrial arts teacher. I was fascinated with woodworking and I worked on carpentry during the summer. But, this experience with music changed my field and so, when I actually went off to college, I went and studied as a music education major.

JM: And then, I think you said, you didn't finish at the time because you got involved in doing sales for Baldwin?

Selling
Hammond
organs

DK: Actually, for Hammond Organ. Two other very important people that touched my life in a very unique way. My folks bought a Hammond organ. And, as I went to college, the people that we bought the organ from suggested, did I have any interest in selling organs? And I thought that was a very interesting question. The long and the short of it is, I started selling organs while I was going to college in 1959, 1960. They ultimately gave me a Volkswagen bus with a couple of Hammond organs in it. So, here out in front of the men's dormitory at the university was this Volkswagen bus advertising Hammond organs. But I was making three, four, five hundred dollars a month going to college as a student selling Hammond organs and it really created an interest for me in the field of sales.

JM: And you said the long and the short of it. Can you tell me more about it...how that came to happen?

DK: Well, I mentioned that besides **Rose Morley** affecting my life the people

<p>Important people in life: Harold and Everett Edstrom</p>	<p>that we bought this Hammond organ from their names were Harold Edstrom and Everett Edstrom. They were from Winona, Minnesota. They owned this Hammond organ operation and in the basement in their Winona, Minnesota store in 1958, they started a very small music publishing company. Harold and Ev were music teachers at Winona State Teachers' College in Winona, Minnesota. One of them had the band and they started publishing their band arrangements as well as how to learn how to play the Hammond organ. So, that was 1958. Today, that company...that music publishing company that started in the basement of their Winona, Minnesota store...is the world's largest music publishing company. It's called Hal Leonard Publishing. The Hal Leonard came from Hal Edstrom and the Everett's... his middle name was Leonard...and they had a dance band called the Hal Leonard Dance Band. So, besides their college teaching, they had a dance band that played throughout southern Minnesota. But, two very important gentlemen in my life. I was very surprised in one of our industry trade publications recently, there was a story on the growth of Hal Leonard Publishing Company... and in the article here was picture of Ev Edstrom and Hal Edstrom and Rog Busdicker, the three people that founded Hal Leonard. I had to cut it out because I've got it on my wall now because it's a very important picture to me.</p> <p>JM: Oh, that's great. So, how did that then transfer into you being involved...from that first initial company all the way through then? Can you kind of take me through your career trajectory?</p>
<p>0:7:30-</p>	<p>DK: Yes, I say unfortunately in a way I did not complete college because by my third year I was making a thousand, fifteen hundred dollars a month. I thought "why would I ever go into teaching when I can make a lot more money selling organs?" In 1966, I was with a company in southern Minnesota and we hired a young gentleman by the name of Doug Woggey who had graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa as an organ major and he wanted to come to work for us selling Hammond organs. And Doug and I got to be very</p>

<p>Getting hired at Baldwin and promotions</p>	<p>good friends and, maybe after about 6 months, he said, "You know, I'm going to write several of the organ companies and see if I can get a job with one of the companies." And after several weeks, he told me, he said, "You know I got an answer back from Baldwin Piano and Organ Company and I'm going to go to Cincinnati for an interview." So, he went to Cincinnati, had the interview, came back he said, "I've accepted a job with Baldwin as a Staff Organist going around the country playing programs, dedications." So, another five...six months goes by and one of our industry trade conventions was in Chicago, Illinois and my wife and I went to the trade convention and we said, "Let's stop by and see Doug." So, we went into the Baldwin Piano and Organ Company exhibit, met Doug, and during that conversation he said, "Oh by the way," he said, "I really enjoy this company and my boss is here and they're going to hire some additional people. Would you like to meet him?" I said, "Sure." The gentleman's name was Paul Mooder who was the Head of the Organ Division of Baldwin Piano and Organ Company and we had an interview. This was in June of 1966 and he told me, he said, "Dewey," he said, "we're going to hire somebody by the end of the year and I'll be back in touch with you." And I said, "Fine." Well, we traveled back kind of taking a vacation from Chicago back to Minnesota, so it was 3...4 days later by the time we got back. Got home late at night and 10:30 at night, the phone rings. "Dewey, this is Paul Mooder. Can you come to Cincinnati tomorrow? We'd like to hire you" [laughing]. And so I joined Baldwin as a Staff Organist and then in 1968, I</p>
<p>Corporate moves</p>	<p>became the youngest District Sales Manager that the company had ever had. Being transferred to Seattle, Washington as Sales Manager for Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Then in 1971, I got transferred to San Francisco in charge of Baldwin Retail Operations in San Francisco, Daly City, San Mateo. In 1979, I got transferred to Cincinnati as Head of the Classical Organ Division for Baldwin Piano and Organ Company. In 1984, I became Vice President of Baldwin. In 1988, Baldwin acquired the Wurlitzer Company, a major competitor in the piano business and, with that acquisition, I became the Senior Vice President of the Wurlitzer Company. We took</p>

0:12:07-	<p>Wurlitzer into the classical organ business by an association with an Italian music company. We produced a series of moderately priced digital technology classical organs and, within 2 years, we were selling more than the parent company Baldwin did. And so, ultimately, we combined Wurlitzer and Baldwin together and we created a new entity called Church Organ Systems which was the Church Organ division of the company. And in 1997, I acquired the organ division of Baldwin Piano and Organ Company. Actually, I acquired Church Organ Systems and we did very well until June of 2002 when we were hit with a lawsuit. A lawsuit that we had nothing to do with, except that one of the parties of the lawsuit was this business partner that we had in Italy. And the lawsuit was a writ of garnishment for several million dollars that, up until that amount of money, we supposedly had to transfer any money to the Court instead of transferring it to our business partner in Italy buying inventory. And so for a period of time, we attempted to bring inventory in using different legal entities and, finally, it was apparent that that just wasn't going to work and in October of 2004, we finally made the decision that we had to close that operation down reluctantly. And the day that we made that decision, within a half hour after that decision was made, I got a call from Lloyd Robbins, who was President of Rodgers at the time, asking me questions about a gentleman that he had just interviewed that had previously worked for me.</p>
<p>Writ of Garnishment lawsuit (Church Organ Systems)</p>	<p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>
<p>Getting hired at Rodgers</p>	<p>DK: And at the end of the interview he said, "Can I ask you one more question. I said, "Sure." He said, "Would you ever consider coming to work for Rodgers?" [chuckle]. I said, "Well, that's a very interesting question. Can I call you back?" This was on a Friday, so I called him back on the next Monday morning and said, "You need to be aware of what is going on." So I shared with him the whole situation with Church Organ Systems and said, "If you're still interested in talking, obviously I am" and so I came to work the following week for Rodgers. So, I joined Rodgers as Director of Sales in Marketing in</p>

November 2004, became Vice President of the company in 2007. Mr. Robbins retired in December of 2008. At that time, Mr. Kakehashi, founder of the Roland Corporation in Japan returned as President and I was appointed Executive Vice President here at Rodgers. And then in January of 2010, I was appointed President of Rodgers.

JM: So, you mentioned earlier on, and kind of detailed it through that, that you've had several moves. I think, when we spoke, you said you've moved seventeen times.

DK: Yeah, coming to Hillsboro area my wife informs me was our seventeenth corporate move. So, it's obvious that I have a very flexible partner in life [laughing].

JM: [laughing] Yeah, I was going to ask you about how that many moves...seventeen moves then...has impacted your personal life and your personal relationships.

Impact of
many
corporate
moves

DK: Well, to me, that's a very interesting question. My wife and I have talked about this many times. I think it's a general feeling that it's difficult for children to move. And we look back and feel that we are very fortunate looking at our children and our grandchildren...in that we've had many friends that have had problems with their children through the years and we can honestly say that we have not. And the more I think about it, of course I was traveling a lot, so any credit has to be given to my wife, not to me [laughing]. But I think part of it was I look at this moving from location to location as a very positive thing that our children were exposed to many different geographical locations, many different local cultures, traditions. They had to adapt to different situations, especially different schools, meeting new people. And my personal feeling is it helped them mature into well-rounded individuals. It was kind of a preparation for the reality of life.

<p>Meeting Baldwin artists: George Shearing</p>	<p>JM: So what kind of opportunities do you think that they provided...all the moves around?</p> <p>DK: Well, certainly one of the things is, I would say, quite a log of what we consider to be real, true friends. Friends that we maintained contact with to this day, especially every holiday season.</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: But the fact that you're communicating with somebody 30 years later, that means that you've got a pretty true friend. So, that certainly was one area of interest. Being in the music business...certainly one of the experiences for me has been the cultural arts activity in each of the areas. When we moved to San Francisco, that was our first experience with opera and Baldwin had an affiliation with the San Francisco Opera and we fell in love with opera. At that time, Seiji Izawa was Conductor of the San Francisco Symphony. Maestro was a Baldwin artist and, at that time, was the Flower Children era. You'd go to San Francisco Symphony concert and the young hippie-like children would bring these...hundreds of bouquets of flowers and throw them on stage afterwards. Very, very interesting time. Of course, Maestro Izawa went on to the Boston Symphony and certainly is...historically, been one of the most famous conductors in history. My wife is a very avid jazz fan. Certainly in the years that I was with Baldwin Piano and Organ Company, which is 30 years, one of the most remarkable things was meeting a good number of the Baldwin artists in a very personal way...Liberace, Frani, and Tischer. My wife's favorite was George Shearing, the jazz pianist. Baldwin had a contract with Western International Hotels, the predecessor of Westin, and their corporate office was in Seattle at the time...and Ralph Lewis, who was my boss from Los Angeles, came out and we paid a visit to Western International Hotels and the Purchasing Office...and as we were coming out, walking through the lobby of the hotel</p>
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Ralph said, "There's George Shearing." And, of course, I was just awestruck that here was the great jazz pianist, George Shearing, so we walked over and Ralph had a very unique accent to his voice and merely said, "Hi, George" and Shearing responded, "Hi, Ralph" and, of course, I just couldn't believe this, and we sat down and had about a 2...3 hour conversation with Mr. Shearing. I was rather timid...I couldn't say a thing and finally after about 2 hours, I said, "Mr. Shearing, my wife is one of your favorite fans...or...she's a fan of yours...just loves your music." And he said, "Oh really? Are you coming to the program Saturday night?" and I said, "What program?" He said, "We're playing here at the Olympic Hotel." He said, "Would you like to come?" I said, "My wife would love to come." He said...about that time, his daughter, Trixie, joined the conversation and she was his Road Manager and he said, "Trixie, please make a reservation for Mr. and Mrs. Kuhn," he said, "Would you come by yourself or would your neighbors come?" I said, "Well, I think our neighbors would love to come." So, we actually came to the event on Saturday night, the maitre d' says, "Oh, Mr. Kuhn, we have a very nice table for you." Well, the ballroom of the Olympic Hotel was in tiers and we had a table at the first tier, right smack dab in the center of the ballroom. And, Mr. Shearing played the first half of his program and then took an intermission...and during the intermission I looked up to the side of the ballroom and here he is being led by his daughter. And, I thought to myself, "Nah, he couldn't be coming to look or talk to us." But, sure enough, he came up to same row that we were in and started walking down the row towards us and I was continuing to tell myself, he's going to stop somewhere along the line. Well, come to find out he came right to our table and said, "I have to come and meet one of my favorite fans." My wife was just, you know, incredibly taken by this and surprisingly the joy of the evening was the table behind us somebody spoke up, "Who in the world are those people?" [laughing]. But, meeting the truly great artists is certainly one of the unique experiences for me. I remember when **Jim Mixter**, who had been **Vice President of Baldwin Piano and Organ Company** for many years, he and his wife, Phoebe, were notorious for entertaining the artists when they would come

to Cincinnati and play with the Cincinnati Symphony...

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: ...and when he retired in December of 1978 they had a retirement party for him at the Cincinnati Club. And, at that event, was Liberace, José Iturbi, George Follett, and...I'm trying to think of one other person...I can't think of his name right now...I can see him...he's from the...Geor...or...Earl Wild from Ohio State University. And, I sat about 3 feet away from the piano to hear George Follett play one of the most incredible interpretations of Liszt. In their day, these were the giants of the classical organ...or classical piano...artists playing...and to meet these people and know them...they were just wonderful people. So, certainly that has been one of life's great experiences for me.

JM: Wow, so it presented you lots of opportunities then...all the moves...to meet people some amazing and great people who were seminal in music?

0:22:51-

DK: Yes. And along that same line is up until becoming President of Rodgers, I've been very active through the years in music ministry. So, in each of these locations that we have moved to, it's been a very unique experience being involved with different kinds of music programs in different locations and, once again, very unique people.

JM: Great. What about some of the challenges then of moving around so much?

DK: Ah, I would have to say the challenges, first of all, fell more on my wife than me. Obviously, in many cases, I moved on before we sold our house and she was there managing the household and the children. We had very interesting experience just to show how capable she is of handling diversity. We moved to Truckee, California and lived up in the mountains of California. Our oldest son had started high school in San Jose...

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: ...and I was traveling on the road and I would call home and my wife, Julie, would say, "Oh Duane said the police were there 5 times today." I'd call the next day and she'd say, "Well Duane said the police were there 7 times today." And after about 6 weeks, I called home and she said, "We aren't going to live this way." Some friends of ours had moved to Truckee before and so we decided to move to Truckee, California and a...small town, fifteen hundred people at that time. Our kids had some unique experiences there. Like our two younger sons, they were in junior high at the time, the physical education class would go out in the weekends in the summer...er, the wintertime and dig a place in the snow bank and camp out for the weekend. The very first winter that we were up there, we had a hundred eighty six inches of snow on the ground...

JM: Oh wow...

DK: In fact, you could not look out any window of the house, the snow, whether it was first floor or second floor, the snow was right up to the house. When you eventually got on top of the snow, you just walk onto the roof of the house on the second floor. So, that was a very unique experience. And one springtime, we had about three feet of snow in two days...

JM: Oh.

DK: ...and it was heavy snow. This house had a very steep roof to it and it was a metal roof, but I still wanted to go up and get the snow off the roof because of the weight...being so wet. And I worked on it all weekend, but I didn't get it all off and when I left on Monday morning, it was raining. And I drove to San Francisco, and of course we didn't have cell phones in those days, and I got to

the hotel at about 9 o'clock at night and the red message light was flashing on the telephone so I called the front desk. "Is there a message?" "Oh yes, there is a message: call home...an emergency." And I said, "What time did it come in?" and they said, "Four thirty." So, of course, I was imagining something had happened to our children or my wife was in an accident of something.

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: I called home and she was relatively calm and I said, "What happened?" She said, "Well, I was sitting having a cup of coffee about four o'clock and, all of a sudden, the house started shaking like an earthquake" and she said, "the next thing I knew, the fireplace and the whole side of the house was gone. You could look right outside." The remaining snow had broken loose, came down and, with it, took the fireplace and the fireplace took the wall off the house and it was wide open. I said, "Well, I'll come home." She said, "Why?" [laughing].

JM: [laughing].

DK: I said, "Well, [inaudible]." She said, "Well, I called a contractor and it's already boarded up." But, I think that's a pretty good illustration of the capacity and independence of my wife and ability to accommodate any situation, so she's the one that gets credit for keeping things together and functioning during all these moves.

JM: Wow, what about challenges for your kids then?

DK: Well, I think you have normal challenges of "What am I going to do when I lose friends?" But, I think we all know that it's just amazing how quick kids create new friends. I know when we lived in Truckee and I was going to get transferred to Cincinnati, our oldest son, at that time, was, I believe, a sophomore in high school, and "I'm not moving. I'm going to stay in Truckee."

<p>28:17-</p> <p>Downsides to being away from family so much</p> <p>Music as a</p>	<p>I said, “Well, you’re not going to stay in Truckee. You’re obviously going to move to us...with us...to Cincinnati.” Well, of course, he had a girlfriend in Truckee and the final agreement was that, yes, he could move back to Truckee after he graduated from high school. Well, of course, once we got to Cincinnati about 6 weeks later, he had met somebody and everything was fine [laughing].</p> <p>JM: It must have been challenging for you because you said earlier that you were on the road a lot. So...</p> <p>DK: Yes.</p> <p>JM: So, what was that like for you? I mean...the good parts about meeting people, but what about the challenges of being away from your family so much...and things like that?</p> <p>DK: Yeah. There’s certainly downsides to that. One downside became very apparent. Both husband and wife, you get accustomed to not much time together and, I think, you develop a certain individual traits and we had gone through a number of years where I was gone all the time and then when I got transferred to San Francisco as Manager of the retail stores, I was home every night. And my wife will tell you that after several months, she said, “Why don’t you go back on the road?” [DK and JM laughing]. So, it required, you know, flexibility on the part of both people [laughing]. We get set in our ways and we adapt and...anyway...it has worked out. We’re going to celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary in a couple of weeks.</p> <p>JM: Congratulations.</p> <p>DK: I know, it wouldn’t have happened without her flexibility.</p> <p>JM: That’s great. You mentioned earlier about being involved in the music</p>
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<p>unique gift from God</p>	<p>ministry. So, I'm wondering if you can tell me about the importance of that in your life or tell me more about it?</p> <p>DK: Well, my personal feeling is, of course, that music is a unique gift from God and worship is one of the unique activities that the human being participates in. In fact, regardless of religious belief, I believe that this is the ultimate activity that a human being participates in. It ties in with the organ business...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>
<p>Maximizing the participation of those who worship</p>	<p>DK: ...because some people would say, "Oh, what do you do?" and some people would probably answer, "Oh, we build organs." My answer is, "We serve music ministry." What we do, the product that we build, is merely a product to help facilitate that ministry. And, for me, whether I was Organist or Director of Music or Choir Director, the focus has always been on how do we maximize the participation of the assembled people in this worship process? Trying to maximize the number of people in a choir; trying to get as many as people as possible playing piano and organ; trying to encourage a new level of singing. So, it's been one of the most rewarding parts of my life...a very important part.</p> <p>JM: We talked a bit about that when we talked earlier about encouraging new organists to come through and things like that....about some of the pilot projects that you're involved in. Can you tell me more about those?</p> <p>DK: Well, fortunately for me, I finally got into a leadership position in a company where I have a parent company that supports my idea financially [laughs].</p>
<p>Lack of</p>	<p>JM: That's great.</p>

organists	<p>DK: Mr. Kakehashi who is the Founder of the Roland Corporation has a passion for getting young people involved with music, regardless of what the instrument is. When I look at music ministry today, for the last ten, fifteen years, there have been many churches that have not been able to hear the sound of the organ because of nobody available to play it. And so, lack of organists has been a growing issue for at least fifteen years. The last five years or so, I hear more and more churches, pastors, priests say, "I'm having a difficult time finding a pianist...not just an organist." And I think all this is reflective of how much the arts and music have been taken out of our school programs versus ten years ago, twenty years ago, thirty years ago. It's a shock to me talking to young people about some traditional, say patriotic, songs. Most of the time, they have no idea of "America the Beautiful" or My Country, 'Tis of Thee" or "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." They've never heard of such a thing. So I think this is reflective of how we've taken our education system and taken an important part out of it. So, I have looked for years at...here's the church, our main customer base, that has this problem...this lack of people to play the instrument. Here we are...as a company, our success is based on selling organs. Why not partner with churches? And this was driven by an experience with our oldest grandchild back in Cincinnati. The Baldwin Piano and Organ Company had class piano lessons...</p>
0:33:35-	<p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>
Pilot project:	<p>DK: ...around the Greater Cincinnati area...I think 8 or 10 locations. And each one of those locations was in a church in a given area. And it worked out very well. So I thought, "Okay, why can't we, Rodgers, partner with select churches?" and the partnership was based...or is based on...our providing at no charge...6 student instruments...the idea that it's very effective teaching 6 at one time. It's also very effective because you are teaching how to play in an ensemble with one another rather than just play by yourself. And so, I had an</p>

organ lab

acquaintance with Dr. Ina Grapenthin, a Professor of Music at Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, it's a member of the State of Pennsylvania system. Dr. Grapenthin is also Director of Music at St. John's Lutheran Church in Kutztown and she and I have worked together on education programs for many, many years. And I called her and said, "Ina, I think we're finally in the position where we could do a test program that we've talked about for many, many years." And so now, it's about 4 years ago, we set the lab into St. John's Church. At the end of the first year, I say "end of the first year," it started in September and this was in May of the following year, I went to hear a concert featuring all of the people that had been involved with this program during the year. One of the things that was exciting for me was the participation levels were from age eight to eighty.

JM: Wow.

DK: That is exciting.

JM: It is.

DK: I think, may I, I don't know if I shared with you in our telephone conversation...there was this lady, very attractively dressed...two children, very attractively dressed, and I thought, "Oh, they're going to play." Well, before they actually played, her husband came in, extremely well dressed...and they played as a family...the four of them. And afterwards there was a reception for the performers and I was there and this very well dressed gentleman came up to me and he said, "Are you Dewey?" I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "Well, I'm Dr...." and he gave me his name. He said, "I just want to come and tell you," he said, "that I owe you and Rodgers a very big thank you." I said, "Oh gee." He said, "I'm a heart surgeon and," he said, "I was in surgery today and that's why I was late. But," he said, "I would not have missed this experience for anything." He said. "This music program has made me allocate a couple hours

of my time once a week to my wife and my family to do this as a joint activity and," he said, "it's been priceless." And that, to me, has pretty well defined the program. Since then, we've set up programs at Smith Memorial Presbyterian here in Gresham...well, actually Fairview. We're at Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church...Tabor Space downtown. We are at St. Matthew's Catholic Church or School here in Hillsboro...and we're going to add several lab editions in Seattle and in the Riverside, California area in the next couple weeks. We presently have about two hundred students taking organ lessons.

JM: Oh.

DK: It's not a matter of kids do not have interest in the organ. In fact, they are totally fascinated with the different sounds, the dynamic range of the organ...

JM: I can imagine.

0:38:30-

DK: Yeah, they literally run to it. It's that they have not been exposed to it. And so, one of the objectives is, I mentioned earlier, is playing in ensembles so they're accustomed to playing with others. And, it allows them to play as a group in worship...nothing more than maybe a simple hymn, but they play with strings, with piano sounds, with oboe. Excuse me, and it gets them participating in worship at a very early age and that's exciting.

JM: Great. What's your role in all of this then now [laughing]?

DK: Well, I think my role is actually probably just trying to provide the, first of all, the vision for this. Secondly, to provide the funding for it. In reality, Jennifer Brandlon, our Marketing Director, is...it's been thrown in her lap and she's the person that day-to-day is doing the execution of this. But for me, it's just so exciting because this concept is a concept I've carried in my mind for some time and finally I'm in a position, corporately, that we're able to do

	<p>something about it.</p> <p>JM: That's exciting.</p> <p>DK: Yeah, very exciting.</p>
<p>Rodgers' Classical Organ Competition</p>	<p>JM: Yeah, that's great. And then you also said, when we talked earlier, about the Classical Organ Competition that Rodgers has. So, can you tell me about that, too?</p> <p>DK: Well, we were looking at what could we do to help stimulate interest or encourage those students that already are taking lessons. And so, a year ago, we decided that we would create the Rodgers' Classical Organ Competition and we had twenty-seven contestants in our first year. The finalists were incredible young musicians and incredible young people, I say young because I'm guessing they were between twenty and thirty in age. We were just blown away by their musical performance level. So, our first objective was: encourage young people. The second objective was to take these winners and help them develop a career of concertizing and build a relationship with them. So, we've been able to take Thomas Schuster, and the winner of our competition last year, and sponsor him with our dealers....sponsor him with a number of conventions as a featured artist. And so, we're helping these winners create a concert performance revenue for them and I think that's very important for them. This year, we are in the middle of our competition right now as we speak and, I think I shared with you, we had eighty-four registrations...so, we had more than triple this year. So, we are really excited about this. Our plan is to incorporate a relationship with our corporate brethren to the north in Canada...Roland Canada...and make it truly a North American competition next year.</p> <p>JM: Wow, that's great. And when we spoke, you said that your role on that is to create is to vision for that competition, as well. So, can you tell me more</p>

Creating a future for the organ

about your vision for the competition?

DK: Yes, the role incorporation to me is one of the truly unique companies in the music business, again, driven by Mr. Kakehashi's passion for getting young people involved and, for a number of years, they have had world competitions in accordion, in percussion, and my goal would be that over the next year...couple years...we've gone from the United States to North American, hopefully within the next three to five years it truly can become a Rodgers' global competition.

JM: Oh, exciting. And so, you mentioned earlier when we were talking about the pilot projects that you have with some of the local churches, although I guess some of them aren't that local since they're in Pennsylvania. But, I'm interested then, because you said about the declining number of organists. So, that must be a challenge for the company.

DK: It is. It's one of the most severe challenges that we meet in the organ business. It's a challenge we can do something about...that's what's encouraging.

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: If we sat back for all of the years I've been in the music industry, no company has done anything about it. So, I believe we are the first company that truly is doing something about it. Recently, Jennifer Brandlon, our Marketing Director, and myself were in New York and we had dinner with James Thomashower, the Executive Director of the American Guild of Organists. And at dinner, I was just taken back when he said, "You know," we had shared with him what we're doing, he said, "I believe Rodgers is doing more than the total organ industry combined in terms of trying to create a future for the organ." And from executive management point of view, everything we do as a company

<p>Challenges for the industry and Rodgers</p> <p>45:23-</p>	<p>we have two basic goals. One is to improve our current operation results and two, simultaneously, to work to create a future for the organ.</p> <p>JM: Great. So, what do you think are some of the other challenges that your industry has faced...or that Rodgers, in particular, has faced?</p> <p>DK: Well, certainly, when we look at the last three, four years, the economic situation...</p> <p>JM: Right.</p> <p>DK: ...of course has greatly affected many different organizations, not just churches, in terms of charitable giving. And of course, that has drastically affected, in terms of available funds in terms of organ purchases. Interesting enough, in terms of our typical selling cycle being, maybe, one to five years...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...from the time a church thinks they want to buy an organ until they actually have the funds. We probably are one of the last industries to suffer in a downturn because these projects have been going on for a period of time. But, we're also probably one of the last ones to recover. So, lack of organists is a key issue...we can do something about that. The economic one is our biggest challenge...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...we are subsidizing free financing programs for your dealers to offer to churches as a means of stimulating assistance right now in helping create sales. And then, the other big one has been change of music styles over the last decade where the organ is used less and less or it's perceived as being "outdated" by</p>
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<p>Challenges: lack of organists, change in worship style, perception of organ as “outdated”</p>	<p>contemporary musicians, when in fact, we have many examples of some of the most contemporary worshipping churches using the organ. That issue is another issue that we can address in terms of what our instrument does. Where ten years ago our instrument only had traditional pipe organ sounds, all of our interments today, and we can do this because of our association with Roland Corporation, is have their technology internally in our products where we have hundreds of orchestral sounds build into our instruments...non-organ sounds.</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>
<p>Organ “stops”: origin of the name and how they’ve changed</p>	<p>DK: So, in a contemporary worshipping environment where there’s a praise band, the organ can actually supplement the orchestration of that praise band and the biggest thing is for us to show these people who believe the organ does not belong there, that it really has a role to play. So, we’re trying to do something about all three, but lack of organists and change in worship styles...those two we can really handle the best.</p> <p>JM: And we kind of talked very briefly at the beginning, before we were recording, about how organs have changed a lot over the years, so can you tell me more about that...about how they’ve changed? I mean you mentioned something interesting about “stops,” too, so...</p> <p>DK: Well, “stops” are these things that you pull out to get the different sounds of the organ and, like I shared with you, I find it very interesting we call them “stops” because two hundred years ago when I pulled it out, it “stopped” the sound of the given pipe. The organs at that time, all of the pipes played when you played the notes and so the way you got a variety of sounds were these mechanical controls that stopped the air supply going to the pipes...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>

DK: ...and stopped the sound...hence the name “stop.” Today, it’s just a hundred eighty degrees difference. You pull them, it activates it. But certainly, I mentioned one thing already, is the musical composition of the product has changed drastically...many more orchestral sounds. Certainly one of the biggest changes has been the transformation from analog technology to digital generation technology and, along with that change, has been the ability to have hundreds of sounds built into the instrument...where maybe twenty years ago, a same type instrument had maybe twenty-five...

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: ...or thirty sounds. So the musical flexibility of the product has been expanded to...enormously. And, the other thing is, if we look at prices, if we go back twenty-five years and look at a three manual organ with fifty or sixty stops and look at it today, it’s probably priced at the same price and that’s not even taking into consideration inflation during that period of time. So, price is similar, but sound quality is at a level that wasn’t available then. Musical flexibility is many-fold compared to what it was before. Ease of operation, in terms of many more controls for the organist, just multiple of what it was many years ago, so certainly the instrument is really, really changing.

Jennifer and I had a most interesting dinner Saturday night. Cameron Carpenter is probably is one of the most famous young organists in the world today and he came to Portland on his own and wanted to have dinner with us. We had a most enjoyable dinner. The thing that surprised me during the dinner was, he said, “Dewey, within a year, I do not want to accept another pipe organ concert because the pipe organ limits my ability to play the variety of music that I want to play in a typical concert.” He said, “I have strong feelings that in order to increase the public interest in the organ, I have to do that via the music I select to play and I don’t believe the ‘typical’ audience wants to come and hear an hour and a half of the heaviest classical music.” So any of his programs...and

<p>Importance of Rodgers- Roland association</p>	<p>he is a controversial person...any of his programs feature “Slaughter on Tenth Avenue,” “Rhapsody in Blue,” a Bach piece...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...and he is absolutely convinced. He shared with Jennifer and myself, at least three or four times during the dinner, he said, “For me, the digital organ is the future is of the organ...not the pipe organ.”</p> <p>JM: Oh. So, how has Rodgers been involved in that shift then?</p> <p>DK: Well, fortunately, Rodgers was founded in 1958...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>
<p>Move into digital technology</p>	<p>DK: ...by the two Tektronix engineers Rodgers Jenkins and Fred Tinker. And, of course, those were analog technology days. In May of 1988, just about twenty-five years ago, Mr. Kakehashi and the Roland Corporation bought Rodgers Instruments. Today, Roland Corporation is roughly about a one billion dollar company. That association is a marriage in heaven for us. First of all, the stability of Roland behind us as an organ company puts us in a very unique position of the only organ company in the world with this kind of support behind us.</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: Technology development, of course, is expensive. If we, as a small organ company here in Hillsboro, were to develop exclusive technologies, first of all, we couldn't afford it or if we were able to afford it, the cost of the product would be such that nobody could afford the product. So, because of the Roland association, it really opened the door for Rodgers aggressively going into digital</p>

<p>Product development (basic technology platforms)</p> <p>53:34-</p>	<p>technology...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...and so, in 1990, two years after the Roland acquisition, they introduced...Rodgers introduced...their first series of digital instruments. What's happened now is...about 5 years ago, Mr. Kakehashi took on the role of Consultant to Roland as he sort of semi-retires, but that's a joke because he's very active [laughs]...and appointed a very young President by the name of Mr. Kaz Tanaka...at the time in his 40s, which is highly unusual for a Japanese company. But, immediately, Mr. Tanaka looked at Roland Corporation assets worldwide and their various manufacturing facilities worldwide and relayed a message that, to me, changed the Roland Corporation. And, that is, rather than all these individual entities such as Rodgers, Roland Europe...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmmm.</p> <p>DK: ...doing their own "thing" in terms of product development that, going forward, the Roland Corporation headquarters in Japan would develop these very basic technology platforms. And then those technology platforms could be modified by the various groups: the Accordion group, the Piano Group, the Percussion Group, Rodgers, Roland Europe. And so, our role in this development cycle has totally changed just in the time that I have been here. And how has it changed? Well, one thing, the time from product conception to shipping the product. We introduced a new series of products here over the last year called the "500 Series." It was about a twelve to fifteen month cycle from conception to shipping. Prior, maybe ten, fifteen years ago, that cycle would have been two to three years.</p> <p>JM: Wow.</p>
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<p>Rodgers' greatest achievements (firsts in a number of developments)</p>	<p>DK: And it's just going to get quicker and quicker as we go forward. So, we're introducing a new series of products at our June dealer meeting that we honestly believe dealers are going to be quite surprised by what they do...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...at the price point at which they're going to be priced. And, we've been introducing these to our Sales Managers the last couple days asking for their input on case designs, the packaging of it, and so forth. But, I think our sales organization internally is really pretty excited about what's going to happen.</p> <p>JM: Oh, that's great. So, what do you think, if you think kind of over the course of Rodgers' history, what are some its greatest achievements then?</p> <p>DK: Well, if you look at Rodgers history, certainly a couple things come to mind. First of all, a long list of "firsts" in electronic organ technology development. The first transistorized classical organ; the first electronic organ to use a microprocessor technology; the first electronic organ company to use lighted controls instead of mechanical controls...and basically they've become the standard of the industry today. On the artist side, certainly Rodgers has had some very noteworthy things happen. Without question, the most famous one is the association that they had with Virgil Fox who, in his day in the 70s and 80s, was a rock star. He played at Fillmore East with this big concert organ and light show and really went around the country creating a lot of interest in the organ.</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: And, I would say, because of the nature of the product that we build and trying to simulate the pipe organ...and we would believe we do it better than anybody, I think that is why, when you look at the very well known classical organists that are known as outstanding pipe organists, they feel it is no</p>
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<p>Female President of Baldwin</p>	<p>compromise to their reputation to play our product...and I think that's probably the greatest compliment that we could possibly get.</p> <p>JM: Great. And if you look back over your career, so not only at Rodgers, but throughout the companies that you've worked with, what do you think is your greatest accomplishment? Or what are you most proud of?</p> <p>DK: Well, I don't like to think of it as "my" accomplishment because by myself I would accomplish nothing. I remember when I was with Baldwin, the Chairman and the President that had been there many years retired and a new President was brought in from outside of the music industry. And I'll never forget her [stresses her] first meeting with the employees. Unfortunately, I say unfortunately, it was a female and I was happy to see a female become President. But her whole speech was, "I intend to do this, I intend to do that, and I intend to do that." Well, my position is, you don't do any of that without your people. So, anything that I look back as an accomplishment it's not what I have done, it's what "we" have been able to do.</p> <p>JM: Or what you've been involved in, right?</p> <p>DK: Yeah.</p> <p>JM: A better way to frame it.</p>
<p>Highlights of Duane's career</p>	<p>DK: The highlight, frankly, is going on right now...in two areas. One is this product development cycle that we currently are on. Without trying to be negative about past history of Rodgers, when I came in 2004, my analysis was it was like there were umpteen different kingdoms within the company. Here was Product Development, here was Manufacturing, here was Service. This department doesn't do anything to communicate with this department or this department. And, frankly, we had to make some changes, getting rid of long-</p>

term employees. Those are never easy. But, right or wrong, I said “If we don’t, nothing is going to change.” And we did. And I think, personally, it was one of the most exciting changes I’ve ever seen in my years of corporate life. On this new project, our Mechanical Engineering Group, Randy LeNeve and Yudi Chen, brought to a meeting...and in this meeting were people from Service...they were people from the Woodshop, people from the Finish Department, people from Manufacturing Assembly, Purchasing, Manufacturing Management...the mechanical engineering guys brought to the table some ideas. And the dialogue that occurred at that meeting and subsequent meetings, to me, has been a prime example of “team.” And we constantly push that: together, everybody achieves more. It was just so interesting, I just sat back and watched the exchange going on where all of a sudden, here’s a gentleman from our Woodworking Department who’s got forty years of experience, saying, “You know, for years, I’ve been trying to have us do this. It’s going to be so much easier, so much less expensive, and so much better.” Our finishing people, “Well, we’ve always wanted to this.” And the culmination of this whole project is this week when we brought our sales team in...

JM: Mmmhmm.

1:00:00-

DK: ...to show them this product...and to see the faces and the feelings of the sales force is so encouraging. I feel that we have accomplished every goal that we set forth with this project. One was to address long-term issues that the dealers have talked about for a long time, but has never been incorporated...they’ve never been incorporated into the product design.

JM: Issues like...?

DK: Okay, when the organ is installed in a building, the pedal board is pushed up against the organ and, as you push the pedals up and down, there is a magnet at the end of the pedal...

<p>Self-contained pedal board</p>	<p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...and that magnet passes a reed switch. Well, after the organ has been sitting there for three, four, five years, it sinks in the carpet and that alignment goes out of kilter and pretty soon the pedals don't play right so the dealer has to make another service call. Well, we are creating what we call "self-contained pedal board" that the pedal board itself includes all of the switching so, regardless of what the console does up and down, the switch alignment always is going to be right. Plus, with technology we now have a self-adjusting switch so every time you turn the organ on, it adjusts itself automatically. But, these are ideas that have been on the table for years, they've never been addressed. And then our Case people that actually cut the parts...</p>
<p>Significant reduction in case costs</p>	<p>JM: Mmmhmmm.</p> <p>DK: ...and create the case, they had such wonderful ideas. You know, if we did it this way or we did it this way, we could save this. We believe we have taken somewhere between fifteen to twenty percent out of our case costs through this project...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...a very meaningful amount of money. And our ultimate goal has been to create this end product that has substantially enhanced...perceived value for the customer...</p>
<p>Highlights of Duane's</p>	<p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...a more competitive price in the marketplace and a better profit margin for Rodgers. And our product development for the last two years, this low</p>

career: low-
priced series
and new series

priced series that we introduced a year ago and now this new series...we have accomplished tremendous things and that would have to be the highlight of all my years in the industry.

JM: That's great. You mentioned a few minutes ago about seeing a woman lead a company and being glad to see a woman do that. I was just wondering if you've seen changes then since you started in the industry...either in the roles that women have occupied or that women are in the industry now and weren't then?

DK: Ah, you hit on a favorite subject of mine [laughing].

JM: Great! [laughing]

DK: I said I was so happy to see this lady become President of Baldwin...

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: ...Unfortunately, it didn't work out. My daughter, or I should say "our daughter," when she was in college, came to me...now this would have been fifteen years ago...came to me and said, "Dad, I'm working on a project. Could you help me?" And I said, "Okay, what's your project?" She said, "The changing role of women in the music industry." I said, "How in the world did you come up with that?" [laughing]. She said, "Well, you're in that business, you could help me with that."

JM: Mmmhmm.

DK: And, at the time, we had this association with Italy and so I shared some perspective, she interviewed some co-workers of mine. And I said, "Why don't you try to get a more global approach to this?" and I said, "You know, you

	<p>know the people in Italy. I'll write them a letter saying that you are interested in getting their feedback." Well, very interesting, the family in Italy, she wrote the daughter and she wrote the Founder, the father.</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p>
<p>Reception to women's changing roles</p>	<p>DK: The daughter's analysis was that things are changing drastically and women are becoming more active in assuming management positions. The father said, "It'll be a cold day in hell" [laughing].</p> <p>JM: Wow.</p> <p>DK: So, seriously, I look at Rodgers and I look at, for example, Jennifer Brandlon.</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmmm.</p> <p>DK: When I came, Jennifer was an Executive Assistant...come to find out here she had been a writer for many years for Associated Press, she had been involved in magazine creative work. And so, in the time I've been here, she's worked up to our Marketing Communications Manager. Typically, I would say in the music industry, a male position. If we look at Credit, I would have to say in the music industry, at least up until the last couple years, all of the major pan-American companies, the Credit Department was headed by a male. We are truly blessed having Diane Snyder as our Credit Manager. Diane does a tremendous amount on her own in terms of taking after hours study, increasing her education. She has her CPA, she has the highest ranking in the Credit Managers' Association. We have a number of women that are starting to be promoted on the production manufacturing side of our business. I would like to think that we're doing a fairly good job at Rodgers...we could do better. But, I certainly see that we have probably eight to ten women of different age that are</p>

<p>1:06:25-</p> <p>Diversity and minority employees (Hispanic)</p> <p>Lack of Black employees</p>	<p>assuming more and more responsibility as we go on.</p> <p>JM: So how does Rodgers then, as a company, either promote or support diversity? How are some of the ways it's doing that?</p> <p>DK: The area where we are weak...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...right now would be...I can't say that we're weak in minority hiring because we have a very high percentage of our workforce that is Hispanic. In fact, talking to Joe Carmody, our Human Resource person, he shares with me that through the years, Rodgers has had a difficult time maintaining certain employees at certain levels because of the intensity of competition with Intel and so forth...other companies that are a much higher compensation level than we are. And, over the years, we have developed a production workforce that, I would say, is strongly Hispanic and their loyalty to the company is incredible. They're extremely valuable and productive employees. So, I would say, if we looked at our makeup in terms of percentage in terms of minority, it actually would be a pretty high percentage. The area where we fail, at this point in time, would be Black members of our staff. And it's not that we haven't tried, I think part of it is just due to the business that we're in...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...I think our chance for that to happen most likely is going to be to look at the college level of people coming out of college that have this interest in the organ market, have this interest in the music industry, have this interesting...interest in our technology. We have had, since I've been here, some members of the Technology Group that have been Black, so that's our weakest area. But I'd say, overall, we could be proud of our percentage of</p>
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<p>Rodgers in Hillsboro</p> <p>Noteworthy organ installations</p>	<p>minority hiring.</p> <p>JM: Hmm. I'm just conscious of time because you said an hour, so...</p> <p>DK: I've got about five minutes.</p> <p>JM: Okay. So, is there anything else that you want to add or tell me then...that we haven't covered that you think, "Oh, actually, I'd like to talk about this?" [laughing]?</p> <p>DK: Well, I enjoy going out and talking about Rodgers...</p> <p>JM: Great.</p> <p>DK: ...in the community. I was recently at the Kiwanis Club a couple weeks ago and my favorite message is Rodgers has been part of the Hillsboro business community since 1958. In fact, was one of the first companies, in terms of technology companies, coming into this area. But, my message is this: I don't think there is another company in Hillsboro, especially a company our size, that creates as much identification for Hillsboro as Rodgers does with our worldwide installation of our product. Whether it's...and I'm talking about very noteworthy installations... Worcester Cathedral in the United Kingdom, Beijing Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Shenyang Conservatory of Music in Shenyang, China, St. Matthew's Anglican Cathedral in Singapore. It doesn't matter...we can go around the world to education institutions, religious institutions, and noteworthy concert artists and our instruments, produced in Hillsboro, are around the world and bringing identification for Hillsboro. And to me, that's one of the most exciting things we bring to this community.</p> <p>JM: Great. How is that you started in Hillsboro or that you've stayed in Hillsboro do you think?</p>
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<p>Hillsboro location: starting and staying there</p> <p>Long-term employees</p> <p>1:11:17</p>	<p>DK: Well, I think we started in Hillsboro because of the Tektronix location...</p> <p>JM: Mmmhmm.</p> <p>DK: ...the fact that they were right down the road. And I think the availability to stay here is largely driven by workforce. If you look at our workforce, we have a tremendous number of our people that have been here twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, and forty years...which I think speaks volumes about the company. If you look at our finish woodworking people, Larry who does the actual shooting of the finish, celebrated his fortieth anniversary...</p> <p>JM: Wow</p> <p>DK: ...last year. I mean, we're talking true craftsman. People that you just can't go out and replace. And so I would say, talking about our makeup in terms of minority, I think we do a good job and I think the number of people in the years and the years of service that they have with the company speaks volumes about the company itself.</p> <p>JM: Great! Thanks! Do you have anything else to add, Dewey?</p> <p>DK: No, I enjoyed it.</p> <p>JM: Great! I'm going to stop this.</p>
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