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April Nachtigal, Sledding and Views from Prospect Hill

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WMU Alum April Nachtigal

Wednesday, Feb. 1 at 5 PM

Virtual Meeting via Google Meet

Cassie: I will go ahead and hit record. Okay, so we are recording now. So if you just wanna introduce yourself, spell your last name for us and then we'll talk about your connection to WMU.

April: Okay, my name is April Nachtigal, that's N-A-C-H-T-I-G-A-L. I actually went to Western and earned my bachelor's in...

Cassie: Okay, sorry, you broke up a little bit. What was it in?

April: It was in psychology.

Cassie: Psychology, okay. And what made you choose Western? Are you from the Kalamazoo area?

April: I chose Western just because I'd, you know, been to things at the college previously, so I had an interest that way.

Cassie: And is that what made you choose it then because you had a history with WMU?

April: Yeah.

Cassie: And what made you choose psychology? Did you know that you always wanted to go into that?

April: No, I didn't. (chuckles) That actually came about just through some trial and error, doing some other things and then thinking that and trying something different. Definitely I have always wanted to help people.

Cassie: So what are some of your earliest memories of campus and then of East Campus as well?

April: Yeah, some of my earliest memories of East Campus are being in the buildings, gosh, probably North Hall and East Hall. And yeah, the things I remember the most because I was a young girl, the noises and different things like that. I do remember a big library up in North Hall and classrooms. Classrooms, in specific, in the East Hall.

Cassie: Okay, and reflecting back on your time then once you came to Western after the times that you're on East Campus as a little girl, how would you summarize your experience as a WMU student?

April: Yeah, I would say it was a great experience and I actually was on East Campus because psychology, right? Wood Hall was being refurbished or rebuilt. So yeah, we got to do some classes in North Hall, so yeah, and I actually did spend a good year or so in there.

That was during... while I was working on my master's degree. So that was very interesting just to kind of see it again as an older adult. And it was very nice actually to have that specific area laid out for us to use while we were waiting to get into the new hall.

Cassie: Mm-hm, yeah. What was it like coming back on the East Campus as a student yourself now after having been there when you were younger?

April: Yeah, it was interesting. I wasn't able at that time to see most of what I had seen as a child because, of course things were sectioned off at that point, different use and whatnot. But yeah, it was very nice just to be there at a place that I had seen before.

Cassie: So did you live on campus during your undergrad and your graduate studies?

April: No, I did not live on campus.

Cassie: Okay, so what did a typical day look like for you when you were on campus? And what did you do in your free time then when you weren't busy with classes and whatnot?

April: Typical day would have been classes throughout the day and then work usually in the evening. I do remember spending time at Waldo, at the library, time between classes and whatnot so.

Cassie: So did you have any spots in and around Kalamazoo that you frequented ever?

April: Not that I can think of.

Cassie: Okay, that's all right. And so do you remember anything about teachers or any faculty during your time as a student?

April: Yes, I can tell you Dr. Lisa Baker in the psychology department, she's wonderful, very helpful. I had her in undergrad and then she was my advisor in grad school. Always helpful. And I also remember Dr. Malott, some other faculty, some that are no longer around. But yeah, I would say she would be the person I remember the most just because she was so supportive and helpful.

Cassie: Yeah, and you talked a little bit about being in the East Hall and North Hall when you were younger and then North Hall again when you were a student. Do you remember anything about those buildings that stood out to you?

April: Just how big they were. It was neat cuz you can see out from the hill. And I'll tell you, the view is like none other up there on East Campus, yeah. And yeah, it was really nice to go up there and see that, yeah.

Cassie: So I have a few more questions for you. So let me just look at some of them cause I forgot what I was gonna ask next.

I was going to ask, what do you remember about other students at the time who were your friends while you were going to WMU?

April: There were only probably three or four of us I would say that were in that specific graduate area. But yeah, so we spent a lot of time actually in North Hall because we also did some research. So, you know as a group, you do a lot of time yeah... So you see your peers a lot in the lab area and whatnot, so yeah.

Cassie: So you spent a lot of time in libraries it sounds like?

April: Yes. (laughs)

Cassie: Do you have any recollections about events on campus, whether it be like athletic or extracurricular or anything else with clubs or groups you were a part of?

April: I was actually not a part of any clubs or groups in college. However, I did frequent the football games. Yeah, those have always been a fun time. I'm trying to think here... if there was anything East Campus specific... I do remember I'm pretty sure there's a track. Isn't there a track or there was a track in East Hall?

Cassie: There was, yeah.

April: But yeah, I don't remember seeing anything there. Okay, are we talking specifically North Hall, West Hall, East Hall, or what about, what's the building next door that got redone?

Cassie: Walwood?

April: I was thinking it might be Walwood... Walwood Union Hall or something?

Cassie: Yeah!

April: Yeah, is that included in this?

Cassie: Yeah, mm-hm, anywhere.

April: This is great. I did calls to the alumni.

Cassie: Right.

April: Part of what I did for work is I made calls to alumni to solicit donations. That was always a fun time. It kinda turns into a little competition amongst everybody.

So interesting story, I have been up to campus since they redid that and I got to go downstairs and look at it and it's so awesome. We just had one room and a bunch of phones.

And so now to go and see how it's partitioned and all of that stuff, that was really neat to see just how things have changed and updated.

Yeah, so I bet that's exciting for the people that are doing that now. Yeah, I think they are because I still get calls once in a while. Yeah, so that was fun. And of course, sometimes tailgates or events have been held up there as well. And let's see. Gosh, what was it? It was a world record.

It was for the most people getting married.

Cassie: I didn't know about this!

April: Yeah, the mayor came. It was 2016, so there were hundreds up there. Yeah, that was really neat.

Cassie: Wow, that's interesting. I had never heard about that before.

April: Mm-hm, yeah, it was really fun.

Cassie: Yeah, and did you participate in any of the tailgates?

April: Yeah!

Cassie: Did you like going to football games?

April: Yeah, absolutely, loved going to the football games.

Cassie: And so I have a few more questions. They might be a bit harder to answer but answer them any way that you want.

What do you think impacted you the most during your time at Western? Whether it be a person, a place, event, a thing.

April: Yeah, I really do think it was Dr. Baker just because she believed in me. Yeah, and she was just very supportive and helpful.

Cassie: And how do you feel about WMU now versus when you were a student?

April: I like how there's been some different changes, things growing, the growth, all of that. It has been sad though to see some of the buildings get torn down. I was happy that they saved the face of North Hall. Yeah, and I know some of that is out of everyone's control, but just to see some of the old stuff taken down when you do have some memories. But it is nice to see the newer stuff.

Cassie: Right, yeah. And, I remember! Was there anything that you didn't like about WMU when you were a student there or anything that bothered you about the school?

April: I would say the only thing I could complain about is parking, parking and walking. I would actually almost think, I can only guess, parking might be worse now. I don't know, because it seems like there's even less W lots now!

Cassie: Yeah, right.

April: Yeah, but depending on the time of your classes and whatnot, you could get there early. Yeah, that would be the only thing.

Cassie: A pretty common, student complaint too. Parking tickets affects every generation. (Both laugh) I just had one more question then for you. Are there any other memories that you'd like to share? Any topics we didn't touch on today that you wanted to talk about?

April: No, I'm glad I remembered the Walwood Union Hall thing though.

Cassie: Yeah, that's good cuz I do know now it was that Walwood and now it's moved over to what was East Hall. It is now Heritage Hall too so.

April: Yeah, yeah, I'm sorry. That is probably actually where I saw all of that because I was--.

Cassie: Right because that was in the basement, uh-huh.

April: Yeah, for some alumni event I think when it was all finally done and revealed.

Cassie: Great.

April: Yeah, so I think that's it.

Cassie: Well, thank you so much for agreeing to talk to me today and meeting with me. I really appreciate you sharing some of your stories and memories that you have.

April: Yeah, I appreciate that.

Cassie: Yeah, of course. Yeah, and if you have any other concerns or any questions in the meantime, just let me know. You can reach out via text again or you can email me as well.

April: Okay, I'm so excited! I can't wait to see the finished product here.

Cassie: All right, well, thank you so much and I will let you know when an update is ready so you can go view it.

April: Okay, thank you. Have a good one.

Cassie: You're welcome. You as well, bye.

Added Post-Interview via Email

April: Me and my friends would sled down the hill at East Hall in the winter. Best sledding ever! That was before that practice field was put there at the bottom of the hill and before that wall at the top of the hill was built.