

Bernie Litman Interview, February 2015

J: Jill

B: Bernie

Interview starts at 3:58

J: Good afternoon this is Jill at Watermark.

B: Give me just a minute, my alarm went off and I can't find it.

B: Hello.

J: Hello, sounds like success.

B: I'm sorry for the interruption. I had my timer set to remind me to call. I forgot about it when I called a little bit ahead.

J: Good, thank you so much. I'm Jill.

B: I'm Bernie Litman.

J: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today.

B: It's quite alright. You don't know what a sacrifice it is.

J: I appreciate it.

B: I'll tell you why, I'm moving tomorrow into another apartment in the same building.

J: Oh my.

B: Right now I'm pretty harassed.

J: Well, we'll keep it short. Usually the interviews only take 10 or 15 minutes and I'll just keep it clipping along. You must have quite a to-do list today for that move.

B: I'm trying to figure out how to put the TV back together.

J: Alrighty, well if you don't mind, I'll just ask you a few questions about your experience when you decided to move to a retirement community.

B: Ok fine.

J: Ok, great, thank you. When did you move to The Watermark please?

B: March 2014.

J: Ok, almost one year.

B: That's right. I moved with my wife and she was in pretty good shape when we moved, but shortly she had problems with a number of illnesses. That's one of the things that show up when you're in a place like Watermark, that if you do become ill, there's a nurse that you can call and hospitals that are convenient. I guess the most important thing, my wife, Pearl, was in the hospital and then she was sent to a rehab facility. There's a rehab facility right in the same building so we don't have to have the aggravation of trying to decide where to go.

J: Or driving just to go see her.

B: Right, that's very convenient to be in the same building. And subsequently, she went back to the hospital again and eventually she decided on hospice and again there's a hospice facility right in the same building. So much is going on, it takes a load off your mind that you don't have to start looking for a place to go.

J: I'm glad it made a hard situation a little bit less hard.

B: People here have been very supportive.

J: Oh, that's wonderful, that's good, I'm glad to hear it. I'm glad you have people around you instead of being alone back in the house or, you know, by yourself.

B: Right, that worked well.

J: Good. If you don't mind where did you live prior to The Watermark?

B: I lived at Beaver Hill Condominium in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, northern suburbs of Philadelphia.

J: Ok, not too far.

B: I lived there for 35 years.

J: Oh really? Wonderful, are you from Pennsylvania?

B: Yes, I've always lived in Philadelphia.

J: Oh, how nice. I love Philadelphia. It's a beautiful town.

B: In Philadelphia, all the things that I never got around to, I'm starting to do that now.

J: Oh really, like to museums and whatnot?

B: Museums, there's a lot to see in downtown Philadelphia.

J: Well, you certainly are right in the middle of it all at Logan.

B: Yes we are.

J: And let's see, you're from Pennsylvania and you told me how long you were at the previous home. In thinking back on before you moved to The Watermark, what was the lightbulb that went off? What made you think, "Hey we might want to move to a place like The Watermark?"

B: Oh, we decided that we weren't going to keep being healthy and when something happened we wanted to be at a place where there was someone to turn to. That really has proved to be a blessing.

J: Oh, that's great, that's great. Well, that was a lot of foresight on your part. You know there are a lot of people who really don't see it that way. They just kind of see the trouble of the move and how difficult the decision might be.

B: I had an interesting thing happened to me about a month ago. I'm generally in pretty good health and I'm an Eagles fan. So I was watching the Dallas vs. Green Bay game and rooting for Green Bay, of course. So the very end of the game, Dallas threw a long pass to the one-yard line and would you believe, at that point, I started getting chest pains.

J: You what?

B: I got chest pains.

J: No!

B: It turned out to be a false alarm, just brought on by the aggravation of that game.

J: Oh no!

B: But there's a nurse to call right away.

J: Well, that was a wonderful thing that happened while you were close by someone that could reassure you that it was a false alarm.

B: Excuse me just a second. You go for hours and the phone doesn't ring, that's how it goes.

J: I'm glad to hear that that ended well. That could've been a biggie, my goodness. And when you first decided, "Ok we're going to move," did you look at a lot of places? How did you do your research?

B: We did and I guess one of the big attractions for Watermark is that it doesn't require a large down payment.

J: And when you were researching, did most of the places require an entry fee?

B: Most of them do in this area.

J: And how did you do your research? Did you drive around and look at places or visit them on websites?

B: A few months riding around and talking to people. We were pretty busy with that chore.

J: I bet. And then did you do a short term stay or did you just feel like Watermark was the right place for you?

B: Yeah, there wasn't an option of a short term stay. If there had been we probably would've tried that. At the time they didn't have that option.

J: Ok, ok, and then made the move. And did your children help? Did you mention that you have kids in the area?

B: Yeah we have a lot of kids and they were a help and they recommended a woman who specializes in

helping you move, helping you decide what to throw away and that was very helpful. In fact she's helping me again with my present move.

J: Oh good, ok good, that does help out. And let's see what other questions do I have for you? Now that you're settled in, you've been there a while, are there certain programs or classes or maybe fitness programs that you take part in at the community?

B: A little bit of fitness. I like to play bridge. I do that as much as I can. A lot of bridge players here.

J: Oh really? That's fun, that's good and I know you have quite a lot of classes with everything from A to Z there. Do you participate in any of the music or the art programs, movies?

B: I don't do too much. I watch the evening entertainment, a movie or outside talent or whatever it is but I ride the bike in the gym a little bit, that's about all I do.

J: Well, that's good in you don't have to drive to do any of it.

B: No, that's very nice.

J: Let's see, yeah I love your community.

B: You can get by nicely without a car. I haven't tried to do it yet. I still have my car and I'm debating when the right time is to give it up. But it's very handy.

J: Yeah and then use it or don't, especially in the winter time, it's nice not to have to drive on those roads.

B: Right, it's been a terrible winter here. Not as bad as other places but not a pleasant one.

J: Right, right and back where you were before did you say you were in a condo?

B: Yes it was just a condominium, it's been a condominium. We converted to a condominium 35 years ago.

J: Ok and did you have all those maintenance chores like shoveling and whatnot or did they take care of those things there?

B: No, they always did that even when it was an apartment.

J: Nice, that's great, that's great. Ok and are your children happy that you're in a retirement community now? Do they have an opinion about it?

B: They're very happy. They know that they don't have to worry about what I'm doing.

J: Good, good. Let's see, well I do have one other big question and that is what advice do you have for people who are trying to decide whether or not they should start looking, maybe never start looking, whether they want to be making that move to a retirement community or just...?

B: You just sort of know when the time is coming. You just don't feel comfortable where you are. You mentioned that there are short-term stays at Watermark now, if that's available that would be a wonderful thing. We would've loved to rent here for a week but it wasn't available.

J: Well, I'm not sure that it is but it is good to see as much of a place as you can before you make a decision, definitely. Any advice on the research or things to look out for, you know processes that people might take while they're making that decision for themselves?

B: I guess just look at as many places as you can find time for and compare everything, it's really all you can do.

J: Well, that's the best way to make an educated decision. Maybe make a priority list, did you have a list of things that were important to you?

B: I'm pretty sure we did but I don't specifically remember. We must have.

J: Definitely. Well, I'm glad that they have a lot of bridge going on at the community. Do they have a regular club?

B: There's a beginner's lesson once a week and then once a month there's a duplicate game. In fact the little project I've been working on is to try to convince them that they ought to do it twice a month.

J: Sounds good to me.

B: Yeah. Like everything, it's a question of budgets.

J: Definitely, well beautiful. If you don't have any other advice for folks who are out there in the world

wondering what they should do next that is very good advice and that concludes all the questions I have.

B: Ok well it's been a pleasure talking to you.

J: Likewise, thank you and good luck with your move today. Thanks for finding the time to do this on such a busy day.

B: Thanks very much I'm going back to packing now.

J: Ok, good luck, thank you.

B: Very nice talking to you, Jill.

J: Thank you, likewise, bye-bye.

B: Bye.