



WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Joanne Jacobellis:
Share Your Windsor Story

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Oliver Ellsworth School, Windsor, CT

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Joanne Jacobellis

Okay, my name is Joanne Jacobellis and I've lived in Windsor since 1988. I thought it was a great town to move to because there was a lot for children. It's seen with Northwest Park and the River Trail and just a lot of open space. And my daughter, my oldest daughter [Julianna Jacobellis], was Shad Derby Queen in 2005, so that was a big highlight and I guess we're in Windsor history because she was a Shad Derby Queen that year and so that was a lot of fun.

Randy McKenney

Who sponsored her?

Joanne Jacobellis

Ashley's Jewelry Store.

Randy McKenney

Oh okay, okay.

Joanne Jacobellis

Yeah, and after that, [00:01:00] my daughter went to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and she graduated. Right now, she's a major in the Air Force. She's in Shreveport, Louisiana, and she works out of Barksdale Air Force Base. She met her husband from the Chicago area at the Academy, and he's a pilot. He flies the B52 bombers. So that was interesting. She was really affected by 9/11 when that happened and, you know, wanted to serve her country. And then Windsor was a great school system. My kids got a really good education here. The town, I think, gets a bad rep. You know, the schools aren't good. [00:02:00] But my middle son, he took AP classes in art. He's an artist now. He's in Long Beach, California. He still is in contact with his art teacher from Windsor High School.

Randy McKenney

Who was that?

Joanne Jacobellis

I knew you were going to ask. [laughs] Right after I said it. Mrs. –

Randy McKenney

Well, if you think about it as you go along.

Joanne Jacobellis

Yeah. But there were two teachers actually. And so, I mean they made an impression on him and the classes that he took in AP art were tremendous. He got into the San Francisco Art Institute. So he went there and now he's an artist.

Randy McKenney

How long since they've graduated?

Joanne Jacobellis

My daughter graduated in 2005, because she was a senior [00:03:00] with the Shad Derby. And then my son, 2008.

Randy McKenney

Oh, okay.

Joanne Jacobellis

Yep, so once he went to San Francisco Art Institute, we lost him to California. [laughs] He's been there. He's an artist now in Long Beach, California. Let's see. And then my youngest son, at Windsor High, he took all AP classes and got a great education. He followed in his sister's footsteps. He also went to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs and graduated from there. At Windsor High School, he was number three in his class. He was always studious throughout not just high school, you know, starting here at Oliver Ellsworth Elementary School, Sage Park. So, he did [00:04:00] really well here in the school systems as well. That's what I try and tell people. Windsor has a lot to offer in their schools.

Randy McKenney

Usually, those comments don't always come from people who live in Windsor.

Joanne Jacobellis

Right, right, right. Other neighboring towns, you know? And I'm like they had more AP classes than you could imagine at Windsor High.

Randy McKenney

I think there was only one school that had more AP classes than Windsor.

Joanne Jacobellis

Really?

Randy McKenney

And other towns didn't pay for them, but Windsor did.

Joanne Jacobellis

Wow. Yeah, so I always defend the Windsor school system. I mean all three of my children did so well coming out of the Windsor school system. And yeah, so my youngest son, he graduated in – let's see. 2013, I believe? Yeah, and then he went [00:05:00], also like I said, to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He was third in his class at Windsor High and then I think second out of the Air Force Academy.

Sulema DePeyster

Oh, wow.

Joanne Jacobellis

And then after he graduated, he went on to Oxford University and he got his masters. He was there for two years. And then his first assignment, he was in Dover, Delaware, at Dover Air Force Base. He was in public affairs. And he was there for two years. Right now, he's in the country of Turkey and he's doing public affairs there at the base.

Randy McKenney

Interesting place to be these days.

Joanne Jacobellis

Right. [00:06:00] He's been there since June, and we hope with COVID and everything, we'll be able to visit him while he's there. It's only a year assignment, so hopefully we'll get to go if it's safe enough. And then after that, he's applied to teach both at the Air Force Academy and at the Naval Academy [in Annapolis]. He wants to teach either History or French. While he was at Oxford, he learned Arabic, so he's fluent in Arabic as well. So, I just wanted to give a plug [laughs] for the Windsor school system, because like I said, all three children [00:07:00] are very successful and I owe it to the school system here because the teachers really care.

Randy McKenney

You probably had a little bit to do with it. [laughs]

Joanne Jacobellis

Well, yeah. I'll take a little credit. But it was a great town to move to and my daughter was one when we moved here. My two sons weren't born yet. My husband was working for a company. They had an office in Bridgeport, and they had another one in the Boston area, and they were getting a lot of work in the Hartford area and that's what brought us to Windsor. His job. And then we also bought one of Ed Sunderland's colonial homes. We're not on [Settlement Hill]. There's Settlement Hill, and then there's a few on Palisado.

Randy McKenney

Okay, right.

Joanne Jacobellis

We're the only one on [_____], so we loved [00:08:00] the colonial home. We live in the [_____] from 1770. Unfortunately, it wasn't from Windsor. The house was moved and disassembled from Avon. It was in Avon and then brought here, but part of Ed Sunderland's historic homes in Windsor. And we're the original owners of the house. When it was built, we've lived there ever since. And the other homes, there's been like three or four different families that have lived in the house. But we're the original owners and we love history. I like that Windsor is the oldest town in Connecticut, and my husband and I both came from Fairfield, CT, and it's another historic town.

Randy McKenney

Right. Not along [00:09:00] the Gold Coast.

Joanne Jacobellis

Right, yeah. And right before I came here, I was at the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead for Constitution Day today having activities there. So, I like Windsor's history and the rivalry between Wethersfield. [laughs]

Randy McKenney

We always like that because we're the winning side.

Joanne Jacobellis

Yeah, so Windsor's a great town for history [and] education. Northwest Park is a jewel. Now I bring my two grandchildren from Louisiana here. They were just here for Labor Day, so the next generation is experiencing Windsor now, which is nice.

Randy McKenney

Great. Anything else remind you of anything you want to talk about that you haven't? [00:10:00] When you first moved here, [do] you still have some of the same friends now? In your neighborhood or?

Joanne Jacobellis

No, a lot of people moved away. Yeah. Let's see. Yeah, our neighborhood has changed. When we first moved, there was just one house across from us. An older home. And since we've lived there, they built another five houses. From the original house that was there, it was just all land and then it was the railroad tracks. So we tried to fight it because right next to our house is a vernal pool there and salamanders and everything [00:11:00] are there so we contacted Northwest Park or the environmental and said, "Are the houses going to disturb all this and is it bad for them?" But I guess because there's the pond and then a road in between, they said no.