

When I was a senior in high school, I decided on Wartburg rather early in my search. Dr. Lee was always open about the fact that he had two alto saxophone players in his band and didn't wouldn't have room for a third. (He strongly believed that he only wanted 4 saxophones in his band - 2 altos, 1 tenor, and 1 bari). But, I was young and stubborn, and I still believed I would be in the band. When I left home for my freshman year at Wartburg - I was EXTREMELY homesick. At even the mention of home (as in, where are you from) I would cry. Needless to say - I did terrible at all my auditions for the music department (band, jazz band, etc.). I was so busy choking down my tears that I could hardly play. As a result, I didn't make any of the bands my freshman year. and had to participate in the Women's choir in order to maintain my status as a music major. But, I worked hard with my saxophone professor (Dr. Robert Jone) and practiced diligently.

My sophomore more year I was accepted into the concert band and jazz band. But, I never stopped practicing. I literally practiced about 4 hours a day outside of rehearsal times. My junior and senior years I was first chair saxophone. My senior year I was selected as the soloist to perform with the band during our spring band tour. My saxophone instructor for my final three years at Wartburg was Dr. Richard Kravchak.

Dr. Lee was never one to shine too much praise on any one person. My first year out of Wartburg I was traveling back to Waukon (where I had accepted a teaching job) on Labor Day Monday. I was aware that Wartburg was actually starting classes on that Monday, so I stopped by the campus to say hello to my professors. When I arrived, Dr. Lee was not in his office. I walked around to a few places on campus for a bit and then headed back over to the music building. Again, Dr. Lee was not in his office, so I went to the band room to just check it out one last time before heading home. I pulled open the door, and was surprised to see Dr. Lee teaching a class to a group of first year students. I apologized for interrupting and was going to quickly leave when Dr. Lee called me back into the room. So, I timidly walked forward to stand in front of the class.

At that time, Dr. Lee started to give the class a run down of my college career. In his description to the class, he explained that as a freshman I had come to Wartburg as naive freshman who had been "the best" from her high school, but was truly a student who had a lot to learn and was likely behind where most students were who auditioned for the band. (These words did sting as he spoke them, but I listened as he spoke). He went on to say that he had never had a student who worked harder during their time at Wartburg and that I had worked my way to first chair (after not even being in the band my freshman year) and even was selected as the soloist for the band tour the year before.

I remember that day in September of 1992 probably more than any other event with Dr. Lee. I didn't get to have a European Tour with Dr. Lee (they went in 1993 during my freshman year). So, my experiences with Dr. Lee are more limited than a lot of my classmates. However, on this particular afternoon, I finally received affirmation from Dr. Lee that he had noticed the hard work and commitment I had put forth during my years at Wartburg. It is likely my favorite memory of Dr. Lee.

A second memory I have of Dr. Lee is again, after I had left Wartburg. In around 2010, we had to travel to Waverly High School for IHSAM state large group contests. As I was warming up my band, it suddenly occurred to me that maybe Dr. Lee was listening to band's at the festival. Sure enough, as we walked into the gym to perform, I saw Dr. Lee in the bleachers. After our performance, I was walking out of the gym as my band was leaving, and Dr. Lee approached me from the bleachers. He was so complimentary for our performance and gave is affirmation towards me as a high school director (a job I had only held for about 3 years after teaching the lower grade levels for 15 years). I don't believe he ever heard my bands again, so I have a high level of appreciation for that moment in time.