

Ruth Candler 0:00

Welcome to W&L After Class, the Lifelong Learning podcast. I'm your host, Ruth Candler, and today's episode is especially exciting as we welcome a new voice and a new chapter to our show. Our guest is James Lambert, Washington and Lee's new director of Lifelong Learning, and he's also a professor in the English Department. James brings with him a rich background in academia and leadership, having held roles ranging from Professor to Provost, both here in the US and internationally. Most recently, James served as provost at Southern Virginia University just around the corner in Buena Vista Virginia, now four weeks into his time at Washington and Lee, James has already jumped head first into our summer campus programs and is actively shaping what W and L lifelong learning will look like for alumni, parents and friends in the years to come. In today's conversation, we'll talk about what drew James to this role, the mission of W and L lifelong learning, his career path, and how he sees learning as a lifelong pursuit, both professionally and personally, you'll get to know the person behind the title and hear his reflections on curiosity, change and risk. This was a very special podcast for me, and I hope you enjoy our conversation as much as I did. James, welcome. Welcome to W&L. Welcome to Lifelong Learning.

James Lambert

Thank you.

Ruth Candler

And welcome to W&L, After Class.

James Lambert

I'm thrilled to be here.

Ruth Candler 1:46

You've been at W&L for four weeks now, correct? You've experienced two campus programs, and you've jumped right into planning programs for 2026-27. How are you feeling?

James Lambert 2:00

Well, I couldn't be more excited. Program Planning is great for someone like me. Some people think, Oh, this is the worst possible thing. Is just program planning. I love it. Then

getting the spoils of other people's program planning has also been excellent. So, I've participated in two programs. As you said, I participated in a Family Adventure in Archeology, and I participated in a special week focused on the Middle Ages. I was so happy doing those things. That's catnip for someone like me, just learning about that stuff. I know a little bit. I know just enough to be dangerous, and now I know a lot more. It's fun. Is that good?

Ruth Candler 2:40

It's fun. It's fun. It's a lot of fun. I hope I'm not putting you on the spot with this, but I'd like to go back to when you applied for the director of lifelong learning position and talk about the opening of your cover letter. Your words struck me as someone who truly, truly understands the mission of lifelong learning. Would you mind sharing that story with our listeners to help them see that connection as clearly as I did?

James Lambert 3:09

I'd love to. So, in January of this year, I accompanied a friend of mine, a French professor at James Madison University. He was going to Paris. He'd always wanted to take me to Paris. He's a French professor. I'm an English professor, but he was doing a class there with about 15 students called Americans in Paris, and I teach some American literature. So, he asked me to accompany him, and I went with him as a temporary employee of James Madison University. And we had a group I had never been to Paris. I had I was very knowledgeable about the literature that came from Americans in the 20th century, from Paris. So anyway, we went around. He was showing us stuff. I was experiencing it for the first time, much like the students. So, the students felt a little camaraderie with me, that they wanted to share how they were feeling. And one of them, towards the end, just made a remark, which is the kind of remark you just wait for. As a professor, Ray said something along the lines of it. And he was a, he was a computer science and business double major, so this was something totally new to him. Totally new to him, totally new to him. And he said, he said something along the lines of, and I'd have to pull out the quote if I have it, because I wrote it down, but I'm not going to remember it exactly. Said something along the lines of, this is fun, and we got into that. And then he said, There's something so amazing about learning in the field, he said, and I can't tell you what it is, it's like learning is fun. Now he doesn't have to convince me that learning is fun, not me anyway. But he was like, learning is real. This is real. This is a real experience. And for the first time, I'm feeling like my college experience is actually full. And. I'm writing, I'm writing this down in my journal later that night so that I can use it for a cover letter eventually and yet, I felt at that moment that that student had missed out on an incredible college experience. Until that moment, he was a senior. He had a semester left, and essentially that's the start of his learning experience, that moment where he realizes learning is actually the richest thing you can do. That's the beginning. It wasn't the end of his college experience. Is the

beginning of his life, lifelong experience and so I thought, This is it. This is what I want to do.

Ruth Candler 5:34

Yeah, we hear that from a lot of folks who travel with us too, that being in in the moment, in the field really deepens and brings them back to what they learned in their schooling years.

James Lambert 5:47

Well, let me just add this. Do you remember I'm dealing with this with my own kids? Do you remember the first time you got really interested in geography? And the reason I asked that is geography, as in looking at maps and understanding where you are, it comes later in life, and I don't know why that is. It's almost as if I've obsessed over maps and geography and where I've been and where I'm coming into and where the plane is flying over, and all of that has been a 30s and 40s thing for me. And instead of just taking for granted where you are, you're starting to go. What does this all mean? And where have I been, and where am I going? There's that moment when geography is interesting to you, that, you know, you're a lifelong learner. That is the moment.

Ruth Candler 6:33

Yeah, and you're right. For me, it was the 30s, 40s, too, where it just sort of started developing. And I just started looking at maps, and when you fly, when you're flying, you pull up the screen so you can see what you're flying over. I get it. I get it.

James Lambert 6:47

Or when you're on a road trip, you're less interested in the people next to you and more interested in the windows around you. I mean, there's just a shift that takes place.

Ruth Candler 6:54

Yeah, agree. So, what does lifelong learning look like for you? Or what is a life of learning.

James Lambert 7:02

I'm gonna, I'm gonna quote something that's, that's sort of personal, but actually kind of interesting. My tradition I have, I have what we call an LDS or a Mormon tradition in my life. And part of that back, you know, in Joseph Smith's time and in in the 1800s there was a journalist that went to this guy and said, What's your deal with, with all of your theology? You're, you're strange people. And so, he wrote up these 13 articles, much like, I don't know, 39 articles in the Episcopalian Church, 13 articles. And the last one is this, and I'm gonna, I'm going to quote it for you. He says, We believe in being honest, true, Chase benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good. We believe all things. We hope all things. We have endured many things, and hope to endure all things. And this is, that parts the kicker, if there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things I feel like, and that comes from Philippians. It's actually a paraphrase of Philippians. Religion is part of my field anyway. Comes from Philippians. But what Paul says in Philippians is, we think about these things, if it's lovely or good report or praiseworthy, I think seeking after these things is the key. I've spent a lifetime seeking beauty, learning about new things is the pursuit of beauty. In my opinion, wisdom and beauty is uplifting. It's fun. And frankly, when you're in a job and you're going there every day and you're doing something, that's what either good for the world or good for your pocketbook, or both. Sometimes you forget that what really brings you joy is seeking after beauty. So, you look for things to make it beautiful. You know, you go to work and you have a good relationship with a colleague, or you try to figure out how something works at your job, and figuring out how it works, it actually makes you happy. Seeking after beauty is lifelong learning. I feel like I've been doing that, and it's because it's what's great in the world. So, let's think back on our middle ages. We got taught by a bunch of art historians this last year.

Ruth Candler 9:15

Year, our Middle Ages class, yes.

James Lambert 9:18

The Middle Ages program over the summer, they're showing us all of these things that we don't quite know yet, if they're beautiful, and then they talk about them, and they become richer, and we're learning about them, and then by the end of that discussion, we go, that's beautiful. We may not be saying that out loud, but that's kind of what we're thinking. And then we're happy. And to me, that's a life worth living. If you are seeking after beauty. It's a life worth living. Now, let me put that into institutional framework. When a student pays tuition or decides to go to Washington and Lee, they don't quite know what they're getting. They think, oh, I'm going to college. This is the next step, or I'm. I need to get a job, and this will help me get a job, or this is a cool enough school and looks good on my resume. So those things are great, but what Washington and Lee is offering them is way better than that. It's offering them a lifetime of experience, not just a four-year degree that they can walk out with, and they can

say, I can get any job I want because I went to Washington and Lee. That may be true, but it's shaping their search for these things that I said, if it's praiseworthy of good report, if it's beautiful, it's shaping how they're going to do that. That's the responsibility of the professors. That's the responsibility of those of us who are involved, and then they take that and they try to find happiness for the rest of their lives. Instead of just finding a good job, they try to find happiness. And if Washington and Lee can help shape that experience, it's done its job. It's part of its mission. If that's part of the mission, I'm in, 100% I'm in. I want to be a part of that. I want to continue to offer programs that can get them to feel what they may have felt is as college students, but even with more experience, when they made that shift that I talk about with geography, when you start to look at maps, often later in life, they start to look at things differently. And then their college learning, they're like, I wish I had more of that. I wish I didn't take that for granted. You can have more that. You don't have to take it for granted. We're still here. You bought into us, and this is a lifetime commitment that we have with each other as well.

Ruth Candler 11:32

And you, you mentioned it's part of our mission. It is part of its written in our mission statement as a dedication to lifelong learning.

James Lambert 11:39

Correct the in fact, the mission statement, the, I think it's a second sentence, says graduates will be prepared for the first one is lifelong learning. That's the first one. And then it's like personal achievement, responsible leadership, the first one is lifelong learning. That's the bargain that Washington and Lee makes.

Ruth Candler 11:56

Well, you came into this position and hit the ground running with our summer campus programs, as you just mentioned, and now you're fully immersed in planning for 2026-27 programs. And I love every phase of what we do. There's something especially energizing about planning for the next cycle. This may be an unfair question just one month in. But what sparks the most excitement for you as you look ahead?

James Lambert 12:29

What sparks the most excitement is an opportunity, any opportunity, to be in a group where we're learning something together. So, I'll give you just a quick example of what I've already seen and what I want to build on. You're listening to a professor talk about,

you know, the beauties of Florence, Italy in the 1300s or the 1200s and it's enriching. And you're like, Well, that was really cool. That was a fun class. I've done classes before, and you might have a few questions, you might have a little bit discussion, but then you have lunch afterwards, and you're with the same group, and you walk with the same group from that lecture to lunch. What's the conversation? Is the conversation still going to be about something you just learned about? Is it going to be about something that's going on in those people's lives? Whatever it is, it's going to be richer, because you just sat in a learning environment together, and that is what students get, and what we don't get enough after we're students, and we need to have that so much more so anything that's in, that's on campus, or on a boat or in a foreign land where we can have that experience where we're doing it together, we're learning together. I want to be a part of that, and I want to help facilitate that for others.

Ruth Candler 13:49

I want to shift gears and go back a little in time and hear more about your career path and how you came to W and L. You have a Bachelor's of Arts in English, a Master of Arts in American literature and a PhD in Renaissance British literature. What made you decide to study English and pursue a career in academia?

James Lambert 14:12

There was a moment I had I had gone to undergrad. I had taken a two-year deferral. Well, I'd done my freshman year, two-year deferral to do a mission for my church, which is pretty common my culture, come back. I was in Mexico. I come back. I'm back on the university campus. Now, after that, things done with and you're kind of like, okay, now the rest of my life, which often happens sophomore junior year for students. And I'm thinking about that. I mean, I'm on this campus, this college campus, and I look around, I go, whatever it is, I never want to leave a college campus. That was my thought, and that was my goal. That's the only goal I made. I never want to leave a college campus. And then with that, I thought, Where do I mostly not want to leave? Well, maybe it's the Literature class, maybe it's the writing class. And so, I just kept taking literature classes, and then when it was time to graduate, I'm like, I kind of want to keep doing this. And then it was time to finish that, I'm like, I want to keep doing this. And so that's why even American literature was in, was what I was interested in and my masters, and then I was interested in Shakespeare and Renaissance poetry later. That's probably because I'd have I'm not good at art, I'm not good at music. Those things are kind of really important to me. For all producers, there's consumers. I'm a consumer. I could understand literature a little bit more, and I could teach it a little bit better, because I understood it better, and therefore I went in that direction. Mainly it's, I don't care what I'm doing, as long as I'm on a college campus. I am happy. I love universities. I love them.

Ruth Candler 15:47

I just want to sit with that for a second. That's fantastic. Well, in addition to your role as director of lifelong learning, you also have an appointment as a professor in the English program, which I'm so excited for our students. How do you imagine that supplementing your work and lifelong learning?

James Lambert 16:05

Ruth, when we first met, you asked me a question that you may have forgotten.

Ruth Candler

Oh, no.

James Lambert

You asked, how do I learn?

Ruth Candler

Oh, yeah.

James Lambert

And do you remember what my response was?

Ruth Candler

You teach it.

James Lambert

Yeah, yeah. I learned by teaching. I don't ever want to get rid of teaching in my life. Now that means I need to have people to teach to which you can't just go on a corner and decide that you know the town is your classroom. So, I'm very happy to have an appointment with the English program where I can occasionally teach and continue to learn through that process. I do believe that teaching is the best way to learn, and so

for example, if you have a little family, figure out something to teach them, and it's not like your career, figure out something new to teach them, like teach them about art of the Renaissance, or teach them about the 1960s or whatever else, and you'll learn that you you've learned that area that much better. So yeah, so teaching is the only way I can be the most effective lifelong learner I can be.

Ruth Candler 17:01

Yeah, I loved, I loved the way you phrased that. And I'd home our daughter her eighth-grade year and taught her geography through culinary experiences and I learned so much that year that I understand what you're saying about learning through teaching, our students are very fortunate, and you've worn a lot of hats as a teacher and a leader at different institutions, including at an institution overseas, the American University of Kuwait. How have those experiences shaped the way you've approached your entry into the W&L community?

James Lambert 17:40

Well, oddly enough, the American University of Kuwait is a small liberal arts school in the tradition of American small liberal arts schools. And somehow, those that had some money in Kuwait saw that genre of education as most beneficial for their people, and so they funded it, and it quickly got an affiliation with Dartmouth, because Dartmouth was, in their eyes, kind of the small liberal arts idea that they wanted to emulate. I didn't really know that when I got there. When I got there, I thought, I've done a lot of graduate school. I already have three kids. I need a place that can pay the bills. It's very difficult to pay bills as a graduate student and so I needed a place that could pay the bills. I also wanted to take my little family, before they were, you know, becoming who they were going to be in schools and high schools and things like that, a little adventure. I wanted a little adventure. So, we ended up at the American University of Kuwait. I was an English professor there. I became chair of the English department, and we loved every second of it, maybe with the exception of the first year of seconds. The first year was really hard, but the subsequent three years were really great. And I felt like it just set us on a really interesting trajectory. And I actually learned about small liberal arts colleges from Kuwait, believe it or not, from American style small liberal arts colleges. I learned it from Kuwait.

Ruth Candler 19:01

Wow. Well, at Southern Virginia University, you held several leadership roles, both in academics and in the whole university, most recently as provost. What are the university leadership lessons do you feel you carry into your new role in lifelong learning?

James Lambert 19:17

There's two parts about being a provost that anyone will have to deal with. One is, you know, you're going to learn how the sausage is made. You are going to see how a university runs from the inside. Sometimes that inside, you don't really want students to see all of it, because it's an organization that has employees, that pays their employees, that has to make ends meet at the end of the year, all that kind of stuff, but learning how to do that makes you understand that even though you're doing this nonprofit good thing for all students, you've got to make it work, and that means making all the hard decisions you usually make. On the other hand, to oversee something as beautiful as the education of 1000s of young people. Role. There's nothing better. Now, actually doing it as a professor is pretty great, but overseeing that on a large scale is pretty amazing. So, you have this really positive and then this real, this realistic look at universities, and learning both of those things allow you to fit into university as best you can and know how it works. Does that help?

Ruth Candler 20:22

It does, no, it does very much. So, we had talked earlier about when you came to W & L your first few weeks were actually that as a program participant, what did that mean for you?

James Lambert 20:35

Well, as a participant and as a student, I'm thinking of this as something that will bring me benefit. So, I'm there with a bunch of fellow students, and the first thing I notice, and this is just comes from a background as a teacher, the first thing I notice is that these are eager learners, those who came to they may not know anything we did the Middle Ages. They may not know anything about the Middle Ages because they've never had occasion to look it up to understand it, and yet they're still interested in learning it. So that's the first thing I noticed. Now, they may not even know they're that interested, but they trust, they trust the product. They trust that the professors are going to do something interesting. They trust the idea of learning. That's the first thing I notice. I have that same philosophy. The second thing that I noticed, and this immediately came to my mind, as I was with everybody. We were with people from, you know, in our family adventure, from the age of 910 all the way to the age, you know, 9293 all of those participated in English. We often talk about the person as an English professor. We talk about the person who did incredible things and then they died, the Keats of the world, right? And, and, and I, and I, in fact, my, one of my philosophies is Truth is beauty, and beauty truth, which comes from Keats. He figured it out early, figured out, and he had a whole lifetime of wisdom in a very short lifespan. And yet, what I'm most interested in, honestly, because I'm past middle age, is what is my opportunity now to accomplish something that I didn't when I was younger, and what new thing can I do? We always

you've heard of Grandma Moses. We talk about Grandma Moses 78 is when she started her career as a painter. I think about people like John Milton, who was a track writer, who was writing political tracks, and was known as the smartest guy in England, but we wouldn't be talking about him, and he's a hero of mine. May sound strange, but this guy was a hero of mine who was living in the in the 1600s Paradise Lost was published when he just about a year before he turned 60, and that's how we know him, as the author of Paradise Lost. And everything changed for him. There, to me, the coolest stuff comes from a lifetime lived and then someone pursuing what they want to pursue, and pursuing what they finally have occasion to speak about. My favorite composer is Arvo part he. He's a kind of Estonian Russian composer who's his early stuff was banned. He took a hiatus from music for a while. Came back in his late 40s. He writes tabula rasa, and it changes the game. He's the second most performed composer right now in the world, after John Williams, the also a late bloomer. John Williams, the guy who did Star Wars and you know, has done every other major movie. He's a late bloomer too. He's been more prolific than just about any composer, and he really doesn't come on the map until his 40s, even though, to me, that's the most beautiful story of someone is finally either achieving recognition or pursuing what they want to pursue after they've gone through their green years, after they've gone through that, I've found a career. I've done this thing. I've accomplished a lot. I want to be the same way. I've been a provost. I've been in a tenured English professor, starting as director of Lifelong Learning. That's to me, that's going to be my contribution. That really wants to I want that to be my thing. And I'm past 45 I mean, I'm, you know, Dante had his experience in the woods past just as he was, you know, around 35 he's like, that's the middle age of man's years. I'm like, Oh no, it's not. That's just the beginning. And so, to and then he wrote, actually, in the inferno, much later. So, everyone is writing their good stuff, everyone's doing their good stuff later. And I think learning is the same.

Ruth Candler 24:44

I love that, and I am so excited for what's to come and to see, to see what you do. And I think that a lot of those that are listening right now are probably feeling the same exact way. So, thank you. I want to shift gears a little bit now, and. Talk about you when you're not on campus, and some of your personal life and I've really enjoyed getting to know you this past month. I really have, and I'm confident that w and L alumni, parents and friends are going to feel the same way. So, what do you enjoy doing when you're not on campus?

James Lambert 25:17

I'm a family man, so that's gonna come first. The thing that I most enjoy is getting all of my kids, ages 21 through 11, into one car and driving somewhere. For some reason, I find real joy in that anything that involves going from point A to point B. I really like if we can get more people involved in that, I like it even more. So, we'll drive across the

country to see family. I'm originally from the west and that's what I enjoy doing the most. The other thing that I like to do is ride my bike. And I'm not a cyclist. I don't race anyone. I don't wear, you know, really cool clothes that have brands on them, or onesies. I just get on my bike and ride, and I find great joy in that, around town, around the beautiful hills of Rockbridge County. I'll ride anywhere. But the thing that I like to do the most that has already alluded to with my family, I like to be in a space with other people, and I don't have to be talking the whole time. I just find that we've part of me laments that we don't do that as much anymore. That's why restaurants are fun to go to, is because there's other people, or you don't even have to talk to them. They're just around. I wrote my dissertation. This is going to sound strange. I lived next to a food court in in Iowa City, Iowa, Coralville, Iowa. And I'd walk over to the mall food court, and I'd sit down and I would write my dissertation. And it's not as if I was just waiting for distraction, although people who write their dissertation are always waiting for distractions. I just found that the other people around me helped me focus. It helped me feel like I was a part of something. It didn't make me feel lonely, as these kinds of things often do. Food Court is a kind of crass play, and, you know, I should probably go to something more high minded, like a library. But I found that it was that a food court was even more democratic in the way that people were walking around and doing whatever they need to do with consumerism, and that I just like being around other people.

Ruth Candler

So, you're a true extrovert.

James Lambert

Until I'm not.

Ruth Candler

I guess that's true for everybody.

James Lambert

Yeah, until you kind of need some time alone when I'm when I'm biking, I'm definitely want to be by myself and I, in fact, when people flag me down, I shouldn't say this to our locals, but I get people yelling out the window, Hey, James, I kind of get annoyed because that's my alone time. So yeah, the introvert expert. I'm definitely an extrovert, and I get my energy from there until I stop getting energy from there.

Ruth Candler 27:51

I call myself an extroverted introvert. So yeah, so this is going to be, I think, a hard question for you to answer, but I'm really curious to hear how you answer it. If you weren't in academia, what would you be doing?

James Lambert 28:08

My dream has always been to write comedy for one of those nightly talk shows. It would be so fun, because you just get to read the news and make up stupid jokes.

Ruth Candler

Are you a funny guy?

James Lambert

You tell me, I don't know. Probably not in person, probably better on paper than I am in person. I don't know that I would call myself funny. I enjoy having fun. And if, if you give me a pen and paper and ask me to write jokes, I will. I will be very happy to do that.

Ruth Candler 28:42

I take you up on that sometime. Yeah, maybe, maybe we'll, maybe we'll ask you to do that and share them in our show notes for this episode.

James Lambert 28:48

Tell you a funny thing. So, when I was in graduate school, I wrote a little joke piece for the Chronicle of Higher Education. And it was just, it was, it was a throwaway piece. It was something like, this is what it looks like when you introduce yourself in graduate school. They loved it, and they even paid me \$300 for it, which was like a huge paycheck when I was in grad school. And they and then they commissioned something else for me, a similar thing, and it was about going to a conference. And I was very excited to write it. And I wrote it, and they wrote back, saying, Send this somewhere else. It's not funny enough. So, I might, I might have it at one point and not but I'm like, I just need more reps. That's kind of was my excuse. I'm like, my first piece was just, you know, rookie magic, and then it's a sophomore slump, and I'm never gonna get a chance again. If I had just been able to write joke pieces for the Chronicle of Higher Education, that would have been wonderful.

Ruth Candler 29:41

I love it. So, what's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? Do you have any secret talents or...?

Speaker 1 29:50

Well, I was I had a dance group when I was in high school. That was it. Yeah, yeah. It was a break-dancing group. It was, uh...

Ruth Candler 30:00

Did you spin on your head sort of break-dancing group?

James Lambert 30:03

We weren't good. We just did it. We were hired by different local campaigns. We did pep assemblies. We were called the Dancing Men. And then what that translated Yeah, it sounds as bad as it was. And what that translated to is, when I was in college, a friend and I went and we tried out as a joke for the folk-dance team, and he didn't make it, and I made the Russian folk-dance team. So, I spent a semester on the Russian folk dance team, learning Russian dances, performing Russian dances in parades and big Christmas programs. In fact, my wife saw me in the Russian program, in the Christmas Russian program, and she was not at that point very attracted to what she saw. It took another five years to get her to the point where she would actually marry me. Didn't love the Russian Dancing side of James.

Ruth Candler 30:58

I have to ask, are there any videos?

James Lambert 31:02

I'm sure they're out there somewhere.

Ruth Candler 31:04

So, listeners, I plan on searching, and if I find that, I will post it.

James Lambert 31:09

I can't reproduce it. I don't have the quads to reproduce what I could do back then.

Ruth Candler 31:13

Oh, so we, we've talked a lot about risk in our last few podcast episodes, and I love that our faculty are dissecting the pros and cons of risk taking with students. What's a risk that you took that paid off or didn't and what did you learn?

James Lambert 31:33

Oh, that second part is really interesting. A risk that didn't pay off. We all we often think of the risks as the ones we that did pay off. I want to answer the second one, but it's so hard to think of it, you know, I'm going to say the risk that I took is taking the job in Kuwait. I was in the middle of America and Iowa City, Iowa, you know, whatever you want to call that middle America and then this offer came, and it was in the Middle East. So, I'm always in the middle of something, I guess that's a joke and not a funny one, but a pun that was not good. And anyway, so I go from Middle America to the Middle East with a family, with three kids. I have four now, with three years. Yeah, they're all under the age of eight. And my wife and I just went for it. It was worth taking, like, as I said earlier, after a year, it was worth taking in the moment when we draw, when we got out of the plane, and it was, you know, 110 degrees with 110% humidity, if that's possible. And the first thing my daughter did was throw up in front of a bunch of guys in dish dashes.

Ruth Candler 32:42

They're pretty meticulous, aren't they?

James Lambert 32:46

Meticulous with cleanliness with, you know, wonderful smells. Where you go places, it's, it's a, it's a place where they really care about decorum. And my daughter, who was eight at the time, just barfed all over one of the tables that they were sitting at as we deboard, I mean, as we got off into the airport, that was the first thing so that that immediate risk didn't pay off over time. It definitely paid off. It was well worth taking.

Ruth Candler 33:10

I bet. Well, thank you for being so open with us about that. And, it's been such a pleasure having you on the podcast and letting our listeners get to know you appreciate your coming on. It's fun to all of our listeners. The timing of having James as

a guest on the show could not be better. As some of you know, I am retiring next month, and with that, you'll be hearing a new voice behind the mic. James isn't just Washington and Lee's new director of lifelong learning. He's also stepping in to the host of this podcast. I have no doubt that you'll enjoy the conversations ahead and the thoughtful perspective he'll bring to each episode. As this is my final episode as the host for WAL After Class, I'd like to take a moment to thank our incredible team behind the podcast, while it may be my voice that you've heard each episode, it was the talent, creativity and dedication of an extraordinary group that brings each episode to life to our brilliant writers, Kelsey Goodwin, Jessica Luck and Laura Lemon. Thank you for your sharp insight and the creativity that is elevated every episode, to Eric Owsley and Jury Sackett, our strategic advisors, whose guidance helped shape the direction and impact of this show, to Cleveland Candler, W&L Integration Specialist, thank you for answering your mother's call for help and composing our theme music. I'm so proud of you and how your work set the tone for this podcast from the very first note and to our technical producer, Jim Goodwin, you've been here since day one, shaping every episode with care and precision. Thank you for editing my ums and ahs and softening my too loud laugh and making sure. Everything sounded just right. I'd also like to thank you our listeners for joining me. Over these past six seasons, it's been a true joy to share these conversations and to give you another walk down a colonnade, no matter how many miles away you may be. These are the kind of meaningful conversations that happen every day after class here at W&L and as always, curiosity remains, not unmindful of the future.