

Les Gardner '52

My name is Les Gardner, Professor Emeritus of History at Graceland University, and I'm really grateful for what Graceland has done for me in my life.

Well, there's nothing I don't think can express how happy I was to get to Graceland. I worked for five years after I graduated from high school to put the money together, and then finally after five years of saving and giving up stuff that, you know, a teenager usually enjoyed, I finally made it to Graceland. And then to put the icing on the cake, in the spring of my first year, I met the girl I knew I wanted to marry, and that happened later on.

So, you know Graceland altogether was a tremendous experience for me, and it really prepared me to go out under appointment for the church. I was just a twenty-two-year-old kid when I went out under appointment. I was ready. Graceland taught me so much about living and relating to people. I was just so excited about life in general, and I thought that Graceland gave me the preparation.

Years later, I worked for the church in career mission, and what that taught me was how much I didn't know about life. I mean, when I went out from Graceland for the first time, I thought I knew everything. Then I learned through life that I didn't know everything, and so I decided to go back to school. Eight years, I spent eight years at the University of Hawaii. And that wonderful thing at the end of that...I was wondering, "Where am I gonna go now? What's ahead for me now?" Then I got that

sweet, sweet telephone call, “You want to come to Graceland to join the faculty?” And I said, “You bet.”

I remember I got to Graceland, and someone said, “What are they paying you?” I said, “I don’t know. I didn’t ask that.” And I thought what a stupid thing, not even to ask. But I don’t think that mattered at that point. I was ready and made a total switch in my career, but I never regretted one day that I was back at Graceland teaching.