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Interview with Dr. C. Redington Barrett  
Held in the Physician's Lounge at Mount Sinai St. Luke's  
INT 0176  
July 20, 2017

**NORMA BRAUN:** I'm Dr. Norma Braun, Chairman of the Archives Committee of the Mount Sinai Luke's—Mount Sinai West Medical Board. We are here today to interview Dr. Redington—

**C. REDINGTON BARRETT:** Barrett.

**NB:** Known as Rud Barrett. He was our former chief pulmonary disorder, Pulmonary Division, here at Saint Luke's and Roosevelt. And so, he's kindly come all the way from Massachusetts, from his little retirement nook, to talk with us today. So, Rud, thank you so much.

**RB:** You're welcome.

**NB:** And for, too, his lovely wife Liz, who came with him, which is very, very appreciated as well. So, we're going to start from the beginning. Where were you born?

**RB:** I was born in New York City.

**NB:** Oh, a real dyed-wool New Yorker.

**RB:** Right. [Laughs]

**NB:** Where did you go to school?

**RB:** Well, I went to a school in New York City, and then I went to a boarding school up in Massachusetts. And then for college I went to Yale.

**NB:** Oh, wow!

**RB:** And then went to Columbia Medical School.

**NB:** So, what did you major in at Yale, do you remember?

**RB:** I majored in Science.

**NB:** Ah, okay. So, you were interested in medicine?

**RB:** Yeah.

**NB:** Any family members in medicine?

**RB:** No.

**NB:** What triggered your interest in science?

**RB:** I can't really remember. I just liked the topic.

**NB:** I know you were very good at math.

**RB:** Yes, that's right.

**NB:** That I remember very well, because you were a wiz at calculations. I would always depend on you when I was doing my fellowship. You'd help me learn how to do them. But anyway, then you went to Columbia. Then, where did you do your internship?

**RB:** Internship was at, [laughs] where was it? It was here.

**NB:** Oh, at St. Luke's?

**RB:** At St. Luke's, the internship.

**NB:** Okay. Then you did your residency here too?

**RB:** Yeah.

**NB:** Of course, that was the time when Vietnam was going on, so did you ever serve any time in the military?

**RB:** I did spend, I think it was how long Liz, in the Army.

**LIZ BARRETT:** Two years.

**RB:** What, three?

**NB:** Two years.

**RB:** Two years. And I was assigned to Berlin.

**NB:** Oh, Germany?

**RB:** Yes.

**NB:** What did you do? Were you—?

**RB:** The Army was there, and they had a hospital, and I was in the Army hospital in Berlin. It was really a very interesting experience.

**NB:** Okay, I bet. It seemed to me that you came back here to do your residency, and then you joined the staff right afterwards.

**RB:** Mm-hm.

**NB:** So, was Dr. Bell running the lab then?

**RB:** Yes.

**NB:** Ah. Dr. Loomis Bell was the son of a physician, and it was called the Cardio-Pulmonary Lab in those days, because Cardio and Pulmonary were the same discipline.

**RB:** Yes.

**NB:** So, we learned Cardio-Pulmonary physiology, so that's what the lab did. What did you do in the lab?

**RB:** I did a few cardiac procedures, but then as I got more interested in pulmonary, needless to say I was sort of easing into that area. So then, of course, Loomis really had good pulmonary training, too, so it was, I still learned an awful lot of pulmonary from him, also, before.

**NB:** Because I think at that time cardiac surgery started to surge, and cardiology became beginning to be a separate discipline. So, pulmonary had to have its own home, if you will. As I recall, you started fiber optic bronchoscopy here.

**RB:** Yes.

**NB:** And you taught it, was well?

**RB:** And taught it, yes.

**NB:** Okay, so you did that a long time.

**RB:** Yeah.

**NB:** Now, I'm trying to remember when Loomis retired. I think you became the chief right after Loomis retired.

**RB:** That's right.

**NB:** And then, I'm trying to remember how long you were chief, how long you were. Because, in the meantime, St. Luke's and Roosevelt joined.

**RB:** Joined, yeah.

**NB:** And so you had to be involved in both institutions.

**RB:** Yes. I remember having to do something up the St. Luke's site and then go down. [Laughs]

**NB:** To the Roosevelt site.

**RB:** To the Roosevelt site, and that was—

**NB:** Did we have a combined fellowship training program by then, or not?

**RB:** Well, it was sort of starting. That was the whole purpose, was because they were the Fellows that were down at, say, one site, and so I had to go down there and train with them, and then—

**NB:** Come back up here.

**RB:** —come back up again [Laughs] to the other place.

**NB:** How did you do your research with your training? How are you able to integrate that? I mean, sneak time from one for the other, because you did. You published.

**RB:** Well, I guess I can't really remember how I did it, but I just set up the time for whenever I was working on the studies or writing papers, and at other times teaching the Fellows. Actually, one thing that I wrote that actually the Fellows helped me a lot.

**NB:** So, they were your gophers?

**RB:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**NB:** They were able to help you do some of the basic labor, but you could put it all together.

**RB:** Yeah. Yeah.

**NB:** That was great. I mean, that was a wonderful thing to do. I don't know if you know, but now the training program is combined with Beth Israel. This will be the first year we now have— funny. We were eleven Fellows, then we went down to six Fellows, and now we're back to eleven Fellows, but combining three institutions now, instead.

**RB:** Wow!

**NB:** So, I'm trying to remember the year you retired, because I know you were boarded in Medicine, Pulmonary, and Critical Care, as I recall. Is that correct?

**RB:** Mm-hm.

**NB:** Yeah. So, obviously you wore many hats.

**RB:** Yeah.

**NB:** Clinician, teacher, administrator. So, how about your personal life? Your lovely wife and your children? You have to have some time for them, right?

**RB:** Well, after a while, when I retired we all moved out of this area and went up to where we live now.

**NB:** Okay. How old are your children now?

**RB:** They're all married.

**NB:** Oh, so you're a grandpa?

**RB:** Yeah, that's right.

**NB:** Oh, that's wonderful. Are they in Massachusetts? Are they close to you?

**RB:** Yeah, they're close to us.

**NB:** Oh, at least you get to see them now and then.

**RB:** Yeah, yeah.

**NB:** So, what did you do for fun? Did you go to the theater?

**RB:** Actually, I took up playing the cello.

**NB:** Oh, wow!

**RB:** And so, that as been my—and I got so I can play it more and more.

**NB:** I thought, didn't you guys sing in some group?

**RB:** And then we also sang, did some singing, that's right.

**NB:** I remember you doing that.

**RB:** Yeah, we were in choruses. Yeah.

**NB:** Was that with a group?

**RB:** Yeah, the choruses were usually with a group, and so I was also easily lucky that I have a tenor range. That's not as common as, you know.

**NB:** Are you still singing, by any chance?

**RB:** Well, I sing in the bathtub. [Laughter]

**NB:** That's okay.

**RB:** No, I'm not singing in any—

**NB:** Any group anymore. Is that because the group doesn't exist, or because you moved?

**RB:** Because we moved.

**NB:** Okay. That's too bad. You have to contribute some back to that, yeah.

**RB:** Then when I took up the musical instrument, the viola or cello, then sometimes I played in a group, or Liz and I would sometimes play together, where she plays on the piano and I play the cello.

**NB:** Well, for the Columbia Alumni reunions, do you remember John Broost?

**RB:** No.

**NB:** He always comes and plays his saxophone. His son now plays the piano, and they will have a little chamber group made up of John, his son, and usually one or two medical students. They

play during the reunions. So, maybe you should do the same. You could probably do that, because they need a cellist.

**RB:** Well, I don't think I could do it now. It depends upon what—

**NB:** I guess if you practice; you've got to practice. When you're coming from a distance you don't have time to get together to practice. What would you consider your most fun contributions, either to St. Luke's or to the field? What was the most meaningful, I should say—not just fun, meaningful?

**RB:** I'll have to think about that a minute. I would say that the bronchoscopy design for pulmonary, that I got it started at the hospital.

**NB:** I think you published on that, didn't you?

**RB:** And then I published on that, about its use.

**NB:** It really opened the field, tremendously, and now there's all this simulation. That's what Dr. Cooley set up to do. He trained here. I told him, he was coming, I wasn't sure if anybody else would have time to come. Because, I don't know if you remember Dr. Mary O'Sullivan?

**RB:** Oh, yes.

**NB:** Well, she's still here.

**RB:** Send her my best.

**NB:** I will, I will.

**RB:** How is she doing?

**NB:** She's doing very well. She's doing very well. Her daughter Chloe is now in college.

**RB:** Wow.

**NB:** I remember the day she arrived, because she called me, "Baby's here! Cover me."

**RB:** [Laughs]

**NB:** That's what happened. Because she told me ahead of time the baby was going to come, and when it comes I have to cover her shift. She wound up taking three months off, so I covered it for three months. But we had a group. We had a group, and you were a part of that group. And it grew from one, to two, to six. And that group is still going.

**RB:** Is that right?

**NB:** With some changes, obviously. There's a tremendous change in how—everybody's salaried now. Nobody's in their own offices anymore. The offices are provided by Sinai. So, they're kind of the tune-callers, because they pay the piper, so they call the tune. But, that's what change is about. Okay. Would you like to tell us anything about either your Army experiences, your retirement experiences? As I recall you also played tennis? Didn't you play tennis?

**RB:** Yes, I play tennis. Yes, and we're still keeping that up.

**NB:** Oh, good, good, good, good. How about your wife?

**RB:** She's very well, and also she plays the piano, so she and I can play together with the instruments.

**NB:** Oh, wow. A duet.

**RB:** A duet. And she plays tennis very well. So, and we have a very nice property where we have a garden, and trees, and we can take care of them.

**NB:** Wonderful. Do you have any pets?

**RB:** No.

**NB:** It's a bit much.

**RB:** Yeah.

**NB:** Yeah, because they do take a lot more attention.

**RB:** Right.

**NB:** Same thing here. Well, would you like to add anything else to our discussion? What do you hope for us? Do you have any thoughts about what you hope the future will be?

**RB:** Well, I still didn't have a complete picture in my mind of what's going on now.

**NB:** Oh, I know, it's hard. Well, we are now part of the Respiratory Institute of Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine. So the Respiratory Institute is now connected with National Jewish, and Richard Martin, who is head of National Jewish, is part of our Respiratory Institute. So, Sinai's trying to set up Sinai units across the country, and the world, a little bit like the Mayo Clinic does with their clinics in different places, to bring in patients. And so the group at Sinai is basically the titular head of pulmonary-respiratory, of all the Sinai-affiliated hospitals now.

**RB:** I see.



**NB:** And everybody's appointed through that institute. They're doing a lot of advertising—*New York Times*, and other places—about the broadness of its scope. Cardiac surgery is resurging here. They're making it a major hub for cardiac surgery. Cardiology is now no longer under Medicine; it's in its own Department of Cardiovascular Medicine. It's called the Cardiovascular Institute.

**RB:** Oh!

**NB:** So, with a surgeon running the show, and cardiologists being under them, with the Arrhythmia Institute, with Cardiac Cath Lab, with Ultrasound as part of that umbrella, Cardiovascular Institute.

**RB:** What about the pulmonary?

**NB:** Pulmonary is still in limbo, because ever since they took over they're in charge of us, but we've only had acting division chairs until—they apparently have a search, active search, going on for the new pulmonary chief.

**RB:** So, what is your position in it?

**NB:** My physician is volunteer.

**RB:** I see.

**NB:** Senior Attending of Pulmonary Medicine, at Icahn School of Medicine. So professor, but you know. So, in addition to this program and some other things I'm running, basically I still go to clinic, still teach, still involved with—I'm now doing international electronic consultations as well, for patients with special problems. So, it's kind of fun. That part's fun for me, but nevertheless, I mean, it would be lovely to see you more often.

**RB:** Yeah.

**NB:** I'm hoping that you'll be able to come back for the Harlem reunion, because you were Attending at Harlem as well, and taught there.

**RB:** Yes.

**NB:** Do you remember that?

**RB:** Yes.

**NB:** So, I'm hoping you'll come back for the reunion and we can touch base then.

**RB:** Sure.

**NB:** Okay.

**RB:** All right. I'm C. Redington Barrett, Jr., and I worked as a pulmonary doctor and ran critical care units until I retired.

[End of Interview]