



David Evans
Atlanta, Georgia

Date: September 16, 2019
Location: Bones, Atlanta, GA
Annemarie A: Annemarie Anderson
Length: Forty-three minutes
Project: Career Servers

[Begin David Evans Interview]

00:00:00

Annemarie A: All right; today is September 16, 2019. I'm at Bones at—in Atlanta, Georgia and I am with Mr. David Evans.

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David E: Hi there.

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Annemarie A: Could you go ahead and introduce yourself for the tape?

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David E: Of course. My name is David Evans and I was born in Atlanta, Georgia. Most of my family is from Ohio. I've lived here almost my entire life. When I was 20 years old I moved to St. Thomas in the United States Virgin Islands and lived there for a couple years and made my way back to Atlanta and joined Bones in 1983.

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well, for the record, what was your birth date?

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David E: My birthday, February 4th.

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Annemarie A: What— what year?

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David E: 1960.

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Annemarie A: Great; great. And well, tell me a little bit about growing up in Atlanta. What was it like growing up here?

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David E: It was—it was great. I—I enjoy sports. I play— play tennis present-day, three or four times a week. It's probably— it's really what I enjoy doing. Yeah; big sports fan of the local teams and just enjoy being outside and being with friends and family.

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Annemarie A: That's great. So tell me a little bit about your parents. What were their names?

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David Evans: Frances and Paul Evans.

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Annemarie A: That's great.

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David Evans: My mom is still living and I take care of her. She actually lives at my home. I'm the youngest and I'm single, so I take care of my mom. And yeah—

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Annemarie A: That's great. All right; you were telling me about your family. So—

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David Evans: Yes. Yeah; I have two sisters. Actually one passed away recently three months ago but two older sisters. But really my greatest joy present-day is being a grandfather. I have one child and she has three kids—twin boys and a six-year-old girl, five-year-old girl and they're you know my greatest joy, no doubt about it.

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Annemarie A: That's great. Do they live here in Atlanta?

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David Evans: They live here in Atlanta as well; yeah, they sure do. They—my daughter is an accountant and she was in Brussels, Belgium for two years. Ernst & Young sent her there on assignment and so her and her husband moved there and we're really glad to have them back. And we took—I took the opportunity to go visit and visit them in Brussels, so that was terrific. But it's great to have them back.

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Annemarie A: That's nice. Well tell me a little bit about what neighborhood, what—what place in Atlanta did you grow up?

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David E: I grew up around the North Lake Mall area which was really one of the first malls. I went to Henderson High School; graduated in 1978. And yeah; I've lived mostly in—in that part of—part of town. And yeah; presently I live in the Tucker and Lilburn area.

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Annemarie A: That's great.

00:02:41

David E: Yeah.

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Annemarie A: Well tell me a little bit about your first—well, tell me about food growing up. What was that like in your house, like, what did your mother and your dad put on the table?

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David E: Sure; my mom was a great cook. She was a housewife. She did not work. And she was a wonderful cook. I remember having breakfast on Friday nights, you know just some of the specialty things she made, and my first job, actually I was a—a busboy at IHOP, International House of Pancakes on Buford Highway. And from there I worked with Victoria's Station organization and as I said, moved to St. Thomas in 1980. I worked for a hotel there, the VI Hotel, the Virgin Isle Hotel.

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I bought a small piece of land there. I wish I still had it but I don't. But yeah; I've been in this business pretty much my whole life. And it kind of gets in your blood and I love it. I—I really do and I actually work Monday through Friday. I'm off on the weekends, so it brings a little more normalcy to this job which is otherwise you know not—not your everyday job. So that means a lot to me—my schedule; it really does and being off on the weekends.

00:03:54

Annemarie A: Definitely.

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David E: Yeah; for sure.

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Annemarie A: Well tell me a little bit about that first job. What year did you start and kind of—
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David Evans: I would say I was about 14, so that was 1974 and yeah; I worked at IHOP and you know I had friends who were working at the mall and such and so when I started making tips when I became a waiter there, I was the only waiter who was— it was all ladies and girls otherwise— I you know was making good money.

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And so it—like I said it kind of gets in your blood, this business, and I’ve stuck with it and was fortunate enough to join the absolute best place I could have joined and that’s Bones in 1983, so I really fell into a great spot here and it’s been—it’s been like a second family.

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Annemarie A: That’s great. So what kind of— what kind of drew you to— ? You kind of say it gets in your blood but what drew you; what were the things that drew you to work in the hospitality industry?

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David Evans: You know I think a people-business— I’ve always been interested in different foods and cultures. I love ethnic food. I love you know all the ethnic cuisines and—and eat out lunch most days. I don’t go out for dinner too much but I go out for lunch on most days. And—and just working in close association with people. You know and pleasing people, making people happy, you know it’s more than just serving food. It’s—it’s you know helping people and making them happy.

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Annemarie A: That’s great. So what—what year did you move to the US Virgin Islands?

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David Evans: 1980.

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Annemarie A: Okay.

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David Evans: 1980, so I was there about two years. And that was great. I lived and worked and lived at the hotel. It wasn't too much of a room but it was—you know room and board there and I—I was in—I didn't start in management but I was in management after about a year, assistant to the food and beverage director. And yeah; it was a great place. It's too many people down there now but it's—it was a great place and still is very beautiful.

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Annemarie A: Definitely.

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David Evans: I think St. John is my favorite island though right next door.

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Annemarie A: So I'm kind of curious about this. Is—what's the difference between you know being a server, being a waiter and management? Could you kind of go into that a little bit?

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David Evans: Well the hours for one; it's probably about double the hours I would say to be in management. Yeah; it's just a little—a little bit more—it's less responsibility being a server. You can kind of you know walk out the front door and not have to you know worry too much about it

til—til the next day, you know when you're going to—going to make some more people happy hopefully.

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So I've been in management before—before and management is fine but I prefer you know I think here at Bones being a server is—it's I have the best waiter job in the city, maybe the southeast. I really believe that with the benefits and that's where—that's why this company is so successful is because they really take care of their people. Ownership, we have great ownership. The—the benefits are just—they may be the best in the country; they're just untold—profit sharing, 401K, you know vacation, five weeks of vacation for myself. And then—and then you nice rewards on—on the fives so to speak, the years when five, ten, fifteen; a Rolex on your ten-year anniversary, and but actually the thing that I'm most proud of here at Bones and I'll—I'll show it to you—is the ceiling of table one, also known as A-Room, also known as the Cork Room, it's an arched ceiling of 12,012 wine corks and that was my project. I put every one of them up there. It took me 235 hours. I did it over about a two-month period and it's—I hope it will be there for many years. And it's probably what I'm most proud of.

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Annemarie A: Oh that's so cool.

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David Evans: Here at Bones; yeah. Thank you.

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Annemarie A: What—what year did you do that?

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David Evans: I did it about seven years ago, about seven years ago.

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Annemarie A: Well let's get into—well before that could you tell me a little bit about what it was like to be assistant to the food and beverage manager before—?

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David Evans: Sure; you know well I got to say that living at the hotel was not always the greatest because you'd get knocked on—you know your door; knocked on your door, we need some beer stocked, or we need, this, that or the other thing. So it was—it was great. I was 20, you know so it was—it was a great time.

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And it was you know a pretty casual laid-back atmosphere. The hotel that I worked for they actually had a sailboat called the *Gypsy Star* and a 56-foot yawl as I recall and I went out crewing several times you know making lunch and—and serving drinks and things like that for honeymoon couples you know several times, and got to see a few more islands and so that was—that was great.

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And I didn't really get paid for that but it was just great going along. [Laughter] But yeah; as I said I kind of got what they call rock fever and you want to kind of get off that island and I decided to come back to Atlanta to actually start a business of frozen margarita machines

and—and popcorn machines that were kind of like a little Jiffy Pop at the bar kind of as a salty snack to make people you know order more drinks I guess.

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But so I had the frozen margarita machines and the popcorn business when I moved back from St. Thomas. I went to a small business show there and thought I would get—I would get that going in Atlanta and I did and I had lots of accounts, but ultimately I kind of got tired of dealing with bar owners, nothing wrong with them but I just—I just had a few bad experiences financial—financial-wise, and I just decided to sell the business and it was—it was only about 20 hours a week just making deliveries, you know. So I sold that business and got back into being a waiter and bartender, couple different places. Like I said, Victoria’s Station was a company that I worked for five, six, seven, eight years. And they had another specialty restaurant, Quinn’s Mill also on North Lake Parkway in the North Lake area, and—and learned more about—that was really my first fine dining place was Victoria’s Station. Out of San Francisco, kind of a prime rib house; they had a run—they were train cars actually connected. That was their little deal and they had a good run.

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But I realized, as I said, I really when I—when I found Bones it really—it really clicked for me here and like I said, many friends and—and it’s like a second family. It really is.

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Annemarie A: For sure. Who are some of those early mentors or teachers who kind of introduced you or experiences maybe that introduced you to fine dining and—and taught you some of those lessons?

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David Evans: Sure; well I think some of my managers at Victoria's Station including Bill Norman who was one of the LongHorn founders and recently closed his restaurant. He just retired—Norman's Landing after he had a good run, but he—he sticks out as—as a really kind of a mentor in this business. My father meant a lot to me and taught me much. And really my two big sisters, 11 and 9 years older than me, you know I wanted to do what they did. I wanted to hang out with them and I learned a lot from them. And everything from learning to drive to just appreciating the music they liked and you know and it was a great time.

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Annemarie A: That's great. Do you have any other family members who work in F and B?

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David Evans: Um, I do not. My daughter when she was in school she worked several restaurant jobs, Bugaboo Creek I know was kind of a Canadian—Canadian restaurant but she—yeah she worked at several restaurants but she is an accountant as I said, so she got—got out of the business to—to—graduated from Georgia State and got into accounting.

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So nobody else in the family—

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well tell me a little bit—let's get into Bones. Tell me your first impression of this restaurant?

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David Evans: Well how beautiful it was and how really on the inside. It really originally was made to not look like too much on the outside and then once you get inside it's kind of a palace. And it—we—we changed that with the outside and it looks great on the outside now, but it was kind of a little sleeper thing you know once you get inside these four walls, you know the critics have been real kind to us over the years and they think we're the best steakhouse in Atlanta and maybe the best restaurant. We're usually in the top five or ten when those lists come out.

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But yeah; we—we really take care of people here. And we do it in a genuine way. And it's—we've had second generations you know turn into businessmen and women here and—and do business here, you know second generation. That's real gratifying. And also just to see my friends that have worked here, their—their children growing up and it's just been great. I can't believe it's been 36 years but it has and I may—I may quit after 40 years. I want to retire soon—soon you know so I'm going to go 40 and we'll go from there.

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But so I come up on 37 in January. And yeah; it flies by [Laughter], like life does, but—. Yeah; Bones is—is like no other place really. It—it really isn't. It's not just food we're serving here. It's—it's somehow it sounds corny but it's—it's dignity. It's—it's making people feel good and making people look good. And remembering the details, you know whether it's their name or their preferences, or you know preferences, whatever they like to drink or eat, yeah, we—we really take care of people here.

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well do you remember what it was like to first start working here? Could you talk a little bit about that?

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David Evans: Yeah; we—we've really evolved over the years, really have. We just fine-tuned it. It was—it was simpler back then. We were smaller. I started right when the downstairs opened and then we've added you know the wine gallery, the back room—since then, as well as the main dining room. And it was—we've always been busy whether we've—because we've always done such a great job here.

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So it was—it's a little harder to do—to work here now because it's so much bigger and it's—it's a job to—to you know to do it every night. But we do it; we don't—we do more than get by. We—we do it; we do it the right way. And we've just really evolved in so many ways whether it's our wine list being on an iPad now; you know we've got 1,300 different selections. We're really kind of a wine destination I've always said too. We really are. It's probably the best wine list in the city I would say.

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Like I said 1,300 different selections and several different vertical collections; we're a real wine destination as well as a business restaurant as well as a restaurant that people count on for their anniversaries and birthdays, the events that—they know we're not going to let them down you know. There was a recession in [20]08. We slowed down a little but people still came here for—for their events and like I said, they counted on us to do it—to do it right and not let them down.

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Annemarie A: That's—

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David Evans: So we enjoy that.

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Annemarie A: Yeah. Well tell me a little bit about educating yourself, so you said you had 1,300 you know lists—wine bottles on your wine list; talk to me a little bit about what it's like to kind of educate yourself with—with wine and food at Bones.

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David Evans: Sure; you know we—we have an ongoing wine program. Our wine director is also a waiter here, Peter Apers and the wine director before him was Bob Reno who was also a waiter here and still is.

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We—we talk about wine every day, every day at line up. We have line up from 5:00 to 5:30 every day; we're talking some about customers and other operational things but we—we're talking about wine most days. We often taste wine many days. We take notes. We've always got our wine notebook. We're quizzed on what we've tasted. We're you know it's—your wine knowledge is always evolving so it's always growing and you know to—to know it all is much to know but it's—it's always been a big interest of mine. And—and I love it. It's—wine to me is almost like a live product, a live thing.

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And we are a wine destination here.

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well walk me through a typical work day or work night for you.

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David Evans: Well as I said, I work Monday through Friday. I used to work downstairs every night but it's getting a little older; I've moved upstairs three nights so downstairs more of the big parties, planned menu, events, things like that. Upstairs, there's A-Room, the Cork Room as I said but other than that smaller tables, but it's—it's a drill.

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What we—we have a team service thing here. We have a front man and we have a back man, the idea being—idea being that some—the eyes are never off the floor. You have a front man who is taking the order, who is opening most of the wine, who is taking most of the orders; the back man is doing everything with the food and still taking orders and talking about wine, you know serving wine. But his focus is the food and the front man's focus is you know being out there with the guests within you know their sight at all times.

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So you—you're—you don't run across that too often really working that team system but it works for us here, and we also have a third member of the team and that is the SA, server assistant. He is a member of the team as well and we work—we work together as a three-man team every night and that's the way we've always done it here. There's some heavy trays to carry but it—it's a system that works very well.

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Annemarie A: That's great.

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David Evans: I must say.

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Annemarie A: And what's your—what's your role? What do you usually do—front man, back man—?

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David Evans: When I worked with Joe [Interviewer's Note: Joe Larson] for 10 years who is still here, we alternated every night, front, back, front, back, front, back but now I've been working with Derrick for the last 10 years or so and a couple other guys since I moved upstairs but I've—I've chiefly gone to working back more. I feel like I can control the pace and the flow of everything from the back and I can pick my spot, too for you know when I—. But the main thing is—is—is one thing here, we try to use the guest's name and two, three, four times if we can. If we know the guest's name we're using it. And it's—it makes a difference. But I like a mix of working front and back because it keeps you—it's kind of with wine knowledge it's kind of if you don't use it, you lose it, so I need the reps of—of talking about wine and things like that. So I like to work front, but I've been chiefly working back these last few years.

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Annemarie A: Definitely. Well tell me a little bit about that relationship, the—the kind of relationship that you have developed with your fellow front of the house employees.

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David Evans: Uh-hm.

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Annemarie A: Because that—I assume that working in the kind of a team service, it—it takes a lot of teamwork.

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David Evans: It does; it does and we've got—we've got a great group of guys and it's—and it's not just the front of the house. We—the front of the house and the back of the house get along very well here. We really do. We—we have a big 4th of July party every year. It's the—kind of the company party. It's all three restaurants, Blue Ridge Grill, OK Café, and Bones, Lake Lanier, the biggest pavilion up there, all kinds of trips and you know all kinds of—all kinds of prizes are given. I don't know how much—they spend a lot of money on this party every year and it's a—it's a—it's a big event with the volleyball game and everything else. And it's kind of a big party every year. And we—but overall we have—we have a good group here. We always have and there's a lot of longevity here.

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I'm not the only one that's been here this many years. I mean I'm number two I guess in seniority in the company, Ali being number one. John who I think you're going to speak to is right there and Joe, but we have many people who have been here 20 and 25 and 30 and 15 years

and beyond because it's the best place in the city. There's no doubt about it—by a longshot—and yeah we've got a good group here and we—we get along pretty famously. [Laughter]

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well tell me a little bit about the relationship between front of the house and back of house. What does it take to kind of make a restaurant work?

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David Evans: Well it takes—it takes respect, it takes understanding of—of what they're doing and trying to do and but—but we're both working for the guests in the long run and we always err on the side of the guest whether it's you know we—we think nothing of buying a problem. You know when something comes up we're going to buy that problem. We're not going to just say we're sorry. We're going to say we're sorry; we're going to say it's our fault and we're going to tell you we're going to make this right—make it right.

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And we—we do that here. If you want to get over on Bones, you can probably get over on Bones, but we're—we're going to err on the side of the guest. When we do let somebody down we're going to make up for it in a—in a big way, in a magnanimous way. And it's—it makes a difference.

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We actually care. We actually care, and we're not the only restaurant that cares. Susan our owner says you know she doesn't want to be—she wants us to you know—you know to lead but she wants other people to be as good as we are, too. You know so there's—you know more choices and there are other good—Atlanta is a great restaurant town actually; it really is. There's

a lot of terrific places in town and we're not the only one that are doing a great job but we do something a little different here. It's kind of hard to put your finger on but when you're the guest here you'll—you'll experience it you know; you will. And just a little bit different.

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Annemarie A: Yeah; well tell me a little bit about building relationships with guests. You talked a little bit about that but—but how you do that.

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David Evans: Sure; we—you know over the years you know have had many call parties and had call parties die. You know have done outside things with—with guests, everything from playing tennis to going to—going to sporting events to—and I've attended many funerals, you know of guests. And I've taken—taken food over to guests' homes from Bones you know when that time is—is—when it's needed.

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And we—yeah; we know our guests as best we can and we—we go out of our way to remember the things that are important to them. When you—you know whether—whether it's birthday, anniversary, whatever it is, if we know you're coming in and it's your anniversary or birthday we've got the table decorated with sprinkles, you know you're—you're either getting complimentary Champagne or dessert to—to honor your anniversary or birthday. And we just make it nice—some shortbread cookies, whatever, the little things, some sauce with the ribbon on it for your pantry, you know just—we do the little touches aside from doing the big things, right. You know we—we try to do the small things, too.

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well are there any regulars who you have that you can talk about?

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David Evans: Um—

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Annemarie A: You don't have to mention them by name.

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David Evans: Well yeah; many—many business leaders over the years actually have seen many, many an actor or sports—sports personality, you know political figures, seen dozens and dozens of those over the years. I say that I'm going to write a book, but it's just kind of like talk I think because [Laughter] I haven't done it yet.

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So but yeah; taking care of many, many people of note you know over the years and you know it's been great. Cate Blanchett was somebody I waited on not too long ago and I was a little bit in awe actually because I like her a lot. And it was—it was kind of cool waiting on her, but yeah. I mean I couldn't even—I couldn't even list—I could list them; I could sit here all day listing so it's [Laughter]—

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Annemarie A: That's pretty cool.

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David Evans: But yeah; we see—we see a lot of people come through no doubt and it—they're making a lot of movies in Atlanta now so it—and even more than normal.

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Annemarie A: For sure. Well tell me a little bit about I know you keep talking about the—the longevity of a lot of the employees, a lot of the waiters who work here, but could you talk—go into a little bit about training and kind of leadership from your position?

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David Evans: Yes; this—we have an eight-week—well it's a six-week training program now. It used to be eight weeks. To be a waiter here you know that's kind of unheard of. Really I think we've maybe had some candidates; we've missed some good folks over the years because it's—it's—eight weeks is a long time to train and as I said now it's six.

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So it's pretty extensive. You start out in the kitchen washing dishes the first night and you're going to learn that—learn what goes on in the kitchen for the full week even though you're going to be a front-of-the-house employee. And then you work in all the departments, you know with the assistant waiters and then working back and working front and working at the host stand as well seating—seating guests you know.

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So it's a very extensive training program. It's worth it; it's going to pay off for you but it's—it's very extensive, and—and I guess it should be. It's—it's paid off for us over the years. We've—I think we maybe have got the best group we've ever had here now.

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Annemarie A: That's great.

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David Evans: Overall.

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Annemarie A: That's great. What makes it that way?

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David Evans: I think just that we've—we've fine-tuned it over the years and we've just—it's not just the wine list. It's you know it's everything. It's—it's the cuisine. We've got a great chef in Leonard Lewis. He's got a great sous chef, Mike, and we've—we've got a good management team. And we all—we all get along pretty well; we really do.

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It's not always the case in this business, but like I said, back of the house and front of the house were—we get along great. We love each other. [Laughter]

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Annemarie A: That's great. Well tell me a little bit about the division of labor, because I find this kind of interesting. You mentioned that like where you first worked at IHOP it was mostly all women whereas this kind of a gender balance is a little different. Could you talk about like how you've seen that difference?

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David Evans: You know—

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Annemarie A: Different places?

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David Evans: —we—we do have an all-male wait staff here. We've had a female bartender. We had a couple over the years. It's a very physical job but it's kind of a New York thing, too, a lot of older waiters in New York and Chicago and at the steakhouses and so there's—there's some heavy trays to lift. I think women could handle that job. We've just—you know that—they don't seem to apply here very often. But we've had several women be successful working in the front of the house with all these guys you know and it's [Laughter]—our—our own Susan DeRose is all about girl power, no doubt about it; she really is. Susan DeRose and Richard Lewis are our owners and but the—the division of labor as far as the working front and back you know we do that as I said to—to really just cover the guests in all—you know the eyes are always on the floor, you know and you got somebody exclusively taking care of the food and somebody exclusively—not exclusively but pretty much taking care of their needs at the table.

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So it works out well. And then—and then with the SA as your third team member, it works out pretty well.

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Annemarie A: I'm sure.

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David Evans: So it's a pretty good system.

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Annemarie A: Yeah; it seems pretty thorough. Tell me a little bit, too, you mentioned the physicality of this work and I've seen that, but also I think that there's a lot of like emotional labor that goes into serving people. Could you talk about how like what sort of support system whether it be like—what have you found or like how you—the owners kind of support you in like making this kind of a long-term job?

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David Evans: Uh-hm; well for—as I said, it's—it's the benefits that they give us and afford us. I would say they're probably unmatched in this city—maybe the southeast and maybe beyond that. They're significant. That's what keeps people here so long and—and really motivates us to take it right down the line and take care of the guests the way ownership would like us to and the way—the way you'd expect to be taken care of at this price point. So we—it kind of—it kind of goes on down the line by ownership really making this the kind of job you can make a career out of.

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It—by taking care of your people we're going to take care of the guests and it's how it's been.

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Annemarie A: That's great. When did you decide that you wanted to make service a career?

00:31:00

David Evans: Well I wasn't sure. I had—I had—I did go to college. But getting into this kind of work early I—I got used to it. I liked it. I liked the hours. I like being off in the daytime, so I can play tennis and do what I want and so the—the night work kind of suited me.

00:31:23

After you work here 10 years you don't have to work lunch anymore. You're relieved of your lunch duties. So that's great; we'll—we'll take that. You know it's—there's money to be made at lunch and it's great working lunch but you know it's nice to have—just work five dinners. I work about 30—33 hours a week, Monday through Friday night so it—it's not too much of a load and as I said, it brings some normalcy to an otherwise un—normal job being off on the weekends.

00:31:53

Annemarie A: That makes sense.

00:31:55

David Evans: Yeah.

00:31:55

Annemarie A: That makes sense. Well you were kind of mentioning the Cork Room. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

00:32:01

David Evans: Sure; I've always—well for many years I've made things with wine corks. I've made lamps out of large format wine bottles. I've made you know trivets, wreaths, garland for Christmas trees, corkboards, I've done two backsplashes, but the best thing I've ever done is definitely A-Room, the Cork Room, table one, as I said. I think it's 19 by 21; it seats 10 people and the—it's an arched ceiling. I'll show it to you in a few minutes and it's 12,012 wine corks. It's in a simple brick pattern but I did mark it off every six inches with fishing line so I would remain square when I got to the end. It's 189 rows, 66 to 69 in each row, and yeah. I think I said it took me 235 hours and I did it over about a two-month period and I'm very proud of it; I'm very proud of it.

00:32:56

Annemarie A: That's great.

00:33:00

David Evans: So yeah; there's—there's also a painting upstairs that I really don't love the picture of me that—in it but it's of me, John, and Ali, who I think you're going to speak to John or Ali as well that was recently put up and it's—it's a tribute. It's a nice thing. I'm just not crazy about my picture. [Laughter]

00:33:16

Annemarie A: [Laughter] Well what—what inspired you to make things out of cork?

00:33:21

David Evans: Oh yeah; as I said I got sidetracked, I'm sorry—I've made things for my friends, as I said and so ownership knew that and so they asked me if I could possibly do the ceiling in wine corks. And so I said that I thought—I thought that I could. And we talked about what we—how we wanted to do it and I—I started one night after service I think on a Friday night and did an overnigher and that was my only overnigher, but just went from there. I used liquid nails. That stuff really holds. I brought in scaffolding the first night but I didn't need scaffolding. I just worked on a four-foot ladder that's in this room right here after that. And I did it pretty much on the weekends during the day when there's no lunch being served. And yeah; over of about a two-month period.

00:34:09

Annemarie A: Did you use all the wine corks from—from Bones?

00:34:14

David Evans: We—we did collect them here as a group and I have many, many wine corks. I have been collecting them for years, so I could—I bet I've got a couple million corks and I've made many things out of corks. *[Laughs]* But it's by far the best thing I've ever done. There is no doubt about it. The backsplashes that I've done were good but the—I'm real proud of this actually.

00:34:37

Annemarie A: That's really interesting.

00:34:38

David Evans: Thank you.

00:34:39

Annemarie A: I like that. Well tell me a little bit, so this is I think a little bit more of a thinking question, but I feel like there's a little bit of a difference, they kind of intersect but they're not both completely the same—difference between service and hospitality. Could you give me your definitions for both service and hospitality?

00:35:00

David Evans: That's a good question. Hospitality I think is having the kind of the instincts to take care of people. It sounds simple to say and in a way you'd like to be taken care of but just to have the instincts, yeah the instincts, the—the—to know—to know really what to say and when to say it which I don't always say the right thing or have the perfect thing to say. You know I usually—I like to pick my spots for my little quips but—.

00:35:36

And the difference between that and—and service, hospitality and service—yeah I think hospitality and also just taking care of people in a genuine way and a way that doesn't seem like a chore. I guess it starts with a smile but—and service I think they're—we have steps of service here and we follow those steps and that ensures you know—goes a long way to ensure the guest satisfaction, the guest experience, you know to follow the steps of service and whether it's marking the table, or whether it's you know crumbing each guest, you know for each guest rather than crumbing at the end whenever they've got a chance to wipe away the crumbs themselves you know.

00:36:22

You—you crumb one guest at a time. Whether it's just those small things you know that just add up to—to kind of being exacting in—in what you're going to do this—. The service is more the steps and so yeah; just following the steps of service. And doing them over and over and—and keeping them you know not deviating too much you know, keeping it—keeping it—you know how it's supposed to be.

00:36:52

Annemarie A: Definitely; what are the most challenging and most rewarding parts of your job?

00:36:58

David Evans: Um, well you know making people happy is very rewarding and I think you know just you know seeing a couple celebrate their anniversary here or—or you know a father and son returning for you know their—you know their deal that they do every year, come here you know for whatever it is—a Christmas lunch and just seeing their—the return guests come here, back and forth for their special occasions. They like I said they count on us to do it right, so we—you know we want to hold up our end and—and do it right and not disappoint. So I'm sorry; I forgot the question.

00:37:48

Annemarie A: What are the most challenging and most rewarding?

00:37:51

David Evans: Okay and it—and as far as challenging, I think we—we do a big number here every night almost. We're always so busy that just to stay on top of it, to stay a little bit ahead,

which is what I'm big on, getting you know my steps down is—it's—there's quite a pace to it. And you know I'll be 60 next year, so I'm getting older and just keeping up I think you know. But it's—it's a physical job in working back and that's what I've been doing for a few years now, so moving upstairs has benefited me but I think the challenge of the physicality of the job for myself.

00:38:37

Annemarie A: That makes sense. It makes a lot of sense. I'm curious about this too because I've—I've interviewed several people and they've—some of them have kind of talked about kind of the changes they've seen in diners and—and guests and dining habits or etiquette. Have you kind of—how has dining kind of evolved as you've seen since you started?

00:38:59

David Evans: Well Atlanta is like I said a huge restaurant town and we've got it all here. I think it—it's evolved—how I've seen it is just seeing all these different cuisines come in. Like I said, I love ethnic food and so you know just we—we've got all the bases covered here you know in Atlanta. I think it's a great restaurant town.

00:39:24

It's just—just exploded over the years just how it's—how it's moved out of the city you know and out of the—outside the perimeter and beyond. We've just—we've just grown with the city, you know as a—as—as a restaurant town. And it's just exploded and it's never stopped.

00:39:40

You know so many companies are locating here and have been locating here for decades that it's just—you know it's just—I don't know if it will ever stop—the boom, but you know it's a great place.

00:39:51

Annemarie A: For sure. And what are some of the most important lessons that you've learned over your career?

00:40:00

David Evans: Humility, just trying to show—show the guests, show my fellow employees generosity. Just understanding, you know just seeing—seeing people go through things, whether it's the guests or co-workers, you know the trials of life you know and sickness and—and all, you know just I feel like I've seen it—I've seen a lot here and we—we keep up with our guests. Like I said, I've been to several funerals you know of the guests and we—we make a point to reach out to them you know beyond just you know coming here to have dinner.

00:40:56

Annemarie A: That's great. What do you hope to see for the future of kind of service? Does that make sense?

00:41:07

David Evans: Oh well—

00:41:08

Annemarie A: For you, here at Bones?

00:41:09

David Evans: You know I guess, I don't know if there's—how much more there is to evolve as far as service. But you know we're—we're always—your wine knowledge is never complete you know so we're just going to continue I think to evolve as—as a staff you know of—of being—being sharper on our wine knowledge and you know kind of leading the way you know. Like I said, we—our wine list is probably the best in the city and we are a wine destination here and people—people like to bring their own wine, too and we have—we have one of the lowest corkage fees I would say in the city. It used to be \$5; now it's \$15 but I know many places are \$40 and \$50 a bottle. So we kept—keep it at \$15.

00:41:58

Annemarie A: Interesting. Well I don't have any more questions for you but is there anything that we haven't talked about that you want to add?

00:42:05

David Evans: Um, let's see; I guess not. It seems like you were pretty thorough. [Laughter] I know I repeated myself several times but—

00:42:15

Annemarie A: No.

00:42:17

David Evans: —um, just you know I don't know too much about podcasts, how they—how they get it. Something that's archived and just—and then it's something that people just go to? I mean they're done live initially right or they're done live at one point and—?

00:42:33

Annemarie A: Yeah; so this won't be for a podcast. This is kind of like—

00:42:35

David Evans: Okay; right.

00:42:36

Annemarie A: —an interview that will be in our archives if that makes sense.

00:42:38

David Evans: Okay; gotcha, gotcha but you do—

00:42:39

Annemarie A: Yeah.

00:42:40

David Evans: —podcasts—that is podcasts for something?

00:42:42

Annemarie A: I don't. We—we have a person who does them for our—

00:42:45

David Evans: Yeah; I don't know much about them.

00:42:47

Annemarie A: I don't either. [Laughter] If it makes you feel better—

00:42:48

David Evans: Yeah; okay. But no; I can't think of any other questions. It's—it's an honor to you know to—you know talk to you.

00:42:56

Annemarie A: Thank you.

00:42:57

David Evans: And all, but yeah and—and you know you'll get some more insight from John and Ali I'm sure.

00:43:02

Annemarie A: For sure; thanks so much for talking with me.

00:43:05

David Evans: Okay; well yeah, if you want to see the ceiling I'm happy to show it.

00:43:07

[End David Evans Interview]