0:89 **Place of Birth**

Lerner was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on January 24, 1942.

0:98 **Parents' Place of Birth**

Lerner's mother was born in upstate New York and his father was born in Philadelphia.

1:15 **Growing up in Philadelphia**

Lerner enjoyed his childhood years in Philadelphia.

1:23 **Siblings**

Lerner has two siblings, Ben and Carl Lerner, and they were known as the ABC boys.

1:85 **Interests or Hobbies as a Child**

Lerner's favorite sport was baseball, and he hoped to play baseball professionally.

2:34 **High School Experience and Activities**

Lerner attended Central High School in Philadelphia, and he worked during the summers. He was active in student organizations and in sports during his high school years.

3:57 **Thoughts on Attending Ivy League Universities as a High School Student**

Lerner didn't think about becoming a lawyer when he got older. He thought about attending either Penn or Temple because most of the students from his high school went there. Although he hoped to attend Reed College in Oregon, it was not financially feasible.

4:37 **Social Changes in the 1960s**

Lerner has some recollection of having discussions regarding the integration of Central High School in Little Rock. He also "aligned" himself with President
Kennedy because he was speaking about “the right kinds of . . . issues.” Lerner vividly remembers hearing that President Kennedy had been assassinated. He was in Prof. Lesnick’s Labor Law class when a student made the announcement that President Kennedy has been assassinated.

7:53

**Experiencing Discrimination**

Lerner’s high school baseball coach told him that although he knew Lerner was Jewish, he certainly didn’t “act Jewish.”

8:86

**College**

Lerner applied to Penn and Temple, two schools that admitted students in January. Lerner graduated high school in January and his parents didn’t want him to wait until September to start college. Lerner was interested in attending Oregon’s Reed College because it was known for being a politically active school.

10:35

**Undergraduate Major**

Lerner was an Economics major at Wharton. His high school teacher introduced him to Economics his last year in high school.

10:84

**College Activities**

Lerner was on the varsity baseball team for three years. He also belonged to a fraternity and went on to become the fraternity’s pledge master his senior year at Wharton.

14:48

**Career Options Considered**

Lerner initially considered graduate work in Economics. However, his interest in history, government and social and public issues made him consider law school.

15:52

**Law Schools Considered**

Lerner applied to Penn, Harvard and Michigan.

15:71

**Admissions Process at Penn Law**
Lerner remembers filing an application and taking the LSATs.

15:92

**First Year at Penn Law**

Lerner remembers his first year classes and professors. First year classes included Agency with Prof. Leech, Criminal Law with Prof. Amsterdam and Contracts with Prof. Wrights.

16:76

**Size of Class**

There were approximately 180 students divided into two sections.

17:14

**Physical Structure of the Law School**

What was then known as Louis Hall contained faculty offices, the Law Review office, the Moot Court Board office and some secretarial offices. Roberts Hall had just been opened. The goat and the fountain opposite the goat were also present.

18:09

**Starting Law School with Brother Ben Lerner**

Lerner started Penn Law with his older brother, Ben Lerner, after completing his studies at Wharton in three and one-half years.

18:56

**Areas of Interest in Law School**

Lerner was interested in labor law and criminal defense work.

18:76

**Differences in Being a Student in 1965 and a Student in 2000**

The present Penn Law classes are much bigger and there are a lot more minority students unlike 1965. Also students in 2000 graduate with large loans unlike in 1965. Penn Law currently has many student organizations. The faculty in 1965 was more involved in government and politics, unlike today's faculty, which is more focused on legal theory.

21:39

**Comparisons between Wharton and Penn Law**
In law school, there was greater discussion of social and public policy issues and the intellectual level at law school was much greater than at Wharton.

**Civil Rights**

Lerner saw civil rights work as an avenue to concentrate more on socially-oriented issues. Penn Law had an organization called the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council, and the law school community was very supportive of those interested in civil rights work.

**Summer of 1964 in Mississippi**

Lerner applied for and was accepted for a summer internship in Mississippi to do civil rights work in 1964. Lerner was the coordinator for all the students in Mississippi that summer. He stayed with an African-American family and there were safety concerns involved with doing so. Lerner also witnessed a case in which a pro bono attorney was not allowed to meet with his 12-year old client until he got a writ from federal court.

**What Lerner Liked Least about Law School**

He disliked exams. He was frustrated by the lack of clinical courses and experiential learning.

**Law School Expectations**

Lerner had been exposed to the law school classroom process when he was a Pre-Law Society Club member at Wharton. So he knew what to expect of law school, but Lerner did not have any detailed expectations.

**Favorite Law School Classes**

Prof. Amsterdam’s Criminal Law and Advanced Criminal Procedure classes. Lerner also enjoyed Prof. Lesnick’s Labor Law and Labor Law Seminar courses. Another favorite was Constitutional Law.

**Reviewed the 1965 Yearbook**

Lerner recalled some of his former classmates.
Relationships with Law School Professors

Lerner was Prof. Amsterdam’s research assistant and he worked with him on a variety of projects after graduation. Lerner also had some relationship with Prof. Lesnick.

Minorities and Female Student Population at Penn Law

Although Lerner wasn’t aware of any commitment to increase the number of minorities and women at Penn, he would be surprised if the school didn’t have some discussions about it.

Director of The Law Students Civil Rights Research Council

In this one-year position, Lerner raised money for the Council and organized and coordinated the Council’s programs.

Clerkship

After his year at the Council, Lerner clerked for Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. for two years.

Cases Worked on as a Clerk

Lerner recalled three cases. He recalls disagreeing with Judge Higginbotham on case where a defendant refused induction into the military. Judge Higginbotham sentenced the defendant to prison although Lerner believed that the defendant should be permitted to do the “equivalent of conscientious objection alternative service.”

Law Firm Days

Lerner started as an associate at the Philadelphia law firm of Cohen, Shapiro, Polisher, Shiekman and Cohen’s Corporate and Securities Department in 1968. He was involved in pro bono cases from the beginning.

First Trial Experience

Lerner’s first case involved representing two tenants
in a landlord tenant dispute in New York. He won this case.

**Unrest in the Cities**

The Philadelphia police were aggressive, "nasty" and "troublesome." Lerner recalled Judge Weinraut’s troublesome remark about African-Americans during Lerner’s swearing-in. During this time, the leaders in Philadelphia met and decided that something had to be done to better Philadelphia.

**Ethics Committee Chair at Cohen, Shapiro**

The Committee reviewed the firm’s ethical policies and practices. In addition, the Committee served as consultants to those who had ethical problems or concerns.

**Specializing in Labor and Employment Law**

Lerner handled several important cases including the first employment discrimination case under Title VII against a construction trade union in Philadelphia. His last case was a high profile sexual harassment case where he represented a former associate against a senior partner.

**Deciding to Teach Law**

Lerner taught trial advocacy training programs regionally for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. He also taught at Temple Law for a semester prior to joining the Penn Law faculty. Since Lerner enjoyed the teaching part of his law practice, he decided to teach law full-time.

**Teaching at Penn Law**

Lerner taught Civil Practice Clinic his first semester at Penn. He also learned that the "students learning and his teaching had to be connected up."

**Changes in Clinical Courses at Penn Law**

There have been changes in faculty over time. In addition, new clinical courses have been added. The clinical faculty has introduced courses that are not
completely clinical in nature. Lerner is proud of the relationships that are forged between the professors and the students. The clinical courses provide students with an opportunity to experience the attorney-client aspect of law practice.

Lerner's Teaching Style and Influences on His Teaching Style

Lerner describes his teaching style as relaxed and less formal. His teaching role models were Professors Levin, Amsterdam, Lesnick, Honnold and Leeds.

Advice to Law Students

Balance your life. Be a lawyer, but also remember that you are a member of the community, a family member, etc.

Most Significant Contribution to Penn Law

Lerner believes that the most important contribution he can make is to educate students about the law and life.

Publications

Lerner recently published his first law review article. He has also published two short, "non-scholarly" articles. He is particularly proud of his article about sexual harassment in the workplace.

Lerner's Future Plans and Greatest Accomplishment

Lerner is happy about his family and his contribution to Penn Law. He also hopes to work on some ideas that he has about professional responsibility, such as normative thinking and problem solving.

The End