

Lawrence Schulenberg, Pottawattamie County

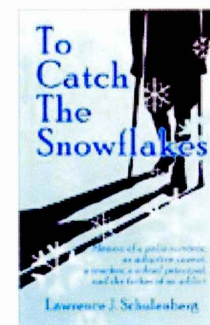
Lawrence Schulenberg

Interviewee: Lawrence John Schulenberg

Interviewer: Monica Gohlinghorst

Date of Interview: 12/10/07

Location of Interview: Council Bluffs Public Library



Cassette

Biographical Data Form

Oral History Release

Photograph (1)

Transcript

Larry Schulenberg made a decision during the Christmas of 1946 to follow his mother's advice and live life to the fullest. The odds were against him. He was outfitted with heavy metal crutches and work shoes after several months of therapy and rehabilitation at the hospital in Topeka, Kansas. That day, his childhood friends gathered at his home to eat cookies, drink hot chocolate, and decorate the Christmas tree when one of the boys looked out the front window and saw that it was snowing. Larry remembered, "So, all the guys ran and put on their coats and their mittens and went outside to play in the snow. The living room got quiet. My mother was in the kitchen and she heard the silence so she came in and said, 'Where are all the little boys?' I told her about the snow falling and she said, 'Well, don't you want to go out there with them?'"

Larry told her how he struggled to walk with those crutches and feared he would fall down. Then, his mother knelt down beside him and placed his hands in hers – and she told him, "Someday, in your future, you are going to have to decide – are you going to sit in this big chair and look out the window for the rest of your life and watch the snowflakes fall – or, are you going to get up and go outside and catch the snowflakes? Each person in their life has to decide what they are going to do with their life. If you decide to go out there and catch snowflakes, you'll probably fall. But, everybody falls some times during their lives. You pick yourself back up and you keep on catching those snowflakes." It was this lesson that inspired the title of his memoir and motivated him to do everything that he has done in his life. "That's why I became a teacher," said Larry, "because I wanted to live life as much as I could."

For further reference, see Larry Schulenberg, *To Catch Snowflakes: Memoir of a Polio Survivor, Adoptive Parent, High School Principal, and Father of an Addict*. (Frederick, MD) Publish America, 2004.