1. Early Life and Studies

JEFF CAMM: Hi, I'm Jeff Camm, Associate Dean of Business Analytics at Wake Forest University. And I have with me here this evening longtime INFORMS member Ben Lev. And we're going to listen to everything Ben has learned over these many, many years as an INFORMS member. So, Ben, why don't we start off with maybe giving-- let's go all the way back, a little bit of your family background, where were you born, siblings, et cetera.

BENJAMIN LEV: I was born in the middle of the Second World War, 1942, not the best time to be born, in a place that was not even a country. It was not even a state. Only six years after I was born, it became the state of Israel. So it was a British colony, a mandate.

And my parents came from Poland, both of them. My mother at the young age of 10. My father was the young age of 17. And I have twin sisters.

JEFF CAMM: Twin sister. Outstanding. When did you come to the United States?

BENJAMIN LEV: I came after my master's degree, and I came to study. And this was 1968.

JEFF CAMM: 1968. And where did you study for your master's?

BENJAMIN LEV: I got my undergraduate degree at the Technion, mechanical engineering. And then I got a master's degree at Technion in industrial engineering. And after my second degree from the same institution, I decided I want another institution, so I went to Case.

JEFF CAMM: I knew your PhD was from Case. And that's really, I think from an academic point of view, the birthplace of OR in the United States or maybe arguably so. But can you tell us a little bit about what it was like to be a PhD student and that was, what, in 1970s, early '70s?

BENJAMIN LEV: '68. In the early '60s and mid '60s, Case was the place to study OR. That's where it all started with Ackoff and--

JEFF CAMM: Arnoff was there for--

BENJAMIN LEV: Arnoff. Yes. And then he moved to Cincinnati. It was the best place and the best faculty. Burton Dean was there and many other good one, Pierskalla. And when I applied in '66 or '67, it was the place to go.

JEFF CAMM: Yeah. There weren't many programs then. That's for sure.

BENJAMIN LEV: Correct. And when they offered me to come, I jumped on the first airplane and came to Cleveland.

JEFF CAMM: And the rest is history. Who was your dissertation advisor?

BENJAMIN LEV: Leon Lasdon.

JEFF CAMM: Actually, I think I knew that now that you said it. I did know that.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yeah. And it was very fun working with him. He really let me do whatever I think is right. And he just made sure that there aren't too many mistakes, and it went very smoothly. I really enjoyed working with him.

JEFF CAMM: Was that math programming?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. It was a transportation problem. And it was a special structure transportation problem. And it's a transportation problem where the number of rows and number of destinations is about the same.

And I worked on this problem back in Israel and also here in the United States. And I found that most solutions are along the diagonal. You either ship from I to I or from I to I minus 1 or from I to I plus 1. So my dissertation was a tri-diagonal distribution problem with some extensions.

2. Academic Jobs

JEFF CAMM: Great. That sounds great. Where did you land after your PhD? I know you worked in the government for a while. Was that your first position?

BENJAMIN LEV: After my PhD, it was May of that year that I decided I'm done or I'm about to be done, so I submit an application. And I ended up at Temple University. So I started at Temple in 1970.

JEFF CAMM: That was in the business school?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. They had a business school with no OR program. And I was the first OR person, and I was charged with hiring additional OR faculty. And over the next few years, that program really flourished, and I brought maybe half a dozen OR people.

JEFF CAMM: You remember any of those names? Anybody we'd know?

BENJAMIN LEV: Very well, yes. The first person was Al Soyster. And he's a good friend. We published a lot together. In fact, I think the first six publications of both of us are joint. And after Al Soyster, it was Fred Murphy and Howard Weiss. And there were maybe three or four other people.

JEFF CAMM: Sounds like a good group. Did that become an OR department in the business school or was it always paired up with management or what was the structure there?

BENJAMIN LEV: It was part of management. Management was a very large department, maybe 30 some faculty. And there was some concentration of quantitative people. So these were the quantitative people.

JEFF CAMM: So I think I mentioned I know you worked in the government for a while. Can you tell us-- was that after Temple? And can you tell us a little bit about what that was like and what was going on in that workplace?

BENJAMIN LEV: It was while at Temple. While I was at Temple-- I was at Temple for 17 years from 1970. And in 1976, we had the oil crisis and President Carter decided to open a new department called Department of Energy. And overnight, he assembled 200 people from all over the country from mainly universities. People who really didn't know each other, put them in one big room or one big building.

And there was a boss from Stanford University. I think his name is Moses. And he ran the show. And these 200 scientists, I was one of them, all we did is build forecasting models.

So Congress gave us scenarios. What do you think will happen to oil prices and demand if the following is going to happen? And we just wrote different computer models to forecast that. So I was what's called IPA, Intergovernment Professional Act, where I'm on loan from Temple University at the government.

JEFF CAMM: OK. So you were full-time even though you were a faculty member at Temple, but they loaned you to the government?

BENJAMIN LEV: Right. I was paid by Temple University, and Temple was reimbursed by the government. And then I continued one year full-time and then five years part-time.

JEFF CAMM: OK. And so you were at Temple for 17 years, you said. I didn't realize you were there for so long. And then you went-- where did you go after that?

BENJAMIN LEV: After Temple, I went to Worcester Polytech.

JEFF CAMM: Yes, that's right.

BENJAMIN LEV: Worcester is spelled W-O-R-C-E-S-T-E- R

JEFF CAMM: Right. No one gets that right. That's probably why I said, "Where did you go?" I didn't want to have to pronounce it. And you were there for how long?

BENJAMIN LEV: I was there only for three years.

JEFF CAMM: OK. And were you in an OR group there? Or was it in the School of Business?

BENJAMIN LEV: There was no School of Business. There were Department of Management and I was the head of the department. And I reported directly to the provost.

JEFF CAMM: OK.

BENJAMIN LEV: And I did not mention that, even at Temple, I was a department head for six years. So I ran a very large department at the end of my tenure there.

JEFF CAMM: And you've had a number of administrative positions. So you went to Dearborn next?

BENJAMIN LEV: After Worcester, I went to Dearborn, as a dean, University of Michigan at Dearborn as a dean and department chair. And I was there for 20 years.

JEFF CAMM: What was better being a dean or a department head?

BENJAMIN LEV: Department head.

JEFF CAMM: I know what the best job is full professor, chair professor, no administrative duties. But If you had to like being a dean better or are being department head better.

BENJAMIN LEV: I'm glad I tried to be a dean. I'm glad I tried that, but I'm also glad it was a short appointment.

JEFF CAMM: Right. Yeah, those can be stressful jobs for sure. Let's keep exploring. We're going to just follow the timeline and come back to some of these things, but then you were at Dearborn for how long?

BENJAMIN LEV: Twenty Years.

JEFF CAMM: Twenty years. See, I think I first met you maybe right when you went to Dearborn or did I know you--

BENJAMIN LEV: I went to Dearborn in 1990. When did we meet?

JEFF CAMM: OK. Probably late 80s. Yeah, probably late 80s. From Dearborn, you went to?

BENJAMIN LEV: Back to Philadelphia to Drexel University.

JEFF CAMM: Where you are now?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes.

JEFF CAMM: And you were a department head there as well.

BENJAMIN LEV: I was a department head.

JEFF CAMM: Just couldn't stop doing that?

BENJAMIN LEV: No. I was department head for five years. Yes. And when they asked me to continue that, I said enough is enough.

JEFF CAMM: Right. Right. And I noticed you're a trustee professor there now. What is that title?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. I'm a trustee professor. And all I know is that it means teaching less and having more travel money.

3. ORSA and TIMS and Service to INFORMS

JEFF CAMM: That's not a bad thing. That's not a bad thing. So, obviously, you were in the profession before the merger when TIMS and ORSA merged. I don't even recall what year that was, but it was early '90s I think maybe. I don't remember. Or mid '90s when ORSA and TIMS merged. But you, certainly, have been a--

JEFF CAMM: 20 years ago?

BENJAMIN LEV: Wow, time flies.

JEFF CAMM: Time does fly, yes. So maybe can you talk about your experiences back in the '70s? Were you more of an ORSA or TIMS person? Did you go to the-- I know even when I came along there were still two meetings a year. And one was ORSA/TIMS and one was TIMS/ORSA so no one got angry. What were those days like in the '70s?

BENJAMIN LEV: I really never knew the difference between ORSA and TIMS. I think I paid dues to both societies. And when they asked me what am, I said I am member of both of them. In fact, we made up a word called ORSATIMS. There was one single word. To date, I don't know the difference between the two.

But yes, there were two different organizations. TIMS was a split of ORSA. And we had two different meetings. We had two different boards. There was the ORSA board. There was a TIMS board.

And there was the combined board. A board which consists of both boards. So there were a lot of disagreements. In order to pass anything, you need to have the agreement of ORSA board and then TIMS board and then the combined one.

JEFF CAMM: It's interesting because I was doing some reading not long ago and I found an article. I think it was in the '50s, late '50s, in, I think, the journal *Operations Research*. And sometimes, they had much more editorial kind of things in the journals in those days sort of like *Interfaces* has some now.

And I don't know who the person was, but he was saying I go to TIMS meetings and I go to ORSA meetings, why do we have two organizations? And that was like 1959. And then in the mid '90s, we eventually merged, right? Change comes slowly.

Let's talk a little bit about-- we've become good friends primarily through service to INFORMS. And I know your service goes way back. What were some of the-- what were the earlier

positions you held and what other positions have you held? We were on the Meetings Committee for what seemed like 100 years. It was great.

But you did a lot before that. And maybe just talk to us a little bit about some of the service you've done. You've always been reliable for INFORMS. I know that.

BENJAMIN LEV: One of the presidents of TIMS was Marty Weingartner. And I was then just a junior assistant professor. And I approached him in one of the meetings. And I said, "Marty, what do you think I should do if I want to move ahead in TIMS?"

He said, "Just volunteer and work on committees. The more committees you are on, the more chances are that somebody will pick you up for something." And that's what I did.

I joined the Public Relation Committee headed by Newt Garber and Sid Hess and Shiv Gupta. And I was just a secretary taking notes when the three of them discussed what to do in public relations. And from then on, I just moved up to another committee, another committee, and so on.

JEFF CAMM: I think I know the answer. How many national meetings did you chair?

BENJAMIN LEV: I don't know, but more than I wanted.

JEFF CAMM: At least two that I can remember.

BENJAMIN LEV: At least two, right. The first one was in 1990, and it was in Philadelphia.

JEFF CAMM: I remember that meeting.

BENJAMIN LEV: And at that time, it was the second largest ORSA/TIMS meeting. And the record was broken only lately, but it was a very large meeting and a very successful meeting. This was one meeting.

I organized also an international TIMS meeting in Israel. And I organized IFORS meeting in Edinburgh. And I organized INFORMS meeting in Argentina, Buenos Aires.

JEFF CAMM: Which meeting was your favorite? And I'll put some pressure on you.

BENJAMIN LEV: I think the first one.

JEFF CAMM: The first one?

BENJAMIN LEV: The one in Philadelphia.

JEFF CAMM: There was a Philadelphia meeting, I think you were the chair of it, where there was some kind of college bowl. Do you remember what--

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. Yes, I do remember.

JEFF CAMM: Refresh our memory about that. I remembering going to that and it was a lot of fun.

BENJAMIN LEV: A lot of fun.

JEFF CAMM: Was it TIMS versus ORSA, is that what it was? I can't remember.

BENJAMIN LEV: I'm not sure. I think Saul Gass ran the show.

JEFF CAMM: Right.

BENJAMIN LEV: And he had all these trivia questions. And there were a team or two teams, and there was a competition who will get the right answer and prizes.

JEFF CAMM: Yeah. It was either ORSA versus TIMS or it might have been west versus east. It was something like that.

BENJAMIN LEV: It was a lot of fun. And we wanted people to stay over Wednesday, so it was, I think, on a Wednesday at the end of the last session.

JEFF CAMM: It was fantastic. I remember the room was packed too.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yeah.

4. Editing Publications

JEFF CAMM: You also were-- I should know. How many years as a book editor for *Interfaces*? Twenty something years? That has to be the longest running record of service to INFORMS.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. *Interfaces* had a column called *Book Review*, and I edited this column for *Interfaces* for 23 years. And every other month, we published six book reviews. And when you multiply 6 times 23 times whatever, you'll get more than 700 books. So I did publish 700 book reviews.

JEFF CAMM: That's amazing. That is amazing. You've been involved with some other journals. How long have you been with *Omega* You're the Editor in Chief of *Omega*.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. *Omega*, I was the Editor in Chief since 2002, for 15 years.

JEFF CAMM: Wow. Are you going to keep going for a while?

BENJAMIN LEV: I'll tell you. This is a very nice story. The founding editor of *Omega* was Sam Eilon. He's from Imperial College. And he was the Editor in Chief for 21 years.

The second one did it for seven years. The third one did it for two years. So when they approached me and I looked at the time series, I said, oh, sure, this is going to be a two week job. So I said, yes. And since then, I saw 10,000 submissions and 15 years went by.

JEFF CAMM: I know the impact factor's risen steadily.

BENJAMIN LEV: The impact factor, yes, it's OK. That's not the main thing. I think the number of submissions is very impressive. We're getting 1,500 submissions a year.

JEFF CAMM: Wow. That's a lot. That's a lot of submissions.

BENJAMIN LEV: So, at least, I have to read 1,500 titles every year, which is a lot.

JEFF CAMM: Yes, indeed. So let's think back a little bit. I don't know If you have stories or individuals that stand out to you, ORSA/TIMS members, people who were in some way special to you, or you think we're special to the organization that had a real impact on the profession or the society, the institute.

BENJAMIN LEV: That a tough one to answer. I think that I cannot recall a single individual. I know that there were several people that I asked for advice. I was very close to Bill Pierskalla. I was very close to Chuck McCallum. I was close to some other people and informal discussions helped a lot.

JEFF CAMM: Right. Right. Yeah. I know when I became Editor in Chief of *Interfaces*, Fred Murphy was very helpful just in telling me what it was like before I really jumped into the water. And so those kinds of conversations are very helpful with people.

5. INFORMS Meetings

This will be a tough question, maybe. Who's the most colorful person you've known in Operations Research? And you can interpret that any way you'd like.

BENJAMIN LEV: I think it was always fun to talk to Gene Woolsey.

JEFF CAMM: That's who came to my mind, but I didn't want to lead the witness.

BENJAMIN LEV: I always smiled when I had a conversation with him. He really was colorful. He has always stories and always some extreme opinions.

He was a visionary. And I really enjoyed what he did in *Interfaces* in the early years. He really solved problems. That was his job.

JEFF CAMM: Exactly. Yeah, and the techniques didn't matter necessarily. It was just about solving the problem. And I sometimes wonder what Gene would think about the whole analytics movement now. It's similar in the sense of problem focused.

BENJAMIN LEV: He will probably think for two minutes and give you a solution.

JEFF CAMM: No doubt about that. No doubt about that. Let's see, what else can we talk about? Meetings Committee, we were on that for a long, long time.

Talk about what you saw in terms of meetings growth and changes in meetings over the years. We were on the Meetings Committee for 10 years together, but you were on prior to me joining, right? And there was a gap there. What have you seen over the years with the meetings? Give us some perspective on that.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yeah. I was on the Meetings Committee for a total of 18 years. In fact, I was the last Vice President of TIMS responsible for meetings, and the first Vice President for INFORMS responsible for meetings. So I was during the transition from ORSA/TIMS to INFORMS as the Vice President for Meetings.

Meetings were as small as maybe a few hundred, maybe 500. We had some small meetings with 400 or 500, 600 people. But I would say the average was more like maybe 1,000 to 1,500, and it was like that for a long time. When we had the joint meetings, we barely broke 2,000, and that was, again, for a very long time.

And membership also-- INFORMS membership was stopped at probably 10,000 plus minus a little bit. So I always argue that an annual meeting that can attract 20% of the membership is a very large, impressive meeting. And all of a sudden, there was a burst of maybe-- within three years, we went from 2,000 to 3,000 to 4,000 to 5,000.

And I don't know what the number today is, but I would not be surprised if we're above 5,000. And keep in mind, 5,000 out of a membership of 10,000 people. That's very impressive. It's almost like it's mandatory to come here.

6. Analytics and OR and the Future

JEFF CAMM: Right. Right. What do you think about the whole analytics craze, analytics, data science, OR? That probably has something to do with our boost in meetings. But there was a big debate about is OR a subset of analytics or vice versa or neither. You have an opinion on that?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yeah. I think that it has a taste of what happened with MIS, management information systems, back then where it was a booming something for maybe a decade or two, but then interests diminished. I hope that analytics is slightly different. It's a very nice word because it includes analysis that we all do. It has to do with large numbers, and we have a huge amount of information from the web.

Perhaps, this is the future where INFORMS should go, perhaps, that's the direction. We have to see how much goods we get out of that. Do we solve problems? Do the company appreciate our answers? Do they hire our graduates? And so on.

And let me say something about the job market. I think one big reason for the success of this annual meetings is the job fair that we have here. This became a must place if you're a PhD student or maybe even a master's student, and you're looking for a job. That is the place to have the interview and to look for openings. And also, look at the exhibit area. The exhibit area is now huge. It's growing--

JEFF CAMM: Much larger than it used to be.

BENJAMIN LEV: Much larger.

JEFF CAMM: I know we talked not long ago, your granddaughter's looking at universities. Would you recommend she go into Operations Research? And we won't pick on your granddaughter. But would you recommend a student today go into Operations Research or analytics?

BENJAMIN LEV: I recommend my granddaughter will go wherever she wants to go. That's my recommendation. Whatever she wants, I'm supportive.

JEFF CAMM: Good answer. Good answer.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes, I'm supportive. If a student asked me, I think that if the person likes math and quantitative and likes to solve quantitative puzzles and he wants to work on cute things, then OR is a very nice discipline to work in. It's very satisfactory to solve puzzles. And that's what OR is all about.

JEFF CAMM: Absolutely. That's what, certainly, brought me to the field. I was decent in math. I liked to solve problems.

Let's see, what haven't we touched on? This is a question I don't want to get to yet, but I'll go ahead and-- yeah, this is a good question actually. So in OR, do you see a certain area that's probably going to be, and this is sort of piggybacking on the last question, where you see one area that's going to be or is more poised for growth inside an application area, for example, that you think is more poised for growth than others?

BENJAMIN LEV: I'd like you to go over the curriculum of 1960s and take any university you want and look at the courses that they offered in the '60s. And you will realize that today we do not offer those courses anymore. And you ask yourself why?

Why is it that we don't have a special course in zero-one programming or advanced stochastic processes or special courses that-- and I wonder why. Is it because we came to the end of the road with these kind of problems? Are they too specialized? Are they problems with very little real-life applications or what?

I think the kind of courses that we offer today in business schools and engineering schools are more problems, more courses to understand a system, more problems to understand a larger size problem. While in the '60s, we solve a personal problem. Like, you go to the supermarket and

you want to know how many eggs you should purchase. So this was a dissertation, what is the optimal number of eggs you want to buy when you go to the supermarket?

Today, that is not even a homework problem. Today, what you want is to understand if not the department, you want to understand the company. What should the company do from a strategic point of view to quantify their problems and to give some strategic answers to the direction and answers that will-- so if you ask me, I think the magnitude of the problems will get larger and larger.

JEFF CAMM: Yeah, that'll provide the challenge for the future larger problems.

BENJAMIN LEV: Right. But if you want to develop a new algorithm in integer programming, the best thing you will get a publication, but not a job interview.

7. Problem Types

JEFF CAMM: Right. Right. Exactly. What types of problems have you worked on over the years?

BENJAMIN LEV: Well, I landed in Operations Research by chance. I really did not want to. I was forced to.

In Israel, where I grew up, there is a mandatory military service. And some people first serve in the military and then go to school, and very few people first go to school and then serve in the military. So I first got my engineering degree, and then I was placed in the Department of Operations Research in the military. And I had no say in that.

And my boss came to me and said, "You need some more education. Go and get an MS degree in OR." And I said, "Yes, sir." So I did that. And the kind of problems we solved then in the military were very interesting military problems of--

JEFF CAMM: Logistics kinds of--

BENJAMIN LEV: Logistic, transportation, distribution, some inventory issues, simulation. And mind you, simulation we did by hand. The bestseller was a book of random numbers. And with it, a simulation of what happened to a battle between a group of tanks on our side and the group of tanks on the enemy side and see what's going to happen after so many hours or simulation between two airplanes. That's the kind of problems that we worked on.

JEFF CAMM: And then as your career progressed, did you stay in that logistics area in terms of your publications and research?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. Transportation, yes. I enjoy transportation. And even today, I still work on some variants of the transportation problem, like the fixed charge transportation problem.

But the second area was inventory. And what we did is back in the '60s, we published several papers on inventory models. And what we did is we changed some basic assumptions that everybody assumes are part of the model. For instance, the horizon was infinitely large. And we solve problems with finite horizon.

We solve problems where holding cost are known to be changed in the future. Like, if there is a union and you know they are going to negotiate new prices in January, then holding cost is going to change in January. So we solved inventory problems with parameter changes. And I'm happy to say that, even today, we get some citations on publications we had in the '60s.

JEFF CAMM: It's great. So can you talk a little bit about problems, especially earlier in your career, how are they motivated? You spoke a little bit about your work when you were in the service in Israel. But were you-- especially early in your career, was it more sat at your desk and thought up a problem or industry came up with a problem and brought it to you and that led to a stream of research?

BENJAMIN LEV: Well, I'll tell you I work for a short time for a beer company. You've probably never heard about this beer.

JEFF CAMM: I don't believe I heard this story.

BENJAMIN LEV: It's called Black Label.

JEFF CAMM: Oh, yeah.

BENJAMIN LEV: Do you hear about that?

JEFF CAMM: I know Black Label.

BENJAMIN LEV: Oh. Well, I worked for Black Label, and they asked me to solve a distribution problem. How do you ship the beer from these breweries to major distributors? And I solved it as a transportation problem.

And I came to them and said, here's the solution, you should ship that many cases of beer from here to there. And the guy looked at me and said, "This will never work." And I said, "Why?" He said, "Because the driver is a cousin of the beer distributor, and he wants to get only from this guy. He doesn't want to get it from--

JEFF CAMM: So you had to add a constraint.

BENJAMIN LEV: So I realized very quickly that if you want to implement an optimal solution, you have to take into consideration things that are difficult to formulate, to articulate. In any system, there are some links that you are not aware of that in order to be practical, you have to compromise and get a sub-optimal solution. A solution which is close to the optimal solution, but works is much better than an optimal solution that will create a chaos in the system.

JEFF CAMM: Absolutely. I couldn't agree more. Other examples of your work from industry, government?

BENJAMIN LEV: When I worked for our Energy Information Administration, the EIA, in the Department of Energy, we used to build very large linear programming models. I was a very little part of that. But these models were maybe 250,000 constraints and several million variables.

JEFF CAMM: This was in the early '70s or mid '70s?

BENJAMIN LEV: It was in late '70s. And if you want to run a linear programming, then a team of people, each one is responsible to submit their input. And at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, somebody blows the whistle and says stop and then you stop putting the input.

And then they press a button and then the computer runs all night. And then, in the morning, you come and you look at that for two hours. And after two hours, you say, it worked, or you say, no, it did not work. Let's do it again.

JEFF CAMM: That's great. Did you work with Saul Gass there? Or, am I not remembering that? Did you work with Saul with this?

BENJAMIN LEV: Saul Gass was not there, no. Orchard-Hayes was there. Dick O'Neill was there. Fred Murphy. Roger, I forgot his last name, Glassey from Berkeley. I could say Moses from Stanford. He was the dean. There are a bunch. Oh, Harvey Greenberg. A bunch of other people. There were 200.

JEFF CAMM: How do you compare the feeling of the growth of OR, say, in the '70s versus what we're seeing now? Did it have a similar feel in the sense that the profession was increasing in size and use?

BENJAMIN LEV: I think OR at its birth, after the Second World War, was a very sexy title. A lot of people were curious about that. A lot of companies said, I must hire one or two people to look at some of the problems we're working on, and maybe there are some issues that these guys can solve. And there was, all of a sudden, a burst in demand for OR analysts.

But I think that it reached some stagnation or a steady state and that lasted for maybe a couple of decades. And only lately, we see that we're going into data mining, large data, analytics, and all the other nice titles. And I think that creates some demand for students.

JEFF CAMM: Right. Right. it's kind of amazing that you can get in your taxi cab and the driver knows what analytics is or, at least, thinks he or she-- they think they know what it is. And all the sports stuff helps as well, I guess, with *Moneyball* and all that.

BENJAMIN LEV: But we all know that the cab driver is using OR tools.

JEFF CAMM: Absolutely.

BENJAMIN LEV: When you click your GPS, and you say, I want to go from here to here, there is a dynamic programming program in the back and that gives the shortest route. And if there is a traffic jam, then it dynamically changes the route. And this is a classical OR problem.

JEFF CAMM: Exactly. Exactly. It's a good time to be in the profession. What haven't we covered? Other types of problems you have worked on?

BENJAMIN LEV: Now, I edit books. I'm finishing a book on big data management, and I edited a book on analytics, both by Springer.

JEFF CAMM: These are a collection of papers--

BENJAMIN LEV: Correct.

JEFF CAMM: --to a volume?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes. And I did write one book with Howard Weiss on mathematical programming and proceedings of conferences. And what I'm doing now is I'm having a lot of fun with *Omega*. I really enjoy shaping what appears in a journal.

The journal has maybe 100 publications per year. And I have something to say what appears and what does not appear, and that gives a lot of satisfaction. So when you add it up over a period of 15 years, then it's a body of work of maybe 1,500 papers that I had something to say about.

8. Legacy

JEFF CAMM: Right. Right. That's a big impact on the profession, for sure. How would you like to be remembered in the profession?

BENJAMIN LEV: I think that I enjoyed service and I think I served ORSA and TIMS. I served also INFORMS. I was on the board of both *Operations Research* journal, and I was the Vice President of TIMS. And I was on *Interfaces* for 30 some years. And *ITransactions*. And many other journals.

There is another journal that I'm very active in. There is a journal called *International Journal of Management Science and Engineering Management*. And I am the Co Editor in Chief. The Editor in Chief is from Sichuan University, Professor Xu, and we are already in our 10th year. It is a journal. And it has annual meetings, and it has societies. So I'm active there.

So I think that to answer your question, Jeff, I serve both societies. I give a lot of my free time and my wife always wondered--

JEFF CAMM: Deb?

BENJAMIN LEV: Yes, Debbie. She wondered why are you doing all that? Are they paying you anything? And when I said, no. She said, you should stop doing all these things.

But I'm glad I did all that. I enjoyed it. I think that I give to the society what this profession gave to me.

JEFF CAMM: Ben, I'd like to personally thank you for all you've done for the society and for the institute and the profession. And it's been great having you as a friend and working on these committees together. I want to say a big thanks to you and thanks for sharing the history with us.

BENJAMIN LEV: Jeff, I thank you. And I only regret that my late wife, Debbie, who passed only a few months ago did not see this interview. I'm sure she would have enjoyed seeing you. She always liked you. And when we came to INFORMS conferences, she said, "Where is Jeff?"

JEFF CAMM: I'm sure she's looking down on us right now.

BENJAMIN LEV: Yeah. But before the interview, I was very nervous. And I think that you did a wonderful job, and I really thank you.

JEFF CAMM: My pleasure. Thank you.