

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF DR. ROLAND LOMBARD

CONDUCTED BY GAYLE MALOY FOR "MEET A PIONEER"
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GAYLE MALOY: Good morning friends and welcome to KFAR Radio's Meet a Pioneer. Today is March 15, 1985. I'm Gayle Maloy. Each Friday morning at nine o'clock we meet a pioneer. We'll spend the next hour with Dr. Roland Lombard, honorary Fairbanksan from Wayland, Massachusetts. The doctor is best known for his 57 year long dog mushing career winning every major title in North America. Welcome to the KFAR studios Dr. Lombard.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Thank you.

GAYLE MALOY: How long have you been coming up to Alaska?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Since 1958.

GAYLE MALOY: 1958. Well, we're going to start at the beginning. You were born on September 17, 1911. Where were you born?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: In Raymond, Maine.

GAYLE MALOY: And big family, little family?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I have three sisters.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And, of course, I suppose they've took to me as my family.

GAYLE MALOY: Were you the -- were they all older than you?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I was the older.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh, you were the oldest.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: Had three younger sisters. Were you close?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, very much.

GAYLE MALOY: What was boyhood like in Maine?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, we all had to work to a certain extent and the -- I guess that's why I was able to earn money to go to veterinarian college, and that was the -- some money that I got by winning a very large race down there.

GAYLE MALOY: You won a race that put you through college?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well \$2,000 around 30, 1930. That's a lot of money.

GAYLE MALOY: Gee, whiz! And that paid for your education then?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, I had to work all to get by, you know. I mean it didn't just do it.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And, of course, the family -- my dad he had to work very hard and he couldn't give me any help. And so that when I went to college I had to use just what much - - that money that I --

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: That I could.

GAYLE MALOY: What was the race that you won that got you that money?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Laconia.

GAYLE MALOY: Laconia.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And that was way back in 1930.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. The start of the tough years there, huh?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: What school did you go to? Veterinary school?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: The one in -- in Canada.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, when did you start mushing dogs then? How old were you and how did you happen to get interested in it?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, I was probably about fifteen or sixteen when I started to race dogs. But in those days most of the teams were two and three dog teams. And they went over some fairly long races. And so later on Seppala came down and --

GAYLE MALOY: Leonard Seppala?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: Came to Maine? Went to Maine?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, yes, that was after the big run to Nome with the diphtheria.

GAYLE MALOY: Will you tell us a little bit about that, especially for those of us who are not really familiar with that? Give us some history on Leonard Seppala and that famous run.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, well, he -- he missed -- he started out to do the whole thing to come here to Fairbanks and pick it up and then take it back. But the epidemic was so bad that they had to do it quicker. So they made the run. They had probably about 15 people that were taking it.

GAYLE MALOY: That were mushing?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: And that's from here to Nome?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: And the worst of the epidemic was in that area then?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: That's right.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And so, he missed his lap and he went through two or three and kept right on going. And so he -- he always had a large team and he was -- he --

GAYLE MALOY: What year was that?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: 1923, I think.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I'm not exact, but I think that was then.

GAYLE MALOY: So as a boy he was a hero to you?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, that was one of the things that got me started.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, what was it like when you met him? What were the circumstances? How did you happen to run into him?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, after that he came down for speaking and so forth. And they went to Poland Springs, which is just about twelve miles over the hill from me.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And so I got to know him there. They -- the -- it was a big summer place and the big hotels that were there.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And they went in with him and he stayed there for quite a long time. And so I was too young to take the car or anything like that, so I'd take one dog that I had that -- that I went 10 miles, no, 12 miles I guess it was across there and -- and hung around the place there. And then I'd come back, you know. And so --

GAYLE MALOY: Boy, that must have been a thrill for you then. Here's your hero.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, you'd been interested though, I guess, in animals as a lifelong interest for you?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, yes. I have with cows and horses and all.

GAYLE MALOY: Did you know when you were very young that you wanted to be a veterinarian?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No, no. As a matter of fact, when I got through school, high school, I decided that I -- I saw a lot of people that were being put through for their families and that couldn't really afford it. And they would go and not use the education that they were using. So, I stayed out for one -- one year and then there was two or three things that I thought that I would like to have and then finally it come down to being a veterinarian.

GAYLE MALOY: Huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: So, of course, it was kind of hard, because you couldn't get any jobs during school, because the people living in that area that was going there they wouldn't take outsiders quite, you know.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh, in Canada?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Yeah. Well, you went to -- you were going to school in Canada and it was kind of tough. You won \$2,000 to help pay for things, but that didn't make it easy, did it?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. I had to -- if I -- dad couldn't help me at all even if I had to drop out of school.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: He just was able to take care of the family.

GAYLE MALOY: Now you had dogs during your college years?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No, I had to let those go and all except one that I kept.

GAYLE MALOY: Because you couldn't bear to let them all go?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No, that was a little mongrel dog about the size of a Cocker Spaniel about -- but I ran him on lead just the same and --

GAYLE MALOY: Is that right?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Huh, so did you have a particular breed of dog you used in those early years or was it just like this little one, a kind of a mixture.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, after a while Seppala allowed me to take two dogs, two Siberians.

GAYLE MALOY: Out of his group you mean?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh, I see.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, they had a hundred or a hundred and a quarter I guess perhaps.

GAYLE MALOY: Were they a gift or did you buy the dogs from his kennel?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, no, he just loaned them to me.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh, I see.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And there was some problems with them, but we got that all straightened out and all and when the race was over and everything I -- he said they're mine and he gave me another one. There was three. He came up to Alaska to pick up Siberians and out of nine I got three after a while. They were not -- I mean easy ones to keep, you know.

GAYLE MALOY: Their temperament?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, yeah, they didn't want to work and so forth, but I never had any problem with it. And they were fighters and --

GAYLE MALOY: Um.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: My little mongrel that I had -- I took them in the kitchen with that dog and those dogs just kind of bristled up and started over to go over to get him and he will take a large dog and knock him down. But, of course, they'd get up and probably kill him, you know. But there was no biting or anything like that. I don't know how he -- he does that. And I took that one out and I did the same thing with the other three -- the other two. And they were the most -- they didn't know what to take and they never fought.

GAYLE MALOY: Really!

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Never fought.

GAYLE MALOY: What a strong hearted little dog that was, huh?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yeah, he was -- his name was Bucky.

GAYLE MALOY: Gee whiz. A kind of a special love for some of your dogs, huh?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: There's some that stand out more than others?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah, that was the one that we -- that I did keep, of course, and then he -- when I was in my veterinary office, he came with me and I went into Massachusetts rather than up -- I wanted more dog work.

GAYLE MALOY: So you -- did you know anybody in Wayland or have any family ties? Is it just a place you picked to go and open a business?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, I looked around for quite a little while.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And I worked for a man for about a month -- about a year, year and a half and then I picked out a place and fortunately they were -- I didn't have any money, you know, but they just -- somehow they just thought maybe I'd be sure to pay them back, you know.

GAYLE MALOY: You had a trusting looking face. They could trust you. What year did you start your business?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: 1938, I think.

GAYLE MALOY: 1938 in Wayland, Massachusetts. What was practice like early -- those days of veterinary medicine?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, we did large animals also, but the -- we had a large, large group after a while. I had four other veterinarians working under me and so we -- it -- it got a little bit big.

GAYLE MALOY: It was your practice and these others were working for you?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Gee whiz! You must be one of the largest in the area?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah, I think so, except for the ones that they -- oh, I don't know exactly what to say, but it was -- they take them in for to take care of and so forth.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. Were you -- so when you got into this business and business was doing very well and money was coming in, did you really get into dog mushing again and started new races?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: After a while I did, yes.

GAYLE MALOY: When did you -- when did your career start where you started winning so many titles? I know it all started back East, but at what point was it -- did you really start to rack up the winnings?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, probably somewhere in the late 40's.

GAYLE MALOY: What were some of the races you entered?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, golly, I mean they're just in New England. I mean we didn't go out -- I guess there wasn't hardly any races across the lower --

GAYLE MALOY: It wasn't big everywhere, but it was certainly big in New England area.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: How were the sleds -- what kind of sleds did you have then and what was an average team -- size of a team?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, there were about seven --

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: -- by that time and we -- the sleds were very much like the same way. You know, we've done a little bit better on them and the dogs and harnesses are -- were not quite as good as they are now, but they --

GAYLE MALOY: What were they made of?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: There were some leather ones, but mostly it's a webbing.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. And were the sleds the short ones that they have -- that you see now in the races? Were they similar to that even then?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Very much.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Very much.

GAYLE MALOY: Had you ever done any sort of racing other than or any sort of dog mushing other than racing? Was it utilitarian at all?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. Well, yes in a way. When I was -- I had to go about 13 miles to high school. And I had a car and we -- some other people that were going that way why we'd fill up the car and take them. And then when the snow was good and of course, they weren't plowing the way they used to now, and I would go down with the dog team and they had a -- a lot of people were coming with horses and sleighs and so I just chained them up in the stalls.

GAYLE MALOY: At the school?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Gee, just -- Uh-huh. The dogs would just wait for you while you were attending school during the day.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Right.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, at what point did you get -- think about mushing in Alaska?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, a number of people had asked me to come up and so forth. It used to be that anyone up here and I guess probably down below that when they got to be forty they would stop racing.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And I was coming to about forty-five. And I said to myself, well, if I'm going to go, I'm over the age anyway and so I came up the first four times by air. Then I'd have to get a truck to haul them around with and all that sort of thing.

GAYLE MALOY: You flew the dogs up.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: And got a truck here. Did you know anybody up here really when you first came up, what was it 1956?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I didn't really know --

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: You know, they'd been writing to me and things like that and so I thought well, gee, I guess I'll go, so --

GAYLE MALOY: Huh. Well, by this time I understand that you had started developing some ideas and methods of making a better racing dog. What were some of the things that you had been working on?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, the feeding and the watering and all the things. If it isn't icy and there's plenty of good snow, they can exist without having drinking water.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: But they don't get as much as they'd ought to get and so that we -- a lot of things like that. And when I came up all of the dogs were trucked in the back of a pickup truck.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And just without any straw or anything, you know. Just a lot of things that we were doing down below.

GAYLE MALOY: Now down below though you were using the straw and making more water available? You were doing that, but when you came here, you said you didn't notice those things being done?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. They were just taken out open in the --

GAYLE MALOY: Well, how did you feel about that? Did that bother you? Did it make you worry about those dogs or what?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, they existed very, very well as far as that's concerned, but things have changed and --

GAYLE MALOY: What was it the North American Classic that you entered the first time, about '56? Was that the race?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: '58.

GAYLE MALOY: '58.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: And you won it, is that right?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. I was, I think I was fourth.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh. Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: That first time.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And when I came up -- when I hooked up my dogs, I went out and I got lost.

GAYLE MALOY: On the trail?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah. And then I broke my sled on that same run and the dogs got away and took off. So, Otto Lake was the one that told me where to go and everything and so he came and got me back. Then I hadn't been over the race trail and Earl offered to take me around on a big sled and show me the way to go. So, it was a little icy and it was just bumpy, you know. They didn't have any Skidoo's to work with or anything. It was just snowshoeing and the dogs packing it down.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: So I asked him how -- 'cause I was in this sled and that was bumping and bumping and bumping and I said to him how much of this trail can you run 'em wide open? Oh, he says we got to run them wide open. So I got quite a ride.

GAYLE MALOY: Boy, I bet you -- and you stayed inside? You didn't get thrown out of the bucket?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. No.

GAYLE MALOY: I've heard you referred to as the Babe Ruth of Alaskan dog mushing. When did you meet your -- win your first Alaskan title?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: That was in 1958, no, '59. I almost won the first time, but I did win on the second try.

GAYLE MALOY: Was that exciting? I mean do you get thrilled when you win?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yeah, that's right, that's right.

GAYLE MALOY: When you came back that second -- well, actually when you left the first year, were you -- and you hadn't won but you did pretty well, were you excited and anxious to come back? Did you know you'd come back?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yes.

GAYLE MALOY: What was special? What made, you know, that you were going to travel, what, 5,000 miles?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, we -- I don't know, it kind of -- the trails were better and longer and more chance of -- to butt heads with the rest of the good ones, you know.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. So, that was kind of exciting racing against some big names, huh?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Who were some of those that you were racing with then in those days?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, golly, I -- so many that.

GAYLE MALOY: How about this? I found this 1958 -- remember, recognize some of those?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh.

GAYLE MALOY: That's you in 1958.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: You got to know some of those guys pretty well.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh sure, Atlla. We had a back and forth and back and forth, you know, there that --

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Bergman Sam was great. And Doc Harris, Gareth Wright, Wilbur Samson, oh I tell you.

GAYLE MALOY: Is it true that Gareth Wright ran Cocker Spaniels once?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: He might have. I wouldn't take it away from him, but on the other hand, he's always having very, very good dog teams, very good dog teams.

GAYLE MALOY: What dogs were you mushing here in Fairbanks in those days -- in those first years?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Siberians entirely.

GAYLE MALOY: All Siberians.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: And was that from Seppala? That --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No, we -- we had -- we had been breeding these dogs.

GAYLE MALOY: In Massachusetts?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: That's important. What were you doing special about breeding these dogs? What were you looking for and what were you doing to make them a better racing dog?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, there were some very, very good ones. So, I don't think that at that point I could say that I had, you know, I was just getting some of the better ones.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. Now at some point you switched to Alaska --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: Huskies? Now what prompted that?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: There were more of them and --

GAYLE MALOY: Easier to get?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: There was more of the Alaskan dogs.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And you could hardly breed them and so forth. It takes a lot of dogs to get a good one. I mean you might get a whole bunch in a litter, but you have to have a lot of dogs to get --

GAYLE MALOY: What makes --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: To make the good ones.

GAYLE MALOY: -- that good dog special?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: It's hard to say. You know, they have to be very courageous and just wanting to run and you can't make them go because they just won't. They want to do it themselves. I mean it's -- it's bred into them.

GAYLE MALOY: Did you have -- did you feel any time in your career do you feel that you have some mental communication with your dogs? Do you feel like to get to know each other?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes, I do. And when you're coming up to a tough turn, one that the dogs don't know, if you aren't thinking of that, the dogs may go anywhere. And it actually -- I mean it's funny, but you've got to just think.

GAYLE MALOY: And concentrate on that.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: And somehow the dogs -- your dogs will pick that up.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I think that -- I think that some of them do.

GAYLE MALOY: What did you -- how did you develop this with them? Can everybody do that?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yes. I mean --

GAYLE MALOY: Did you work with them especially? Do you spend a lot of time with them during the day and are you their only feeder and that sort of thing?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, I try to most of the year. You see back then I had to have someone to -- because I was working.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: But the people that we had to do it were, you know, very special people too. You know, they liked the dogs and it wasn't just a job and --

GAYLE MALOY: Does that make a difference?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yes. Yeah. There's -- I've had people that come in and worked and so forth and the dogs -- some of the dogs just don't like them and I don't know why.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I mean they're not mean to them or anything but --

GAYLE MALOY: In your career have you raced mostly short races?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: All short races?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah. I haven't gone to any of the longer ones, no.

GAYLE MALOY: Any particular reason or -- ?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, there's a couple. Number one, by the time that I -- that they started these longer races I was too old a little bit, you know, to stay out there in that cold. And I have great trouble with my hands. I've got some arthritis and so I have to be very careful with my hands. They'd freeze when somebody else could go out with just a pair of gloves.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. Had these longer races started when you were much younger, would you have participated?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I don't know. I don't know. I've questioned over my time the -- this seems like the better one for dogs and the drivers.

GAYLE MALOY: Physically?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: They're getting in some places not long enough trails to do it. Mostly because there isn't the room that we have up here.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. Right. I could imagine there's not many places Outside where you could have a thousand mile race and be out in the wilderness.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Or even the 25 mile race is not -- it's kind of hard to get that much, you know.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. You favor the three heat, is that what you call them, three --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Heat races?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes. Uh-huh. I think that tells whether they're really good dogs or not, but you can't run the dogs every weekend.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Three days going and they'll get stale and they'll be tired and you have to give them either a short race on the next weekend or something like that or you have to skip a weekend.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. Are you still in vet -- practicing veterinary medicine?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. No. I sold my practice and then I worked for up to about three, four years ago I didn't -- I worked with some other people and so I've got all I can do to take care of my dogs.

GAYLE MALOY: How many do you have at home?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, altogether we have about forty.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. There are none up here right now this year, is that correct? You're not

--

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No.

GAYLE MALOY: -- entering any races?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No. I raced down in the lower part.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: You know.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh, you've just been in some races recently?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah, even last week.

GAYLE MALOY: Is that right?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: So, how'd you do?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: I was third.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: But there weren't too many big teams, you know, there.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: The reason that I didn't come up to race this year was that I only had 11 dogs that I could race with and the young -- the rest of them are younger and aren't experienced. So, we're hoping to be back up here with a dog truck full of dogs.

GAYLE MALOY: So, you're going to do this again. You're going to be racing next year?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yes. Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Is it --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, you know, something has to stop after a while, but on the other hand, I'm not going to let it go.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, I hope not. Is it kind of -- does it get you frustrated to watch others going to be racing this week and you're not there?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, yes.

GAYLE MALOY: Or not participating in the races?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, no, I mean I had a good reason for it, you know.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: If I just said well I don't think I'll go, it's -- I just don't want to be the tailwagger, you know, in those. If I can be up in the middle of the pack, I'm not happy about it exactly, but because I'd like to win. But on the other hand, I have to know that some of the bigger kennels and some younger guys that are pretty smart --

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: So, but if I can get in there where I -- but if I start getting back, way back then I'll know that I better quit.

GAYLE MALOY: That spirit of competition is keen isn't it?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: It stays that way. The dogs feel it and you feel it. I understand in one of the articles I read that you felt that it was your responsibility to get excited and do that for the dogs as a coach and a leader.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah. Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, how do you do that? What do you do that shows your dogs you're excited? Do you do anything special or do you run around and you talk to them or what?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, you know, a lot of different little things, but when it's cold and blustery and they've been working pretty hard before, I have some dogs that if I go around the truck and clap my hands and they'll be pushing at each other and jumping and all that sort of thing, you know. Just kind of get them, you know, into the wanting to go.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And so --

GAYLE MALOY: You have a close relationship with them, huh?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: Not just a machine. Have you ever had any dangerous or frightening experience, anything awful ever -- kind of bad happen to you on the trails?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Not in -- on the race trail, but I think probably I come as near as can be after the race here in Fairbanks. We used to go across the Tanana to get some running on the flats.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And we had some good trails there. So after the race was over and a day or two and I'd bought one or two dogs and I wanted to put them on a team before I went back home, because we don't have any snow there during, you know, by the time I get home. And there was one little dog that was a little female that I bought. And I put her on alone and I was going across the river and there was a great deal of snow so that you didn't see the water until you was right there. And I didn't know what the leader would do whether she would come around for me or not because the first time I was out with her. And that was probably about fifty feet across and opened up, and it was just boiling and I was right on the, you know, right on the thing, you know, because the snow over there so that you didn't see it until you was right there. And by golly I called -- I called her to come around and she did.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh!

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And I didn't step off my runners or anything. I was afraid that I was -- didn't have anything underneath me, you know. And when they got all the way around there, I just let them go, you know. You know, got -- turned the sled to come back and I tell you that was -- that was probably as close as I've been.

GAYLE MALOY: I bet you were proud of her and shaking in your boots --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes.

GAYLE MALOY: -- at the same time?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yes. Yes. And it was a bad thing. We took her home and she had a cough and I did everything that I could tell -- you know, to find out what was going on. And I took her into a large veterinary hospital that they had better facilities than what I had, you know. And so she had tuberculosis.

GAYLE MALOY: Oh!

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: And they said that there's no way that they knew that they could take care of that. And so we had to put her down.

GAYLE MALOY: Is that hard to do?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, I let them do that at that time. But with my own dogs, most of them, if they're happy after we stop going to races with them, a lot of them go up to 14, 15, 16 years and I don't let anyone put them down. When they're really ill, then I'll do it.

GAYLE MALOY: There's nothing wrong with living to a ripe old age for the dog, huh?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: No, we try to make them happy.

GAYLE MALOY: Uh-huh. What was your most cherished memory? Do you have a particular one or many?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, I think what was -- when I first got to race here. And then that's very hard to think of another one. I mean --

GAYLE MALOY: You had a special glow inside. It just meant a lot to you. Well, you've come back up here a lot of years. There must have been a lot of special --

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yes.

GAYLE MALOY: -- things that happened, made some special friends.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah. Yeah. There's nothing like being up here. I mean I've raced down south and it's great, but, on the other hand, it's -- it doesn't seem like it's winter.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, you've set the standard by which many mushers aspire to and set their goals. What do you see in the future of dog mushing?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Well, I think that it's going to keep going and I think that the people that are in it are pretty good people and so I -- they take good care of their dogs and they're -- they, you know, there is no fist fights or anything like that. I mean it seems as though things are going very well.

GAYLE MALOY: Well, welcome to our city once again in 1985. It's a pleasure to have you here. The Grand Marshal?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Uh?

GAYLE MALOY: Honorary Race Marshal?

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah, that's it.

GAYLE MALOY: Of our North American Classic, starts today.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Yeah.

GAYLE MALOY: And we're looking forward to seeing you next year too with your own dogs.

DR. ROLAND LOMBARD: Oh, yes. I've got to do it.