

Oral History Interview_Sue Hritzak

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Participating: Paul Adams, Chris Breiseth, Tim Gilmour, Sue Hritzak, and Jim Rodechko

Christopher Breiseth (CB): Tell us where you grew up and how you ended up at Wilkes.

Susan Hritzak (SH): Man, that's an easy story to tell. I'm so ensconced in this place, as you all know. I have two older brothers, Bob and Ed, who both attended Wilkes University. They're eight and nine years older than me. I started hanging around this place, so to speak, when Bob was on the wrestling team. I would say I was about ten or eleven. I can remember my mother making them bring me over to the football games when they were there with their friends, so I was around Ralston Field a lot. I've always been a "Hill" person, and Paul knows what I mean. You hang out on the hilltop to watch the game, so I've been a "Hill" person ever since. I can remember running up and down the side of the hill that's closest to the tennis courts and finding a lacrosse ball. It was this hard ball that was orange, and in my mind, it was a Super Ball! I was just so thrilled that I found this ball in the bushes, and I kept it. My oldest brother, Ed, ended up transferring out of Wilkes after his sophomore year, because back in '68 and '69, we did not have a computer science major yet. He ended up transferring the Williamsport way and getting his degree at Lock Haven. So, he left Wilkes, but Bob stayed on to graduate with a Business degree and wrestled for four years. He had his compadres of Mike Lee, Alan Zellner, Tom Morris, and Jay McGinley. I grew up with all those guys in my neighborhood. They were hanging around my house since I was a kid. I learned to ride a two-wheeler bike when I was about six years old from Jay McGinley. I go way back with all these guys, and so I have very fond memories of being a young child and hanging around Wilkes.

Paul Adams (PA): What Street did you grow up on in Kingston?

(SH): I grew up on Chestnut Street. We were right near Wyoming Seminary. It was the Chestnut block between Newett Place and Pringle Street. Just a half block away from the Wyoming Seminary Football Stadium. We used to bend back the side of the fence and go underneath to play inside the stadium.

(CB): This is our time for confession, so we're open to that!

(SH): They ended up putting hooks on the bottom of the fence so that kids couldn't do that anymore. Well, that's because of us!

(PA): What school did you go to?

(SH): Maple Street, so I walked the other direction for a block. I went to Maple Street School and then went to the Wyoming Valley West School District, which, when the flood of 1972 hit,

we were going to all the different schools. In seventh grade, I went to Luzerne, in eighth grade I went to Forty Fort, and in ninth grade I went to Plymouth. When the flood hit, we were back in Kingston, then we went back to Plymouth, and then I ended up back in Kingston again to finally graduate. The new Plymouth High School had not been built yet, so I was at Kingston High School.

(CB): When did Wyoming Valley West come into existence?

(SH): In '68, because my brother Ed was the first class to graduate from Wyoming Valley West. They combined the west side towns. When it became my time to look for a place to go to college, I don't recall ever applying anywhere else, because when my brother Bob was here, he was a student worker for Doris Barker, who was our registrar at the time. He used to say to Doris, "Hey, I've got my little sister coming up here." I was eventually hired by Doris. I graduated from high school on a Thursday, and the following Monday, for that summer, I was to start working in the registrar's office as a student worker. I never actually made it there that first day, because that weekend, when we went to visit my aunt and uncle in New Jersey, our car broke down and we didn't make it back in time. I remember calling Doris from a payphone in Blakeslee Corners and telling her I could not make it to my first day on the job as her student worker since we weren't back in town yet.

(CB): And she was forgiving?

(SH): Yes, absolutely.

(CB): That was good.

(SH): Yeah. You have me reminiscing here. So this would have been the summer of 1977. The registrar's office was still in Weckesser's lower level. I remember during that summer having to substitute upstairs when Peggy Corbett would go to lunch. I used to sit at her desk to be the welcome desk person that summer, and then I'd go back down in the basement to work when she came back.

(PA): I remember registering in the lower level when Ben Hopkins Moses was the registrar.

(SH): Correct. All of the old bulletins that Doris had, that I've now accumulated, had Hopkins Moses' name on them.

Jim Rodechko (JR): Were you there when we were still registering students in the gymnasium?

(SH): No, I never had to do that, but I heard stories of when everybody would show up, get in line, and there were these class cards. When you walked up to whatever department you wanted, if that section's cards were gone, the course was closed.

(PA): But, Sue, did you get to take final exams in the gym on a lap board?

(SH): I've heard about those times, but no, I didn't have to do that, though I considered using that idea several years later when we ran out of rooms for finals. "Oh, we'll just use lap boards in the gym like they used to," but it never happened.

(CB): What about your actual degree program? What did you study?

(SH): That's a very good question. I started as an accounting major and thought that's what I'd like to do in my life. President Bob Capin was the instructor of Intermediate Accounting at eight in the morning during my sophomore year. I remember going to the first test that semester, and I studied hard, but nothing clicked. I was blanking out, and I wasn't understanding the concepts. I didn't do well, and I decided from that point on, I wasn't going to be an accountant anymore. I was going to switch over to business. So the next time we had class that semester, I didn't show up. The Registrar's office had moved to Parrish Hall at that point, which is the building by the Market Street Bridge. I hid out in the back file room behind Ruth Bishop, our Recorder, and I heard Bob come up to the counter in the office. He asked, "Where's Susan? She didn't come to class today." I arrived later with my drop slip and change of major forms. I said, "Nope, sorry. I'm leaving the class. I'm not going to do this." So I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce and Finance.

(PA): So, Susan, this begs the question, between the lower level of Weckesser, Parrish Hall, Parrish Hall, the Marts Center, and Karambelas, what was your favorite?

(SH): Actually, right now, Capin Hall is my favorite. I just like the way it's physically set up and the staff group I'm with now. I mean, don't get me wrong, there are a lot of good memories at all those different places, but this is the most comfortable setting. I actually wrote some of this stuff down. I was in Weckesser, Parrish, Sturdevant, the Marts Center, Passan, UCOM, Bartikowsky's, and then finally to Capin. That's all of the Registrar's offices I've been in.

(CB): I was wondering, as I prepared for today, who of you, Paul and Sue, has been here longer?

(PA): Well, I started before Sue. I'm still working, I suppose, but I worked full-time for forty-three years. I graduated in '77, which is the year she started here.

(SH): Right. And when I graduated in '81, I didn't continue working here. I left, and I worked at Franklin First Federal Savings and Loan for a year. Then I transitioned over to Atlantic Insurance the second year out of school, and I worked there for a year. I wasn't happy there, so then I came back to the Wilkes Career Services office as an alum, asking, "Can you help me out? I want to refresh my resume and some interviewing skills. I want to look for a different job. I wasn't happy in the insurance industry." That's when Gene Domzalski was Director of Career Services. I think he had just come off being the baseball coach and part of Admissions. He said to me, "Well, my assistant director just quit. Would you like to work here?" I got hired on the spot. It doesn't work that way anymore, but I was hired to be the Associate Director of Career Services with Gene Domzalski. That's how I got my foot in the door to actually work here as a full-time employee.

September 1, 1983, is when I started working here full-time.

(CB): So it was just before I came.

(SH): Yes.

(CB): So talk about Doris and how you got to work with her. She's a large figure that we did not interview, unfortunately. She was a major figure in the administrative structure, so give us a profile of her from your close association.

(SH): We were very close. Again, going back to when my brother was in college, and I was still a kid, she had twin sons. Unfortunately, the week before the flood in 1972, her one son, Kevin, was murdered at Club Lee in Edwardsville. Unfortunately, when the flood happened days later, all of the evidence for his murder got washed away. I don't think it's ever been solved who killed him. But my brother was friends with Kevin. They were all in that same age group, so I remember that horrible thing happening and her going through that.

(JR): I think Kevin was murdered the day before Jack and Gay Meyers got married.

(SH): Yeah, that sounds familiar, because they were married right around the flood time. So, again, when I was hanging around at Wilkes, I kind of knew who Doris was, and then I moved to working with her when I turned eighteen and enrolled at Wilkes. She was a great mentor. I mean, back then, you didn't have too many women in positions like that. It was all men prior to that, and she was non-degreed, as far as I know. Paul, she did not earn a degree, right?

(PA): She went to the Seminary Dean School of Business.

(SH): There you go. She took over after Ben left and took me under her wing, allowing me to do a lot of stuff in the office. By the time I was a senior, I did an internship, and she let me compile the master schedule, so that was a good learning experience. And she used to give me rides home from work, too, because she lived not too far away from me. I didn't have a car back then, so my brother Bob would give me a ride to work in the morning. He was working at United Penn Bank at the time, though he was out of the house and married at that point. He'd drop me off, and then I'd get a ride home with Doris. We always used to stop, especially on Fridays, at the drive-through beverage beer store. She wouldn't even have to get out of the car! We'd pull up to the takeout window, they'd hand her the case, she'd put it on my lap, and then she'd drop me off on the way home.

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[REDACTED] When Doris retired, she moved down to Delray Beach, Florida, and Ron (Rainey) was down there too. I was friends with her after she retired. My other friends, Margaret, Karen, and Betty, would get together, and we would invite her to join. We'd get together maybe once every month or two just for a girls' night. We would go out, get some drinks, and have dinner, or we would be at one of our houses, and she would join right in. She was always so grateful to be a part of this little group that we included her in. I remember the one time she brought us all these beautiful tea sets. We each got a teacup and a saucer that was unique to ourselves. I still have it.

(PA): Yeah, she was quite a woman. And Joan is gone now, too, isn't she?

(SH): Yes, Joan passed away about two years ago. Joan Pappas. She worked in the office with us as well. I stayed close with her as well. I called her every year on her birthday, and I called her at Christmas. She was a lot of fun, too.

(CB): Tell us about the management of the Registrar's office as it evolved during your time serving it. Was Doris open to change as we got into the computer age? Was this a hard thing for her to negotiate?

(SH): She didn't have a lot to do with the computers. We were still using Thesis. That was our first system that came along in 1983.

(PA): The Student Information System.

(SH): Yeah, SIS. It was a small company out of Scranton, and there were only a handful of schools using it. After a few years, we moved to Banner in '94, when the student module got going. We realized that if something happened to these two guys who owned the company, we'd

be up the creek, as they say, so we had to go with a more national company. I guess Doris did have the computers in those couple of years. She would have had a computer to use for the records and everything in the master schedule.

(PA): And what year did she leave Wilkes?

(SH): She left in '89. I worked those six years, from '83 to '89, with Gene in the Career Services office, and when she was retiring in '89, she called me up and asked, "Susie, do you want my job now?" I said, "Okay," and she said, "Well, they're not actually going to give it right to you. We need someone with a little more experience. We're giving the job to Jack Myers, but he's going to have an Assistant Registrar and that's you." So I became Assistant Registrar to Jack, which we never had before. He and I were the team then for the next eleven years, and that was great. I needed to learn the job more, but I really enjoyed it. It was the best thing for me to spend all those years under Jack's mentoring. You all know Jack. He was quite a guy. But he had nothing to do with computers. He would say, "Something's not right. Can you hit the twanger for me and make it do whatever it is called?" "Yes, Jack." So I handled that part of the job while also running the office. I was there when we moved, again, from Thesis to Banner, so I handled all that. But Jack had the institutional knowledge in his head, and he did the bulletin! Remember?

(PA): Yeah!

(SH): He'd be walking down the street with those long yellow legal length tablets, and he'd have all the edits in red. His favorite thing in the world was that red pen, right, Jim?

(JR): Oh, yeah, that's for sure!

(SH): He did the editing of the bulletin, but then things would come up where he had to handle some of it, and I kind of handled the rest. We were a great team. But even after he retired in '89, and when I took over as Registrar, we continued, obviously, to stay close. We would have lunch every January before he left to go south. He would leave on January 2nd or 3rd. It was something like that.

(JR): January 15th through March 15th.

(SH): There you go, you got it! He'd go down to Mississippi, or wherever, taking the bulletin with him, all those edits, and he'd be hand adjusting them. But we would always have lunch right before he left. And throughout the year, if there was something I needed or if something came up and I didn't know how to do it, I would just call him up and ask, "Jack, do you remember this committee you were on? What was said? Who was the head of it? Give me the institutional history of it," and he would. It's funny, even when I was still working with him, he would say, "Come on, SQ, we need to get out of here." So at about 3:30 or so, on a weekday afternoon, he would take me over to Boris's. Al Boris would not let a woman walk in the front door by herself, so he would take me in the side door. We'd go in and sit, and we couldn't sit in the bar. We had to sit in the dining room area together. So there would be Jack and I, around four o'clock on

whatever weekday it was. We had a short bartender, who was a tiny Italian-looking guy, in his little black suit with the black shoe polish on his hair to make it look darker. We'd sit down, and he'd come over to take an order. By the sly look on his face, he thought we had something going on, but we said, "No, just colleagues!" We would just talk about the office goings on, and other things on campus and just try to get away from it for a little bit. It was a good little getaway. So, yeah, Jack was a great mentor. I had two very different experiences with Doris and Jack, but those were my two great mentors. And like I said, Doris made it so homey in the office. She just cared about the students and made sure everybody was good with our work. She cared about everyone so much, and that's a good thing to learn from her.

(JR): I think you followed in that line, Sue.

(SH): Thank you, Jim. I hope I did.

(JR): Well, I know you got my grandson, who couldn't get any advice from the engineering department. You got him into the right courses, and he graduated.

(SH): Yeah, that's my job! I'm the Registrar! My job is to graduate students.

(CB): You know, this is an unusual opportunity. We never got to interview Doris, but we also didn't get to interview Jack. Jim, you were really close with them as well. Why don't you add to the portrait, not just in terms of the Registrar's office, but as a fellow historian? Give us a portrait of Jack Myers, who was a key guy in my years.

(JR): Well, we were best friends for forty-seven years until he passed away. We played golf together and went everywhere together. Sue is right about the red pen. I used to laugh at him for that. He'd grade student papers, and with that red pen, he wrote more on their papers than the students did! I said to them, "Jack, they don't even look at this stuff," which I think was true for the most part. They just looked at the grade, and that was it. But he would write endless amounts on those term papers and tests. He was an athlete, too. People don't realize that he was on the All-State Minnesota basketball team, and he was very, very good.

(SH): I used to love his Midwestern sayings. I say them to this day in the office! He'd say, "Things are running short, SQ, we've got tight sneakers!" Or something controversial would happen in a meeting, and he'd say, "I got everybody's bowels in an uproar!" I used to love that, and I still, once in a while, pull them out and say them in the office! He was always a happy guy. No matter what the situation was, he was a happy guy.

(CB): What has happened to their daughter?

(SH): She's a doctor.

(JR): Vince lived in Wellsboro, right? They have two children. When I last saw the little boy, he looked just like Jack.

(SH): Oh, really? That's good.

(CB): What got Jack from Minnesota to Wilkes-Barre?

(JR): Well, he went to Clark University for graduate work.

(CB): In Massachusetts?

(JR): Yes. And then he came down to Wilkes-Barre. He had an advisor at Clark, and he was doing the dissertation with him, but the advisor left and went to Rutgers. He was a big name. I'm having trouble remembering his name. But Jack was about to finish the dissertation when he left. So Jack finished the dissertation, and they said he could still work with the man from Rutgers. I remember the letter he got from the man. He wrote, "Congratulations, you're finished. Great job. As far as I'm concerned, you graduated." But then, some guy at Clark, who hated his advisor, said, "No," and he never got the degree from Clark. So he later went to Mississippi for a doctorate in higher education.

(CB): What was the dissertation on? Do you remember?

(JR): The one from Clark was about a philanthropist in the early 19th century. I read the dissertation, and it was very good. I don't know what logical argument they could have had against it, but the guy didn't approve it.

(CB): I team-taught with Gay in one of my African American experience courses, which was a great experience. We taught, among other things, a slave narrative by Harriet Jacobs. This girl was caught in an attic space. She was very confined, for years, above the home of her white slave owner. They created a box with the precise dimensions of the space that Jacobs had lived in, and we required every one of the students in the class to crawl into this space and to imagine themselves. So Gay and I had an interesting relationship, which I value very much. I do remember him smoking.

(SH): Oh yes, he was a smoker. I have another good Jack Myers story for you, if you want. So Jack and I went to a registrar's conference, MSACROA, in Atlantic City, and when we were coming back, I needed gas for the car, so we stopped at the rest stop, I believe it was in Allentown, on the way back to put some gas in, and being the gentleman that Jack was, he had to be the one to get out to pump the gas. He said, "You sit. I'll go pay inside," So I pulled up to the pump and sat there. He got out, and I guess what he did was put the gas pump in my car and then went inside to pay. So I'm sitting and waiting, but I didn't realize he had already put the hose in the car, and this big truck comes around the corner. I thought, "Well, I'll move my car up a bit to get out of the way," again, not realizing the hose in my gas tank. So as I pull away, I pulled the whole hose right off the pump since I didn't even realize it was there! He comes out, and he asks, "What'd you do?" I said, "Jack, I didn't know you had a pump in my car! I moved the car." I felt horrible. I said, "Oh, my God. I'm going to have to pay for all this damage." He went inside to

talk to the guy, and he when he came back said, “They said not to worry about it. It was an accident.” Whew!

(CB): Did it break the hose away from the pump?

(SH): Totally. The handle and the hose were totally disengaged from the pump itself. And in my mind, I'm thinking gas is spewing all over, but it wasn't. It wasn't turned on. But yeah, that made me laugh!

(CB): Your relationship survived!

(SH): It did. And then we laughed all the way home from there. It was just another fun Jack Meyers story.

(CB): One of the things we've talked about with most of the people in this project is getting a handle on the Wilkes culture. You've had a unique angle on Wilkes from the time of being a younger sister of Wilkes students, and then it being virtually your whole career. So you've watched the changing of the guard at the presidential and vice-presidential offices. Can you talk about Wilkes' culture?

(SH): It really has changed. When I think about it, it was really only Dr. Farley and Dr. Michelini for whom I was not here for during their presidencies. So all the rest of you I have been here for. But again, times change. I think back to when my oldest brother was here, and new students had to wear the beanies on their heads. It was all that initiation of the freshmen, and obviously, that went away by the time I was a freshman here. I had such a good time, and to actually work here now is amazing. I'm no longer a student, and I'm not just an alum, but I'm now also an employee of the university. I'm the one helping students, first in the career services area, and now in the Registrar's office. I get to see all the different changes of the students, like how many students we have here. There are years when our population was much lower, and then we have the years where we are booming much more. We needed to try to figure out where we're going to put these students, adding more classes, and making more dorm rooms. Doubles become triples, and triples become quads. I've been here for the different ebbs and flows that happen at any university, so to see that change is great. I do have a different perspective on that over the years of that. I have to say, I don't know too many people who stay as long as Paul and I have. I've been here for forty-three years now.

Tim Gilmour (TG): How many years have you been at Wilkes, Jim?

(JR): I was there for about thirty-five years.

(SH): So I have to tell you guys, I think Paul and I are going to be tied for our number of years. With the buyout that they're about to put out to everybody, I'm 99.9% sure I'm going to take it. I've heard, first, that we were going to be gone by May 31st, but now I'm hearing it's August 31st. Once the buy-in kicks in, that takes me to my September 1st anniversary date, which will

be forty-three years.

(PA): Hey, that's a good sound.

(SH): So, yes, I'm almost positive that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to go out this year.

(JR): So, as Registrar, Sue, what hurdles have you had to get over and problems you've needed to resolve?

(SH): Well, there have been things as big as the student information system transfer from a smaller system to a larger, national one. I remember sitting in all those meetings in the Weckesser basement. There was a conference room there, and all of the department heads had to meet and decide what exact codes we didn't need to do. Behind every screen were all the things we had to figure out. How were we going to make it look? How was the transcript going to look? What order do we put everything in? As I said, alumni was the first module to go up on Banner in '92, and then the student module went up in '94. So again, that changed the way registration happened, obviously. We were at the time of the class cards, but now students were just getting their registrations approved. I can picture them in line in the Marts Center. We were up on the second floor in room 202. So the line would go down the hall there on registration days. Later on, when we were in Passan across the street, they were inside for most of it. We would have the whiteboards up in the hallways, so I would literally go up, and as sections would close, we'd mark them off the list. We'd update it every couple of hours so that the students would know as they were coming in. And one-by-one, we would literally hand-enter their courses in the system for them. Then we transitioned from something like that to now having an online system. We were having to teach the students how to register online, and these things called ALT PINs came into play, which means you had to meet with your advisor first to get your ALT PIN. That was your passkey to register for classes. At that point, the student could go online to register themselves. What I really miss in this whole situation is the good old days, especially with putting in grades for faculty. They had a sheet of paper that they wrote the final grades on, originally, and then later on, they filled in the little dots. They had to personally come into the Registrar's office, and we'd make sure there was a grade dot on everyone's name. Then we'd rip the carbon copies apart, because they were the sheets with the ink in between, and the faculty member got the second copy. We kept the original, and then we'd crumble up the ink paper and throw it in the garbage. We got to know every single faculty member, because they all had to come into the office. We knew who everybody was. And we'd also always have a plate of cookies or a dish of candy out for when they came in.

(JR): I remember that. Are there students coming into the office for something anymore?

(SH): We never get lines in the office. They occasionally stop in. As for faculty, we get phone calls and emails, but I have no idea who a lot of them are. Names appear, and I see faces in faculty meetings, but I just don't know them like I used to. I used to know everybody.

(JR): I remember when we would post grades by Social Security numbers.

(SH): Oh, that's a big no-no today! I remember in Parrish Hall when your Social Security number was on your Wilkes ID. We had that old embossing machine in the corner of the office, and as student workers, we'd make the new ID cards. We'd be hitting those heavy buttons, and it would punch the student's Social Security number right on the card.

(CB): I had the Employee ID number. Frances Perkins talked about the Social Security numbers, and she made it explicit that those numbers would never be used for cross-reference purposes by the government, particularly by the IRS and the FBI. I was so fond of her, and I sort of entered into her world, as you can see if you read my book. I didn't learn my Social Security number, but here I was as a president. It was just impossible.

(SH): You had to know it. That was your ID.

(CB): It was at Wilkes when I finally learned what my Social Security number was. That's a long time, because I got it while I was still in junior high school or high school.

(SH): When I was here as a student, we had a five-digit number as our ID. Mine was 55044. I still remember it to this day!

(PA): 00935. There you go!

(JR): There you go!

(SH): We had the smaller student numbers before that, but I just can't imagine how we had Social Security numbers printed and embossed on these ID cards. That was a crazy, crazy time. So things like that have evolved. As far as FERPA and everything, so much has changed. There's just a lot of differences as the times have progressed.

(CB): What are your observations about our relationship, from a student perspective, particularly with King's?

(SH): Oh, it was a big rivalry way back then. The rivalry is still there today, especially with the sports, but it's not what it used to be like. They used to be the "absolute enemy" down the street. We would have snowball fights by the Market Street Bridge. That was the dividing line between the two campuses, and it was a very, very dividing line back then. That kind of faded after a while. It's really not that way anymore.

(PA): Even athletically, it's not really there.

(CB): I refer to that snowball fight in my book. It happened before I got there, but I assumed it sort of stopped at the point when King's stopped football.

(SH): True. It was gone for a while for them. You know, another thing that changed over the

years is the school spirit. I remember my days as a student here during Homecoming. We had parades, and every dorm was decorated. They would have contests with the dorm decor, but all of that has faded away. Again, times have changed, and I miss it. We had different dinner dances, group parties, and the TDR, but all that has gone by the wayside. And then even the ebbs and flows over the years of the spirit here. A lot of our students are very apathetic, I think. I mean, Golden Horde was well before my time, but the football team went 10-0 in '93. We would pack the football stadium.

(CB): We were on the first yard line, but we didn't punch it in for a touchdown. That would have put us in for nationals.

(SH): Yep. Didn't Colonel Bob have a helicopter bring him in and drop him in the field?

(PA): They had the horse, too.

(SH): Oh, yes! The horse came in, and then he did a Secret Service bit. He had a limo come in, and the basketball players were in suits like they were Secret Service walking along the car, and then he popped out of the car like he was the president. We also had the big W that sat in the gym for a while. They rode that over there while he was inside of it, and he popped out of it.

(CB): Do you know him well?

(SH): Yes. He was here not too long ago for the Hall of Fame dinner, and we sat together then. We were really yucking it up and reminiscing then, too. I also remember packing the gym for basketball season either in '97 or '98. We went to the Final Four, and you could not get a seat in that gym. It was packed solid, and the atmosphere was just amazing back then.

(JR): That's great.

(PA): I remember when Colonel Bob graduated. He walked across the stage and pulled a fake fall. He popped up with his hands raised over his head.

(SH): And then he came back for his master's degree, so then he had a little more fun, too.

(CB): Sue, could you say something about the changing role of women at Wilkes, both within faculty and staff and with students?

(SH): There was definitely a bigger role for female administration as the years went on, though you did have your originals, like Jane Lampe, who was here. Paul, you worked so closely with Jane. She was quite a figure on campus. She was the dean of women. I guess back then, there was a dean for men and a dean for women who both worked in the student affairs department.

(PA): Yeah, that was way back before you came. When you were here, she and Arthur were Associate Deans.

(SH): Right. And I think back to when Rachael Lohman was our financial aid director. So, Chris, the amount of women in the administrative numbers absolutely went up as the years went by.

(JR): And in the faculty as well.

(SH): Yeah, you're right, Jim. I think it's across the board.

(JR): When I first came, I couldn't remember many women faculty at all. Betty Yar was in math and computer science, but beyond that, there weren't many. I guess the field hockey coach and Doris Saracino would have been there, too. Also, there was Grace Kimball, but she left before I came here.

(PA): Do you remember Dr. Lord?

(SH): Oh, yeah, I had Dr. Lord. She was my English 101 teacher.

(CB): She was fantastic. She was very much part of my inauguration.

(SH): There was Dr. Taylor in the business school, too.

(CB): We had an interview with her, so we have her take on all this. What are the changes you have seen in a woman student's perspective of how they deal with the university and their experience? Has it changed over the years?

(SH): Again, I can only really speak from when I was that student, but I didn't see many obstacles for myself then, in any perspective, whether it's registering for classes, taking tests, or looking for jobs. And really, the students since then, it's not like they would come to me with their issues and complaints. That would be more, maybe, Paul's area if there were issues that they had in the residence halls or with faculty. Did you see more of that, Paul, over the years?

(PA): I don't know. It was always such a gradual change for me over the years that I always had a hard time distinguishing one generation from the next. They just all kind of blended together. Certainly, you can differentiate certain eras and things like that, especially when social media came along, though that would have changed pretty dramatically over the years. There would have been a chasm that used to exist between students. When you were a student, it would have been much, much greater, but that virtually disappeared, thankfully.

(CB): Why?

(SH): I think part of it is because more students live in the apartments around campus, so they're not really resident students. They kind of become commuters, even though they live locally. So that might have had something to do with it.

(PA): I think you're probably right. I think the advent of off-campus housing and the shift of everybody from out of town living in the residence halls had something to do with it.

(CB): What is the ratio of townies to students living either in dorms or in apartments around campus? Is that ratio still referred to today? It was very prominent in my time there.

(PA) The commuting student population is much lower now. In fact, I'd be surprised if there were only six hundred or seven hundred commuters at this point. And it's harder to distinguish, too with people living off campus, but you still need to have a two-year residency on campus. Towards the end of my career, I used to always see that it was like thirds. It was like a third commuter, a third off campus, and a third living in the residence halls. That's the way it worked, but it is very different from when you were president. There were probably over one thousand commuter students and only eight hundred residential students. It was very different back then.

(SH): And what's different, too, in general, is that the population has changed with the addition of so many graduate programs and graduate students now. We didn't have any of them way back then. There would maybe be a couple of graduate engineering or math majors, but now it has taken off. Think of those years for graduate education. We were bringing in students left and right in the Mike Speziale and Joe Bellucci years. We had all that income coming in from those programs, but now the education majors have gone down a little bit, and nursing is flying. They are saving us a lot now. So the total population has a larger number of online graduate, professional, and doctoral students versus the traditional undergraduate students. That has been a big shift over the years.

(PA): Why don't you talk a little bit about the ups and downs of the current time and having to work with online program managers?

(SH): It's very different. We partnered with HotChalk for recruiting when nursing first got going, and again, when you're dealing with external people like that, and trying to make everything work, they have their views and goals, while we have ours. Trying to make it still be legitimate and work the right way was a big challenge. They were insistent on making all those mini eight-week terms, so we had to create a dozen different terms within the university, which was a lot of work for a lot of people, from financial aid to finance to registrar. It was a lot of extra work to make all of this, again, stay within the legal bounds and the federal and state regulations for aid, but we made it work. But after a time, we saw that that wasn't going to be the case anymore, and for whatever reason, we dissolved that partnership with HotChalk. Then we took on KeyPath. They stayed within our normal terms of fall, spring, and summer terms, so it made everything fall back into place again and made it easier for everyone. Though the volume of courses and students is much greater now. In the office, we deal with not just registration tasks, but also graduation clearances, diplomas, and all that. The number is much greater, but the process is fairly easy now. It's a nice, settled-in process. And speaking of graduation, hot off the press news just happened yesterday. We're going back to just one Commencement ceremony a year. That just came down the pipeline. I guess the Cabinet agreed, which is what it was like back when I graduated. We have students graduating at three different times of the year, but we will only

have one Commencement Ceremony in May. I literally, this morning, went on the '26-'27 calendar and removed the line that referenced the September 13th summer commencement. That's not happening this summer.

(CB): That situation happened when I was president. Did it happen before I came?

(SH): Yeah, we were at one ceremony, and then I think we went to either two or three. I mean, there was a point we were at two, and then we went to three, and then we went back down to two. We did away with the winter ceremony because of the weather.

(CB): Who started it? Was that during Capin?

(PA): I don't think so. I think it was with you, Chris.

(TG): Yeah, I think it was you, Chris.

(JR): I think so, too.

(SH): Yeah, we had the big one and the two minis, as we would call them. They were only an hour long.

(PA): I remember we used to do them in the CPA (Center for Performing Arts). I keep calling it the CPA, but nobody calls it that anymore.

(CB): I thought it was called that when I was there as well.

(JR): Well, we used to do the graduations in the old gym.

(SH): Or at Ralston Field. I graduated twice on Ralston Field.

(PA): Or the Armory.

(JR): The first few years I was there, we graduated at night in the old gym, and I'll tell you, the temperature, whew.

(JR): I remember Linda Hobrock had to be carried out because she passed out.

(JR): I can remember having a tie, but I had to throw it away because it was so full of sweat after. I think I lost three or four pounds during the ceremony. It was murder.

(CB): I came on July 1st, and it became very clear to me that the first priority was to build a gym or conference center. My first board meeting in the fall was held in the old gym, and then we did a tour of the locker room situation. I explained how the wrestlers would be wrestling in an event while the basketball team was using another part of the court for their practice. Pattie Davies and

I strategized about that. She was very nervous about getting into a capital campaign, and when I looked at the Middle States report, it was really hard on Wilkes in terms of the athletic facilities. We had the Wilkes Open wrestling event every December or January, and I think, nationally, we were referred to as “The Cigar Box Gym on Franklin Street” in the newspaper. Anyway, as a new president coming in, this was absolutely the first priority. And part of it was the heat. It was very bad in the gym and during Commencement. And in the 1980s, you couldn't get that many people in that space. It was a wonderful facility, and it was the first facility Wilkes built in '49, but we were ready to move beyond that. So that was the first big fundraising I did, and I think the Marts Center really changed the whole character of the campus.

(SH): Yep, absolutely. I think of things like when we built Breiseth Hall, and now we have a bigger gym, and then we added a classroom office building, COB.

(SH): I named it that because I said, “Alright, we're building the class schedule, we have a new building, we have new classrooms, and now we need to put something in the system to identify where these classes will be.” It didn't have a name on it yet, so I said, “We're calling it COB. Classroom Office Buildings.” That's where COB came from. That was me.

(CB): I had a hard time referring to it as Breiseth Hall when I left, because it was COB. I've had much to reflect on as I've written the book.

(SH): And then, as we acquired the call center, which became UCOM, which then became Simms. And then next door, Bartikowsky's became Karambelas. We have all of these town structures that are now a part of Wilkes.

(CB): That really was Tim's initiative.

(JR): And Ten East South and 32.

(SH): That was a big one to acquire, too. And then we got DelBalso Ford down the block. That's now our maintenance headquarters area.

(TG): Yeah, Scott Byers got that done. That really cleaned things up there.

(CB): That was one of the things that I focused on in my book, and it shows how each generation worked. I was standing in front of the Farley Library, looking at Kirby and Chase Halls, before the John Wilkes statue came along, and we still had these buildings behind what would become Fenner Quadrangle. There was also one other house along there that still had a carriage house behind it, so there was no way to go through the whole campus. So when I stood there, I looked at the Farley Library and realized that the entrance to the library was from the inside of the campus, but every other building on both River and Franklin Streets opened up to the street, because they were originally built as houses. So I said, “The founders of Farley Library looked at eventually having a quadrangle,” and that's what energized me to pursue that as an objective. Well, talking to older people, they said, “That's what we all expected would happen.” It took a

lot of work to get those families to offer their houses.

(SH): I remember doing a summer Commencement by the library entrance. I think, maybe, it was right when the statue came, Paul?

(PA): Yeah, that was when we dedicated the John Wilkes statue. We did the August Commencement.

(SH): Yes, I remember that. The bees were biting!

(CB): We had one of my most memorable commencements with them. We had both Janet Reno and Sandy Ungar. I'm sorry I'm so loaded with reminiscences.

(SH): No, it's okay!

(JR): One of the things that has always struck me is when I first came to Wilkes, the majority were commuters. We had no parking. None at all! We didn't have a lot, and I still don't know how we managed that. The police would be ticketing the students for parking too long at a meter.

(SH): Yeah, I personally didn't have to worry. I was getting rides from my brother, so I was doing alright.

(CB): There were efforts to appease the commuter students, since they were the dominant group when I first came. There was a plan to carve out a section in the Stark lobby for smokers. It was called The Smoking Room, and it had a high-powered venting system. Well, Chuck Reif was powerful. He was a smoker, and we had so few facilities for everything. This was before the Henry Student Center. So I made the big picture, and I wanted to do condoms. Well, I got my head handed to me. We set up a basket of condoms, and we had a special committee run by faculty and staff, and they tried to figure out whether we should put condoms in the new vending machines. They came back, and they were unanimous. They said, "We don't want cigarettes in the vending machines," and I said, "I didn't ask about cigarettes." So I sent them back, and they came up with the compromise that the condoms would be in the restrooms, not in the vending machine, and I accepted.

(JR): By the way, talking about Chuck and the smoking thing, the person he couldn't handle at all was Grace Kimball. She smoked like a smokestack, and she did it throughout Stark. He was never able to deal with her, and she was, of course, in his department.

(PA): So I've been cataloging all these for Suzanna Calev. I have to take them up to the school for her. Can you see this picture? It's Max Rosenn, Janet Reno, Chris Breiseth, and Paul Kanjorski.

(CB): Oh, I wish I'd had that picture.

(SH): Is it Paul, or is it Jack Myers? It was a big deal back then that Jack looked so much like Paul.

(PA): That's Kanjorski.

(JR): He did look a lot like him.

(PA): Alright, here's your next one. There's Sandy Ungar, Janet Reno, Chris, and Jane. And here is Janet Reno being given her honorary degree. I found a whole bunch of these things. I finally just went through them and put the names on who they belong to. I was going to give them to Suzanna for the archives.

(TG): That's what I call organization! I'm proud of it.

(CB): There you go. Well, Tim, you've been quiet during all of this reminiscing by the folks who shared the campus before you got there. What are some of your questions for Sue, before we tie this up?

(TG): Well, actually, I wanted to ask one question before I did that. How did Sandy Ungar get involved with the Janet Reno commencement? Was he just a speaker there?

(CB): This is a story I tell in the book. We didn't have a speaker, so I called Janet at home one Friday night. She said, "I don't have my calendar, but I think I can do it. I'll call you Monday morning." So Peggy Corbett came in, and she said, "An Attorney General is on the phone for you." She's like Harry Truman. She just put her calls in her cell. She said, "I can't do it," so I immediately called Sandy. We knew Sandy because he came up to Tom Bigler's classes frequently. He and Tom were really close, so I got to know him casually through all this. We had him on the list of someone that we wanted to ultimately give an honorary doctorate to, since he was the guy who had started all things considered. Well, we didn't know at the time, but he was about to become the director of Voice of America, and he was the dean of the School of Journalism at American University. So I called him as soon as I got off the phone with Janet, and he said, "Oh, that'd be terrific." He never had a doctorate, so this was his only doctorate. He went on to be the president of Goucher College, which is where my daughter did a master's degree. So we continued that relationship. But he was a very key part of the Jewish community in Wilkes-Barre. His brother, Calvin, was killed during World War II, and his mother, Tilly, and his father immediately got pregnant. He was known as the replacement for Calvin. So what he talked about that day at Commencement was that he was writing a book, which ended up being a New York Times Magazine article, that accomplished the objective to talk to as many people as he could who knew Calvin so that he could rediscover his brother. And then Janet's whole focus was on children, and how we're dealing with children. So it was one of the most interesting commencements we had, from my point of view.

(PA): So I have a question I have to ask you, Chris. When I was going through these pictures, I came across the ones from a year or two later. It was maybe your last Commencement. Do you

still have your Troy Aikman football?

(CB): I do. It's actually in my bedroom, but it is deflated.

(PA): I remember that because I saw the pictures of you and Eddie White while he was giving that to you.

(CB): Yeah, that was something very special. It's used by my grandkids for play. I just haven't cranked up the air in it, but I'm sure it would still hold. Mike, my grandson, who's coming this weekend, has just become a member of the ultimate frisbee official team in Philadelphia, which is a big deal. I haven't seen him since he acquired that, but he's a fantastic player and dancer. He's about 6'5", so when he goes up in the air to get the frisbee, it's like that of a ballet dancer. He's played now for several teams, as well as being at Dickinson as both the coach and a manager of the event. So that's the only athletic connection to me that I can expand. In fact, I said in the book that to first build the Marts Center of all of the buildings, for my friends who knew me, this was most improbable. Everyone knew that I had never been an athlete in any way, shape, or form. I have brothers who were, but not me. But the first thing I saw Wilkes needed was a gym with superb facilities for all of the teams.

(SH): You know, speaking of family, that's another topic that I hold dear to my heart. Wilkes has always been known as being a family place, whether you're an employee or a student. That's our thing. Everybody gets that. But also, my literal family has grown up here. Again, I was that young child and then a young teen coming here as a student, and now I got to raise my own family here. My daughter and my son hung around here when they were toddlers, then young kids, and then teenagers. I was taking them to the basketball games, and they were running up and down the bleachers or up on the hill at the football games. And now I have my two granddaughters, who are six and seven, come with me to the football games, and we're up on the hill again. They're running around and rolling down. We were just at the last couple of basketball games together, and sitting there, it just hit me that my kids were here doing this, and now I'm still here coming to the games and rooting on the students while my grandchildren are with me. It's beautiful. My whole life, I've been here, and we're all Wilkes people. I have a cousin who is a graduate from here, my niece graduated from here, and my neighbors have graduated from here. Wilkes is so dear to my heart, and I'll never forget it.

(CB): That is beautiful.

(TG): That sounds like creative enrollment management to me!

(SH): Thanks, Tim. Yeah, absolutely.

(JR): Families have been a part of Wilkes for a long time. In my own family, we've had two daughters, my wife, and my grandson who have graduated from Wilkes.

(PA): Can you see that, Sue? (Shows a picture.)

(SH): Oh, that's the one! That's my daughter.

(PA): That's Danielle, Lindsay, my daughter, and Laura Wingert. Chris, that was taken at one of the Christmas parties.

(TG): That is great.

(SH): She's thirty-eight now, by the way. She's the one with the two kids.

(PA): Do you have this picture, Sue?

(SH): I do, but send it to me again, please. That's a great shot of our daughters together. But see what I mean? I got to raise my family here for all those years.

(CB): I only had one daughter who went to Wilkes, and it was my oldest. She came back for a second degree, and she only used the name Abigail. She didn't let on that she was my daughter. She was abrasive, and she led the art students against the administration. She was a University of Chicago graduate and an activist, which she still is. But we had a little family involved here as well. And Lydia, of course, grew up on the Wilkes campus.

(SH): Oh, yeah, I remember when you moved in. She was quite young, and there was Lydia waving to everybody that summer.

(CB): I'm in operation, she was just 4.

(SH): Damn.

(CB): She was established for the public. At the inauguration, she was photographed running up and down the aisles while different people were trying to corral her on their laps. She has a website for English language learners, which is part of WETA, the PBS affiliate in Washington, and she does a lot of workshops with teachers around the country. She's funded by the American Federation of Teachers. She's had, that I know of, three special sessions with the Pennsylvania teachers, and she cries every time she gets on. She shows the sign on the interstate that points to Wilkes, and there's also a sign in all the different languages that gives the miners instructions on safety. Those two things just trigger tears every time. She is a valley girl. There's no question. And Tim now has a miniature schnauzer who's about three months old. He and his wife, Brooke, are having a trainer come on Sunday. He's wonderful, but he likes to bite my granddaughter. She adores him. The question is how to deal with this. Abigail's idea is that you get a water pistol, and you shoot the water at his head when he does this. That's how she's done it with her pit labs, but Lydia is not quite ready to be that violent with him. How is your dog, Tim?

(TG): We had some blood tests last week, and the oncologist thinks that if the next scans show no development, he's probably out of the woods.

(SH): I have to say that my son's fiancée is a veterinarian, and she's about to start her residency in oncology. That's what she wants to do.

(TG): Isn't it amazing?

(SH): Yeah, that's her career goal.

(TG): So what are your children doing now?

(SH): My daughter lives locally here in Forty Fort. She's five minutes away from me and is married. My son-in-law has his own HVAC business, and they have two girls. They are in kindergarten and second grade, and go to Dana Street in Forty Fort. My son is an engineer. He graduated from Widener with a mechanical engineering degree. He is a quality engineer currently with L3 Harris in New Jersey. They're one of the big government contractors. So, he's doing well there, and he's ten years younger than my daughter. He's twenty-eight, and he just got engaged last fall to a Widener classmate that he had. She just graduated last June from one of the Caribbean veterinary schools. I forget which one it is.

(TG): St. George's?

(SH): Yes, that would be it! Thank you, Tim. That ceremony was the first ever graduation I've been to in my life that was not at Wilkes. Brian graduated in 2020 during COVID, so Widener didn't have a graduation ceremony. That broke my heart to not see him cross that stage, but I went to Nicolette's graduation, and it was at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center in New York. She did three years in the Caribbean, and she did a internship in her fourth year of medical school in Wisconsin, and then she graduated. Right now, they live in Lawrence Township, New Jersey, and she's doing this year's clerkship at the Eatontown Animal Clinic. She's waiting to hear if she got a residency for the three-year program in oncology. So if she gets that, they're going to move somewhere else in the country, because there's only six hospitals in the country that specialize in that. But they do want to relocate back to Pennsylvania eventually to settle down. So she could be helping your dog in the future!

(JR): How are the current financial issues at Wilkes affecting everyone?

(SH): Well, the budget has been tight all this year, so we haven't spent a penny on anything. No one goes anywhere. We've got to get through this challenge we're in, and like I was telling Paul, they're looking at ways to cut the budget. One of them is to offer this Voluntary Retirement Program. I heard the list has about fifty names on it with who would be eligible, but nobody has gotten a letter. There's nothing in writing, so we're all waiting. I think they're working out the details right now. Everything we're hearing through the talks and presentations that are happening is that if not enough people take the retirement option, they will probably need to start chopping some positions. I know they don't plan on replacing a lot of the positions, unless absolutely necessary, for those who will take the retirement option. Karen O'Boyle, who is in my

office, is the same age as me. We were born in the same month, and we were high school classmates together. She said she's absolutely taking it, so we're going to lose at least that position. And then I'm thinking that when I leave, we might not have an associate registrar. Again, nobody has told me anything, but I'm thinking they won't replace the associate registrar, but will decide to just move Joe up to be Registrar. Then they'll have Ellen as our assistant registrar. We might end up losing two spots here, but again, nothing is definite. That's just my own thoughts and feelings. But I think they're going to be cutting everywhere across campus.

(JR): How's the morale?

(SH): It was a tough year so far. It was quite volatile in the fall, but now that Greg announced his departure for August, things have settled down. Everybody knows this is going to be a tough time for the next couple of years. But the protests and screaming and yelling in meetings have settled down. David Ward has a lot on his shoulders. As Provost, has also taken on the COO position, so he's making a lot of hard decisions. I give him credit for that, but he's honestly telling everybody, "I'm a glass-half-empty type of person, so I'm laying it on the line for you. This is what we're going to have to do to get us back on track." Wilkes is not going to close. It's just another rough time we'll get through. We always have up and down cycles.

(CB): How is the enrollment at present?

(SH): It's down from what it was.

(PA): Well, they're way behind on their freshman deposits.

(SH): Yeah, for next year, we're way behind. We are around 23% behind. It's on the main page of the portal. You can look every morning and see how many deposits we have, and we're down for fall, though I have to say that it is everywhere, not just at Wilkes. There aren't as many eighteen-year-olds anymore, so I think across the board, at most schools, it's down. But it's only February. We have two more months to go, so we'll see.

(PA): While I was sitting here, Chris, Jim, and Tim, I sent you the email that has the presidential prospectus in it.

(CB): Who is on the committee?

(PA): Well, Bill's chairing it, right, Sue?

(SH): Correct, Bill Miller, Chair of the Board.

(TG): Is Academic Search doing the search?

(PA): Yep. I think Jay is actively involved. I mean, Jay put his name on the prospectus, so.

(TG): That's good.

(PA): Yeah. So there are three people from Academic Search working on it. BJ put his name on it also, so that's a good thing. They want somebody for September, right, Sue?

(SH): Yes, they do. That's a quick turnaround, I think.

(TG): That's a really quick turnaround.

(SH): April 13th is the deadline. They want them for September 1st, I think.

(CB): Well, any other comments from you, Sue?

(SH): Well, I just need to ask Jim, is that Ginger wandering around behind you?

(JR): Yes, it is.

(SH): Please give her my best. I haven't seen her in a while, either.

(JR): We're both old.

(SH): Come on now, aren't we all?

(TG): They're old, but they're doing well!

(SH): As my mother used to say, at least I'm vertical today.

(JR): I can't even say that. Right now, I'm in a wheelchair.

(SH): Oh, are you?

(TG): But you have a great attitude, Jim. This has been a real pleasure, Sue.

(SH): I just want to thank you for inviting me to do this. This has been awesome. Paul, as you said, it's been a very enjoyable hour and a half. A lot of memories came out here, and you're all in my memories. I've worked with all of you.

(TG): It is great to see everyone, and I think we're a special group here. I really do.

(JR): As I look at the five of us, Sue, I have to say that you've changed less than any of us.

(CB): That is true.

(SH): Thank you. I've been told that by high school classmates who haven't seen me in a while.

“You look the same!” and I say, “Well, thank you.” I have good genes, I guess, but believe me, do you want to see the gray hairs here? I think happiness is expressed in our aging process. You know, if I do retire, I'm not going to be bored or sitting around. I told my kids that I will be cleaning my house from the attic to the basement. I'm going to go through every room, closet, and drawer, and I'm just going to purge.

(CB): You have the courage to carry that out. My hat is off to you.

(SH): Oh, I've been wanting to do it for years, but I don't have time. I'm too busy with my work and my private life that I don't have plenty of time. It's going to take me a year, but that's my plan. And then, of course, I want to travel and be with my family.

(CB): Well, that's what's good about your son going off to another place. That's going to be a place you get to know well.

(SH): True. And I'm going to be more of a backup for my grandchildren. My daughter works for Benco Dental, as a matter of fact, so she works from home, and when it's a snow day for school, I'm going to be with the grandkids.

(CB): Well, this has been lovely.

(SH): Thank you all. I really appreciate it. This was a lot of fun. It was great to see everybody.

(TG): Oh, you too.

(JR): Thank you for a great service to Wilkes.

(SH): Oh, you're very welcome.

(PA): Congratulations, Susan.

(SH): Thank you. I'm joining the club. All right, take care, gentlemen.