

Oral History Transcript--Agnes Flood reflections from Dr. Michelini

Participants:

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Francis J. Michelini: ...say when you asked, "Was I ever in doubt that the college would survive it was the federal government money necessary, I was too naive to even realize that I had options. It was simply 'How can we get back on operations?' and I mean I'm not making that up as an afterthought, because we really did open the second and third floors. We had the National Guard move into our second floors with their kitchens, their mobile kitchens, and their power generators. The first thing that they unloaded after two days in an elementary school up in Ashley once they found out that they could come down on campus they moved in two six by six loaded with Iron City beer [laughing in background] and I have some photos and some National Guard publication that references. They call beer a different beer than Iron City, it was a more local Johnstown beer, but the bottom line is that I perceived us still us being in operation and the evening school started which was our own summer class activity I think if it wasn't we had all the classes on the second and third floor---

Jim Rodechko: Yeah I [cough] we started on a Monday evening.

FM: And really only had to get, we didn't have to worry about the dormitories or things of that sort or even the food service because the classes could start in two weeks once they got power restored to the building and Stark Hall I think was the primary building intact. And so we were back in operation. We had offers from Bloomsburg and King's and probably Misericordia to take our Freshman class in September and give them a start on their courses and by the time we were back in operation come back. My instincts told me that once kids make friends as a Freshman they were not going to uproot themselves and come back under the best of circumstances.

JR: East Stroudsburg President came on the air--

FM: And offered actually---

JR: Well he invited our students to go to East Stroudsburg

FM: That's typical. [laughing in background]

Christopher Breiseth: Now you all have just entered a conversation on this 24th day April 2017 anno domini with two veterans of the Hurricane Agnes flood Dr. Francis Michelini who was President at the time and Jim Rodechko who was a young faculty member in the history department. This is a continuation of our oral history of Wilkes College, Wilkes University, and today we are going to focus on the flood: how it occurred. Who was on campus, how the campus responded, how the campus dealt with the aftermath and how that shaped, in some broad ways, shaped Wilkes. With Elizabeth Sullivan directing this we also want to look at the impact on the surrounding community to Wilkes such as downtown Wilkes-Barre but even beyond because the flood pushed people out into areas that are now major suburban areas not so well developed before. So to start with let me first ask you, Doctor Mike, describe Wilkes before this as you were just before the word came that we would likely to have a major weather event.

FM: I was 18 months into my presidency and Dr. Farley assumed the responsibilities as chancellor because our third addition and iteration of a science building and a learning facility the expansion of Stark Hall to South River Street which involved tearing down five dormitory buildings which created a whole new set of problems. In the history of the college, the availability of properties and characteristics and their nature as former residences, some modest some very elaborate, is woven expertly by Dr. Harold Cox. Those publications will give a profile of our typical separation. We were 58 buildings within a community of hundreds of buildings. So there was a common denominator of disaster effect on all of the buildings. The campus at King's College is often forgotten as being only a side... a side victim of the flood, but they had the same flooding waters to a lesser depth. Because their campus consisted of practically new buildings that were built when urban renewal programs demolished two square blocks of homes they were able to design their buildings and they had basically five high rise buildings. The old office buildings of the coal company and a new science building and another the gymnasium might have been there as well.

FM: So although they suffered damage it was restricted to basically new construction in five locations while you have five buildings, many of which were historic, or we call them historic now, they were just old buildings then and the impact on the science building was that the new addition was a major upgrade and expansion of engineering facilities, laboratory facilities, laboratories, lecture halls was under construction. And---

CB: This is now the Wilkes campus not the King's campus.

FM: Yes the Wilkes campus. The Stark building was designed and construction had begun in '69-'70 before I became President and was still underway. A part of the building was designed to

accommodate a two year old computer setup from IBM state of the art been used by the United States Air force for two years, but was superseded by new equipment which we didn't know at the time. Dan Flood got us this Air force computer system which was state of the art as far as our ability to purchase it would have been impossible. I mean that was cutting edge and it fit in perfectly with the concept of the new building and expanded engineering facilities.

FM: Before the flood came, the computer had been moved into this basement area and full rooms but the building was not habitable, it did not have any of the surface walls or things interior. The economy of the 1970's was very very bad; we think the economy is bad now or was bad in the 19 or 2007 economy, but in 1970 interest rates, Jimmy Carter was president before Nixon, or after Nixon okay, but it did not recover very well and the economy was really devastated. Industries, interest rates went, we think now five percent..."Oh my God, an interest if you get a mortgage at 5 percent, gee that's high." Interest rates for business and for corporations were ranging for 17 to 20 percent. And I know that as a family matter because my brother owned and operated a tech torch company. It was (Tungston and Eart) gas welding and it was a technique for welding materials in an oxygen free environment so you can get different, in fact his equipment was used on one of the space shuttles, it was very high tech. My brother basically lost his business because the interest rates from Perk and Elmer and the changing computer environment made all of the welding work that he was doing obsolete. At the drop of a hat he lost all Perk and Elmer kinda, so that's kinda the economic environment external to the college was not the best during those early 70's.

FM: When Dr. Farley became chancellor it was because he was the first and only fundraiser the college had ever had. His connection with Arnaud Marts and with the carpenters, they resided very well in his book, but they were not endemic to the college. I think I sat in on a planning meeting for a campaign once maybe, but that was not part of my assigned responsibility as Academic Dean so when I moved into the Presidency and Dr. Farley remained as Chancellor I was still basically a newbie and very unschooled in tactics or the whole physiological field of fundraising. So that was maybe a blessing in disguise because I didn't recognize what a tremendous job that is, was, became.

CB: Mike remember the time... did we have an endowment?

FM: Our endowment probably maintained the minimum required for an accreditation. Now I won't venture to say that I know that Bucknell provided 200,000. I've heard different numbers but it's probably in Dr. Farley's book. You were required to have 200 or 250 thousand dollars in endowment to become an independent free stated institution and Bucknell actually contributed from their endowment to that required amount whatever it was so that Wilkes could become a four year---

CB: Were you aware of that as a faculty member Jim?

JR: As I recall when you and I had our initial to do up at the Sterling Hotel I asked you what the endowment was and I think you said four million. Now that would have been 196--

FM: Wait What?

JR: Four Million.

FM: I was counting all of the assets. [All laughing]

JR: That would have been 1968.

CB: It was only two billion when I came.

FM: [laughing] Wilkes never had 4 million dollars.

JR: Okay.

[inaudible]

FM: That was probably the total value put on the business plan. And with the new science buildings I can see that was a reasonable number. But it was not endowment in the sense that it could be drawn on in an emergency.

CB: Mike let me ask a broad personal question, you had become the president. Dr. Farley was still the Chancellor; he dies after the flood...Describe how you saw your role before the flood hit. Who were you as President? Francis Michelini in your own line.

FM: I think I moved into the Presidency with a solid knowledge of the community. I'd been very active on boards on Nesbitt Hospital and on Children Service Center boards. I was very well known to most of the board's members and I think I understood the faculty issues probably better than most because I did have that seven years as Academic Dean, but I was not, and am not still very familiar with the financial operations of an institution. I would honestly admit that I depended a great deal on the chief financial officer at the time **Alex Pallenoch** had been somewhere in the pacific a liaison with the with Chang Chi Shik with the Chinese from Taiwan and he was very schooled in the financial aspects of operation and his predecessor I believe was a woman Margaret.

FM: So it was always a very smooth running financial operation to depend on and turn to. Student financial aid was nonexistent. In fact that is part of the environment when I left Wilkes we had no overt governmental availability of student financial aid. What the colleges and institutions were able to raise used for scholarships for needy students was purely a burden on their own back. There was a foundation for independent colleges, which is relevant to the flood story, I'll get to it. Three times a year you committed your time and effort to the Foundation for Independent Colleges. They would approach all of the corporate enterprises as a team. There would be usually two or three Presidents that would make a visit and you would have to commit your time to that visit. The results of that income was raised through that collective state effort. It was a state organization that would then be distributed on a per capita per student capita basis. I think was the formula to use it. So I really didn't have much involvement. The community and the board members basically handled the structure of endowment goals or financial goals for the institution at the time of the flood. The government came much later into that picture. One of the side effects during the flood was that Bernie Vinovrski who I believe was the financial aid officer at the time, had left to take a job at Bloomsburg and then came back a couple years later. There was a replacement for the financial aid office, who was very new to the job and he created a significant problem for us afterwards.

JR: That guy screwed up everything.

FM: Oh my---

JR: I remember that piece of history.

JR and FM talking over each other.

FM: It's part of that environment of pre-flood institutional management. There was disruption in that particular office that turned out to be very critical in this sense. At the time it seemed like well just another hire was required; you never realize what you have until you lose it, and when you have a smooth functioning operation you just take it for granted that it's going to continue. So that's the kind of administrator I was, I was not a trained business manager of a campus, I was more a person manager in relationship to main campus. When Dr. Farley became Chancellor, that financial fundraising side of the picture and the payment for the efforts to raise money to finish that new science building were his charge. We never phrased it that way but it was passively understood by the board when they created the position of chancellor, the position was not an honorific one. He was expected to maintain the continuity of their fundraising---

CB: Did you have a job description?

FM: No we never had a job description or a contract that I can remember. My role during the 60's there was a lot of student unrest, In fact my inauguration speaker was Bill Scranton who headed the Presidential commission on campus unrest and I have a copy of it back home and it's worth reading. He gave the inauguration address and it was very pessimistic. He said who in their right mind would take a position as a college President? [all laugh] Honest to God that's exactly what he said. So you have to realize that Dr. Farley and I understand after a lot of the conversations of this group which proceeded this session that Dr. Farley was not comfortable in that environment and student governments were becoming aggressive. He had force of character of right and wrong, the discipline that was characteristic of his generation that my generation kind of bridged, but [in the 1960s] those kinds of social restrictions were all breaking down, racial barriers were breaking down, even though we had no sexual barriers at the college women didn't go to college.

FM: One of the first things I learned in Harrisburg when I left Wilkes was the Department of Education Statistics showed private colleges in Pennsylvania were going bankrupt. And Harold Wisner was projecting the numbers of high school graduates who would be going on to college and he showed me graphs that were going to be cut in half. He wanted me as president of CICU to have me write their plans for student decline, for institutional absorption of this decline. I said to him 'Harold if any President went to his board with a plan to diminish the institution instead of building it up, they would be out of their job in a heartbeat.

CB: Or the institution would be out."

FM: That was the environment in the late 60's and early 70s. Populations of students were not on the increase. We had benefited from World War II. Wilkes was created by that World War II generation and was sustained by the Korean War generation of GI Bill people, and was gradually building its own character and its own rational and orders of expertise with the help of an awful lot of World War II veterans who were experienced in leadership and capable of doing jobs when they were assigned.

CB: Let me just say that---

FM: Yes bring me back.

CB: At this point, we are in the middle of the Vietnam War in the 60s. Just to elaborate a point that Dr. Mike made, all kinds of Presidents of colleges and universities as well lost their jobs. I was close to the situation in Cornell where the President, after the takeover of the African American students in the 1969, went through a dramatic firing that involved the whole campus. I was on a campus at William's College where the African American students took over and then in 70 the Cambodian bombing, we closed down the college for those students that wanted to go out and organize against the President of the United States, Mr. Nixon, this was a Republican

board. So this kind of agitation which was going on on campuses and a lot of things that campuses are very good at doing now. So it was a high time of vulnerability, so the vulnerability of Wilkes financially, on top of change in leadership, a man who had been in power since 1936, who stepped down just shy of this tumultuous event, left Dr. Mike handling the bigger cultural issues at the college and financial issues of a very weak college. In context, in which private colleges in Pennsylvania were seen as being chronically weakened. New York and Pennsylvania had the largest number of private colleges and proportion of students in private colleges. The two states were the top, which for someone coming out of a public institution in California, was not even a concept to think about before I got here. Before we get back to Dr. Mike, Jim from a faculty member's perspective, on the eve of the flood what would you say about Wilkes?

JR: On the... let me put it this way, on the eve of the flood I doubt there was anybody the day before the flood who anticipated the flood. I went to bed that night at about 11:30 totally naive regarding what was happening. Jack Meyers was married that prior Saturday he came back Thursday morning we were sitting in Capin Hall, then Franklin Hall at the top floor and he was talking about his trip, and there was a leak in the ceiling and we called for maintenance and the guy came up, and you think about it [Inaudible and laughing]. I know this Berlatsky, Jim Boning, people I talked to that day we went to the movies that night in Hazleton the Berluccis took us and our daughters to see a movie called 'What's up Duck.' I will never watch that movie again since then. The kids loved it. Came back home it had been a [inaudible] 6 o'clock in the morning 6:30 I get a phone call and it's Berlatsky, he says "I'm coming up" I said "What do you mean you're coming up?" he said "They're evacuating the town." and I said, "For what?" Flood. Flood? That's when... so there was no... now after the flood in the days... I can say this I think you had a great deal to do with that. None of us ever thought the place wasn't going to open. I mean those same we just went as opposed to will it. There are certain things that stick in my mind. I know we in the fall we I think we opened September 29th. It was two weeks later than the usual.

FM: Pardon, but I don't think we ever... I think part of the reason why we accept that Wilkes might not have survived without the Federal aid is we don't want to kick up sleeping dog in the mouth. We couldn't have survived the way we did without Federal aid, but we would have survived. Because we made the point education is people and our people are still here.

JR: We come in the mornings after the flood, Tuesday they let us back in. We came in that Tuesday. Mike was wearing a hard hat. In the, well, I guess a parking lot here and that is where we would all gather, I remember thinking why can't I get a hard hat? [laughing] And we'd all... Jack and I cleaned out Capin, other people were cleaning out their buildings and you know at night we served, we lived up in Forest Park so that was a place where a lot of people came up the Berlatsky's, the Berluccis stayed with us for three weeks. People just came up there and washed, showered, and brought their belongings. My garage was full of belongings.

FM: And you know we had a lot of a lot of people from the heavenly world looking down on us for some reason because one of the things I can only attribute the grace of God to was when I went back into Weckesser Hall after the flood there was mail from the previous Wednesday. I was in Harrisburg on Thursday came back that morning and the mail for Thursday and on top of the mail was the letter from the Foundation for Independent Colleges I mentioned earlier the FIC was the fundraising group and it was a check for Wilkes's share of what we had been participating in as the FIC drive for that year and it was a check for 25,000 dollars. And I gave that check to one of the people in the finance office and I said "take that Check to Hazleton open an account keep out a couple thousand dollars, bring it back to me and buy all the hoses and shovels you can find"

JR: Squeegees

FM: And that check.

JR: Squeegees oh yeah we were locking them up at night

[Inaudible]

FM: and I had a little blue backpack that I had for years until it rotted away and I finally had to get rid of it, but I wish I still had it. But I had a little pad of paper, lined paper in there and i think I put about 5,000 dollars or 2,000 dollars a lot of money in those days and any faculty member, you didn't have access to your banks. The banks were flooded and they had to eat and so I kept a running total of anybody who needed a hundred dollars or two hundred dollars I would just mark down the name and the date and how much cash I had given them. [Inaudible]

JR: You got us paid though. We got our paychecks

FM: I don't know, it was a miracle though.

JR: I remember we were... they were passing them out in the Weckessser lot. That's how we got our checks.

FM: Maybe that's how we made the maybe that's how we made some of the payments then from that check because I don't, none of our local banks that we had our accounts through we might of had a branch in east---

CB: I was going to wait to tell this later, but sense it's come up now I'm going to but my [inaudible] by the way I didn't introduce myself in Chris Breiseth [inaudible]. I of course coming in 1984 realized the flood was the marker for everything. You have something that was before

the flood or it's after the flood. Personal lives, institutional lives, and the life of the city. So having come in and asked almost everyone I had met in a formal way the first three months I was here in the summer of 1984, was "What is your flood story?" I was really filled with the images, the experiences, the tragedies, and I knew that Dr. Michelini has had commissioned [inaudible] colleges and universities in Pennsylvania was my colleague in that regard, but he was also the man that had seen this place through the flood, and I felt a real burden that this could happen again. So when Mike finally made his first visit to me in his CICU hat, the first thing I said is "I wanted to meet you I want to know about the flood." and we came in and we sat in what was his office and was what was then my office and we talked probably 15 or 20 minutes and he got to the story about the check on the desk and his desk was so heavy it did not tip over it stayed right there and the water did not reach the top of the desk. And when he told that he began to cry and I went over and held on to him for probably two minutes and the two of us just cried. So this is the flood 12 years later, affecting the two of us. He said at the that point said 'you know I have not talked about the flood' and I was pressing what kind of questions you listed there so he was going into detail but when we got to that that money that was so important to let him play his role he broke down. You do remember that don't you?"

FM: Oh I do, I was supposed to be home for dinner that day and I think I was four hours late and Ann Marie was furious. I got talking to Chris Breiseth and started crying and we just spent the next four hours hugging each other, which was very cathartic.

CB: for both of us.

FM: Imagine that was 12 years after the flood and when they talk about Post Traumatic Stress and how you did with it, I always tell that story and I say "you know you think oh that doesn't bother me you're invulnerable" and I know first hand you're not invulnerable. You may suppress it, but when you go through traumatic events it takes an awful lot and a lot of support and if it hadn't been for Chris's supportive inquiry and welcoming I could never have opened those doors mentally for the rest of my life. I'm sure I would not have. And instead I can talk about it now and I...I don't get choked up.

FM: So you learn a lot in life, but back to Dr. Farley and the transition, I've gathered since, I wish I appreciated the time I was much more in tuned with the student attitude and the student unrest and even had dealt with some of the students who came into me when I was Academic Dean. There was a fad sweeping the country that students were going to evaluate faculty and I thought Oh my God and the student government sure enough they wanted to establish a committee that was going to evaluate the faculty and I took them into the boardroom and I said "Okay what do you want to do?" "Well think we have faculty members that we think aren't doing this that" I told them the story I said "You know when I was at Seton Hall after the war largest Seton Hall enrollment was 700 after the war when I returned in 1946, it was 4,000 it was

destined to go even higher. They had temporary barracks from Fort Dixon had been transplanted to the South Orange Campus. They had no tolerance for anything but work. We took 21 credit hours a semester and you worked your butt off. One of my professors and I defy anyone I'll say this to any group of adults I defy them to name one of their elementary school teachers that impacted on their life, and one of their college teachers that impacted on their life and one of their graduate teachers they can rarely come up with all three, but I can come up with all three. My third grade teacher Ms. Brooks believe it or not in third grade this little, I was small I had a birth mark I was picked on, talk about bullying... and she taught me poetry... Poetry.. geez it really was something and she taught me some skills that in learning to really use your mind and visualize and think of things see more than just what the word is. In college it was Father Michael Fronza, Iron Mike Fronza, he was a disciplinarian of the first degree. I'm telling my students, the Wilkes students student government this I said the second one was Father Michael Fronza when he came into the room you stood at your desk. He would start the lecture and when he stopped you stood up at your desk again and he left the room and then after he was gone you were free to go and I did not understand a word he said. He was teaching comparative anatomy, but I would go home and I would try to study and try to figure out what's this stuff about fertilized egg and blastula of cells forming and double layer of cells and gastrulation and formation of neuro column of the brain and vi-- and trying to visualize how how the hell does this system evolve into a human embryo. Couldn't ask Father Bronzac about it [laughing] but I had to figure it out myself. Now talking to the students I say "You don't know who your best teacher is and you never will know because they aren't teaching you anything except how to learn, that's what a teacher does. He teaches you, he exposes you to issues, he exposes you to thinking, exposes you to questioning thought like the sciences pose and he taught you how to think in your own way. And it was reinforced as a student because I had buddies, **Bob Pasalinko, Ed Walski, Bill Kalahan and Ted Eckard.** I can remember them clearly. We were all in the same classes and Bob Pasalinko could read an organic chemistry textbook. He was at my inauguration all four of them were. He would read an organic chemistry textbook in about an hour and put it down and he was ready for the test and I would have to struggle and go through. Now how are you going to evaluate a teacher and not a student comment was made they all have happy, we never had that issue raised again. [laughing]

CB: Every campus I was part of had that issue.

[inaudible]

FM: ...triggered those thoughts what went into that transition to President and in part of our discussions we have recognized that Dr. Farley enjoyed his sainthood. He earned his sainthood, but he really was---

CB: and enjoyed.

FM: He was overwhelmed a bit by the changing social mores of students of the 60's and when he saw that I related in particular ways like students coming to me and talking about faculty evaluation it was handled and it was gone in retrospect I understand that he respected that and was probably part of why he recommended... that when the time came choosing his successor that I was one of them names, I wasn't the only one, but I was on it.

CB: Those are great stories which I won't go into detail, but part of how he learned things that he really didn't want to learn was through his own children particularly through one of his daughters who had heard the story for herself who was out all night with a friend and had a flat tire and got in very late and there was a great scene between daughter and father, and he realized that she was like the students at Wilkes. The world was changing, and he needed to do some changing and he wasn't at that stage. And I am very sympathetic and I know now you don't change much.

CB: I want to say a little about the flood itself that in my talking to people that when I first came I realized my first night with General Townen was a particularly delicate one because I had heard great bitterness that he in charge of the National Guard had delayed letting you know that this flood was going to come and that it probably was going to be very bad because they didn't want people to spend all night taking furniture and moving things that would create chaos. So they made the tough triage decision that property would be lost and lives would be saved and he's the one that made that decision and it was obviously one of the heaviest leadership decisions of the whole flood. It came as the flood was coming down the Susquahanna. Each of you say a little bit about the flood as a weather event as it hit his place.

FM: It was incredible the rain must have been two or three days of rain before it came---

JR: I heard there was a storm in the process... Southern tier of New York and dropped seven inches and it just went back the same [inaudible] and dropped another seven [inaudible] In a matter of a couple days and the all the rivers that were affected flowed into the Susquahanna.

FM: I am going to give a variety of publications to Elizabeth, I'm not going to give them to you yet because I still reference them when I'm trying to write things, but some of the data in them is relevant to this particular issue and based on personal experience General Townen made exactly the right decision because when we did go out in our boats there were still people that had to be rescued that would not leave. They had their dog they had, we took them off their second floor porch roof or their first floor porch roof from the second floor on boats the dark of night the day after the flood because they had not left and we cursed them because that was dangerous work and it was completely scary---

CB: Including some faculty members [inaudible]

FM: but seriously those [inaudible] I mean there were people who and now having a pet or a dog that I love dearly and I would never leave behind, I can understand it, but it made for very very difficult and treacherous evacuations of people from roof tops. That 280 pound woman with her pet police dog that weighed 85 pounds you know that's not easy to get into a small boat trying to get in a raging boat on the water. Jim Tool and I were at the state, Pennsylvania was the state host of a technology conference in Harrisburg and Jim Tool and I were there I was a member of the Governor's [inaudible] science advisory committee and there was there was this he had two different committees but the science advisory committee and I called Ann Marie Thursday night seven o'clock and said "what's happening up at Wilkes-Barre ? The river's pretty high here in Harrisburg and they got all kinds of flood warnings out." and she said "Nothing everything's fine" and at five o'clock the next morning I got a call in my hotel room "Mike! Mike! They're evacuating the city! What are we to do?" I said "evacuate the city." She took our three girls and went up to our old home on Dana Street where a neighbor took them in. Jim Tool and I drove back and Jim had a big Cadillac and I had kind of a Ford or something, but it wasn't going very fast and Jim Tool's was. We came back and of course along the river Susquehanna going north before interstate highways we had to detour, we were winding up eastern or God knows where, but got back to campus around 9:30 to 10 o'clock on Friday morning and the dikes were still holding. The people were at the levies, there are pictures in some of this I don't have to describe them, they're working their butts off getting sand bags and all their very, obviously if you are familiar with the old dike system you know they they knew the weak points and everything else.

FM: By 10:30 we knew the campus was going to be pretty much... most people were gone Bill Caspero was still in the basement of the Music building and I remember asking people "who's left on campus?" and I started to tour the buildings to make sure they're not there and and I don't whether it was Al Groh or someone else who said "Bill Gaspero's down in the basement looking for a cat." [laughing] I... of all the weird things Bill's looking for a lost cat down in the basement, so I went down in the basement of the Darte Center and he was looking, somebody's stray cat was there and Bill didn't have the heart to leave, Korean war veteran you know chain smoker and had been through World War Two, Korea and was a nervous wreck, but he was dedicated. You could never stop him, he was looking he was going to save that cat. So we're there and he goes over and says "I have to turn off the electric power so it doesn't get shorted out" so he turns off all the lights in the basement [laughing] and turns on the flashlight and by then I realized then this is like it's happening again.

FM: I see this water squirting up through the concrete cracks and I couldn't understand that we're in the basement how can water be coming you know water through a ceiling fine, but water coming up from the basement subsequently I learned a physics lesson that you get hydrostatic pressure and the river was rising so high it was forcing the water and that's what moved the wall at Forty Fort cemetery. General Townen was always adamant that dike did not

break it was undermined by that hydrostatic pressure that pushed underneath and lifted the tree that John Chwalek was watching shaking in the cemetery from his front steps because he was still in his home and that tree and those bodies just came up because there was a hydrostatic stream force going up.

FM: Speaking of the water before getting to the actual evacuation. Let me finish. We get through the evacuation. The library had the rare books vault in the basement and so the last place I went to was the library and they were chain passing books up the steps and the classic picture of the Wilkes library that the public saw was of these books covered in mud when we evacuated. I said “put down the books let's go we're out of here.” and so everybody put their books down and I swear I can see the book that I put on the top step of the library coming up from the basement covered in mud and I say “My God I put that book down there, why didn't I just carry it with me?” You know? [laughing] But by 11 o'clock when the dikes were topped as General Townen said he was an engineer and he did not want anyone to think that they had not built a sturdy dike. The steel pilings when we moved here in 1955 you could look down the river past the Dorothy Dart Center is and you can see the steel piling they had a dip or a rise and whenever you ask why they're not level? Well the mines subsidence and so over time the dike got, well towards the end of West River Street. The river curves and the beautiful mansion homes along the river did not want that ugly steel piling dike to intrude on their view and so the steel dike stopped and they built an earthen dike for the rest of the bend in the river going down towards South Wilkes-Barre and that is where the current swept down and eroded that dike.

FM: It never did top our steel dike---It did eventually, but what broke and gave the water that flooded Wilkes was this current going down and all that mud came back up into Wilkes campus. That was another difference with Kings. Kings got the residual water from the river that was basically clean. I've never seen a picture with mud filled and encrusted materials in it, but Wilkes suffered as much from the mud that was there. Now one final statistic and it's verifiable in one of these books, but I'm going to adlib it. Among these books there is a PPL reporter there's a flood control report on Tropical Storm Agnes done by Wilbur Smith and associates. They were contracted by someone, I do not know. The area engineers, U.S Army corps of engineers, many of them have many of the pictures that we've seen and a lot of statistics. I can't find it right now, but I read a statistic, but I do not know how a physicist would measure cubic feet per second, but apparently there have been and are river measurements that the power companies, people that have that have to know what engineers wouldn't know measure river flow in cubic feet per second. The 1955 flood or earlier in Wilkes-Barre was 232,000 cubic feet per second. water flow. In the 1936 flood the water cubic feet per second 375,000 cubic feet per second. The water flow measured for Agnes was 1,180,000 cubic feet per second. When you look I looked at this morning I stopped at the old president's home and looked and down by the bottom step is the marker there to measure and then the marker for '72 is there and I got to get a picture of that. Try to get somebody to take a picture of that I can put it in my history books. But

it's almost impossible to comprehend I use to go out on fundraising trips to Pittsburg and to anybody who would listen and the slides from the show from the flood show the damage and I tried to describe them, the only descript term I could use is Chesapeake Bay for the first time in it's geologic history. Now that's millions of years we're talking about became fresh water because of the flow of the river in of that flood of Agnes. It was compounded by the New York state watershed. The storm that came through here initially was you know normal rainstorm bad but not, but what happened was what Chris described, they had snow fall that was residual there in a snow pack with a warm rain and that's where that water came from down that watershed. It was unprecedented, imagine over a million cubic feet per second and flushed out Chesapeake Bay with fresh water for the first time in geologic history.

CB: Say something about what was happening to people that you know,? Part of Wilkes in these hours of evacuation and kind of... I know Jane Lampey talked about people coming out of the Sterling. We had students at the Sterling and they walked down on the Marque in the boats. What were some of the other people stories that... and then we'll get on to some of the structural issues.

JR: I bought a house that summer the prior summer up in Bear Creek and we had a little water in the basement, while Berlatski just let me have it on that and he would be saying "Jim put a diving board in your cellar steps and a light there and you'll think you're at the beach." We cleared up that problem. Joe bought a house [laughing] and now in Bond Street in Kingston one week before the flood [laughing] I think you can imagine what I [inaudible with laughing], but he had the good fortune he was living up here right umm... right near King's in an apartment on the third floor he hadn't moved yet so that made it a pretty decent situation. Jack had just married, he had a place right next to where Ralston lived there he was up on the third floor and as a result he bought a house up in Laurel lakes.

Elizabeth Sullivan: Jack who?

JR: Meyers.

CB: Where were the Heamans?

(All talking over each other)

CB: He was my special assistant so we did a lot of talking about these things.

JR: Yeah.

FM: The five days of the flood before anybody could get back into the city. One of the things that I had heard on the radio while I was in Harrisburg was an appeal to people to bring their boats and check in at the firehouse in Harrisburg because it was flooding. And so that was kinda on my mind and we had just bought a boat for the environmental science program to use in the lakes and the things from Wolburg it's over in Kingston boat dealer and I being a new President summer at the shore, I was mortgage free and so I bought a boat too.

FM: So we had two matching boats that were bought at Wolburg one was green and one was cream yellow. And I taught my kids to water ski behind that boat. We had lots of good picnics at the shore, but that is how we happen to have two boats. So when I got back I stopped at the firehouse down South Main Street and said to the guys "look I'm from Wilkes College we have two boats available and when the water, you know this was before the dikes broke, when the water comes over if you need them just let me know. Call Wilkes College and we'll check in with you with our two boats." and then came went on campus and went through the buildings. So after the water started... it broke over the dikes it was kind of a lull because there was nothing you could do. You know there was really nothing you could do. I don't remember to this day what I did all that I remember is that eventually we checked both boats in with the fire department and one other guy, not a college member but one of the firemen was driving one of the boats and I was driving my boat. We were kinda paired and it must of been, it could have been late Friday night early Saturday morning that the water got deep enough that you could use the boat because flooding doesn't suddenly become five feet deep, it just accumulates. So you still couldn't go down the street if there was still a high rise or something. So by the time that it got deep enough that you could really get out in a boat it was dark, it was night and the fire department orchestrated---

CB: The lights were all out? You mean the electricity had stopped?

FM: Yeah there had to be because one of the first assignments they gave to us was to take the boats in tandem and follow the power lines. There were PPL guys in the boats or the firemen did it I don't know who they were. but they were disconnecting all the circuit breakers all the way down South Main Street, Front Street, and down South River Street. Just disconnecting. If you look up there's always a spring loaded circuit breaker that in case there's a power surge it could break that circuit of course in a flood you're short circuiting all of the wiring. So by disconnecting the circuit breaker they're saving a lot of house fires which are very difficult to fight in a flood. So it's ironic, but that was the way the system worked.

CB: When... When were the fires? The first night? Because apart of the picture are of North Hampton---

FM: I think I... the one that I can speak personally to was the second night because the first night was taking people off roofs. They'd panic. I remember there was a Gienta Pharmacy down the end of Academy Street and South River Street or one of those corners a I turned down we were going down to South Wilkes-Barre to get a lady and her dog that's one that really sticks in my mind off this roof. I see these lights gyrating under water the water was already deep enough. I found out that it had short circuited the tow trucks batteries and so all of their lights were flashing and going around underwater the eeriest thing in the world, but it was later that the fires started because it was day time so it might have been the next day, there were two members from the flood and they're both they're pictured in here.

FM: First of them was you couldn't get near the bulk of the river. It was too powerful with a 50 horsepower motor. So we were out alone in the boats kind of patrolling Main Street and I heard the windows popping and glass breaking. I realized it was the wick from my boat that was breaking the windows. Well they're being destroyed by the flood why should I feel guilty about breaking windows, but I didn't know... it scared me. So went up to the square big oil tanks floating there nothing to do so we went back to the firehouse. This was the second night and the fire director said there's a fire reported at North Hampton Street in a building at North Hampton Street and Pennsylvania Avenue so the two boats...when we were going out on a pick up mission, we'd unload the equipment and when they needed, when we got back they'd put the equipment back in the boats. We were moaning about it. We happened to be at the time were they had a pump and fire hose and a boat and firemen in the other boat as a team to fight fires if needed. There was no fire at the time, we sat there and that's when the changed their mind. So it was a kind of not an assigned responsibility we just happened to be the two boats that were available to fight a fire and there was a fire down South Main Street another group had taken care of that, but this call was for Pennsylvania Avenue so we take the boats up and were at Pennsylvania Avenue and North Hampton Street and we could see the flicker of flames reflected on the water.

FM: Apparently ceiling electrical fixtures had shorted out. It was beginning to ignite the flooring above it and so firemen and me the firemen started the engine that pumped water into the hose to fight the fire and the other boat was ready to float a spray nozzle they were had equipment for it that they were going to float in under this ceiling fire and put it out. So the firemen starts the pump in my boat and it chugs along and starts to pump the firemen in the other boat hears it. He breaks the window to get into the basement area and as he is floating his hose into the building the pump stops and they could not get it started. So I was kidding Jim and saying it's statute of limitations they can't say we started the fire [laughing] but in effect we fed the fire fresh air and the fire started. Well then it became a containment problem. How in the world do you keep that fire from sweeping up through Public Square? And there is a picture in this book somewhere I have a couple of books there's pictures documentation most of these I tried to put markers in them and I've gotten so confused---

JR: Mike I had the impression that fire just ultimately just burned itself out after a couple of days.

FM: Oh no no no no no no no no no. I have a I will find it before we go, but I won't interrupt the dialog I'll describe it. The only access to water then without the pumper was a fire hydrant. Well the fire hydrant was back up North Hampton Street, so we took both boats went back to North Hampton Street and they hooked a hose up to the fire plug which was still functioning. And then preceded to drag the fire hose back down to Pennsylvania Avenue to the corner of the building. Well by then, the building is up in flames and that little 50 horsepower engine going against the current dragging a full fire hose, it was touch and go. We finally got to the alley way, here's Pennsylvania Avenue, here's North Hampton Street, here's the building that caught fire, here's an alleyway about three buildings down and I'm not... in that alley way is a fire- telephone pole and so we dragged this hose all the way down North Hampton Street and those two firemen got there way up that pole and I have no idea how, they go up on the roof of the building across the alley from that burning block and they had a splitter on the hose. There's a picture in this book you can see in the lower left hand corner two strands of water coming off that roof that stopped the fire from crossing that alley and getting into Public Square. I've been looking at pictures and now I can't find it. I sat tied up to the Bnai Brith portico entrance to B'nai Brith Apartments across the street in case the firemen in case the fire jumped I could get the firemen off the roof again, but that [inaudible] got stopped at that alleyway those two firemen God bless them.

JR: Of course that burned for a few days.

FM: oh it burned a long time.

JR: I remember standing on the hill by GAR high school all sorts of people were in, now I don't think you can see down I mean that fire was just, that was scary.

FM: I think I napped a few times.

CB: Let me use that example of physical expenditure that you were doing and obviously other people were doing, but I guess at Wilkes you were doing more than almost anybody else physically as well as all of the responsibilities that you had for your family and for the institution. What, in the short term, did it do to you physically? Did you get pneumonia after the flood was over?

FM: I was too dumb to get sick. I don't recall any particular physical aftermath, but I remember sleeping upon the grass in front of a Jewish Temple on North Hampton Street in the daytime

something, but it was a break in the in activity when the water was still there. But you know, one thing I remember again documented dome pictures in the book, you had a lot of sightseers you had a lot of political who wanted to get their special trip to the flood and we had Senator Dick Schweiker came and uh came down to North Hampton Street where we were docked and we were introduced by said Senator [inaudible] and he said to me I'll never forget he said "you have more important things to do than give me a tour of flood area. you go about your business" and I thought by God there's somebody that's thinking of way beyond himself cause we were tired---

JR: The streets were full of people who were just coming in from various areas

FM: Anybody who had a boat was going downtown.

CB: Emergencies attract.

FM: We had one, we were out with the firemen I was out in one of those cruses I told the story about thinking I saw dead bodies floating by and I found pictures just as fast and I'm looking at these things the PPL report has pictures showing the mannequins that have floated out of the store windows, hanging body parts from the electric wires, and on the boat and I-- oh my God.

JR: Well one of our students who became mayor of Nanticoke **Ed Kepits** I think he was in the National Guard and were fishing some of the coffins out of the river.

FM: [inaudible] there is a National Guard publication here that one of my neighbors gave me just this weekend because I told him it was the only one I did not have in my collection of things and I thought I had almost everything and Jim's wife got on the internet and found there are very limited copies and they identify libraries where you can access the National Guard reports. There was so much going on my little world was circumscribed by my boat--

JR: Yeah, but it was bigger than most people [inaudible]

FM: One thing I remember was that I was going down North Hampton Street before the building caught fire because there were a lot of cartons of cigarettes and cigars that were floating down North Hampton Street. The firemen in the boat are grabbing the cigarettes and cigars and throwing them in the boat and I'm throwing them out the other side of the boat and say you're going to get me arrested for looting (laughing)

CB: It was, I had lunch with um, who was our Sherlock Holmes coroner he was our coroner for years and years he was Sherlock Holmes---

FM: It starts with a P his dau- he was a good friend (CB and FM together) He was a Wilkes Graduate, Hoodock, Pete Hoodock, George Hoodock.

CB: George Hoodock.

JR: George is responsible for the reburial.

CB:and where they could identify the bodies and they could only identify a very small percentage. They were reentered in the cemetery where they had come from, but there was a mass grave, did you know that?

FM: yes

CB: It was a mass grave-

FM: I forget where, there are some pictures if you know what you're looking for---

(all talking over each other)

CB: he was responsible---

FM: there was a trench I believe it looked like it's in a picture it almost looks like it was gravel lined and yeah they this National Guardsmen that gave me that book he was one of those on that side of the river and we didn't get across the river for weeks.

JR: oh yeah that right you had to go down to route 80 if you wanted to---

FM: One other thing I've learned down in Harrisburg. There's a section of a bridge that is washed out between City Island and Wormleysburg Camp hill and I always have fun when reading at the old catalanas is now the rock fast grill asking people "do you know what that big white thing is out there on the bridge pier?" Nobody ever knows and I don't know how I know except that engineer must have told me [inaudible]. They learned that the pilings...and why was there a railroad train parked on the bridge toward Nanticoke here during the flood? And somebody said the railroads learned long ago to keep weight on the pilings so that the water can't erode your foundation which is so logical. To this day there two huge white plastic covered must be drums of sand at the ends of the bridge that are still there that are anchoring down those pilings. Yeah.

CB: You've mentioned Dick Schweiker and I think I don't know if you want to take a break at all are you doing okay? You doing okay?

FM: Yeah-

CB: Let's keep going then. There two key people that I want you to talk about and one is the Congressman and the other is the future federal judge and the roles they played in securing federal support that was ultimately was expressed in a check given to you in Weckesser Hall by President Nixon.

FM: That was a very complicated set of relationships that post flood Governor Shapp, the Democratic governor of Pennsylvania, who is in charge of the National Guard. You had Dan Flood who was a congressman who was also an actor in new Shakespearian drama and how to create drama when necessary.

JR: He modestly used to phrase it it's a Flood on flood.

FM: and you had from the college perspective Max Rosen, a Republican who was very close to the Nixon administration. Now in terms of power points, you couldn't have asked for a better set of connections I mean how the Wyoming Valley was blessed with that particular representative at that particular point in time and that particular name of flood meeting flood played to a dramatic hill. With Milton Shapp who was a very competent business man and knew what he was doing without fanfare it was very easy to give credit where credit was not due. And I think one of the most under recognized persons in that whole triumvirate or what became four was Milton Shapp. I'm in no position to elaborate on that other than after thinking about this for many years and recapping this I begin to see what really made me appreciate it was looking at the National Guard deployments and that was all Milton Shapp. He deployed the National Guard he made the decisions to do that- that wasn't General Townen, General Townen was the civil defence general at the time he had no military authority. Dan Flood controlled two thirds the budget of the United States of America. His subcommittees in the congress included subcommittee of health, education, and welfare and the subcommittee of defense appropriations that was two thirds of the budget of the United States that went through Dan's committees and if you think Dan didn't know how to use that power you're naive beyond retrieve.

FM: Dan was very good he was like the guys that related Tip O'Neel, who was one of those, you know, exemplary congressmen who knew how to make parings and how to compromise and how to get things done. And Warren Magnuson from the state of Washington with another one of those old timers, "Let's settle this problem and have a drink and then open a bottle of Irish Whiskey." They knew how to get things done. There was no less rank between house and senate and between the congress and the President now then there was then. There is always that kind of rivalry. Republican President Nixon, Dan Flood Democrat, Max worked the Republican side of the street Dan worked the House side of the street, Max with the Senate and the people of the Presidency primarily he worked with the executive branch and some of these things just came

together that created the environment in which we survived. There could have been a lot of disasters after the flood. The appointment of Max Rosenn and Frank Carlucci which is a different story involving personality and political [inaudible] is part of the next---

CB: Max has already become a federal judge at this point.

FM: No.

CB: Doesn't he head the- this is one of the striking things about the role he played is by heading the flood recovery task force he was a newly appointed federal judge.

FM: After.

CB: Well we can figure this out-

FM: My impression that was after, but I don't---

CB: Since he had been appointed by Nixon by the way the same day John Paul Stevens.

ES: September 3rd 1970.

CB: Here for a Rosenn lecture I think that Max taking on the local role of flood recovery as a newly minted federal judge was terrifically revealing about him and his loyalty to this community.

FM: That very well could be.

CB: but I think your delineation of how they were positioned, these local people were positioned to impact the whole federal government was I never heard that put together before I think that is a thesis.

FM: it's incredible---

CB: to interpret why we did as well---

FM: it took a lot of pieces---

CB: it took a lot of pieces

FM: no one party could take credit.

CB: and I never heard Shapp identified.

FM: I never did identify him until just going through a lot of this stuff and I began to realize that his nature was not aggressive.

CB: Now having said that, describe how local leadership responded in the months the weeks and the months following including how did the flood recovery task force get put together and bring leadership people.

FM: I don't really know. There is a very good book written by a history professor at King's, Tony Mussari. I read just bits and pieces of that just over the last week or two. There was an awful lot of local politicking between General Townen...they were planning pre flood planning disaster plans in place. They had been exercises that involved the army engineers and things of that sort. Tony Mussari, to give him his due, narrates the political and local politics in the community a lot better than I would ever want to. He really deals with the personalities of Nixon, General Townen, how they dealt with the forces of mayors and of Dan Flood and so on. I was basically restricted to dealing directly with Dan Flood's office for whatever circumstances. I wound up being able to go up to his headquarters in Avoca by the airfield somewhere and I could always get to talk to Dan Flood. I knew Max Rosenn was always on track of heading the task force, but I don't understand any of the environment politically that went on there in the closest I could come to recommending a source would be that book by Tony Mussari.

JR: Tony was involved in the whole thing.

FM: He was very involved in politics and he knew all the actors he mentions Minn Matheson and a whole bunch of people who I know were very important to the local community. I would have to say that after the campus reopened I was totally oblivious to what else anybody was---

CB: How about your take on the merging leadership in the community issue.

JR: All I remember Chris is Pete Bolla, there was an expectation that the flood might bring together some of these diverse, smaller political entities and we'd have one functioning thing that apparently never happened, but there was a hope and a thought that it would happen. I remember Flood's role was significant because he announced it. He was not bashful.

FM: One of these sources that I have here talked about exactly that small town was one of the newspaper headlines was the problems created by all these small town municipalities that didn't ---

CB: Was the effort a consolidation after the flood or before the flood the one that failed?

JR: After I think.

CB: Because I know Max Rosenn wanted fervently to get consolidation of these jurisdictions.

ES: The Institute for Regional Affairs under Hugo Mailey had been working towards consolidation going back to the 50's I think yeah.

CB: There were several attempts. Max in his old age was part of one that I was part of and he was ready to provide leadership in his 80's to this effort. Now as a newcomer who came in in '84 one of the cliches was that the greatest thing going for Wilkes-Barre was that it had the flood and Scranton things against Scranton is it didn't have a flood. This goes back to a comment we made an earlier session that given some of the governance issues that were swirling around here is as you set up the division structure, which was groaning, was that Wilkes was saved by the flood.

FM: Let me get, get back to that post flood trends that were initiated. The key phone call that I got after the flood must have been one of the first from an outsider was from the Sordoni company. I did not initiate the call and I do not know if I was speaking directly to Andy or to one of his Vice Presidents. All I know is they were engaged in the construction of the new science building at the time that new addition and I swear it was the first phone call I got said "Dr. Micheleni what are your plans for work to be done after the flood?" and I said "I have no plans, we just got back you know three days later." and he said "well if you want our services to deal with the problems on campus you have to let us know now because we have to inventory materials and build up and we are under such huge demand ." and you know I didn't have to hear no more I said "well please go ahead." you know. And it was again the idea of well, what if we don't get what we need. It was just a matter of how to do what has to be done as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Unless I had gotten that phone call from a reputable firm like Sordoni's then I don't know how we would have handled it. I remember going months later over to Wyoming Seminary visiting with Wally Stepner for some reason and Wally was at a table with Godfrey Challa who was the architect for Wyoming Seminary and my God they had blueprints all over the table. They were talking just the two of them, and they were going around the camp describing what they were doing at Wyoming Seminary and planning. I thought holy mackerel if I had to do that with Wilkes at every building, with every architect with every decision, I mean I don't think any single person could have approached the recovery the way Wally was able to approach it because of the nature of Wyoming Seminary. That contrast has always lived with me.. Was I involved enough or God forbid I should be more involved, but that would be the question was I involved enough with the architecture with the gallery and then I retreat and say I couldn't have been you couldn't have physically or physiologically been more involved. So I I trusted an awful lot of people to be doing their job. I didn't have to tell the departments what to do. We talked about the strength of the department chairs and so on. I just assumed that the

chemistry department was going to take care of what was flooded and what they needed, that the physics people were going to do the same thing. I couldn't sit with an architect and tell him yes, clean out this conduit, do this or do that. The most expensive part of restoration was Sordoni cleaning out the unused that hadn't even been lined yet the conduits for the electrical systems of the new building they had to wash and drain every one of those conduits that was embedded in concrete.

CB: My last flood story Weckesser Hall was we had a short electrical short and they discovered it was a conduit still had mud in it. This is late in my present years; it was in the late 90's.

JR: I think there was a perception though in the years that followed that we were better off because of the flood--- the school and the whole city. I might have been wrong.

(Talking over each other)

FM: No I think so. In one way you say, of course of its history I think we would have been altered because of a few critical things. Like Dr. Farley's initiation of the involvement with the Mountaintop plant and if the master's degree [inaudible]. There were already educational aspects in place and moving ahead that would not have been sculptured one way or another. You may have done it in less effective facilities and so on, it wasn't like the college was going to stop or for God sakes---

JR: No

FM: The flood didn't save Wilkes; Wilkes probably did more to save the community after the flood than anything else.

CB: I think that's the bottom line. I think what you've been talking about today surfaces how important Wilkes was to this area even as in with in it's own limited purview, it was very vulnerable. It was vulnerable financially, it was vulnerable in terms a physical plant that might be hit by the flood. So you can focus on the glass half full half empty and we were half empty unlike traditional grounds that you would look at assess a college or university and as you point out this was true all over the state independent of floods. But the needs of this community long term--- the post coal needs, the post railroad needs we have been responding to in a very fundamental way Hugo Mailey with his net tense governance issue of 73 jurisdictions when I left just in Luzerne county. What we've been doing with RAC in Mountaintop, what we've been doing with Wilkes Hahnemann and the whole pre medical training. All those responses to the community, they were not a typical issue for a liberal arts college to take on. Bucknell has not taken on those issues in Lewisburg, but that was our unique niche and whether we were conscious of it all the time organically that's how we grew.

FM: I----

CB: and we became more relevant after the flood then we were beforehand. So there were strengths there and there were resources to draw upon. I mean Sordoni I mean which is a magnificent company, there's all kinds of things in them on the edges that one could talk about, but they were a magnificent company and they were also a telephone company with the commonwealth or whatever it was called. To have them feel a sense of obligation to use their remarkable capacity to help us take on these 52 buildings, I mean there wasn't a building that wasn't flooded right?

Mumbling

FM: Yes! One!

CB: What was it?

FM and ES: The field house.

FM: Well we bought, when Dr. Farley bought the remnants of a coal company over on the Kingston side of the river was the access of a coal mine I have no idea what company and they were selling out, liquidated it, it was not given to the college, it was purchased by the college and it had the shaft house, the shaft house governed access to the coal mine. It had huge elevators big wheels that would reel steel cable mile down into the earth if necessary to reach the seams of coal and so when he inherited the shaft house Adonizio what was his first name?

JR: Jimmy

CB: Jimmy Ad---

FM: Jimmy Adonizio was in with Dr. Farley one time he was a board member and he said to Dr. Farley "Dr. Farley you want that shaft house knocked down," or Dr. Farley went to him and said "Jimmy knock down that shaft house." because Jimmy would be expected to do it for nothing that was Dr. Farley's expectations was clear so Jimmy Adonizio goes over and he comes back about a week later and I remember this very clearly and he said to Dr. Farley "would you take a ten thousand dollar donation and let me out of knocking down the shaft house those coal miners knew from experience that concrete had to be very very strong to support the weight of these big drums and wheels and the engines and everything. Instead of making their concrete from sand and you know river washed sand and nice smooth grains and so on with concrete, they would get sand that either deliberately or it was glacial residue or something that had sharp edges and so

instead of these little grains of sand mixing in the concrete you had these little shaped edges pieces of sand that would mix and apparently it made like a solid steel well they used to make ships out of concrete you know.

JR: And Adonizio swung that wrecking ball and he could not knock it down.

FM: There's one hole left in it somewhere covered up by plaster board I think that's still part they never did knock down that house they built around it.

Talking over each other

CB: One of the greater things of my era was to make that a field house.

FM: But all other 58 buildings were under water to some extent. Weckesser probably the least in terms of depth we maybe had three or four inches on the first floor of Weckesser, but the entire basement and [inaudible], but it was the contents you had asbestos wrapped pipes steam pipes we had the city steam system that had connected a lot of these buildings to a heating source that was---

CB: When I came we were still steaming----

FM: but the last part of the flood story until we get to curricular and administrative changes was the... see my train of thought left me excuse me what was I talking about? I think we turn off until I get my bearings.

CB: That's alright let's let's pick it up. One of the things we wanted to look at was, before we say what were that changes the college experienced because of this what were the activities to---

Muffled sounds on recording

ES: Go ahead.

CB: Shoveling out the mud, what were the activities required in the summer of '72 just to get ready for that late opening in the fall from a faculty member's perspective?

JR: It was shoveling

CB: Shoveling.

JR: Oh boy I can tell you one of the proudest moments I had was the meeting talking about right after we got was in Capin Hall it wasn't in Weckesser annex. It was in the back room of Capin and we had cleared that out and we were ready for classes, but boy did we spend that whole summer just ripping things. One recollection is when late August we had to get out of here and we went to New York to see my folks and spend the some time at the beach and I couldn't believe the change. People who didn't care about a flood and no mud no mud. When we were going into the city on that Tuesday they opened it everyone was up then tremendous optimism by everyone and we walked across the bridge which is now we had it renamed by torch by King's, but we walked across.

[inaudible]

JR: We walked across that bridge and we were so optimistic because everybody thought it was water it would be gone and clean up no problem. It was the mud and it was the same people thousands of us walking back up at the end of the day because it was curfew and we were dispirited because that mud was everywhere and it was it exploded on bookcases and we had books in there it just pushed metal bookcases.

CB: When the day Mike came to visit me the first time he asked to open all the doors in the office and there was the line for the flood it was it was green and then he said I want to check the cupboards so he pulled the sofa back and there were the drawers still full of flood mud and some of his papers for examinations. I've meant to keep that there as a historian and I don't know it was Peggy Corbit, someone, under a cover of darkness came in and cleaned out all those drawers.

FM: Being a good samaritan.

CB: I was furious you know what power does a President finally have he can't even control the mud in his own office [laughing] so I experience my flood limits.

FM: One of the psychological things before my mind goes again about the impact of the college, I think the very visible activity at the college you know it wasn't like you were restoring a single building [inaudible]. The visual dimensions of what the college was doing was a stimulus and the publicity around the state I mean I move into my next job because all the presidents knew me all the private college presidents in the state knew me from the flood experience leadership rightly or wrongly they evaluated that as competence in a particular way, but that was profound

JR:we got our students here

FM:Yup

JR: they came in. Our enrollment place was loaded with students

FM: I do not remember an enrollment [inaudible] I would love to see the statistics. I remember that one of the problems I remember it shows about 50 drops. Part of the problem was Dick Raspen elected to become a professor to teach a subject instead of doing the financial aid in the admission's office. Stupid me instead of thinking that he was a pretty damn good financial aid officer presumed a professor was a better job for him. He was a good professor he was a business professor. My philosophy of "We should not discourage students who are applying for financial aid" {inaudible} but he interpreted it as me saying "give away the country store" so he gave away like a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships that we did not have.

(All talking over each other)

FM: But that scholarship thing and Dick Rasp---

CB: [inaudible] left one of the times

JR: when you appointed Jeff

CB: that was the emergency we hired another guy came out of a state university system and this happened in private colleges all over the country. You made your budget on your projected enrollment and then you determine how much financial aid you can give, given that enrollment projection and the guy that we hired on one of Bernie's. I brought him back three times this guy comes in and he spends all of the money we had authorized, but we were a hundred some students shy of what the budget was and that took us and that's when Michael Lennon came. Mike inherited this and Walner.

JR: Oh that was Mark Davis not the Mark Davis the P.R guy.

CB: Mark Davis.

FM: Chris here's an interesting combination before the warning and after the warning. [someone's phone starts ringing] This is a critical, not my phone I don't have one, is that your Chris? [inaudible] My God it is.

JR: I remember this, you know that's one of the regrets I had too. Berlatsky came up that morning and I pretty much had to stay with him. I would have loved to have gone down to that dike.

CB: It was either '92 or '96 I kinda think it was '92. The flood that we avoided around here it was terrible around Plymouth, but the kids were out in the middle of the night sandbagging I mean you know the [inaudible].

FM: Here's the cemetery, now here's what I want you to look at. You look at the contours at that bank and you see the way they're bending.

CB: Yup.

FM: And they did exactly what that engineer described to me. The water pushed it down and actually pushed right out and that is the most visible demonstration of how those graves came out of the ground as any you'll ever find I don't know if the guy even knew what picture he was taking when he took that, that's a perfect.

JR: [inaudible] movie theater there [inaudible]

CB: Well I won't take up our time on this, but let me tell you about that after Roth Corey I've been involved with. One of the grave stories coming new in '84. I heard was that in downtown Wilkes-Barre. There wasn't a single piano left undamaged now and somebody said no they got the pianos at Dartmouth above water level.

FM: No...

ES: No

FM: I wish.

CB: so that.

CB and FM talking over each other.

CB: The thought that the pianos were all destroyed this while community was just extraordinary news. One of the grave stories which may be hypocritical [inaudible] was a man recently buried his---

FM: There it is one two and the organ was back there. I have to go to the men's room, excuse me.

CB: That this man's casket pop up floated down into his own yard.

JR: I have heard that too I---

CB: Up against a tree in his own backyard so I mean

JR: that was a---

CB: Bizarre things

JR: That was commonly, I never heard it rejected I never heard any---

CB: I have just such an overactive imagination I for this official recording I want to maybe I'm a little exaggerating, but I heard that story many times.

JR: Jim Bowning and I were walking down this street past the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center and it wasn't a Tuesday it was the following day we just wanted to see part of the town and we walked down to Academy. I will never forget it was it was right opposite one of our parking lots down there the street started to open it just peeled back. A huge and we're there and we ran out around it to get the National Guard and they came running down in the jeep and we had to get out there and stop them and that thing that hole was huge [inaudible] I guess it was filled in. We also saw---

CB: Was this near Riverside Drive?

JR: No it was on this road right here going straight down. It was the street past the new student union and before Ross Street.

CB: Okay.

JR: It was in that area then we got to Academy and I remember two [inaudible] one of those old washing machines with the rollers hanging from an electric line they're just hanging there it was [inaudible] around we didn't have a camera we should have taken pictures and then the other was a guy in his backyard as we were walking by cleaning his golf clubs (laughing) we all have our priorities.

CB: Well your sense Jim as a faculty member the flood breaks through on Friday you've got a curfew clearly there's not much that can happen on Saturday except rescue.

JR: Well we would we would go down again to GAR [inaudible]

CB: Which day? Were you doing things Saturday?

JR: I think we went down there Saturday to look.

CB: okay

JR: And that's when we saw that fire boy that fire burned now it consumed the whole block, I think they might have contained it, but I think it did eventually burn itself out.

CB: And then by Monday you just were telling a story about walking down on Tuesday what's happening on Monday?

JR: Well Monday is the day before we went back in.

CB: Ok

JR: And I don't remember anything---

CB: The Tuesday people start reoccupying the campus to clean it up.

JR: Well everybody just came---

CB: How soon does the Water recede?

JR: It must have receded by Sunday I would think.

CB: I've heard it was very quick.

JR: It did go down pretty quick now that's a good question. I remember I think we were concerned that they wouldn't let us back in till Tuesday and there was so why are they waiting?

CB: Like [inaudible] wall.

JR: Yeah, but yes I guess it did go down pretty quick, which made us even more optimistic about what was waiting for us.

CB: Until Mike described I always heard it was the bend in the river that because the water was coming down a fairly direct way is this incredible quantity and velocity that it that it hit that bend, now knowing that [inaudible] had the major pilings there makes all kinds of sense now that that was the great breach that came flooded this this whole area.

JR: And that's that famous picture they mention there that was pretty much cut in half is right there.

CB: Mike how fast did the water go down?

FM: I think it was a gradual process of course the lower lying areas were still blocking streets while you were still above water for the most part. I was back in the house on West River Street before the power was restored for one night one maybe two nights. They the crew had hooked up a power generator and we had lights on, but I didn't want to be off campus because we knew the looters had already been there. I just thought I'd be there and I remember I had a baseball bat in the room Ann Marie was petrified [inaudible] oh God, but I thought I had to be there. And it was four or five days before there really were... it was at least three or four days before the Red Cross had stations for feeding stations and it took a couple of days for people to kind of come back in and had come to grips with what had to be done and it wasn't like the National Guard descended all at once they didn't get here six or seven days far as I recall.

JR: We went back in on a Tuesday that Tuesday, the flood was that Friday morning and that Tuesday we were back in.

FM: It wasn't like we went back in the city was open for access.

JR: Yes, okay.

FM: Very limited access.

JR: And there was a curfew we had to get out.

FM: That's right.

JR: From 5 o'clock or something like that.

FM: And you said something the other night Dr. Farley retired resigned as Chancellor retired before the flood.

CB: Yes.

FM: You keep saying you saw him on campus or something I never saw Dr. Farley.

JR: Well he, the issue was whether he had died before the flood or after and he died after.

FM: No not died no no he was still alive.

JR: I remember seeing him, I had just come up the basement of Capin with a wastebasket a plastic [inaudible] wastebasket, by the way a get to do with the flood to lug mud, and I was filthy and he was walking from Stark right down that alley way across to Wekesser and he looked at me and he said "I came in with a flood and I'm going out with a flood."

FM: That's, now I don't know what his official position was with the school and what not.

JR: He, he was definitely there, but that's all I---

CB:[inaudible] in '36.

FM: I did not see him during any of the flood recovery.

CB: Now that's the only thing, and that was probably several weeks after we were back.

FM: Because when you look at the administrative changes it's very difficult to understand the structural changes in the Dean and the in the divisions, and in the [inaudible] in the flood because they inadvertently create a turmoil that was totally unrelated to flood, that's the point administratively we bring out. It was a transition period aside from the flood that was probably in terms of the college evolution was more critical than the flood. So there are people who say you know I would have been President for 20 years or life or I would be out the following year you know it depended on what aspect of the evolution of the structure and this is what we examined.

CB: And we looked at the role of certain people, public officials and others. What was the role of the Board of Trustees immediately during say the first month after 20 30 June. Any? Were you dealing with the Chair?

FM: I'm almost inclined to say none.

JR: You mentioned that before.

CB: Yeah that.

JR and CB talking over each other.

FM: This is a stage I've been at the last couple weeks the more I've come to approach this meeting the more I have come to discover things that were disconnected that I have, I have a long way to go before physical things that have coherent flow to them that's why I'm reluctant to

give you stuff now because I know I think this is the photo album where I have pictures of faculty and staff people. Like I was talking to the secretary this morning about these two pictures God I found them. That's the goodbye to Dr. Farley on the back steps of Weckesser Hall, isn't that a beautiful picture.

CB: It is a beautiful picture.

FM: With him in it and then this is the picture of my administration into it and I wish it was little better, but when you really ask about people, oh God I can tell you stories about everyone of us.

CB: Now we can't do this with the recording on so.

FM: What's the question you asked me about that made me look for a picture.

CB: Trustees.

FM: Trustees okay.

CB: And what Shaffer was Lou Shaffer your Chair at the time?

FM: I have a picture, Lou Shaffer was the Chair and I have a picture in one of these books of a group of trustees who have come to campus there was a need for an official meeting.

CB: You still [inaudible]---

FM: I got to find it.

CB: That are local.

FM: Because it's relevant, as far as I can remember there was only one post flood board meeting that was really relevant to reconstruction and we needed a vote on something most of what was need by why of board authority was me and Lou Shaffer. But everybody else had their own the bankers even God bless them they had their own issues to deal with in their own corporations so it was kind of a bless in disguise that I didn't I really did not deal with board---

CB: I just when you---

FM: Authorities---

CB: When you raise the issue, the Sordonis call wanting to know whether or not you are going to use them to reconstruct the campus. I just know that in my time that would have been a very large board discussion even if I lead the way in and said this is what I want to do there would be a lot of basic touchings. My guess is in a kind of disaster like this really all power flows to the president.

FM: How strange things work [inaudible] interesting the events become in retrospect the board still identified with Dr. Farley the mere fact that only weeks before he had resigned was kind of a disconnect for them.

CB: Yes it would be.

FM: I don't ever remember the board or Lou Shaffer or anybody on the board saying you should discuss this with us or [inaudible]. I presumed they said Mike's got to handle it and you know tell us what you need from us.

CB: That's true in the way Farley would have dealt with it.

FM: yeah that's right they were accustomed to that type of leadership.

CB: Which may suggest why some of their second guessing years later was so kind of out of character for them.

FM: Yeah yeah, but it was an avenue open to them all the time until one took the initiative and time and finally went---

CB: That was not an unlikely a result of a huge event like this---

FM: I make absolutely no bones about it. Tom Connelly. I think we recorded it before and we can record it again. He had the reputation with every organization in the community. He became involved at the board level and experienced upheaval and whether it's the boy scouts or the Red Cross, those are the two that I heard specifically at a time. Unfortunately he got elected Chair after the flood and during the flood. He wanted to be President as we mentioned because we sat at a table [inaudible] recording. We sat in at the board table and in a time what is now Pat's office and I forget who was there maybe Andy Gorkin or it might have been Lou Shaffer. I had gotten a job offer for CICU and it was unsolicited I was not on the market looking for a job and when I was getting ready to offer my resignation to the board and for some reason there was kind of an executive committee and Bob [inaudible] was not there, but Tom Connelly and Andy Perkin and me and they were talking about [inaudible] and I was tell them in confidence that you know I'm leaving I'm going to go to Harrisburg [inaudible] CU and Tom Connelly assumed that

he would become acting president and I said to him no Bob Capin is my Vice-President and my Academic team, what was Bob, yeah bob was my Dean.

JR: Yep.

CB: Dean of the faculty.

FM: Yes, and I said no Bob will take over as President until the Board can select a new President and he said no well I'm Chairmen of the board I could [inaudible] well then I withdraw my resignation [inaudible] if you think you can get the board to make a choice between us fine and that's what really convinced me my time had come, but he backed down and then they had the Presidential search as Bob was listed as intern President and then Bob came---

JR: There were at that time there were four candidates in total all in total that would be 1976.

FM: Dan Wieller.

JR: No

FM: No

JR: Ralph Rozelle

FM: Rozelle

JR: Bob Capin, Andy Shaw, and the fourth I think was Kiley. I'm not sure about that, but I think he was---

FM: That would make sense.

JR: And there were I know faculty were very worried about two of those in particular.

CB: Okay now I want to say particularly while you're still in presidency. Those next few years, what was the impact on the institution educationally, physically, role in the community? What did the flood help create of the Wilkes that we now know in those critical years right afterward. I would say Elizabeth, you mentioned the rare books and other things the man that happened to become president of the institution. I was at in Illinois, had been the National Endowment of the Humanities and he actually authorized the refrigerator trucks that came up and we should put some of the rare books from the library dry out was one closed loop in my life he was very proud of how many books were saved. What's the impact from '72 to '76?

JR: I have very positive memories. I think nobody was worried about survival, I don't think people were worried about it.

FM: It certainly changed the visibility and ultimately the prestige within higher education institutions in Pennsylvania no question about it. I mean the rest of my career I benefited from identification with the flood and Wilkes College.

JR: Yeah that's the recollection I have.

FM: Nobody can deny that as a part of history that was part of my life. The interface in so many ways and there were so many changes going on in federal involvement with institutions. You got to think student aid was just beginning in 45 of the 48 or 50 states depending on what calendar you use. The public sector is the dominate university sector in the state Alabama, Wisconsin you know anything makes up for Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York and California and Ohio Colorado...

FM: I think in a perverse kind of way the flood gave credibility and impetus to the curriculum you know you don't just change physically you mentally have faced new hurdles you face challenges together. I think there was a more homogeneous acknowledgement about the academic mission of Wilkes and its significance that normally people just take for granted. All of a sudden this was an important institution in the lives of the community and surviving such a disaster in a perverse kind of way added credibility to its importance. I think it was a physiological turning point in many ways but not because we were helped to survive, it's because we survived that we became a better institution.

CB: And I would hazard his hypothesis that this took place as the institution was weaning itself from Dr. Farley.

FM: Yes.

CB: Gave a sense of autonomy to the new generation to redefine the institution at least to sharpen the definition without a sense of his hovering presence.

FM: I also think it's safe to say that uh you know I I was a president at a particular point in time that my relationship with Dr. Farley was a ying and a yang, the faculty expected new things and the student body expected new things, I never really considered what the board expected because I figured I'll tell them when I'm good and ready. I had a very different perception of the role of the board than what reality should tell you.

CB: Or what has evolved across the country.

FM: And I think it's really apparent with a [inaudible] operation with the board and Dr. Farley's prediction when I would say to him "geeze Dr. Farley what's going to happen to this place when these trustees die off?" and he said "Mike the alumni of this college are going to then be at safest" and I looked at the roster of the board and the bulletin online, 80 percent of them at Wilkes graduates.

JR: Is that right?

FM: And very successful Wilkes graduates. In the big time class, I think to myself how perspective he was, but at the time I was kinda torn in two different directions. I was so close to Dr. Farley and understood him and I think he respected me and I wouldn't have become president if he disrespected me that's for sure, but I also was so concerned that there was a perception that well Farley lives on except now they're calling him Michelini. He was such a dominant figure that I was his Academic Dean and all we're getting with Michelini is a continuation of the same old things that I inadvertently closed him out of my consultation and my life. Which was bad. I should not have done that. I I didn't know enough of how to handle that and I was afraid if I and especially with him on the third floor at Weckesser. He should have gone way the hell off on another end of campus or something really in a functional way when we talk about administrative transition, which is where you started today. There were transition pressures from that dominant founding president that I'm not sure they ever could have been handled well. I blame myself more than I would blame Dr. Farley.

FM: I look up pictures of him when he was aging, he was not well. I didn't realize it at the time to me he was my father figure why should I? I was aware the fact that the students were really just looking for an excuse to start to raise hell and the faculty was always raising hell. But you know what I mean though, in translation with the recording these are a stream of consciousness thoughts so they have to be interpreted and I'm interpreting that very complicated period in my life...not only the college, but of two personalities that worked together and respected each other very much that was just part of a disruption in continuity.... and unless you understand that campus universe during the 60's and 70's you can't understand why that even could have been a factor, but it was.

CB: Well successions after dominate particularly the founding---

FM: Presidents.

CB: No matter the year, that is a traumatic process and I've partly because witnessing what I witnessed when I came here I've been very attune to that in other institutions here in Pennsylvania where I was involved with different presidents where I was on accreditation visits.

FM: And actually you have also seen and been part of because you know Bucknell very well of institution that have solved that problem by having finite terms for their presidents. My successor at CICU who... any way he became president of Bucknell with a five year contract he went to Washington and Jefferson first, he succeeded me at CICU Brian Mitchell, then he became President of Washington and Jefferson I believe in Western Pennsylvania really cleaned up after a 30 year President really had to shake up a lot of things and then left and he went to Bucknell when he had no collusions we're hiring you for five years and then gone baby. They now they have a five year.

CB: [inaudible]

FM: Which makes a lot of administrative sense if you think about it, but it also takes some pretty knowledgeable board people to understand how to work that system it has its faults too.

CB: Another tactic here for both of you in those years Mike was here after the flood what happened in curricular terms was the consolidation just the physical campus did you open up any new programs?

JR: Oh expanding, there was expansion there into engineering, nursing, I got that co-op ed going. We were, and part of it was driven by the national situation and I think people were concluded they want their kids to graduate and get a job and be able to get a job and you had to satisfy that feeling. I think you're right, the 70's were really a time of economic difficulty you had the inflation, I remember Nixon's wage and price controls---

FM: Oh that's right!

JR: There was a sense of panic.

FM: Told Flood I lived with the wage price control couldn't give faculty salary increases---

JR: That's right couldn't

FM: Couldn't do this that didn't exactly make middle of [inaudible] shining eyes in the back of it.

JR: Well you couldn't do much about it

CB: And the AUP censure comes in

FM: Yeah

[inaudible talking]

CB: we have people that have been here seven years or more who didn't have tenure at a time when they had to make cut backs because of budget including faculty positions. So when I came here now 12 years later the first thing I'm confronted with is that you be censured for not only those salary things, but then the board passes the ten year too an AUP says best revocable tenure and they were and they were hind to the 1940 AUP standards and you couldn't do that so---

FM: See---

CB: those were a couple of double whammies that were left over---

FM: and that was over 12 years later!

JR: That would have been troubling to you. I can understand any new President would have been troubled, it wasn't when we were censured there. It was a general feeling on campus that our policy on tenure was an overly fair one, What it said was I got tenure up to two years I got a letter in the mail from you. The policy said that the clock would not start ticking until you got your degree. In short, there were people here for ten years who had not gotten a doctoral degree there were ABDs and it was always understood that they could be removed if they didn't and so it seemed like a generous policy to many of us and of course from the AAUP standpoint it was not---

FM: and let me say one thing for the record I never received a complaint from faculty about this. I never received any written correspondence and defy anybody to find written correspondence to the president from the office of the AAUP I knew nothing about what their action was and why all I could assume was after the flood I wrote a letter to all non tenured faculty regardless of rank if they were non tenured I said we don't know what the circumstances would be by September we may come back and have no assignments so basically you are free to do whatever you want. The only one that took me up on that that I recall was an English professor he went to California and stayed there, but he wouldn't have been granted tenure anyway---

JR: It was Stevenson.

FM: Yeah Bill... who?

JR: Stevenson.

FM: Oh maybe I don't know, but my point is that it was the only prudent, wasn't even prudent it was necessary we had no way of knowing what September was going to be or who was going to show up and that is still my only understanding of an issue that AAUP raised.

CB: Because there were five---

FM: What you tell me---

CB: I think there were five people five cases

JR: Ann Kish, Chet Molly---

FM: Ann Kish-- God I've been trying to think about her name for years.

JR: Yeah Molly was one, Al---

CB: They formed a registered complaint with AUP and that's when the case started. I don't think AUP took initiative on this until the faculty the aggrieved faculty made a case with them and asked them to intervene. And that's I don't think that happened before you left, I think it happened after.

FM: Yeah might have happened then.

JR: I think if I've had a meeting with AAUP from Wilkes campus which I was a member of, you know I would have remembered it.

FM: I absolutely do not remember communicating with---

CB: Jim's point is crucial, you had a tenure policy,

FM: Yes

CB: Here, that was that was operative in the way things were handled. I was at a brand new University in Illinois state university. They tried to do a five year contract, those that had come out of tenure systems, we preferred it. So there was much more freedom in the whole teaching environment if one had five year contracts and you stayed because things were going well for you and with the institution. Ultimately, the board of regions would not accept it; it said you had to go back to the traditional which was the 1940 AUP one. So you were kind of innovative in the way you're handling it here.

JR: Well it was Dr. Farley.

CB: It was Dr. Farley. Dr. Farley institutionalized, but it had some parameters and AUP is not designed to deal with unique parameters.

JR: I don't think it was unfair. I got a letter in the mail from you saying the board has approved you for tenure, I've been probably in my third year.

FM: But I never heard that ADA as the policy issue they were addressing I didn't know that til today.

CB: Well the second the first one they were addressing were Ann Kish and I think four others. Then when the Board of Trustees after your time, Bob took the position of what was called tenure two it was effect inaruptable tenure it laid out the grounds in which the college could fire a tenured faculty member.

JR: I don't remember that.

CB: And when I came I remember I got our five year review policy which I brought for [inaudible] on state as my way of negotiating the trustees to back off interruptible tenure and I said this in a faculty meeting I said you got to support me I need this to get to Max Rose and others to back off that policy so that those are the dynamics when I addressed this problem, but that that's tenure policy by the trustees that came in in the post Farley era was regarded as inappropriate for AUP people to do and so they came in on a second censure so we had two censures to deal with. One was the four or five individuals there cases as of 1972 and then it became a policy of the trustees showing they were flaning.

JR: I didn't know about that.

All talking over each other

FM: I don't you know, I'm beginning to understand what may have happened. I would bet my bottom dollar that whoever was the president of the AAUP chapter on campus was doing all of the corresponding with the AAUP.

JR: Well that was Frank Sally---

FM: I wasn't even in the loop.

JR: I'm pretty sure it was Mike Sally.

CB: I'm sure that's true. This is true of other campuses as well and the campuses particularly public that have AFT, the AUP folks are the kind of traditionalist softies and the AFT are [inaudible] we had both a member of both so I was I was here and that that made my political career at the new university that's another story that's irrelevant here, but---

FM: Just for the record because we're finishing the flood. About what eight years ago, six years ago, I was driving around I had the habit of driving up in the atlantic field and sitting, Al Groh and I use to have a corn beef sandwich and we were on the bleachers so I go back and I drove around and the driveway doesn't really go all the way around the fieldhouse but for some reason I was going all the way around it and there in the back by some little outbuilding was this boat, I don't even think it was under a tarp, and I looked at the boat, and I stopped and I got out of the car, and walked over and walked around it and you could see where they had built in like carrier little place for instruments or for fish or for tackle or whatever and I thought, "My God..that's the environmental science boat! That's the boat that was out in the flood!" So I must have mentioned it to somebody, who mentioned it to somebody else, whether it was Gilmour or whether it was Leahy and now they tell me it's indoors and stored somewhere...but man it's even got the original engine on it I believe...and I thought, "Oh God..they ought to keep that..." because mine was stolen right after the flood. I was supposed to do a tv interview up in Avoca or somewhere so I had the boat..I finally got it back from the fire department out of the water. And I pulled up because I didn't know where to put it because I couldn't put it through the alleyway by the President's house. it wasn't big enough...so I parked it on the grass by the loading dock by the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center. I pulled it on the grass and disconnected it, went to the tv station and came back and the boat's gone. So I thought "Geez the crews pretty fast they got my boat and put it in the garage already." I started asking around and nobody had they didn't know where Mike's boat was so we called the State Police and they said "Oh God we got to find that will have that checked out on the highways, they won't get very far." Well they didn't get very far, but they never got the boat back.

(Laughing)

CB: Well since you raised a personal matter, I knew I had to ask this again my sense of identification with you and wondering if I would have to go through this experience as president dealing with a flood, talk about your family and the house and your housing and what the length of time that you were dispossessed.

FM: Well you had the discontinuity between your oldest and your youngest daughter didn't you?

CB: Right, 12 years.

FM: Yeah, and my girls were within 18 months of each other, so Michelle was the oldest 15. Her sister was 14 and there are pictures in this book I think and in some of the others in which Michelle and Lisa the two oldest were teenagers and were helping in the clean up. They're there in mud overalls with about 15 other students who were there for an evening class. When I told them [inaudible] might be in somebody else. Our youngest daughter Cia was maybe 11 at the time and she's special needs so she would be hard to establish a memory link for her I think although she surprises me in a lot of ways. The oldest two girls Michelle was a looker and the National Guard guys loved Michelle. I still have somebody's batten jacket down in my closet that I can't get rid of I think "boy I can track this National Guard down guy down and see what's happened to him," but I had to keep an eye on Michelle with the National Guard guys. But I mentioned I never related our children growing up to growing up on campus the way you know you would think it's always take some time, but I did say to Pat Leahy and his wife at the dinner they had so graciously. Lisa was with me and I said towards Michelle doesn't matter any way I mentioned to him that and I wrote some letters here and papers about relationship between girls growing up on campus with the father who was president. And I expressed some regrets or something and my God my middle daughter Lisa blew up and said "Dad we had a wonderful time! We loved Wilkes!" So I can't judge what kind of childhood they had I really can't, God bless Ann Marie she really was a mother to our children.

CB: Just technically how do you how was your family?

FM: We were back on campus the second floor wasn't flooded you know that [inaudible] class--
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CB: Weren't you living in a trailer?

FM: Yeah we were in it just its... since the crew... the houses is a separate problem that includes Andy Shaw and a couple other things too but the [inaudible] that's in one of the books. That's why they took out so much organizing to do. We were basically back in the flood because of the temporary power was there the girls were back in their own beds and I had to be on campus. They were working on the first floor of the house washed down all the walls I remember they used high pressure chlorine mix to kill mold and so on. We were back in the house in three weeks. We might talk about the camper trailer later and Ann Marie said I'm smelling a strange smell here well there in one of those books our pictures they finally took it's all plaster wall from you know the earlier 20th century and the Sordoni guys tore the wall down and looked and there was mold growing in the walls. God, and it shows up clearly in the pictures and so they had to come in and tear down all the first floor walls and I guess they used plasterboard and you know drywall for the new I have no idea what was there. They were restored and it cost I saw the numbers the other day 85,000 dollars. Somebody wrote a letter to the press and I don't know who this somebody was, it might have been Andy Shaw somebody that dealt with the numbers

because I never saw a break down of what was spent on each building. So it was somebody who knew what was going on and he said “Oh 87,000 dollars spent to restore the president’s home” as though I was getting 87,000 dollars worth of a house I was think you know man you don’t know what this cost me in furniture that the president had to buy his own furniture and that was all flooded then I... So any way they came in and redid that. My family was there for all the time that during the worst part the beginning before they had power and before the mold was taken care of they proved a camper trailer not campus trailer, but a small trailer not a sleeping trailer to do your cooking in. They assessed your house and what did you need and well you know they didn’t have to tell them a real tiny home and we had National Guard cooking right next door. Oh they were wonderful.

FM: When the flood was over they were trying to get rid of those trailers. They said to us, Ann Marie cooked in that trailer for eight or ten weeks, but when it start to get cold in November so on we were back installed and the kitchen was in and everything was working so we got a letter from HUD that says you know we’re giving you the option of buying the trailer for ten cents on the dollar or or you know we’ll be taking possession in December 1st or something and I went tro Ann Marie I said “You know we have vacation a good trailer for maybe 800 bucks or whatever they would get.” She looked at me and said “Mike over my dead body. I never want to see the inside of a camper trailer again.” (laughing)

FM: But the family basically got back in my recollection. They obviously had to redo the first floor at the time I wasn’t paying too much attention to [inaudible] I really have to say you know Ann Marie she really stepped up and did everything about that house I that was the least of my concerns and God bless her. You don’t give your wives enough credit for maintaining stability, but she had for those girls.

CB: I can speak to that.

FM: Back ...

CB: Who made the decisions about which buildings to save and which buildings to repair? What was your decision making process? Who was your Paul Hop? Did you have one?

FM: Charlie Big.

CB: Okay.

FM: I know St. Carl was not that kind of maintenance guy it had to be Charlie Big he was the kind of guy regardless of what his job title was; he knew everything that was going on and what had to be done.

CB: [inaudible] still true when I came.

FM: And he he knew what his job was he didn't have to come to me a say [inaudible] of evaluation a facility to whether it should be torn down or not he didn't have to come to me a said this he just tells---

CB: Just in general the 58 buildings, how many did you not reuse?

FM: Oh boy.

CB: 10? Was it that much culminating?

FM: You know it was almost a toss up between the federal government saying will pay for restoration we won't pay for replacement and so what ever we needed and we needed darn near every space we had we imported temporary dormitories I guess we we restored. I don't remember consciously saying "yes tear this down, don't tear this down" because if that happened it was too an older frame building that had no rehabilitative prospect. In a way that was true of the whole block. I mean you look at Harold Cox's histories there and I do not think there is much or a big jump post flood in the availability of property see it wasn't that kind of flood we did not get the power when you look at the pictures you know of homes off their bases and broken up and so on we go that backflow and we got the mud, but we did not get the power of the current in fact if you came in from the river Main street had more current than the college did. And yet we're closer to the river, but the river takes that bend and so you got you know you got Main Street then you got South Franklin Street then you got South River Street so the difference between water levels and the way the water flowed when it came through below us and then came back up those streets it was a totally different flood effect on buildings. It was more electrical connection it was not. I don't remember a Wilkes building that was physically damaged that you can look to see and say "Oh look the porch swept away." I just don't remember any of those.

JR: Doorways had to be you know they swelled, but I don't remember our buildings were pretty sturdy.

CB: Two stories about Weckesser Hall when I arrived in '84 what is the front door facing South Franklin Street had not been opened mud had been taken off, but the paint was peeling. It was not a door that was ever opened so at my inauguration even before I declared an open door policy we open did finished off that clearance, but that was an example of an area that was not urgently needed and in 12 years it was not taken care of. The other is the Cunningham hall Mrs. Cunningham Bill Cunningham's mother continued to live on the second floor.

FM: No Weckesser oh Cunningham.

CB: Right right.

(siren goes off)

CB: I got the other Weckesser story, let me come back to it. The Cunningham story it was Mrs. Cunningham continues to live on the second floor [inaudible] when they cleaned up the first floor, they did nothing to repair it and when it came time when they were giving that building and this is SE divitive that's coming into the picture persuaded they wanted to have it torn down and she after Mrs. Cunningham died and the persuasion was to be given to the college and as seen when [inaudible] make the case with the Cunninghams that there had to be some money to go with it to maintain it because it was and to fix it up and that created some tension with the Cunninghams that I inherited and towards the very end of our time here we had a board Jane like to use board dinners in different buildings to show of the to the trustees what [inaudible] so we had a dinner at Cunningham Hall the first floor, but we had open house for the whole building and Bill Cunningham came into his---

FM: Which Cunningham Hall the only Cunningham Hall I know is [inaudible]

CB: Cunningham Hall that burned down was next to it. That was John---

FM: Oh Okay. So then the Deans when into the building it's a red brick building.

JR: Yes it's right over there.

FM: Okay that was not called Cunningham Hall when I was here.

CB: By the time John Cunningham Hall had gone down except for the.

JR: Oh yeah those things.

CB: Which I think Charlie Abate in my day cleverly knocked down.

JR: One night.

CB: Yeah one night, [inaudible]

(laughing)

CB: Because we were going to incorporate it in a new building and we had to save these pillars from John Cunningham Hall. Anyway William Cunningham's parents lived in the next house and that's the house Bill Cunningham and his brothers John and begins with and grew up in. So when we took that over they did provide money and we had this dinner and and Bill comes up and it's in his parent's bedroom where both had died and he'd never been back to that building they were so ticked off that they didn't go we added additions and did not go to dedication. So that was kind of a reconciliation time it's a beautiful building those two brothers lived next to each other great mansions that Pennsylvania Supply Company a lot to them.

FM: You see I was not involved in college [inaudible] I don't remember any of that transition I remember what you're calling Cunningham hall was what was it before that that's were student government office---

JR: Wasn't it a private home?

CB: It was a private home until we got it and and I don't know the I know student affairs was in it right away.

JR: I don't think so.

FM: I thought Jane Lampey had an office in there?

CB: She did.

JR: She did.

CB: And that's that was the parent's bedroom. So that's but that's we did a lot on that when I came here [inaudible] I'm not sure I think Student Affairs was someplace else when I arrived yeah George Ralston was in Weckesser.

JR: Yep.

FM: Yep, well Jane Lampy used to be in Weckesser (all talking over each other) Hoover was in Weckesser.

CB: I think the Student Affairs Staff was in Weckesser and we moved them over to Cunningham.

JR: I think that's true yes yeah yeah that's where they were that's right.

CB: I am ready to say what were the final questions Elizabeth what would you like us to speak to in your long list that we missed?

ES: So one last question that I have is if you read the Beacons in the immediate post flood period the students are still concerned with parking they're always concerned about parking they're concerned about the final exam schedule they're always concerned about that, but the one big thing that was really kinda new and different with the flood were some security concerns on campus so I think the street lights around campus were not all back up when classes restarted so student government were proposing things like should we have student government fund raise to have the lights come back should we have student government create its own police force to patrol the area, and I was curious if any of that discussion floated up to your awareness.

FM: You want my opinion of it without any---

ES: Yes.

FM: My opinion of that is that students had to have a justification for doing action of some kind.

ES: Okay.

FM: And The administration frankly didn't give a damn. Which may have offended them, but as far as I'm concerned it was during my time that was the lowest priority I had was whether they had proper we had guys punching time clocks all hours of the day and night, but to me I think I would have treated it as another student concern because they got to justify their existence as a student government they'll find an issue, you know that was the tenner of the times and with George Wilson and Jane the last thing I would have dealt with were students. That's just kind of an add on off the cuff.

CB: To put that in a slightly larger context that we talked on on tape before and that is part of what I observed at George Walson's Deanship and as he talked about Dr. Farley was that he had learned a very skillful way to keep all student problems away from the president and he was still doing that with me. A part of why I finally did what I did is that I needed to feel some kind of accountability for what was happening to students in areas that were just careful hugs to the student Deans you know when the X hit the fan it was going to be me I didn't want to be finding out stuff after the whole world did. I think you were still a captive of a Farley relationship the very skillful, I mean the Student Affair Staff of Wilkes if you want to look at continuity is remarkable. I bet there is not another college in the country that's had the continuity from George Wilson through R. Hoover, Jane Lampey, Paul Adams I mean that that's gone on for since 1946.

JR: That's true.

FM: And any record of American College or University development identifies the figures of the President of the of Harvard or the President of Princeton or the President of your local University as being a thinker a philosopher one who you turn to for expertise they were not an administrator and you read pre-World War Two histories these are famous names of the guy from Harvard who writes a book while he's president. God forbid a President now and days says gee it's time to write a book, right? So there was a changing of the whole concept of Presidential purpose at an institution and they were not they were not disciplined by the details of administration and the student administration even further from the top of the heap.

CB: The question being given what came out in the Beacon would that have been something that George would have handled? And would he have brought something to you---

FM: That's why they called it Student Affairs. It wasn't the dating game. Any student affairs George handled them I only got them to my desk when you know God forbid faculty affairs were more the who transition in faculty affairs and the revision instruction and then the reversion Dean instruction and the whole disruption there because we had because we had distorted Presidential seque- Presidential succession at Wilkes was distorted by other events fund raising the building the Chancellorship the that we were a typical, but the structure was in place that Student Affairs. I don't want decisions about whether to throw a kid out of school because he got [inaudible] dropped on the patio George handled that. I remember Jane Lampey came to me one day and she put a jar on my desk and said "Mike we found this in Sterling Hall" "Well what is it?" and she looked at me and sad "It's marijuana" I said "it is?" I didn't know what the hell marijuana was. I resisted the temptation to open it and sniff it at least to know what it was: this green thing.

FM: I went to Hawaii with my good friend Bob Kelly and they had the State association meetings in California the year of the Olympics and so the President of California Association who was responsible for planning the annual meeting ran into a roadblock in getting motel reservations so he was a great golfer and he wound up negotiating a trip to go to Hawaii to spend our three nights to be in three different resorts hotels with golf courses that's when the Japanese were building like crazy in Hawaii and they're building golf courses. So Bob Kelly and I went a couple days early and we went to Mawii and the Mahina shores and he went back with his wife a couple of years ago and he said "Mike you would have felt right back in heaven", but we got up about 7:30 in the morning and walking down this long esplanade there, yachts and boats here and had breakfast at a little store down the end [inaudible] those hibiscus are really beautiful and Bob looks and me and he says "Mike don't you know what you're smelling that's Maui gold. That's famous all over the marijuana world." They're breeding marijuana, I didn't even know what it smelt like.

JR: We used to have the winter carnival for students out at White Beauty Field out in the Poconos that no longer exist, but they would put the kids in these cabins and there'd be two hundred kids there. I remember it cost them 19 dollars to go for three days. And Ginger and I and Gay and Jack and I think Rasmen and Ann Marie and the Baluccis were the chaperons the kids said we were the guests the owners said we were the chaperons. So at the end of it we had to go to each cabin and it shows you how naive we were, walked into one and (sniffs) what's that smell? The next one we're all looking at each other it's that smell again and the owner, a man by the name of Cardollo and I remember him distinctly saying "are you guys for real? It's marijuana." and we're all like "Oh my God they were smoking marijuana oh I apologize." and he said "are you kidding these are the best kids we ever had here I'm sending my daughter to Wilkes." She was my student assistant for 4 years Ann Cardoa.

CB: That is a good story to end on. That is Wilkes at its best. So thank you thank you all this was a remark... there's a lot on this recording it has some real value.

ES: Thank you.

CB: Thank you Elizabeth for recording all of this and making it possible.

FM: Elizabeth I haven't signed this yet do I print my name up here?

ES: Yes. You print at the top and then sign at the bottom.

JR: By the way I assume they're going to do this again.

(Laughing)