

*Internally Robert Boulay
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I first recruited Gilbert McClintock when I was president of Bucknell University when Wilkes was Bucknell Junior College and I had to go over to Wilkes-Barre every week in the early years to be present there for anything that might need the presence of the president of Bucknell University; and I soon realized that it would be necessary to have a strong committee in charge of the junior college in order that it would not be just an institution operated by an absentee landlord 65 miles to the west, namely, Bucknell University. So, I organized a local committee which could only be a committee of The Bucknell University Board of Trustees. It could not be a Board of Trustees in itself as long as it was Bucknell Junior College operating on the Charter of Bucknell University. I was referred to Gilbert McClintock as a very prominent citizen of Wilkes-Barre who was highly respected, interested in cultural matters and I visited him, became acquainted with him, and asked him and asked him if he would serve as chairman of the committee on Bucknell Junior College. He gave it some consideration, said said he would, and he did. And, from the very beginning, he was chairman

of the committee which I then organized, about a dozen leading men and women of Wilkes-Barre who agreed to serve as the local committee, with whom I consulted from time to time in order to keep the development of the junior college in line with the needs of the community. Then, when the time came to break the ties with Bucknell University - when we could get a charter for the local institution on its own, under its own name, so that it could continue as an educational institution on its own charter, the local committee then became, automatically, the Board of Trustees of the local college and we decided to call it Wilkes College; Gilbert McClintock then continued as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Wilkes College. There is a lot of other history.....I'll just try to give you this particular phase of it in order to answer your question as to how Admiral Stark happened to become Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Wilkes College. It's a long answer but you see how interwoven it is with everything that was happening. Meanwhile, Admiral Stark had given Bucknell Junior College the property of his sister, Mrs. Chase, as one of the College's properties, on West River Street and had shown his interest in Bucknell Junior College in that way - and in other ways.

One day I sat at this desk here in New York and had a phone call from Wilkes-Barre; it was Gene Farley on the phone. He said, "I have very sad news. Gilbert McClintock dropped dead 15 minutes ago. He had been at lunch at the Club and after lunch he was walking from the Club to his office and dropped dead." "Oh," I said, "that's terrible." And Gene said, "I'm phoning you to let you know. In the first place, I know you'll want to come over for the services." I said, "I certainly will." "In the second place," he said, "You're vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees and I want to ask if we may elect you now as chairman of the board of trustees in order that there will be no interruption of functioning of the board." And, I said, "Gene, I will be acting chairman of the Board of Trustees for a few weeks until you can get permanently re-organized as a result of Gilbert's death, but I have a candidate who would be a much better chairman for the board than I would be." "Well," he said, "I don't know why you say that - you're vice-chairman now and how could anybody be a better candidate for chairman than the vice-chairman?" I said, "I'll explain it to you: I'm not a resident of Wilkes-Barre; I'm not known to the people of Wilkes-Barre; I'm known as the President of Bucknell University - former President by

that time I had retired as President of Bucknell University - they know who I am and they know what I did in the early days in bringing Bucknell Junior College up and then helping to get it ready to get its own charter, but I'm not a citizen of Wilkes-Barre and I have no roots in Wilkes-Barre, but I have a candidate for you - a man of great distinction, world distinction, who is a native of Wilkes-Barre and is admired, respected, and loved by everybody in Wilkes-Barre." He said, "Who's that?" I said, "Admiral Harold Stark." I said, "I would suggest that you consult with the trustees and say that I will be willing to act as chairman, acting chairman, for the little time it will take you to call a meeting and get a chairman, but that Admiral Harold Stark has been nominated as chairman of the Board; get the reaction - then if the reaction is favorable, proceed immediately.

So, in a couple of days, Gene called back and he said, "Well, the reaction is very favorable here toward Harold Stark although there are those here who think it just natural that you should be elected chairman." And, I said, "Well, I appreciate that and I understand that, but they do agree that Harold would be a great chairman, don't they?" "Yes, they do." "Well,"

I said, "Let's go forward and call a meeting; I'll come over and preside at it, we'll elect Harold chairman." I said, "Have you consulted Harold? Will he accept?" "Well," he said, "Should I do that?" "Yes, I think you ought to consult Harold." So he phoned Harold (I don't know whether it was in Washington or up at his summer place). He was retired at that time. He was not a member of the Board of Trustees, but he had contributed this Chase Hall, you see, and shown his interest. (I do not think he was a member of the Board.....you can check that to make sure.....he may have been, but I doubt it.) So Gene called me back in a day or two and he said, "Well, Harold thinks that you ought to be chairman, he's a modest man, of course, but if you won't accept it, he says he will accept it, if elected, provided you will continue to be vice-chairman." I said, "You call him back right away and say that I will be very proud to continue to be vice-chairman, with him as chairman, and I'll help him any way a vice-chairman can help a chairman."

Admiral Stark.....He was a very able and devoted chairman

of the Board. He was very, very much interested in all that was going on and presided over the Board with great skill and attention. He was not the

*Correction: Eff
Harold was a
trustee for 2 years.*

kind of chairman who would come to a meeting and say "Well, now I don't know what's been going on here, but here we have our president." - You know the kind - No, he would go over very carefully with Gene and with me before every board meeting just everything that was going to come up, and why it was coming up. And what did we want to do, and so forth and so on. The three of us would be briefed on everything that was going to come before the Board. We would have a meeting perhaps the evening before and understand it all and each of us be ready to do our part in the presenting of each situation. If there was anything out of the ordinary.....Did anything vital or critical come up? Was there anything out of the ordinary at that time? There was indeed. There was the whole matter of the development program.

We had the problem of the growth of the facilities and faculty and the student body; and Admiral Stark was in favor of a big vision. Gene always had before us a vision of a college that would have as its very heart the highest standard of excellence, but at the same time would be a growing college - not just a little college, but a growing college in numbers, and in excellence, and in course content. He kept before us the concept of graduate

work - master's degrees, and so forth - which would introduce new courses in science and education; which called for new faculty; which called for new laboratories. And, he would explain this to Admiral Stark and to me - primarily. We were the ones that gave Gene assurance that we would back him on the Board. And we had members of the Board who completely understood what he was up to and wanted to back him and we had others who half understood it and went along because Gene and Admiral Stark and I were there and said this is what ought to be done. And we had some others who would go outside and say: "Well this will cost a lot of money and this means that there will be another campaign, and that isn't good. - They'll be asking us for more money."

It wasn't a split in the Board, but you have different kinds of people on every board but the fact that Admiral Stark and Gene Farley and I were sitting up there as Chairman of the Board and Vice-chairman of the Board, and President, were up there sitting at the head of the table and we were together on these things. Anybody who would oppose us would have to have a pretty good reason.

Wilkes College is a child of probably the worst economic depression that Luzerne County and that whole area ever had - I don't mean to go back into history - I don't know how far back it goes - but in my recollection, which has to do with the Thirties, Forties, Fifties, and Sixties, ----Wilkes College came out of the worst era in that period of four decades having to do with the collapse of the anthracite coal industry, the unemployment and the fact that the boys and girls of the Early Thirties were graduating from their high schools and coming to the end of any opportunity for schooling. These kids graduating from high school, bright as they were, (and there were a lot of bright people in that Anthracite region) - these were very bright peoples - Scotch, Irish, Welsh - the best Anglo-Saxon stock - along with a lot of Polish stock, people with brains; and those boys and girls were graduating from high school...period...that was the end - no more school. They couldn't go away - their fathers had no jobs - sitting around at home, no work, no income - except maybe a little Miners' Union income..... it was really sad.

I was on the Board of Trustees of Bucknell University at that time.

The president of Bucknell was Dr. Homer Rainey, who later became

president of the University of Texas, his alma mater. And a committee of three high school principals of that area - they were all Bucknell graduates - came down to see Dr. Rainey and reported to him this situation of bright boys and girls from their schools that were graduating and were just thrown out into the pile of The Unemployed without any chance, for most of them, of getting any further education, and asked Dr. Rainey if he would send some of his Bucknell faculty up to Wilkes-Barre by car, sixty-five-mile drive, and offer some freshman classes to begin with to qualified students under the Bucknell Charter and give them at least one year of college education - and maybe two - maybe make it a junior college; they didn't ask for anything beyond that.

I do not know if they approached any other schools. I know State College is very unhappy that they asked Bucknell to do it. I know Penn State - after Bucknell did it - complained because they hadn't been asked. It was a group of three Bucknell alumni who did it. And, they went to Lewisburg and asked Rainey for Bucknell to do it, and Rainey took it up with the Board of Trustees and asked if he might do it.

What was the reaction of the Board? Were there any alternatives?

The reaction was partly negative, partly affirmative. Bucknell at that time was running a deficit of \$100,000. a year like most colleges were because the student enrollment was dropping off very very fast - this was in '32 and '33 - and you know that colleges suffered a very serious student loss and they were consequently suffering a very, very serious income loss - Bucknell was operating at a \$100,000. a year loss, running up deficits which I had to repay when I became president a few years later. And, the deficit-conscious members of the Board of Trustees said, "No, this is going to cost us money." And they said to Dr. Rainey, "Will this pay for itself?" And he tried to say it would (he was always an optimist anyway) and he didn't pay much attention to deficits anyway, as you can believe when he was letting his own college run \$100,000. into the hole and so there was some opposition to it that this would just add to Bucknell's deficit, although it would render a good service up there but was that Bucknell's business to do that and pay the bills for it. But, it passed and Dr. Rainey was given the privilege of offering the freshman courses up there. He put a couple of young Bucknell alumni (Sy Morgan was one of them who later became president of his company and he is a Bucknell alumnus, and a chap from Wilkes-Barre

named Herbert Lloyd). He put them out on the field and they went around and solicited seniors graduating from those various high schools in the Wyoming Valley and solicited them to come to Bucknell classes and Senator Andrew Sordoni had had a mortgage on a ^{three}~~six~~-~~or seven~~-story business college building up there in the center of the city that had gone broke during the depression and he had taken over the ownership of that building. Bucknell rented that building as the site for these classes - which was well-equipped for it because it had been built for a business college and had classrooms and blackboards and administrative offices and so forth. So, the first year, I think there were 190 or 195 well-qualified boys and girls came in there and enrolled as freshmen.

How many faculty?

Well, I don't remember them by name but I would think probably about ten.

How was this directed?

One of the faculty members (a teacher by the name of Isenhower was given the title of Director) but he was not a trained director, he was a professor in the education department at Bucknell - a very nice fellow, hard-working, good teacher - but the other teachers on the staff really

didn't give him a chance. (There were a couple of them there particularly who wanted to run the show themselves or wanted to scheme up things behind his back and complain about this, that, and the other thing.) They would go to this committee - after I organized it - and complain to them. Well, this went on for about three years, and I got tossed into the presidency of Bucknell in 1935; the Board of Trustees was called into special session in the fall of 1935, on short notice - less than a week's notice - and I couldn't go over; I didn't know what this special session was for and I just sent word I couldn't go over - and they had a meeting over there and the purpose of the meeting was to receive the resignation of Homer Rainey as president of Bucknell, because he had been appointed Director of a Commission on Youth, an educational study of the needs of youth. And he wanted to take it and this meeting was called. Without consulting me at all, they elected me in my absence as president of Bucknell. The Chairman of the Board came to see me the next day and said that he was sorry I couldn't be at the meeting and I said: "Well, what happened?" and he said, "You were elected president." And, I said, "That's quite a happening." And I said "That's too bad, you'll have to have another meeting." He said, "Why is that?" I said, "I am not

going to leave my business; I've created this business and I have fifty men working for me and I'm not going to walk out on these men and, furthermore, I am not an educator and I don't want to be an educator and I have no intention of being an educator and for me to leave my business, my home, and all my interests here and say: 'I am hereby an educator.' Nothing doing." He said, "Now wait a minute, you can't let us down like that." "Well," I said, "Why didn't you talk to me about it before?" He said, "It was such a hurry. I was afraid you'd say that, that's why I didn't talk to you about it beforehand."

not
"Well," I said, "I'm^{not} going to leave my business. People are dependent on me for their lives and homes. I like my work, too, and I don't intend to change it at my age - I'm forty years old." "Well," he said, "What are we going to do about it? Can't you come over for a year or so and help us get another president?" I said, "I can do that, if you want me to." He said, "Could you come over and be acting president for a year or two?" I said, "Well, on that basis, if you understand that I'm just coming as acting president for a year or two and I'm not going to take the job." "Well," he said, "It'd be a wonderful relief if you'd do that." So I went over as acting president for a year and, of course, they stopped looking for anybody right away, thinking

they had me. And there I was.

WE had chapel every Thursday morning - it was more a college meeting than a religious exercise. At the end of the year, a committee of seniors rose up just as I was about to dismiss the meeting and asked if they could present a petition to me. And I said: "Yes, what is it? Come forward." So they came forward. It was a petition signed by all the two thousand students of the college, the faculty members and the administration, asking me to drop the "acting" from my title and be their president - which was a very emotional thing, a very touching thing - I said: "I can't answer this at this moment; I'll have to take this and think about it." So, I thought about it and I said: "Well, you may drop the 'acting' and I'll stay here for two or three years. But I will continue only to give the time I've been giving, which is Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and I'll continue to be president of Marts and Lundy, and there you are. And I will not move here; I'll keep my home in the East and I'll keep my office in the East. And, I said to the Trustees: "If this suits you, I'll be president for a few years, meanwhile, we will look for a president; I'm doing this for these students. They want to call me president instead of acting president; but this is just for a little while .

Do you want me to come on that basis?" They said, "Yes." So that's the way it was. It went on that way for ten years. Then I really quit.

It was while I was president of Bucknell that I selected Gene Farley.

I did that the first year I was acting president of Bucknell; I got there in 1935 as acting president and I found I was also acting president of Bucknell Junior College and that I had to go up there once a week in addition to spending a couple of days at Lewisburg: I had to drive up there one of those days. And I found that some decisions had to be made: We either had to go out of business and say: "We were here during the Depression; we answered the call and now it's over, or, I had to take the next step and create a permanent campus.

WHAT WAS THE REACTION TO THIS ON THE PART OF THE
BUCKNELL TRUSTEES?

They didn't like it at all. They thought that the junior college was draining away resources from Bucknell. They didn't like it; that is, these who lived down that way. The ones who lived around Wilkes-Barre liked it very much. They didn't make an issue of it, though, for anybody but me - one or two of them, including the treasurer was nasty about it, but he was

just nasty by nature.

I gave you this long story now, but maybe I gave it to you at the wrong place. What you asked me was about the development of the scientific rather than the liberal arts, and the reason I told you this point was that the junior college was born out of an economic crisis that might be called also a scientific crisis - in the science of economic organization - and when I became president of Bucknell, I saw that there were two things absolutely necessary if this institution was to go on: Either it had to quit, or if it were to go on, there had to be two things in addition to what it had: It had to have an able, unusual, devoted, dedicated head; and it had to have its own campus in addition to its faculty and its student body. Its student body had risen every year - freshmen and sophomores, that's all. So, I asked my dean down at Bucknell - Dr. ^{Romayne Rivenberg} ~~Ryman~~ Burke (?), who did all the work of recruiting professors and so forth for Bucknell University - to use his usual contacts to find a man who could be designated and employed as director of the Junior College. This is where Gene Farley comes in. Dean ^{Rivenberg} ~~Ryman~~ Burke went down to Philadelphia and interviewed the dean at the University of Pennsylvania School of Education and asked the dean down there if he had

a recent graduate who would be a suitable candidate as Director of the Bucknell Junior College at Wilkes-Barre. He went over his recollections of students of the last ten years, and he said, "Yes, I have a man - he's over in Newark, New Jersey, as director of research over there. He's a Quaker, a good-looking fellow, with a nice personality, able, --- his name is Eugene Farley and he's the best graduate student I've had in the last ten years. He could do this job if he were interested." And that's how we heard about Gene Farley.

So I phoned Gene Farley at Newark and invited him to come over to Wilkes-Barre. And he came over and spent two days. Now, Wilkes-Barre was a dead city. It was discouraged. People were down; employment was down. I told you this business school had gone into bankruptcy - and a lot of other things had gone into bankruptcy. I showed Gene the students and the faculty. I kept him close to me the two days he was there, but he slipped off for a couple of hours (I didn't realize it at the time, but he told me later) and he went around the town - just walked in on people - and asked about Wilkes-Barre. Everybody he asked gave him an awful report. They told him it was dead and would never pick up. "It's gone," they said, "the

anthracite business is dead; there's no hope for it. New fuels and new methods of heating have taken its place. There's no hope for the future."

When he told them he was considering a job in Wilkes-Barre, they said, "Don't come here; you're licked before you start. It's a dead city. Go somewhere else where there's a future; there's no future here - only the past."

He went back home, said he wanted to think about it a while, and he would call me. In about a week, he called me and said that he and Eleanor - Eleanor had been with him, his wife - had been thinking about it. And I told him that we'd pay him ^{4,500}\$8,000. or so - some small sum - and he said, "We've been thinking about it and we'll take it." I was amazed because I didn't think he would take it: He'd given me some hint of what he'd learned of the town. I said, "I got the idea that you got a pretty bad picture of Wilkes-Barre out of the town." He said he had. He said, "That's why I'm going to take it." "Why," I said, "explain that to me." "Well," he said, "For two reasons. In the first place, I want a tough job, one that's a challenge. And in the second place, I can see it's something that needs to be done. I know it's a tough job, but it needsto be done. I think I can do it,

and I want to try."

Well, that's the spirit of Gene Farley.

One reason he came, he told me afterward, (in addition to his primary reason which he, as an educator, had - which was to do a good educational job) was that he felt he could help that community find new life through new resources. He didn't know what, but he just felt that with those people out there - they were educated people - they were a good type of intelligent, hard-working people; he just felt that they needed some new ideas, some new stimulus, some new help and guidance in finding ways to create new livelihoods. And, he would like to help them do it.

And this comes back to your emphasis on science, because immediately after he got established and got into the life of the community, as well as the life of the College, he began to work with committees, began to serve as one of the leaders of the committees to bring new industry there, and that new industry required new thinking, new ideas, and it required the training of men in science, in physics, in chemistry, in electronics, and in engineering, and in all aspects of mathematics and science; and that, I think, may have been the reason that he put more emphasis on science at one stage than

he did on the arts, although he more recently has put the greater emphasis on the arts after he got the Stark Laboratory and the graduate maps built to help in the achievement of his hopes for building up the aids to developing educated men in the sciences.

AFTER SPUTNIK, DID THE "SCIENCE HYSTERIA" AFFECT WILKES? DID THE TRUSTEES WANT TO PUSH FASTER IN SCIENCE?

No I don't think it ever came up in the Board. I don't recall that it did. I think that it was Farley's own concept of what the community needed. We did not have on the board any persons who were original thinkers in educational processes. They were community leaders in general, as I think back over them I can't identify any of them as having made any contributions along the line that you suggest.

WAS THE SCIENCE BUILDUP IN THE 60s REACTIONARY OR WAS IT DEFINITELY PLANNED?

No, this was a response of Farley's to what he regarded as the community need of developing new resources - which he did. As you know, he brought branches of eight or ten corporations to establish plants there. I don't know whether or not he did it personally, but he was very active

in it. He came over here to New York and interviewed persons, along with others. They had a development committee over there - with a full-time man in charge and - I don't know whether or not you know the groups that did this - well, this man was a very able fellow, and Farley worked with him very well, and they thought very highly of each other. But, there were certain community leaders over there - and they are leaders in the community - and I won't undertake to name them because I may get the names wrong, but I recognize them when I see them - who are not helpful, to say the least, to these ideas - and Farley got out of touch with some of them because he was too far out in front in those very ideas.

It was Admiral Stark who found the money for Farley's concept of the new Stark Laboratory and the Graduate Center. It was a friend of Admiral Stark; the three of us were struggling to raise that money for the laboratory and one day, a certain man who is a friend of Admiral Stark, phoned Gene and said, "Harold's been telling me about the new laboratory that you need, and I agree with you that it's needed, but I'd like to ask you just one question: If we give the funds for it, would you be favorable toward naming it for Harold Stark? What an unnecessary question! Why, we would

have been only too proud - under any circumstances - to name it for

Harold Stark.

Gene called me up right away and said, "What will I tell them?" I said, "You tell them, money or no money, we'd just love to name it for Harold Stark."

That whole emphasis on the laboratories and the graduate work came out of economic need of the community, and really came because certain of these corporations whom Gene visited over in New York said to him: "We are going to establish some plants outside of the city in new locations. We're not going to establish a branch plant anywhere, in any community, that does not provide an opportunity for our personnel to take graduate work in science. We want these men - men on the way up - to continue their educational preparation for higher tasks, and they want to continue; they don't want to stop at the bachelor level. They want to go on to Master's. Do you have any masters in physics, chemistry, etc.?"

Gene came back and reported that to Harold and me; we, three of us, agreed that for the good of the community as well as the good of the College, there had to be some master's levels, or the college and the community would

suffer a real loss.

DURING THIS PERIOD OF 1959-1964, WHEN THERE WAS SO MUCH THAT HAD TO BE DONE IN PLANNING FOR THE SCIENCES, WAS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE REST OF THE COLLEGE SUFFERED?

No. The rest of the college did not have to pay the bills; all the money that was put into science in that period was given for that purpose.

WHAT ABOUT EMPHASIS ON PLANNING?

There was no relaxation of emphasis on planning. Every time that we had a campaign for any one thing, we presented the next steps in the brochure. (You can confirm this by looking at the brochures.) You'll find that we presented the next steps. This is not the end of Wilkes College: The next step is a Fine Arts Center; next step is a gymnasium; next step is a library. We were always stretching their imagination to the next step, and do you know something? We've achieved the next step in every one of those things: The gym, the library, the fine arts center - we were leading the friends of Wilkes along to the comprehensive development of the college all the time. We were not saying to them: You get the money for this science center, and that will be all that Wilkes College is

ever going to need. No - the next step is a library. At that point, some of the narrow-minded trustees said: "Well, what will the library cost? Can we build one for about \$500,000?" And Farley's reply was: "You can get a library for \$500,000, but you can't get the library that Wilkes needs for \$500,000." "Well," they asked, "How much will the library that Wilkes needs cost?" "Two and a half million dollars." "WHAT?" "Yes..... \$2,500,000." You know something? They got the \$2,500,000. for the new library just like that. Now the next thing that you need is an art center. - A center for the practicing arts. "How much will that cost?" I think, as originally stated, it would have cost about \$750,000. But I'm not going to say how many times that it's costing - and paid for - but it's quite a lot.

If people complain that the emphasis on Science in 1959 interfered with the development of the arts - just ask them: What development of the arts, the library or the fine arts building? It is an amazing thing about the development of Wilkes College: Success in one phase has been surrounded by successes in the other essential phases; it's been a comprehensive development. Farley has kept all aspects of it before the constituency.

Some people have said: I'll do this, and some people have said: I'll do that, and so on; and no one phase has had to suffer because of generosity to another phase. - At least in my opinion, if it has I'm not aware of it.

WAS THE WILKES CHARTER ONLY DEPENDENT ON A \$500,000.

ENDOWMENT?

That was a money requirement (I've forgotten the exact requirements), but it was dependent upon the judgment of the people in Harrisburg - at the State Education Department - as to the soundness of our instruction and our faculty, on the educational competence of our faculty, and our president; and on our course offerings, on the product that had been produced up to that time - they made a very careful study of it, and of the students that had been graduated, and the general esteem in which the college was held and the number of Ph.D.s on the faculty - all those things - but there was one dollar requirement and that was that the college had to have an endowment of at least \$500,000. In other words, it couldn't be entirely dependent on tuition income and current giving.

Re: Conyngham home. It was staffed with a ~~full~~ staff of servants all year round, and it was quite expensive for her (not that that was any bother to her). I wondered how I could see her; and a friend told me that she lived at the Plaza Hotel in New York and that she also had a nephew, an insurance broker, who had an office downtown in New York.

He ran her business for her; his name was ^{Robinson} Russell. So I went to see this nephew of hers and asked him if he thought his aunt would be willing to give her home, over on ^{River} Front Street, to Bucknell Junior College. Well, he said, "What's Bucknell Junior College?" So, I explained it to him: I said they could use it for educational purposes for boys and girls of that area. And it might be a comfort to her to know that her home was being used that way, for educational purposes. And it would save her the expense of running it, if that's any concern to her. He said that it might be. So, that's the way that happened.

Her gift was announced in the newspapers. About a week later,

Admiral Stark's nephew, who works in a bank up in Wilkes-Barre, came to see Gene, and said, "My uncle, Harold Stark in Washington, read about Mrs. Conyngham giving her house to the Junior College and he asked me

*minutes later
E.S.*

if I thought the college would like to have his sister's house, Mrs. Chase.

She bought a new house - her husband was head of the Lehigh Navigation

Company; they had just built it a couple of years before they died. It's a

relatively new house. And they left it to Harold; he doesn't need it; he has a

home in Washington and a summer home up here in the mountains. He wanted

to know if you might like that home." Well, Gene phoned me and asked whether

we'd like Admiral Stark's home. (I had, just a few weeks before, given Admiral

Stark an honorary degree at Bucknell - as chief of naval operations.) I said,

"We sure would." So that was the second.

Then Gilbert ^{McClellan} got in touch with me and said, "I wish you'd go

to see Allan Kirby and ask him for his father's home. It's right next door

to the Chase home and he doesn't use it. It's a bother to him; he doesn't

want to live there in Wilkes-Barre. He hates Wilkes-Barre, and he says

the people of Wilkes-Barre hate him. And he doesn't want to be here anymore;

he's got a home up in New Jersey." I said, "Why don't you ask him?" He

said: "He hates me and I hate him. We couldn't do any business together, but

I ~~think~~ maybe you could." So I said, "Well, I'll try." I was living over in

Plainfield, New Jersey - that was my home - I called him up from my office

here and asked if I could come to see him. "All right," he said, "but what do you want to see me about, Bucknell Junior College?" I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "you can't have that building, if that's what you want." Well, I said, "Can I come and see you?" And he said, "Yes, come next Sunday afternoon." He told me how to reach it, and I drove over.

It was a nice pleasant Sunday afternoon. We sat out on his porch. "I'm glad to have a visit from you," he said, "but I'll tell you before you start that you can't have my father's home." Well, I said, "That's plain enough, but do you mind telling me why Bucknell Junior College can't have your father's home for the benefit of the education of the boys and girls of that area? Your father was greatly interested in the education of boys and girls; he was very generous to your own alma mater, Lafayette, and to other institutions. He was a very generous man. He had great faith in education. You don't use the home, do you?" Well, he said, "I have some of my father's paintings in there. He had wanted it to be the beginning of an art gallery for Wilkes-Barre, and I have some of his paintings there. But I don't use it as a home." Well, I said, "I don't want to press you if you've made up your mind, but you have a reason; is it a good reason?" "Yes," he said, "I'll tell

you the reason. The reason is that my father's chauffeur and his wife, who was my father's maid, live in rooms over my father's garage. And he promised them they could stay there as long as they lived. And by God I'm going to keep his promise to them and no goddamn Bucknell can ever have that garage as long as they live." And, I said, "Well, Mr. Kirby, if you'd give that property to Bucknell University, we'd be very very glad to keep your father's promise to them." "You would?", he said. "Of course, we would. We wouldn't touch the garage as long as they lived - if that's the way you want it." He said, "Is that so. Well, what would you do about those paintings in my father's home?" Well, I said, "We'd be happy to keep that parlor there where the paintings are as a small art gallery and give it protection." "You would," he said. "Yes, of course, we would. We'd be proud to." "What would you use the rest of the building for?" "We'd use the rest of the building for a library." "Is that so. Well, that puts a new thought in my mind," he said. "But there's one other question I want to ask you. Somebody told me that you and Gilbert McClintock said that you wouldn't take any more of those houses unless the donor would give you a small endowment that would pay for the actual physical upkeep of the houses, like painting and repairs. I

couldn't do that. I wouldn't be able to do that. Maybe I could give you my father's home under the circumstances that you mention, but I couldn't give you any endowment for upkeep." Well, I said, "How much does it cost you for repairs and upkeep on that home?" Well, he said, "It costs me about five hundred dollars a year." I said, "That would take about a ten thousand dollar endowment, at five per cent, wouldn't it?" "Yes, that's right," he said. Well, I said, "Would you give half of that if I raise the other half from some other source?" "Well, I guess I could do that," he said. So, we got that home.

Dr. and Mrs. Farley lived on the top floor of Kirby Hall for years - a very unselfish thing, too. And, before we got Kirby Hall, they did the same thing over in that ~~little~~ building that Fred Weckesser gave me - behind Conyngham Hall. It was used for a girls' dormitory for a while. It was a three-story brick home, ~~and they lived on the top floor of that.~~ They were really unselfish people - they were devoted to the job and they paid the price for it.

WHAT WAS THE FULL EXTENT OF THE PRICE THAT THEY

PAID?

It was utter devotion to the college: Anything for the good of the college and its students, anything that the institution needed - they adjusted their lives to it. They made the college the big thing in their life, along with their own children and their family. They brought up a fine family, you know, a wonderful family - two boys and a girl. They had a splendid home life. They would change their own plans, if necessary, at a moment's notice; they lived there ^(it was too big 8 bedrooms & 3 baths) ~~without adequate room for a family life,~~ first in that three-story brick building that Mr. Weckesser ^{purchased} ~~built~~ for his daughter when she married. (When her marriage broke up, she didn't want it anymore; he gave it to me for the junior college.) They lived there - ~~just on the top floor.~~ I guess they had ~~some kind of a little kitchen on the top floor where they cooked their meals.~~

And, then on the top floor of Kirby Hall. For a college president and his wife to live there, you know! Then, one of the trustees, a very generous woman, bought the president's house and gave it to the college for them to live in. It was that wonderful spirit of Gene and Eleanor that won them the support of the most generous contributors to Wilkes College.

We loved them both; my wife, Ann, and Eleanor just loved each other. Eleanor was a very lovely woman - so unselfish, so kind. Everyone

who knew Elenor was devoted to her because she was so devoted to him and to the college. Such a wonderful personality - a beautiful girl, and very talented: She was a wonderful musician. And, she just killed herself by carrying on her activities and devotion after she had had two or three very serious heart attacks; her heart just wasn't up to it anymo e. Gene couldn't get her to relax and give in to her heart. They were a great pair; they loved each other and were loved by all the people who were of their own caliber.

WHO WERE THE OTHER PEOPLE WHO WERE INVOLVED WITH THE COLLEGE IN ITS EARLY DAYS?

The major ones, of course, were Gilbert McClintock and Daniel Roberts, Andrew Sordoni, Jim Harris, Charles Miner, Mrs. Darte, the pastor of the Baptist Church there, a Bucknell man, and Dr. Sam Davenport, Admiral Stark, Ruben Levy, he was a great fellow, the head of the ^{Blue-Ribbon} depart-
Calver Co *Juris Stern, owner of a department store, Isaac Long's,*
~~ment store~~ - *he* was a Cornell graduate, he was very active in the early days.

An amusing thing happened. He had a home down on West River Street; he was in Bermuda on a vacation when the announcement was made of one of these homes being given to Bucknell Junior College - I think it was the second one - and we were working on down toward where he lived, you see. He sent

He sent me a cablegram from Bermuda, and it read something like this:

"Please don't take my home for the junior college until I can get back and talk with you about it."

THAT WAS STERN, WASN'T IT, JULIUS STERN? Stern! Yes.

He was very active in the beginning.

WAS THERE ANY PRESSURE PUT ON THESE PEOPLE TO
DONATE THEIR HOMES?

I've told you about the first three. No, it became a matter of general interest. There was no pressure we could put on them at all. It was just a matter of being involved in something that was very popular - building a college there for the boys and girls of that community and doing it successfully in a way that the community approved. It became a community honor to participate.

As I said to you a moment ago, no one asked Admiral Stark. He called up from Washington and had his nephew ask Gene if the junior college could use the Chase home. It was the response of generous people to a community undertaking that had community approval. And they wanted to help. I can't remember putting any undue pressure on anybody - successfully. I tried hard to buy a piece of property, or to acquire it, somewhere between

Conyngham and Chase - a very desirable piece of property for the college - but the owner would not give any consideration to it at all, because he wasn't that kind of man. You know giving is an expression of a certain spirit. There are people who give because they want to be helpful. And, there are other people with even more means who don't give, because they're not that kind of people.

I sat on the front porch of Daniel C. Roberts' home one time. ~~His home now belongs to Wilkes College; it's down on West River Street past~~ the point. He gave me quite a lot of money for Bucknell. He was one of the original partners in the Woolworth Company, he and Frederick Weckesser and Allan Kirby's father were all original partners in the F. W. Woolworth Company; that's where their money came from. I became acquainted with Daniel Roberts through Andy Sordoni. They had places together side-by-side out on the lake; Andy introduced me to Daniel Roberts and we became good friends. He used to give me Woolworth stock for Bucknell and he gave me funds for the junior college. In fact, his daughter had me come down and officiate at his funeral as a layman. I sat out on his front porch one day - we had lunch together inside - no, I guess it was in the parlor inside because if

we were out on the front porch, he couldn't have talked to me like he did. We sat in the front parlor and an old man went by, about his age - he was eighty or so. He said, "Do you see that old coot?" I said I did. He said, "I feel sorry for him." And I said, "Why do you feel sorry for him, Mr. Roberts?" He said, "Because he's never learned how to get any fun out of his money, like you've taught me." I said, "What do you mean by that?" Well, he said, "You've taught me how to give my money to help young people get an education. And, I'm having a great time doing it. And, it isn't hurting me any; I've got all the money I need and all my daughter needs and all her family needs. I've got it all put away - I know just what I'll need. And what I'm giving you, none of us need. They like to have me do it; they encourage me to do it. And I'm getting a lot of fun out of it - I'm helping young people get an education where otherwise they wouldn't get it. You've shown me how to have fun with my surplus money. That old coot - he's never learned." I said, "What's he do with his money?" "Oh," he said, "he has a game he's played all of his life. His game is to be worth more on December 31 than he was on January 1 of the same year. And, he watches himself all year long about spending and about investing. And, if he's worth more on December 31 than he was on January 1, he's just as happy

as a lark; He's won the game. And, that's his whole life; all year round he's just watching every dollar to see that it's bringing in something that will make him worth more at the end of the year than he was at the beginning. I feel sorry for the old coot."

There are people like that, you know. He said, "That old man's worth just the same as I am." And, he told me what he was worth; he said, "I'm worth two and a half million dollars. And, he's worth just what I am. And think of the fun he could get out of some of it."

DO YOU RECALL OTHERS WHO HAVE GIVEN TO THE COLLEGE IN THAT WAY?

I do, but their gifts have never been announced publicly and I think you'd better let them stay that way. Some of them are very sensitive on that subject.

ARE THE CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING A MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN THE LIBERAL ARTS DIFFERENT FROM THOSE FOR ESTABLISHING SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN THE SCIENCES?

I haven't been a party to that decision, so I don't know the reason for it, but I would assume from my general knowledge that the

master's degree-granting institution would be quite important to the Wyoming Valley - if they don't already have one. And, naturally those who have their bachelor's from Wilkes would probably find it more convenient to get their master's there, too. But, isn't an advancement in salary beyond a certain level dependent upon a master's degree in the public school system? I think so; I don't know how extensive that it. I know it is in New York City.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE EXPERIMENT YOU HELPED BEGIN AT WILKES HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

I certainly would. I'd say it was largely due to Gene Farley. I think bringing Gene there was the move that assured its success. He made it a success. It wasn't a success - beyond just a statistical success - up to that time; there was a teaching faculty there, yes, but it was not an orderly faculty. I'm not an educator, but I'm an organizer. I'm a management man, not an educator. But, I knew immediately when I arrived at the Bucknell Junior College that its primary need was management. We had competent teachers there, but we had no management; the management was sixty-five miles away, and that wasn't adequate. These teachers could quarrel with each other and undercut each other and just be a group of teachers without

any compact group spirit at all. They had to have management in order to develop respect among the students and in the Community. And, the first most important contribution I made was management, which was Gene Farley. And, the second most important one was the campus, which he helped me very greatly to do. I couldn't have done it alone, because we had to have management there that the community had confidence in. The community didn't know me. There's a fellow named Marts back there somewhere who's back of Gene Farley. But they knew Gene Farley and had confidence in Gene Farley.

THERE ALWAYS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A DESIGN ON FARLEY'S PART. IS THAT TRUE: COULD HE SEE TEN YEARS AHEAD?

Yes. That's right. He had a design, and it was a sound educational design. He knew when to open up the enrollment to outside students. Originally, it was just a local student operation - that's what its purpose was - and there were important members of the Board who didn't like the idea of bringing in students from five hundred miles away. ("That isn't what we had in mind when we started this college," they'd say.) But, Farley knew that you couldn't build the kind of college you ought to have, just on the basis of a commuting institution. You wanted them, yes. But, you

wanted a wider geographical distribution, too - a wider cultural distribution.

The college now has these students, I guess. (I don't know what the

percentage from Wyoming Valley is now, but it's not as large a percentage

as it was in the beginning, is it?)

END OF INTERVIEW