

Participants:

Christopher N. Breiseth

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Jim Rodechko (interviewee)

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Transcribed by Huda Khan

[starts at 28:00]

Christopher Breiseth: Well let's get right into it. First of all, Jim is prepared for this and he's got some things on the 70s which we've really done very little on. You were also about the only one around who had known the last four presidents. You've had an extraordinary range of teaching and administrative experience over a long period of time, so you can reflect on these different presidencies and what characterized them.

JR: I was planning to do that.

CB: Okay so why don't you just carry forth and we'll break in when we want a clarification. You are being recorded.

JR: Okay. Well, I came to Wilkes in the fall of 1968, and I can tell you it was not love at first sight. I was used to campuses that were bigger and more rural, or if you like, more spread out than Wilkes was. I had been at Bowling Green for two years, I was replacing two people who were on sabbatical one year after the other, and that experience allowed me to finish my doctorate. When I came to Wilkes the job market was still good; I had a bunch of offers mainly in the mid-west. I remember Knox college, South Dakota State, and several others, but I really wanted to come to the east and be closer to my family and Ginger's family. At the time, Wilkes's salary was very competitive. I was making \$8,100 in Bowling Green, and my first salary at Wilkes was \$9,000, which was about as good as people were getting in those days. I liked Dr. Mike and some of the others I met, including Dr. Farley. They both struck me as good and fair administrative leaders, an opinion I've held to this day. But in truth, I figured I'd be here a year or so and then go elsewhere. Well, surprise of surprises, that actually happened, I was no sooner at Wilkes and a fellow from Bloomsburg contacted me. He appeared in my office one day and talked about me coming to Bloomsburg. The chair and he had read articles I'd written, liked them, and invited me down for a visit. I was impressed by the Bloomsburg campus. Although smaller, it reminded me of the ones I experienced at the University of Connecticut and Bowling Green. But the history department didn't have an opening for 1969 but they would have one for 1970. Although it would be almost two years down the road, they indicated they were committed to me, and in turn I made a verbal commitment to Bloomsburg. In fact, they even began buying library materials for me. I couldn't believe what they bought; complete microfilm runs of the Irish World, the Irish Nation, the Irish American. Since I had paid \$27 for one

specific reel of the Irish World, I knew that the complete collections cost several thousand dollars.

At Wilkes, I was unhappy about certain things. A big problem was the way the history 101/102 courses were set up. I had a large lecture section of 125-150 students that would meet three times a week, and then break down into six discussion sections which would each meet one hour per week. Essentially it meant doing the same thing for six hours a week. To say the least, it was a bit monotonous. The other thing, too, was that Professors Cox and Berg controlled the course. Bronis Kaslas, the department chair, let them have complete authority over the 101-102 course and the rest of us who taught it were allowed very little input. For example, the textbooks were chosen for you, term papers were under no circumstance to be returned to the students, and final exams would mainly consist of 125-150 short answer questions, prepared mostly by Cox and Berg. In short, the authoritative atmosphere in the department was troubling to me.

But as this was occurring, near the end of that first year a new chair was hired for the department. Dave Leach came in and Dave was terrific. He changed the 101/102 course to the current format, let each faculty member decide upon his/her readings, and encouraged giving students back their graded term papers. The departmental library budget, instead of resting entirely in the hands of the chair, was now divided among the faculty with each of us responsible for purchases in our academic areas. Given these very positive changes, I was already having second thoughts about the Bloomsburg situation.

TG: [The Cox you're talking about is Harold Cox?]

JR: Yes, and Jim Berg.

TG: I never met Jim Berg or the department chair you mentioned earlier.

JR: Dave Leach became the new one and Bronis Kaslas had been the existing one.

CB: And Dave Leach was one of the first three division chiefs.

JR: Yes. And then there was also Gene Farley who I knew, and my impression was that he was a very good man, he was honest, straightforward, he vigorously opposed the Vietnam war, he was an academician without any question. The problem was, as it's been pointed out before, he was a throwback to an earlier period; he was authoritarian and instituted one man rule. I remember faculty meetings were very structured with Gene calling the shots. I recall an occasion where there was a report given by a committee on whether faculty should be required to take attendance in class, and the committee unanimously recommended it should be left to the discretion of the instructor. At that point I said that I don't know how I could take attendance in a class with 125 students without wasting a lot of class time. I added that when I had them sign attendance sheets, they signed for each other. Gene, who had said nothing up to that point, responded by saying he faced the same problem when he was teaching and he solved it. He admitted he couldn't remember how he solved it, but he closed with the words, "And you can solve it, too." That ended the discussion! We all agreed, including the committee members, that we would be taking attendance.

TG: Those were the days!

JR: Dr. Farley also had another “requirement,” or perhaps it was a strong suggestion, that hit me in the pocketbook. He wanted everyone to give 5% of salary to the United Way. At that point, I had two little girls and Ginger wasn’t working, so that was a big bite out of my paycheck. And then Bloomsburg clinched matters with their salary offer. Had I stayed at Wilkes, my salary would have been \$10,000 for the 1970-71 academic year. Bloomsburg’s salary offer was \$12,500, which was an incredible jump for those days. So I left. I left on very good terms though, particularly with Dave, Mike Michelini, and Gene Farley.

I hated Bloomsburg from the day I got there. I couldn’t believe what I walked into and should’ve checked more carefully before I left Wilkes. One had been a member of the Hitler youth.

TG: No kidding!

JR: And he was a Nazi even in 1970 who committed suicide in the 1980s. Jane Elms knew something about this because she had been at Bloomsburg when it happened. When the police went into his house, they found Swastikas draped on the walls from floor to ceiling. But he was just one among some strange people. The senior member of the department was arrested for shoplifting, another wore a shoulder holster to class, still another had a habit of calling people after midnight for advice on his emotional problems, and one was arrested for organizing a burglary ring. I just didn’t like Bloomsburg and was discouraged about a long-term commitment to the place. At the same time this was happening, I was still bowling once a week in Wilkes Barre with Jack Myers. Jack knew I was unhappy with the situation at Bloomsburg and apparently told Dave what was happening. Dave called me and, after a brief discussion, asked whether I’d like to come back. I said, can I? He said he already talked to Mike and that he and Dr. Farley approved it, and what’s more that I’d get the same salary I’d have gotten at Bloom! {mixed laughter}

This was an incredible stroke of good fortune! And by the way, they gave me full two years credit for my prior service, so I got tenure immediately in November, 1971. I felt guilty about this in later years. I simply received a letter in the mail saying the board of trustees approved me for tenure. I had not even made an application or request for tenure; I just got it without knowing it was happening. This was such a contrast to the “mountains” of paperwork faculty had to provide before facing questioning by departmental and faculty committees in later years when tenure was not so easily awarded. At any rate, I came back to Wilkes in 1971 with a much more positive attitude than the one I first had in 1968. Joel Berlatsky in later years referred to it as the “Bloomsburg shuffle,” and joked that it was a move that worked out pretty well for me. I had to agree.

I was back at Wilkes less than a year when the flood of ‘72 caught us all by surprise. In fact, the afternoon before the flood, Jack Meyers and I were sitting in the “ballroom,” actually an empty classroom, on the third floor of Capin Hall (Franklin Hall at the time) discussing his “honeymoon” trip (he and Gay had been married the prior Saturday). A leak appeared in the ceiling and we were anxious to have the maintenance crew repair it before any serious damage occurred. In spite of the heavy rain, we had no clue about what would soon happen. Later that

evening, Ginger and I, along with our daughters, Jean and Amy, went to dinner and a movie in Hazleton with Barbara and Joe Bellucci and their two daughters, Lisa and Allison. No thought of a flood occurred to us. When we returned home, it was late at night so we went directly to bed without watching the evening news. I've never been sure whether the news reports that night would have alerted us to what was happening.

The next morning, a Friday, I was awoken around 5:30 by a phone call from Joel Berlatsky. Joel indicated that Wilkes-Barre was being evacuated, and he asked whether he could come up to us to escape the flood plain. Fortunately, when we returned to Wilkes-Barre from Bloomsburg, we had purchased a home in Bear Creek. That had been Ginger's idea. After so many moves in our first seven years of marriage, she wanted a permanent home in the country and vetoed my suggestion that we buy a home in south Wilkes-Barre.

In the days and weeks that followed, our home became something of a shelter for faculty who had been displaced by the flood. The Berlatskys stayed with us for several weeks, while others came to store household items that they salvaged from the flood. Some needed to take showers and most of them filled jugs with fresh water (since there was concern about the purity of available water in Wilkes-Barre). In the following months (until late August) I worked at Wilkes every day. I'd come home with my clothes filthy from head to foot covered with dried mud. Ginger would put a bathrobe in the garage where I'd completely undress before going inside to take a shower.

I'd be at the college at 8:00 a.m., even on weekends. Dr. Mike would already be there in the parking lot behind Weckesser Hall wearing a hard hat and directing the campus recovery effort. We didn't know it at the time, but he was also dealing with people in Washington to arrange for available funding.

I should also point out that Jack and I were at first responsible for cleaning out Franklin Hall. Although Jack and Gay had secured an apartment in south Wilkes-Barre in the weeks before they married, it was on the third or fourth floor so their belongings weren't damaged. They moved their things to an apartment in Plains very quickly, and thus Jack was able to work on Franklin Hall. The Berlatskys were not so fortunate. They had purchased a house in the Kingston/Forty Fort area and moved in about a week before the flood. They spent the summer cleaning out the house, making repairs, and replacing furniture.

Jack and I were proud of our effort in Franklin. We started on the first floor, where the flood water had reached the desk tops. Oddly enough, things on top of desks were untouched, while things in the drawers and on the floors were covered with mud. We dragged out what couldn't be salvaged (plastic waste baskets were invaluable in completing the task) and then carried out the metal desks and metal furniture so we could hose everything off. Once done, we brought hoses inside and washed the entire first floor of the building. We cleaned it out so effectively that Dr. Mike had a faculty meeting there, about six days after the flood waters had receded and we were allowed back into the city. Since most faculty were struggling with their own homes and belongings, only a small group attended. Dr. Mike complimented Jack and I on our clean-up effort and, after some discussion, made the decision to restart the summer session, I

believe on the following Monday. All classes would be moved from first to second floor locales. At some point, probably a few weeks later, the decision was made to begin fall classes, as I recall on September 29th.

I remember that during the last week in August I took our family to Long Island for a week's break, and it was like another world. To me, it was unreal. People weren't interested in the flood, or even hearing about it. Houses weren't dirty and full of mud, and heaps of debris weren't piled up on the streets.

For Wilkes, the interim tenure policy was the big event that followed the flood. Chris, you're aware of the result of the interim tenure policy from the standpoint of Ann Kish, Chet Molly and Al Cerzan, (and possibly one other person), that caused Wilkes to undergo AAUP sanction, a sanction that lasted to your presidency. But the interim tenure policy included issues that had an impact on more than just those people. It essentially froze existing tenure decisions, and I believe, meant that only two people in the entire college could be tenured in a single year. As I recall, seventeen people were immediately at risk because of that policy. I recall that Joe Belluci, Joel Berlatsky, John Furlough, Rick Reese, Harry Caldwell, Jack Meyers, and Ed Waters were among those on the list. Moreover, the affected faculty would have to sign a document indicating that they agreed to accept the policy. I've never been sure where this latter part of the tenure policy originated from, but I doubt that Dr. Mike agreed with it. Frankly, I suspect it was urged by senior faculty who were worried about their own continued employment as well as the newly appointed Dean of Academic Affairs, Don Tappa. Before, the flood, there were fears that too many people were being tenured at Wilkes which put the college's financial solvency at risk. I think this was one of the concerns that created pressures on Dr. Mike to eliminate the division structure that had been put in place sometime between my return to Wilkes and the flood. Dave Leach was responsible for history and the social sciences, Ben Fiester for the humanities, and Ralph Rozelle for the sciences. Simply put, there were senior faculty concerned that the division chairs were allowing too many people to be tenured. The flood only worsened this feeling, even causing a senior member of the history department, Harold Cox, to write a widely circulated letter arguing that the two untenured members of that department should be terminated.

I believe the restrictions put on tenure proved unworkable from the start. Joe Bellucci, having already provided grant work that was extremely important to the college, refused to sign the document and indicated he would move to the University of Scranton. I think Joel Berlatsky refused to sign as well, and a number of valuable people left the college, including Harry Caldwell. Given the amount of money the college received from the federal government (about 10 million dollars), and that the feared loss of student enrollment owing to the flood did not really occur, it would seem in retrospect that the entire interim tenure policy was unnecessary. In fact, somewhere along the line, the restriction against more than two tenure decisions per year gave way to a common belief that fully tenured departments were unacceptable.

The ban against fully tenured departments created problems for a number of departments. History was immediately forced to choose between Joel Berlatsky and John Furlough. Dave

Leach asked each member of the department his opinion and as a result Berlatsky was tenured and Furlough was dismissed. The result of the decision was that the Furlough position was not replaced and history became a fully tenured department anyway.

CB: Can I stop you there Jim?

JR: Sure!

CB: Say a little bit more about the tenure policy. Was Mike an important agent in coming up with that? Or was it trustee dictated and conceptualized?

JR: In all honesty, the board put its imprint on the policy, but I think there was faculty pressure on the board to implement such a policy. Among many of us, including Dave Leach and Ralph Rozelle, there was great concern that senior faculty were contacting board members and pressing for changes in the tenure system. I don't think Dr. Mike ever really liked the policy, and in some ways acted against it. For example, Joe Bellucci was tenured, Jack Meyers, who would have been in the same category as Kish, Molley, and Cerzan, was given charge of the evening and summer programs, and Rick Reese was given an administrative appointment.

Furthermore, there was a small group of people who supported the interim tenure policy and who held administrative positions. Don Tappa was Dean of Academic Affairs, Harold Cox had become director of the graduate program, and Stan Holden had a position (I'm not sure of the formal title), that gave him considerable influence over the college's financial affairs. As I look back on the situation, a few faculty supported these people, Phil Rizzo in the English Department for one, but the impression I have is that the larger number of faculty were unhappy with the situation. Events which happened a short time later suggests that this impression was correct. There was real concern about what was happening at the college to the extent that people were talking about union and there were union representatives on campus. Younger faculty were especially interested in union and, believe it or not, the Teamsters were one of the unions talked about. All in all, it was a very tense period.

CB: I was just wondering, was this whole situation at the core of Tappa's problem as dean?

JR: I would say so.

CB: Okay, I've never met him so I don't know much about him.

JR: Like Dr. Mike, he had been a member of the Biology Department. I think he was well organized and very efficient. After Wilkes, he would go on to become dean of academic affairs at St Rose in New York State. I believe he served there for a long time.

CB: Now, when did the tenure policy start? Right after the flood or was it '74?

JR: There was a little delay I think before it came in. I think it would be in fall of '72 or early '73.

CB: And when did AAUP censorship come in?

JR: Oh, that was later, after Molley, Kish, and Cerzan were let go.

TG: What you seem to be saying, and this may be obvious to Chris, is that a lot of the problems that Mike ascribed to the three-person leadership team really came from this whole contention around tenure.

JR: The contention and concern about tenure came before the flood, and I, among others, may have been a point of that concern because I received tenure in the fall of '71. And I think the shift away from the division structure, which occurred before the flood, resulted in a large way because of a feeling that there were too many people being tenured. The flood simply aggravated that concern and served as a justification to do what some people wanted to do all along.

TG: Were enrollments down at that point?

JR: No. At least not to my knowledge.

TG: Okay, so it wasn't enrollment driven, it was more the old deal of we should only have a certain percentage tenured.

JR: Yes. I think a lot of tenured people were worried about their own jobs, and keeping a good portion of the faculty untenured provided a cushion if cut-backs had to be made. There was a fear after the flood that we would lose students, but when the school opened in the fall I think we were in pretty good shape as far as student numbers as far. And in the middle of the presidential election of 1972, when Mr. Nixon gave us the 10 million, we may have been in better financial shape than we were before the flood. I know quite a few faculty members held that opinion.

TG: Yes.

JR: And the school was starting to look better physically than it ever had before. The repairs necessitated by the flood made many of the old buildings look pretty good. As I said before, in this atmosphere the interim tenure policy seemed unnecessary. The interim tenure policy really awoke incredible dispute in the faculty; the turmoil was enormous and people weren't talking to each other. There was a rumor that Phil Rizzo had a hitlist of faculty who should be removed. I have no idea if that particular rumor, or others that were circulating, held any truth, but it seemed the situation was getting out of hand.

CB: Tim, I can't speak for all the people that you had to deal with in your time, but to my knowledge you had no one like Phil Rizzo. Phil Rizzo was from another realm. He was embittered, but he was apparently a brilliant guy. I don't know what embittered him but he was vicious. And I got the full fury of that; my entire relationship with the Heamans was deeply entwined with Rizzo, as well as Tom Kaska, the chair of the English Department. They were both vindictive against Bob and Pat, and they reflected in my mind the organizational failure to develop administrative leadership above the department level. One of the results was that Kaska was removed as department chair.

JR: I think in the spring of '73 matters came to a head. A faculty meeting was scheduled for a Saturday morning in the upstairs lounge of the CPA. The night before that meeting, there was a gathering of senior faculty and administrators at John Chwalek's house. I can't remember everyone who attended, but I know Dave Leach, Ralph Rozelle, John Whitby, Al Groh and of course Chwalek were there. There were about 10 or 12 people in all. I was also asked to come. I couldn't figure out why they included me, because I was hardly a senior faculty member, but Dave Leach told me there was some urgency involved, and that I should be there. As the meeting proceeded, I realized why I was there. They decided that a statement should be made in

the faculty meeting to the effect that Mike should change his administration because the faculty had lost confidence in them. And they needed somebody to speak, and guess who it was, it was me.

CB: What a distinction!

JR: Ralph Rozelle summed it up. He said I was new at Wilkes, tenured, had no “baggage,” and that people wouldn’t see me as part of the old guard. I agreed to do it, mainly because I thought it was the right thing to do. At any rate, the next morning Mike was conducting the meeting, I raised my hand, stood up, and after noting the turmoil on campus and a general belief that all sorts of conspiracies were being hatched, said that he should seriously consider changing his administrative team.

By the way, Dr. Mike and I never talked about that meeting again. To this day, I don't know how we felt about it. We met many times after that, but I never mentioned it and neither did he. A few weeks later, however, he removed Tappa as academic dean and Cox as graduate director. I was surprised by the Tappa decision, but not so much about Cox. Cox’s office was on the first floor of Franklin Hall and he had hung a rubber chicken from a window shade in the window of his office at that time. It was visible to everyone on campus, including students, faculty, and board members. We understood it to be a criticism of Dr. Mike. It was my understanding that Mike asked him to remove it, and Cox refused. In the aftermath, Dr. Mike brought in Bob Capin as academic dean and Jack Meyers replaced Cox as the graduate director. At the time, Jack was already handling the summer and evening programs. I didn’t know why Dr. Mike picked Bob but I think Dave Leach had something to do with it. About a week before the announcement was made, Dave said to me, “wouldn’t Bob Capin make a great Academic Dean?” I replied that I thought he’d be very good. In light of what happened soon after, that conversation convinced me that Mike and Dave had been talking, and that Mike had sought out Dave’s opinion on things. It also suggested to me that Mike never really wanted to eliminate the division structure but was under pressure to do so.

CB: This is all new to me, this is wonderful. Jim, there was tenure one and tenure two; can you give us a thumbnail sketch of what was one and what was the other?

JR: I am sorry Chris, but I never thought in terms of a one and two. I may have forgotten about it over the years, but I really can’t remember a second policy.

CB: Tenure 2 was adopted before I came. And I think it was the idea of interruptible tenure. Tenure 1 is what you’ve been describing that dealt with the post-flood financial concerns, but the board was still concerned about what would happen if the school had to face the problem of financial exigency. The board considered declaring financial exigency an act of desperation, and in order to avoid such a declaration, was looking for some way to eliminate tenured people if a financial need arose. In fact, this is why the AAUP censured Wilkes in the first place. After the flood, Wilkes had let people go who’d been here more than 7 years without declaring financial exigency. This violated the AAUP policy in effect since 1940. Since we didn't declare financial exigency, we were not acting under the protection of national AAUP policy. Primarily for this reason the board, I think led by Max Rosenn, really got into the idea of interruptible

tenure. There was also talk among board members that there was a lot of 'dead wood' among the faculty who were impeding the college's progress. So there were several issues I had to deal with when I became president. What to do if the college had financial problems and how to deal people who weren't giving their best effort.

Okay, so I was confronted with those two issues and that's when I proposed to do what we'd been doing at Sangamon State as a brand new university. A five year review of tenured faculty linked to the new mission statement that you and others helped us come up with. The board accepted this instead of more extreme measures to deal with tenure. So that was my understanding of how the tenure issue evolved from the time of flood till I got there in '84, and then it had been at the back of a lot of tensions among the faculty and between the faculty and trustees.

JR: I wouldn't disagree with anything you just said. However, as a faculty member I didn't know what the board was thinking about, and Bob Capin didn't really tell us very much. Other faculty might disagree, but I can't recall ever hearing of a tenure 2. I do recall Ralph Rozelle telling me and others that if cut-backs occurred at Wilkes they would be done by seniority, and that seniority was determined by longest continuous service in the highest rank. The mere fact that he would say that does suggest a concern about the future of tenure.

TG: Yes.

CB: When I came in '84, I was also concerned about the department chair situation because there was no effective intermediary between the department chair and the dean, and the dean was the total administration between the president and the department chairs. The positions of department chairs were perpetual, so they built up power over faculty even though they had no power institutionally in terms of governance. So that is why I created the strategic planning committee when I first got there made up of department chairs, so that they would be in on the process of defining a new level of organization. What Jim has been telling us provides pieces that I never understood in terms of the actual people. So this has been incredibly valuable to me.

TG: So, Chris you're saying that this was kind of a revelation for you.

CB: Revelation in that I didn't understand how the people had worked and never got much reading on Harold Cox who I think is a pivotal figure over a long period of time, something of mixed bag. Much of Harold's impact was negative, some of it positive. But I had never understood that cabal that in effect got rid of the three divisional chairmen and replaced them with Dean Tappa.

JR: And Capin replaced Tappa.

CB: So, Tim this is the situation with these powerful department chairmen who had no great power in governance across the institution but had great power over their own faculty, on issues of tenure and promotion. Carry on Jim, I just felt the need to think out loud with both of you.

JR: I have to say something about Bob Capin as Academic Dean. He was a really good choice! And I think there was a change that occurred at Wilkes because of him. Bob had a lot of self-doubt about his abilities, particularly in academic matters, he was an accountant and he never really thought of himself as an academician in that sense, which meant one thing: he listened to

people and was concerned about what people thought. With Bob's encouragement, we developed a faculty affairs committee and a tenure and promotion committee. Both committees were elected by the faculty, and Bob attended meetings of both. I was on those committees at one time or another, and Bob was a terrific participant. I think that began to open things a bit for faculty participation in decision making. This all continued over to his presidency. He made real efforts to consult with people.

I don't remember any real protests when Bob became academic dean. You know every appointment before that point had been from the top down. That goes back to Farley; he appointed Dr. Mike as Academic Dean, Dr. Mike in turn appointed the division chairs, and later he appointed Tappa and then Bob. If there was any consultation at all, it would have been with a few faculty members who were close to Farley and Mike. There wasn't a lot of protest about this situation, probably because the whole thing seemed to be something of a tradition. When Bob started to open things by considering faculty opinion, I think that was a real change for the whole community. It meant we would be unlikely to continue with the old appointment tradition.

Let me just say some things about what I was going through as all this was occurring. In the spring of 1975, Dr. Mike was leaving and Bob became acting president. The summer of '75 was probably the worst in my life, even worse than the flood summer of '72. I was in my office on the third floor of Capin Hall, then called Franklin Hall, which was my campus location for the majority of my years at Wilkes. There was no air conditioning and I was there by myself. By noon on most days the temperature hit between 90 and 95 degrees. Andy Shaw, who now had an office on the first floor of Capin Hall, and who held an administrative position that I never really understood, called me in sometime in the spring of '75 and told me that Bob Capin personally asked that I prepare a proposal for an Action grant. Briefly put, Action was a federal government agency which had responsibility for several government programs, one of which was titled the University Year for Action. According to Andy, Bob sensed an opportunity to receive funding to institute such a program at Wilkes. I can't say I was enthused by the prospect of spending time on something that had so little to do with my history research, but I agreed to do it. During the spring semester of '75 I wrote a planning grant proposal for \$5000 which was to cover expenses required to prepare a major, and much more extensive proposal, during the summer. This latter grant would provide over \$150,000 for Wilkes to run a University Year for Action program over the next three years. It was a nice hunk of change for that day and age, and I could understand why Wilkes was interested. Action quickly approved my planning proposal, and I had to start work on the major proposal before the spring semester ended.

What a University Year for Action program involved was this: we would place 30 students in public service agencies for a year and give them academic credit equivalent to full time status. What I had to do was go to the faculty at the last meeting of the school year and ask them to approve 12 credits per semester in what I called community service credit. The credits would be listed as electives in whatever major programs students were enrolled in. The credits would be for work they performed at public service agencies. Since I couldn't yet say what specific agencies would be involved, or how the students would be recruited, supervised, and evaluated, I

had real doubts that approval would be given. Nevertheless, the proposal passed with only two votes against it.

In the summer, I had to line up service agencies that would participate, but also to get agency directors to provide written descriptions of the work the students would be doing. Since Action had very specific guidelines for the student work experiences, I found myself carrying on extensive conversations between the agency directors and Action supervisors to get everything approved. If memory serves me, I think I got ten to twelve agencies to participate. Among them were Volunteers of America, Mental Health Mental Retardation, and the Housing Authority. Gene Brady, Joe Devisia, Howard Grossman, and Don Stalhut were some of the agency directors I worked with.

Even as I was recruiting the agencies, I had to start recruiting students. I prepared a letter saying what was involved. I recall sitting on the floor in the large room next to my office and stuffing copies of the letter in more than 2,000 envelopes that went out to our students. In the aftermath, I dealt with a flood of students coming in to see me to ask about the program.

TG: Oh my god!

JR: Aside from several departments who were sending out students for work assignments (Nursing, Education, and Engineering), this would be Wilkes's first intern program open to students from every major. It was essentially our first venture into cooperative education. The pressure on me was tremendous, because I wasn't even sure during the summer that the grant would be approved. The planning grant did not guarantee acceptance of the regular grant, and that would not be done until late August. In effect, I was recruiting students for a program that I couldn't be sure would even exist come fall semester.

At the same time I was doing the Action work, Bob Capin and John Chwalek also asked me to organize Mike's farewell dinner dance which would occur in August. It was my job to basically get the invitations together, mail them, get the responses, keep track of the money people sent in, and arrange for the dinner itself. I had to go over to Genetti's, get the menu together, plan a program, and do everything else necessary to make the occasion happen. After all this, I remember being at the dance, and the host, I can't remember who, thanking John Chwalek for the wonderful work he had done preparing for the dinner dance. I just sat there wondering what my role had been.

At any rate, that was pretty much it for the summer. In the fall of '75 we opened the community service program with 24 students, I was the director of the program and Barbara Belluci was the coordinator. From this point on she did 90% of the work. She visited the students, got feedback from their supervisors, gave them their final grades, and generally handled day-to-day operations. She did a fantastic job. In the two years that followed, the number of students increased to 30 and then 34. We had more students applying than Action would allow us to accept. My role during this period was to oversee the budget and insure that we could properly account for the money.

By the middle of the third year, Bob Capin wanted to know what would replace the Action program. I recall attending a meeting with Bob and Don Carpenter, a board member who was

very enthused about developing a Cooperative Education Program, where I was given the go-ahead to prepare and submit a grant proposal. I attended workshops in Washington and Philadelphia and we were able to get the funding to begin the Co-op program at Wilkes. I was the first faculty coordinator, and Dick Soter (the academic dean) hired a full-time director. I was not consulted on the hire and didn't really approve of that person's handling of the program. He aggravated quite a few people and Bob Capin eventually let him go. I stayed with it for another two years and then turned the coordinator's position over to Brad Kinney. By that time, I had become chair of the history department and was pressed for time. On the whole, I think the program was very successful. In the early nineties my youngest daughter participated in the program and really benefitted by it. She did her work at the local Department of Environmental Resources and when she graduated she was offered a job there. However, she turned the position down and went to Washington D.C. to work for the treasury department. I'm pretty sure the co-op experience helped her get that position.

CB: Jim I have a question, was the Action Program really your first administrative assignment? I think that's crucial.

JR: Yes.

CB: And secondly was this the first major grant the college had gotten? Or had there been major grants before that?

JR: I'm sure there were others. Joe Bellucci was already doing grants, and I recall consulting him on the Action application. In fact, when I had to go to West Virginia to participate in an Action conference, Joe went with me.

CB: When did Upward Bound come to Wilkes?

JR: I'm fairly certain it was before the Action program.

CB: How about Andy Shaw?

JR: I am not aware of anything Andy was doing on grants.

CB: When I arrived in '84, he was in charge of the grants program and Sandy Beynon was his coordinator for all that, and there were a fair number of grants that came through the Institute of Regional Affairs? I didn't know when that started.

JR: When I was doing my grant work, Theresa McDonald was the grants officer, but I don't think she was very active from what I could tell. I believe Phil Tuhy was handling the Institute of Regional Affairs.

CB: Well Sandy Beynon was very active and in fact I took her away from Andy and brought her and the grants activity into development. That ticked Andy off. As for the coop program I recall when I arrived, and for several years later, we had lunch for the corporate executives and public service leaders who worked with our student interns. It was a way of saying thank you. I don't know when the program ended.

JR: I don't know if it ever really ended.

CB: Was it still going when you were there Tim?

TG: I was not aware of it if it did.

JR: I think it was largely through departments by that time. The departments were putting people in intern situations.

TG: Yes, we had internships, Jim, but there was no funding for them.

JR: The funding had disappeared years before when the co-op education grant came to an end. The grant was only for three years. I believe for a number of years Cheryl Gibson managed the program and set up internships.

TG: I think we had co-ops in engineering.

JR: Yes in engineering, communications, computer science, others as well..

CB: Probably in nursing

JR: Nursing with the clinicals.

CB: Right. But internships were particularly geared to professional programs. Students interns had work that paralleled and strengthened their career preparation.

TG: Yes. I don't think nurses make money in their clinicals; my distinction between an internship and co-op is that in co-op you get paid a little for it.

CB: Okay.

TG: The other thing with co-op is students usually have jobs they do everyday.

CB: I want you to speak about a person you've mentioned that Tim never heard of, but who when I arrived in '84 was still on a lot of minds and that's Dick Soter. But before you do that, I just want to make an observation about what Tim and Paul and I talked about yesterday, and that is that you really across time have been trusted by virtually every faction in the institution, and the role you were asked to play in that group of 10-12 was indicative of that. And then when you moved into this administrative position in the co-op program your role evolved, and you were a key player in each of the following administrations. This gave you an unusual insight into what was happening in the institution which we can reflect on later, particularly when you talk about the different presidencies. You can say what happened to the institution in each of the presidencies starting with Mike. But before you get into the larger picture, tell us about Dick Soter.

JR: I'd first like to mention some things about Bob as President.

CB: Okay go ahead.

JR: When Bob first took over the job he was acting president. There was a search conducted for a new president, I think Judge Rosenn chaired the committee and they didn't make much of an effort to look outside the campus. There were three main candidates that I recall being considered. There was Bob [Capin], Andy Shaw, and Ralph Rozelle. There may have been a fourth, maybe Tom Kiley, but I just don't have a clear memory about that.

CB: Jim, I understood that there was an outsider whom they tendered an offer to. Bob Capin told me this, and the guy turned them down, and that's when they turned inside.

JR: The faculty affairs committee had a meeting with Judge Rossenn and he didn't say anything about that. I'm pretty certain the faculty never heard anything about an outside candidate.

CB: Well that came from Bob and some of the trustees that I talked with about presidential succession.

JR: The search committee didn't include any faculty. When the judge did talk with the faculty affairs committee, he didn't really consult, he just told us what was happening. It was probably already late in the game, and the external candidate may have come and gone by then. I know there was a lot of jockeying going on largely by Andy Shaw, who I might add was already acting as if he was the president. He was taking people aside and telling them what would happen when he took over. But the result was that Bob was named president. And I think the faculty was relieved that it wasn't Andy. Rozelle probably had the best credentials, but I don't think he ever really got a serious look.

At any rate, once Bob became president, he was troubled by predictions that in 1979 there'd be real decline in student numbers. I know that several faculty members, most notably Bob DeYoung, presented figures on that point. I think that we were all concerned about what that might mean. This, in turn, caused Bob to be very cautious about things. During every year of his presidency, Bob opened the first faculty meeting with the statement: I'm very optimistic but I have to tell you we have real problems. [Laughter] That kind of created a bad feeling about the year to come.

Now I should say one other thing. I was a real friend of Bob throughout his years as president. He had a number of confidants, and I was one of them. Before he became Academic Dean, he did my taxes so I knew him pretty well.

TG: He knew you too!

JR: Yes, he did! When the flood occurred, I went over and helped him clean out his house, I was there for a few days and in fact when David Capin made his Bar Mitzvah, Ginger and I were guests, so we were pretty close. We genuinely liked each other and worked well together.

One of his big problems was Dick Soter. Soter had been hired as academic dean. He was the first academic dean brought in from off-campus and one of the first upper echelon administrators brought in from outside Wilkes. A search committee had been chosen. I think the faculty was involved in the selection, but I'm not completely sure about that. I still remember the members of the committee that picked him. Tom Kaska, Jim Bohning, Wagiha Taylor, and Steve Tillman. I remember that on the fourth of July 1976, when we were at Frank Darte's house for a faculty gourmet picnic celebrating the bi-centennial, Steve Tillman mentioned the committee had picked Dick Soter as the academic dean. And I asked, what do you think of him? And he said, I voted against him. He said it in such a way suggesting "don't blame me" for what happens next. At that point I was really suspicious about what we were confronting.

In the two years that followed, most faculty were very unhappy with Soter. He was a guy who had one face for Bob and acted in particular way with Bob, and for the rest of us he was a foul mouthed guy who said some things in committee meetings you wouldn't believe. I also heard from the director of the United Services Agency, Gene Brady, who I knew from the co-op ed program and the community service program, that Soter had been hanging out regularly in Perogino's bar at night hitting on women. There were also suspicions about his credentials. He supposedly had a PhD in history, but he avoided conversations about history with members of the history department. On one occasion, board members apparently insisted he give a talk on

history, and the history department was invited to attend. I recall a general consensus that the speech was inane and high schoolish in quality.

I think Bob began to sense tension and began to ask people for advice. I remember a day when he called me in and asked what I thought of Soter. I said that Soter was heavy-handed and crude in dealing with people and didn't really seem to understand the nature of academic life. Bob agreed with me, and so I asked why not get rid of him. Bob answered that he couldn't do that because Andy Shaw was Soter's best buddy, and that Andy had great influence with the board of trustees. At the time, I accepted that as an accurate assessment. I knew for a fact that Shaw was saying great things about Soter. Shaw's office was on the first floor of Franklin Hall (later Capin Hall) and he told everyone in the building how much he liked Soter, Shaw also gave the impression that he (Shaw) had more influence among board members than Bob Capin had. It seemed to me that Bob's hands were tied.

In the middle of all this, I think in the spring of 1978, Bob suddenly wound up in Wilkes-Barre General Hospital. Most people on campus, including me, assumed he had heart attack. When I visited him in the hospital, he was in pretty good spirits. He never told me he had a heart attack, but he did say he had some problems with his heart. He also said he'd be returning to Wilkes in the near future. But by then, Andy Shaw assumed Bob would step down as president and he'd be in, and before Bob even left the hospital he began to act as if he was the president. Then a little surprise occurred. Soter also assumed Bob was finished as president and made it known that he was interested in being the next president. Overnight, Andy Shaw completely turned on Soter and began attacking him publicly as a useless individual who had no place at Wilkes. Soter promptly responded with an attack on Shaw. In the aftermath, Bob felt on firm enough footing to fire Soter. I think it was in October of 1978. He just fired him flat out, right in the middle of the semester, and I can't remember anyone feeling badly about it.

Andy Shaw of course was delighted by what happened and immediately claimed credit for having Soter removed. He acted as if he was calling the shots. Bob then announced that he would serve as both president and academic dean until a new academic dean could take office. Furthermore, he indicated it was going to be a national search and a search committee was elected. I think there were six faculty members on the committee. I remember Joel Berlatsky and Les Turoczi were members, and maybe George Eliot as well, but I can't remember who else was involved. In the course of the search, I was nominated as an internal candidate. Gene Hammer was also nominated and I think there were two or three other people nominated as well. Since the committee had advertised nationally, a lot of applications came from various places throughout the U.S. I remember a faculty meeting was scheduled, and the search committee was going to report on its progress. The day before the meeting Andy Shaw came to my office and told me that Gene Hammer would be the next academic dean. He said that he had spoken to Bob about it and said that a really senior person was what the college needed at the time.

The next day at the meeting, the committee chair (I can't remember who that was) announced that five external candidates had been chosen and described their credentials. He said that one internal candidate had also been selected, and that was me. I remember Shaw storming out of

the meeting when that was announced, and that he wouldn't talk to me for about three weeks. Subsequent to that, I know that the committee did a really careful search. Committee members visited other campuses to get opinions about particular candidates. I think 3 candidates were brought in for campus visits. I had a visit too. I had a schedule to speak before various groups on campus that consumed almost an entire day. I recall being exhausted by the time it was over. It was an especially tough time for me because my youngest daughter, Amy, was in the hospital that time. Because of a softball injury, she had surgery on her hand and hip.

The entire search was very professionally done. I think it was the first time in Wilkes's history that such widespread consultation and careful consideration occurred during a search. Bob Capin made it very clear that he supported the procedure and that he would abide by the result. I suspect he wanted to avoid having another Dick Soter selected. Jerry Hartdagen, who had been at Concordia College (I think in Minnesota), was chosen as academic dean. Almost immediately, Dave Leach resigned as department chair and Bob Capin appointed me as the next chair.

Jerry and I got to be very close. The first day he was on campus he came over to my office and we had a nice visit. In future years Jack Meyers and I regularly had lunch with Jerry and we went to seven or eight Yankee games, several times with Bob Capin. I also went on several long road trips with Jerry to history conferences. I recall meetings in Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia.

I had the impression that Bob and Jerry worked together beautifully. I never heard a negative word from one about the other. They seemed to be best buddies. I remember going to Jerry and asking him a question about the co-op ed program and him telling me I'd have to check it out with Bob. When I talked to Bob, he asked whether I had Jerry's approval. I don't recall them ever having a disagreement with one another. In faculty meetings, it was much the same. They were of one mind on any issue that came up. The first and only indication I had of problems between them occurred during Chris's inauguration.

CB: I was just going to mention that.

JR: Jerry got up and made that famous speech, saying that bones were rotting in the grave, fruit dying on the vine.

CB: The train had stopped on the tracks. That was his metaphor. And along came the new engineer and he got the thing going again.

JR: I was seated in the audience next to the Dean of MMI, and he leaned over and said, boy, your academic dean didn't think much of your former president. I answered something to the effect: apparently not, but it's news to me. I was shocked by what Jerry said and so were a good many others in the audience.

CB: I recorded elsewhere what happened to me because of what Jerry said that day, so that's a matter of record. I'm intrigued to hear what you see as the effective day-in and day-out relationship between Jerry and Bob which is good to hear. I think one of the things that did create some friction when I came was my empowering the department chairs to start thinking about academic organization, a new level which would in effect be a new powerful group that

would deal with Jerry Hardigan as well as with the president. My focus was to create a dynamic between department chairs and deans and committees, to get them working together on curriculum and other matters. I saw sources of tension that I haven't understood till right now. I think Jerry got blindsided because there were several department chairs that he did not get along with, and so to put him into a working relationship with them under my leadership as the new guy on the block just exasperated or brought to the surface those tensions, and it included guys like Tom Kaska. He was one of the department chairs who was very important in those early discussions.

JR: I can say one thing about Jerry. He had an amazing ability to shut out issues and problems when he left his office. I can remember once I was waiting outside his office to go to lunch with him, and he and whoever was there were screaming at each other. I think it was a chairperson and they really were screaming at each other. After that meeting Jerry acted as if nothing happened, like he was totally oblivious to the whole thing. When he left the office he simply relaxed and just put aside troubling issues and difficulties. At the time, I remember wishing I had that ability. If I got in argument with someone my stomach would be churning for hours later.

CB: Paul Adams has joined us, and Paul, I would invite you to reflect on the Capin presidency and the Capin/Hardigan relationship, to fill out this picture that Jim is painting. You missed the earlier parts but I think you've really heard the critical last 10-15 minutes.

Paul Adams: I started in 1979 as director of residence life so I wasn't operating at the upper levels of the administration. I don't know that I have a lot of reflection about how Bob and Jerry got along.

CB: What about some general observations about Bob Capin's presidency that Jim then can relate to from his position in the institution.

PA: One of my strongest memories, and Jim may have better recollections of this than I do, is that we were going through some difficult financial times. I can remember all of us being called to the Darte center when Bob was giving a budget address, and he was making an announcement about positions that were going to be cut. I had a young man working with me by the name of Jay Tucker and he had a shared position as an Assistant Director of Residence Life and Director of Student Activities. We walked in together, sat down, and Bob announced that Jay's position was cut, and nobody had told Jay, nobody had told me. Now, that could have been a miscommunication, but I remember to this day the shocked look on Jay's face. Beyond that, some of my memories would be as Residence Life director struggling with the triumvirate of Andy Shaw, Charlie Abate, and Gene Manganello. That's where I personally had so much trouble. Jim will remember they were quite a formidable group just made my life hell for several years. [Laughter].

CB: What do you remember Andy Shaw's title to have been?

JR: I don't know what his title was.

CB: I think it was Dean of Management.

PA: Yes, I think so.

CB: So that triumvirate was very prominent when I got there, and my sense Jim, was that Bob inherited this very difficult financial situation that was connected to the flood. As an accountant, Bob had really spent his time figuring out how to stabilize the institution financially. That was his strength, which was another way of saying he maybe didn't have some of the strengths that were needed in other areas, as the college evolved and changed, particularly on the academic side.

JR: Frankly, I think Bob was inclined to overreact to the financial situation. I have a vivid recollection, it must've been around 1980 or 81, when I had come home on a Friday afternoon and got a call from Bob's secretary saying that the president was convening an emergency meeting of the chairs at 6 p.m. I thought something really bad had happened. The chairs were gathered together in the boardroom in Weckesser, and Bob announced, with Joe Chisarick sitting next to him, that we were facing a budget deficit of 100,000 dollars. Joe was kind of quietly shaking his head and all of us looked at each other thinking \$100,000 in 1980 wasn't that big a deal. But Bob really reacted to that, and you could tell he was shaken up by any thought of a budget that wasn't balanced. I think you're right, Chris, that Bob put his best effort into financial matters. He was a numbers person without question.

CB: And raising money for Evans hall was the big bricks and mortar thing that he did, but he didn't come close to meeting the money needs to build it. So that was a new part to our debt situation that then was mine to deal with.

JR: Bob also put me on the accreditation committee in 1979, and specifically I chaired the program committee. That was an eye opener, because you saw how the school was changing. We were moving away from liberal arts traditions to more specialized programs. Engineering and nursing were growing rapidly. In one year I believe we had 34 faculty members in nursing. Science programs were generally growing and pre-med was especially strong. During the 1970s teaching opportunities were drying up, and that had been the backbone of the liberal arts. All of that, of course, meant a more costly academic environment. Smaller student numbers in highly specialized classes replaced the 30 plus students in liberal arts courses. Tuition was rapidly going up. This was a real problem Bob was facing, and one that I think Chris had to face as well.

CB: Yes.

JR: In addition, in 1983 a faculty committee was elected to pick the outstanding teacher at Wilkes. At the graduation ceremony that spring, I became the first Carpenter award recipient. That was probably the finest and happiest moment I had at Wilkes.

In 1981 I also took Ted Engel's investments course. I really enjoyed it and as a result started to take accounting courses. By taking one per semester and two in the summers, I eventually took every accounting course. I was planning to take the CPA exam in early 1987, but in 1986 Chris decided upon three deans and I was selected as Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For me, that ended accounting.

CB: So I furthered your career development. I hadn't realized that. [Laughter].

JR: I've always thought that was one of the reasons I was selected as dean. I combined the liberal arts with financial interests, and people found that an attractive combination.

CB: Yes.

JR: In all honesty, I can't say that the accounting experience really helped me as dean. In financial matters, common sense seemed more important in making monetary decisions than my accounting background, but people I spoke with didn't really believe that. I just shut up and let the myth continue. [Laughter] At any rate, I think I became dean in the summer of 1986.

CB: That's right.

JR: I wasn't a very good dean at first. It's one of those things where you become something and then you wonder what you'd do. [Laughter] It's kind of like that movie with Robert Redford, I think it was called, "The Candidate." In it, he becomes president and then doesn't know what to do next.

CB: I think we can all relate to that.

JR: Jerry Hartdagen wasn't the best mentor in the world. I asked him if I could have a budget. He flatly said no. If I needed something he said I should come to him and he'd take care of it. When Jack (Meyers) was appointed Associate Dean, Jerry told me that Jack would be in the office next to me on the first floor in Capin Hall. I didn't think it was a big deal and figured Jack would want to know about it so I gave him the news. Well, the next day we had a meeting in the library basement. You may remember the meeting, Chris. The architects were explaining how the new gymnasium would be laid out, and I sat down next to Jerry. He immediately began to write, rather vigorously I thought, a note of some sort. When the meeting ended and we stood up to leave he gave me the note and walked away. The note said, "if you wish to remain as dean, you won't be blabbing all over the place what I tell you, and I should've been the one to tell Jack about his new office, not you!" [Laughter] I was flabbergasted. I thought it was absurd to think that kind of information was confidential.

As I look back on it, I think Jerry was as lost at working with a dean as I was at being dean. I think it's fair to say that we muddled along for the short time Jerry had left as academic vice president. Everything changed when George Waldner took Jerry's place. George knew what deans should be doing and in our weekly academic cabinet meetings he pointed us in the right direction.

CB: And you and he worked very effectively together.

JR: In the months and several years that followed, I think we did. It was a learning experience for me, but I eventually got the hang of it.

CB: I would guess your challenge at the very beginning was the size of the College of Arts and Sciences. Umid Nejib and Ted Engel had already been the chairs of the departments they now were responsible for as deans. In effect, they were functioning as deans before actually becoming deans.

JR: I was originally responsible for biology, chemistry, mathematics and computer science, and environmental science. I was also responsible for physical education and the intercollegiate athletic program, and the nursing department. It was an enormous job and I wasn't really ready to handle the whole thing. I can remember I spent hours and hours going through load forms. Some of them were unbelievable. The nursing loading made absolutely no sense. They were

complicated beyond belief, and it took years before I understood them. Then you had things like the chemistry forms, which upset me no end. In one case a faculty member was getting seven credits of loading for a course with four students in it. I couldn't believe it. When I asked Howard Swain (the chair) about it, he said the American Chemical Society insisted upon it and would take away our chemistry accreditation if I changed it. About a year later I went to a dean's conference and found a consensus that accreditation by that society was meaningless and should be ignored. There were also nonsensical things that happened too. On a Friday afternoon about 4:30, Howard called me and said there was a leak in one of the chem lab sinks. I said why did you call me? Shouldn't you call maintenance to get it fixed.

[Laughter]

CB: Well that's part of why you were so successful as a dean, as a troubleshooter. From my perspective, what you describe in chemistry was happening across the institution. The chairs, while they were powerless on a college-wide basis, controlled everything within their departments, whether rightly or wrongly. Distribution of workload, decisions about adding faculty, and judgments about colleagues, were all encapsulated within the departmental structure. That's what you deans began to change, and when Waldner came, he had the kind of disciplined intellect as an administrator who started to institutionalize decisions like workload, hiring, and course loading. Before that it was up to each department. A strong chair could really run things to his own liking. So you, probably as much as any person in the institution, were at the center of the change.

JR: Yes. Once George was on board, and I don't know whether it was your decision or Georges', but he moved chemistry, biology, math and computer science, and environmental science in with Umid to create a School of Science and Engineering. I think the various chairs were relieved by the move. I know I was relieved, because the change enabled me to focus more on a smaller range of departments. They were also, by and large, departments that I had a better understanding of how they operated. Nursing and music had some unusual loading features, but by the time the change came I already had a pretty decent understanding of their faculty loading formulas.

As dean, I think I had some impact on the role of women on campus, particularly with Pat Heaman's situation. I think you asked me to investigate what had happened there Chris, and I found Pat had been mistreated in that department. They were giving her 11 credits to teach every semester, to avoid the full-time label and tennure, and it was pure exploitation. When I went to the Tenure and Promotion Committee I had a lot of opposition from that department, they did not want her tenured.

CB: Kaska and Rizzo were of course opposed.

JR: Yes, and more for personal reasons than anything professional. They didn't like her and were afraid of what would happen if she was tenured. I can say that I found letters in her personnel file placed there by Kaska that might have warranted legal action by Pat. I subsequently made her my associate dean and eventually chair of the English and Foreign

Language department, and they didn't like those developments. From my perspective it was a real achievement.

TG: It was.

CB: It was huge. And there were several people who worked together on that. Outside of the Jerry Campbell situation, I regard that as the most important personnel situation I had to deal with. It was difficult just laying the groundwork for the tenure decision and getting her the full-time faculty status she deserved. I had trouble dealing with Kaska and Rizzo; they were adamantly opposed to giving her full-time status. It's hard to believe men taking that position with a woman, and it all got involved with personal issues that are inappropriate to talk about here. But you really got involved with that, and I think it was the beginning of support for women on the faculty, and at the staff level as well. It was a position that the college and university increasingly embraced. But Pat was the key person that had to be dealt with by the institution, and that was my sense from the first semester I got there.

JR: Let me say a few things about George. I think he was an extremely efficient guy; he got things done but he was something of an authoritarian, and I know he made enemies. But I can give you one example of his strength. During the Middle States accreditation process in '89, we had been given somebody by Middle states to be our liaison. George didn't think she was being fair to us. I remember that he criticized her in an early meeting and even walked out of the meeting at one point. He had her replaced. He also did something that I thought was incredible with the National League of Nursing. They had a visiting team come in for re-accreditation of our nursing program. Ann Kolanowski, the nursing chair, called me and said they were making some very unfair judgements about our program. I told George and he immediately ordered the team to leave the campus. He called the NLN and had a new visiting team brought in. The re-accreditation went very smoothly.

He just took charge of things, he never hesitated. Now, on the other hand, he had a knack for offending people, particularly women. Women faculty didn't care much for him. I can remember when he and I were having a meeting with a woman faculty member in his office. She had specifically arranged to meet with him and he had asked me to attend as well. She was in the middle of explaining her problem to him when George stood up, excused himself and left, possibly to go to the bathroom. He came back and sat down like nothing had happened, while she was clearly upset. She stayed only a few minutes later, stood up, thanked me pointedly for listening to her, and left.. George seemed completely unaware of what had happened.

On another occasion Norma Shulman, a member of the communications department, had been on sabbatical, and came in to ask for a raise. Since she had been gone for a year and had accomplished something that she felt would be advantageous to her department, she felt she should be rewarded immediately, I think it was in September. George explained at great length that we reconsider salaries in the spring, not the fall, and that she'd have to wait until then for an adjustment. I sat listening to the exchange, which became quite heated, with Norma increasingly upset, and George sticking quietly but forcefully to his guns. When Norma stood up and left, George looked at me and said, "Jim, give her a \$3000 raise." I said to him, George, you were

right. We shouldn't be doing that. That should be done in the spring. No, he said, she'll be a problem all year if we do nothing. Give her \$3000. Guess what, when Norma got her next check, she came up to me and said "thank you Jim, thank you for sticking up for me." I said I didn't! That was all George, but she wouldn't believe it. She didn't believe it at all. She resigned at the end of the year and went somewhere else.

When George was leaving for the presidency of York, he asked members of the Academic Affairs Cabinet for feedback about what he had done wrong over the years, and what he might improve on. He wanted to know so he could avoid the same mistakes at York. So I went in and was very blunt. I said, you've done a lot for women on this campus, especially in salary equity, and yet I have a sense that women don't like you. They really don't have a high regard for you. I cited the two examples I've mentioned, and he was grateful for the comments.

By the way, I should also tell you that in '91, I told George that I would serve one more year as dean and then wished to go back in the classroom at the end of the 1992 academic year. This would give me a six-year term as dean. He said I should think about it for a while before making a definite decision. Nothing happened for about 3 or 4 months, and then there was a meeting in the Academic Affairs Cabinet when we were talking about the core program. George had a certain idea of what he wanted and made it very clear. Well, after that I talked to Pat Heaman, who was associate dean, and she had another idea. I remember thinking that her idea made more sense than what George wanted, so in the next Academic Affairs Cabinet meeting I brought up Pat's proposal and argued it might be a good idea to go that way. George was furious. He said, Jim, we settled this last week. I kept to my argument that this was an improvement over what George wanted. After the meeting several people mentioned that George was really upset with me. About fifteen minutes after the meeting was over, I was back in my office when George called and said, Jim, you said you wanted to leave at the end of '92. Why don't you come over here and we'll talk about the details. [Laughter] We decided the date and conditions under which I'd be leaving the deanship. George was good at sending a message.

CB: So much for speaking truth to power.

JR: You know George invited me to his inauguration down there and we exchanged Christmas cards for some years.

CB: I think we went down together to his inauguration.

JR: Yes we did, a number of us went down.

CB: He was crucial in getting 'university' status. George handled it so efficiently and thoroughly, and impressed the visiting team. But the tensions I had to deal with between him and Paul O'Hop were so great that when he announced that he was going to York, I felt relief.

JR: George was a guy who really ignored disagreement and plunged ahead with whatever plan was on the table. When Harold Cox opposed university status, George just never paid attention to him. He did that with the accreditation procedure in '89, too. He would not tolerate any opposition to the administration or any sign of faculty discontent in that report, and we received re-accreditation rather easily.

CB: When you consider his interest in Japan and Japanese culture, you can understand how he valued hierarchy and how he tried to implant it in academia. He brought that to Wilkes for a temporary period of time. It got us university status, but it created a lot of other problems. When George came to us as Academic Vice President, he had already been a candidate for presidencies, so he came to us with a full readiness to be in charge that characterizes those of us who had presidencies. All of a sudden he was a number 2, and he encountered me and Paul Ohop, people who really marched to different drummers and ideas than George was expecting. Not that Paul and I marched to the same drum, believe me, but George was at war with both of us right from the beginning. George was so professional that he would absorb the differences and move on, but he would be angry after meetings and it was part of my job to hear him out. I wasn't the kind of guy that he really respected, so it was really good for him to get off to a presidency. I was fascinated to know how York culture responded to his leadership. He was very successful from what I learned. He turned the place around, did some very creative things financially and in terms of enrollment. At that time, York was in bad shape and he rescued it. He was a very talented guy and had a wonderful wife and daughter.

Say something Jim about the changing styles of the presidential leadership from Farley and Mike, I guess down to Tim. You would have a unique understanding of the roles we played and our strengths and weaknesses.

JR: Well, I think the biggest thing is that down through 1984 there was a kind of internal approach to presidential leadership. The presidents of that time had long personal histories with Wilkes. Farley had been here forever, and Mike and Bob had been faculty members at Wilkes for years before becoming president. There was a "Wilkes Way" of sorts, that I'd have difficulty explaining in any detail, but the leadership was different than any college or university I'd been at in the past. For example, the president actually presided over faculty meetings. His office set the agendas. It was pretty much taken for granted, and for the most part accepted, that the president's authority, and I suppose the board's as well, was all that mattered. And it didn't matter if actions were taken that were quite different than what the academic community outside of Wilkes was doing. The interim tenure policy and the eventual censorship by the AAUP suggest what I'm speaking about. I think the presidential authority was strongest with Farley, lesser so with Mike, and still lesser so with Bob. When the presidential hold loosened with Mike and Bob, however, the board became more prominent in college decision making.

After 1984, with Chris and then Tim, we were not as internally focused as we were. Administrators were more and more coming from outside the institution rather than from inside. George Waldner and Mike Lennon are examples. I think also that the school began to change physically in a big way and has been changing ever since. The addition of all the new buildings, the renovations to existing facilities, as well as cosmetic approaches, have created a beautiful and modern campus, quite unlike what existed when I came in 1968. I think that Chris and Tim were alike in the sense that when they came here, they weren't looking to move. I think they came here to stay and finish their careers here and build something wonderful. I think Pat Leahy was the first who came not expecting to stay, and I think we all knew that when he came. I am not so

sure that had a healthy effect upon the place. Maybe that's a chapter still to be written, but he may have done some things that would help him move, and didn't leave the school in the best financial condition. The latter point is largely conjecture on my part, based upon what I hear through the grapevine.

I guess a principal difference between Tim and Chris was that Chris was more hands on, Tim for example was inclined to let me do my own thing as vice president. When I became acting Vice President it was spring of '98 and that was much more stressful than when I later became the Vice President without the "acting" in front of it. That was a very tough semester. For example we had the Jerry Campbell's case, and many days ended with a meeting in O'Hop's office with Gene Roth, Chris, and myself discussing the legal nature of the whole situation. Another thing that I had to deal with, and I don't think you knew about this Chris, was a major problem with a student's course grade in nursing 101. I still remember her name [Carolyn Nelson], and the issue just drove me nuts. Her father was very well-to-do and brought in a Scranton lawyer ready to sue us about the grade. The father actually told Paul O'Hop and I that he would destroy our computer system if his daughter had to repeat the course. We told him that we'd follow our own procedures and that his threats would have no bearing on the eventual decision. Ann Marie Kolanowski, the nursing chair, who was concerned about how the National League of Nursing was closely considering student performance on national and state nursing exams, stood fast that the grade should not be changed. With help from Bonnie Bedford (Dean of Arts and Sciences) and Jack Meyers (the Registrar) I investigated the matter. I don't want to get into details, but in the long run and upon the advice of our attorneys, a grade appeals committee, and other members of the nursing faculty (including the person who taught the course), I overturned the grade. In the aftermath, Ann Kolanowski subsequently resigned and left Wilkes. Carolyn Nelson eventually graduated with honors in nursing. That was a very tumultuous situation, and I really didn't need the distraction, given other things that were happening at Wilkes.

The big thing that spring semester was the Strategic Planning Committee which Paul Ohop and I co-chaired. Jerry Moffat, chairman of the board of trustees, and a member of the committee who participated in our meetings by phone from Florida, made it very clear that our purpose was to find ways to cut expenses at Wilkes. Paul's assistant, Cheryl Scalese, provided a great deal of statistical information about department loading and expenditures that was very helpful. As a result of the study, we immediately had to release four members of the engineering department. They were young and untenured, but probably the best teachers in the program. One of them came to me afterward and said I had no choice because student numbers were declining drastically. He said that several of his colleagues had already been looking for new positions because student numbers at Wilkes were so low. In fact, that was probably the main problem of the late 90s. Student numbers were declining in two of our major programs: engineering and nursing. Both of them lost students in a big way. For example, we had 34 full-time faculty in nursing in the 80s, but in the 90s we were down to 7, and we had a hard time to justify even 7, because student numbers were so low. Music and art were other programs troubled by low

enrollments, and both, especially music, were very expensive programs. Those were big problems the committee had to confront and which contributed to the economic pressures the school was facing.

I was happy to go back in the classroom at the end of the semester. But I have to tell you that it was a different teaching experience. I wasn't doing as well in the classroom as I had done earlier. Student expectations were changing; technology was becoming more important in college teaching and I wasn't adapting to it very well. My traditional lecture approach was giving way to discussion groups and video presentations, and I wasn't happy about that. That's what probably made me open to applying for the VP position in 2000. When I became vice president for Academic Affairs in 2000, it was a tumultuous time for the university. In 1999, we had suffered through an unfavorable accreditation procedure with Middle States and were trying to make changes Middle States insisted on. Jerry Moffat, the chairman of the board of trustees, told me my principal job was the development of a new core academic program and limiting financial expenditures, which were apparently two principal Middle States concerns. In the first instance, I had to work with the curriculum committee, and then the faculty at large, to create and then gain approval of a new core. Given the conflicting interests of departments and individual faculty members, there were times when I thought the effort would not succeed. I can't tell you how overjoyed I was when the faculty finally approved a new core program. It occurred only after countless hours of meetings, discussions, compromises, and worry on my part. The stress I felt before it was over was greater than any I had ever felt in my career.

On the matter of limiting expenditures, I found that I had to develop an ability to say no in a nice way. Nursing and Music both wanted additional faculty and when I had to say no there were strong protests. The music chair, who was in his first or second year at Wilkes, went over my head to you, Tim, and when we both rejected his demand, he threatened to go to the board of trustees. At that point we told him that if he did that, he wouldn't be working at Wilkes for very long. It was a tough time, but I think we weathered it fairly well. When I retired in 2002, the engineering program was still in some trouble but I think you, Tim, pulled it out with a number of changes and it started to prosper. I think it's prospering today from what I know. I'm happy to say that my grandson, Gage Krisanda, is going to graduate from Wilkes as a mechanical engineer this fall.

CB: Tim and Jim, I really don't know this, but what was the leadership transition when Umid died? Who took over?

JR: Umid had already stepped down before Tim came to Wilkes.

PA: Yes, he left the deanship when Bonnie became the dean of everything.

TG: But he was still around when I came here.

PA: Yes.

JR: He was involved in recruiting students from India.

TG: Okay, I remember.

JR: Umid even visited India at one point.

CB: I don't remember Umid stepping down while I was still at Wilkes..

JR: I think what the Strategic Planning Committee did was join departments to cut the expenses, and Bonnie became the dean of everything at that point.

TG: Yes. except pharmacy

JR: And the deanships were simply gone.

CB: Was that my last year?

JR: A little before that.

PA: Bonnie was an interim dean and then she became the full dean. I think it occurred 1999 or 2000..

CB: She became the dean of everything while I was still there, but I think it was my last year before Tim came.

TG: I think that's right.

CB: So what leadership emerged in engineering and environmental sciences after my time?

TG: I never appointed a dean of engineering per se. I appointed a director, David Wells. Dale Bruns was the overall dean of Science and Engineering.

CB: Didn't Dale combine the leadership of environmental science and engineering right after Umid?

TG: Yes.

JR: Well, I haven't talked about students and I'd like to say something about the ones I had and the ones I remember. When I reflect back on my teaching career, I have a much stronger memory of specific students I had in the 1970s than I do in the 90s. I can remember quite a few of them by name. We had one student who I'll never forget. Willie Reese was a history major who came from Dupont. He was a 'these and them' guy when he started out, but when he graduated it was with honors, and I was able to arrange with the people at Bowling Green, who I had a good relationship with, for him to get into the master's program at Bowling Green. When he completed the program there he went on to complete a PhD at the University of Indiana. The last I heard, he was the chair of the History department at the University of Wisconsin.

TG: No kidding!

JR: Yes, and according to Joel Berlatsky, he received the biggest grant ever given in the United States to work on historical research. He was an incredible achiever. In some ways, he exemplified the students we had in the 1970s. They were hungry, really wanting to move ahead. We had a lot of students with that kind of drive and ambition. I remember Bill Philips, Randy Gale, Frank Januzzi, and fellows on the football team like Frank Galicki and Harry Hoover. I think Paul Adams may have been one of them. They were anxious to move ahead, concerned about their grades and about what they were doing. I think students today lack that drive and concern. They're more laid back about what they're doing and what the future holds for them. I was talking to a doctor the other day, Dr. Yurkanin, a podiatrist, who taught at Temple for a while, and she asked me the question, how are students different? And she agreed with my conclusions. In earlier times there was a hunger about students that's lacking in today's world. Maybe it's the millennial generation. I was wondering, Paul, if you've experienced anything like that in your work with students?

PA: Yes. I think there are things that are common about education across the years, and then there are things that have changed. Certainly each generation is shaped by different events. We've talked about current students being shaped by the covid pandemic. In like manner, millennials being shaped by 9/11 and boomers being shaped by Vietnam.. I certainly do think that generations have changed overtime. New technology has changed the way they've interacted with each other, I think in a tremendous way. I also think kids today are probably more conservative than in the past.

JR: I would also offer some comments about presidential leadership. I think Wilkes has been very fortunate over the years with presidential leadership, having the right person in the job at the right time. Farley was a tough guy who got the place through a depression, a world war accompanied by shrinking enrollments, limited financial resources, and even hostility in the community, especially from the Catholic hierarchy. Mike was the right man for the flood of '72. He provided inspiration, energy, and an attitude that never doubted that we'd survive as an institution. He was helping to clean out buildings and make repairs and at the same time successfully negotiating with the government to get needed funding. We had all sorts of problems, but we survived it. I think Bob Capin was able to stabilize things financially, and also establish formal channels, like the tenure and promotions committee and the faculty affairs committee, that brought faculty members into the decision-making process. With Chris we had the introduction of a more national approach to higher education that went well beyond northeastern Pennsylvania. We began to bring in administrators, board members, and students from distant places. The physical improvements also began to make the place look more like a college than it looked when I arrived in 1968. I also think there was a greater emphasis on scholarship, both in approaches to teaching and in publication. With Tim, I think we had a strong recovery from the negative accreditation report we received in 1999. We also had considerable expansion of the campus that was consistent with a need for growth. The purchase of the former "call" center on South Main Street, the luxury apartment complex across the street, and the parking garage were important to Wilkes's future. There were also increases in faculty and administrative salaries that made us more competitive with other Pennsylvania institutions.

I think we were fortunate with Paul as an interim president; there was a lot of support for Paul among both faculty and administration, and he was able to keep things on an even keel. That was especially important given some of the financial problems Pat Leahy left behind. From what I can tell, the jury is still out on an overall judgement of Pat Leahy, but I do think he did a lot to improve the looks of the campus. I think Wilkes is now a beautiful urban campus. I think on the whole Wilkes has been very fortunate in its presidents, from Gene Farley right down to Paul.

CB: Aside from the financial side, I think Leahy did a remarkable job in raising the name and reputation of Wilkes nationally and internationally. As someone who knew northeastern Pennsylvania from the perspective of the University of Scranton, he saw the strengths in Wilkes in rather remarkable ways. Given some advice Tim and I gave him when he first became president, he was able to define how Wilkes was different from other colleges and universities.

He made some very telling points about what Wilkes represented to the region. It was music to my ears to know how he was able to market the institution in such a unique way.

I think both Tim and I did a lot in that direction, but I think Pat Leahy carried it to the next level. He was ambitious for Wilkes, but I'm afraid some of the financial issues he left behind may cause people to forget his strengths.

JR: I think one thing is that the university looks very nice, and I think in the long run that will serve the place well. I think students are impressed by what a campus looks like. From personal experience, I know that the Towers dormitory, one of Tim's purchases, impresses prospective students. My grandson, and the kids who were with him on the campus tour, couldn't believe the accommodations that were involved. He said it was far better than the dorms he saw at other schools.

TG: I think Jim your analysis is pretty much on target. Facilities investments are important, especially in attracting students to campus, But I think Pat may have made purchases of facilities that might be a drag on the institution. I'm not sure what purpose some of them will serve, and they will be expensive to maintain.

I think Wilkes has had presidents who really cared about the school. And I think that's something we are not always seeing elsewhere, where presidents come in for a very short stay, try to improve their credentials, and then move on when a better position opens somewhere else. Pat came in relatively young and so it was natural for him to move on. We'll have to wait and see what long-term impact he had on Wilkes.

I think we, as an institution, have missed the boat on getting a strong upper and middle level academic leadership that has stayed around for a while. You can see in Paul Adams' long-term service in Student Services what an organization could look like if you have a really able leader surrounded by some good people. There's stability and a consistent approach to things, while at the same time an ability to keep up with changing student needs and interests. I'm not sure we've had that on the academic side. Don't misunderstand me. We've had some very good people. George Waldner is a good example. He might've been tough to live with, but he certainly had some good ideas and personal strengths. But he stayed for a relatively short period of time. In my time, Jim did a heck of a job on the transition between Chris and me, Jim was a great academic officer, but I only had him for one year and then he retired.

CB: Paul, do you have some reactions to those thoughts?

PA: Well, I do agree that Pat's legacy is probably yet to be written, and he had a great gift in weaving a story and telling a tale that would be inspiring, I think you saw that at the gala. One of the things he did well was figuring out why Wilkes was different. He just pressed and pressed Brian Bogert, our institutional researcher, to find evidence that distinguished Wilkes from other schools in the country. I thought it was fascinating how he used that information to brand Wilkes as a very distinctive place, and I thought that was inspired of him.

Pat is criticized by a lot of people here for building his resume through the physical structures of Wilkes and what he did here programmatically. But who knows five years from now if those physical investments aren't going to pay off. I agree that there are a couple of buildings around

here that are albatrosses and are going to hurt us for a while, but there were things that he was very gifted doing very well, and he was so good on his feet and certainly knew how to work a crowd as well as anybody.

JR: I agree. I heard Pat talk to incoming students with one of my grandsons on two occasions. He was very impressive, and he shared with those students Wilkes' uniqueness as an institution. It was very effective.

PA: Oh, very much so, I agree. I think one of the great gifts he'd given to Wilkes was trying to explain its unique niche in the world of colleges.

CB: Jim your final reflections, and if you think you may want to do more of this later we can work it in, because there is so much we haven't talked about today that you were right in the middle of.

JR: Well, I came to Wilkes planning to leave as soon as possible, but I came to love the place after it all. I enjoyed working with all of you over the years, and I think it still has a great future, and maybe I'll have a great grandchild there someday. [Laughter]

TG: Good for you.

CB: the one thing we haven't asked that you might just close out on, who were some of the four or five key faculty colleagues over the years that stand out? Both in your personal relationship with them and also the role they played in the university.

JR: Well I think Jack Meyers, Joel Berlatsky and Dave Leech would be right up there, I think Les Turoczi was another, Bob and Pat Heaman, and I think Anne Kolinowski in nursing. Bernie Graham who I admired a great deal as he developed the pharmacy program. But I think the most valuable faculty member, and one not always appreciated, was Joe Bellucci. Joe built our computer development program and expanded the graduate programs in incredible ways. He paved the way for off-campus offerings and our on-line programs as well. His work was absolutely essential to not only the financial integrity of the institution, but also in spreading and enhancing its reputation. For me personally, Jack Meyers was not only my closest friend, but a person who could be relied on to tell me the truth, whether I liked it or not. He was honest and straight-forward, a feature that many people didn't appreciate, and at times I think people treated him badly because of it.

CB: Tell me, because you were very supportive of the athletic program, your sense of George Ralston, John Reese, and our current athletic director, Addy Maletesta.

JR: John Reese was a great wrestling coach, but I think one of the great mistakes we made was going from Division 3 wrestling to Division 1. I think if we stayed in Division 3 we would've probably won 10-12 national championships. As it occurred our Division 1 participation was effective but not really noteworthy. I also think that Division 1 status gave John, as athletic director, the opportunity to capture the athletic budget for the benefit of wrestling at the expense of other sports. I think particularly men's varsity basketball suffered. It's no accident that our basketball program really took off when we were transitioning out of Division 1 back to 3 in wrestling. Particularly since Addy took over, there was more balance to our programming. We

began to have a focus on equity for programs involving men and women. Addy Maletesta was a very good athletic director.

CB: How about George Ralston?

JR: He was a terrific guy, a really good man. I still remember when I first came to Wilkes, Jack Myers and I were asked to chaperone a dance in the old gymnasium. It was a Saturday night high school dance, and I think we rented that facility to high schools for their proms. Jack and I went, we stood there and watched the whole thing, and when we left we congratulated ourselves that everything had gone very well. Then George called us in on Monday morning and asked what happened at the dance. I said, nothing, everything went well. And George asked: well how do you explain the fact that two urinals on the men's room wall were destroyed? [Laughter] But then George just chuckled a bit and let the matter drop. George was really a good man, very generous to students, and I know he gave them money out of his own pocket when they were hurting. If I called him with a question I had about a student, he was able to provide an incredible amount of background information, without even checking his files.

CB: So what actually happened to those urinals?

JR: They were really smashed, and Jack and I never knew it because we were in the gym the whole time and the music was very loud.

PA: In that old gym there couldn't have been more than two urinals in that place! The men's room was pretty tiny.

[Laughter]

JR: I think so. We were lucky they didn't get the toilet bowl!

CB: Maybe that's one of the reasons why we had to build the new building.

TG: Yes.

CB: In fact, Middle States, in our ten-year evaluation in 1979, made a condition that we improve the athletic facilities.

TG: Jim, you are a tremendous resource about Wilkes, dating back to Farley down to the present time.

JR: I can't believe that it's been 52 years since I first came to Wilkes. It's amazing!

TG: Yes. and I know that we're all thinking your service to Wilkes has been invaluable and unselfish. I think in so many ways you made very significant contributions.

JR: I hope so, I hope so!

CB: One of the qualities that you brought to your work is that when controversial and explosive issues occurred, you never made your decisions personal. You could work with people who could be irritating at times, but you still treated them as colleagues. You dealt with issues and never became the issue yourself.

TG: Jim's a smart guy you know! I wish you had stayed around longer. I think you quit too soon Jim.

[End of interview]