Interview with Dr. G. Robert Holsinger by Prof. Paul Underwood
July 30, 1985

UNDERWOOD: I guess we’d better start off with the question that comes first as far as your career is concerned. You got a Ph.D. in classics from The Ohio State University but were news director for WOSU. Was that simultaneously or one after another?

HOLSINGER: That’s a little hard to explain. I was finishing my doctorate in classics in 1952 and I had been teaching classics in comparative literature. In 1952, there was not a tremendous demand for classics in the country, and I had had about a year of commercial radio and news between high school and college. I was working with commercial stations in Youngstown, WFLJ and WKVN and WRRN in the Warren area, so I was offered the job of news director at WOSU at what I thought was a stupendous salary of $3,600 a year. I think the highest classics offer I had had was at that time was about $2,800, so I decided to go to WOSU. During that time, one of the jobs of news director was to supervise the radio news labs. As a result of that I had faculty rank in Journalism and from that time on I taught at least one course a quarter while in administration. I left WOSU and then I went on to WOSU-TV as its first program director when it went on the air.

UNDERWOOD: When did it go on the air?

HOLSINGER: Exactly 1956, I believe.

UNDERWOOD: So you were with WOSU for actually some time?

HOLSINGER: Yeah, really quite a while. Then Oz Fuller, who was then dean of Arts and Sciences, asked me to come over as assistant dean of Arts and Sciences, which I did. I was in charge of the honors program down there and then Fred Heimberger said, “Would you consider doing half-time in Arts and Sciences and then half-time kind of pulling together the Continuing Education, particularly in the evening offerings?” I did that until 1961 and then they formed a new division of Continuing Education, which is no longer on the books. Then I became the youngest dean ever to be appointed and I served there for 5 years before going on to President Fawcett’s office.

UNDERWOOD: Tell me, what was Continuing Education like when you took it over? You said you had to pull it together. Were departments just offering courses?

HOLSINGER: They were kinds of offering courses. We had no real bulletin. This had been proceeded by kind of a strange organization, part of the university administration which was headed by a man named Lou Cooperider. That goes way back in history. We’re talking about the late 1950’s or early 50’s. It was called the Twilight School, which had a horrible name. It sounded like twilight sleep or something like that.

UNDERWOOD: Or Twilight Zone.
HOLSINGER: But the point is that they had never really pulled this thing together academically, and the idea was we would now have a bulletin just like all the other colleges, only it would be an evening bulletin which would pull together academically all the offerings of the university. Then when I went to Continuing Education as dean, we added to that all the non-credit courses, which were being offered, and in particular developed, for example, a program called Continuing Education for Women, which was intended for the employed women or the second career woman. I think we did a lot of exciting things, I suspect that Continuing Education still is, but I thought it was quite interesting.

UNDERWOOD: It doesn’t have any special programs like that now, does it?

HOLSINGER: I don’t think it has a CED for women that I know of.

UNDERWOOD: So you got over into administration by going into the College of Arts and Sciences for Oz.

HOLSINGER: Right. And I headed the honors program there.

UNDERWOOD: And then took over Continuing Education and then you went to Fawcett’s office. In what capacity?

HOLSINGER: I went to Fawcett’s office in 1966, in July of 1966. Nov asked me if I would consider coming up to his office as Executive Assistant, and we had talked about this at various times, and also secretary of the Cabinet, which was his staff, as it were. I didn’t hear anything too much about it for a month or two, and I was going on with my job, and I happened to run into Maybelle Ruppert, who is still in the President’s office, on the stairs of the Administration Building, and she said, “I hear you’re coming up to join us,” and that was the first indication I had that I would be becoming Executive Assistant to the President.

UNDERWOOD: What did that job entail, more or less?

HOLSINGER: Well it really entailed almost everything. One of the things was Secretary of the Cabinet, and keeping all the Cabinet records, or staff records and answering correspondence for the president’s signature. Meeting with student groups. This is one of the things that Nov did not really particularly enjoy, and I spent quite a bit of time meeting with students and student groups that had particular complaints or interests. That was in the days before the Ombudsman.

UNDERWOOD: How would that job correspond to something like, would it be more like the job that Bill Napier and Eric Gilbertson had, or more like Moulton?

HOLSINGER: Well it would be more like Moulton I suppose. When Moulton came back from the presidency of the University of South Dakota, he came back as Executive Assistant. He took my position and then later became Vice President for Administration.
That was after I had decided that I would go up to Jack Corbally as Assistant Vice President of Curriculum. That was in 1968.

UNDERWOOD: So you were in Fawcett’s office from 1966-1968.

HOLSINGER: Yes, about two years.

UNDERWOOD: What was your view of Fawcett as an administrator?

HOLSINGER: I think he was a very capable administrator. He was much different from the sort of administrator that you normally find at a university. I would say he was more corporate oriented than academically oriented. You know some of his closest friends were people like Lee Iaccoca and people like that, rather than people in the academic environment, and I think he would have been even more efficient as president of General Motors, for instance than perhaps the university.

UNDERWOOD: The correlation there, or corresponding question is: What qualities do you think helped him be an administrator and what might have hindered him?

HOLSINGER: I think in the first place, he was tremendously well-organized. He was a good administrator in that he was always completely clear, which I have found is not a trait that necessarily goes with administration. You understood exactly what direction he was heading and he had a very clear concept of what his goals were and his goals for the university. I think that was a tremendous advantage to him as an administrator.

UNDERWOOD: What were his drawbacks?

HOLSINGER: The drawbacks, I think many of them have been I think overdrawn. People talked a lot about his relationships with the faculty. I suspect that would be one. He always had a hard time understanding a university faculty as opposed to a teaching staff. I wouldn’t be speaking in derogatory sense, but I think he was just a corporate executive. If somebody had done something to him or had done something to hinder his administrative direction, he never forgot that. I think that was reflected in his attitude towards the press. One of his deficiencies I think is that he found it very hard to accept criticism of any kind. He certainly pretended to be open to criticism or at least, he may have believed this. But I remember certain newspapers, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, for instance, was very, very tough on Fawcett, particularly in the period when he got into hassles with Jack Fullen. When a new director was brought into journalism, he got into a real hassle with the press there. He never really trusted the press. He was always worried about what the Lantern said, instead of taking a kind of relaxed attitude, as I think Enarson had done, and I think probably Ed Jennings even. He felt very much upset and he seemed to be critical of the way it was handled. I think in many ways he was a very, very efficient administrator.
UNDERWOOD: A lot of people have talked about the odd attitude he had towards faculty. It seems to me that if there’s any one general criticism, it’s that. He tended to think of the faculty in the same terms as teachers when he was a superintendent.

HOLSINGER: I think you’d have to go back in the history of his career. First of all, he did not have a doctorate, which I think the faculty in a sense maybe resented in some aspects. Then he started out as superintendent of school in Gambier and then he went on to Akron and then he came on to Columbus and this was, as superintendent. If he sent out a notice saying that everybody will wear green ties on Tuesday, nobody would dispute that. That was simply the way the administration was run. So I think he had a little problem when he came to the university in finding that faculty just were not of the same opinion. The Faculty Council, I served as a secretary of that group from 1961 to about 1968, and one of the things were that you saw immediately there were sharp lines of demarcation. I wouldn’t call them exactly conservatives and liberals, although that was almost true. I think that the Arts and Sciences, the people in law, political science, history, English, and so forth would be more inclined to be academically oriented and maybe real dissenters, where the people who stayed with Fawcett were people in agriculture, the college of medicine, the college of dentistry, the professional colleges in general. Education possibly.

UNDERWOOD: They were protected in a way against my invasion of faculty rights by the structure of those colleges.

HOLSINGER: That’s true, and I think you have to also look at the structure of the university at the time, when vice president Heimberger was here as Vice President for Academic Affairs. He and Nov never really saw eye-to-eye on very many things. When Jack Corbally came in it was a different situation. Of course Jack came from Education, but he was, I think, a much more relaxed administrator.

UNDERWOOD: I never knew Heimberger, so I can’t make any comparison, but I must say that Corbally was relaxed.

HOLSINGER: Now Jack had that, and I don’t know if he till has that with the McArthur foundation, but he always had a very relaxed attitude. Somehow he had the capability administratively of having two groups in his office, and each group left feeling that he had somehow convinced Jack that his position was correct. I never saw how he did that but it was interesting.

UNDERWOOD: I remember the break up of the Art and Sciences. I don’t remember whether you recall it or not, but you and I and Ken Krouse were in that outside office there one morning, and there had been a big faculty meeting the night before in which the faculty had apparently voted against something Corbally was pushing. So there was a certain amount of kidding Corbally about his defeat, and I’ll never forget, Corbally just sat there and smiled and said, “Wait until tomorrow. I never go over the barrel.” Do you have any other impressions of his (Fawcett’s) attitude toward the faculty? I had a feeling myself that he was a little baffled by them. Do you think that’s right?
HOLSINGER: Yeah, I think that’s true. I can remember times, and you can too, there were times when the faculty would be gathered and tearing down the flag in front of the Administration Building for instance. I don’t think he could have envisioned anybody having really strong principles of action, which many of the faculty had. Of course, they all went down on his list. As I said, I don’t think he ever forgot a slight. If anything, that was a fault in him personally. Now Jack was just the opposite. He was able to have somebody call him any kind of names in the book, and the next day he would be completely relaxed. I don’t think Jack was very much offended by it. Nov was. He took it very personally.

UNDERWOOD: You always seemed to have the feeling that he knew he was doing the best he could do, and if people didn’t appreciate it, then something was wrong with them.

HOLSINGER: That’s right. The Speaker’s Rule. I know the Speaker’s Rule has been talked to death. Nov was I think very much in favor of that. You’ll recall that was the thing that led to the faculty having a kind of a publicized vote of non-confidence in the president. There was a meeting. There were the days when we had faculty meetings every quarter. That particular meeting was by ticket only to be able to count the votes. It was a fairly close margin. It was saved only by the fact that John Mount and some of his colleagues, Roy Kottman and others in the College of Agriculture, were able to bring in every person in Cooperative Extension who held faculty rank from all around the state. You’ve got 88 counties there so there were quite a few votes. They all had tickets and they all got in. Legally, it was not problem at all. But they were not full-time faculty.

UNDERWOOD: Would you describe Nov’s method of procedure as top-down administration or was it more like a two-way street.

HOLSINGER: Not entirely. I think he related pretty well with what was called the Academic Council, which would be the deans. He did consult the matter where he felt that consultation was necessary. I think he was very good with his staff. Of course you were in the office and you know that every morning we met with Nov at the end of the day we met with Nov to see how the day had gone and what things might be on the wind to cause his trouble. I think he was pretty good on consultation. He was not nearly as autocratic as a lot of people he felt he was. A lot of people thought he was.

UNDERWOOD: To certain extent, that seemed to me to be mainly those people that never tried to talk to him.

HOLSINGER: I think so. I think you’re absolutely right. I think there were people not only who never tried—yeah I guess never tried is a good example. I don’t think he ever turned anybody away.

UNDERWOOD: He maintains he never did, and he maintains that he had an open door, yet you talk to people around the campus who were here then and then you hear that they never had an opportunity to talk to him.
HOLSINGER: I think that is because they never tried.

UNDERWOOD: Well you’ve already talked a little bit about relations with the deans and the Dean’s Council and the Academic Council, which it was then. I was going to ask you if that was a forum or a captive audience, but you’ve indicated that was pretty much a forum.

HOLSINGER: I think, yeah, in my view that was pretty much of a forum. Of course we had some very, very strong deans at that point, people like Dick Meiling in medicine.

UNDERWOOD: The general.

HOLSINGER: General, who was certainly in the mold of the old Prussian general. But people like Ivan Rutledge in law and a number of people, Jim McCoy from what was then Commerce. I think he listened pretty carefully.

UNDERWOOD: Kottman.

HOLSINGER: Roy Kottman was certainly very strong. Of course much of that was before the confederation of Arts and Sciences. I think that people in Arts and Sciences were strong, and I think he listened to them. I would say those meetings were pretty open.

UNDERWOOD: Now you’ve already said that as far as Heimberger was concerned they never did see eye-to-eye. But they respected each other apparently, because Fawcett maintained he always respected Heimberger and liked him.

HOLSINGER: I think that’s true. I think they just did not understand each other. They stood for different things. The Rose Bowl incident is a good example. I think, if you look at the minutes of, for example, the meeting where he was up for censure, I think you’ll find that the people who spoke on his behalf and the people who spoke against him, which if my memory serves me properly would include Fred Heimberger. I think that’s where you began to see a real division in the university. That was true in the Faculty Council. I don’t think this is as true in the Senate now as it was in the Faculty Council. But there were almost both sides of the aisle in the Council itself.

UNDERWOOD: Then Weaver succeeded Heimberger. I hear very little about Weaver. Did he get along all right with Fawcett? What was the situation there?

HOLSINGER: I think he got along all right with Fawcett because he pretty much carried out what Fawcett wanted done. I considered Weaver, and this is a completely open and frank statement, I considered him a very weak administrator. I don’t think Fawcett had respect for Weaver, even though he was going along and things were going more smoothly. I think he respected Fred Heimberger more than he did Weaver.
UNDERWOOD: He certainly gave that impression when you talk to him. He has very little to say about Weaver. He refers to Heimberger as somebody he liked very much and respected.

HOLSINGER: Weaver is kind of a blank when you look at the history of the university. There wasn’t really much accomplished during that period. I think he kept things going, but when you look at people like Corbally and Diether Haenicke and Al Kuhn, I think of all of those as very strong leaders. But Weaver, I don’t know about. You just don’t hear very much about him.

UNDERWOOD: By the way, talking to Fawcett one time about some of these people who were Provost, and he said Al Kuhn was a better department chair than he was a Provost.

HOLSINGER: I think he felt that way that he was more departmentally oriented than he was totally university oriented.

UNDERWOOD: I always thought myself that Al was a top-notch Provost.

HOLSINGER: Oh I did too. I had a great respect for Al. In fact, I think Al was, in my view, much more capable than Jack Corbally, overall. I think overall he was a better Provost.

UNDERWOOD: Do you have any sense of what Fawcett considered proper university government? I have a feeling, talking to some people, that he would have had very little use for the role of the University Senate.

HOLSINGER: I think that’s right. I don’t think that he really felt that the Faculty Council was serving its real purpose. They were acting quite often with a very narrow vision, as opposed to his, which he considered broad vision. It was one of those things. Now he doesn’t like to be voted down. I don’t suppose any administrator does. I don’t think Ronald Reagan is too happy about, for example, the current flap over the budget. I think he kind of resented the Faculty Council. I know the first meeting that I attended as secretary of the Faculty Council, and that was back in 1961, was the Rose Bowl meeting. Of course that meeting, I don’t know whether you want me to talk about that now or not, but we can very briefly. That was one year in which the university did not have a contract with the NCAA. The team was invited to the Rose Bowl, and it was then up to the faculty to make the decision. The Athletic Council voted very definitely that we should go, but it would then have to have the approval of the entire faculty. Fred Heimberger led that fight.

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HOLSINGER: Fred Heimberger led the fight against accepting the Rose Bowl bid. His argument, whether it was valid or not, was that if we turned down the bid, it would make us look better academically. We had a reputation as a football or athletic school, and if
we turned down that bid, it would prove that we were concerned about academics and not that concerned about football. As you know, it went to a secret ballot and the vote was 28-25, and Nov was very, very upset with that. He was strongly in favor of the team going. I would say that was one big conflict he had with Fred.

UNDERWOOD: I’ve heard several different things about that story that I have never been able to get straight. I was talking to Nov about that some time ago, and Nov said something about the real problem here was that not only that Ohio State didn’t have a contract with the NCAA, but neither did the Pacific Coast Conference. Neither one of them had one. Ohio State could have been kicked out of the NCAA had they gone. So he was saying that all of this fooling around is a lot of nonsense, because there’s no way they could have gone, regardless of what the faculty voted.

HOLSINGER: I’ve heard that story. I’m not sure whether it’s accurate or not. It would be interesting to talk to the athletic department on whether or not that was true. That wasn’t my impression. Otherwise why have that meeting.

UNDERWOOD: As I say, it’s all very confusing, these various angles on this thing. Maybe I should follow up on this little matter.

HOLSINGER: Yeah, I think if you’d read the minutes on that meeting, which run to 70 to 80 pages in the official documents of the university. It was almost like Congress because people wanted their speeches inserted into the record. Somehow I had the feeling that if there were not question, there would have been the fury on the part of Woody Hayes and the athletic department. Of course, as you recall, what happened then was that the Dispatch was able to find out who voted not to send the team and printed their names and addresses and phone numbers and so forth.

UNDERWOOD: So everybody could harass them. One thing that’s come out several times as Nov’s relations with Jack Fullen and the alumni. It’s quite evident that they did not see eye-to-eye, to put it gently. Specifically, several people have mentioned complications regarding research funding, when you have people going to Fullen and getting a certain amount of money and then going to the Research Foundation and getting some more money and coming around to the administration building and saying, “Well, we can get started on this. Now we need $20,000 to finish it.” And the administration wouldn’t know anything about the whole project until they had to get salary operations. Do you have any memory of that sort of thing while you were there?

HOLSINGER: I remember it very clearly because of course Nov and Jack Fullen were mortal enemies. I recall that kind of thing happening. I don’t know a great deal about it, but I think that was the reason that the Vice President for Research position was created, to try and pull all of that together, so we wouldn’t have that kind of hassle, because it was possible to go to the Alumni Foundation to get money, send money to get the project started, and then since the university was committed, come back and say, “Hey, we need another $20,000 or $30,000 to finish this up and we’d committed ourselves to this.” That
of course did not make Nov happy and it certainly did not make Jack happy. I think Jack was always kind of a newspaperman. He was a journalist in many ways.

UNDERWOOD: I suspect there may have been some suggestions that another factor in that was that Fuller wanted to be president.

HOLSINGER: That was often said. I never heard Jack say that, but I’ve heard a lot of people say that. Of course, this was at a time when the School of Journalism was kind of a hassle too and the late Cole Porter and Jack were very strongly united against Nov on this issue, Nov and Jack Corbally. You remember the picketing…

UNDERWOOD: I wasn’t here then. I came in later but I certainly heard a lot of stories. Is there any history of alumni directors becoming president?

HOLSINGER: The only one I can think of offhand was Lou Morrill. He was an alumni director and he went from here to North Carolina I guess. He’s the only one I can think of. I don’t think there’s any history of it. I certainly would not see the alumni directorship as a step toward the presidency.

UNDERWOOD: That’s what I was wondering too. Of course, if you went from being the alumni director to being the vice president of something and then went on to being president that may be so. But I was wondering why Fullen would have expected to be made president.

HOLSINGER: I think maybe because he was so involved in the affairs of the university. You look at the major universities and they kind of run parallel with the president. They’re sort of a support staff of the university who pull together the alumni to support the university financially. I certainly don’t see it as a road to the presidency. I don’t see any reason why Fullen would have expected that, and I don’t think he would have been made president. I don’t think the Board would have elected him.

UNDERWOOD: The faculty. Not at least without some apprenticeship in another position. How do you feel he got along with the Board of Trustees, Board of Regents, and that sort of thing? I guess there was a Board of Regents during the latter part.

HOLSINGER: I think he got along very well with the Board of Trustees. He was very close to them. Again, as you look at the composition of them, essentially they were the same kind of people that Nov was. They were business people and I think that was reflected by the fact that Nov served on so many boards of directors of people that were on the Board of Trustees. I think the board composition has changed since then. But that was very much like the Board of Directors of a company, and I think he got along very good. Now the Board of Regents. At that time John Millett was head of the Board of Regents.

UNDERWOOD: Well Millett had been president of Miami when Fawcett came here. They cooperated on the establishment of the branch at Wright State.
HOLSINGER: I think he and John got along reasonably well. I think the real problem was when the Board of Regents came out with the master plan. Of course what the Board of Regents effectively did was to take away the lobbying influence of the university, so that there would be one voice speaking for all of the state universities. I don’t think it worked out that way.

UNDERWOOD: I’m certain if you went down right now and talked to the legislature, it looks the same.

HOLSINGER: And certainly up to the present time, I don’t think Ed Jennings is sitting back waiting for the Board of Regents.

UNDERWOOD: So your perception is that he got along pretty well with “downtown”.

HOLSINGER: Yeah. I attended a lot of meetings with Nov and I never saw any strong dissension. I attended in his stead 3 or 4 meetings, and I didn’t see any problems. As far as his relations with downtown, I think they were great. He belonged to the University Club, he belonged to the Athletic Club, he belonged to the Columbus Club, Rotary. Downtown was his milieu. He was happier downtown than he was on campus I think sometimes.

UNDERWOOD: Yeah, you got that feeling as you talked to people that somehow or other he related better with business types and politicians.

HOLSINGER: It’s interesting. I had lunch with Nov, I guess it was a year or a year and a half ago, but he was talking the same way. The people he was talking about were the president of Huntington, the president of Bank One, the relationship of banks and the downtown structure of Columbus. We weren’t talking about people at the university particularly.

UNDERWOOD: It’s interesting about that. All right, let’s skip on down. You mentioned the Speaker’s Rule. Let me say something first and see what your reaction is. I talked to Nov about this. Nov said he didn’t like the Speaker’s Rule from the very beginning, but he was faced with a rule that the Board of Trustees had enacted, and it was his duty to enforce it, and he tried several times to get it changed through a rather devious maneuver of his. He got a favorable vote, largely by persuading one member not to come to the meeting and holding a meeting when another one was out of the country and got a vote on which they could pass the Speaker’s Rule. That flies in the face of the opinions of other people that Nov really believe in the Speaker’s Rule, and rather reluctantly because it was causing so much trouble around the campus, he kindly persuaded the Trustees to change. What’s your perception?

HOLSINGER: Well my perception I think would be pretty much what Nov had said, that he was faced with a rule that was there when he got there. He had to enforce it. He was very unpopular. That was the one thing that I think faculty resented most of all, and I think that was the real reason for the censure. But I think it was, you know, a position of
again a stronger academic president might have kicked up a little more fuss about that. I think there’s where we go back to the president of General Motors again and the Board of Directors. This company policy and this is the way it’s going to be. We’re going to enforce it.

UNDERWOOD: All right. Campus planning. We had this tremendous expansion and all kinds of things going on, and what Nov said was that he was very interested in the whole idea of planning and organizing the campus. I don’t get that perception from very many other people. What’s your feeling about that?

HOLSINGER: Now are you talking about the actually physical building of the campus? I don’t really get that impression. In fact, I think, I get the impression that Nov was voted down on a lot of things that he wanted to do because I think the real power at that point was Gordon Carson, who really pushed for the erection of Lincoln and Morrill towers, for example. Now that’s something he was never very happy about. He didn’t think it was a good idea. I don’t think anybody thinks it was a good idea now.

UNDERWOOD: John Herrick as head of campus planning, and I’ve never gotten it straight whether he was really backed by Nov or Nov just tolerated the idea of having a campus plan in some kind of an organization about how the buildings were going to be put up or what.

HOLSINGER: I think he backed John Herrick and certainly Jack Corbally. I think that Nov pretty much went along with the concept that there ought to be a strong campus plan. One thing he was very fearful of was that we were overbuilt, particularly in terms of dormitory buildings, and I think that’s been born out, because he could see the direction in which things were going, which would be that people were not going to be required to live in dormitories. We had a lot of buildings, which were dormitories, which are now office space. I think the wisdom for this thinking in this regard was brought out.

UNDERWOOD: Let’s get on to the question of the dissolutionment of the Arts and Sciences. Was he a major force in this, or was he simply going along with Corbally, etc.

HOLSINGER: My impression was that that was pretty much an academic affairs direction, which he approved and which he went along with. But I think Corbally was really the leader in that concept of decentralization that would more effectively serve the university, rather than having one dean. Of course I don’t think Oz Fuller was one of his favorites either, but I think he felt it was too unwieldy and administrative structure if it were broken down into the colleges of the Arts and Sciences, which incidentally is a very hard concept to explain to anybody outside of the university. I sometimes wonder if it wouldn’t have made more sense just to go ahead and have the College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and the College of Humanities and not worry about this umbrella thing.
UNDERWOOD: It looks to me like the umbrella was kind of a compromise because nobody wanted Fuller’s idea of a “Super Dean” and yet they would appeal to him enough to put the umbrella in there.

HOLSINGER: I think that’s true, and I don’t know how effectively that works, because I know in the course that I teach. I ask people about the college in which the school of journalism is located and they say the college of Arts and Sciences, and they have no idea of social and behavioral sciences, what the means or who is dean. So I’m not really sure that that was a move that was tremendously effective.

UNDERWOOD: Some of the people who I’ve talked to about that have talked about a certain number of important characters around the university as being very opposed to that structure before Corbally became the major protagonist in it. For instance, both Agriculture and Medicine, for reasons I’m not quite sure and nobody has ever explained to me, are presented as major forces in this campaign to break up Arts and Sciences. One way, Fawcett said once, that one of the logical reasons for doing this way that Agriculture had a certain number of courses, Medicine had some biological science courses and so did the College of Arts and Sciences, and this duplication made no sense. The solution to that was to have the College of Biological Sciences, which was the beginning of the breakup of the College of Arts and Sciences. I don’t know whether you’ve ever heard this or not or were conscious of it but I was curious as to what were the objections as to the College of the Arts and Sciences.

HOLSINGER: I never heard this. Of course, I’ve heard the argument against duplication of course which goes on and on and on, as a member of the curriculum affairs committee of one of the colleges of the Arts and Sciences. Here again you have a curriculum affairs committee for everyone in the college, and then it goes on to the curriculum affairs committee of the College of the Arts and Sciences and then goes on to the Council on Academic Affairs to the Provost, so you’ve got all this extra staff and there is certainly a continuing, ongoing battle to keep away from duplication of courses, not only among departments but in departments. But I had never heard that Medicine had particular problems.

UNDERWOOD: Agriculture was being described to me by a couple of people as being a force very early on behind this move to break up the College of Arts and Sciences.

HOLSINGER: That could really be true. Look at the strength of the deans of those colleges, Roy Kottman and Meiling; you have a good idea that they might well have been behind a move to break up anything, which was more powerful than they were.

UNDERWOOD: That was one of the reasons. I was wondering…

HOLSINGER: That’s one of the reasons. I wasn’t really as involved in it. We had at that time, I don’t know if you remember him or not, a professor of philosophy whose name was Marvin Fox. He was very active in this battle for the College of Arts and
Sciences and the maintenance of the integrity of having liberal arts. I’m not sure where he is.

UNDERWOOD: I was just trying to remember. Somebody told me where he was. Someplace in the East. I always found him very intriguing.

HOLSINGER: Yes, very interesting and a marvelous speaker.

UNDERWOOD: Construction of the tower dorms. Well we already talked about that and everybody agrees that this was Carson’s baby.

HOLSINGER: Yeah, without a doubt. He wanted those built.

UNDERWOOD: How did Carson get that over Fawcett’s reluctance to do it?

HOLSINGER: That’s a very good question, and I wish I could answer it. I would say that it probably stemmed from his original post as dean of the College of Engineering, and his very close relationship with a lot of the engineering companies who felt that it was a viable concept.

UNDERWOOD: The arguments of course was that you saved money by going up and you saved about $500,000 over the lateral thing for the rooms or something like that. I understand that this sort of argument was made.

HOLSINGER: Of course I think the tragic fire in the towers, and I can well remember the day that that happened really put the hiatus on the towers ever becoming a place where parents wanted their kids to be.

UNDERWOOD: Do you remember not so long afterwards, I guess it would be several years afterwards, the view about the towers being Sodom and Gomorra? That was also in the Plain Dealer wasn’t it?

HOLSINGER: The Plain Dealer has had an inordinate interest in the Ohio State University, for a newspaper. Cleveland State is no small institution, but they’re still tremendously interested in Ohio State.

UNDERWOOD: I could understand it earlier, when Phil Porter was still there, before they established Cleveland State. The first break came about when they allowed cocktails in the Faculty Club at 4:30 in the afternoon.

HOLSINGER: Part of that too was the construction of the Fawcett Center, where there were a number of people from off-campus. Then it moved into the dorms, but that wasn’t until much later.

UNDERWOOD: Enarson claimed he was responsible for liquor.
HOLSINGER: That’s right. My feeling about it was that the Faculty Club was kind of embarrassed by the whole thing, that they keep everything behind folded doors and then sort of slip out with a cocktail or something. There was never a bar that I know of then. Well there’s kind of one down in the basement. But I think it was a competitive thing, and partly might have been grown out of Continuing Education, because we have a coordinator in physical facilities who arranged for all the hotels to house the people who came here for conferences. Of course, where they were housed, obviously liquor was available. Then the question came up that if they could have it there, why couldn’t the Faculty Club have some? I always felt that 4:30 was kind of a joke because what was the magic about 4:30? There were people who had classes at 6:00 and 5:00 and so forth. I think they do serve wine in the afternoon. I think part of that too grew from the fact that the Faculty Club is really not a part of the university. Its members support it. It’s a private institution. The Fawcett Center had to have it. I mean there’s just no way you could have management groups meting there without a bar.

UNDERWOOD: All right, we’re up to co-ed dorms. I don’t think the came in until…

HOLSINGER: That was late too, because a lot of people were opposed to that. People like Bill Guthrie.

UNDERWOOD: The idea was floating around.

HOLSINGER: That’s right, but the enactment came, I think it was after his period. I don’t know what his feelings were. I never heard him express an opinion. I can’t even guess.

UNDERWOOD: Nov could come up with some surprising ideas. You think of him as being very straight-laced, and all of sudden he

HOLSINGER: No, straight-laced is not a word I would use. Nov was a very fine entertainer in his own right, when he had groups at the Sciota Country Club and that sort of thing.

----End of Side 2----

HOLSINGER: He was excellent. The dinners the Board had the nights before they met. They always met at the Sciota Country Club, and they always had cocktails and wine. He certainly was not dour. I mean he could have a very good time. I think the problem with Nov was that he was viewed with the puritan ethic, and I think he felt guilty when he was having a good time. I think it was not that he couldn’t have a good time, but that he felt guilty. He felt he had to be working during that period. He was a very conscientious president. He gave an awful lot of time.

UNDERWOOD: I was going to say, he came early and stayed late.
HOLSINGER: That’s right. That was during the period of his administration when the President’s house was on campus. He certainly during that period took a lot of beating because these kids would come back from the bars on High Street at 2:30 in the morning and make a regular stop at his house and knock on the door. He really hated that. He wanted to get away from the university.

UNDERWOOD: We chatted for a little while about the famous “Presidential Palace”.

HOLSINGER: I’d almost forgotten about that. That was one that Jack Fullen battled against and Phil Porter battled against.

UNDERWOOD: It was the Plain Dealer that kept referring to it as the “Presidential Palace”. I tell you, he had picked out, or somebody had picked out of him, one of the prettiest places in all of Columbus, that Beechcroft on Northstar Road.

HOLSINGER: I’d almost forgotten the Plain Dealer controversy about the Presidential Palace. I guess it’s no wonder that Nov was not in love with the Plain Dealer.

UNDERWOOD: What was it when Fullen and Porter got together? Were they classmates or something?

HOLSINGER: There’s some connection between the two. They may well have been classmates. They certainly worked together. Everything that Jack Fullen fed, the Plain Dealer would take as gospel.

UNDERWOOD: Well let’s skip on. How well do you think Nov handled the problems involved in all this tremendous expansion that was kind of characteristic of his whole administration? Was there too much expansion?

HOLSINGER: I think that’s the real question. Was the university really ready for this tremendous influx, not only of students but of varieties of students, students from foreign countries, problems involved in having teaching associates with language problems. I think Nov handled that very well, as he would have handled again if you want to the expansion of General Motors to new plants. I think he handled that very well, and I think the only thing that disturbed him about it was the tremendous student reaction to various…he was faced than with students and faculty, which was rather a sharp difference from the way thing had been.

UNDERWOOD: How well do you think he did in the business of maintaining the quality during all this expansion?

HOLSINGER: I think he did very well. I think Nov and Jack working together really tried to find the best possible people, and they succeeded in getting some people that I would have thought would have been almost impossible to get, people like Rutledge in law, who was an outstanding constitutional lawyer, and the dean of education who from the University of Chicago. They had quite a contest to get him here. I think he was very
conscious of that, that it was necessary for the university to maintain quality despite growth. A lot of people have said that he was very much a number person, that he was impressed by the fact that the more students we had, the better institutionally we would be. I don’t think that was true. I think he was very conscious of academic quality, and I think Nov really had the same kind of ability, again to get back to that corporate presidency, of delegating authority. He, for example, where the College of Law was concerned or the College of Medicine was concerned; he would fight to the nth degree the desire of the dean to get a particular person to fill a particular job. I think if anything most of our problems with the quality came after Nov. I never had any doubt about his desire to maintain quality in the university.

UNDERWOOD: Did he look at the business of the named chairs and professorships and that sort of thing? They kind of began in Nov’s administration. I just wonder if that was a thing of his or not.

HOLSINGER: He was certainly totally behind this movement. This marked kind of changed in the Development Fund, where they became more interested. I think that was under Nov’s leadership more than anything else. That was after Jack had gone to maintain excellence by the establishment of these specific chairs. Of course as you know, there’s a Novice G. Fawcett chair in educational administration. That was something that was kind of a tribute to him and I think to his interest in that kind of educational leadership.

UNDERWOOD: Was that built?

HOLSINGER: Offhand I can’t answer that.

UNDERWOOD: I can’t either. I know the funding was finally but together a couple of years ago for it. It’s workable now, but I don’t know whether it’s actually been done.

HOLSINGER: I’m not sure that it has, but certainly as I recall one of the first chairs, wasn’t it the chair in Jewish Studies, the Melton?

UNDERWOOD: I’m not sure if that was the first one or not. He was one of the first I remember, but I came in at just about the same time as the Kiplinger chair did. I don’t know if that was first, but they were fairly close together.

HOLSINGER: He fought very hard for the Zollinger professorship and the Zollinger chair in surgery. He was willing to go on and work hard to get funding for these chairs.

UNDERWOOD: He was apparently a very good fund-raiser.

HOLSINGER: Yes, very good. Again because he was very direct. I don’t think he made the end round plays. He would say, “We need this much money, and can you help us?” Again, I think his connections with downtown or the corporate structure or whatever it was stood him in good stead. Now whether or not the establishment of chairs
guaranteed his excellence of the university program, I don’t know. But you look at universities like Notre Dame, which has been able with fewer students to maintain a degree of academic excellence, and they’ve done it partially through the establishment of specialized chairs.

UNDERWOOD: It’s one way you can hope at least, it suggests that you can actually do it, whether you actually pick wisely or not.

HOLSINGER: That’s right.

UNDERWOOD: I question the selection. There was a big question in some people’s minds about how well we’ve done with the selection process. Again I’m talking about the Kiplinger chair. It seems as if we could have gotten Wicker because of the name and so on, but he said something about this university had never really gotten their priorities straight and had never really gotten the best person they could have for that chair. They got the second best but they can’t get that push or whatever extra it takes to get top-notch people to come.

HOLSINGER: This was one of the things that Nov was committed to, and I think working with Jack, he was willing to go on the line to fight to get those professorships and chairs, and I think that was certainly one of his big accomplishments.

UNDERWOOD: I remember seeing a list of endowed professorships and chairs at sometime or another, and I’m almost certain that they began after Nov’s term.

HOLSINGER: I had that feeling.

UNDERWOOD: I was going to ask you about Continuing Education but you’ve already talked about it, and in a sense you’ve already answered the question about how much Continuing Education there was when you took it over. I kind of had the impression up until you answered that Continuing Education really almost didn’t exist, but you’re saying they had the Twilight Program. They had what was called the “Twilight School” and really all the Twilight School was, was an attempt to take the evening courses that were already offered by departments and organize them into some kind of a printed leaflet. My job was really a little more derivative. Really it involved three aspects. One was to go to the department chairmen and meet with department chairmen and meet with deans. As a matter of fact, I had an advisory council of dean and of department chairmen to encourage the development of programs. For example, an entire Master’s program that could be offered in the evening. I was on the credit side. Then we of course did develop programs like the Continuing Education for Women program, which had a lot of specialized, non-credit programs. In addition to that of course we had a conference coordinator and our idea was to go out and get people and bring them here to this campus for a meeting of the Big Ten Deans or whatever it happened to be, but to encourage this and to have a person. My assistant at that time was John Barton, and John’s job was to arrange with the hotels, work with the hotels so that we had a good working relation so that we could bring people and then get good meeting rooms, good housing and so forth.
and so on. The Center for Tomorrow originally was intended to be much bigger than it is now. The Center for Tomorrow was to be entirely Continuing Education, and then they had to kind of give in because they didn’t have enough money. So they said, “Well, we’ll put WOSU out there and use the WOSU money to get that wing done, and then we’ll use the alumni money to get that wing done. So now we have two wings and the center is Continuing Education. Originally that hotel was intended to be much larger, with more meeting rooms, more dining facilities. In fact, if you look at the original drawing for that center, it would have been a real asset. We were many millions of dollars short by the time they got around to moving them.

UNDERWOOD: Let me just ask out of sheer curiosity, when did you begin night courses?

HOLSINGER: They date back to World War I. I would say somewhere between World War I and World War II. They date back a long time. Luke Cooperider as I said, was with that program many, many years. Luke came from public schools and they had a little office over in the Administration Building, which was called the Twilight School. I would say the university got into evening classes. I don’t know the exact date but I would certainly say it would be the 1920’s and probably somewhere between the first and second World Wars.

UNDERWOOD: The reason I ask is because some of the evening classes in New York City began early but I remember sometime along the line most of them began during World War I.

HOLSINGER: The new school, for example.

UNDERWOOD: People would work in World War I and still want to continue with school. Columbus would have been a different kind…

HOLSINGER: It would have been a different kind of situation. When I became Dean of Continuing Education, my first title was coordinator of part-time and continuing education, and Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences, which was a strange conglomeration of titles. It was like pulling teeth to get chairmen to teach classes in the evening. There was no funding. I think there is some funding now to encourage these classes, which is the only way you can get them. Most of the one I got were achieved just by pleading with the deans to please put them in.

UNDERWOOD: I remember in the 1970’s somewhere when they began starting to emphasize night programs and they told us the things that were made public that you could take. Sometimes we would reorganize our programs so that somebody could get a Masters at night. Even that was a hellish problem for some departments. I guess there always will be too. Did you have any part in the series of developments that led to the establishment of Wright State? You mentioned that a little bit ago and I thought you’d come back to that to see.
HOLSINGER: I really did not. Moulton was primarily the main figure in that one.

UNDERWOOD: I wanted to ask you about finances. Do you remember the last year Nov was in office he started off the year by announcing that this year would be a year of great austerity. I have no impression about whether there were financial problems as far as the university was concerned in the previous years in the Fawcett administration. There were times when the legislature came through pretty well for you.

HOLSINGER: I think the legislature came through pretty well. His budgets were somewhat austere I suppose, but I never had the feeling that it was really…there was a period before that. I remember when I was teaching, when Bevis was president, where we went almost without pay simply because there were budgetary problems with the legislature. I think part of that austerity statement may have been public relations to explain why we weren’t doing some things that we planned to. I think that’s always happened in the university.

UNDERWOOD: You didn’t have anything like these series of reductions and budgetary financing that came during Enarson’s period.

HOLSINGER: I can’t recall anything like that.

UNDERWOOD: 5% cuts and 10% cuts after the budget had already been cut.

HOLSINGER: I can’t recall that. That seemed to me to start with the Enarson administration. I can’t recall anything like that.

UNDERWOOD: Another thing I’ve been intrigued with ever since I began reading the Enarson files is that business of the Practice Plan. I was enormously intrigued. Fawcett began his last year on that St. Pierre committee. He’d never done this before. Any impression as to why he did not move earlier?

HOLSINGER: No, I don’t. I remember our discussing this before. I really never heard Nov bring this up. It never seemed to me to be an issue. Of course the St. Pierre committee was formed after I left administration and had come back to journalism. I never saw it as an issue. I never heard anybody bring it up.

UNDERWOOD: The reason I mention it is because I have seen some of the correspondence. Remember Howard Collier and Harry Vandament and the man who was the chairman of the Board of Trustees, Sirak, were a committee set up to investigate what other universities were doing. I’ve seen some of that correspondence. Now some of the universities always had a Practice Plan. The University of Michigan for example. But a number of them, and I remember specifically Minnesota, initiated a practice plan when you began to have Blue Cross in 1953, 1954. Moulton said there was never any problem here until Medicare in 1967, but I don’t understand why all the other universities got bothered by this and Ohio State didn’t.
HOLSINGER: I don’t know. In fact, I don’t recall having any conversation about this at all. It never seemed to me to be an issue until it obviously became an issue and had been an issue.

UNDERWOOD: There must have been some thought in his mind that it was or was going to be an issue when he hired the St. Pierre Committee. I get no reading as to why.

HOLSINGER: I think it would be interesting to know, and I guess the person to answer this would be Nov, but whether or not some pressure was put upon him to appoint a committee like this, or whether it just came out of his knowledge of the situation.

UNDERWOOD: It’s hard to guess. I asked him one time about that but he kind of ducked it, which doesn’t say whether he avoided it because he did not want to get into the political fight or whether he didn’t think it was much of an issue. Because as I say, most of these practice plans date back into the 1950’s, except in the case of those who always had Practice Plans. Part of this is used I think so supplement their salaries, but he didn’t have anything to say about that.

HOLSINGER: Well of course one aspect of this is the tremendous number of clinical professors who were practicing. They came in with the Cooperative Extension people during the censure meeting.

UNDERWOOD: Nov said he didn’t have anything to do with this or did he even know it was going on.

HOLSINGER: I think that’s where the cooperative extension came in. I think Dick Meiling…

UNDERWOOD: Yeah, but I’m saying John sort of organized the whole thing.

HOLSINGER: I kind of have a feeling that, particularly because of his close friendship with John Prior, who was then associate dean. I have a feeling that was orchestrated. That’s pure guess.

UNDERWOOD: Kottman and Meiling would have joined in happily.

HOLSINGER: Somebody had to tell them what the problem was.

UNDERWOOD: You should talk a little bit more about student unrest. How was it handled? I guess what I mean by that is not just actual actions but I mean how did he respond personally to it?

HOLSINGER: I think personally he was very distressed by the whole thing. Of course I left the office in 1968 and we had had that was the first wave really. That wasn’t the big major one. That came in about 1970. But evening in 1968 we had a takeover of the
building and this sort of thing. I remember we set up a kind of command post in the old alumni house, which was right around from where Dulles Hall is right now.

---End of Side 3---

HOLSINGER: Fawcett was in Cleveland, and we called him and I recall that Jack Corbally and I, in our discussion, it was obvious that he building was going to be taken over. Jack and I decided to exchange lunch hours, and I said, “Well I’ll take the first one and you take the second one”, so I got out of the building, and Jack was in the building. I was over there in the so-called “command post” at the old Alumni House. From that time on, of course, it was a continuous period of unrest that would go all the way in the 1970’s until the university was closed down. Fawcett was greatly criticized for that. I don’t really know. I can’t make any judgement on whether that was the wise thing to do or not, but I think his personal feeling was that the inmates were kind of running the institution. He came through a rough period to get himself through school. He had kind of a feeling that students didn’t really appreciate that they were getting a good education and they had the facilities of the university.

UNDERWOOD: Do you have the feeling he felt they were a bunch of spoiled brats?

HOLSINGER: I sort of have that feeling. I have a feeling too that he had no sympathy for their causes. Certainly I’m not saying that he was for Vietnam, but I think that when the Gay Alliance came in he didn’t have much sympathy for the Gay Alliance, and I don’t think he had much sympathy for the strong women’s movement that came in at that time. Of course as a result of that, we really in sense changed the whole academic structure of the university, in that we now have Black Studies and Women’s Studies.

UNDERWOOD: I was going to ask you, what do you think of reaction to blacks, because in 1968, part of that was blacks, remember?

HOLSINGER: Yeah, the first floor was the whites. The second floor was the blacks. My impression at that time was that it was a much more violet demonstration than the 1970’s, even though I felt even when I got back in that building, I felt really physically endangered, and there were people like Gordon Carson, for example, who at that time was not in very good health. He was made to stand for hours at a time and the secretaries were maltreated. I somehow felt that, the 70’s, even though they were more boisterous, they were less dangerous. I felt a real sense of danger.

UNDERWOOD: I know how you feel because, I don’t know whether I could make the same comparison of 1968 to 1970, but I remember in 1968 there was this feeling of danger.

HOLSINGER: It was a feeling that anything could happen. I can’t really refrain from comparing it to the Shiite Muslim hostage thing. Of course that’s on a much greater scale, but they were willing to give up an awful lot to get what they wanted. I think that changed in the 1970’s, when there was more of a willingness to sit down and reason
together. I don’t think that was present in 1968. I think of the anger and there was that possibility of violence where people were really physically maltreated. It was frightening.

UNDERWOOD: I remember it, although I was not in the administration building at any time during the period. I was around. I stayed away from the building itself.

HOLSINGER: That was a very smart thing to do. I didn’t feel any great urgency to get back in myself (laughter).

UNDERWOOD: Do you have any feelings about how that all came about? It was the beginning of a black agitation. It seemed to me to catch everybody by surprise.

HOLSINGER: I think so, and I think the reason that that happened was because that was a period where a number of things came together. You had movements like Gay Alliance and you had movements like the strong women’s movement, and you had the strong black movement where the blacks were saying in effect, “It’s your fault.” Although you still sometimes hear this in rhetoric about this, they were saying it’s your fault that I’m suffering. I think maybe it was just a coincidence of all these things, which we should have been able to see as coming. And of course Vietnam. The attitudes of the government toward Vietnam. The demonstrations that we have now seem so piddly when you compare. There was not a day that went by without some event or rally on the Oval. They had blocks of people. Now they have 15 people. You’re almost tempted to compare it to the case in Skokie with the Nazis, where they came up, on a march in Chicago, and drew something like 26 people. I think the campus has changed so much. There’s no feeling of...

UNDERWOOD: I was going to say, devotion to causes.

HOLSINGER: No, no, it’s devotion to, I think Tom Wolfe called it the “me” generation and I suspect we’re still suffering from it.

UNDERWOOD: Well it seems to me they’re all very serious about, well, “I’m going to go out there and get to work, put my nose to the grindstone so I can make my little pot” and the grades are important and that sort of thing, which is sort of a throwback to the 1960’s. It may be more serious than the 1960’s were. There aren’t many legacies of demonstrations. You already mentioned the fact that the university has changed enormously; programs, the departmental structure of the university.

HOLSINGER: I think that if you look back at history at that point, we had the Department of Black Studies, Women’s Studies. I remember Jack Corbally left about that time and went on to Syracuse and really the same thing occurred there. Then he went on to Illinois and Illinois has faced the same kind of reconstruction where they have Women’s Studies and Black Studies. There’s still a lot of argument about whether they might not have been more logically budgeted under other of the departments. It wouldn’t
have satisfied them. I think certainly it would have changed the course of higher education.

UNDERWOOD: Will this structure stay or will we see another change as it neglects?

HOLSINGER: I don’t know. That’s a good question whether it will go back when there’ll be kind of a change back to the traditional university. I think you can begin to feel that already. I think there’ll be a change to a traditionally organized university. I think if anything now we’re going to see changes in the other direction, where we have, particularly the religious elements, where you have universities like Oral Roberts University for example. There’s a Catholic Evangelical University in Steubenville called St. Francis, which is a very Evangelical. That’s one of Father Berdilluchi’s moves. I think you’re going to see a lot of, and parents seem to be in favor of this, universities, which are stricter in the sense of alcohol and drugs and all of these things. Plus the fact that I think students have changed quite a bit. I think they’re more ready to accept that kind of…I’m not suggesting that the major universities will go in that direction, but I think they’ll go toward a more traditional structure.

UNDERWOOD: I have an impression, and I could be wrong, that the situation nationwide shows a decreased interest in Black Studies and Women Studies. I think there’s a place for them, but I should there be a separate department giving a degree program, is the question.

HOLSINGER: I think it is too. It’s kind of a feeling in general, and I detect this when I talk to other administrators, that there’s a feeling that there might not be quite the academic standards as the rest of the university.

UNDERWOOD: Okay, let’s wind up asking you, what would you list as you three greatest accomplishments?

HOLSINGER: I certainly think one is this issue of being the first program director of WOSU television. We did a lot at that time, a lot of action with the remote unit in which we did programs like Camera on Health, which highlighted the university’s hospitals and various things they were doing. I think being in on the very start of that educational television was the greatest accomplishments. I wish we did more productions of our own. There’s really only two stations in the country, WGBH in Boston and WNET in New York, which do a lot of private production.

UNDERWOOD: I’ve said to myself many times, what good does WOSU do for the university. All it does is cost money. They don’t anything. It’s as if OSU didn’t exist. It’s getting awfully strange because there’s all this contention with programming.

HOLSINGER: That’s it. We were doing that and I remember, I don’t know whether you remember Sam Saslaw, but Sam was head of Communicable Diseases at that time and we did an hour show, took our cameras into University Hospital at that time and talked about various things, and Sam for 8 years after that used that program as an instructional took
in classes. So we were maintained. We’d go over and spend a month in a hospital in a particular unit. The only one where I drew the line was the pathology department, to do one on post mortems and so on, and even though I was promised a nurse who would take notes and help, I think she was there to keep me from collapsing entirely. And then we did a program called, well we had a children’s program, which we did live. We had live news. In a way it’s like television in general. People are talking about now the Golden Age of Television. When Kraft Theatre and so forth were doing live productions, we were doing live theatrical productions. I think it was a much more exciting time, for me. I loved being in the heart of that, so that would be great accomplishment. I think certainly, administratively, my years with Fawcett and Corbally were accomplishments. Of course I look with a great deal of affection upon the support of the faculty, the dean, when I was acting director of the School of Journalism. I think that was for me an accomplishment. One of my great accomplishments then was getting Henry Schulte to head the Kiplinger program, because Henry really got that program going.

UNDERWOOD: There had been a lapse in getting control of the administration of it. In fact, from the Stuart Loory left until Henry came in, it was kind of a year-by-year thing, and that was too bad. All right, how about disappointments?

HOLSINGER: I think my greatest disappointment would be—you know I’d started as an assistant instructor and research associate in 1948, and I had been at the university for a long time, and I think the failure of the university to have any kind of recognition of what I’ve done has been a disappointment. I think that is a disappointment. I feel a second disappointment would be the failure on any level of using any of the knowledge that I have about the operation of the university, and having that kind of ignored.

UNDERWOOD: What would you see yourself doing, for example, so that you could be utilized in that fashion?

HOLSINGER: Well I don’t know whether I would be in any position to utilize it, but I think other people who are in other positions might utilized it, maybe in some advisory capacity.

UNDERWOOD: I see. Well that’s mainly what I meant. You see yourself as an advisor.

HOLSINGER: I don’t see myself as going back to administration. I suppose the other disappointment is that I don’t quite have the rewards of teaching that I’d like to have. I’m in kind of a rut now, teaching the same courses quarter after quarter after quarter. I think that’s kind of a disappointment. I know Jack Corbally, when I left his office, there was some debate. Bill Hall had just come in as director of schools. There was some debate about my going back, whether I’d like to go back to administration. Fawcett wanted me to stay. He said, “If you stay, John Mount has now left the Secretary ship of the Trustees. We think we could get that for you. Would you like it?” It was a period after all the student activism. A lot of that I had to take on myself. I had to meet student groups and so forth. I did make the decision to come back and teach again. I just feel
now kind of disappointed in the way the direction of the university is going. When I see lists of priorities, I see publications and research, and then teaching way down here somewhere. This bothers me, and I’m disappointed in the university on that score.

UNDERWOOD: Although I see it as sort of a natural development. It’s sort of happening everywhere.

HOLSINGER: Yeah, it is. I was talking to a colleague at Indiana University a couple of weeks ago. She was saying their tenure situation was almost impossible. They had cut so far back on tenure that there were so many departments that are over tenured that it’s much easier to get a promotion than it is to get tenure. I still would like to somewhere. I spent 12 years on the Worthington Board of Education. That was always a question, there you know, how do you evaluate teaching? I still think that’s the main function of the university. When you look at the master plan of the Board of Regents, I mean this university is a graduate center really. But nonetheless we are still teaching undergraduate courses. Graduate seminars are a little more rewarding…

UNDERWOOD: A little more rewarding, but also more work. I think the pleasure of things decreased by repetition of course, but it also decreases, as you get older. Things are not as great as they once were.

HOLSINGER: I had many other rewards. Certainly travel was a reward. I find increasingly I get more reward outside of the university than I do within. I think one of the things that’s happened to the university is we’ve become very much isolated. I don’t know people from the mathematics department or the Italian department, unless I just happen to meet them. We’re getting more inbred. If you go to the Faculty Club and talk with other faculty members, you don’t talk about your disciplines. You talk about insurance, benefits, retirement, all those things.