Q. This is the Ohio State University oral history program. This deposition is from Professor Jack Frymier of the College of Education. It is recorded on Friday, October 5, 2001. The recording is made in the conference room of the Ohio State University Archives on Kenny Road. The interviewer for this deposition is Robert Butche, Historian of the College of Education. Good afternoon, Dr. Frymier.

A. Good afternoon.

Q. Let’s begin by examining what drew you to an academic career in education so many years ago.

A. Well I’m not sure if I know. I graduated from high school in 1943 and as was true during the second World War, colleges and universities across the country were allowing people to enter college before they graduated from high school. And so I enrolled at Valparaiso University in the middle of my senior year, to major in chemical engineering. I liked chemistry in high school. At the same time, I enlisted in the Army with the promise that I would not be called up until the end of the academic year. So I started college in the middle of that year at Valparaiso. And I was majoring in chemical engineering and thinking that I wanted to study chemistry. Then when June came, I was called into the Army in 1943, went into the Army. Was in about three years. During the time that I was in the service, I became interested in teaching, primarily because I was a non-commissioned
officer. I was a private, a corporal, a sergeant, a staff sergeant, a tech sergeant, and a first sergeant. And during the last 1 ½ year or so in the service, I was overseas. A lot of the things that we were doing was training and toward the very end of the war, the last few months of the war, we moved to the front line while Germany was in the process of collapse. I was only minimally involved in hostilities. But a lot of the things that we were doing were training and a lot of that training required teaching, and as a non-commissioned officer, I decided at that time that maybe teaching would be a good thing for me to do. So when I came back from the service, (I left Europe in December, 1945. I got back the second or third of January in 1946. I got discharged) and when I started to college that fall, I decided that I was going to teach. And I’ve never regretted it. My decision really came from the Army, the kind of experiences I had in the Army.

Q. About how old were you when you started in the Army?
A. Well I was 18. I was 18 in March of 1943. I enlisted in the Army before that. And then I went in the Army when I was 18. I got out of the Army when I was not quite 21. I got out of the Army two or three months before I was 21. I was actually discharged in January of 1946. I would have been 21 in March of 1946. Well I was a whipper snapper.

Q. Where were you born and who was your family?
A. I was born in Albion, Indiana. My parents were both natives of that community. None of them had been to college. They were very supportive of me continuing my education. That was apparent even before I was in high school. They were
always talking about me going to college and so forth. So they were very, very positive in their support about me. But both sides of my family were born and raised in northern Indiana. And I was there until I was 18. When I left in 1943, for all practical purposes, I never went back. I went back for a few months after I got discharged. Well, I was maybe back in Indiana a year after I got discharged. And then I left. And in many ways, never went back until about 1984 or 1985. I was gone almost 40 years from Indiana before I went back. Now I’m back there and live there.

Q. You were born in 1925?
A. ’25. I was born in 1925.

Q. And you did not have a sense of an interest in education but rather of science?
A. I liked chemistry. I liked my teacher. My teacher of chemistry was a wonderful teacher, Mr. Ummell, in high school. We didn’t have a good experience. We didn’t have a lab. It was just studying kind of the theoretical aspects of chemistry, but I was fascinated with it. And I was attracted to that. And I don’t know why I thought about chemical engineering, other than the fact I had a good experience in high school. But the Army is clearly the thing that turned my attention to the possibility of teaching. I had had some wonderful teachers in high school and I had some wonderful teachers in college. And maybe as I went through college, that may have matured that idea. But I’ve never been sorry that I went into teaching. It was wonderful. In fact, I’ve always tried to stay in teaching. I’ve not been attracted to administration, although I’ve done that for a while. But teaching is the thing that was interesting to me always.
Q. And what was your own academic path in higher education and what degrees did you earn?

A. Well I kind of wandered around from pillar to post. While I was in the Army, in the fall of 1943, after I had finished basic training, I was sent to West Virginia University, again to study engineering and I was a part of what was called an Army Specialized Training Program, ASTP. I was at West Virginia two quarters. I got sick while I was in West Virginia; I had Scarlet Fever and I didn’t finish the first quarter. But I was at West Virginia two quarters and then in March of 1944, the ASTP program was disbanded, at least all of those of us that were there were sent to regular Army forces and I went overseas with the transportation corp. And I landed in England, not in France, but I landed in England on D-Day. Actually landed on, I think, it was June 5. We landed at Glasgow. We went overseas on the Queen Elizabeth. We took a train overnight down to Bath, England and we got to Bath, England about 4:00 in the morning of June 6. I think it was June 6. It was the first day of the invasion. The skies over England were just filled with thousands and thousands of airplanes. I’ve never before or since seen so many airplanes. I was in England about a month and then I went to France and then I was in the Transportation Corp. Then in France, after the Battle of the Bulge, I was sent to the infantry as a replacement and I joined the 106th Division. That regiment had been decimated in the Battle of the Bulge, so we had training during, I don’t remember the months exactly, but during January and February. And then in March, we were sent to the front line. But by March, 1945 the Germans defeat was assured and all that we were engaged in were kind of
mopping up operations. Then I stayed there. We were then scheduled to go to Japan. I was transferred to another infantry regiment and then we were in training for Japan when the war ended in Japan. Then in a couple of months I was shipped home.

Q. And you were interested in education and what institutions of higher education did you later attend and what degrees did you take?

A. Well, I started out in Valparaiso when I was in high school. I went to West Virginia University while I was in the Army. When I came home, I went back to Valparaiso for one semester and then I got married. My wife and I got married in August, 1947, I guess it was. And then I went to Indiana University extension in Fort Wayne for 1 ½ years. We lived in a house trailer. It got terribly cold one winter and we said, “Let’s just take the house trailer and go south.” We went to the University of Miami. I actually graduated from the University of Miami, although I just went there my senior year. I stayed and did a Master’s at the University of Miami, then started a doctoral program at Indiana University in 1950, but got called back into the Army when the Korean War started. Then I ultimately went to the University of Florida in 1954 and finished my Doctorate in 1957. Those are the academic institutions.

Q. Were curriculum studies part of your doctoral work at the University of Florida?

A. They were very much. I had had experience with Bill Alexander at the University of Miami. Bill was a very prominent person in the field of curriculum and I had some very good coursework with him. And I got interested in curriculum. I’m not quite sure why unless it was just Bill and the way he went about things. So I went
from the University of Miami. In 1954 I signed a contract to teach with the Dade County Public Schools, and that summer Bill Alexander, who was half time with the University of Miami and half time with the Dade Public Schools, had arranged for a teacher workshop for the Dade county teachers. I took that workshop. In that workshop, I met Clara Olson, who was a Professor of Education at the University of Florida. And I met Earl Kelley, who was Professor of Education at Wayne State University. Those people encouraged me right then to go on and do my doctoral work. I thought about going to Wayne State, but I actually wound up going to the University of Florida for my Doctorate and was very much interested in that point forward in curriculum activity. And so that’s where my interest really sharpened. I had an introductory experience with Bill Alexander and had some little work while I was in Miami, but the only intensive experience I had was at Florida.

Q. What was your doctoral dissertation?
A. My doctoral dissertation was a study of aural perceptions of authoritarians and non-authoritarians in two different cultural situations. I studied high school kids from the heart of Detroit and high school kids from northern Alabama, all rural, and the way in which they perceived sounds. My dissertation as modeled in a sense after Earl Kelley’s book Education for What is Real, which was a study of the way in which previous experience affects visual perception. And so my dissertation was a study of the way in which previous experience affected auditory or aural perception. I worked with Art Combs who wound up being the director of my dissertation. Clara Olson took a Fulbright and went to India for a
couple of years and she was not there. So I worked with Art Combs as my major advisor. He was a clinical psychologist who had just gone to the University of Florida and later became very prominent in ASCD and the President of ASCD and very active in curriculum from a psychological perspective. So, my dissertation was a study in psychology. It was a study of high school kids from very different cultural backgrounds.

Q. Researchers in the history of education at Ohio State will be very familiar with the name of Boyd Bode, who came south and was at the University of Florida. Was he there during your term and did he have any influence on you?

A. He was there at the University of Florida while I was there. I did not know him or I did not see him. I don’t know if he was an invalid, but he was confined I think to bed much of that time. The year before I got there he had held seminars. He lived with his daughter who was a Professor in the College of Education of the University of Florida, Eleanor Brown, and he was at her home and he had conducted some seminars for graduate students the year before I got there. He was still alive when I was there. There were seminars and I did not ever meet him. I knew his daughter and I knew his grandson, who was a high school student at that time. But I never met Professor Bode. I always thought Boyd Bode was the shaping influence at Ohio State when I got there in 1962. It was obvious to me that his influence was the dominant influence which was still felt throughout the College of Education in the early 60’s at least. And I always felt that I knew him but I never met the man.
Q. After completing your doctoral work you became engaged in teaching in administration again. How about those years? Where were they?

A. I left the University of Florida and I accepted a job at Temple University in Philadelphia. I was there two years. My wife was not enthused about Philadelphia, the big city. Vince Hines at the University of Florida had recommended me for a position at Auburn University. The Dean at Auburn University called and asked me if I would be interested in working there. And at the time it seemed an appropriate step. I had only been at Temple two years. I went to Auburn University and was only there one year. I don’t think I was ever really comfortable at Auburn. Auburn was, I don’t know what the right word is, but it was much too conservative for me. 1954 was the year the Supreme Court decision about desegregating schools. I went there in 1960 I think it was and the impact of the desegregation and the segregation decision and the negative attitudes towards the federal government was very, very strong. And I was not ever really comfortable at Auburn University. That first year that I was there, the Superintendent of Schools from Orange County Florida came to Auburn and asked if I would be interested in the possibility of working in public school administration in Orlando. I went down for an interview, was offered the job, and finally accepted that job, having been at Auburn just one year. I then worked for two years in Orlando in public school administration as Director of Instruction. I forget the exact title. But in the school administration. The school district was a large district that had almost 70,000 students at that time, 85 schools, a big urban district. But it was a county district. It was not urban in the sense that Cincinnati,
Columbus or Cleveland are urban, but because Florida districts were country districts, it was a big district. But it didn’t have all the urban characteristics. That was before Walt Disney moved to Orlando and it was before all that phenomenal growth and development that occurred later there. From Orlando, I was asked to come to Ohio State for an interview. I had decided that I was uncomfortable in Florida. I’ve always been uncomfortable in many southern states, although I lived for over 15 years in the south, all put together. But many of the southern states were simply too conservative for me. And conservative in the sense that they, for my values, wanted to uphold traditions that I didn’t think should be upheld. I remember being one time at a high school in Sylacauga, Alabama and somebody said something to me and I said, “Are you uncomfortable with the Supreme Court decision?” And this guy said, “I’m not in favor of segregation, I’m in favor of slavery.” That was tough talk to me. The south has always, from my standpoint, been too conservative. Whether it’s called Democrat or Republican is beside the point. Southern states are very, very conservative and that’s always been very difficult for me to cope with. So I was ready to leave Orlando and I decided to leave, although I hadn’t decided to leave in 1962. But I got a letter from Ohio State asking me to apply for a position. I did that. I came to Columbus, was interviewed, was offered the position and I accepted the position, resigned and left Orlando. I had meant to stay another year or two because I thought it was very important for me to have that kind of experience. But the job at Ohio State was very attractive to me, even though I came for $3,000 less salary than I was
making in Orlando. And in those years that was not a lot of money. But I’ve never regretted the decision to come to Ohio State.

Q. Let’s explore now some of what happened to you in Orlando and the impact it had upon your career.

A. Well, I had never been a school administrator and Orlando was a big district. It was a very fast growing district. It had all the problems of growth and none of the problems of stagnant action. And so everything was exciting. They were building new schools and people were moving in and there was a lot of development and there was a real concern about making the schools better. Martin Marietta had a big plant there and they were very supportive of public education. There was tremendous opportunity for me. I became very deeply involved in curriculum development. Established a county-wide systematic approach in which we established curriculum councils and every school in the district was involved, and every principal was involved and there were teachers from every school that were involved and there were parents from every school that were involved. And it was a marvelous experience for me to work directly with both teachers and administrators and also with parents across the county in curriculum development activities. I had always been interested in research and I argued in a policy position, which the Board adopted, to establish the curriculum council idea. I argued that curriculum involved what was taught and how it was taught, and that the important thing was to study things through research and to make recommendations for changes based on the research that we collected. And we did dozens and dozens of research studies. We studied class size and different
methods of teaching reading. We studied dropouts and we studied motivation and we studied the problems of migrant children. We studied lots and lots of things. My interest in research was what would probably be called an action research level, and I became committed to the idea of systematic change and improvement based on good information. And so what profoundly shaped my whole professional career was my experience in Orlando. There were things about Orlando that I was uncomfortable about. The superintendent, for example, was an elected official, and I was never comfortable with people who were running for office while they were trying to administer the schools. But Earl Kipp who was the Superintendent was a good person. He and I had our disagreements but they were not fundamental. And he was a good administrator and he was, in a sense, a skilled politician. But half his time was always cultivating votes and the other half was administering the schools. And that part was uncomfortable for me. I just never liked to mix politics and education. And that was ultimately the reason I decided to leave Orlando. And I knew that I was committed to the university. University life, I had had a little bit of experience in it, and universities are very important to me and I knew that I wanted to get back to university life. So I made that decision to move. But Orlando as an experience, working directly with hundreds of teachers and dozens and dozens of administrators and lots and lots of parents, had a profound influence on my life, for the rest of my professional career. Orlando was certainly a shaping experience in that way.

Q. When you came to Ohio State, it was during the latter part of the career of Dean Donald Perry Cottrell, who was Dean of the College of Education at a time when
it was the largest college on campus and had many departments and activities in it that are no longer part of the College. Many people think of that as the heyday. How did you feel when you came into Ohio State and found the complexity and breadth of this giant College?

A. Well, I don’t know. There had been a person in Orlando who was a graduate of OSU who was working in school administration and when he heard I was coming to Ohio State, he was very, very positive. He thought it was a great university. I had never been on the campus until I came for an interview. But he was very supportive. I came here in June, 1962 and I taught in the summer session. I was hired by the Department of Education which, in many ways, would have been the equivalent of what most people call School of Education or College of Education even at that time. But the Department of Education was the part that was committed primarily to public education. I don’t even know if I can remember them all, School of Music and School of Nursing and there were other units within the College of Education which had nothing to do with what I thought of as education.

Q. Psychology?

A. Psychology was there. I could understand the Psychology.

Q. Fine Arts?

A. Physical Education was there. Fine Arts. And I didn’t even think much about those. I didn’t have any contact. My contacts were with the Department of Education which is where Boyd Bode had been a member. Hank Hullfish had been a member. Harold Alberty had been a member. Laura Zirbes, in...
Elementary had been a member. And the Department of Education was a very, very strong department on the University. And I very quickly realized a lot of things about Ohio State within the first summer term that I taught. The first six weeks I guess it was or however long the summer term was then. I realized that Ohio State was a very mature institution. I had taught at Temple. I had been involved in some workshops and things at the University of Florida. I had done some teaching at the University of Miami. I taught at Auburn and I had some contact with universities. Ohio State immediately struck me, and the only word I can ever think to describe it, was a mature institution. Most of the places that I had been had spent much of their energy trying to prove that they were a great university. I was at Ohio State a month and I realized that just permeated the place and it was a great University. It didn’t have to spend any time proving that to anybody; it simply was a great University. And I realized that very, very quickly. And was very pleased to be here. I didn’t have much contact with Dean Cottrell. I had met him and so forth. But Earl Anderson had been the Chairman of the Department and then Ted Jenson became Chairman that fall when I came here; that summer, maybe Ted assumed responsibility. But Earl Anderson had been Chairman when I had come for an interview, probably in March of 1962. And my whole early contacts were with the Department of Education. And I was very impressed with the people. The department, I don’t know how many people there were in the department, I would guess 40 or 50, maybe more than that. And we met in department meetings. We would have a big group. And department meetings were very, I don’t know what the right word is, casual. They were very
democratic in the sense that everybody participated, things were voted on. There was a great sense of collegiality. There obviously were splinter groups that didn’t necessarily like what other splinter groups did in the Department. But that is true of academic life and that didn’t bother me. I was absolutely fascinated to be in the Department of Education and didn’t think much about the College. But then in a year or two, the idea that the University School should be abolished and the College reorganized began to percolate. And then I became both more interested and more involved in the College of Education as an organized entity.

Q. What were your experiences with the University School in that period?

A. Well, I don’t know that I had a lot of experience with them. Alex Frazier was the Director of it. My own children had been admitted that first summer we came, probably because I knew Alex, I don’t know, whatever. But anyway, we had two girls who were admitted as students. One was probably in the 5th or 6th grade and one was two or three years beyond that, 6th or 7th or 8th. And they were admitted to University School. And I had taught in University School at the University of Florida part of the time while I was working on my doctorate. I had some experience with University Schools and I liked my experience at the University of Florida. I thought it was an enriching experience for me and I thought the idea of having a laboratory to do research and to think out of the box, so to speak, was important. And so when the idea that the University School should be abolished, that didn’t ring true to me. I don’t think it was just because my kids were there, maybe that was part of the reason too. But I knew a number of people who had been teachers in the University School. Ralph Tyler used to talk about Bob
Havighurst who taught science there at the University School and Bill Van Til taught in the University School. And a number of very prominent University professors, and I remember saying to myself “Maybe it’s a good idea to have a University laboratory school if only as an opportunity for parents and people who later became outstanding professors.” I thought the people I just mentioned were absolutely outstanding people. I think the kind of thing that Bob Havighurst did in his life, mostly at the University of Chicago, were phenomenal. Bob Havighurst, I think his major was in physics. He wrote a college textbook in physics I think. I’m not sure about all that; I’ve heard Ralph Tyler talk about that. But I thought Havighurst was a very good person. And I thought the other people, Bill Van Til and many other people I had known, had worked at Ohio State University School. And if for no other reason, as a training ground for future professors of education, I thought it was important. That couldn’t be justified that way. But I thought the idea of the University School was good. So when the idea was made that we should abolish University School, it didn’t ring true to me. It didn’t make sense. My own experience had been very positive at Florida. What I knew about Ohio State had been very positive. I didn’t understand why they wanted to get rid of it. It didn’t make sense to me at all.

Q. When we look back at that era from the perspective of 2001, we can see that education was undergoing a dramatic change. After a couple of decades of relative stability, it was changing in ways that were surprising. For one thing, the progressive movement that had been so strong, appeared to be losing its zip in that era. But at Ohio State it was complicated by large numbers of the old family
leaving and lots of new blood coming into the College. Part of that new blood
were Professors Egon Guba and Associate Dean at the time, David Clark. What
are your recollections of that era and some of those people?

A. Well, Dave and Egon were powerful intellects. Very, very bright people. Dave
was a very dominating, powerful personality. His presence in a room was just
dramatic. Physically he was a big guy. Voice wise, idea wise, he was a very
powerful person. And in lots of ways I was attracted to those people. Egon was
Director of the Bureau of Educational Research and the Bureau didn’t teach
classes at that time. One of the first recollections I had was that Egon wanted
some of the people in the Bureau to teach. He wanted it possible for Edgar Dale to
teach classes in reading. And he wanted to do some teaching, but the Department
was very much against that. I didn’t understand all that at first. The people who
led the fight against Egon, in my judgment, were not the great strengths of the
Department of Education. I won’t say those names, but the people who didn’t
want them to teach, that didn’t ring true to me. I thought those people should
teach. So I was very much attracted to the possibility of being around those kind
of people. I didn’t know either one of them in terms of the writing and the
thinking they had done. And the more I got to know them, the less comfortable I
was with Dave and Egon. But at the same time I had great respect for them. They
were clearly influential people in the whole field of education around the country.
They were very good thinkers. The fact that they didn’t think exactly like I did
didn’t bother me. I’ve always thought a University ought to have room for people
who thought in all kinds of ways. That’s what makes it a universe of ideas. So that
wasn’t bothersome to me. And I had written a paper very early on, in 1963 I think, called *A One to One Relationship*, probably one of the most significant papers I ever wrote as far as I was concerned. It was never published and only a few people saw it. I sent a copy to a few people and I remember Egon wrote a very positive reaction to me about the paper and I hardly knew Egon. I just distributed a few by campus mail and Egon was very enthusiastic about the paper. And we then had a seminar that he organized around that paper, in which Ross Mooney and some other people were involved. So my first impressions of Egon were very positive in his intellectual ability. And that was true of Dave. But they were, both of them came out strongly, for abolishing the University School. And in that sense I was on another side of the coin. And I don’t think I realized it first. But I think later I came to conclude, perhaps erroneously, but I don’t think so, I came to conclude that they wanted the University School abolished so that they could have those lines on the budget to convert for more research. And they could hire people primarily as researchers. They wanted to emphasize the research aspect of the University. I was very interested in the research aspect of the University. I didn’t think of myself really as a researcher. I remember the last day I was at the University of Florida before I graduated, I had a conversation with Douglas Scates, who was a very prominent person in the field of educational research, and had worked at different places and had retired in Gainesville and wound up teaching there. Doug Scates was a very important person in my final year of working on my dissertation. He was very, very helpful to me. And I said to him when I finished, I said, “You know I think I should have majored in
“research rather than curriculum.” He said, “Well, no you’ve had some experiences here in research, but you can tie curriculum and research together.” So I was always interested in research. And when I got here, Dave and Egon were pushing that. That was a very attractive thing to me. And I didn’t see the machinations and political implications of the University School as a source of revenue to bolster the research thing. I never thought research required money. I think it requires a commitment. Money is not what makes research go; it takes a little money to make it go, but you give a University professor $3,000 or $4,000 dollars and a lightened teaching load and that’s all it takes. And Dave and Egon thought in bigger terms than that financially. They wanted big bucks to create a big University center. And that was not, but I think it took me a good many months to realize that they were proposing things that didn’t make any sense to me and I didn’t think they made any sense even in terms of emphasizing research in the University. It was not the way I would have gone about it. So we wound up being on opposite sides of that argument.

Q. Were you engaged in conversations with them on those issues in those years?

A. Not until what I came to think of as the Ramseyer committee was formed. I guess, in terms of things that I’ve heard from you and other people, that there was a committee in which Dave and Egon proposed that the University School be abolished and that report was accepted and the College would be reorganized somewhat that way. I literally don’t recall that. I remember when the decision was made to close the University School, and I was not happy with that. I thought the University School ought to have a laboratory. And during those months before
that, we had had a number of meetings in the University School cafeteria and I remember President Fawcett arguing that he thought a college ought to have a laboratory. And I remember Al Garrett arguing that he thought the College of Education ought to have a laboratory. And the idea of a laboratory was very important to the top level of the University administration, so I didn’t understand why the College thought it had to get rid of that. But Dave and Egon thought that and they were pursuing different paths than made sense to me. Well, later I just thought that was not the way to go about it. And I fought them in the Ramseyer committee, when the Ramseyer committee was formed, and I don’t know exactly what year that started, but it was a committee of 12, 14 people, I don’t remember exactly how many, that John Ramseyer chaired. It was a committee to reorganize the College of Education. And somewhere in there, Jack Corbally’s committee about reorganizing the University had begun to take steps that some of these, what I would call, non-education groups -- nursing and music and fine arts and some of those other groups -- would be assigned to other units, other colleges within the University. And what the College of Education got pared down to primarily what we think of as education, teacher education, public education notion. On the Ramseyer committee, we struggled to organize that. Dave and Egon were very prominent members of that committee. And several of us fought those two all the way through on that. We didn’t win that argument. Dave and Egon won the argument about how to reorganize the College of Education. They won the decision, but they lost the war. The decisions that were made there were poor decisions. The theoretical structure of the College of Education, with the School
of Education inside it, was not a good plan. I didn’t think it was a good plan at the time and I never did. So I wound up being very much in opposition to Dave and Egon throughout that entire committee activity, which was four hours twice a week for more than a year we spent arguing that through, and eventually the decision went Dave and Egon’s way. I thought it was wrong at the time. In middle of the thing, somewhere after we had gone five or six months, I remember going to talk to Nick Severino, who was the Associate Dean of the College, and said, “I’m not happy. I think I ought to quit this committee. It’s clearly doing things that I’m not comfortable with. There’s no reason for me to fight it. We’re not going to win that battle. The people who want to do it that way are going to do it.” And Nick said, “Well, if you want to do that, you can, but I think you ought to stay there and fight it out.” Well I did stay and fight it out. And in a sense, I don’t remember what the vote was when the vote finally came, but I was in the minority. There were clearly several of us who were on that side. It wasn’t a 90%, 10% vote. But the vote went the way Egon and Dave wanted it to go. And I was not comfortable with that. I was positive that wouldn’t work. We then had a series of meetings in the auditorium at the University School which were very acrimonious and very tough fought sessions. And many of those votes were very, very close. Dean Cottrell presided at that. And if you’ll pardon the language here, I’m going to be a bit obnoxious here on that, but a friend of mine who sat through that and later left the University, a friend of mine said he thought Dean Cottrell was magnanimous in that decision because he said, in effect, somebody argued to jam that idea up your butt. And the Dean said, “How far?” It was a very, very
tense series of meetings and the votes were almost always 45-55%, 49-51%. And people tried to accommodate. And in one of those meetings, Hal Reynard or somebody proposed that we accept the motion of the committee to establish a School of Education according to the plan that had been submitted by the committee and to appoint John Ramseyer as Director of the school. And that motion passed unanimously and went into effect. It was in that kind of a political milieu that the decision was made. Obviously the faculty’s decision wasn’t the final one. The University administrators and Dean Cottrell I’m sure had to sign off on that, but that’s the way it went. Those were very tough fought times. And I was on the losing side of all of those things. I was very uncomfortable about that, and I was positive the new organization wouldn’t work and it surely didn’t. It didn’t last more than a year or two.

Q. Did your experiences on the committee provide you an opportunity to engage in intellectual discussion with either Guba or Clark about their ideas? Why they felt that way?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you find merit or do you have a recollection of those discussions?

A. Well, first of all, the meetings intellectually were invigorating to me. I came out with some ideas that became very central in my own scheme of things. I wrote a book three or fours years later called *Fostering Educational Change*, which in a sense was a direct outgrowth of the intellectual combat that had gone on there for several months in that committee. And it became a very central part of my own thinking. So in that sense it was fun. It was intellectually exciting and
intellectually invigorating. And Egon and I, especially Egon and Dave and I all enjoyed the intellectual combat that went with it. That shaped much of the rest of my professional career in a theoretical sense. I came to understand, theoretically, the power of data as a way to make decisions. The book *Fostering Educational Change* was just a little book, just a simple idea, drew upon many experiences that I had had at Ohio State. Experiences that I hadn’t had. I just read about them. Experiences of the Board of Trustees of establishing the “speaker’s rule.” The experiences of when Jim Rhodes was elected governor and firing people, who had been hired in the last 90 days. The way in which politicians made decisions, not based on information, but based on political whim, I was further convinced of the absolute necessity of having good information. In education that means we need some kind of research and evaluation to generate data, and that school people ought to try to make decisions, not on political considerations, but on data-based considerations. That is very central to me and it still is. And it’s central even today. I think what’s going on in the accountability movement in general has been stupid stuff. It’s even evil. I think many of the things that are going on in American education today are because politicians are trying to make fundamental decisions about education which are based on political rhetoric and political considerations, rather than data considerations. I think in many ways what’s going on in America right now is equivalent of what went on in the United States from 1820-1860, when people tried politically to compromise slavery, but slavery was evil and it couldn’t be compromised. I think what’s going to go on right now and probably for the next 10 or 15 or 20 years will be discussion of accountability and
people are trying to make political concessions and make political compromises on something which is not compromisable. You cannot, by my values, you cannot compel children to go to school by law and punish them if they fail or punish their parents if they don’t succeed and guarantee that huge proportions of those children shall fail in school. That’s immoral. And that’s exactly what the accountability movement is today. And that, all my own thinking about that, grew out of a lot of things, but was really put in focus by the conflict that I had intellectually with Dave and Egon on that committee to reorganize the College of Education.

Q. This is the Jack Frymier deposition. This is tape 1, side A. This is the end of this side.

Q. This is the Ohio State University oral history program deposition of Jack Frymier. This is tape 1, side B, recorded Friday, October 5, 2001. So after having had these intellectual discussions and I suppose, even more so with David Clark, you formed opinions that have lasted you a lifetime. Did you ever have occasion to speak to either one of them after that and to learn what, if any, impact those events had on their lives?

A. I don’t think I ever talked with Egon about that. Dave went to Indiana University shortly after as Dean and then he asked Egon to come with him. So I never saw them very often. I met, I guess by accident, I met Dave Clark, I think it was in November 1983, in a restroom in a hotel in Indianapolis. Ted Bell had convened what he called the National Conference on Excellence in Education, or something like that, and President Reagan was going to speak. It was a two day conference.
I was at the meeting and I had gone to the restroom in the hotel, and Dave was there. Dave joked about he and I always meeting in the restroom when we were on that committee back at Ohio State years before, and he said, “Let’s go have a cup of coffee.” So I went and had a cup of coffee and we wound up talking for two or three hours. I talked with Dave about that at length on this one occasion.

As we had coffee, Dave started off by saying, “Do you remember that committee to reorganize the College we had. You and I often disagreed about this?” I said, “Do I remember that? For goodness sake. You and Egon crucified me every time I was there, everyday, hours and hours a week. How could I ever forget that? It was a profound experience for me.” And he said, “Well, I just wondered. You and I were on different sides of the issue.” Of course, that had been the most memorable thing about the experience for me. And I said, “Of course.” Well he said, “You and I disagreed. I just wondered if you had a theoretical rationale for what you believed at the time?” I said, “No, I didn’t have any theoretical rationale. It was just a gut feeling. What you proposed did not make sense to me and what I was advocating was a better solution. But I didn’t have any theoretical rationale. And Dave simply said, “Well, that’s interesting. That was more than 20 years ago or about 20 years ago. I just wondered. In the last 20 years, I’ve come to the conclusion that you were right and I was wrong. I just wondered if you realized what rationale you were employing.” And I said, “No, I didn’t realize what rationale I was employing.” He, in a sense, admitted that from his perspective, and he said this out of the blue and I was really surprised. Very interesting conversation. I had seen Dave several times at AERA and so forth over
the years since then and we’d always been congenial and talked, but we had never been very close. And I was fascinated by his comments. But that’s the only conversation I ever had with either one of them.

Q. As a historical mark for researches who come across this material, David Clark also spoke of his change of heart on these matters in an interview with me for a book published in 2000, Image of Excellence. And researchers may find additional materials there.

A. That’s interesting, good.

Q. One of the people who had come on early in the College of Education at a very young age was John Ramseyer, who by the 1960’s had been around for quite a few years and was well known. What are your recollections of John Ramseyer when you first met him and as you came to know him at Ohio State?

A. Well, I can’t remember the first time I really got to know him. I liked him. Everybody spoke very positively about John. John was clearly a very, I want to use the world influential, but he was not influential in the way that Dave Clark was with the power of ideas. John was, I don’t know what the term is, but he was more of a people-centered person than an idea-centered person. He was a good thinker and had done some wonderful writing and very provocative stuff. But I was not in school administration and had not read the book that he and Corbally and other people put together. But I liked John very, very much. And everybody liked John. I never saw anybody who didn’t like John. Maybe there were such people but I never knew them. He was a very warm, accepting person. My first really telling experience with John came - I had been at Ohio State probably a
couple of years, I don’t remember when or how long it was - and the Dean of Kent State University called and asked me if I would go up there for an interview about being an Associate Dean at Kent. And I went and had the interview and came back. At the time I was on a committee with John Ramseyer. I think it was called the Research Committee of the Department of Education probably. John and I were on that committee and when I came back, the Dean at Kent had asked me if I would accept the job and I said I’d think about it. When I came back I talked with John about it and John says, “Let’s go over to the Faculty Club and have lunch and we’ll talk about it.” So we went to the Faculty Club. The Faculty Club was a very important part of the whole College of Education at that time, very important part. (Golly me, that’s a whole story in its own right.) But we went to the Faculty Club and John and I sat at the table just for two. Not the big table where people join others, but we had a private conversation for probably a couple of hours. And I told John that I had been offered the job as Associate Dean at Kent and I really wasn’t enthused about that. I knew that I wanted to be a professor. I didn’t want to be an administrator. I’ve done a lot of administrative things in my life and I think I do them reasonably well. But it’s not where I get my satisfaction. My simplistic way of putting it is that administrators deal with other peoples problems, and professors deal with their own. And in a sense I think I’m selfish in that respect. I like to deal with my own problems. I’m not very good at helping other people solve their problems. And John was exactly the opposite. John was superb at helping other people solve their problems. And in this discussion with me about my problems, should I go to Kent, he was very,
very supportive of me as an individual. He said, “Well, if you want to go to Kent and be Associate Dean, you’ll be very successful at that. You’ll be successful at whatever you want to do. If you want to be college president, you can be successful. He said, “You’re a very good person, you’re going to be very good in university life. Personally I think you’d be a great professor.” And he said, “You’ll be successful in whatever you want to do.” And I said, “Well I don’t really want to be an administrator. I want to be a professor.” He said, “If you stay at Ohio State you’ll be a great professor. This will be a wonderful opportunity.” But he was not trying to force my decision; he was just trying to help me think it through. But he was very positive to me about myself and the things I could look forward to in the future as a professional. He was very positive. That was the first time that I really had had that kind of interaction with John. So I came to feel very positively about John. And Ohio State quickly, well not as a result of that, but Ohio State had in many ways had -- I don’t know what the right term is -- embraced me or allowed me to do my thing or whatever it was. Had been very, very supportive of almost everything that I had been involved in professionally, whether it was speaking around the country or working with teacher groups in Ohio or whether it was writing or whatever. Ohio State had always been supportive of that. If I wrote an article, I got a letter from the Dean or something. I always heard about things. They were very supportive and I just began to develop an allegiance to the University, even in those very early years, and John simply cemented that allegiance by personally saying some positive things about me. And I felt that way until the day I left. The last year or so I was here I was
somewhat disillusioned, but only with people in administrative roles at that time. That wasn’t the reason I left either, but the University was a wonderful place for me. It supported me, it nurtured me, it gave me credit and recognition, it gave me latitude and freedom. It did lots and lots of things, and I could not ever have imagined a more wonderful place in which to work than Ohio State University.

Q. John Ramseyer had been a Director of University School early in his career here at Ohio State. And his ideas were that the University School was an integral part of the mission of the College of Education. That a laboratory was an essential instrument. When you were advocating maintaining University School, were those the kinds of thoughts that were behind your thinking. Did you see it as an instrument essential to the College?

A. Absolutely. As I said, I taught in the University School, laboratory school at the University of Florida, and it had been very important for me. And I had done things there, because it was a lab school of a research nature, and I thought it was important for me as an individual to have that kind of research experience. I was very conscious that you couldn’t do that kind of thing as easily in a public school. So, I went to Ohio State not thinking so much about the University School in that way, but that had been very much a part of my thought process while I was in Gainesville, and I simply took it for granted that that was an important element of a College of Education in the University. So the idea that you described that John held was one that I held from my own experience at a lab school and I didn’t get it at Ohio State. I got it before I got there, but the fact that John felt that way was absolutely consistent with my own thought processes. And I still think laboratory
schools are very important. They’ve been done away with almost everyplace and partly because people in education are not as research oriented as I think they ought to be. So many people just think of them as good schools for the faculty kids and so forth. I think it’s imperative that people in University Schools think research, do research, try things out. I did many things at the University of Florida which were very much in that direction and, although they were not great research studies, they were clearly in that direction. And I published some research before I got my doctorate because I was in that kind of a milieu. I published more than a dozen articles, not all research articles, but I published more than a dozen articles before I got my dissertation, before I did my dissertation, before I became really active in University life. And the lab school experience was part of the support of that. So I was very much on John’s side in that kind of an argument. I think John’s ideas were right and I think it was wrong for us to get rid of the lab school. Dave went to Indiana and he abolished that lab school. Dumb, dumb idea. Dave’s idea was to get a lot of research money from the federal government and then do special projects. Have people on soft money; that’s a dumb notion. It doesn’t integrate it into the operation of the institution. It doesn’t get the institution to commit its own resources to research. Many universities … one of the generalizations that came to me in all those years was that many universities are willing to let professors of education do research if they can get somebody else to pay the bill. The mission statement of Ohio State University is teaching, service and research. It seems to me that a university should schedule people for research, just like it schedules people to teach. Just like it schedules people to do service.
For example, the Bureau of Educational Research and Service, which Egon and Ross Mooney and Edgar Dale and other people were involved in was a financial commitment on the part of the University to do it. Egon’s idea that we didn’t need a Bureau was probably correct, and if we could have woven those ideas of research into the Department of Education, and I know that was what Dave and Egan were trying to do, but I think they went about it in a very rough handed way. But I think it’s imperative for College of Education people to engage in research and to do research and to be research-oriented, to think that way. And a lab school is simply a vehicle to expedite that process sometimes, not always. In fact, probably not most of the time. Most of the time I think we ought to do our research with the public schools. But in a university setting, you can help people learn to think that way. They can get relatively small experiences working on research. For example, the first studies that I did at the University of Florida involved acceptance and rejection of students in the school in terms of the kinds of experiences they had had before they came to the lab school. And I remember working with, I forget the guy’s name now, a statistician at the University of Florida, Corwin or something like that. Barney Corwin. And I remember him working with me on analysis of variance to try and analyze some of those data. I think it was important at that time as a high school teacher in a laboratory school to study and research with the professor of statistics, and that was an important thing as a part of my own professional experience. I know that it profoundly affected the rest of my life because I was in the lab school. And I think lab
schools are very important. And John’s belief on that matter was absolutely correct. And Dave and Egon were flat out wrong.

Q. Not many years after you served on the committee, John Ramseyer died of a heart attack. He left behind a legacy at this University that was to some degree intellectual and academic and certainly for his collegiality in being able to work with others. But Ramseyer’s most unique gift was his ability to bring people together and reach consensus. Do you have recollections of that?

A. Well, that’s what our work was on this committee, which he chaired and which went against my judgment about the reorganization of the College. And John was naturally superb in that respect. I remember John said to me one time, I guess it was probably in the conversation he had with me about going to Kent State as Associate Dean. He talked about how important the University was to him. And he said he’d been to a basketball game in which his son played (and I think it was in Grove City or someplace. I’m not quite sure where, South-Western School District, in which he had had a heart attack), and he’d passed out while his son was playing basketball. He passed out and he’d gone to in the University Hospital. And the University people in the College of Medicine saved his life. And he said, “This University saved my life, and I’m going to give my life to the University.” And John was deeply dedicated to Ohio State. More so than any person I’ve ever, ever known. And probably because of that personal experience, but he certainly was a remarkable person in a leadership sense to bring people together. He was just uncanny at that. Very, very good.
Q. Part of that legacy of that decision-making process was a split in the College, a split that put former allies against each other in some ways. You worked to correct that problem by organizing the Lake Hope Conference, which would be held after Cottrell had retired and then the first year of the new dean, Luvern Cunningham. What are your recollections of putting the Lake Hope Conference together and what are your views of its accomplishments?

A. Well, I don’t remember all that history exactly, but I know that we’ll go back to the Ramseyer committee first. On the Ramseyer committee, as I said, we made the decision to organize the College of Education in a way that in my judgment was theoretically flawed. It was based on the matrix idea in which you had vertical responsibilities and horizontal responsibilities, but loyalty doesn’t run two ways. It just doesn’t do that. And that was the reason I thought that would fail, even though lots of people in organizational theory propose those kinds of ideas. So John became director of a school of education which I thought was theoretically flawed. I did not play any kind of an administrative or leadership role in that new school. They had -- my recollection was that it had three vertical axis -- a teacher education axis, a service axis, and a research axis. And it had horizontal axis which were elementary and secondary and administration and different kinds of things. As I said, I thought that was wrong. It was wrong because I didn’t think it would work. And it didn’t work very well. And John was remarkably able. The administrator was not comfortable with it. He was, as I said, voted in almost unanimously by the faculty at that special meeting in the auditorium in the University School which Hal Reynard had proposed that as a
motion. And that had become fact. But, John, I don’t think, was ever enthused about that thing. He tried to make it work, but it didn’t work. And so very early on the idea of thinking through the organization of the College and the School of Education again came to be. And I was at that time, I must have been what would have been a faculty council or something, I’m not sure, the policy-making group inside the College of Education. I was a member of that. Maybe in the School of Education. And John was probably chairman of that. And somehow or other I was very active in the rethinking again of organizational things. In general, I think that’s a rotten way for a professor to spend their time. I don’t think professors ought to spend an awful lot of time thinking about how things ought to be organized. Organization is generally a secondary consideration. We worked ourselves into a negative corner of a box on this last reorganization we’d done. And we just spent an inordinate amount of time thinking about that. We should have been thinking about what we were teaching and working on, writing and research. But in many ways we wasted our time. I don’t say waste because I just said a little while earlier that much of that time was very important for me personally, and maybe that’s a useful way to think about it. But in general to ask people to spend their time reorganizing is a waste of time. Lots of administrators do that because they want to upset the apple cart, get things their own way, and constantly have to have new people in positions and new structures. I think generally I’m antithetical to reorganization. But somewhere or other in that first year or two, after John became Director of the School of Education, I was involved on the committee to re-think that again and what we ultimately came to
call the Lake Hope Conference. My recollection was that I was Chairman of that group. I may not have been; I may have just been my usual dominating self. But in fact I think my own files for that, which are considerable, with all that reorganization stuff are in the archives here somewhere. Desmond Cook borrowed them once or twice and gave them back to me I know. I’m sure they must be in the archives here because I don’t have them at home. So there’s probably more specific stuff that’s included there. But in planning for the Lake Hope Conference, I can’t remember who all was involved. Bob Howe was and there were some other people. But I remember we went down to Lake Hope as a committee and looked at the facilities and checked out the buildings and what would be involved before we went there. And we put together a package, basically of simulations to go through and to encourage people to think what kind of organizational arrangement would be the best. My whole thought process involved in that, whether I served as Chairman of the committee or not was not important, I think I pushed these ideas hard in that process. My process was we ought to organize a way that made sense to the people involved, not to look good on paper. Not that it sounded right theoretically. But it was important for the people that were involved. And so we went to Lake Hope for three days, I think we were there probably two nights, I can’t remember exactly how long it was. Wonderful setting in this time of year, October I think it was. And Vern had been on board just a couple of months. And we had three different kind of simulation. One simulation was structured around what I would call vertical organization. A term that is used sometimes in curriculum in which you think of an organization
on the elementary school, and the secondary school, and administration and higher education. And the simulation exercises were organized that way. The other one was one based on horizontal organization which was based around the subject matter fields in which you would have mathematics education and English education, social studies education and guidance and counseling. And so we spent one day with a series of exercises, activities in which people were put in groups and they were asked to role play for several hours a way of thinking about problems, they were realistic problems, about course changes or approvals or research that might be done or projects that might be undertaken. And they would think all day that way and then we would spend that evening evaluating it. And the next day we would think with the other axis. First, we did vertical organization on the first day. And then the second day we did a horizontal organization. And the third day was open. We did a funny thing, and in some ways it goes back to my experience I just recounted about my work when I was a lab school teacher at the University of Florida. I had read a lot of research in sociometric journals and studies of what people liked or disliked about other people those years. I read a lot of that sociometry stuff. And we decided on that third day to allow people to affiliate with people they thought they would be comfortable working with in a professional context. And so we had a number of people who simply had tall poles with big placards on the top which said room number. Meet in this room or meet in this room. And graduate students took those and went out there -- and a lot of graduate students were involved in this experience. A lot of people went out there. These graduate students went
outdoors and stood around ten or fifteen feet apart with these signs which said room number 107, room number 203, so forth. People were told back in the building, all the professors were told, “We want you to go out there and form a group of people that you would like to work with in this new college. Who do you want to work with? Who do you want as professional colleagues? Who do you want to affiliate with? Who do you like to think of as people who would be stimulating and interesting for you to work with and you might be helpful to?” But this was basically a kind of a social exercise. And they went out there and they milled around for a while. I literally don’t know how long, but I think it probably took the better part of an hour anyway for people to finally sit down together. And then that group of people came back together as a group and I don’t remember how many groups there were. But there were probably eight or ten or twelve groups that came back in and they all went to those rooms. And as I recall, another kind of simulation activity that they went through as a new group. That may not have been quite right. But they got together as a group and began to think of themselves as a group and to give themselves a name as a group, a label for themselves. What would it be? We decided not to call ourselves department, but we decided to all ourselves faculties. By calling ourselves faculties we thought, and Vern was very instrumental in this approach too, he thought lateral movement. If a first fit didn’t work, maybe in six months a person would say, “I really need to be with these other people.” We thought people could move laterally from one group to another. So we adopted the notion of faculties. People joined together in what made sense as a personal and professional affiliation, kind
of a sociometric level. And we started the college that way. When we got back to
campus, there was a tremendous amount of excitement and enthusiasm. Not
everybody was behind it, but my recollection was that a lot of people were very
happy about that. It immediately became apparent that some fits were not perfect
and people needed to slide sideways into another group. And during that first
several months some of that went on. And then finally little combinations became
bigger combinations. But I don’t know the exact time table, but I want to say for a
year and a half or so we continued to kind of informally reorganize and find our
place and to settle in to what seemed to be a real working group. And that was the
way in which the organization went as a result of the Lake Hope Conference. I
thought, as a person who both participated in and had a responsibility in it, I felt
very good about it. And I think most of the College felt good about it when they
came back. We then developed a kind of a formal structure for that, wrote it out,
and I had a lot of responsibility for that writing because I was on the faculty
senate or whatever it was called at the time. And we simply used the pattern of the
federal government of a legislative, and executive and judicial thing. We
established a group of policy makers. We established a group of executive
people, the chairman of the departments. And we established a quasi-judicial
operation that we called accountability committee or review committee or
something. And it was simply a paraphrasing of the federal constitution and I
think there was some intellectual enthusiasm among a fair number of people about
the way in which we came together and started together. And of course Vern’s
leadership style, and Vern was a Dean at that time, and made things operate in
lots of ways, was like John Ramseyer, very much a people oriented thing. And Vern was very, very good at bringing people together and getting people to talk things out and stimulating them with new ideas and stuff. And during the years that I was Chairman and Vern as Dean and I’m not exactly sure, he took a year off and went to Stanford I think for a while, so he wasn’t always in the role of Dean. But I think I was Chairman six or seven or eight years, I forget how long it was. But we then settled into a scheme that we stayed with for a fair number of years and I thought worked reasonably well.

Q. The Vern you have been speaking of is Luvern Cunningham, who became Dean of the College in 1967. And for whom the Lake Hope Conference was his very first official activity. What did you make of this new Dean from the University of Chicago at the time?

A. Well I didn’t know much about him. I had been on the Committee to search for a Dean. Arliss Rhoden was Chairman of that Committee. I had been on that Committee and we had gotten Vern Cunningham to come. I may not tell this story quite right but I think it’s an interesting story and I may have told it in the earlier deposition but I think it’s an important story. And if I’m not telling it quite right, Arliss could correct it or Vern could correct it. When the Committee, we reviewed a lot of people, when we came to the conclusion that we ought to get Vern Cunningham as Dean, we met with President Fawcett in his office to give him our report. And we had one name to recommend and that was Vern Cunningham. We didn’t give him a slate. We recommended Vern. And Arliss was saying this. Arliss was the architect. It was Arliss’ idea that we do this. It
wasn’t mine. I don’t remember all of the people who were on that Committee. Maybe Naomi Allenbaugh was on that Committee. The fellow that later died from educational administration that really alarmed me I think was on that Committee (Roy Larmee). I forget who all it was. But we thought Vern Cunningham would be a good person. I didn’t know him personally. Several people did know him. I didn’t know him personally. We read some of his stuff and we were excited about Vern. We went to meet with President Fawcett and we said, “We would like to suggest that you hire Vern Cunningham as our new Dean.” And President Fawcett said, “Well, why don’t you invite him down here and we’ll interview him and we’ll see if we like him. And if we do we’ll offer him the job.” And Arliss said, “No, that’s not the way to do it. We want you to get in the University airplane and fly to Chicago and pick him up and offer him the job while you’re in Chicago. And bring him back here and persuade him that he should come.” And Fawcett said, “I’ve never done that. That doesn’t sound like a good idea. If he’s a man he ought to want to come here and apply and take the interviews and stuff to go with it.” And Arliss said, “No, you don’t get good people that way. If you want really a top notch person, he’s not going to apply for the job and go through what we think of as competition for that job. He’ll only come if you offer him the job and persuade him to come.” Well, we finally convinced Fawcett that that was the way to do it. I don’t know exactly the process but they got a University airplane and flew to Chicago and they got Vern Cunningham and brought him back and offered him a job and he took it. And Fawcett later said to me, told me personally, “I’ve hired every single Dean on this campus now in the years that
I’ve been here. That was absolutely the best process that we’ve ever used. That was a marvelous process. Vern Cunningham is a wonderful person and I’m glad we got him.” So I think Fawcett felt good about the process. Vern came with great support from the University and a wholehearted support of at least a few people in the College of Education have been through that process on the Dean’s search committee, and he quickly won the hearts of lots and lots of people. Vern’s a very special guy, a remarkable person and he won lots and lots of people, both by his ideas and by his intellectual stimulation. His propositions that he kept putting forth to people and by his style of work which was very collegial and very supportive, etc. I think later I came realize that in many ways Vern’s probably a wonderful Dean in the period of growth and possibility. I don’t think Vern liked to deal as an administrator with problems of enrollment and decline I don’t think many administrators do. But I think several years later when the problem of growth, the damper on that, there were not as many people coming, not as many people we were hiring, and other things. In many ways, Vern’s enthusiasm may have diminished. But that’s from a distance. I never talked to Vern about that directly. But I think he was a great Dean and great periods of dynamic development of ideas and of people and the programs and of numbers. Vern was absolutely phenomenal in that role. And I felt very privileged to serve as Chairman of the Department of Curriculum Foundation, what we called faculty of curriculum and foundation, during that period, it was a great growth experience for me. And Vern was, during all the years that he was Dean, he was very, very supportive of me. I remember making a speech once in Fresno, California and I
sent a copy of the speech which had been printed afterwards, and I sent a copy to Vern, he was so enthused when he wrote back and he was just always supportive of me as an individual. But I know he was that way with everybody else in the College. He was a great person, I think. Great person.

Q. Researchers interested in pursuing this issue further, the hiring of Dean Cunningham, will find additional support materials in the oral history of Dean Cunningham, which is part of this oral history program at Ohio State. Additional materials will be found in the oral history of Jack Corbally, who speaks extensively on this issue in his oral history at Ohio State, and in the Corbally papers that are in the manuscript section of the archives at the Ohio State University. The period we’ve been talking about was a period of great change. We had engaged in a war in Vietnam and social patterns were changing, both on the campus and in society at large. In the years following Lake Hope, the College continued to have some degree of success, but there was still some nagging problems. What happened during those years? What impact did the Vietnam era have on the College of Education?

A. The Vietnam era had a tremendous impact on the College of Education. We went through the protests, the effort to accommodate the number of Blacks on campus. We did not have many blacks. The Blacks that we had became very active and vociferous and critical in lots of ways. It was tough within departments and various other places to cope with some of those criticisms. People were very, very confrontational and I in fact kind of like confrontation. And I don’t know exactly when it was, what year, it was 1970 or 1968 or what not. But I remember
there were lots of Blacks that made many confrontations in many classes. And I, as an individual, just refused to be cowed by that. I remember lots of times people would stand up and say, “You God damn, dirty, mother fucker racist bastard” to me. And I said, “By God, I learned to swear before you were born, you son-of-a bitch” right back. And people would say, “Well, you shouldn’t say that.” Well, that was just my nature. But there were lots of times which were very confrontational. And I didn’t back down from that. In a sense, it was fun for me. But there was lots and lots of that that went on. And I can’t remember exactly when that started. Well anyway, that was a very interesting period. In a sense, I suppose there could be much that could be written and talked about that from all kinds of perspectives. I remember when the University finally did close down, I guess, in 1970, I was just back from England, where we had been there with graduate students working on a humanities curriculum project. And immediately the University was closed down and my office at that time was in Ramseyer Hall, the old University School building, and a day or two before it was closed down, students were doing all kinds of things, confrontations all over campus. Lot of activity, lots of confrontation. And I remember in the backside of Ramseyer Hall, in the parking lot, and I had gone out there and someone threw a rock at me and it just skimmed my hair. And I don’t have much hair. I have hardly any hair at all. A rock just skimmed my hair, and I still have the rock at home in my desk. And students were vigorously and violently protesting things. Of course I didn’t know who threw the rock. But I still have it at home as a reminder to myself of those very sharp divisions that occurred on campus at that time. I think the College of
Education tried to process those confrontations and those criticisms remarkably well. I think many people on campus didn’t process that at all. I think what’s true in a theoretical and imperial sense is that when protest occurs, the protest almost always occurs at what would be thought of as the most liberal segment of the institution. If we think historically, for example, the great confrontation at the political conventions in 1968 were at the Democratic convention, not the Republican convention. I think the College of Education was much more open to criticism and therefore we had much more of it. And it looked like the more open you were, the more criticism you got. And I think theoretically and empirically that is correct. The College of Education was very severely criticized by blacks at that period of time. In fact, we were probably the most liberal segment on campus at that time in terms of our willingness to accommodate blacks, to bring blacks in, and so forth. So it appears at one level we were the worst part of the campus and another level, I think the data would clearly support that we were very open to trying to be positive and helpful to the disenfranchised who were involved on campus.

Q. All of the stress was not between the students and the University. Some of it was within the University and the faculty. And as part of that in 1966, you served on a University wide committee to examine issues of establishing a position of ombudsman. What are your recollections of that?

A. Well the idea of an ombudsman, I was on the faculty council -- I guess that is what it was called, faculty council, faculty senate or whatever it was -- and somehow or another, Jack Corbally was probably presiding, not presiding but he
had a role in representing. But Jack was a representative of that. Somebody made a motion that the University appoint a person as ombudsman to receive criticisms and complaints from any source within the University. From students, from faculty, from administrators, or from anybody. But to use that office of ombudsman to handle criticisms that were evident. They were trying to loosen up the organization so it wouldn’t be top down administrative dominated and so forth. And I was on that committee. In fact, I was Chairman of that committee. And John Mount, Vice President, was on the committee. And there were three or four or five people. I don’t remember how many were on it. Well, this was right after -- somewhere, I’d have to check the timeframe again -- but right after my experience on the Ramseyer committee in which all of these discussions with Egon and Dave had preceded, and many of my own ideas about the University and the organization that had evolved. I was committed, in a theoretical sense at that point, to the idea that the University should be structured in a sense so that it had kind of a judicial component to it. And the book I wrote ultimately called Fostering Educational Change describes that in some respect. So when I was asked to chair the committee to consider the possibility of establishing an office of ombudsman on campus, I don’t think there’s any doubt that I went into that role thinking we should go beyond that. I didn’t think that one person could possibly cope with all of those kind of problems that were evident in a large university. I thought structurally that a university ought to be reorganized to have within it an evaluative component, a judicial component. A component that would be charged officially with the responsibility to receive complaints and
criticisms like an ombudsman would do. But then had the authority to make recommendations or changes that ought to occur. So I went to that committee with that idea in mind and pushed that idea hard. And the committee just finally acquiesced I think to my thinking. I don’t think most people had thought about it that way, although I did a lot of thinking about ombudsman. I went to Columbia University and interviewed a professor of law, Walter Gelhorn, who had written books about ombudsman. And I read his book and talked with him at great length about that. And I talked to many other people in the field of law about some kind of a judicial segment that would process complaints and criticisms. And almost unanimously these people were not supportive of what I thought was a good idea. The conclusion I finally came to in my own mind was that one of the things that makes a university work pretty well most of the time is that almost everybody in it is a reasonable, thoughtful, rational, humane human being. But not all people are. When you have good people in office, things work pretty well. But any organization which depends on good people to make things go right is also an organization with allows scalawags to do an awful lot of harm. And it seemed to me our system or government, and our federalists papers had pointed this out in our whole history of the founding fathers, and the writing of the Constitution make it very clear, that when the nation was formed, we wanted a government of laws, not a government of men. And the notion that government should depend on the men in it was not the strength of it. That we had a system which systemically was able to process criticism and complaint, whether the people in it were perfect or good people or not. And that struggle between the government of laws and the
government of men is a long term one. I think the genius of our constitution was that it built into it the notion of a judiciary which had clout. Of course, John Marshall made that happen, made it work. And lots of people at the time thought that was wrong. Thomas Jefferson thought that was wrong. He thought everything John Marshall did was in error and Jefferson thought it should be law. Well, I think Thomas Jefferson was a wonderful person, but I think in that respect he was actually flat out wrong. And the idea of having a judicial branch, a judicial element, an evaluative component within it, seemed to me to be important. So our committee went back to the faculty council and we proposed, instead of establishing an office of ombudsman, that we establish, we posit throughout the University, at every department level, at every college level, and at the university level, a kind of a judicial or evaluative or reflective review component that would be charged officially with the responsibility for receiving criticisms about the University. Whether those criticisms were aimed at individual professors or they were aimed at courses that were taught or what not. I’ll give one example. I remember, it occurred to me in my own thinking, about the University. We had a course that was required of all students in the College of Education that wanted to become teachers called Education 108. Anybody who wanted to be a teacher had to take Education 108. And after Jim Rhodes was elected governor and his newly appointed budget director had cut the budget of every institution in the State of Ohio, after that November of 1962, the first year I was here, when January came about, all of a sudden every state unit found itself shortchanged. Every university
organizational unit was without dollars that had been proposed in the past. You want me to stop and take a pause here?

Q. This is the Ohio State University oral history program deposition of Jack Frymier dated October 5, 2001. This is the end of tape 1, side B.

Q. This is the Ohio State University oral history program deposition of Jack Frymeier. October 5, 2001. Interviewer is Robert Butche. This is tape 2, side A.

A. After Jim Rhodes was elected governor, his budget director from Cincinnati, I forget his name now, had curtailed a lot of expenditures. Every state institution found itself financially cut back. The prisons were cut back, social welfare were cut back, the universities were cut back. Everything was cut back. When the winter term opened in January, 1963, the first quarter after the financial cutbacks had occurred, every department on campus had had its financial resources which had been promised for the budget for that whole year curtailed. In the College of Education we found ourselves with less money to operate than we had had before. Well, there was a lot of breast beating and hair pulling and so forth that went on there for several weeks. We thought about lots of things. Should we do this, should we do that? How can we accommodate? Well, what we actually did, after all this talking, what we actually did in this process was that we kept everything as it was except Education 108, which was a required course for all students in the College of Education; we absorbed all of the financial loss in that one point. Before that, there had been class sections of 35 or 40 people and there were dozens of class sections and there were lots and lots of people in that course. In January, 1963, in terms of my recollection, we put all of those people in one
classroom, about 1,100 people, in what at that time, was the auditorium in the Ohio State Museum or library or something. I forget what it was called. We had a big auditorium room and we put 1,100 people in that one room. And we gave them a graduate student to run that class. A TA had charge of about 1,100 people. What the TA did was make arrangements to have professors come and give lectures to this large group. Somebody would lecture one day and somebody else would lecture another day and somebody else would lecture still another day. Theoretically the idea was that the intellectual content of the course would be maintained, but the class size would be different. Well, I was asked to talk to that group. Lots of people were asked to talk to that group. I remember going over there and looking at that great sea of human faces, 1,000 people there in that room. I was talking to those people and I remember saying to myself: “What would happen if some kid in this class said to me, ‘Dr. Frymier, we have to take this course.’” And I would say, “Yes, it is a required course for graduation.” And he would say, “Well, why do we have to take this course?” And my answer would be, “Well, you have to take this course because we say you have to take this course.” Suppose the kid had been one of these obnoxious kids, we found a lot of them around later. Suppose he went to see Dean Cottrell. Suppose he went to Dean Cottrell and said, “Dean Cottrell, how come I have to take this class? Can you prove to me that I’ll be a better teacher if I take that class than if I don’t take that class?” The Dean would have probably said, “Well, maybe education is not for you. Have you thought about the College of Agriculture? Have you thought about something else?” And suppose the kid said at that point, “Listen, don’t give
me any nonsense. You say I have to take that class. Can you prove to me that I’ll be a better teacher if I take that class than if I don’t?” I always said to myself, well what the Dean would have probably done was to pull himself up to the full majesty of his office and said, “Young man, that course is a good course because we say it’s a good course. You have to take it because we say so. We don’t have to prove to anybody that you’ll be a better teacher if you take that course than if you don’t.” And I thought, that’s not a very good system. Any system which depends on the authority of one person to justify it rather than some kind of empirical base didn’t make sense. For example, I’ll use another example from that same era. For example, every segment of the University found itself shortchanged. For example, University Hospital found itself shortchanged. University Hospital made decisions which were very different than the College of Education decision. They decided not to do certain things. So for example, they decided rather than do poor surgery, they would cancel all elective surgery. I may not be remembering this quite right. But University Hospital, people in the College of Medicine -- and I later worked very closely with a lot of the people in the College of Medicine -- but the people in the College of Medicine said, “If we can’t do this job right, we’re not going to do it all.” And they closed down segments of University Hospital. Jim Rhodes’ wife got sick and Jim Rhodes’ wife needed to go to the hospital. And he wanted her to go to University Hospital. So the University got more money allocated. I don’t know all the details on that, but I noticed that the medical people made a decision based on professional things. Everybody else in the University accommodated politically. We
accommodated. We didn’t have a basis for it. The medical people had a sound theoretical rationale and a lot of empirical evidence that you can’t do certain things except in certain ways. And they took a different kind of posture. That was another thing which committed me to the idea that change in a university setting ought to be based on good information. That we shouldn’t always try to accommodate things politically. We ought to try to get some facts. So on this committee to establish an office of ombudsman, I was very concerned that we devise a mechanism and have it in place across the University, that when there were complaints about professors, about anything -- about why do I have to take a required course or what not -- that we try to institutionalize this in such a way that we get some factual data. And then have this segment of the University have some authority to make decisions which would override poor decisions, even if they were important. It might have been good decisions or bad decisions. So our proposal came back to the faculty council not to establish the office of ombudsman, but to institute some other kind of organizational change and impose or have developed within each department, within each college, and across the University, a kind of evaluative segment or section -- I forget exactly what we called it -- that would be commissioned to receive complaints, collect data about those complaints, and then make recommendations and decisions based on the data that were available. Well, when we made that proposal to the Faculty Council, it didn’t fly at all. It just fell flat and didn’t go. It got voted down. I remember several people came up to me as a young professor trying to reassure me that I had good ideas, but they just didn’t think we were quite that far along.
And then within a few days, Jack Corbally was locked in his office with a bunch of blacks in a sit-in or something like that. I can’t remember all of the details. A University sit-in at University administration offices, and we had problems. Other people later said, “I guess we do have some problems, don’t we?” But my proposal, I think, was theoretically sound. Maybe it was like Dave Clark’s proposal about reorganizing the college. It was theoretically sound but it was certainly not politically acceptable at that time, and it never did fly. We’ve had the office of ombudsman since that time, and I think the office of ombudsman has helped. I still think educational institutions would be better served if people didn’t have to take their cases to court. I think one of the reasons we get in lots of court cases in education, whether it’s in universities or in public school, is that people don’t have recourse when people make unreasonable decisions. And so I think theoretically the idea of having a mechanism within the educational establishment that would be charged with making decisions based on good data is an important one. It has never flown, probably never will fly. But I think it would be a good idea. But the notion was voted down completely in the Faculty Council.

Q. Researchers are alerted that parts of this are covered in the deposition of Jack Corbally, particularly the shut down of the University in the spring of 1967 and the takeover of the administration building. There were many people in the curriculum and foundations faculty. Who were they and what were their roles?

A. We started off with about five or six people and then we ultimately grew with the foundation people that were added, and later some teacher education people were added. Still later some other people were added from what we called educational
development at that time. The people I thought of as my immediate colleagues would have been in curriculum instruction. We didn’t call it that. It would have been Jack Hough, Kelly Duncan, Chuck Galloway, Paul Klohr, and Alex Frazier, in a left handed sense, was involved in that. That was kind of the core group of what I thought of as curriculum and instruction. The foundations people were added later. That would be the history of education people and the philosophy of education people. And Bernie Mehl was there and Bob Sutton was there. We hired Gerry Reagan about that time. I forget when Gerry came; I want to say about 1970 or so. We tried to hire Steve Hazlett as history of education, but Steve, at the University of Chicago, didn’t come. He later went into administration and became a Dean elsewhere, not here. Then we hired Phil Smith in philosophy of education. And then the teacher education people came in, Don Cottrell came in, L.O. Andrews came in after Don left the deanship. He became a part of that. Ultimately Don Sanders and Sid Eboch and some other people became a part of that. We accommodated and a number of people joined. That was what I referred to earlier as that lateral movement in the faculty. People could join and not have to be formally reappointed by the Board of Trustees or anything. But we made that decision just within the College. But there were about six of us in what I thought of as the curriculum and instruction group. They were a closely knit group that worked together and did a lot of things together. Paul Klohr, Jack Hough, Kelly Duncan, Chuck Galloway, Alex Frazier, and Elsie Alberty, to a lesser degree, and myself. I don’t think I’ve left anybody out.
Q. Well your focus was heavily on graduate students, particularly doctoral students at the time. And your graduate student program was not static. For example, there’s an interesting story of you and Klohr taking graduate students to England one year for the Nuffield Humanities Curriculum Project. What about that? Why would you do that?

A. Let me explain that our primary emphasis in graduate work was because our department or our faculty had responsibility for teaching only one undergraduate course, Education 435. It was a general methods course for secondary school students. And that was the only part of the undergraduate program that we had. Most of the people that taught 435 were doctoral students, all experienced teachers or administrators that had come to work on their doctorate. And they were very closely supervised by different people at different times, by Don Cruickshank. But primarily by Jack Hough over a period of time, who worked very closely with all those doctoral students who were teaching in the undergraduate section. All the rest of the courses that we taught were all graduate courses. And we had work at both masters level and a doctoral level. In a theoretical sense, we envisioned three layers, three levels of graduate work. One would be an introduction level or what we called foundation level or fundamental level. The second level was a theory level. And the third level was the practicum level. Then we did that within four areas. Curriculum was an area. Instruction was an area. Supervision was an area. And evaluation was an area. So we had kind of a four by three matrix there. And we had at least one course in each of those twelve cells. And different people taught in that thing. Paul taught in the
curriculum area and Jack Hough taught in instruction and Kelly Duncan taught in evaluation, and I taught in supervision. Sometimes we would double team on a practicum or what not. But that was the theoretical rationale. Doctoral students, we were very active in recruiting doctoral students. Those of us especially that moved around the country. I did this. Paul did this in some respect. But Paul and I probably did it more than anybody else. We would actively recruit people in California or Florida or wherever to come and do graduate work with us. We tried to get a good mix. We were constantly concerned about that. And then, I think I mentioned in the earlier deposition that Al Garrett, Vice President for Research, when we’re talking about the debating about the closing of the University School, had tried to argue about the importance of research for University professors. He made the case that when he had been Chairman of the Department of Chemistry, they always assigned people to do research sometimes and not to teach. And he said, “I presume you do that in the College of Education.” Well there was a big laugh you know; nobody got assigned to do research in education except Edgar Dale. Edgar did, but nobody else did. But Edgar was in the Bureau. He wasn’t in a Department. That was part of the conflict between the Bureau and the Department early on. But when that point was made, Paul and I immediately internalized that notion and as we began, Paul and I together, I think, collected some of these people. Chuck Galloway. I was responsible for getting Jack Hough and Kelly Duncan to come. I had known them at Temple and I was very impressed with both of them. And they finally both did come. But we began to think of our own schedule. And especially as I became Chairman of the
department, I began to think in organizational terms of the department. I began to think that although teaching and service and research were all important functions for the University -- and I can make a very strong case that they were all important functions for an individual professor -- I did not believe that they were all important functions that had to be accomplished every quarter. So I began to think of myself as having a primary emphasis on one of those three things. Teaching or service or research for one quarter or maybe one year, I began to think of it a year at a time. And then to de-emphasize the other two. Then the next year I would shift. If I took teaching one year, I would downplay service and research. The next year I might take service and emphasize it. The next year I might take research and emphasize it and downplay teaching and service. And in that sense, we began to schedule people time to do research. We began to schedule people time even to do service. And especially as we reorganized and, for example, Edgar Dale came in our department. Edgar, who never taught very much at all in the University, began to teach some, but he was primarily 100% research. And other people were almost 100% teaching. Bernie Mehl, Bob Sutton were almost 100% teaching. And very little research. But some of the rest of us within the department began to assume responsibility for research. We would take a quarter in which it would not be a sabbatical but be one whole quarter to do research. And we’d produce a product at the end of that. A book or an article or something. We began to think about scheduling research time. At the same time we also began to think about what I called “inventing money.” We couldn’t do everything, even by scheduling it, people into research. But we began to do
things, especially collectively, as a department to make money. We would put this money in a kitty, and then we would spend it as a department. So for example, one year we contracted I think for $9,000 to provide in service education for a county in North Carolina. We flew a team down there once a month. We would have two days of activities for teachers and administrators. We provided in service education. And for this we got some funds. For that money we had to pay the motel bill overnight. We had to rent the airplane from the University airport. We had some money left over. So we began to accumulate some money. And we began to use that accumulated money, and other people did other things. I had begun to put money in the President’s Club. But we had access to that money. So we could use it as long as it wasn’t for us personally. We could hire graduate students or we could use it for different kind of projects. Well ultimately, Paul made contact with Lawrence Steinhause in England. Lawrence was working on a very important curriculum project in London funded by the Nuffield Foundation: The Humanities Curriculum Project. We ultimately made arrangement; I would go over and take two graduate students with me for a month. Those graduate students would come back and two other graduate students would come over. And I would still be there. So I spent two months, roughly 2 ½ months, better part of a quarter, in London. There were four graduate students who were there at least a month during that quarter. Then the next quarter Paul went for the whole quarter, and during that quarter four graduate students went over there with him. And those five -- there were only three people at a time over there -- I was there with two graduate students. Paul was there with two graduate students. The three of us
who were there at any one point in time worked directly with Lawrence Steinhouse and his research staff on the Humanities Curriculum Project. We were deeply involved in that. In a sense it was kind of a practicum research experience for our people. It was also obviously very much a learning experience for all of us. So we used the money -- partly which we had invented, partly which we had done some consulting and put the money back in there, and partly by the fact of scheduling time for people to do research, that is University dollars in that respect -- we used money that way to try to broaden and deepen the experiences and enrich the experiences of our graduate students and of ourselves. And I think all of that activity was a very successful venture in enriching graduate students’ experiences. I don’t think there’s any doubt at all that Larry Bowen, who was involved in that, or Margie Prentice, Marie Jo Henning, who was involved in that. Larry Bowen who was involved in that. A lot of those people had very positive doctoral experiences which served them very, very well in later years. They moved into administrative roles, became deans, vice presidents, Margie Prentice became Dean of a Graduate School. I think those experiences were wonderful for those people. And they were deeply grateful for them. And I think those of us who were involved were marvelously enriched by the experiences which we had. So it was a good experience for everybody.

Q. One of the important figures in the College of Education during your early years was Harold Alberty? What are your recollections of Harold Alberty and what are your appraisals of his work?
A. Well, Harold had retired when I went to Ohio State. This isn’t quite correct but I used to think of it, in a sense, that I took his line on the budget. Probably not true, I think somebody else actually did that. But I knew Harold. I had known him for almost ten years before I came to Ohio State. I had known him through my work in ASCD. He was very active in core curriculum development. I had worked in that area and I knew him. And he was obviously a powerful personality and so forth. When I came to Ohio State, Harold and Elsie were very hospitable to my wife and I. And they took us in and we were at their house for dinner and we had drinks at their house and different kinds of things, over New Year’s or what not. I got to know Harold better. Harold had worked of course with Boyd Bode, and he had been profoundly influenced by Bode, whom I didn’t know of course. But Harold Alberty was a very good man. The things that I learned from Harold, however were of a negative nature. And they were very personal for me. When I first knew him, he had become, I think, cynical because he had spent his lifetime trying to cultivate the idea of core curriculum. And at the end of his life it had not been widely accepted. He was disappointed in that. In all the discussions I had with him, especially after I came to Ohio State, that became evident. And Harold was, I think, I don’t know whatever word to use but “disappointed.” I think he became cynical because of that process, and I thought it was unfortunate because he was a marvelous person and had done wonderful things. And had good ideas. And the fact that what he had tried had not been universally accepted across America, had caused his disillusionment and disappointment. And even his cynicism struck me as avoidable. I said to myself, I don’t want that to happen to
me. I do not want to spend the rest of my life at Ohio State or wherever, I don’t want to spend my life working hard at things and at the end of my professional career come to the point that I’m disappointed that I haven’t found enough converts to carry on my work. I don’t want that to happen. And so I tried to think that problem through and I ultimately, for myself, came to adopt what is called the concept of “diversity in investment” in economics, as applied to my time. I think a person who lives has his time to spend. You spend your life doing the things that you want to do with it. And I decided very early during those first two or three or four years; I think this was a concept which matured during those very early, very tense, tough years at Ohio State. Reorganization of the College and all that kind of stuff. I became aware of what I came to think of as Harold’s disappointment and I said to myself, “I don’t want that to happen to me. So I’m going to invest my time in different ways. I’m going to have three or four major thrusts simultaneously going on in my life. And if one of those fails, maybe the other two will work.” So I wanted to consciously do different, have different areas of emphasis that I would spend my time on and my life on. I decided the same thing about my writing. I would have two or three or four articles or writing underway and at different points. One just beginning to think about, one first draft, one getting polished, one submitted, one just coming off the press. So that I could invest my time in what I did, both in writing and in research and in service. Both with motivation, with curriculum, with instruction. I diversified my interests for myself across the board. And there’s absolutely no doubt in my mind that I did that because of what I perceived to be, in Harold Alberty’s life, a disappointment.
It may have been an error in perception on my part, but I thought Harold became kind of a cynical old man, and I thought it was tragic because he had been a wonderful person and a wonderful professor, done wonderful things for the field of education. And I didn’t want that to happen to me. So my recollections of Harold were almost all in his last several years before he died. I forget exactly when he died. But I had been here for six or eight, maybe ten years. And I knew him in his final years and many of those years I thought that he was a cynical old man. I thought it was tragic, and I didn’t want that to happen to me. So it was a negative lesson from him that I tried to convert to positive advantage to myself.

Q. As you look back on that era today from the maturity you have now, does it appear to you that possibly Alberty had judged himself too harshly?

A. Oh yes, no doubt in my mind. I would say operationally I think he would have been better off if he would have done something like I did; that is, invested his time in different things. But he didn’t do that. But I think he absolutely judged himself too hard.

Q. But indeed his ideas endure to today.

A. Well of course they do. What we call today “block scheduling” is in a sense core curriculum 50 years later. Absolutely. And the people who are teaching don’t even realize that. They don’t know the history of it. They don’t know any of that. So absolutely he judged himself too harshly. He was very effective. His ideas were very soundly based. And even though the people today who are doing block scheduling don’t reference the core curriculum, the people who conceptualize
those things and put them into operation and made them practical, are unaware of
that.

Q. His second wife, Elsie, was also in the College of Education. And she was on the
faculty during many of the years you served. What are your recollections of her?

A. Well, when they closed the University, Elsie was assigned to the College of
Education and she, I guess, was assigned to us or she chose to come to us. I don’t
know. Anyway, she was not a person that we recruited. She was a person whom
we accepted. That had happened several times, several people in the University.
Ken Arisman had been working in the University administration, and left
administration. He was assigned back to the College and the College assigned him
to our department. I understood that. I understand that the University, in a sense,
was taking care of its own and so forth. But Ken never became an integral part of
the thought processes of our department or our faculty. Elsie did. Elsie became
very much involved, and later became Chairman of the faculty and department.
But she came in kind of through the back door.

Q. Did you see her as an independent person or did you see her as a carry forward of
Harold’s work?

A. Probably both. I think Elsie was fairly independent. She later had a problem
drinking too much and was dependent in a different sense. But at the same time, I
think she was a very thoughtful person about curriculum and about other things.
She was thoughtful about foundations. She was thoughtful about the course that I
taught called “The Role of the School in Social Order.” She constantly made
suggestions to me about things that she read that she thought might be useful in
that class. My perceptions of Elsie were positive. She was not like me. She was not dynamic. She was not enthusiastic. She was not gung ho. She was a quiet, thoughtful person. Not like Harold either, but she was a good person, I thought. And she was intelligent but she was probably not a person that I would have sought out to hire, if we had had an open position. But we accepted her graciously and my perception was that, at least for a good many years, she did a very commendable job. Kind of a steady yeoman’s like job. She was not a star. She was not a person who attracted a lot of graduate students. She didn’t go out obviously and recruit, to get special kinds of people to come and do graduate work. But I thought she was a very capable, very competent gal. She was kind of a quiet, unsung hero in a sense.

Q. How did you come to write *The Nature of Educational Method*?

A. Well the book *The Nature of Educational Method* is the first book which I had written, and it’s a book which is based almost entirely on other people’s research. It’s what I call a scholarly book rather than a research book. It’s a book in which I tried to integrate hundreds and hundreds of research studies. My own ideas are in the conceptualization of what I put together, some of which I think are interesting and some of which I still think are very, very valid. I think my conceptualization of educational method is good. I think the notion of different kinds of methodology being used with different kinds of people is a very sound one.

Q. Did you see it as being Deweyan in origin? Or an original thought?

A. I didn’t think I was being Deweyan. I thought of it as simply my attempt, by studying other peoples’ research, much of which was in social psychology, to
develop a way in which people could conceptualize teaching which had a sound empirical basis.

Q. So it wasn’t student centered, so therefore not Deweyan?
A. Well it wound up being very student-centered conceptually. But I just came at that a different way than Dewey had. I’m not a Dewey scholar. But almost everything I’ve ever read that John Dewey wrote I like. And I’ve always been consistent with that. But in a sense what I did is, I came to many of the same conclusions Dewey came to, but I came from a different route. He got to them through philosophy. I went through psychology. Of course, he did a lot of work in that vein too. And I don’t mean to say that to put myself in a positive light. I simply came to the same conclusions that he came to 50 or 60 years later. He had done it right. I wish I would have studied Dewey earlier. I might have gotten into it. But the way in which I did get it, primarily through psychology, was good for me, rather than through philosophy. I simply am not a student of philosophy. The philosophy things are terribly important, but I came to things through psychology rather than through philosophy.

Q. The nature of educational method was basically pedagogical approach?
A. Yea.

Q. But you went on to think very forward things. For example, when you wrote A School for Tomorrow. What was the motivation for that and what caused you to write it?
A. All the books that I’ve written -- and I’ve written 12, 14 books, I don’t know -- are different. That’s part of my scheme of doing something different all the time.
I’m off base here but I’ll come back. I watched my own advisor, Art Combs, who was a graduate of Ohio State in Clinical Psychology. He did his work with Carl Rogers. He took his final oral examinations on his dissertation on VJ Day. I was profoundly influenced by Art Combs. He was a very important person to me and had tremendous impact on me. He was from Ohio and had done his masters and his doctorate both here at Ohio State. But Art, in his later years became, in many ways, like Harold Alberty did. He became disappointed that his ideas were not as widely shared as he had hoped. In fact, many, many people were profoundly influenced by his work on self concept and stuff. But to himself, he was a disappointment. And he kept re-writing the same thing over and over. The last three or four books he wrote -- he died about three years ago now -- and I read a book that he was writing the last time I saw him, which was probably five years ago. I’m not exactly sure. I stopped to see him. He lived in Greeley, Colorado. I spent a day with him. He gave me a copy of a manuscript he was working on. It was exactly, word for word, example for example, what he had taught in class 40 years before that. And I was very disappointed in that. I had seen that coming in Art over the years, and I had not wanted to do that. So I had tried to write different things every time I wrote. Every one of my books is different. There’s sometimes a little bit of overlap but not much.

Q. You had some collaborators on School For Tomorrow.

A. School for Tomorrow had some collaborators. I constantly was trying to push my own thinking along different directions. The first book, Educational Method, was a synthesis of other people’s research. The second book was Fostering
Educational Change, which grew out of this confrontation with Dave Clark and Egon Guba in the Ramseyer committee, helped me re-think what I thought was rational basis for bringing about change. I basically used research as a mechanism to change the educational institution. The third book that I wrote was actually based on my experience in Orlando, using action research for changing curriculum. The fourth book that I wrote would have been A School for Tomorrow. I wrote a paper called A School for Tomorrow and at this time I was very active in ASCD. I was doing lots of speaking to ASCD and state units around the country, and I had talked to a lot of the state groups around the country. And I had talked about this concept of a school for tomorrow. It was probably a 30 page paper, a major paper for me. I always tried to write about two papers a year, that for me, would break new ground. I made a lot of public speeches around the country, around the state, and I always tried to develop one or two new speeches every year, so I wouldn’t always be saying the same thing. I saw early on that that was what Art Combs was doing and other people were doing. And I wanted to move away from that myself. So I was always trying to cultivate a new paper. I wrote the paper, A School for Tomorrow, probably in 1969 I guess. And it was a major paper for me. Part of it was premised on this other paper I wrote which was never published, The One To One Relationship. It was basically an idea about individualizing instruction. Individualizing instruction, some of which I had described in The Nature of Educational Method. But thinking about the uniqueness of the individual as a basis for teaching, not trying to vary time so much or vary methodology or some of that, because each
individual had different experiences and different genetic components. Each individual needed a different kind of curriculum experience. So I wrote *A School for Tomorrow* that way, and then I was elected President of ASCD. I decided as President -- in ASCD you’re President elect one year, then President, then Past President -- and I thought maybe it would be possible to have a two or three year go at it by pushing this idea, a school for tomorrow. So, because as President, I had access to some funds within ASCD, I opted to form a group of people based primarily on our Curriculum Foundations faculty at Ohio State, as a core group. I asked each of those people to select one public school person to work with them, so we’d have a team of about 12 people, half university and half public school people, to take this paper that I’d written and use that paper to take off and develop ideas much further. Develop the curriculum ideas further, the instruction ideas further, the organizational ideas further, the evaluation ideas further. And so I took the core group, Jack Hough and others, Paul was not involved in that. For the life of me, if I asked myself why, I don’t know. It may be because I took curriculum. Didn’t do it for Paul. I don’t know why Paul wasn’t involved in that. Paul was deeply involved with ASCD and he may have had other commitments. I don’t know. Or maybe in my mind I slighted him there. I didn’t mean to. Maybe he chose not to. Paul was much more of a synthesizer of existing research rather than he was creating new thinking. And he was superb at that. But anyway, Paul wasn’t involved. Jack Hough was. Kelly Duncan was. Charlie Galloway was. Jerry Reagan in Philosophy. And there were some other people. Who else? Don Anderson. Anyway, each of those people paired themselves with one public
school person and assumed responsibility for writing a chapter in a book to be called *A School for Tomorrow*. And we worked on that. Ultimately the people in Annehurst School heard about that. I found out they realized more about that book than I knew. And when I was asked to go out there and talk, they said, “Can we become a school for tomorrow? We want to work with you.” We finished the book. Published the book. The book was released at the ASCD National Conference in Minneapolis in 1973 and everybody got a flyer on the book. And Harold Shane, a graduate of OSU too, who was the President elect of ASCD, followed me as President, he encouraged people to buy the book because the proceeds from that book, *A School for Tomorrow*, would go directly to ASCD. They would not go to Jack Frymeyer and the other people who had written it. They would go to ASCD. And so we got kind of a send off on that book that way. But the book was a different effort, an effort to take something, which I had written and other people had piggybacked on that, and then to use their own experience but in conjunction with a person from the public school, to try to think through ideas, the practical aspects of education so that they would be rooted solidly, both in theory and in empirical evidence, but tied very closely to practitioner’s approach to develop that. That’s what the book, *A School for Tomorrow*, was. So that was a wonderful experience for me. And then that began to tie some of us closely to the Annehurst School, an elementary school in Westerville. And Jack and Kelly and Charlie Galloway and I especially, Jerry Reagan less so and Don Anderson less so. Don has his responsibilities with administration. But the four of us got deeply involved with the Annehurst faculty.
And then ultimately several people stayed several years. I stayed and worked with the Annehurst faculty, what I call one day a week, for 11 years. Jack Hough worked for three or four years. Charlie Galloway worked for two or three years. Kelly Duncan worked for two or three years. Jack Hough worked very closely with a number of people, and ultimately Jack took a research quarter assignment. We didn’t have sabbatical leaves at that time at Ohio State. But I was Chairman of the Department and I assigned him a research quarter. He went to Annehurst School and he functioned as a 5th grade student for a whole quarter and he went home every night and wrote on a yellow pad. He wrote 20 yellow pads full of notes as a 5th grade student. He tried to see what it was like at Annehurst School to be a student. And he did a wonderful job. He never published that and he should have. I just always thought he should publish that. But he never did publish that. But many of us had a very, very close affiliation with the Annehurst School which grew out of The School for Tomorrow. I ultimately wrote another book, but I wrote the book myself, as I said, with other people. And the other people who were listed were primarily the teachers at Annehurst School and one graduate student, Dave Clinefelter. That book was titled Annehurst Curriculum Classification System.

Q. Jack Hough and Ned Flanders were interested in another area with interaction analysis. How did that come about?

A. Well, I don’t quite know how Jack got to know Ned Flanders. I knew Ned from my work in ASCD. Ned was very active in ASCD. And Ned was a good man, a good thinker. He came out of the University of Chicago. Trained as an electrical
engineer, he got interested in education. I don't know how that happened. But an interesting background. During my early years here at Ohio State, Ned taught at the University of Michigan. Jack and I went to see him, I think, on more than one occasion, to talk with him. Jack Hough learned about interaction analysis, I think, from one of the students that Ned had. But he became deeply committed to it as a tool, a conceptual and practical tool, for looking at teacher-pupil interaction. And he took Ned’s ideas and modified them and added to them. Ned often said to me personally that Jack Hough knew more about interaction analysis than he did, even though he developed the ideas and published them, and did hundreds of workshops across the country with teachers on interaction analysis. But Jack was intellectually and conceptually way in advance of Ned. And I’m sure Ned would say that, even today. He lives at One Spyglass Hill in Oakland, California. Somebody ought to talk with him about that. And Ned’s a wonderful person. Jack learned a lot from Ned, but primarily by studying what Ned had done. And then Jack developed, the OSIA, whatever. I forget the letters. But it was what he called the Ohio version of interaction analysis. And Jack taught many of the graduate students who were teaching 435 at that time about that, and there were many dissertations done with those ideas. It became a way to look carefully and thoughtfully and critically in a very empirical way at what was going on in classrooms. Jack made a marvelous contribution in my respect. Jack was a wonderful professor, a phenomenal human being, and a powerful thinker. One of the most powerful thinkers I’ve ever known in my whole life. Jack Hough is a wonderful person. He developed that area, and many of the graduate students
who went through our area and worked closely with Jack, and Jack coordinated the 435 undergraduate program. These people got deeply involved with Jack. Their lives were profoundly changed. Almost everybody who worked with Jack in that respect became a user of those ideas when they left here and went to teach, whether it was a University of Tennessee or wherever they went. Many of those people followed Jack’s work that way.

Q. When you look at the Annehurst project, in terms of its importance to the College of Education and your career, how do you appraise it today?

A. Well I don’t know how I can say what it was for the College. I can only say what it was for me and what it was for the other people like Jack Hough and Kelly Duncan and Charlie Galloway, who worked in it some. Nobody worked in it as much as I did in terms of time. I worked with it many, many years, and it was a profound experience for me. Absolutely profound. My experience in Orlando was a very rich experience. But the experience with Annehurst teachers was deeper and longer. I don’t know how else to describe it except to say it was probably the most significant. The experience in Orlando was very significant, but the work at Annehurst was more significant for me. I worked with seven or eight people there; the principal, Troy Mills, and I worked with several teachers there, Lynn Fitzpatrick, Betty Marshall, and others. We did many, many things. We spent about three or four years developing the basic ideas of the Annehurst system, what I call the Annehurst system, which was a practical way to individualize instruction. Which meant classifying curriculum materials in terms of human attributes. Any piece of curriculum material could be classified in terms
of intellectual component, its motivational qualities, the creativity that it evoked, the social attributes it would bring out, or whatever. So we looked at individual qualities that affected learning. We started out with a notion that people are different, but some differences make a difference in learning and some don’t. A person’s intellectual abilities make a big difference in learning, but their hair color probably doesn’t make any difference in learning. Their eye color doesn’t make any difference. Probably the color of their skin doesn’t make any difference. But their intellectual abilities, their motivational attributes, the way in which they process information in terms of their personality style. The social qualities that they have, their interactive strategies. We identified a number of factors that we thought were differences that made a difference in learning, then we developed a way to classify curriculum materials that way, and then we started, but we never finished -- I have not even finished it in my own mind, although I’ve done a lot of work past that -- a way of tailoring teaching to make it different that way too. Some of that was an outgrowth of my work originally in the *Nature of Educational Methods*. But some of it went much further than that. But we developed a systematic way of classifying curriculum materials, and then we ultimately worked with professors and graduate students that we knew from a number of universities. Some from the University of Texas, some from the University of Tennessee, some from the University of Toledo. Some from other universities around the country. We asked professors to come and bring at least one graduate student with them to a meeting that we held here in Columbus. We held many of these meetings at my house, which was a farm out near London,
Ohio. It was called Crooked Run Farm. I always had to explain it was not the way we operated the farm, but it was a river that went through it. I didn’t actually farm at all. I was never there enough to farm. But it was a farm. We had a great big old house, more than 100 years old, and people would come to the farm and we would have meetings.

Q. This is the Ohio State University Oral History Program deposition of Jack Frymier. This is tape 2, side B, recorded October 5, 2001. And we’re speaking of the Annehurst School episode.

A. The work at the Annehurst School grew into a set of ideas and ultimately we had a series of conferences which we called the Crooked Run Conferences, which were held at my house. We had a big old farm house out near London. And we would eat at the Red Brick Tavern. We asked a number of people from around the country, some of whom were our former graduates. Russ French, the University of Tennessee, Cy Hahn of the University of Georgia, Mary Joe Henning of the University of Toledo, and other people who were not associated with us at all. O.L. Davis came from the University of Texas. Some other people came from other places. We asked each professor to come and bring a graduate student, and ultimately we had 40 or 50 people from around the country, who were deeply involved in doing research with the Annehurst system or working with schools in their local communities to try to implement the Annehurst ideas. And there a number of places around the country -- one in Minneapolis, one in Cincinnati, some in other places where people were actively involved with public school people -- trying to make the Annehurst ideas work. Some in Kentucky. There
were a number of places around the country. In a sense, we were trying to disseminate an innovation. And we had a good core group of 40 or 50 people. We had, I’m not sure how many -- I want to say five or six or seven what I would call national conferences -- but they were national conferences with just 40 or 50 people. But we had people from all over the country, from Michigan and Minnesota and Iowa and Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, Ohio, Kentucky; people from a lot of different places. And the people would come and we would simply work through what the ideas were and train people how to do it, then talk about different ways of trying to implement and disseminate that. In one sense, that was a very successful experience. In another sense, it was not. If you’d go someplace today and try to find other schools who are using the Annehurst ideas, probably not. My guess is that the Annehurst School is not even using them here in Westerville. What it became was a very rich experience for all of us who did it. And I think it enriched our personal lives. I know that, for myself, it sharpened the way in which I think about research because we began to study curriculum materials that were used around the country. And lots of it was very depressing. Most of the curriculum materials were not worth a nickel. And I think we persuaded a lot of people as a result of those studies, and their involvement in collecting the data for those studies, that the Annehurst ideas had validity. So I think for myself at least, here at the end of my career, I feel very good about the Annehurst experience and the Annehurst ideas and what we called the “Annehurst Curriculum Classification System.” Dave Clinefelter and I -- he was a doctoral student at Ohio State -- Dave Clinefelter and I finally tried to take those notions
and market those ideas. I told Dave I couldn’t market. I wasn’t going to try to sell anything. But if we could sell a computer disk, where we could put this on a computer, if he could do that, that would be okay and it would work. But I wasn’t going to market it. We tried it, and it kind of worked, but it didn’t work. We finally moved away from that. But we took those ideas to their full hilt, and although they are operational in some places, it’s not a successful innovation in the sense that lots of schools do that now. But they were a profound experience for almost every person that I know who was deeply involved. And there were a good number of people who were deeply involved in that. When I say 50 or 60 people, those people were profoundly moved by that. Some of those people have become active in the Texas Education Agency, State Department, and man of those people teach fundamentals that grew out of that, I know today. I know that that’s true. So it was a good experience. For the people at the Annehurst School, I know it was a good experience. Those people were profoundly moved. Lynn Fitzpatrick, who just retired last year, I know that Lynn and I both grew immensely during all of our years together. Although Lynn left Annehurst School and retired from it last year, and she probably didn’t directly use those ideas in the last few years of her teaching, I know that indirectly they were very much a part of the fabric of her professional being.

Q. During your tenure at Ohio State, there were many changes going on in the field of education. Changes of emphasis, changes of ideas, changes of methods. One of the areas that underwent a good deal of change was the concept of philosophy as a basis of education, which had always been a very strong part of the Ohio
State program. Who was working in that area during your time here and how do you appraise their work?

A. Well obviously Bode was the person who cultivated that interest in philosophy, especially as it related to curriculum, early on. And Harold Alberty was a student of Bode’s. Hank Hulfish, who died the day I came to Ohio State, or that week anyway, was a professor of philosophy. Everett Kircher was not a Bode in the sense that Hulfish was. Everett was – I don’t know -- more eclectic or broader based or what, but I think Everett drew more broadly in his philosophy. But we hired Jerry Reagan and Jerry had a narrower interest, just more specialized. I don’t mean the criticize it. He had a narrower orientation of philosophy, very different from Everett’s. So Hank died right when I came. Everett, and there were some other people, I’m sorry I block on who was involved in that …

Q. Reagan, Pratt and Smith.

A. Well they came. We hired Reagan and Pratt and Smith to fill some other people who were kind of involved in what I thought of as the foundations area. Who was the guy who wrote much about democracy and freedom – Alan Griffin, I think it was -- died my first year, I think, at Ohio State. But anyway, he was a part of that foundations group when I was with the Department of Education. Reagan, and then Reagan and Pratt, and then Reagan and Pratt and Smith were hired to emphasize philosophy. I think it had a very different emphasis from then on. Everett was approaching retirement and in a sense he had never been a really influential person in that area. He was a more quiet, soft spoken person. He was not a person who was a shaker and a mover, as Edgar Dale might say. Jerry
Reagan came. Jerry was a very strong personality. He had his own unique orientation toward philosophy. It was very different from Everett’s. In an intellectual sense it was very well developed. Jerry was responsible for us getting Dick Pratt, and Dick Pratt had an orientation which was more like Jerry’s. What I think of as logical positivism. That might not be the right way to describe it. But they began to turn it in a different direction. Because of a lot of changes in the organization of the College and the organization of the University, the collegial relationships changed. As I said, when I came to Ohio State in 1962, the functional unit was really the Department of Education, and at that time, the people who taught methods, the people who taught curriculum, the people who taught philosophy were all the same department. They were colleagues. The collegial relationship was very, very strong. It was very easy, under those circumstances, in what I think of as the worst sense of academic tradition, that what is taught is more a matter of “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours. I’ll require my students to take your course and you require your students to take my courses.” That’s a dumb way to run a university, but many of the things that are called “required courses” grow out of that. When the department was the milieu, within which that discussion took place, you had one set of contributions. When we broke into faculties and other departments and people in other departments, it was very different for people in elementary to require their students to take classes in philosophy when they were in a different department. Departments tend to think, “well we need that money for our department. We need lines on the budget. We need to hire our staff members. Why should we support them
over there?” So the notion of what’s a required course began to lose favor as we broke into departmental units within the College, rather than when we had all been in one department. And I think that was the primary thing which caused the loss of support for philosophy and teacher education. It was really a function of the organizational changes and people in elementary or secondary would think, “I don’t know why we should send our people over there to take classes. Let’s give them another course in reading.” They wouldn’t have said that out loud, but that’s the thought process that went on. The people said that in science and math. The people said that in social studies, education. People said that in every area. It’s very tough when the person in your own department says, “I don’t think the person ought to take your course.” It’s very different when they’re in a different department. You don’t meet with them. You don’t make decisions with them.

Q. So you’re arguing it wasn’t intellectual content but simply organizational methodology within the College that caused the decline in philosophy.

A. Absolutely. I think people would not have said that, and they would have said: “Well we don’t have the same kind of emphasis they had when Boyd Bode was here.” I think that’s what Pratt and Reagan and taught. Phil Smith had a very different orientation. More of Dewey and the holistic orientation. But they were all good teachers. All good scholars. And they were all effective in the classroom. So it wasn’t that what they were teaching was not well done. It was just that, “Why should we do that when we can have people take our own courses?” I would put the primary emphasis on the organizational changes within the College that caused that.
Q. There was a similar decline in the interest in the history of education.

A. Same thing. Same reason, I would say. That may not have been true. Bob Sutton and Bernie Mehl were very different people. Bernie was a very dynamic, enthusiastic teacher but very hard to understand. And nobody grasped him, especially during those years of unrest. But he was very bright and very provocative. And students learned a lot. Whether they internalized that and were able to use that, I don’t know. Bob Sutton was much more quiet, and Bob functioned primarily, what I think of, at the politics of the University, and some within the politics of the College. But Bob did not publish much, was not a scholar in the traditional sense. But Bob was a very good person, good thoughtful person, intelligent person. And I always thought he was a very good teacher. When I say that, I’m talking about graduate students that he had who took courses with him. And I know that they thought he was good. And I think he was. Bob has Alzheimers now, and is very incapacitated. Just tragic to see what happened to him. I think Bob is a good man. Bob was not as well thought of by a lot of other people, but that’s because they valued the kinds of things that guys like me do: write a lot, talk a lot, so forth. That’s only part of what it takes to make a university professor. Bob was very strong in other ways than a guy like me. He didn’t have the national visibility that I had. I had the national visibility. And even Bernie. Bernie was a very different critter than I was and very hard to understand. Very difficult to live with. He was very sharp and abrasive and so forth. But he was a very good teacher. And the people at the University who took class with him, they got a lot of radical ideas and a lot of wild ideas, but the
University was big enough to handle that. Bernie was very helpful in that respect. Bernie, I know, now is not well, and I feel very sadly about that. There’s nothing I can do about it. I’ve never seen Bernie, probably since I left here, 15, 18 years ago. But I think Bernie was a very provocative person. He drove any administrator in the University up the wall.

Q. Do you think that teachers in training in particular have any need to understand the philosophy or the history of education?

A. Absolutely. They absolutely do. We talked earlier about the people, high school teachers who are teaching what they call block schedule, don’t realize that that’s rooted in core curriculum, and core curriculum is rooted in Boyd Bode’s notion of philosophy. I think it’s very important that people should know that. I think they are not getting that. And I think the current emphasis on what’s usually referred to as “accountability in education,” we’re moving further and further away from it. There is no rationale for what is taught now in schools except what’s on the state test. I think that’s an absolute tragic set of circumstances. I think American schools will do nothing but go downhill, until we finally live through that. And then as the Don Cruickshank sometimes says, “The accountability movement is going to fall of its own weight.” It’s a terrible movement and I think it’s sad that it’s here. But we’ll eventually outgrow it. We may not, If the Supreme Court rules that vouchers are good, and if we move to privatize everything, that will be a tragic set of circumstances. We’ll teach at a very low level technologically. Teachers will teach only what we can test. And I think that will be absolutely harmful to the kids who will not learn to think. These tests, whether its Indiana or
Ohio or Florida or what not, these tests do not get at the things. Ohio has a good set of tests, but the emphasis on using the test as a final measure of the effectiveness of a public school is probably about as low level as politicians and others can sink. But they’ve sunk down to that. And they’re trying to implement that. And because they have power, they are doing it. But giving people power doesn’t give them wisdom. I think lots and lots of policy makers at the state level are behaving like teenagers: they’re doing it just because every other state is doing it. It’s a tragic thing for public education in America. And public education is going to be hurt because it’s following the political approach and we are not basing what we teach or how we teach on the fundamental purposes of education, which relate to life itself. And that’s lost when we’ve lost the philosophical assumptions that undergird curriculum.

Q. To what extent do you think colleges of education contributed to this change of thinking?

A. Oh a lot. I don’t think there’s any doubt in that. I think a lot of people have contributed to it unwittingly. But they’ve done it. And I think now we’re going to suffer the consequences. But education people historically have not rooted their own activities in the research with their particular thing. Some people have done that better than others, but people in colleges of education around the country have not been, notoriously they have not been strong, either in research or in philosophy. And they’ve rooted their approach in the practical aspects of things that work. I think that’s unfortunate. I think we’re at the stage that medicine was at the turn of the last century, in the early 1900’s, when medicine finally decided
to build a strong university base for preparing people to be physicians. People in education have tried to move that way, but they’ve never gone all the way with that. And because they didn’t go all the way with that, they are still trying to lean on the -- I don’t know what to say, and this isn’t the right language -- but lean on the “gimmicky” aspect of it. Lots of people in math and science, I think, have leaned on the mathematics part or the science part. Lots of people in social studies lean on the social studies part. But they have not leaned on the part of that that’s important for every youngster to learn, especially general education in the public schools. And general education in the public schools is in serious jeopardy with emphasis on accountability now. I think many of the people in colleges of education around the United States, in fact I think Ohio State is less inclined this way than lots of people are and lots of universities. But even so, we have not built our program upon very solid empirical findings, especially as we have moved, all across the country, away from empirical studies, to what we call qualitative research or other kinds of things. I think we’ve done things that further jeopardize that. We’ve tended to move in the research base in education and education is shot through with this. American Educational Research Association shows it, and other organizations -- the American Psychological Association -- shows a willingness to build ways of looking at what people learn and how they learn and so forth, based on what I think of as very, very flimsy bases. Most of the qualitative research in education is based on the notions of small numbers and personal experience. Well, the one thing I’m confident of is, personal experience is not enough from which to generalize. We need a broader base than our own
personal experiences. And that’s what research is. That’s what reading is about. We can draw from a thousand peoples’ experiences, if we use other peoples research, but the emphasis to say “it’s right because it worked for me,” is much too narrow a base. And I am very critical of much of the research in education today, and many people as I understand at Ohio State today too, many of the people are operating almost on the basis of an existentialist approach. “It’s right because I know it’s right.” And I can’t think of anything being dumber than that. For example, I’ve done my own research in drop outs and student motivation. I’ve done research on hundreds of thousands of young people. And I have a lot better understanding, a lot more confidence in what’s related to students dropping out of school based on that than anybody could ever have based on a personal insight they have of a few students that they’ve studied. I worked with a woman in Detroit who just finished her dissertation and she did what she called a qualitative research with teenage students. Well hell, she doesn’t know about it as much as I know. I know she doesn’t. And that loss of an empirical base and the loss of a very solid philosophical foundation in many colleges of education across the United States, is a very serious loss, and I regret it seriously.

Q. Well you thought that many years ago because as the failure of philosophy and history became more and more apparent, did you not move those specifically into your CNF group in order to strengthen it?

A. I think so. At the time it was just a political accommodation. The people were uncomfortable with where they were. They wanted to come someplace else. Paul Klohr, who was a product of OSU and profoundly influenced by the philosophy
thing, and I had indirectly gotten it from Ohio State by having worked at Florida where many of the professors were graduates of Ohio State, I had absorbed that indirectly. But Kelly Duncan, whose own basic training, undergraduate degree was in engineering, he had come to that conclusion on his own through his own scholarship and study of the importance of understanding the basics. And he would classify philosophy as a basic in those kinds of things. Most of the staff had accepted, willingly, the people in foundations to come join us. In an indirect way, we were influenced by what had been an Ohio State tradition originally. I used to think -- this is kind of an aside -- but I used to think that there were three dominant institutions America in training of people in education. One was Columbia, one was Chicago, and one was Ohio State. Columbia had kind of a practitioner emphasis. Chicago had kind of a research emphasis. And Ohio State had a foundations emphasis, and a values emphasis, and a philosophy emphasis. Each of those institutions, especially after the second world war, when they began to really develop the graduate program and turn out graduates and form graduate programs elsewhere, as guys like Gaylen Saylor left Columbia, Bill Alexander who left Columbia University, became very active in developing graduate programs at the doctorate level in their own institutions. Gaylen at the University of Nebraska and Bill Alexander did it at Peabody, then later at the University of Florida. It was a spin-off of what the strength of Ohio’s emphasis on values and philosophy. Whereas the graduates at the University of Chicago who came out tended to be very empirically oriented, and the people who came out of Teachers College tended to be very practitioner oriented, so there were, probably during the
50’s and 60’s and maybe the early 70’s, (I think those universities were fountainheads of the whole country.) And as Jack Corbally said something to this effect in the orientation when I first came there in 1962, he said, “The University of Chicago and the Big 10 Universities graduate more Ph.D.’s than all the other universities in the United States put together.” That was a remarkable statistic. I think I’ve quoted Jack correctly on that. Those universities turned out a lot, so Ohio State was part of that, and the University of Chicago, were two of those parts who turned out lots of people during those very important years. And the people who came through the Ohio State program at the graduate level were people whose roots were in philosophy. I remember Kim Wiles said to me one time, and Kim was a curriculum supervision person, par excellence. I asked him once, “What was the most important course you ever took in your graduate work?” He said, “Hands down, Boyd Bode’s philosophy course. There were 250-300 people in that course. That was absolutely the most important course I ever took in all my graduate work, all my college courses.” So philosophy was the root of many of the people who had profound influence on curriculum. And those roots were there. So when the people at Ohio State expressed an interest in joining with those of us in curriculum instruction, that was a very natural affiliation. It wasn’t something that we ourselves explicitly were interested in. It was something that we were, at an implicit level, deeply interested in.

Q. Do you think a non-philosophical model such as the body of knowledge approach is doomed to failure because it has no philosophical foundation?
A. Well, I don’t know what it means to call something “a body of knowledge” approach. I don’t know exactly what that means. My guess is that …

Q. Well, many think that is the basis of the testing standards.

A. Okay, I hadn’t seen that. If that’s the die, then that’s an error. As a nation we’re going to suffer. As a profession, we’re going to suffer. And as a profession at the college level of teaching, we’re going to suffer, if we follow that route. That’s a dead-end route. Bodies of knowledge is wonderful. But when those bodies of knowledge get translated into 40 questions on mathematics, of which 24 have to be answered correctly, as is true in the case of State of Ohio right now, that’s a very narrow approach. And it’s bound to fail in the long run. Bound to fail.

Q. You’ve spoken very eloquently today of many of the people you worked with here at Ohio State by name and by specific activity. If you look at the total body of colleagues that you had in the College of Education today, were they supportive? Did they play a role in what you were able to achieve in your career?

A. The answer to that has to be yes, and I’m sure many people were supportive that I didn’t know were being supportive. I remember, for example, I had only been here a couple of years and I came up for promotion to full professor. I had been an Associate Professor before I came here. I came here as an Associate Professor. And although I hadn’t fulfilled all those years here, I came up for promotion. I also know that I came up for promotion at a time when the rules were different than they are now. Now, the emphasis is on how many articles did you publish and that kind of stuff. Well I had already done all that stuff. I had written all my life. I like to write. I published a lot of things. It’s never been a problem. I don’t
even think about it. It’s just because it’s a way to help me to learn to think better myself that I write so much. And I feel good about that. But I remember a guy like Bob Jewett, who was Chairman of the Ranks and Promotion Committee the year I came up for promotion, and I had only been here two years. And I expect some people might have said, “Well, he hasn’t been here long enough” and so forth. Well I don’t even know what went on there, but I got promoted. Guys like Bob Jewett and other people were obviously supportive of me and I just happened to remember that as an instance. Lots of people I think were supportive of me who didn’t even understand what I was doing. I probably didn’t even understand it fully myself. I was very active while I was at Ohio State. I mean, I was active around the country. I was as active nationally as I was locally. I never worked, for example, with the Columbus Public Schools until one or two times the last few years I was here. The Columbus Schools didn’t call on Ohio State. I don’t know what that schism was, but they didn’t do it. They should have. I think it was criticism. I never went anyplace unless I was asked. I never tried to work my way into the Columbus Schools. I did much more with Westerville, of course, with Annehurst School. I did much more with the Cincinnati Public Schools. I did more with other public schools around the state than I did with Columbus. Now I think that was not to the Columbus Public Schools people’s credit. But I was very active outside of the institution. And the institution was supportive of me in that. I got promoted. I got reasonable salary increments. I was very positively thought of, I think, by lots of people. There were probably people who didn’t like the fact that I was out running around the country and was commuting to California twice
a month sometimes. For a whole year or two I commuted to California twice a month. I thought a lot of people probably assumed that I was using that for my personal grandizement or personal ego, and maybe I was. I wouldn’t even say that wasn’t true. But I was trying to cultivate a way of changing education that I thought had ideas which had solid bases. I think the research that I had done in motivation, the things I had learned about curriculum development, the ideas that I thought were important and I still think are important. I was simply trying to teach, whether I was in Sacramento or whether I was in Seattle or whether I was in Chicago or whether I was in New York City or Boston or Gainesville, Florida or Daytona or Atlanta. I was a school teacher, and I thought it was important to try to teach the best way that I could. And I think, for whatever reason, most of the people in the College of Education were supportive of me in that respect. Some of them might have thought I was gone too much. I’m sure many of them did. But I think generally the college, even those that I didn’t really know very well or we didn’t have a lot of interaction, were tolerant of that and supportive of that. Certainly the Deans and the Associate Deans and other people in the University were supportive of that. The President was supportive. People who I thought probably didn’t even know what was going on were supportive of that. And I didn’t even know that, but I found out later that some of those people did lots of things that were helpful to me in that respect. Certainly guys that I worked with directly, like Vern Cunningham and Don Anderson and Arliss Roaden and Don Cottrell. Those people were very supportive of me. And I know that many of the people who were my colleagues at that time at least tolerated that. If they
really felt negatively about it, they could have caused somebody to raise a question with me. That was never, ever done that I know if. If it happened, I certainly didn’t hear about it. People protected me from it, so I would call that support.

Q. In the period after you organized the curriculum and foundations group, new ideas came about in the field of education. Some of the old ideas were considered passe, particularly by those who were traditionalists in the field of education. But within your own CNF group, there was a new outshoot called post-modernist theory and ideas, widely attributed to your department and the work of Paul Klohr and his graduate students in the 60’s and 70’s. What’s your appraisal of that era and that kind of work within the College? Do you think it was meaningful?

A. I’m sure it was meaningful, but it was never meaningful to me. But I know a number of people for whom it was very meaningful. And people that I knew well and whom I respected. My general evaluation of that was that that was the wrong road to hoe. But that’s based on my own idiosyncrasies. Lots of people have hoed roads that I thought were the wrong roads to hoe. For example, I think the people in special education who followed the behavior modification: that was not the way to go. And I’ve said that to them many times during those years. But I respect their right to do that. They were thoughtful people. They were intelligent people. They were working hard at what they were doing. It just didn’t square with me. Incidentally, it didn’t square with me because of the philosophy of it. But that’s another story by its own. Lots of people did things that I didn’t think were the right way to go, but a university has to be big enough to have diverse
points of view. The universe of ideas. And so the fact that Paul and some of his students wanted to go that way didn’t make sense to me, but that didn’t make it wrong. It was not an area that I was interested in, not an area that I was going to cultivate, it was not an area that I was going to spend much energy on, but I wouldn’t have argued against it. I didn’t try to tell people, “That’s a dumb set of ideas, don’t do that.” It just didn’t make sense to me.

Q. Do you think in the fullness of time the idea has held up or do you think it has died?

A. I think it has not held up. But it may be that I still don’t understand it. I’m not following it and I don’t understand it. But the fact is, there are lots of changes that are not holding up now, especially as the activities within the nation are profoundly influenced by legislators to hold up, the whole field is being redefined. For example, if the Supreme Court holds this term, as it’s going to hold, make a decision on the Cleveland case about the voucher program, if they hold that vouchers are legitimate ways for public agencies to spend money for private, church-related programs, I think that will have a dramatic impact on public education. And if it comes, it will come through the courts. It won’t come through the legislature. It never worked through legislature, but the courts may make that decision. The court is now a very conservative court and they may move that way. They may not and they’re going to make that decision about the Cleveland voucher experience this year. But if that happens, all of these other things are beside the point. I think, for me anyway, and I’ve been aware of this for 20 years anyway, I wasn’t aware of it before, I think there are fundamentally
two streams of thought that exert influence on the public schools. And I’m thinking about the public schools, not the University. The University, in a sense, follows that. We can say that the University ought to lead it, but it doesn’t lead very well. The public schools have had to deal with two streams of thought. One stream of thought has come out of the State Department of Education and it is rooted in law, and it says schools must do thus and so. The other streams of thought have come primarily from professional organizations in an education, like ASCD and other professional organizations, in which they have constantly bombarded the people who are in the public schools with a set of ideas about how to do things better. Whether it’s to say that research in brain development suggests that high school kids need to start school later. That’s very different than what the legislature is saying that “all schools will do thus and so.” So I think we’ve historically had these two streams of thought. One has been rooted in law and mandates and requirements and compulsions. The other has been rooted in ideas and it’s been a whole series of propositions. Whether it’s a PSSC physics, BSCS biology, which came outside the field of education and field of the disciplines, or whether it’s the notion of block scheduling, or whether it’s notions like the core curriculum. Those have always been provocative ideas that have run parallel but in the opposite direction from the compulsion thing; this has come from state departments and law. For a hundred years, the compulsory thing was exercised at a minimal level. Everything that schools did, they did either because they were required to or they were permitted to by the State. But in the last 20 years, last 15 years, that shifted very strongly. The State has shifted its emphasis
from giving permission to the local boards to do things like curriculum
development, etc., select their own tests. The states have exerted themselves much
more influentially on that. And the influence on the state now is profoundly
magnified compared to what it was just 20 years ago. For example, before the
Nation at Risk report came out in 1983, and after the Nation at Risk came out in
1983, the State of Illinois passed more laws in the first five years after the Nation
at Risk came out about education than it passed in the 100 years before that. And
that’s happened in every state in America. And the state has become a much more
active influential participant, and almost everything that they have done has come
in the form of mandates and requirements. Fifty years ago, when things like
federal involvement in education were being considered, people used to ask the
question, will federal involvement mean federal control? Well that’s kind of a
silly question. Of course, federal involvement means federal control. But federal
control is very different than state control. Federal control in education has
always been characterized in three or four ways. First of all, in every case except
one that I know of, in every single case federal laws that affect education have
always been optional to the school districts involved. For example, Upper
Arlington High School, which is less than a mile from where we sit, prided itself
all during the 40’s and 50’s and 60’s of not taking federal money because they
didn’t want federal control. The conservative nature of that community allowed
them to reject that. So they didn’t have a program in vocational education
supported by federal control, federal legislation. So the things that were made
available by the federal government were always optional for the people at the
district level. Secondly, every law that is passed from the federal government, always came up for review. So when ESEA was passed, Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed, it had to come up for review two or three or four, five years later. And so it was always reconsidered. None of the state legislation is characterized that way. None of the state laws are optional. Every school must do it. None of them came up for review. The state is much more rigid and much more inflexible than the federal government ever was. And so I think now that the state governments have moved dramatically in their effort to control education and they’re trying to exercise control in a very different way than the federal government ever did. And I think a much worse way. It wasn’t intended that way and I think the people at the state level are just doing what they know to do. They pass laws. That’s all they know how to do, is pass laws. But because of the history of education, education is a state responsibility, the implications now are much more severe and much more narrow. The federal government always expanded opportunities. For example, the federal effort in public education for more than 100 years has been to broaden it. For example, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, not quite a 100 years, was an effort to broaden it from a narrow curriculum approach. It broadened to add vocational education in the same way that the laws which establish things like Ohio State University. The Land Grant College Act, the Morill Act of 1862, broadened the conventional conception of higher education. Federal legislation in education has always broadened it. Sometimes it’s enriched it by providing opportunities for the new math, new science and so forth. And the traditionalists have always kind of fought
that. But the state role now is a much more narrow, much more coercive, it’s
going to have much more negative influences on it. Even though the states think
it’s going to get better, it’s going to get worse. It’s going to get much worse. I
think the next 20 years, 25 years, they are going to be very difficult years. People
in charge of education are going to have to conform to very narrow state mandates
and we have not learned when people have power, that doesn’t give them
wisdom. And the state approach, which is a coercive approach, the law approach,
is a narrowing approach and it doesn’t benefit from the enriching, the controversy
that can occur within a university, like Ohio State. That’s all going to be lost. All
the benefits of that are going to be lost. And the people think they can legislate
education in a way that’s going to make it better. I’d bet every dollar I own right
now and put it in a trust. And if I lost that bet, somebody else could have it. It is
not going to happen. It’s dead wrong. And we’re going to ultimately learn that
that’s a tragic way to go. It’s going to take a whole generation, but we’re going to
do it. We’re going to suffer through it. We may lose the whole concept of public
education. And if we do, that will be a tragic loss. Public education is a very
important idea. And if we lost it because of a bunch of knuckle heads who think
that you can compel people and coerce people to do better, it’s because they don’t
know well enough and we didn’t teach them well enough in public school.
They’re dumb, stupid people, and I’m sorry that happened. As long as the
chemistry of ideas were such that that could prevail, it would work. But when we
lock that chemistry down and go for a mandated approach, which is what states
are doing, I really think what’s going to happen in the long run is tragic. Now we
may outgrow it, and the courts may not lock us into that, and we may ultimately come to realize that we’re doing this stuff and it’s dumb stuff. Maybe we need other legislation. Maybe we need to loosen up the system rather than tighten it up. But there’s no sign at the moment that that’s going to happen.

Q. Do you believe that alternative schools and magnet schools are constructive to public education?

A. Well, there have always been options, some of which have been created within the framework of desegregation. We’re not able to control young people. They’ve been options. Anything which takes away options for anybody is moving in the direction opposite to that which is America. The whole notion of freedom presumes options. Anything which locks out options doesn’t do that. Now the notion of public education as compulsory locks out options. We’re compelling kids to go to school. But within that, we’ve always been able to preserve some options. People had elective courses. People had elective options. Teachers would not have to fit a nice tight … we’ve always had slippage in that. And as long as that slippage existed, it was pretty good. But the more options we deny and the more we try to mandate very narrow things, the worse it’s going to be. So I feel alternative school is simply a part of that, and some kids don’t fit regular school. So the alternative schools that were developed in Worthington or Columbus or what not, have served a very useful purpose. Allowing some people who didn’t quite fit the mold to have some latitude, some freedom, some flexibility, and so forth. I’m very much for latitude, freedom and flexibility. And if we lock it down and don’t have it, it’s going to be tragic. The schools will
become more like prisons and I’m very uncomfortable with that analogy. But I think it may happen. That’s clearly the direction we’re moving right now nationally.

Q. Do you see charter schools as being part of the threat to public school systems?

A. I do in the sense that most of the people who are using charter schools are doing that as a device to privatize, and often they want to try to privatize funds as a way of helping a church. And I’m adamant against the breakdown of the wall of separation. I know Chief Justice Renquist has said that separation between church and state is too high and needs to be torn down. I don’t think it’s too high. I think the wall of separation is a wonderful thing, and I think charter schools are being used to get public money for private religious reasons. I think that is wrong. I think the history of the world will support me on that. When government and churches have gotten in bed with each, one or the other loses out. That’s happened every time that I know of in the history of the world. You either have a strong government or you have a strong church. The only way you can have strong government and strong churches is to have this wall of separation. For example, the idea that God is dead evolved in England. It evolved in England where they have some wonderful churches, but nobody goes to church in England. They don’t go to church in England, because the church in England and the government got in bed with each other years and years and years ago. We now have in England a very strong government, but weak churches. In some other places we have strong churches but weak governments. The only place where you have strong government and strong churches is where they try to keep
that separation. Where the church can grow on the basis of voluntary contributions, and the government can do its thing. If the only thing that will make your church stand up are my taxes, I want your church to collapse. If the only thing that will make my church to stand up are your taxes, I want my church to collapse. The church has to stand apart from government. When the church and government try to wed their ideas together, one or the other goes down the tube. I think it’s a dumb thing. So the charter people are using that now as a device. I think there are lots of things about charters that are probably okay. But they won’t fit in in the long run. There are a lot of people, for example in Minnesota, who are using the charter idea as a way to bring novelty and options. And I think that’s good. But when in fact they run up against the accountability movement, which is not doing that, I think they will get chopped down. And very quickly all of these options won’t prevail. So I don’t think it will work. So I’m not enthused about that, in the long run. In the short run I’m enthused, because it’s an option. But if in fact the charter school movement moves in vigorous ways to get more tax money to support church efforts, I’m opposed to it. But it probably won’t make any difference. If the Supreme Court says that’s all right, the Supreme Court will prevail. For the short term anyway.

Q. This is the Jack Frymier deposition. Tape 2, side B, end of tape.

Q. This is the Ohio State University oral history program deposition of Jack Frymier. Interviewer is Robert Butche. This is tape 3, side A. This session recorded on October 5, 2001. Jack, we’ve talked at some length about the impact of outside agencies on education and the schools. But there are also similar changes within
the colleges of education. One of the approaches was to bring up the standing of
teachers and society by making teachers a profession as opposed to a group of
workers. And the proponents of that are generally members or founders or
believers in what is called the Holmes group approach to education. What are
your ideas?

A. I was not at Ohio State. I had left before the Holmes group was really proposed
and discussed and acted on. So I don’t know much about experience at Ohio
State. I think my general concerns are mixed. I think it’s very important for
people in education to become what I would call truly professional. And I think
the Holmes group was a group that was trying to do that. I think in general it has
not worked very well. But I think the ideas were fine. I think it hasn’t worked
very well because there are two factors that would affect that. And people want to
talk about one factor and not find a way to effectively deal with the other. For
example, another thing that is now moving around is called the national
certification of teachers by the National Certification Board. It’s an effort in the
same direction. The second set of factors which comes into play relate to how
much people are paid. And the notion of becoming truly professional is related in
part to the kind of people that you attract. And educators have never been able to
attract really first rate people in teaching, because they haven’t been able to
promise them enough financially. That’s a reality. Lots of people say, “well they
ought to go into it because they’re dedicated,” or what not. Nobody else thinks
that way, but everybody thinks educators should do that. So the Holmes effort and
the effort to make education truly professional was a noble effort. I think it would
have been very useful for us to stabilize the number of people in education and develop the cadre of people to a much higher level. I won’t discuss it as much length, but I tried in two or three very faltering efforts in my own life to make that happen. And I haven’t been able to do that at all. As long as people come into teaching and out of teaching, in and out, in and out, in and out, in and out -- as long as the in and out nature of teaching prevails -- you can keep the very low salaries. The dedicated people will stay. The other people just come and go. And you can operate the schools at a minimal cost. Which is a factor when legislatures and other people meet. If you want to get really competent people, you can’t do that. We couldn’t get people to enter fields like medicine that way. We couldn’t get people to enter fields like law that way. Unless there’s some promise economically that people will benefit in the long run, we’re not going to be able to stabilize the group. And if we can’t stabilize the group, the effort to become truly professional is offset. So that efforts like Holmes, in one sense, it makes a lot of sense. Keep people in training longer, make them better prepared. They’ll go out and be better prepared. Theoretically they’ll be able to command better salaries. But they can’t command better salaries as long as they’re operating within the negotiated framework settled by unions and that kind of thing. So it won’t work that way. In my little book, *Fostering Educational Change*, I proposed a six year program to train teachers. Nobody could enter a College of Education unless they had some kind of undergraduate degree. The first year they would spend one year in what I call the basic sciences of education -- that would be psychology and sociology and things like that -- and they would study what learning really was,
etc. The second year they would so something comparable to what they do in medicine. They would learn to teach on a one-to-one basis very effectively in all different subject matter fields. And people would become trained to become general practitioners in teaching. They would know all subject matter fields and teach people at all levels. Ultimately they would become very skilled. Well, that won’t work. I think it’s dumb now at the present time to ask an 18 year old male who played football last year, “Do you want to teach kindergarten?” And so we don’t get many men in elementary education. The dynamics are wrong. And when you can’t promise them anything, even people interested in teaching come in and they move into administration, then they move out. So that the strand of effort which relates to reimbursement is inconsistent with the strand of effort to upgrade the quality of teaching. We’ve tried to accommodate that over the years and tried to make it work, and the Holmes program is one effort in that direction. I don’t think in general, from what I know about Holmes -- I don’t know what really has happened here at Ohio State -- in general that effort was doomed to failure. And I think any effort like that will be doomed to failure unless you can simultaneously solve the financial problem. And the financial problem relates to people who come and ask for a job. If we could pay people $85,000 a year, we’d get a different kind of critter coming up and saying I want to learn to be a teacher, than when we could say we could pay them $45,000 a year after they work for 20 years. As long as that happens, the quality of human being who asks for a job and puts themselves forth for training, is different. So it’s not just selection. You can only select from those who are willing to come. And as long as we’re just
selecting from the bottom group -- and that’s what teacher education is doing. The
history of teacher education is clear. I have data at home right now, which shows
that for the last 25 years, the people who come into education have scored the
lowest on the GRE score, scored the lowest on other kinds of tests -- they simply
are less able intellectually than people who come to other professions. I don’t like
that. I wish it weren’t so. I don’t say it disparagingly. I say it factually. But as
long as those are the only kind of people that come, the effort to raise ourselves
by our bootstrap by better training and longer periods of preparation, are not
going to pay off. So I don’t see that as a way to resolve the dilemma.

Q. Are you saying there’s a relationship between financial reward and intellectual
competency?

A. Well of course I’m saying that. I think when you promise to pay people
$100,000, you get people with more smarts. Now it’s not popular in education
today to even talk about intelligence. Most school districts won’t test intelligence.
We tend to presume that’s not a factor. For example, in the data base, in the Ohio
State Department of Education, intelligence is not listed as a factor. So we don’t
take intelligence into consideration. Now, by golly, intelligence makes a lot of
difference. If you want to get good people in profession, you have to select them
on the basis of intellectual qualities. I know it’s not politically correct to talk
about that. But there’s a lot of things that aren’t politically correct that don’t have
any square with reality at all. So I think we’re very unfortunate in not being able,
somehow or other, to get good people and know that they’re good people. We
find out after people finish four years of college and take a graduate record exam,
that they’re not as intelligent as students in other areas. But we don’t use it as a
criterion. We never select people on that basis. Other professions select people
on those bases, even it’s a subjective assessment of intelligence; they select people
on the basis of intelligence in other fields. They certainly don’t let people into
medicine who are dumb, stupid people, if they can help it. They may make a
mistake, but they don’t do it knowingly.

Q. Do you think the ongoing conflict between the traditionalists and the progressives
in the last 50 years has contributed in anyway to the demise of public education in
this country?

A. I don’t know that I can answer that question. I don’t think that’s the issue
anymore. That was the issue 40 or 50 years ago. I don’t think that’s an issue
anymore. The issues now, the central issues now, have simply transcended that.
When state legislatures started to mandate what tests items kids have to pass --
and that’s a fairly recent phenomenon that’s just now being fully implemented
nationwide -- that changed the whole nature of the ballgame. There’s a different
set of rules now. We aren’t fully aware of what they are. And everybody’s going
to try to accommodate to those rules; try to figure a way around those rules, or
see if they can find a way to make those rules work. They’ll try to be politically
accommodating. That’s not, in a theoretical sense, that can’t be solved by
discussion. You cannot, the more you mandate things -- I’ll use the Ohio example
because I understand it, the example I cited a little bit ago. There are 40 items no
a math test. You have to pass 26 to get them right. If you don’t pass 26, you don’t
get a diploma. That’s a very narrow approach to educational improvement and
it’s doomed in the long run. Because people are going to teach to the test. People
don’t like that. Whether people are teaching to their tests, that’s the way it’s
going to happen. For example, in Ohio now, you assess kids in 4th grade. Nobody
in the public schools wants to teach 4th grade anymore. You can’t get people to
teach 4th grade, because of this asinine assumption that comes out of the State
Department, from the Ohio State Board of Education. It comes out of the
legislature. But the accountability thing won’t be able to legislate good
achievement. You can’t do that. And I think the nature of the game is such, that
the traditionalist approach, the progressive approach, is, I don’t know what the
right word is, non-secular or something. It’s passe. It doesn’t exist. There’s no
impact on it at all.

Q. Would you take issue with those who argue that the state minimum standards is in
fact a win for the traditionalists?

A. No, I don’t think it’s a win for the traditionalists. The traditionalists may think it
is. But it isn’t. Anything which reduces what people have to learn to a set of
items on a test narrows the curriculum, narrows learning, and reduces learning.
You cannot teach people to become more intelligent by teaching them less.
There’s no way that that can be done. I thought we learned that 20 years ago with
what was called “minimum competencies.” Minimum means minimum. You
can’t maximize achievement by focusing on the minimum. The current
accountability is simply an effort to maximize achievement by focusing on the
minimum. It’s logically inconsistent. And it will prove that way and it won’t
work. I wish that weren’t true, but I know it is.
Q. By the time you had completed your 11 years working with the Annehurst School, your career at Ohio State had come to an end. How did it end and what did you do after?

A. Well I worked, I taught, at Ohio State until 1984. I must have left here in ’84, yes in ’84. The last year that I worked with Annehurst was ’83-’84 school year, and I didn’t go every Tuesday that year. But I probably went 20 times during the course of the year. The last year that I worked at Ohio State on salary I took leave half time from Ohio State and I worked with Kappa Delta Pi on a project that was called “The Good Schools Project.” It was a study of 106 schools across the country, and we tried to identify schools in all kind of communities, north and south, east and west, big cities, small towns, rural, etc. We tried to identify good schools and then tried to study what those schools were like and make some generalizations about how good schools were characterized, even though they came from different situations. And it was a project that I worked on, I worked half time for the University and half time for Kappa Delta Pi that year. It was a very strenuous project for me physically. At the end of 1984 school year, I was exhausted. I was really tired and I felt the need to leave. I had agreed -- I may be a little off here on years I’m talking about -- I had agreed earlier to take leave of the University and to work with the Indianapolis Public Schools for one full year. And I had started that. I went to Indianapolis in August, 1984. I went to Indianapolis to work with Jim Adams, who was the Superintendent of Schools there. He had asked me many times to work with him wherever he had been in different places around the country. And I finally agreed to go there. And I told
him when I went that I was not going to travel. I was not going to run around the
country. I had been doing so much of that and I was physically exhausted. I said I
wouldn’t leave Indianapolis that year. I think I left one time to go make a speech
somewhere. So I was psychologically and physically tired, and I had taken leave
from the University to work with the Indianapolis Public Schools. And it was fun
for me. I like to work with public school people. And I think one of the most
significant personal experiences for me that I ought to find a way to articulate, I
haven’t done that very well, is how University people can work with public
schools more effectively. I think I have been very effective at that. And I think a
lot of people in the public schools think so too. And I have not found a way to
communicate that to other University professors very well. I think the University
professors in the College of Education ought to work hand and glove with people
in the public schools. I think we ought to do it without remuneration. I think we
ought to do it as part of their assigned responsibility and so forth. And that gets
into a big can of worms to do that. But I left here, took leave, and went to
Indianapolis. Was living in Indianapolis. We had rented an apartment and my
wife and I were living there. And the Board of Trustees adopted an early
retirement policy and I decided to exercise that. My wife did not want me to do
that. I finally made the decision to do it, I’m not exactly sure when, but I think it
took effect in November or December of 1984. I’m still not sure if I’m right on
the year. It may have been 1983. But anyway, I exercised the right to take early
retirement. Incidentally, the early retirement thing, I’m vain enough to put myself
in that category, I think the only thing the early retirement did for University was
to bleed off some of the most able people it had, and I think I’m right when I look
at the people. I put myself in that category but maybe I shouldn’t. But many of
the people who took early retirement were some of the most able people we had.
And I think that was a tragic loss. If that had been posed in such a way that was
seen as a golden handshake for me, I probably wouldn’t have taken it. In
retrospect, I think it was the right move for me. But I left here, while I was in
Indianapolis. I stayed on at Indianapolis and began to draw my retirement. I
stayed at Indianapolis. And I left because I was physically and psychologically
exhausted. I shouldn’t have made the decision on the basis of that, but I did. My
wife didn’t want me to, but I did anyway. After I took retirement, Phi Delta
Kappa, with whom I had worked very, very closely over many years, and I had
taken the equivalent of a sabbatical, whatever that was (I had taken that I think in
1978, several years before that). I had had a wonderful experience with Phi Delta
Kappa that year doing workshops on the Annehurst curriculum classification
system that had been developed at Annehurst School all over the United States.
And the University paid half my salary, and Phi Delta Kappa paid half my salary.
So it was a marvelous experience for me. And when I got finished and I wrote my
report on it and sent it in, Harold Enarson read the report and wrote back to me
and said, “This is what leave ought to be.” When people take sabbatical, it wasn’t
called sabbatical or whatever it was called. Very positive comment from Harold
Enarson. It just blew my mind. I didn’t even know he had looked at it. That was a
good year for me, when I did that as a sabbatical. But when I left at retirement
time in 1984, I was simply tired. But Phi Delta Kappa had heard about that and
asked me if I would come down to Phi Delta Kappa and work for one year. I did that. Then during the middle of that year, they asked me to stay on and I did. I stayed on five years. Then I retired again. Then I wound up going to the University of Nebraska at Omaha for two years, retired again and went back to Bloomington. Then I started to work with Phi Delta Kappa again, and I stayed again. I stayed until 1999, I guess. And I finally retired at age 74. I finally retired. I’m now 76 years old, and I wish I was teaching school now. I think I would be 100 times better professor if I were teaching now, than I would be when I retired. I simply know more. My years at Phi Delta Kappa were wonderful for me. My years at Ohio State were wonderful for me. So I just think I’d be a better professor. Nobody wants to hire a 76 year old guy now, but I think I would be a good man. I’d come pretty cheap.

Q. Let’s explore some of your other experiences, particularly with ASCD, because it bridged much of what you were doing at Ohio State and what you were doing with outside entities as well. Why did you spend so much time on ASCD and what did it produce for you and for this University?

A. Well, I don’t know if I can answer that. I think every University professor has an allegiance to the institution and an allegiance to his academic discipline. And for me the ASCD was the academic discipline, the organization most closely affiliated with what I would call an academic discipline: curriculum development, supervision, what I was teaching. ASCD is not thought of as an scholarly organization like American Historical Society. But for me that was the closest thing there was. And over the years I had been very active in ASCD; I
became an officer and a president and all that kind of stuff. But I did a lot of speaking to groups. I worked on lots of committees for ASCD. It was simply an enriching experience. It was part of this other stream I talked about. The professional organization had people in it with ideas, and it was intellectually fascinating and helpful for me to know people from around the country who were in the same kind of work that I was in. Professors of curriculum, people who taught supervision courses, people who were trying to use research in their teaching, and I would meet these people from all over the United States. So the organization was simply a place for me to continue to learn. Then I ultimately became active in it in the sense of an officer and all that stuff. I didn’t want to do that but I finally wound up doing that. That was not the part of the organization that I enjoyed; probably the part that I enjoyed least. But I used the organization, I think, to benefit myself and I hoped that that would show up in the students that I taught at Ohio State. So it was because there were lots of interesting, exciting people in ASCD at the time. And they further enriched my own experience and further helped me become a better professor. So that was the reason I was attracted to it. And it was reciprocal. I think I contributed to ASCD. I know I did in lots of ways. That was the reason I was elected president and all that kind of stuff. But professional organizations are very important to University people. I think they simply represent another handle on the way to get hold of the universe in which one deals. In my case, it was with curriculum and supervision and instruction. That was another way to meet people who knew about that. I wouldn’t meet as colleagues within the University.
Q. Well you paint ASCD and your experiences there as being very intellectually stimulating, similar to your work here.

A. Very much. Very much. so. It was primarily a source of intellectual stimulation for me. I don’t know if it’s that way now at ASCD or not. But at the time it was. I met people from all over the United States, many of whom were professors of curriculum, who became presidents of ASCD. My own advisor, Art Combs, who was a psychologist and became very active in curriculum work, became President of ASCD. Bill Van Til was professor of curriculum at NYU. First he tried to hire me the first year I was at Ohio State. He offered me a job at NYU, as a professor of curriculum. I didn’t go, but he was Past President of ASCD. Gordon McKenzie was Past President of ASCD. Professor of Supervision at Teachers College. These were all people who were colleagues of mine nationally and I learned from them. And Alex Frazier was very active in ASCD and President of ASCD. He happen to be locally a person I knew. But most of the Presidents and people I met; like Ned Flanders through ASCD that I talked about. I met Ralph Tyler through ASCD. Ralph wasn’t active organizationally, but he was always on the program and he and I debated once on ideas of national assessment in 1968 in Las Vegas. Should we have national assessment? He was in favor of it and I was opposed to it. That was the way the debate was set up. I knew Ralph Tyler before that. I worked with Ralph Tyler through ASCD. When I came here, then we got him as a visiting professor. So I really got to know Ralph Tyler better. But ASCD was intellectually stimulating for me. That was the main thing that was attractive to me about it. And I needed other people to learn from. I learn a lot
from reading, and I’ve learned an awful lot from reading in the last ten years of my life. I’ve continued to read more and more. And I’m very deeply involved in research now of a very different kind. And I get that from books and the Internet and stuff. But traditionally, I learn more through the spoken word rather than from the written word. Now I’m in the business of learning more from the written word. And I learned primarily in my early years from other people, from hearing what they said and how they talked. It was important for me to hear Harold Taylor, President of whatever it was in New York City, that talked about the importance of democracy. Well, I heard Hank Hulfish talk about the importance of democracy too. And I heard other people. It was interesting to hear a guy like that, and that was a rich experience for me. It was good. And I got that through ASCD.

Q. Did you see your efforts in working off campus in the regional campuses as being similarly enriching and intellectually stimulating?

A. I don’t think it turned out to be that way for me. I did some of that. I didn’t do a lot of that, but I did some. I usually did it because somebody needed somebody and maybe I needed a few extra dollars. I don’t know. But that was not the main advantage to me. There were two reasons for that. After my work in Orlando, I clearly realized that I was better at working with teachers in service rather than teachers pre-service level. And I think I was a much better person as a teacher with people who had teaching experience, rather than people who didn’t have any. I don’t think I was ever as good professor at undergraduate level as I was at the graduate level. I think the skills that I had were with people at the graduate level.
And most of the work that I did early on, especially at the regional campuses, was at the undergraduate level. I later taught two or three classes that were graduate level courses, and I think those were interesting experiences, but it was not a source of intellectual inspiration for me. It was a practical thing. Somebody needed a class taught. I taught in that area and went out there and did it.

Q. Professor Frymier, on behalf of President Kirwin and your distinguished colleagues here at the Ohio State University, congratulations on a distinguished and very successful career.

A. Thank you very much. I was glad to be here. I hope some of what I said will be useful and maybe some of it will be interesting. I don’t know if it will be funny or anything, but to me it was helpful for you to ask these questions. I’m glad to be here.

Q. Thank you so much. This is the end of the Frymier deposition.