Q. This is Tamar Chute, Associate University Archivist. I’m conducting this oral history interview of Lou Heldman, Steven Hirsch and David Williams on June 28, 2010. We are doing the interview over the telephone by conference call. Lou, Steven and David, thank you all for participating in this oral history project.

A. You’re welcome.

Q. I realize that most of this is going to be more of a conversation, but I thought we’d start off with, if each of you could, and you can pick which order you’d like to speak, just tell us a little bit about yourselves, growing up, and how you decided to come to Ohio State. I don’t know, I guess we can start, let’s start alphabetically. David, you want to start first?

D: Well, let’s see, growing up. There’s a debate over whether that ever really happened. But I did in fact I think grow up. I grew up in Tiffin, Ohio, about 80 miles north of Columbus. I was the first person in my family to go to college, and the decision to come to Ohio State was just something that I had always wanted to do ever since I was a kid. So that’s why.

Q. Okay, Lou?

L: I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was also the first person in my family to go to college. And I knew that Ohio State had a Journalism School, and that had been my interest from the beginning of high school. And so I didn’t apply anywhere else, and never thought about going anywhere but Ohio State.

Q. I guess Steven, you’re up next.
S: Okay, I grew up upstream from Louis in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. And I wanted to get out of Pittsburgh after I graduated from high school. I had close relatives, I had an aunt and uncle in Columbus and a cousin who was, I think she was going to be a senior the year that I would be entering as a freshman. And I also got a general University scholarship from Ohio State. I was the eldest child in my family. Neither my parents nor any family members in their or previous generations had gone to college but in mine, five older cousins had. And the combination of family support, relative closeness to Pittsburgh and the financial aid are what enabled me to go to Ohio State.

Q. I probably should ask this, this isn’t a question on our list, but when did you all come, and then when did you graduate?

S: Let’s see now, I graduated in 1971, March 1971, and I started in the fall of 1967.

L: I started in the fall of 1967 and I was on the five-year plan. I graduated in the spring of ’72.

D: I started in the fall of 1966, and I graduated in the winter of 1969 and stayed on to enter a Master’s degree program, which I finished at the end of 1970, and stayed on to finish my Ph.D., which I did in May of 1973.

Q. Great. I guess one of the things we want to get into is spring of 1970. But we thought we’d ask a couple questions about the student organizations that you joined when you arrived, and then kind of throughout your college career, what organizations you were a part of. And then how did you three ultimately find each other?
D: I only joined two student organizations. I was involved with the student government off and on and ultimately as the Director of Academic Affairs for student government. And I started the chapter of the Campus Americans for Democratic Action at Ohio State in January of 1968.

L: I started at The Lantern as a freshman, which was unusually early, and there was at least one semester or two that I worked in student government after my friend Tim Sheeran got elected President of student government.

S: I was among the first group of students to live in the brand new Lincoln Tower dormitory on west campus. [I] ran for Freshman Senate as a representative from Lincoln Tower, was elected and joined student government at that point. I became Student Affairs Commissioner of Freshman Senate when the original Commissioner resigned, and served in that capacity through fall quarter of my sophomore year, when the “elder statesmen” freshman senators helped to make the transition for the incoming freshman class. I then remained involved in student government in various capacities. I joined one other organization and that was a fraternity, Alpha Epsilon Pi, during winter quarter of my freshman year, lived in the frat house my sophomore year and ended up running for student assembly from the Greek district in the spring of 1969 and was elected. And the following year, when Tim Sheeran’s term as student body President was about to expire, and the new elections were coming up, I was asked by one of the campus political parties to run for vice president of the Undergraduate Student Government on their ticket, which I declined to do. I ended up working for Steve
Kling, who was elected President of the Undergraduate Student Government in the spring of 1970, as his Executive Assistant.

Q. So did you all meet as part of student government, or how did you all meet?

S: I think we did. I think we probably all met as either part of student government or as part of the activities ancillary to student government, especially all the political events that were going on at that time. David, I think you and I met because of Patty, that’s how we met. David’s wife, Pat, was also running for student assembly from the Greek district, and both of us were elected that year.

D: I think we all met in _____, I don’t know.

S: It could have been.

L: I think so. I remember David being one of the most prominent people on campus. He was an unusual blend of articulate and rational and outside the mainstream of student government.

A. You’re being a lot kinder than my FBI file.

L: Yes, that may be, but I thought David was really one of the seminal figures on campus. And everyone was in love with his wife.

S: I thought that David was one of the most prolific and clear writers of any of our peers. He was just an amazing writer and was published very frequently in The Lantern.

D: Well, the only thing I wrote that I’m really proud of was called the _______. It was the first document in favor of adding, changing the way government was handled and having a University assembly that involved students, faculty and administration, which eventually we got. But long after all of us had left, I think.
Q. You wouldn’t happen to have a copy of that, would you?

D: You know what? I don’t think I do. I kind of wish I did, but it’s probably buried in a box somewhere. Someday, my kids will probably throw it out.

S: Well, you’re going to have a little time on your hands when you retire, David.

D: We’ll see.

Q. Well if you find it, send it to the Archives.

D: I will.

L: Can I ask you a side question here? I worked on a University future project that was headed by, I believe his name was Arliss Roaden, the Dean of the Graduate School. And I was on the staff of the project. And it was either called OSU 2000, or more likely OSU 2020. And one of the things that we had planned to do, I’m not sure we did it, was bury a time capsule or something. Does any of that ring a bell with you, or with anybody on the call?

Q. I know there have been several time capsules on campus in different ways. That vaguely rings a bell with me, but I could look it up and let you know.

L: Okay, well we were taking a very serious look at how the University served its constituencies in different ways than it was doing at the time. And it was what I did in about my fifth year there. So I was just curious what ever happened with that. But I’m sorry, that’s a digression.

Q. Oh, that’s okay.

D: Tamar, your next question has to do with the relationship of administration and students. And Lou mentioned Arliss Roaden. The relationship between the administration and students, depending on various people and times,
sometimes very strained and sometimes very rewarding. But Arliss Roaden, who was Dean of the Graduate School and had previously been Associate Dean in the College of Education, and then went on to be President of Tennessee Technological University. He was from Tennessee. He was one of those people who was always very calm and reasonable, as was a person that I don’t want to leave us without mentioning, leading up to the spring of 1970, the person in 1968 named Jack Corbally, who was Provost to Vice President ______ at the time, when thirty-four black students and about a hundred or so white students took over the Administration Building. It was the first time anything like that had happened at Ohio State. And Jack Corbally remained inside the building. People took the fire hoses and tried to tie the doors shut. I don’t even know if that building is still in existence. But after about five or six hours, Jack negotiated a statement with the students, saying that, and I think I’m quoting it exactly, “The Ohio State University recognizes that black students have unique problems at the University.” And within a day the Trustees fired him for doing that. And then he went on to be the President of Syracuse University, and ultimately took over the McArthur Foundation of Chicago.

Q. Do you think that that firing sort of cautioned other administrators between ’68 and ’70?

D: It could have cautioned them. It might have emboldened others. Some might have thought that he got what he deserved, but I think one of the things that did is that took out a moderating influence in the administration.
Q. How was the President, mostly the President, but how were also the other members of the administration perceived by students, either Lou, when you talked about being on The Lantern or in student government? Today, President Gee meets regularly with students. I’m assuming that President Fawcett was not meeting regularly with the students.

L: From this distance I think that President [Novice J.] Fawcett and Vice President [John T.] Mount were the key contacts with students, were both people of an older generation and they were old in a way that President [E. Gordon] Gee will never be old. They were not even greatest generational; they seemed like Ohio agricultural roots World War I and Depression influenced old. There was a great gap, a great communications gap. And they were both perfectly pleasant guys, but they seemed very out of touch.

D: I think that’s fair, Lou. But they were different people. Novice Fawcett, I don’t think really liked students that much. He used to call them transients, and John Mount, I think, did like students. I think he enjoyed meeting with students. I think he tried pretty hard even though he was old school in many ways to try to come up to speed with what was going on. He had a hard time doing it.

S: I have an anecdote to relate, with regard to John Mount. The day that the South Campus gates were closed, which precipitated probably the first violence in terms of law enforcement response and student activity on campus, probably an hour to an hour and a half before that occurrence, Steve Kling and I were attending a meeting with Vice President Mount. The main thing that we were trying to accomplish at that meeting was to influence him to openly engage student
government in an activist role as a moderating influence in what was going on, on the campus. One of the key points that we discussed with Vice President Mount was, whether there were any plans to bring outside law enforcement on the campus, what those plans might be, what sort of events might cause that to take place. Vice President Mount was very adamant in his response that there were no such plans at that time to bring anybody else onto the campus. Any problems were going to be handled by the campus security people and, if necessary, the Columbus Police Department might be called in for assistance. David and Lou, you both may remember that several weeks prior to the campus events that took place, the Teamsters Union went on strike. During that strike, independent truckers were still operating, and some were being shot at on the Ohio turnpike and other roads.

D: Concrete blocks were being dropped on them from overpasses.

S: Right. Governor [James] Rhodes activated the National Guard in response to that violence, and one of the encampments of the National Guard was the Ohio State Fairgrounds. By the time the violence on campus started, the National Guard troops were pretty well settled in at the Fairgrounds, just a few miles east of campus. When Steve Kling and I left the meeting with Vice President Mount, we headed over towards the Neil Avenue gate where demonstration activity was taking place. I don’t remember exactly where we were, but we took up a position where we could see what was happening in front of the classroom buildings on a place where there was some elevation, and we could see what was happening down by the gates. Just outside of the gate was a formation of Ohio State
Highway Patrol officers in riot gear. So I always wondered whether Vice President Mount was just out of the loop with regard to what response was likely to take place in the event of violence on campus. I couldn’t conceive of him being duplicitous. I think he just didn’t know.

D: I think he didn’t know, either.

S: He probably thought he did.

D: I don’t think Fawcett knew. I don’t think any of them were in the loop. I think Rhodes was making all of the calls.

L: I was there at that corner on that day Steven is describing. And what he says is quite accurate. There was already a contingent of state police there in riot gear, and maybe one of you will recall this better, but I think it was also pretty well proved that there were state police there in plain clothes who may actually have been the people who started closing the gate.

D: Yes, I’m glad you brought that up because it’s my understanding that that actually was testimony presented before the commission that investigated the 1970 riot. I can remember who was in there, O’Shaughnessy who headed that? I can’t remember the name. But the plain clothes officers were identified by name by some of the people testifying. And I don’t even know if that ever made it into the final draft of the report. The people who closed the gate clearly were a lot older than the typical undergraduate.

L: There were a number of us on campus who already knew the plain clothes state troopers because they had been present along with some plain clothes Ohio State police department folks for months. They used to turn up at everything on
campus. And yet, they still had sort of crew cuts. They didn’t look a bit like students or faculty. Do you remember those guys, David?

D: Sure. I just never decided to become very intimate with them.

L: Well, as a reporter I talked to everybody.

Q. I guess when they were closing the gates, what was the makeup of students there? Like who was it, besides there were obviously some students, what do you think was the overall makeup of the crowd?

D: Well, I think at the beginning it was basically very activist-oriented students but as the days wore on more and more people got ticked off and were drawn into it in a manner that they normally would not have been drawn into it.

L: I’d be interested in Steve’s perspective from the Greek system. But my sense of what David is talking about is once the local police began shooting tear gas at fraternity row on 15th Avenue, that’s really what changed things into a much more of a feeling of general unhappiness. I think at the beginning it was the usual suspects, David and his pals.

S: That was a very interesting question because when all of this started in the spring of 1970, there was no cohesive amalgamation of students who were protesting. There were various groups that were protesting for their own parochial causes on campus. There was the Black Student Union, there was the School of Social Work. There were the anti-war protestors. There may have been others as well. But each of these protests was pretty separate and distinct at the beginning of that spring. Those protests melded into a much larger heterogeneous group of students that brought in, as Lou was saying, fraternity row. It grew very quickly
and it grew very large, and, of course, when President Nixon ordered the bombing
of Cambodia, that just threw fuel on the fire.

D: I always thought that the politicization of campus had more to do with the
registrar’s office than with Cambodia. I really thought that the depth of anti-war
feeling was far less than the depth of anti-administration, anti-authority, anti-
getting-continually-jerked-around-feeling.

S: I think that’s how it began. In response to the statement about fraternity row,
there was a colleague of ours in student government, an older student, a returning
student. His name was Gene Garver. And Gene had been in the Air Force, I think
in the Strategic Air Command., He finally got tired of doing fake bombing runs
over his parents’ house; got out of the Air Force and went back to school. And
Gene helped organize a group of students, student marshals. Once the Columbus
City Council and the Mayor had ordered the curfew in the University area, a
number of us joined with Gene and put on yellow arm bands and went out after
curfew on the city streets with the acquiescence of law enforcement. We went out
in pairs, walking the off-campus streets, acting similarly to the way the Green
Ribbon Commission acted on campus, willing to place ourselves physically
between curfew violators and the police, to try to just keep things calm. I
remember walking down 15th Avenue past a few fraternity houses that had broken
windows, and mostly what we were doing was talking fraternity kids who’d had
too much to drink back into their houses, because they were out on the street
making a lot of noise after curfew, inviting response by the Columbus police
officers – response that had become overreaction that ultimately radicalized what was normally a pretty conservative segment of the student population.

Q. Was there a great division between the students that were protesting and those who were, you know, not as interested or against it? Was that an obvious division or was that more of a sort of a faded line between the two groups?

D: No, I don’t recall any strong reactionary force against what was going on, whatever it was that was going on. But I think there were a large number of students who just sort of tried to sit the whole thing out, and then, of course, when the campus was closed, got as far away as possible as quickly as possible. You know, it’s funny you should mention Gene Garver and all the sort of disparate groups that were involved then. Gene was gay before there was a Gay Rights movement. And one of the things that I think we have to remember is that all of this was taking place before there was any kind of meaningful gay/lesbian/transgender sensitivity. In fact, the whole issue of women’s rights was still kind of incipient. Looking back at it now, it was a very disparate group, but all of those things started coming into being or into real fruition after this.

Q. Besides what you all have talked about, what do you think is the biggest thing you remember about sort of the end of April leading up to the events in May on campus?

L: I just think that the tension kept rising. If there was a stress thermometer on campus, you would have seen it going up every day. Was the career expo on April 29? Anybody remember?

D: Don’t recall.
L: What was it that sent people to the gates on April 29th? I thought maybe there were events that had started in the Union and then moved on to 11th and Neil. But I don’t remember why 11th and Neil was picked. David, where were you when all this was going on?

D: Oh, I don’t know, everywhere. It’s just that a lot of little things to keep happening that caused, as people said before, more fuel to go on the fire. I remember one morning a small contingent of Franklin County Sheriff’s Department [officers] let loose across the Oval with some bird shot, and no one really knew why. And then, of course, my favorite incident of the whole thing was the large rally in front of the library where Woody Hayes got up to speak and talked about “revolution now,” and I don’t think he really meant what he was saying or understood what he was saying, but he sure got a cheer out of people.

L: Actually, that preceded one of my favorite moments, which was after the wheels had come off. And I don’t know how deep into this it was, probably in the first or second day, but there were skirmishes going on all over the place between, I think mostly between, police, sheriff’s deputies and students throwing things at them or taunting them. And in one case, I remember it started on the Oval and moved out to 15th and High, and I wanted to stay close to Woody Hayes because I thought if he got shot or hit in the head with a rock, I wanted to be the reporter who was there. At one point I thought that he was standing in an area with people throwing rocks on one side and the police on the other side, and the rocks were coming down right around us. And I realized – this was very unprofessional of me – but
of course I wasn’t a professional yet. I said, “I really think we need to move.”

But I didn’t want to leave him there by himself to get clobbered without me.

D: Maybe he was just looking for a good passer.

L: Yes, that could be it.

Q: What do you think he was trying to do?

S: I think he was trying to be a peace maker, to calm things down.

L: That’s right, I think he was too, I think he wanted to get things calmed down. I don’t think you would say this is really bad for recruitment. He ended up with the best recruit class in ________. I think he genuinely did not like disturbances of any kind and thought it was bad for the University.

L: And he cared about the University. There’s no question about it.

Q: Were there other faculty or other staff or administrators who came out on the Oval?

S: Oh yes, I’m trying to remember the name of the political science professor. David Kettler.

D: Well, there was John Champlin.

S: John Champlin.

D: And Andy Axelrod, who immediately left the University after that. John Champlin retired from the University. I think he’s still a food critic for The Columbus Dispatch.

S: That’s a bizarre image.
S: And of course there was the Green Ribbon Commission, made up of faculty members who were actually willing to physically interpose themselves in situations where they could have very easily been hurt.

L: And do you remember an older student named Jim Blue?

S: Yes.

L: I remember him. I can sort of picture him being involved with that.

D: Well, he was also very involved with the open housing movement, and you all will recall, Steve, I can’t remember if you were one of the group or not, of people that sat on the Oval at night in total silence. Croff Macklin was there; Jim Blue was part of that group.

L: I think I was there because – was there a fast involved with that?

S: I think there were some people who were fasting and others who came out – I was one of those others – who came out and supported them. And it’s the only night I ever slept out on the Oval.

L: Yes, I remember that.

D: And Tamar, for your benefit, what we’re talking [about] is the open-housing movement.

Q. I was going to say, could you explain that please?

D: This is David. At the time, landlords off campus could discriminate against, on a fairly broad basis, students, and I think student government formally wanted an understanding that landlords would not discriminate on the basis of race, especially, but other preferences as well. And now that seems like not a big deal, but then it was a big deal. You have to remember that two years before, Ohio
State had mandatory ROTC for men and women. You could opt out of it by taking other courses, but it stayed on the books. And that was about the same time, I think if you were dining in the dining hall, you had to wear a tie to dinner. Can you imagine that now?

Q. Not really, no. So the event on the Oval was planned by the student government as sort of a protest against the actions of landlords? Is that accurate?

D: Steve, you may have a better…

S: You know, I don’t think it was a student government event. What I seem to recall, and this is a little fuzzy so you’ve got to realize it’s forty years later, and now I can’t remember where I put my keys sometimes, but there was a core group of social and political activists who were in the forefront of the open-housing issue. Student government, I think, followed the efforts of that group and took up the cause, perhaps to lend it more legitimacy than it had with just a few activists trying to protest. And I believe the event on the Oval, the group of people who were in that core group did start some sort of a fasting and hunger strike, and were sitting on the Oval. I think that the event that took place that evening in support of those who were on the hunger strike was fairly spontaneous. It wasn’t a formal proposal by student government. It was just a, “Hey, let’s have a sleep out on the Oval with these folks and provide some support.” And then I think there was probably the idea of getting some more attention for it, some media attention, etc., to see if we could advance the cause. And it turned out to be, it’s hard to imagine Ohio State being a hippie environment, but it was kind of a hippie event. There were guitars. There was probably grass being smoked on the Oval that night. It
was a combination of political event and party. I don’t even recall how that issue was resolved or what progress may have been made at that point. I just remember the event.

L: What’s interesting about all this is that even though we don’t have a chronology, the events of late April and May were again a context of so many things going on, on campus, and of course in the broader society. Earlier that April, it’s hard to believe this, was the first Earth Day, and there was a big turnout by Mirror Lake for that. One of the things that I think got pushed off was the world premiere of a play, “The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail,” which is sort of ironic, because the playwrights Robert E. Lee and Jerome Lawrence, had come to campus and you know, going back to an earlier time of civil disobedience, it was just fascinating how many threads there were that went into what happened that spring.

S: Louis, didn’t that take place at Mershon Auditorium?

L: I’m not sure. Because I lost track in the midst of everything else going on. One thing that’s interesting to me is that we’re 45 minutes into this conversation and no one has mentioned Lorraine Cohen yet.

S: Or Bill Caldwell.

D: Or ______ Johnenberg.

S: Yes, these were all the most prominent leaders of the movement to make something happen. And Lorraine Cohen, especially, was a daily fixture on campus.

Q. And they were leading in terms of, what were their goals, or what were they against?
S: Lorraine was a graduate student in political science, as I recall, and she was a very, very articulate spokesperson. She often had a microphone in her hand or a bull horn. And [she] was out there creating excitement and articulating arguments and speaking before large groups of students.

L: And it was mostly anti-war sort of pro-strike, pro-change. David, what do you remember about that?

D: Not a whole lot. I had completely forgotten her name. It’s funny how some stick with you. Do you remember Ron Hutchinson and his wife?

L: I remember that name, but I don’t remember anything about them.

D: Poor little Ron was almost blind. He had glasses as thick as a door. And somehow he ended up getting arrested and spent a couple weeks in jail. All I can remember is that I knew his attorney, and he was acquitted and that became like a trespassing charge. And for some reason that became big news in Columbus for a day. And I can’t imagine anything like that happening now. There were so many disparate players in this whole thing. As everyone’s pointed out, there were so many things coming together, but I think the one thing that probably didn’t really happen as effectively as people wanted was the urge for people to go on strike against going to class. And I think maybe in retrospect that probably wasn’t a very good idea anyway because people were about as grade-oriented then as they are now.

Q: I was going to ask you, so did people go to class and then come out on the Oval to demonstrate, then go back to class?

D: Oh yes.
L: But the difficulty came especially when you’re crossing the Oval with no involvement in any of this and you’re tear-gassed, because my recollection is that recovering from being gassed took quite a while. So you’d see lines at drinking fountains of people there trying to wash their eyes out.

S: Tamar, you asked a question earlier about what people’s greatest memory or favorite moment was. I never had a favorite moment during this whole thing. It was a pressure cooker. It was high, high stress period of time. Because of my position as Steve Kling’s executive assistant — he was in very great demand to be here and there for various meetings, and he obviously couldn’t be everywhere at once — I filled in for him. I went to tons and tons of meetings of different groups, usually wearing a light suit and a tie, made it my uniform as a representative of student government. And the ties were outlandish. I bought them from a graduate student in math – Murray Goldwag – one of my favorite TA’s. He had some supplier in New York who sent him ties that looked like they had been made out of my grandmother’s drapes. I’d be walking across campus between meetings of the Black Student Union and the School of Social Work and various other groups, Green Ribbon Commission, and I kind of felt like Columbus’ version of Henry Kissinger doing shuttle diplomacy, providing the student government with information on what I had gathered at all these meetings. But the moment that sticks out in my mind is not actually a moment, it’s an image. It was a foggy morning and I was walking across the Oval from High Street. In the distance I could make out a group of protestors over near the library, and a line of National Guardsmen on campus, on the northeast side of the
Oval heading toward that group. Let me expand that. They guardsmen were wearing their gas masks and walked with fixed bayonets. And as the group of students, who were basically just chatting and carrying signs headed towards the line of guardsmen, they fired off their tear gas canisters. The image of the tear gas rising from those canisters against the backdrop of the fog stayed with me, especially after the shooting at Kent State. I realized how easily it could have happened on the Oval as well.

D: I was just thinking of that, Steven. When we look back on it now, it’s just a miracle we didn’t have real live ammunition. And, of course, there are all kinds of theories about what happened at Kent State. I went to work a few years later with Jim Fox, who was Dean of Students at Kent State, when the shootings took place. He, of course, agreed with me that there was a lot of firing and there was a gun that went off beforehand, and it was behind the National Guard, not in front of them. But every time I listen to the singer Alison Krauss now, and hear her name, I think of the other Allison Krause that time has forgotten, I think. From Pittsburgh, Steve.

S: That’s right.

D: And the only child of the parents.

Q. In one of Steven’s e-mails, he said the Lou and he were together when you, maybe even at The Lantern office, when you got the news?

S: It was actually your article, I think, Tamar, in the Alumni Magazine, The Ohio State Monthly, that brought back that memory for me, realizing that it had been forty years ago after seeing that article. Oh, and by the way, I misspoke a name
earlier in this conversation. I said Bill Caldwell. I was thinking of Bill, I think it was Crandall [Caldwell], who was head of the VVAW chapter, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, who was sort of out in the forefront of campus personalities and speakers, along with, help me, Lou.

L: Lorraine?

S: Lorraine, thank you. But when I read that article, I had a very vague memory of standing next to the AP wire photo machine in the Journalism building and watching that Pulitzer Prize winning photograph come across the wire, transforming a piece of clean white paper into his horrifying image of this young girl kneeling down over the body of Jeffrey, and I can’t remember his last name right now, someone from New York. Was it Miller? And then I thought, I think Louis might have been standing next to me, and that’s when I looked you up on the internet, Lou.

L: Right, and I was there and, going back to something David said, I don’t think people who were in the middle of things at Ohio State were at all shocked by what happened at Kent State, because it seemed to just as easily have happened where we were. What shocked me was when the news came across, I was looking at on the wire, this is probably before the photo, and I had dispatched a reporter to Kent State the day before to cover what was going on there. And I thought, “Well, thank goodness I’ve got a reporter up there. We’re going to have a great story tomorrow.” And I turned around and the reporter was not far behind me in the door of the newsroom and I said, “What are you doing here (as in you idiot)?” And he said, “Oh, I had to come back to take a midterm.” That just proves what
was said a little earlier about grades were so important, or were important then and now.

S: I think you mentioned to me and it was probably true, that he missed the story of his life.

L: Yup.

D: Tamar, you wanted to know, what did we do when the campus was closed for two weeks? And I don’t know about Lou and Steven, I don’t remember, but I was getting married the next month, and my wife was desperately trying to keep me out of jail. We just stayed up on North Fourth Street in our apartment. I was rooming with Ira Sulley, at the time, who was also involved in the student government. The one thing that I remember most, though, about that night, because the campus closed within hours of the shootings at Kent State, my dad called me up from Tiffin. You have to understand my dad. He’s born in West Virginia, had to drop out of high school to pay for the family during the Depression, was [in the] 82nd Airborne, went through five invasions, and was a hard worker, and he said, “Are they shooting at you?” And I said, “Well, yes, they’ve been shooting tear gas at us a long time.” He says, “Well, no son of mine is not going to be able to defend himself. I’m coming down there.” And I wasn’t sure what he meant. But a couple of days later my mom called and said, “Your dad got to just the north side of Delaware,” and evidently he was speeding and the state police pulled him over, the State Highway Patrol. And in the back seat of his car he had three shotguns. And he said he was going down to help his son
protect himself. Now, of course, today he might be in Guantanamo for the rest of his life, but then they just turned him around and told him to go home.

L: My parents’ reaction wasn’t quite as extreme, but my mother sent me a gas mask.

D: Too little, too late, huh?

L: Yes.

S: I did end up going home to Pittsburgh during that time but not right away. Before that, I went as a representative of the Undergraduate Student Government at Ohio State to a meeting at the College of Wooster, representing Steven Kling.

D: Which is about as close to Kent State as you could get at the time.

S: I drove up to Wooster for a meeting of student body presidents of college campuses around Ohio. There was just a telephone tree that sprung up, and one student government president’s office would call another. I think when I got to Wooster there were probably 40 or 50 undergraduate student government or University undergraduate student body presidents who were having a plenary meeting trying to come up with some kind of an action or a gesture to make in the aftermath of the shootings at Kent State. And what resulted from that meeting was a petition to be delivered to Gov. Rhodes, calling for the removal of the National Guard troops from the college campuses and allowing local law enforcement agencies to handle matters in local communities. And I can’t recall what else was on that petition, but I know that that was the prime issue. And I was among this small group of college undergraduate government presidents who went to the State House one day to present that petition. I remember that the flagpole at the State House was surrounded by a circle of state troopers, as if these
student body presidents were going to be pulling down the flag or doing anything else. It was just a really a matter of wanting to make some sort of symbolic gesture, because I think that pretty much everybody felt powerless in the aftermath of that shooting. And as I recall, Gov. Rhodes did not accept the petition himself. John McElroy, his executive assistant, with whom by that time I had a telephone relationship, came to the door of the State House and accepted the petition from those students. I think it was a day or so later after that that I went back to my family in Pittsburgh for the remainder of the period of time that campus was closed.

L: David or Steven, were either of you at a meeting that was held, I think it was held away from campus, with President Fawcett and some of the administration and a group of students that was before the re-opening of the campus?

S: I was not there.

D: No, I wasn’t either.

L: Okay, I remember being at a meeting that I’m pretty sure the President and some other prominent people were at, along with some students talking about what were the best things to be done at the point the campus reopened. And we haven’t talked about Jim Robinson, Corbally’s successor, but wasn’t Robinson involved in working through issues to get the campus reopened in a way that problems wouldn’t start right back up again? Anybody remember that?

S: I think you are correct. I don’t recall what the details of that were, but I think that Robinson did take part in that effort. I don’t remember much other than that.
Q. Do you all think that campus had to be closed? Did you agree with the closing of campus?

D: I think at the time I probably did not. At the time I think it did not seem necessary to me. But in retrospect, maybe what happened at Kent would have caused an even larger explosion. I’m not sure we’ll ever know. On other campuses after Kent, some things went crazy; some things did not. I think we’ve often forgotten that at about the same time as Kent, Jackson State happened, where Walter Payton was a freshman at the time. And [it] was much more brutal than anything that had ever happened in Ohio, all things combined. The National Guard there just opened up with automatic weapons on the dormitory and just killed a lot of people there. It’s probably good that it was towards the end of the year. I think one of the biggest things that had to be negotiated at the time, and it concerned a lot of students, was what was going to happen to your grades? And, of course, they gave you the option of taking a grade or taking pass/fail, which a lot of people were grateful for.

S: David, do you remember the name, maybe it was Hutchinson’s attorney, but there was one defense attorney who took a great number of arrest cases during that time, who sort of became a fixture on campus and was helping quite a few students who had been arrested. (First name was Bill…)

D: I can’t remember his name.

L: Ray Twohey.

D: Might have been but there was another guy who later became the state representative from that district. I can’t remember his name. I can see his face.
can see his house over there above Iuka. I can see his garage where he collected orchids. But unlike you, Steven, I tend to lose my keys and forget names.

D: It’s not unlike me at all. They come to me anywhere from five minutes to six hours later sometimes.

Q. Well I guess, what do you think were the legacies you all continued for at least, I guess Steven was the first to leave in March of ’71, but you were all were here after the fact. What were the legacies of maybe in the fall or a couple of years later, or even now that you see from the demonstrations and the events of April and May of 1970?

L: David, you were there the longest.

D: Well, as far as at Ohio State, I think on the plus side, it probably emboldened other people to move forward. I think we got the real beginnings of the gay/lesbian movement. We, of course, didn’t have that many Mexican Americans or Puerto Ricans or anything like that. So I don’t think anything of significant became of that right away at Ohio State. I think we saw a real push on for the Green Movement. I think Comfest probably grew out of a lot of this. It’s a little thing but it’s probably the origin. On the negative side, I think what happened in the immediate aftermath with the passing of conspiracy laws, with the cognizance of the government can keep a pretty big file on you, and things of that nature, I think people learned to be very cautious. I think if people today did half the things that we got away with then, they would find themselves incapable of getting into graduate school. And I think people just learned to be a little more fearful of the government. I sort of sound like somebody from the Tea Party but I
have no relatives in the ________ family. There were pluses and minuses. A lot of things fizzled out.

L: But I think along the lines that David is saying, I think it created a fair amount of cynicism or at least skepticism about authority about Ohio State. And about authority in general. I think one of the good things that probably sparked a little – probably took a long time – was that future generations of administrators may have thought more about listening to the concerns of students. And that was probably around the time everywhere that in loco parentis began to ease some and all those things I wish were still in place with the parents of college students.

D: Well, that’s a good point, Lou. And the other thing that came out of it that many of us forgot is that we ended up getting a really good Governor in Ohio afterward, who had a really good daughter who was Governor of your state. Without him, of course, it cost him his re-election, Ohio would have never had an income tax and it would be broker than it is right now.

Q. I’m sorry, for me who is not from Ohio, who?

D: John Gilligan.

Q. Thank you. Since leaving Ohio State, what’s been your relationship with the University since you left?

D: Well, Steven, it sounds like you’re still a member of the Alumni Association and I joined off and on through the years, but right now there’s not much of anything. I don’t even go to football games anymore.

S: I’ve only been back on campus one time since I graduated. I was back in Columbus for a wedding, a family wedding, and [I] took my son and my wife and
my sister up on campus. It happened to be a Saturday of an away football game, so we had no trouble parking. And we just wandered around. That was the only time I’ve been back on campus since then. I’m sorry. There was one other time when I was there. My eldest son and I took a cross-country trip a couple of summers ago. I bought him a used Subaru Forester on eBay, from a seller in upstate New York. It was a good trip in many respects because my son was a new driver and it gave us a chance to drive across country together and have a father and son bonding experience and give him some great driving experience. Not one of my best purchases, I thought, because of the road salt rust from winters in upstate New York, which I wasn’t really paying close attention to. But we stopped in Columbus so that he could visit the campus and talk with some people. He was thinking about majoring in music and had a very nice visit with the Director of the Orchestral Brass Program at Ohio State. A cousin who was on campus for summer quarter took him on a campus tour while I sat across from the Ohio Union in a restaurant as the wrecking balls were knocking it down. And I looked at it and said, “Oh my God, I can’t believe they’re tearing down the Union. It’s not that old.” My other involvement with Ohio State has been with the local chapter of the Alumni organization. I’m a member of the Orange County and Inland Empire (California) chapter and I go to functions and hear speakers from time to time. And when I’ve had extra money in my pocket I’ve made contributions here and there to scholarship funds. That’s pretty much been it. I did have enough money in my pocket at one time to pay to be a life member of the Alumni Association, so I did that as well.
L: I’ve only been back once in 25 years. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I’d like to go there more often if it was more geographically accessible to Kansas. I really like both of Gee’s terms as President and I hope he lasts a long time.

D: He certainly is a far cry from Novice Fawcett.

L: Yes.

Q: Yes, I think a conversation between the two of them would have been priceless but I guess we can’t do that. Are there any other things that have come that you want to talk about? Certainly, if you have thoughts at 2:00 in the morning or something like that down the road and you would be welcome to send anything to me electronically or give me a call. But is there anything right now you’d like to add?

S: I was thinking and I think I mentioned this to David, that it might be interesting since the three of us have done this, that you contact a few other people and have a few more conversations to get a bigger picture, a few more pieces of the puzzle, so that you can get a broader picture of things that took place on campus at that time. And David, I think, mentioned to me the name of Mary. Help me, David.

D: Mary Webster.

S: Mary Webster, right.

D: I think she just retired. She was working for the Mayor in Columbus. Is she doing media relations, do you know, Lou?

L: I don’t know anything about her. I know who she is obviously, but I haven’t been in touch in many years.
D: I think a couple of years ago she retired and she was the person that they always turned to, to make announcements about snow closings and stuff like that. Of course, Ira Sulley is still there. Lee Walker is gone. She was controller for ever so long at Ohio State. I think she’s living in Panama now with Jack.

S: After this conference call was set up, I did a little more internet searching and I found Lorraine Cohen. She is a professor at, I think it’s at the City College of New York, and I believe she’s either a professor of political science or social work. It’s not social work; it’s social science or something like that. So I’m sure she would be available to contact. And one of the articles that was in the Archives, I took a read of some of those. There was one article that was a pretty good diary of events at that time. And Tamar, you’re probably more familiar with this than I am. It was written by a professor, I think, and he mentioned Bill Caldwell, in the context of several years after these events being on the panel that was adjudicating Bill’s Ph.D. thesis. So he might be somebody you can contact. You might be able to locate him. I have not been able to find Bill, but he obviously got a Ph.D. from Ohio State.

L: Well, you know, we talked about how this changed Ohio State, but I guess more interesting to me is, how it changed the people who were there at the time. I guess probably everybody is changed by their college experience. There’s a group who became reunited during the long illness of someone who had been my roommate for a couple of years at Ohio State. I think all of us would say, you know, in the same way that our fathers would say, that World War II was a turning point in their lives and they were exposed to things that, had it not been
for World War II, they never would have been exposed to. I think being on campus during those tense times, if you were at all a participant in the events, probably changed you in some ways, or at least gave you memories that are still relatively fresh after forty years. So I’m really glad I was there when all that was happening, and that I got a chance to bear witness to it.

Q. Well, thank you. Kevlin [Haire, OSU archives librarian who sat in on the interview] just wrote me a note that she has actually contacted Lorraine for an interview, so we are pleased to have one of those people. So if you think of other people, certainly send us an e-mail. From the column in the magazine, we’ve gotten several different types of responses that we’ve been doing a series, trying to get as many different perspectives as possible. I think right now our biggest goal is to do as much documenting as we can, because it’s very easy to get the administrators’ view, but much more difficult to get a student point of view. So we’re hoping to do that.

L: I’m going to have to sign off here in Kansas, but it’s great hearing all of your voices.

S: Nice to hear you too, Lou.

Q. Thank you. Once the transcriber is done, I will e-mail the transcription to everyone. You can look at it and make any changes or whatever. Like I said, if there are other things that people want to add, please definitely feel free to.

S: Tamar, just one question. Can you just briefly share the nature of any of those other survey responses that you’ve received that might be of interest?
Q. Well, one person that I interviewed last week was David Hopcraft, who had been a Lantern reporter, had graduated a couple of years earlier, but then was covering the riots for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. So that was a little bit different because he had been a student and then had left and then came back in a different capacity. We’re also hoping to interview someone who was in the group that sued the protestors to get them to not protest on campus. So again, a very different point of view. There’s also someone who is in Florida who, I believe, was in ROTC, and I’d like to interview him because, again, I think it’s a different perspective.

D: It was not easy to be in the ROTC at that time.

Q. No, I would not think so. We’re hoping to get them all up online on the website. Even people who have just filled out the online survey we have, we’re working to get those responses up as well. Some people have sent smaller responses that are interesting but maybe not enough for an oral history. We’re hoping just to get that kind of information up. And I can send you an e-mail. One of our students is working on doing his magic with the internet that I’m glad he can do [it] because I can’t do it. And so I can send you all an e-mail and let you know when those are up and available.

S: Do you have access to the archives of The Lantern from that period?

Q. Actually, the archives from The Lantern are available online. The library is working on digitizing the entire run of The Lantern. And from about 1959 until 1985, I believe, is already online. If you want, I can send you, was that Lou who just asked me that?

S: No, that was Steven, sorry.
Q. Steven, okay, I can send you the link to that.
S: That would be great.
D: Well, thanks an awful lot, Tamar. We appreciated this opportunity.
Q. Sure, thank you all very, very much and I’ll be in touch soon.
S: You’re very welcome. Take care, David.
D: You too.
Q. Take care, bye-bye.