Q. Today is June 11, 2011, and we are at the Ohio State University Archives. My name is Kevlin Haire and I am interviewing James, or is it Jim?

A. Well, Jim.

Q. Jim Tootle, for our oral history program. Good afternoon, Jim.

A. Good afternoon, I’m ready to roll.

Q. Okay, well we’ll start off with the first question. Let me adjust the… you’re fine. We’ll start off. You’ve had a long history with the University beginning when you came here as a freshman. So I’d first like to know a little bit about your family background, your own personal background, where you grew up and when, and how you got to OSU in the first place.

A. Well, I grew up right here in Columbus in the Beechwold/Clintonville area on the north side of Columbus, and I just always had it in my mind that I would go to Ohio State someday when I grew up. And I remember when high school came, I didn’t even apply anywhere else. I just wanted to always go here and that’s the way it worked out. I was kind of familiar with the University before I got here as a student, when I started as a freshman in the fall of 1961. Back in the 1950’s, my older brother was a student. He graduated from high school in 1952, and then did his undergraduate and then enrolled in the College of Dentistry, and graduated from there in ’59. So throughout the decades of the 1950’s I had an older brother who was here. So I would come down to campus with him, or come to a game or something. And then also, in those days, at the Ohio State football games, they
had many Boy Scouts serve as ushers at the game. They have a few of those still but not as many as in the old days. And so I would volunteer to do that in my Boy Scout days in the middle ’50s, when Howard “Hop-a-Long” Cassady was the Heisman Trophy winner and star of the team. And my routine on Saturdays in those days was, I’d get up and go down to Whetstone Park and play my youth league football game at the Clintonville Boys Association it was called. The CBA ran football, basketball and baseball programs for kids from, say 8 or 9 to 15 or so. So I’d go down and play my Little League football game at Whetstone Park, go home to my home on Garden Road, which isn’t too far away, change out of my football uniform, get my Scout uniform on, hop on the city bus, go down and get off at Lane Avenue, [and] scurry down to the stadium. All the games started at 1:30 in those days as I recall. They didn’t have the televised games at noon, 3:30 and all that. Most every game started at the same time. So I got down there in time, say an hour before the game. You could usher the game which would mean getting in for free. And so I’d run down there and usher the game, and that was a lot of fun. And you’d help people find their seats. But usually most of your work was done by the start of the game, or five or ten minutes after it started and everybody was pretty well settled in. And then you were allowed to sit down either in an empty seat or usually in the aisle, sit down on a step in the aisle and watch the game. So I just thought that was a great way to spend Saturday. And so I did that many times. So it is a long answer to your question but I had a lot of contact with the University, and like I say, my brother being a student, sometimes our family would come down and we’d have a meal at the old Ohio Union, which
had a nice cafeteria. And they’d show a film now and then, maybe a nature film or something and we would come down and watch that. Through my brother’s experience of being a student, it just kind of rubbed off on me. It just kind of soaked in. I saw what he was doing, I heard him talking with his friends and with me and our parents about what was going on at the University and how school was going and all of that. So it was just kind of a natural thing, that I felt like I was part of Ohio State even before I got here as a student.

Q. And you say you got here as a student in 1961. Did you know what you wanted to do with your life?

A. Not at all. And I really, I had to work on that a while. My brother was very lucky in that regard. He knew he always wanted to be a dentist. Going back, he wrote papers when he was in junior high school on, what do you want to do with your career, and he’d write, “I want to be a dentist.” And he lived that out. And today he is a wonderful dentist and still has patients, is kind of semi-retired, but still goes into his office three days a week and sees patients that he has had for years, and still just really enjoys his work. And it’s a wonderful career for him. But I was not blessed with that kind of direction. And I liked a lot of different things in school. So when I started at Ohio State, I kind of had to scuffle around a little bit to see which direction I wanted to go. And I thought perhaps health professions like my brother. And I thought, “Well, not exactly.” My parents would say, “Why don’t you be a dentist like your brother?” And I’d say, “Well, that just doesn’t have the same appeal for me that it did for him.” I’m very happy for him, so obviously he made a great choice, but that’s not what I wanted to do. And I
thought, "Well, maybe medical school, maybe psychology." I looked at different things. I tried them all and I did okay at some of those courses but particularly the science courses I could get through them okay, but it wasn’t an enjoyable thing. And I thought, "Now wait a minute here, this isn’t playing to my strengths." And I sat down and had a little talk with myself about, "Now what do you really like to do?" Well, the answer was American History. For instance, I always enjoyed traveling as a youngster to historic sites, to forts and battle fields, some things like that, and reading in that area. And I thought, "Now, this is really what I like to do." This is what I would read in my spare time. This is what I do for fun. Let’s think about making a career out of this some way. So like many students though, I thought, "Well, what do you do with that? What kind of job is at the other end? If you major in any of the liberal arts, if it’s English or History of Philosophy or whatever, where does that go and all that. And I decided to just kind of take a chance on that and figure that, even though my direction was not all carved out like my brother going into dental school—he knew exactly where he was going—I thought, "Something good is going to come out of this.” If you do what you like, and enjoy doing it, opportunities will come along. And let’s kind of think in those terms. And I thought maybe college teaching would be one way to go. I always thought administrative work, maybe in a Colonial Williamsburg or Greenfield Village, up at the Henry Ford Museum, or some of these big outdoor museums and indoor places, the Smithsonian perhaps. There were career paths to do that. And I didn’t know exactly which path I might be taking but I thought something along those lines would be pretty good. And I would enjoy going to
work every day at a place like that, and that would be a lot of fun. And you would feel like you were doing meaningful, useful, productive work, and enjoying your days at the same time. So that was kind of my goal. So about halfway through my undergraduate days I decided that a History major was for me. And so I hadn’t taken a whole lot of History up to that point. I had taken the introductory ones and really enjoyed them and done well in those. So about my junior year, I had to kind of cram all my History courses in, so I was taking two or three at a time, which was a lot of reading and a lot of writing papers and all that. It was work but it was fun work. And it was what I liked to do and I was interested in doing it. So I found my niche there and decided to go on to grad school and did my Master’s degree right after the Bachelor’s degree. It went right into the Master’s program, and then I thought I might leave Ohio State and do a Ph.D. somewhere else. And I applied several places and kind of looked around. I looked at North Carolina and Maryland and Duke where my advisor, Professor Paul Bowers, had gone. And I got accepted at most of those places. But assistantships were kind of hard to come by. And I thought if I would move to a place like that, you’ve got to have a job, someplace to support yourself. So I ended up staying here. I continued my assistantship here and finished my degree here. So I am really a home grown product in a lot of ways, growing up in Columbus and doing all three degrees at Ohio State. But, while that’s not exactly the way most people do it, the History Department here was just outstanding and I had wonderful faculty mentors and I had a great experience doing that and being a teaching assistant in the department, whether I was a grader or a discussion group
leader, or had my own classes. It was just a great experience and I still didn’t get around to taking all of the courses there were to take, or have every professor in the department. The History Department has so many courses and so many quality professors; I still couldn’t get around to all of them. Professor Rule’s course in the French Revolution—I never could work that one in. So I never felt like I had exhausted everything here. Ohio State is just such a great place and so many opportunities, there was plenty of room to do all three degrees here and have a wonderful experience doing it. So that’s the way it worked out.

Q. Now tell me about your first impressions of campus, or what you remember most about campus most when you were a freshman here compared to say when you were a Ph.D., student, because the campus obviously changed in those ten years. And also the climate in general in society had changed.

A. Yes, there was a lot of change in those days. I remember my first day on campus. It was kind of cloudy, rainy day in September. I remember going over to McPherson Lab to stand in line and get my chemistry equipment for my chemistry course. And kind of feeling my way around although I had been to campus several times for things, football games and things, but this was different, being a student.

Q. Did you live here? You didn’t live at home?

A. Yes, I certainly did.

Q. At home?

A. Yes.

Q. In that day that was unusual, wasn’t it? Or maybe not for Columbus residents.
A. It wasn't in that day. It was really the only way I could go to college. My parents were not made of money and while we were comfortable and lived in a nice middle class neighborhood, we certainly did not have abundant funds. And it was possible for my brother and I to go college but we had to work to make some of our own money, and our parents helping us through. So it wasn't a money tree in the back yard. And, since I lived within commuting distance, it worked out very well to live at home. I had absolutely no difficulty doing that. My brother was married and had moved out and had his own place by then. While some students that I worked with over the years had trouble with younger siblings being at home, they said there was always noise going on, it was just my parents and I. And I had my own room to study and all that. So it just worked out fine.

Q. It was probably nicer than the dorm.

A. My mother's cooking was probably better than dorm food, yes. But really from a financial standpoint, we could, my parents and I, could get together and cover the tuition and living expenses, just normal out of pocket things and all that. But there wasn't a lot left over. We didn't have several hundred dollars, to pay to live in a dorm when you've got a perfectly good room at home. I've heard since, people would say, “Well, you've got to live in the dorm and experience all of that.” But I didn't really see any necessity of doing that. And I saw a lot of people who did move in a dorm kind of go off the deep end of being away from home for the first time. I just got along very well with my parents, and they were very supportive. It was just a good environment for me.

Q. And you don't feel like you missed out on campus life?
A. No, because of Phi Gamma Delta. And joining a fraternity was a tremendous positive experience for me. And that’s what got me involved on campus. I think students would have an empty college existence if all they did was drive from home, go to class, and get back in the car and drive home. That’s not what college is all about. But joining the fraternity, which was a financial strain, even though dues were not very much, when we think in terms of today’s dollars, but I covered that part of it by working part time jobs and mowing lawns and doing all kind of things, to get enough together to do that. And that’s what really got me into being a student, not just a classroom student but a total student of the University. Playing on the intramural sports teams and the touch football leagues and the softball leagues and all of that, building the Homecoming float and working on service projects and having social engagements with different sororities or another fraternity, or a picnic or a cookout and a dance and different things like that. I got to meet a lot of other students. You got to meet students from who grew up in New York, or they grew up on a farm in Ohio, which is a totally different experience than I had. Or some of my fraternity brothers had some money, and they’d go to New York on spring break. And then come back and tell stories of going to a New York play on Broadway, and I thought, “Holy Cow, wow, that’s fantastic.” And then the guy sitting beside them, the two that went to New York on spring break and went to a play and went out to eat at these lavish restaurants and all that, he was talking about his tractor on his farm and he and his dad was getting a new tractor that was bigger than the one they had, and all that. Some people have this mistaken idea of a fraternity being homogeneous
and all the people are the same and all that. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. I really grew a lot by associating with these people from different backgrounds and different socioeconomic and graphic areas, in state, out of state. We had a couple of transfer students that had gone to another college and then come to Ohio State, and they would tell what that was like. All in all it was a great experience and it got me involved in a lot of things. Also, just met some wonderful people. My fraternity brothers at that time, while we had a few that probably partied a little more than they should, most of them were pretty focused on what they came here for. And of that pledge class, and I still keep track of some of those guys many years later, several went on to get MBA’s, and had a business career. We’ve got a couple of medical doctors, and lawyers, got a couple of Ph.D.’s. We had a lot of fun in building the Homecoming float and playing on the softball team and having dates and going to parties and things like that. We had a lot of fun doing that. But it seemed like we had the balance in there. It was a group that was not overboard on the social activities to the point where they let their school work slide. And so the majority were serious about their school work. It’s just been a good lesson for me all along. Working with students all of these years, I have concluded, the students that have the most fun in college are the ones that work the hardest. It sounds backwards but the ones that have a lot of “fun,” going up to High Street and maybe having too many beers and letting their school work go and their social life kind of take over, really in the end that doesn’t work out very well. And there’s a lot of regret and lost opportunities and so forth. And the ones that study and go to class every day and
have some academic goals and want to go to graduate school, I saw that in that
group. The culture of that group was fun. We had a lot of fun. But also,
everybody kind of had their goals, whether it was medical school, the business
world, being a teacher or coach, they kind of had their directions, and they stuck
with them and got them done. And so when we have our reunions and so forth,
we look around and there’s a lot of success around the table. But not just
monetary success, but people who have really done good things with their lives,
whether it’s education, business, health areas, whatever they got into, they made
their mark and have had a nice career and done well. You look back from that
perspective and you remember what they were like when they were 18, 19, 20,
and the kind of decisions they were making then, how they were spending their
time and how it’s turned out these years later, you kind of get that perspective
which I think helped me work with students all those times. Because I could see
where they were making good decisions or maybe not so good and maybe give
them a little guidance here and there, and tell them a story or an anecdote, a little
encouragement, a little inspiration, whatever, and get people on the right track
that were maybe falling off a little bit.

Q. When you were teaching, at least as a graduate student, a Ph.D. student, there
were a lot of distractions for students on campus, because that’s the time of the
Vietnam War and a lot of campus unrest across the country, and also here at Ohio
State. The campus shut down for two weeks. I know, I will mention our
Facebook page, Jim here is a big fan of our Facebook page and we’re very happy
to have him. And when we did a posting about the campus shutdown on our
website about that, you had a comment, I’m paraphrasing, but you said it was just a very sad time. So talk a little bit about that time on campus because it sounds like it was very different when you first got here, a whole other world from when you were here as a Boy Scout.

A. When you talk about the decade of the ’60s, it’s not a decade, it’s two half decades. And the early ’60s were like the ’50s, and then things happened very suddenly. There were a lot of things that changed our society. The assassination of President Kennedy. When it happened, I was sitting up in Page Hall studying. My girlfriend then, now my wife of 45 years, we had a lot of study dates. And so we were studying together up in Page Hall, we’ll say at 3:00 in the afternoon or something like that, and one of my high school friends walked in and said, “Did you hear Kennedy got shot?” And I honestly thought it was a joke. I thought there was a punch line coming, you know, political jokes that people make all the time. And he said, “No.” And I said, “Oh no.” So we got to a television, we didn’t have cell phones and instant ways to get things, but we got this terrible, terrible news. That was a changer. That was just an awful moment, for those that are too young to remember that. My wife and I were just at the Kennedy Library over in Boston this past weekend. I just was there and we kind of re-lived all of that, from the campaign, how he started out as a senator and then was elected president, youngest elected president ever, and then the first three years of the administration and all the changes that were going on, and the impact of that. And then all of a sudden one day it just ends, totally different after that. And then
the Vietnam War comes along and all the struggles of that. And you know, that was so divisive and just a difficult, difficult time for everybody.

Q. Was it scary to be on campus?

A. Was it what?

Q. Was it scary to be on campus? Or maybe just heart breaking?

A. Yes, heart breaking. I just came to really appreciate what a wonderful place Ohio State is. And I hated to see it go through such an awful time then. It was kind of like mob rule. I had an office up on the 4th floor of the Old University Hall at the time. Several of my fellow TA’s, grad students in the History Department, we shared an office up there. And we’d come out on the fire escape there and kind of had an aerial view and could see the waves of people, protestors going back and forth. Then they brought in the National Guard. It was just a sad time and it was, I think it’s important to know, that not everybody was protesting. And that most students, myself included, just wanted to go to class and do what we were supposed to do. And some people were preventing that. The protestors were blocking the way to get to class and things like that. Growing up as a student we all think about getting a snow day now and then and we’d think, “Oh great, no school today,” and all that. My views on that kind of changed. I appreciated class so much after that. It can be taken away from you. Somebody can block you. I’m all for discussion and debate and all that kind of stuff, but we weren’t getting that at that time. It was just sort of a mob rule, violent kind of stuff, and if we had debate and people stand up on different sides, that’s fine. But it wasn’t, you need a respectful audience for debate. And that was the era of just shouting
people down and that kind of thing. And that’s not good. I mean, the University should be a place where you have a free exchange of ideas and all this kind of stuff. But you need to be respectful. And even if the person is saying a totally opposite thing that you think, let’s hear them out and hear what that is and let somebody else speak and get another view and another view and another view, and there are many views. Sometimes there are not just two views. There can be six or eight or ten. We lost that at that time. And it did become violent and people were throwing rocks through windows. I could never see the connection between whatever your feelings were on international politics and the war and all that, what the connection was of throwing a rock through a window at your University. That made no sense to me. You could have very strong feelings about the war or whatever, the draft, but what’s that got to do with throwing bricks? People could get hurt. I didn’t want anybody to get hurt. Whatever side they were on. So that was a sad time. It’s something we never want to go through again. It’s so divisive and we weren’t getting anywhere. Nothing good came out of that. So it was a very tough time and it was a sad one for me. I remember the day that the news came out that the students were killed up at Kent State, and I thought, “Oh no, that’s just so sad.” It reminds you of the Boston Massacre story going back to the Revolutionary War time. You’ve got some troops stationed there. You’ve got a mob that’s starting to throw things at them. You’ve got the confusion. One soldier thinks he heard a command to fire. A gun goes off and it’s a dangerous situation where somebody is going to get hurt. It happened back at the Boston Massacre back in the 1770s, and it happened again
here. And probably nobody wanted that to happen; nobody meant for it to happen. But it happened. And that’s when tempers are flaring and somebody’s got a gun and there’s potential for somebody to get hurt. And there’s a mob out there that’s kind of lost control. Just a lot of bad things can happen and they did. Unfortunately we did not have that and I think that was probably the only thing the administration could do at the time was close it down and take a week off and get everybody kind of cooled off, and then come back and finish the quarter as best we could.

Q. I was going to ask you about that because they shut down, I think it was actually two weeks, maybe a week, and I wondered what you thought of that. Some people were angry because you got a pass/fail. People who were doing well in school did not like the pass/fail, and also you just come back from your finals and you have to leave again. It was very frustrating.

A. That’s not the way an academic institution ought to work under ideal circumstances. We’re here to teach and learn and if you miss two weeks of a ten week quarter, that’s a big chunk out of there. But yet, what are you going to do given the circumstances and all that? So I think that’s probably the best compromise you could work out. But there was some teaching and learning that didn’t happen. We do have students in classes to learn certain things and, yes, you can say we’ll just you credit for it and you can go on, but did you really learn anything? So it just was just the worst, saddest time in the history that I know of, of the University. And personally for me, I was just a wreck over that. It was just awful. My position on it was, I was going to teach my class. I had a contract to
teach class and I was supposed to go in and teach in my own section that quarter. I was a discussion leader and we had a professor that lectured three days a week. Then we had the discussion groups two days a week. I was going to meet my class. I didn’t care what the rest of the graduate students voted or whatever. I had a contract to go teach that class at whatever time it was, Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00, or whatever it was. And I was going to do that and tried my best to maintain my responsibilities on what I thought I needed to do. I just never could understand any connection between whatever you thought about the war and what’s going on and disrupting class and violent activities. I think it’s fine, you go to class and take care of that. Now, in the evening if they want to have speakers come in to the Ohio Union and debate both sides, or you want to have all kind of things, that would be fine. Let’s hash it all out, fine. And give everybody a chance. But to disrupt class and worse, violent activity where people could get hurt by throwing bricks and broken glass and confrontations and that kind of stuff, we needed more compromisers, conciliators, people who could bring the sides together in a civil way, so that people of different views could discuss and debate and talk but not be so combative. And it didn’t happen right then.

Q. Now I think it was about a year later you got your Ph.D. So you’re ready to teach but then your career takes a little bit of a different direction.

A. Yes. That was an interesting time. Since I did all my degrees here, they had a limit on your teaching assistantship of, I believe, five years. You could be supported for five years from the department. So because I did my Master’s and Ph.D. here and passed by generals on December 15, 1969, a big day.
Q. Congratulations.

A. A big day. Once you do that, you write that dissertation and you’re done. So I needed another year beyond the end of my assistantship in the Spring of 1971 to finish, and I was looking around for some kind of employment. I didn’t want to leave. It was possible. Some people leave at that point and go take a teaching job somewhere, ABD, and I didn’t want to do that because I knew how hard that would be to finish my dissertation. And if I took a teaching job I knew I would want to give 110% there and I wouldn’t have any percent left to finish that dissertation. So I thought one more year, stay here and finish up, and then go out and do things. And University College was hiring Academic Advisers at the time. And that was a new college that was started in the late 60’s and several of the older graduate students that I knew had taken a job over there and worked with students. And I thought, “That really sounds like a neat job. I would enjoy doing that.” You’ve got to have a job and you’ve got to have a paycheck coming in. But I thought, “That’s really an interesting job. Wouldn’t that be fun to work with students?” And since I had been at Ohio State now ten years, I thought, “I know this place pretty well and I think I could be of help to students and that would be really an interesting job, to talk to them about their plans and help them as I did struggle a little bit with what field you’re going to go into and where you end up and how to study and set some goals, and career planning, and all that kind of stuff. That sounds pretty good.” When I was teaching, whether a discussion or had my own class several quarters, students would drop in and talk about things and you’d get into discussions like that and they’d say, “Well, I really like this
history course and I’d like to major in that but what would I do with that and where would my career go?” So we had some discussions. As a classroom teacher you talk to students. So I thought, “That would just be an ideal setting.” So I applied for that hoping I would get it. And I remember right now, forty years ago right now, in June 1971, I had applied for that. And I hadn’t heard and hadn’t heard and I needed to make a research trip to Philadelphia to do research for my dissertation on the Colonial Wars and so I was getting ready to leave and I still didn’t have a job for next fall and all that. So I called and said, “Do you have anything.” And they said, “No, we haven’t made all the decisions yet. It will be a couple weeks. Can you call us from your trip?” I said, “Well okay.” So we went over to Philadelphia. My wife helped me as she has done all these years. And we did some research at the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia and stayed there a week. And she had an aunt that lived in Philadelphia, so we stayed with her, because we didn’t have any money. And then we gathered the research data. We had planned to drive up through the Lake Champlain/Lake George area of New York because that’s where some of the events of the French and Indian War took place. And I wanted to see those as part of my learning process. So we had to camp of course. We didn’t have any money to stay at a motel. So we made our sandwiches and did all that. But we were camping and the day came that I was supposed to call. And I called into the office at University College and they said, “Yes, you’ve been hired, three-quarter time for $575 a month. And I thought that was all the money in the world. That was the most wonderful news. And we had brought a bottle of wine along in our Volkswagen van and we sat
around the campfire that night and uncorked the wine. And we thought, “What a wonderful day this is.” So that was June twenty something of 1971. And then we proceeded with the rest of our trip and came home. To make money, the summer of ’70 and ’71, I worked for one of my graduate school friends who was an apartment manager of an apartment complex. He got a free apartment for being the manager. So he and his life lived there. So he hired me for the summer to be the yard man. So here I am, almost Ph.D., but I spent that summer mowing lawns and pulling weeds and cleaning out window wells and painting door frames, and things like that. But it was a job, it was a job. So anyway, we got through that fine. Then I started over at University College in the fall of ’71. And that just clicked. That was a wonderful experience. One of the things that made it so terrific was John Mount, who was the Dean of the college at the time, and was for many years. I had known him a little bit, I’ll go back to tell you another story if I can.

Q. Please.

A. One of the good experiences that I had as an undergraduate was being employed on campus. And two summers I worked over at the University Farms at the corner of Lane and Kenny, did stoop labor, had to hoe, had the calluses on my hands from planting corn and harvesting corn and tomatoes. One day our little work crew of three of four guys, we put in 5,000 tomato stakes. Do you know how tired your arms are after you put in 5,000? We got a very good suntan that year which we shouldn’t have been doing, because I didn’t know about sunscreen and all that. But anyway, two summers, now that was at the princely sum of
$1.35 an hour but the second year, being an experienced farm hand, was $1.45 an hour. But got by that okay and all that. And another job I had during, as I started my senior year of undergrad and continued on into grad school even, was I worked at the Campus Mail Service. And I was a mailman. When you started out, you sorted a lot of mail. Now this sounds like a boring job and it is kind of, but it’s not. Because you learn the University. You learn every office at the University. Sorting mail you have all these pigeon holes of all the different departments and everything, some you knew about and some you didn’t. So you’re sorting mail and you see mail come into the Water Resources Lab or something. I didn’t know we had one of those, okay. The Vo-Ag Department or something. I didn’t know we had that. Now I know where it is. And we would actually put on the leather mail bag and go out and walk a foot route. And there were several of them. The mail room, instead of being over here by the Archives where it is now, used to be in the back of the journalism building. And the U.S. Mail trucks would come in there and the campus mail trucks and all that. And so we would walk the foot routes out of that building. One route was to the administration building. So you got familiar with those offices, you knew where the president’s office was and all the vice presidents. You figured out what they did and what areas they had, which most undergraduates don’t pay much attention to. And you got to know the people that worked in those offices and all that. So once again, that sounds like kind of menial job, starting out in the mail room, but I learned the University. I learned every building. Then after you worked there a while, you can drive the truck. So I got to drive the truck over to the Ag Campus
and the Research Foundation on Kinnear Road. So you learned where all those offices are. It sounds kind of funny but that was a tremendous help to me when I ended up working for the University all those years. I knew where everything was. And it was so helpful when students would say, “I have a class in so and so,” or, “I’m trying to find this,” or you would refer them to go see somebody about something. I could visualize where that was and tell them right where to go. But you really kind of learned how the University worked which was a tremendous help to me. But as I started to say, one of the officers on my mail route over there in the administration building, was John Mount, who was Vice President Student Affairs and Secretary of the Board of Trustees and many things in his long and great career. Then when I came along to University College in the fall of ’71, he was the Dean of University College and Vice President for the Regional Campuses. So I learned about that, too, regional campuses. That’s a whole other world. Well, what a role model. What a fine individual in every way, and as a young guy in his 20’s still and still choosing a career path and deciding what opportunities are going to come up and all that, to be associated with him was such a wonderful serendipitous coincidence or whatever it was, that could happen. And you hear him get up and talk to all the new advisers in the training program, and I thought, “This is a remarkable man. This is different. This isn’t just an ordinary training session. I’m hearing some things here I’ve never heard before and I’m hearing them from a guy that’s been there and been around this place a long time, has deep affection and respect for the University, great affection and respect for the students.” And that’s what I picked up from
him, and continued to pick up, to get ahead of our story, working for him for the next twelve years. He becomes almost like your dad in a way. He has kids about my age, so I can say that. What a person to be around to show you how to live your life, how to serve the University, totally all about helping students succeed. I think he even told that story, we often hear new freshmen come in and a president or somebody says, “Look to your left and look to your right. Only one of you is going to finish” and all this kind of stuff. It was the opposite of that. He says, “We want everyone to finish. We don’t want to scare anybody out. We want everybody to study hard and go to class but we want every person that walks through that door to succeed. We’re not here to fail people out or to weed them out. This is Ohio State. This is the land grant public university where families from all over the State of Ohio and beyond are sending their sons and daughters to come here. We want everybody that walks through these doors to have the best experience they can. And you, speaking to these academic advisers out here, you’re the first ones they meet. You’re the front door. And you know, you are the University to many of them. And how you treat them and how you help them is going to have great effect on how they are going to do.” And I thought, “Boy, he’s right. This is amazing. This is not just a stop gap job to get me through another year of grad school. What a responsibility and an opportunity and an honor in a way to have this important job.” And so I was thrilled to be there. And every day was better. Met a lot of good colleagues there. Some of the other graduate students were working half time or three quarter time, good camaraderie. Some had been there the year before and kind of taught me the ropes a little bit.
And then we worked together, just good spirit. Most, there were a few, like any organization you’re in, some that kind of mail it in and don’t get quite as involved with helping the students as they should. But the majority were very good colleagues to work with. I think we all had that idea that we were really making a different in young peoples’ lives that were coming through the door and helping them get off on the right foot. University College at that time, this is a little hard to imagine now, but all the freshmen started there, all the freshmen. So whether you were decided or undecided, or wanted to go into business or arts and sciences or engineering or agriculture, you started out in University College. We had everybody for the first year. And then they started to move into their colleges depending on how they did. If you wanted to be an engineer, you needed to take math 150 and 151. And if you did okay, they’d admit you if you had a certain point hour. And you took certain courses to get into business or engineering or whatever it was. And some students did and some didn’t. Some thought they wanted to be a doctor or an engineer or something but they’d run into math and that convinced them that they ought to do something else. So that was another good experience for me because I was designated to be an adviser to undecided students. They had CAP areas, as they called them, that matched up with the colleges. So you had an [agriculture] Curricular Academic Program, or CAP for Ag, Engineering, Business, and so forth. And I was wondering what I would get when we got our assignments. And they tried to match you up with what your background is. So I thought I would probably be assigned to the arts and sciences group. But they put me with General Baccalaureate Curriculum, the GBC CAP.
And I thought, “Hmmm, what is this?” Well it turns out it is the undecided students. And I guess since I had been around a while, or maybe they flipped a coin, maybe there was some thought behind it. Anyway, I was assigned to that. Well, another great thing happened to me there as it panned out: because I had to learn all the curricula which was fun in a way. Learning new things all the time. I didn’t know much about Agriculture and some of these colleges, other than carrying the mail over there. I knew where the animal science building was anyway. But you know, every student that walked through your door, and you would see dozens in a day’s time, was different. And everybody had different plans and different ideas. Some were pretty decided, “I definitely want to go into this.” And they were a good student and looked like they were going to do it. And you’d help them and show them what they needed to take and help them work out their schedule, and they’d go off and do it. And then some were pretty undecided and say, “I don’t have a clue. I want to go to college.” I figured out after a while that we had a bi-model distribution in there, in the GBC area, of undecided students. We had some that were undecided because they were very bright and able and talented in many ways. And they couldn’t decide because they were good at a lot of things. And then we had some others that hadn’t given it a lot of thought and kind of went off to college because it was thing to do but they really didn’t have much direction and all that. Not that they weren’t good people and not that they weren’t salvageable but they hadn’t really clicked with any field of study yet. And so it was probably a help to them to find something that they liked and all that. So it was a lot of fun and you thought you were
helping students and doing good work every day you were there, that what you were doing was worthwhile. But what a great thing for me as a young administrator starting out in my 20’s, I didn’t know I was going to be an administrator at that point, but as it turned out, I learned once again the whole University. And I learned the people because if somebody was talking about going into Engineering, I’d call up and talk to one of the counselors over there and say, “I’m going to send Joe Doaks over to you. He’s thinking about this or that. Could you talk to him about that? We’ve talked and gone over the basics but could you tell him the difference between mechanical and civil engineering,” or something like that. So we kind of worked with all these people. And so I got to know people all over the campus in addition to Admissions and Financial Aid and Student Services and all of those. So it was a great thing to spend a year in that.

And then, when I had signed on to go to work at UVC, the agreement was, I found out the reason they were a little hesitant to hire me, why I was on the fence for a while. They said, “Because you’re too close to finishing your degree. We’d like for you to be here at least two years and not one year. By the time you get trained and get used to the job, you’d leave and then we’ve invested some training in you, and then you leave.” So they said, “Would you stay for two? Would you give us two years?” And I said, “Yes, I’d be glad to do that.” So when I got hired it was a two year thing. So that gave me time to work, get the dissertation done, which I did pretty much in the summer of ’72. I was off, so I had a quarter to just blitz on that. So I wrote it all up and turned it in by the end of the summer. Didn’t graduate until December, because I didn’t have it in by the deadlines for
the summer quarter commencement but I had it all done. So then it was back to work. So I had this year and I thought, “Well this is great. I’ve got an income. I’ve got a nice job that I enjoy doing. And I’ve got a year now to job hunt. So I can start, if I’m going to teach I can start sending out resumes and look for jobs. This is perfect. Fine.” So that was plan. So I graduated, got my Ph.D. in December commencement of ’72 and my wife and I were talking over our strategies, where we might like to live and where we might like to apply. And Dean Mount had a Christmas party at his house, as he did every year about that time. And we were at the Christmas party and having a nice time with all of our University college friends and colleagues. Dean and Dave Marsh, who was a senior administrator at University College at the time, tapped me on the shoulder and said, “Have you got a minute, we’d like to talk to you. Let’s step in the other room here a minute.” And I said, “Well, okay.” They said, “Would you be interested in staying at Ohio State and have a full-time job at University College.” They said, “Dave is going to be assuming some other responsibilities and his College Secretary job is coming open, which is sort of a senior-level administrator, kind of like Assistant Dean level.” Every college has a College Secretary. I have not found any university in the United States other than Ohio State that has this title, so it’s not like typing and whatever. It’s the record keeper of the college and the administrator with responsibility for student records of the college. It’s like a Deputy Registrar in the college. The College Secretary manages all the student records and their grades and all that sort of thing. I said, “Okay, that sounds outstanding, I’d love to do that.” So your question about how
did you get out of the teaching group and into administration, you never know what opportunities are going to come your way. I will say the other part of it was, while I was in grad school, the teaching market had dried up. It was in terrible shape. And so when I went in, it was normal, you had to do well but the prospects were that you would get a job. By the time I got done, there were just almost no faculty jobs open around the country. It was just in a quagmire and hardly anybody is getting a job. Maybe you would get a junior college somewhere, maybe part-time somewhere, that kind of thing. So it was real hard to get anything. And here this full-time opportunity to stay in Columbus which I was very happy to do. My family is here. My wife’s family is here. We like Columbus. We like Ohio State. It just all worked out fine. And so I became College Secretary of University College and held that job for 10 years anyway after my grad school days. And I had a wonderful time doing that. What that leads to, first of all you supervise the staff of people that manage all the records, the record folders. We didn’t have much in the way of computers at that time. It was all papers. You had an actual folder student for each student with their grades and stuff in there. That was a big job because we had, I think somewhere around 15, 16,000 students in University College at one time. So to manage all their records and keep the grades straight and all that. And then that leads to all these problem-solving things. So a student comes in and says, “I attended math all quarter but it didn’t show up on my grade. What happened?” Well then you go back and untangle. Well, you find they actually were there the whole time. They didn’t sign up for it correctly or something happened. Or the opposite might come
up: “I got an E in this course, I thought I dropped it way back the first week of the quarter.” Then you’d have to figure it out. Were they telling the truth or not? So you had to track all these things down. And this is serious business because this is their official transcript. And you certainly don’t want a student to have a failing grade on there if they honestly made an attempt to drop the course and thought they had dropped it and quit going and picked up another course or something but didn’t do the paperwork correctly. But you could have a situation where a student did earn a failing grade and comes in and tells a story that they didn’t deserve it. So you had to sort all that out. And then at the end of the quarter I would review all of the grades and see who made the Dean’s List, 3.5 or better on a full-time load, and who is in the middle and then down at the end. And who is on warning, probation or eligible to be dismissed from the University. And you have to look at each one of those. We would make those decisions very humanely and very thoroughly. We would have meetings sitting around a table, like you and I are here today, and each CAP area supervisor would come in with the records for their students, and we’d talk over each one. Now some people think Ohio State is a big place and you don’t get personal attention. We had thousands of students and every case got discussed. The supervisors and advisors [would] come in and talk to me, I was kind of the central person, to kind of maintain some uniformity and standards. But the individual attention given to each case was just what ought to happen, even though the student is not doing well. And then the student would come in and sometimes there was good reason. The counselor would say, “This student really had a bad quarter and they got two
D’s and an E, but I think we ought to save them because I learned their mother was ill and in the hospital and they were going home very weekend. I didn’t know about it until last week. They finally came in and told me about it. I think we’ve got things straightened out now.” So we would waive that one and let that student stay. Or, just all kinds of things. Maybe they are in the wrong field and the advisor said, “Well, I’ve talked to them and they are going to change their major and they are going to get out of engineering because they failed math and they are going to move on to X, Y or Z, whatever it was, and they have a plan.”

Now sometimes it’s just all bad grades and the counselor would say, “I’ve called the student three times to come in and I haven’t seen them yet.” I said, “Well, I guess they are going to have to take some time off then because we don’t know what’s wrong and they aren’t making any attempt to correct anything.” But we would talk about each case like that. And we would make the decisions and I’d have to send out the letters that said, “You’re on warning, or you’re on probation, or you’re dismissed from the University.” Then we had the ones who were dismissed. Maybe in a couple of quarters or a year later they [would] want to come back. And they would apply for reinstatement. So again, we’d go through the process of what went wrong, “What are you going to do different?” And they would write out essays about that and then we’d review those and try to make a wise decision. And it was never in the idea of punishment … (end of tape).

There was always an idea of, “What can we do to help them, what went wrong. Let’s analyze this.” And sometimes you would see very good ACT scores, 28 or 30, good high school grades. And you’d think, “Well, this student ought to be
doing well. What’s the problem here.” And we’d call them in. And so I had a lot of conferences over the years with students and their parents sometimes about what had gone wrong, and everyone was different and everyone had a story to tell. So anyway, that’s kind of what my day was all about. But it was fascinating work and interesting stuff. And once again, sometimes you had these students at that “teachable moment” that we talk about right? The teachable moment. They kind of put things off and hadn’t come to grips with what was causing the problems. Are they working a part-time job too much? Are they socializing too much? Are they in the wrong field? Whatever it was. And finally you get them to that time when they are eligible to be dismissed or at least on probation, that they would finally make some progress here and get them to analyze what’s going on and talk them through and get them back on the track. So, when that process succeeds, there’s nothing like it to help a student and to feel like you’ve helped that student get from being dismissed or near dismissal, to succeed. And then of course at University College we only had them their first two years, then they’d go on to a degree-granting college. But when I got over to Arts and Sciences and did some of these same things there, reviewing those grades at the end of the quarter and reviewing the reinstatement requests and hearing all of these things, to see that student come through the commencement line. They’d look at me and I’d look at them and we’d have a little nod. They’ve got their cap and gown on just like everybody else and they should. They earned it. But we know that they’ve had some dips and trips along the way. And maybe they were out of school for a while or whatever. And then here they come through that line and they made it,
and they did it, and they got back on track. What a wonderful feeling it was. Commencement was always my favorite day. I just loved going to commencement. Over in Arts and Sciences I would help pass out the diplomas. I was always glad to do that. And be up there in the line and see them. Some students that were just terrific and had done everything right all the way along, had a 3.8 or 4.0. I advised both Romaphos and Sphinx, the sophomore honorary and the senior honorary, so I knew a lot of these students that were high achievers and just tremendous students. And they’re off to Johns Hopkins Med School and all kinds of wonderful things in their future. And I loved seeing them coming through and they had just done a spectacular job in their undergraduate days and done all kinds of great things. You feel so proud of them. And here’s some of them that had their problems along the way and they had recovered and got back on track and got back in school and finished. And here they come through the Commencement line and to shake hands with them and put that diploma in their hands, that was just the greatest day.

Q. So you wouldn’t agree, I think one of my questions asks about some of the criticism of UVC, because it was seen by some as a place where students could flounder for a very long time, as opposed to getting them as soon as possible into the colleges.

A. University College was anything you want to say about it.

Q. It was all of the above.

A. All of the above. It suffered from a couple of things. One was the geographic isolation on west campus. And students felt like they were still in high school or
something. They didn’t get over to that beautiful Oval and Mirror Lake and all that. They didn’t have any of their classes around there. So some felt sort of like second-class citizens in a way. So we had that geographic problem. I always thought University College would have worked better if it was in Derby Hall or Page Hall or something like that, if it was right there on the central campus. But to bus them to West Campus, they had to ride the bus over to get there, and then take classes over there, you spent a lot of your day there and then you go back. I could see how students wouldn’t feel like they were quite an Ohio State student yet. So I think the geographic thing was a problem. The other was, now I wasn’t around, I mean I was here on campus but I wasn’t involved in University College getting created and I didn’t hear all the debates. When I worked there, it seemed that we always had to justify our existence as a College. It seemed like every year there was a different faculty committee that would study whether University College was a good idea or not. And so we’d spend half of our time, instead of helping students and doing what we were supposed to do, doing all these reports. How many students are in this and that program, how many transferred, how many were above a three point, and how many made it to their degree-granting college within a year or two? So just all the time we were under the gun so to speak from different committees that would be appointed. And then you would get a new provost or someone who would come in from some other vicinity and wouldn’t know any of the background, and they would say, “What’s University College?” And then we’d have to start all over again. Justify why we’re there, explaining the history, explaining the advising and how we fit in with the degree-
granting colleges. We’d get that settled, then the next year the University Senate would appoint a committee to study University College, and you’d go through all that again. So there was an awful lot of energy expended on justifying why we were there. I don’t know. Some of the colleges wanted their students right away, and some students were prepared to go to their college right away. Particularly Ag, a great college. I just really admire Ag and all they do for their students there. They had kids coming from family farms who had been in 4H and all this kind of thing. And they knew they wanted to go into agriculture. And it just seemed that Agriculture would always say, “Why can’t we just have these students? Why do they have to go to University College and sit there for a year? We know their family. The county agent knows their dad.” That’s a good question. The other thing is, we had a lot of students that honestly didn’t know what they wanted to go into. And rather than force them to make a quick decision, perhaps the wrong one, let’s get them in with some advising and try some courses and see are you fit and all that. Now the trouble is, all these students look alike. They are not wearing flags on them or a different colored hat or something that tells you when they walk in the door as a freshman, which they are. And some that say they are decided of course aren’t really decided. Some are saying something because they are expected to. Their parents wanted them to be that, or their next door neighbor wants them to be that, or they live next door to a pharmacist and they are going to go into pharmacy. And haven’t thought it all through. Some really need a lot of guidance and a lot of help, and some know what they want to do and could get on with it. But it’s hard to kind of sort all that
out. So University College was kind of the honest broker of all the different majors there are and tried to help students make the right decision. So I think that part of the concept was good. Geography hurt and the fact that pretty much all of our advisers were grad students and were temporary and were there for a year or two and they would move in. You then have the continuity and the experience that builds up of making a good academic adviser. Somebody that’s been at it for 10 or 15 or 20 years really can get good at this job. And that was the tough part of it. A student would have one adviser one year, then the adviser would get their MBA or something and leave, then they’d get a new advisor. They were always changing and all that. You didn’t have the continuity, one advisor that got to know you and take an interest in you and get you on your way. Sometimes that worked real well, but it didn’t always. And you hear those stories that, “I didn’t get much help over there.” So yes, all those things are true, and some students were just served beautifully and had a wonderful first year or two there and got it all sorted out and moved into their field and did fine and everything worked out great. And some perhaps didn’t feel they were part of the University or resented the bus travel every day or whatever it was, and got a little disgusted about that. That hurt us too. But it was a good place for me to learn the University. It was wonderful to have that mentorship of John Mount. I can’t tell you how much that has meant to me over the years. Coming out of the History Department or any department like that, the History Department is as good as any, but you don’t see the entire University. And I had never had a single course in University administration or higher education administration or anything like that. I had a
course in American Revolution and Civil War and different things like that, but you don’t have any in higher education administration. When I got the College Secretary job and started going to John Mount’s senior staff meetings, there’s where I learned all these things from a guy that knew them and knew how to convey them. We had a staff meeting every Monday afternoon and to me that wasn’t staff meeting. It was Higher Ed 999. As I go in there and learn from “Professor” Mount in those terms. Here’s a senior guy that knows how this University works, knows how to treat students. He’s seen it all, he’s done it all, and he knows what us young pups coming up ought to learn and how we ought to do things. And he was so good at teaching that. He was the boss but he never liked to be called boss. If you’d kind of jokingly said, “the boss,” or something, he seemed to kind of wince because he didn’t really want to be the boss. He didn’t see himself as bossy. But he had that knack for sitting around the table and there would be seven or eight of us and we’d be talking about something, and somebody would make a suggestion or whatever, he knew that was kind of going on the wrong way. But he would never say to that person, “Well, that’s the dumbest idea I’ve ever heard.” He would always do it in a teaching way and he’d say, “Now, if we do that, let’s think how that would work out.” And he’s get the people around the table to say, “Well, how would that affect your area?” And they would say, “Well, we’d have some problems with that.” So by the time you talked it all out, you figured that that wasn’t the way to go. But he got everybody to see that rather than just being the boss and saying, “No, that’s a bad idea, we’re not doing that.” Twenty minutes later he would get everybody around that table
to see that that wasn’t the way to go without making that one person that suggested it feel like he’s totally stupid for even for bringing it up. We’d come to that consensus, then we’d move on to a better way to do it. He just had that way to teach. That was his course on how to run the University and how to run our college disguised as a staff meeting. But when I had learned those lessons and then I moved over to Arts and Sciences, there was a lot of that that went with me and I hope went with me and I hope stays with me today, to put students first, how to treat students, how to interact with your other colleagues around the University, to keep everybody on the same page, how to treat your colleagues, how to treat the people that work for you, how to treat the people that you work for. It was all right there. It was a great experience to be there. Everything, once again, falls into place. John Mount reached the mandatory retirement age in 1983.

Q. They still had that then, that’s right.

A. And he had to step down and I don’t think he really wanted to do that because he had a lot of energy and a lot of value to this University. And he found ways to continue to do that. All these years later he’s still part of things and will always be part of things. And has contributed so much over the years. But anyway, he had to retire and I knew the college would never be the same, that that would be a different thing. And while I could have stayed there and it would have been fine, an opportunity came up. Dean Oates, Bob Oates, who was the Assistant Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences when I was a student, had also reached the retirement age. And so he was going to step down and I thought, “Well wouldn’t that just be an ideal spot for me?” the job would be some of the things that I had
been doing, so I kind of knew how to do that. Dean Oates and I had been in a lot of meetings together. And yet it would be different. It would be working with juniors and seniors now and taking on some different things. So it was just enough of the same that I felt comfortable moving into that, and just enough different to make it a new challenge and to be something new. And so that was a wonderful thing and I applied for that job. I’ve always hated to apply for jobs. And I was so glad my first full-time job at University College came as it did because I don’t like the idea of applying. There’s just something about applying for something. If you haven’t made your reputation, if you’re not well known enough—now sometimes at a starting level you’ve got to apply for a job—but when you kind of get into your career I always thought that the job should come to the person and not the person come to the job. But this was the ideal job. And the way things have changed, with the way the laws have changed over the years, you don’t just give jobs to your friends and all that. You need to advertise around the campus and have interviews and follow a procedure, so that it’s not a closed network and the good old boys. So there’s reasons for that, and yet there’s some good parts to being approached for a job. Well anyway, I applied, because I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity and Arts and Sciences is my college. And what an honor that would be to sit in Dean Oates’ chair and be as he was to students over the years and take all I had learned from John Mount and my other colleagues, Dave Marsh and others over there, and apply that to Arts and Sciences. And Tom Willke was called the Vice Provost for the Arts and Sciences at the time. He was kind of the super dean of the Arts and Sciences colleges. Tom
knew of my work and I interviewed for [the job] with the other Assistant Deans over there, and [I] got that job. And that was just another one of those great days in my life. That I was able to step into that. Denney Hall. I had gone there for my freshmen orientation back in 1961. I had orientation sessions in there and I had freshmen English class in there and all that. And now to get to be one of the senior administrators of that, was just a dream come true. It sounds corny but it was true. That’s what was going through my mind at the time, what a wonderful opportunity that would be. And so I was in that role for the next 16 years. And you say, “Well, that’s a long time in one job.” Yes, but it never got old. Every student that walked through the door was different and my job description changed here and there over time with more recruitment and retention responsibilities and different ways to structure things. And we’d reorganize from time to time. So it was a great place and I just loved it. Really enjoyed my time there.

Q. Well there was a lot of change in that college over time. When I was going through some of the clippings, there was a lot of discussion of curriculum, a lot of discussion of should it still be these five colleges, maybe we should break them up. It sounded like in a way it was like UVC. Every other year there was a new push to make it a lot different. So it must have always been interesting from that standpoint.

A. There was a lot of change over time. I thought the model we had when I first went over there worked very well.

Q. You had the five colleges.
A. We had five colleges but we had a dean over them. Each college had a dean but Tom Willke as Vice Provost for the Arts and Sciences was kind of the “super dean,” the chief dean of the five. And I thought that worked very well and I’m glad to see we have sort of returned to that. I was at an event this last weekend and somebody on the Alumni Advisory Board of the University says, “How about that Arts and Sciences Dean, and not having the five colleges so much anymore, more unified? What do you think? And I said, “Well, if you live long enough it all comes back.” He said, “Oh really, I didn’t know that.” And I said, “Yes, that’s pretty much, as I understand what’s going on today, that’s pretty much what we’re getting back to.” I think that works the best. I think it became awfully fragmented and there was—I want to put this as gently as I can here—there was a lot of squabbling over turf and some people trying to make their careers by being one of those five deans, with the idea of not so much of serving students or Ohio State but going on to become a provost or president and things like that. Instead of having the University at heart, they kind of had their own career. And I think one thing that kind of got us off the track there for a while; I know a college like Dentistry, the alums, the graduates of that college, really identified with that college. And they are very loyal to that and they give their money back. So also with Vet Med or Pharmacy, things like that. Arts and Sciences is a little different. So in an attempt to try to make our graduates identify with their college more, they stressed that, that you had a dean and you were in Humanities or Social and Behavioral Sciences or whatever it was, and they tried to kind of force that on the students. Now the students, I had a lot of contact with students that were here,
and they never bought into that. If you’d ask a student, “What college are you in,” they would say, “Arts and Sciences.” When commencement time would go around—I mentioned going to commencement—so we’d go over to St. John Arena and get them all lined up. And I’d go down the line and say hello to some of them and congratulate that I had known along the way. But a student walking in the door and trying to figure out where they are supposed to go and what line they are supposed to go into was always looking for “Arts and Sciences.” There were signs up, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, etc., and the students would say, “Where do I go?” And the staff member would say, “What college are you in?” “Arts and Sciences,” and they would say, “Well, what major were you in?” And they would say that and we would say, “Okay, that’s Social and Behavior Sciences or that’s Math and Physical Sciences.” So to the students that meant nothing and they hardly ever grasped that. And you couldn’t find a student with a search warrant that knew what college they were in. So it just wasn’t a natural fit. They wanted to be in the College of Arts and Sciences. They thought they were in the College of Arts and Sciences. They wanted to be a graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences. And so we’ve got to find some better ways to do our fundraising and our alumni relations than just forcing a system on them that’s not an intuitive one that they don’t react to. So therefore I was delighted, when I get these recent e-mails and publications from Arts and Sciences that, they are going back to something like the old model. And if you’ve got a great dean in there like Tom Willke was when I went over there, as my boss, just a wonderful person to work with and work for, who has all the right ideas. And a very
effective administrator and got along well with people. He had definite views, but
great to work with. And you know, you get the right person in there and then
have these five deans take care of their own fields, that’s great. Some of their
faculty things and curricular things, that’s fine. They’ve got plenty to do. There’s
plenty to do. And then let this one dean coordinate the various colleges, and
we’ve got a unified Arts and Sciences. Students often had no idea, coming into
my office, they said, “Well, I can’t decide, I thought History or Political Science.”
Perfectly natural. And I’d say, “Well, one is in Humanities and one is in Social
and Behavioral Sciences.” They had no idea of that. And when you stop to think,
why should they? It’s just not something that’s really critical to them. They’d
say, “Biology or Chemistry.” And you’d say, “Well, one’s in one college and
one’s in the other.” And they would ask, “Why?” So I think we’re back on track
and I think this is the way to go. It is a difficult task because there’s so many
students involved. And I guess the College of the Arts is kind of the outlier there,
too, because they’re different, a different degree, and their curricular requirements
are different, and being a Music major or Fine Arts major is, a little different.
More of the conservatory model in a way. It’s not all the same general
requirements and all that sort of thing. So that’s a little different. So it’s good to
know, I’m delighted we have now put both science colleges together. Because
like I said, students couldn’t tell the difference anyway, and as we get more
interdisciplinary things and faculty working together across departments and all
that, great. Social and Behavioral has so many students, Psychology and
Sociology and Communications majors, I don’t know what the numbers are.
When I was in Arts and Sciences, there were 800-900 majors in each of those fields, 900 psychology majors, 1,000 maybe, something like that. So you get these big majors like that, and then you have another major that has like 20 or 30 students. So not all majors are the same and not all need to be done the same. Those are things I think we can work around. That’s what administrators get paid for, right? That’s what they are supposed to work out, some problems like that.

Q. It probably would be, being an administrator at the level of the college over the other colleges, would be akin to at times herding cats, because you have different personalities. And like you learned about different students and what they wanted, you must have had to figure out how to deal with different deans, their personalities, and how they were seeing their college should be, and how it was affected by the overall institution. Did you deal much with the deans or were you mostly dealing with students?

A. I tried to always put students first and keep my focus on what we are there for, and stay as far away from office politics as I could. And I don’t know if that’s wise or not because I’m probably a little naïve sometimes on who was on their way out and who was on their way in, and all that kind of thing. But I know some people kind of make a career out of going to the Faculty Club for lunch and gossiping about what department is going to be done away with, or have a new chairman, and all this kind of stuff. And that just never intrigued me at all. And I thought, “What I’m here for is something else.” And while I care about who my boss is going to be or how we’re going to divide up the colleges or not, or whatever, I care about those things, but I’m not going to run my life or have my
life run by that kind of stuff. And I think what we are here for are for the students and making sure they are having the best experience they can. And so when these things were going on in different behind-the-scenes office politics, I just tried to stay out of it and make suggestions here and there on what I thought was a good way to run things and all that. But some things just take off and run and get a life of their own, and fragmenting Arts and Sciences into the five colleges, that clearly was what some people thought ought to happen. I think--I’ve thought about this a lot because it did affect me—I think we get too caught up in structure, way too caught up in our structure. And I learned in going to the CIC meetings, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. The CIC is all the Big Ten schools plus University of Chicago, because they used to be in the Big Ten when they had a first-class football team and all that. First Heisman Trophy winner, Jay Berwanger, University of Chicago. Going to those meetings of the Assistant and Associate Deans of all the CIC schools, we’d get together once a year at one of the schools and we had similar problems, issues, programs, all that, and we’d talk about all these things. And here I found out, you sit around the table, there’s Wisconsin and Purdue and Michigan and Michigan State and Iowa and so forth, they are all organized a little differently. What we call a College of Arts and Sciences or College of Liberal Arts, it had a different name every place and it was a little different. Now that’s an interesting thing. We’ve got all these sister institutions, Northwestern is a little different because it’s private and all that, but you look at Illinois and Indiana, they are very much like Ohio State. They are organized differently. All these students are coming out with a nice degree and a
nice education. And then I’d look at an Ohio State Commencement and I’d be sitting there in my cap and gown looking out at our graduates, and I’m thinking, “There’s probably not two students out of several thousand sitting out there that took the same courses in the same order.” Now that may happen over in Optometry or Pharmacy, everybody marches along and takes the same courses. But at Arts and Sciences, everybody is different. So this makes you think too, that curriculum, while it’s important and we must give a lot of thought to that, in Arts and Sciences, there’s a lot of diversity there and there’s a million different ways to fulfill your requirements. Now I’m all in favor that we ought to have foreign language and math and science and humanities, we can argue and discuss that forever. There’s no great right or wrong way to do it. We can come up with the best we can. But I’ve always thought our structure of how to organize the colleges, plural or singular, and curriculum, took up way too much of our time. And whatever curriculum we came up with was probably pretty good. And a student that was interested in learning is going to get a good liberal arts education out of that. Now we can always improve it. I don’t mean to sound anti-intellectual or anti-academic or something like that. But my gosh, you figure every college in the Big Ten Arts and Sciences is a little different. There’s no exact one way to do it. So let’s pick one and go with it for a while and not be changing all the time. And the curriculum the same way. Let’s get a nice well-rounded liberal arts curriculum that’s got some components in it that we think are pretty good, and let’s just go with that for a while and not confuse everybody all the time on what they are supposed to do, and figure it’s got to have this or that or
whatever. And there’s so much flexibility in how to do it. Like I say, we could have 3,000 students sitting out there and you couldn’t find two of them that took the same courses in the same order. Everybody had a little different experience here, the way they put their courses together. Now we ought to help them. Our advising ought to be just top notch. And if our students are going to go into Psychology help them. Now which language would be the best for you in that major? There’s all kinds of help. It’s not just, “Oh, go take whatever you want.” I don’t mean that at all. Help the student put their optimal program together. But I think we’ve done that over the years, and to just keep changing things all the time for the sake of change, a lot of it is office politics. It’s one department trying to get more students into their courses so that they’ll get more funding. That shouldn’t be what it’s about. The debate ought to be about educating the students and what they’re going to do when they come out, and not other things.

Q. And also, I think as you get the different personalities or different people in the positions when they come in, you have a new provost come in and I’m sure they always feel like, “I’ve got to make my stamp on this,” whether it’s because of ambition or they just want to have some kind of legacy. And so things have to change.

A. You’re exactly right. And that a person like that, if they are ambitious for their own career, they can say, “I made Ohio State change.” Now that’s to the outside world, that’s a feather in their cap, that they had a curricular change or an organizational change or something, while they were in charge of whatever it was—Dean of a College or something in the Provost Office, “I did this or that,”
They must be a powerful leader.

Q. They must be a powerful leader.

A. Yes. That’s too bad, that things get done for those kinds of reasons. But I think it does happen. That happens everywhere. We’re certainly not unique. There are higher education people out there that are looking at their own careers and all that. I guess that’s fine. But Ohio State in some ways is just a different place. We’ve just got to put the students first here. When I look at the past and when the University was created and you go back to the Land Grant Act of 1862 and 1870 when Ohio State was created, where they are going to put it, it ends up in Columbus. What’s the curriculum going to be like? First debate. Agriculture at Ohio A&M, and then we get wonderful Rutherford B. Hayes, what a great man he was. The more you learn about him, the more you see what a fine person he was and how smart he was. No, it’s not going to be confined. Agriculture and Engineering, that’s fine. Great. But we’re going to have liberal arts. This is going to be a University across the board. I wish that Rutherford B. Hayes could somehow come back to life and I could walk with him across the campus and have him see what has happened, and maybe that first Board of Trustees or something, and have them look at this campus and see what they dreamed and what they thought about way back when. It’s gone even beyond their wildest expectations and they had high hopes. But it’s gone so far beyond that. And the thousands of people that have gotten an education here, a quality, quality education, for a very reasonable price. And although fees are much higher now,
they were $100 a quarter when I started, $108 if you bought the health insurance, for the value of what this has done, not only in their income producing and all that, but the personal growth and all kind of thing, what this has done. I get kind of romantic or emotional or sentimental or whatever the right word is about this, as I think that Rutherford B. Hayes and those pioneers, they had my brother and me in mind. They didn’t know us yet, we weren’t born yet. But they were guys like us. And first my brother comes in and does the Dental School route. Ohio State is producing useful, valuable people for society. We need doctors, we need dentists, we need engineers, we need scientific farmers, we need veterinarians, we need pharmacists, we need optometrists. We’re going to educate them right here. This is going to be the place and they’ve come, and not only did they come from Ohio, they come from all over the country and all over the world, to get educated in those professions like that. And they say, “But we’re not stopping there. We’re creating a liberal arts. We’re going to have all the arts and sciences here and we’re going to have a first class education, just as good as Yale and Harvard and anyplace you could go.” I firmly believe that. And so here’s me coming in as a freshman. And my interests are in more of the liberal arts. Well here I end up doing that and I get to be educated here and go on and have a nice career that’s fulfilling and rewarding and all that. Some of my fraternity brothers could buy and sell me many times. But I wouldn’t trade places with them because I just had a great time here as a student and later working on the professional staff. But you see what I mean. And we must never forget that. That’s what we’re here for. That’s what we’re here for. That’s why this place exists, not to provide places for
office intrigue and power plays and stuff like that. It’s all for the students and of course the research that supports all of this. Don’t forget that. We’re a great research University that’s doing all these great things, but research and teaching and learning all go together in my mind. So there you have it. And I mentioned about the quality. I think Ohio State has not been given its due on that. But in working with students over the years, I am absolutely convinced, absolutely convinced, that they are getting the highest quality education here, the good students, the ones that are really serious about their work and getting their 4.0 and 3.8 and whatever, the students that I advised in Romophos and Sphinx, I got to know pretty well, and the Beanie Drake Scholarship Board and other student leaders that I advised for several years, great kids. Well, they’d go to Johns Hopkins Med School. They would apply there and they would get in right away. Then they’d come back and see me a year later after they had graduated and they would stop by the office and say, “Dean Tootle, how are you doing?” I’d say, “How’s Johns Hopkins doing? How’s med school?” “Oh, going fine. I had someone in my freshmen class in med school from Yale in the Ivy League. I thought oh, gee, I’m in over my head, I’m going to be the low student in the class and all that. But they’d come down the hall and ask me for help with their chemistry. I felt so good about this. It didn’t take me long to figure out that I can just hold my own just fine in there with these Ivy League students.” And we had several years there where the top student at Johns Hopkins Med School was one of our grads, not just one. Not just one fluke, but one got awards for best rounds and all these kind of things. So I just know that while Ivy League has that
reputation and certain private schools and all that, that if you want to get a great
education and go to class every day and work hard, you can get just as high a
quality education here as anywhere you go. I just saw it so many times. So we’re
not only doing that quality bit—it’s a big place and we’re turning out a lot of
them. I don’t know how many alumni we have now, I’ve forgotten. I saw that
number not too long ago but it escapes me. Hundreds of thousands, something
around 500,000.

Q. I think it’s 800,000 or something.

A. So all these educated people and all these well-educated people—not just a
diploma mill kind of thing—but really top notch. So that’s why we’re here, to
keep that going. And we’ve been entrusted, those of us that teach or whatever we
do at the University, we’re all part of that. That’s why we’re here and that’s what
we’re supposed to do. And keep those opportunities flowing for the students
coming in. There’s a new batch every fall and it never gets old.

Q. Do you think that would be your legacy, that your students, that you have put
students first, that you’ve helped so many students, in whatever ways you helped
them, as an advisor, administrator?

A. Yes, you don’t want to sound self serving or patting yourself on the back.

Q. Well, one of the questions that I asked you was, what are some of your
favorite accomplishments or memories? What do you think you contributed to
the University?

A. It’s all wound up in the students, yes. It’s all wound up in the students. When
you get a note or a call or an e-mail or Facebook thing from a student it means so
much. We had a wonderful experience this past fall. Over at the Ohio Union, there’s a room named for my wife, [Barbie]. And I don’t know if you know how that happened. But she didn’t know anything about it. When she was Coordinator of Greek Affairs from ’74 to ’85, 11 years in that role, she worked with hundreds of students in the fraternities and sororities. And I would again put in that disclaimer about they are not all alike. There are all kinds of students. When the new Union was built, a group of them got together and thought it would be a good idea to raise the money, $75,000 it cost to do that, to name that room for her, because she had helped so many of them along the way. And they did it in a fairly short amount of time. A couple of them took the leadership and canvassed their friends and people they were in touch with and they raised the money. Now there it is with her name on it. And I think that’s the kind of thing, and we had a wonderful dedication ceremony, a grand opening, in October last year, and so many of the students came back. And some we’d see now and then, at a game, or work with a committee on, or something. And some we hadn’t seen since they left college. And here there is a whole room full of them and they’re getting all reacquainted. Of course they were all great friends back in those days, and some of them have seen each other and some haven’t. And to see how they’ve all turned out. Somehow they all got to be 45 and 50 years old now, I don’t how that happened, but there they are. And that was just so rewarding, first of all that they would do something like that. And second of all, to see them all and they are successful. And I don’t mean successful with a dollar sign as the “S,” but they are good parents, they are good teachers, school teachers. One of
my students there that was active in Greek affairs and also worked for me, has been teaching school now for 20 some years and has two lovely daughters that are coming up to college age, and just a great person when she was a student. And I think how many lives she’s touched being a school teacher all these years. But all of them different, some of them are farmers and some are engineers and some are in business and some are coaches. They’re doing all kinds of things. But they said, as they stood up, and said that Barbie had been an influence on their life and helped them find their career, find their way, get on the right track or whatever it was, develop their leadership skills. And some of them said, “Not a day goes by when I’m standing up giving a business presentation or something, I don’t think back on those days and you coached me on how to make a speech in front of the IFC group or something like that.” You think well that’s kind of small potatoes back then, but it gave them confidence and they learned some things from it. So you hear things like that. And yes, that’s the legacy. I hope it is. It would be presumptuous to say it is but I hope it is. And Dean Mount taught me something a long time ago that fits in with that. I was just getting started and somebody made a suggestion, “Well, we have to make the students do this and they have to fill out this form and they have to go to this place,” and whatever it was. And he said, “Are we regulators or educators?” Boy, doesn’t that sum it up? Are we regulators or educators? Well, everything I did from then on, I tried to think about that. It was one of those things that I thought about every day, “Which am I?” When you are making a procedure for students to do something, I had to do a lot of that—the students have to do this and have to do that to register for courses
or whatever. But do you make it in a kindly way that’s helpful to everybody, or are you just kind of ordering people around? Now sometimes you can do that. You have authority to do this and that. But that’s not the way to do things. There has to be some order to things and there has to be some deadlines and you have to do some things in a certain way. But there’s all kinds of ways to communicate that to students and colleagues and other colleges and all that. And are we educators or regulators? Well I hope “When the One Great Scorer goes to mark against your name, he marks not whether you won or lost but how you played the game.” I hope when my name comes up, they mark, “educator.” That would be the legacy I would hope for, and I hope that’s it.

Q. I think we’ve answered most of my questions. Would you like to add anything else?

A. I’d like to thank the Archives for doing this project. I think it’s a valuable one. You obviously get a lot of different views on things. People see things different ways, and I hope that is helpful as a historian. I can see how this would be helpful to scholars over time. Wouldn’t we like to have interviews from people that worked at Ohio State in 1890 or 1929 or 1941, or something like that? So I hope it all adds up a little bit and I think it’s a good project. I think your new initiatives on Facebook are tremendous, where you’ve done the commencement speeches, all these photographs and put these things out there. I think it’s so important that people see how long Ohio State has been here and what it represents and all the things it does. We were just over last night to a program over on Kinnear Road, where we saw the Library Technical Services, where they restore and rebind all
the rare books and cartoons and different things, and how they preserve and save these things and display them, and things like that. And we went to the Logan Elm Press and see how they make paper and how they print books by hand and all that. So Ohio State is just such a magnificent place with all these things going on, that sometimes you don’t know about them and sometimes you find out about them. But to preserve and help people to see that and to broaden them out and see beyond their own job, what they are doing at the University, how this fits into the whole thing. I heard a saying some years back that I think is really true. Anything that anybody does at the University, whatever job it is, whether they cut the grass or teach a class, whatever they do, everything we do is Admissions, and everything we do is Development. It is. Everything we do is going to attract students or not, whatever your role is. It can be somebody that answers a phone. You are the University. When you pick up the phone and say a certain office and, “What can I do for you?” or “What do you want?” it’s entirely different. Everything we do, it either adds to this reputation or takes away, as we have seen in the last few weeks [a reference to the football scandal and resignation of Coach Tressel]. We have seen some things that have been taken away. We must all work together, we are always building up and up and up. And we can all do that, no matter what job we have. Whether it’s clerical, in the classroom, in the lab, physical plant, public safety, people making paper over at the Logan Elm Press, whatever they are doing, it either enhances or not. And therefore, it’s either going to attract the good students that we want and the dollars that we need, that people are going to feel good about giving, “That’s a magnificent place. We need to
support that. We need to put that in our will. We need to give them a gift right now for this.” An Admissions Officer—that’s their job and you might say, “Well, that’s the job of the Admission Officer.” No, no, no, we all have to do it because they can’t go out and talk somebody to coming here that has a negative view of the place. And the same for a development officer—they can’t go out and make the ask for a gift, and the person says, “Why should I give to that place?” They’ve got to already be predisposed to either come her as a student or support us with their resources. A person that is the front person that goes out to do that, they make the request or they kind of polish it a little bit. But they can’t do it without the product being there. And it’s all of our jobs and I think all of us need to think of that all the time and then things work out. That’s kind of been, you ask me all these questions about my career and being here all these years, I think as a student I saw my brother who was very valuable as a role model, and I didn’t even know that term at the time, but I saw him coming home from class and studying. And he had his desk in his room and he would study late at night. He’d be there at 2:00 in the morning with the light on studying. And he worked a couple of jobs and all that. But I saw how hard he worked. So that’s what happens when you go to college, is you work hard. How naïve, right? So when I got to college, I found some students didn’t do that. But I thought you know, I see it happening here at Ohio State, if you do do that, if you go to class every day. Some of our student employees who would miss a class now and then, I would say, “Would you go over there to Lennox to the movie theatre and pay five dollars or something to go to a movie and to buy a ticket, and then walk away and leave.”
And they would say, “No.” I said, “Well, if you don’t go to class every day, that’s what you’re doing.” We figured it out. It would be $5 a class. And they would say, “Oh, I never thought of it like that.” I said, “Yes, you’re short changing yourself. Go to class every day.” But my point is, if you go to class every day, do your assignments the best you can, things will work out. And kind of the same way with employment, if you’re there every day. I went to a meeting out at the University of Denver, when telephone registration was first coming in, and they were one of the pioneer schools of that. And they had a business expert come in and said he was going to give us all the speech. There were people from universities all over the country and we were in an auditorium. And he said, “I’m going to give you the three lessons of a successful business. Show up, show up on time, show up on time dressed to play.” And that was it. And he sat down. And then he got up again and he told a little bit more. But I thought, “That captures it.” First of all, you’ve got to be there. You’ve got to show up. You can’t shirk your job. If you’ve got a role at the University, you need to be there. I hardly ever missed a day. I went six, eight years at a time without missing a day. Once in a while you get the flu and you just couldn’t do it, but not often. And show up on time. How hard is that? And then, dressed to play means ready. You’re ready. You’ve got your mind engaged, you’re dressed in a way. As a professional person you’re going to be meeting students and parents in all that. You shouldn’t be in a T-shirt and jeans. But mentally dressed, ready to engage and thinking about what you’re going to do and ready. So he gave a little talk about that. You usually forget speeches like that but that stuck with me, because
the guy had a lot of know-how there. But the point of it is, if you just do those basic things, things work out. And it will work out successfully. And you'll have a good college office and you'll have a good office whatever office it is. So I guess the other thing I would say in closing is, what wonderful people I've worked with. I've said a lot about the students along the way and they are just terrific. People asked me if I miss not being at the University and I say, “Well, I miss the students.” And that’s why I enjoy being on the Ohio Union Council. There are students there and I am kind of connected. Just walking in that magnificent new building, it’s just fun to be there and you just sense the energy and what great students we have and all that. But the staff, the colleagues that I’ve had over the years have just been tremendous people, that have been so enjoyable to work with. You get a bad egg here and there, anyplace. But for the most part, just great folks. And right before our meeting today, I had lunch with two of my former colleagues that used to work for me. And one was my right hand person at University College for a while. Then she left and went over to the Athletic Department for a while, then came back and worked for me at Arts and Sciences from about ’86 to ’91, and then her replacement when she left, marriage, starting a family, so she was going to leave. And our student employee, who had worked with us for a couple of years and kind of been her protégé, then she graduated and stepped in and filled that role for four or five years, worked with me. (end of tape) We got together in the fall, summer, early summer and later summer for each of our birthdays, so we had three times. We added Groundhog Day, since nobody has a birthday in the winter and we have a long stretch there,
we have to get together on Groundhog Day and celebrate Gordon Gee’s birthday and Groundhog Day. So the three of us get together—we see each other at different times—but we make sure we do those four days. Now we haven’t all been in the same office together for 20 years. What great folks, what great people, and it’s not like they were working for me so much as we worked together on things and we were all pulling the same weight in the same direction. And they were taking care of things and doing a great job on that. And I have other colleagues like that. Bob Arkin, who was my boss in Arts and Sciences for quite a while. I stay in touch with him. And he has three boys that are good ball players. And so I go over and see their ball games. And being a baseball fan I enjoy seeing them. I’ve seen them from T-ball, now two of them are off in college now, but that’s always fun to go over and sit with him at a ball game and watch his boys play and all that. Just great colleagues over the years. It’s not that you just go in there 8-5 and leave. We really developed good relationships. I guess the other thing is how much my wife and I have enjoyed working together at the University over the years. We both started as freshmen in 1961, and we just started going together then. We bought our football tickets together, which was almost like getting engaged because that’s a pretty serious step, right? So coming in as freshmen, we had started to go together that summer and we bought our football tickets together. So we did all undergraduate and graduate school together. We got married after our first year of grad school. We finally thought we had just enough money to do something like that. And we both got an assistantship. She was in the Sociology Department. I was in the History
Department. And we planned it out. So anyway, I think it was so good for both of us to be a sounding board. But it certainly wasn’t an 8-5 job. It was 24/7, but an enjoyable 24/7. I think we thought about the University a lot, other than just when we were sitting at our desks doing things. We were always back and forth on better ways to do things, or she’d be working on a project and asked what I thought about it, or I would have something and ask her what she thought about it. Somebody’s writing something and the other person would proofread it and edit it a little bit. We both enjoyed our time here so much, that it just didn’t seem like work in a way. That sounds funny but that’s kind of what I tried to tell students all the way along when they were trying to pick a major. I would say, “Find a job that you enjoy doing, that you like going to work every day. What good is it to maybe get a degree in something that you don’t really enjoy doing? What’s so good about that?” We both had the great good fortune of the way different circumstances work out, we both ended up staying here in different jobs. Ohio State is big enough, you can have a two-career family kind of thing without being each other’s way and all that. So it was always a positive thing and we knew a lot of the same students and it’s great to see them now. That was all positive, all good, and just a great experience for both of us to share all of that and still doing it. So there you are.

Q. Well thank you very much for sharing your experiences and your thoughts and opinions of the University. I appreciate it.

A. Okay.