INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM J. GRIFFITH
MARCH 27, 2003

Q. Good afternoon. This is Charles Corbato. I’m going to be conducting an
interview today on March 27, 2003 with Dr. William J. Griffith, formerly of The
Ohio State University. And we’re going to be talking about his career at OSU.
Good afternoon, Bill.

A. Good afternoon to you, Charlie.

Q. Can we start off by you telling me a little about your family history and where
you grew up?

A. Okay. How much do you want to know, Charlie? Because I’ve written family
histories for both my name and my mother’s name. So I could take you back to
the 14th century if you like. No, I’m just teasing.

Q. That’s wonderful.

A. I’m one of four children, three of whom are still living. My parents are both
deceased. One sister died as an infant, and one brother and sister are still living. I
was born in Toledo, Ohio and grew up in that area. College was not a thing that
people in my family did.

Q. What did your father do?

A. My father was a carpenter and a very good one. Both of my parents valued
education, however, and encouraged me to pursue education beyond high school.
So far as I know, I and one cousin are the first people in the history of the family
to earn a baccalaureate degree. There were others subsequently of course. But
we were the first. My father, who was uneducated formally, I think he left school in 7th grade, always encouraged me to pursue education, as did my mother. I went to a rural public high school in the north end of Wood County, Lake Township High School, and then I went to Bowling Green State University primarily for two reasons. One, a few of my classmates were going to go there, and two, it was close and cheap.

Q. What were your career aspirations?
A. I wanted to become a public school teacher and I did. I made that decision when I was in the 7th grade and stuck to it.

Q. Oh really? And you graduated in four years?
A. Yes, four years in the spring of 1950 and began to teach public school that fall. I taught mathematics and sciences.

Q. At what level?
A. Secondary. Taught English a little bit also. And after three years in a little country school, I was appointed head of that school, at the ripe age of 25.

Q. How many staff members did you have?
A. Eleven.

Q. And about 300 students?
A. It was very small, 200-250 students. It grew a little bit. And after three years as school head, “local superintendent,” as they called me, I left there and went to a larger public school in Forest, Ohio. And after six years there, I left and went to graduate school at OSU, because I decided I was going to pursue a doctorate. I had my Master’s degree which I got from Bowling Green.
Q. In the second school were you still in the administration?
A. Yes. I was a school head or local superintendent.

Q. So you had gotten out of the classroom rather quickly.
A. Yeah, I taught one or two classes while I was there. But I was a full-time administrator.

Q. What prompted you to make the decision to leave and go to graduate school?
A. I had decided that I was going to stay in public school administration and knew that if I expected to move up in the ranks and go to a larger system, ultimately I would need more education. So I decided to pursue a doctorate and came to Ohio State because it was the big state university. Where I was located was about sixty miles from Columbus and so I spent two quarters in summer school before I went into full-time residency at Ohio State. As part of my program there, I worked as a graduate research associate with a couple of faculty members whose work was assisting public school systems with doing long-range facility plans and developing plans for new buildings.

Q. You were a research associate?
A. Yes, I was a graduate research associate in the Administration and Facilities Unit in the Bureau of Educational Research and Service of the College of Education. That office specialized in assisting public schools with various facility related problems.

Q. And were you given specific tasks or were you just sort of a general gofer for this group?
A. No, I was intimately involved and did various tasks under the direction of those two faculty members. They were my mentors.

Q. Who were they?

A. One is still living, Professor Arthur Wohlers. The other was Professor Marion Conrad and he’s deceased. They were both fine men and I learned a lot at their behest. Then after I finished the degree, I took a faculty appointment in the College of Education.

Q. Did your doctoral degree have a dissertation associated with it?

A. Yes, it did. It had to do with forecasting public school enrollment. I had a faculty position in that same unit and spent the next two years doing service for public schools in the area of facilities planning. I also taught a graduate course or two in school building planning. Then after a little over two years, I got an offer to move to central administration in the Campus Planning Office as a staff member, which I took. The fellow who headed that office was John Herrick, a really fine guy. True Ohio Stater. He essentially devoted most of his life to Ohio State, even after he retired.

Q. How did Herrick discover you?

A. He was well acquainted with both of the professors that I worked with and I think they recommended me.

Q. It wasn’t the kind of job that was advertised and you applied for?

A. No, it wasn’t. It was simply offered to me. At that time, I think one could do that at the University.

Q. That’s right.
A. Later on you couldn’t of course. It had to go through a public process.

Q. What kind of projects did John Herrick have you working on initially?
A. I was working with colleges and departments on developing plans for building projects.

Q. For specific building projects?
A. For specific building projects. Not architectural plans. We did what we called a program of requirements which specified what was to be in the building -- what kinds of rooms and spaces, how they were equipped, what their functions were, so that the architect would have that to work with when he did the building design.

Then after I went there in September of 1964, in the spring of 1967 John Herrick decided to retire, and so I threw my hat in the ring as a candidate. They said you are it; so I succeeded him.

Q. Do you think you beat a lot of other candidates out?
A. No, I don’t know how many there were. But anyway I was tapped as the successor.

Q. One of the points that I was told was that Herrick claimed to take a great deal of pride in making public the planning process at OSU, which he had said had been very secretive previously before he took over that job. Any ideas about that?
A. I wasn’t there at the time but I learned subsequently that he did do that. The University went through the process of developing a campus master plan starting in 1958.

Q. ’58 was the beginning of that?
A. Yes. And it was completed in 1962. And one of the things that John Herrick and his colleagues did was publish a monthly bulletin about the process. What was going on, what had been decided, what the issues were. And it was sent to all faculty and they had an opportunity to comment. There were public hearings conducted which people could go to and make comments about the process and so on. So it was made public.

Q. That does sound very, very public at this point. You became Director of Campus Planning then and who did you report to?

A. To John Corbally who was the Provost.

Q. Okay, campus planning reported directly to Corbally?

A. Right. And that was the case for a couple of years and then Jack Corbally left to become president of Syracuse University. And the office was switched to report to another Vice President, [Edward Q.] Ned Moulton.

Q. That’s who I would have guessed at this point. How many people were in the office when you took over?

A. I think 12 was the number. Let me think for a moment and I can tell you with some surety; ten full-time and then enough part-timers to make twelve full-time equivalents.

Q. And the training of most of these people? Were they engineers, architects, planners?

A. Varied. My training was in planning facilities for education. That was true of one or two others. There was a position entitled “Campus Planner” and that training was in urban planning. There was a position that took care of all the
campus mapping and building floor plans. His training was in graphics. There were others whose specialty was data processing, development of computer programs and the like because we maintained the campus facilities inventory on computer and we had people to take care of that system.

Q. Did you find there was a big transition from worrying about elementary and secondary schools to now worrying about a major university?

A. No, the processes of planning are very similar. Different context but the process is much the same. We did some different things, additional things, but we had people with specialties in those fields to handle it. So I didn’t find a tremendous transition. I thought the training that I got as a graduate student was quite good. Fitted me for the role. Plus I had training in administration. And that was a large part of what I was doing.

Q. You mentioned that the first master plan for the campus was started in 1958 and completed in 1962. Were the master plans then updated on a regular basis after that?

A. 1962 was not the first master plan. There had been master plans prior to that time but they were primarily design plans more than they were functional plans, I guess is the way I’d put it. One of the things we did was to frequently update the plan as conditions changed and we would take a change to the Board of Trustees for approval. We did that for a number of years after that plan was officially adopted by the trustees in 1962. It was as much a policy plan as it was a plan that showed where things are going to go, a design plan as some people might call it. It was really more of a policy plan which focused on certain planning principles.
It was because of that that we could make changes and amendments to it so long as we stuck within those principles.

Q. Were there changes that you made in this planning process or did you just stick with the process that Herrick initiated?

A. We did some new things. One of the things we did was to develop master plans for each of the University’s branch campuses and for the agricultural technical institute. Those were done under my tenure. We did a number of new things. One was that we completed the mapping, the geodetic mapping, of the campus. That was done with the assistance of the University’s Department of Geodetic Science. The campus was divided into a number of grids (I can’t tell you how many anymore), but each grid was mapped by aerial photogammetry, so that we had great detail. And we used that as a basis for developing campus maps. Because one of the responsibilities that our office had was to maintain all campus maps at several different scales. Whenever there was any kind of change, we changed the master copy of each map. We could produce copies anytime we needed to. There were copies at different scales for not only the entire campus but sections as well. So we really developed and perfected that system.

Another thing that we did was to develop a campus signage system. There were signs on the campus, of course. But there was no systemized signage system which spelled out the size and shape, the colors, the letter styles, and the purposes of signs. That was developed by our office, so that there was a system for identification signs, for directional signs, for orientation signs. I think that’s still in use as far as I know.
Q. As I drive around campus I think it [the signage system] has degraded at times. A few people have gone off on their own and put up their own sign design.

A. The system was initially developed by our office, and then the actual implementation was done by the physical plant. Another thing we did which I think was quite important was to begin the program of modifying campus facilities for use by people with physical impairments.

Q. Was this because of federal mandates or state mandates?

A. Neither. There were no state or federal mandates. We began that process back in the early 1970’s, just simply because we could see the need. We were able to obtain two federal grants. I can’t remember the amount of them but I know the first one was in excess of a million dollars and then there was a subsequent grant. We used that money to put in curb ramps, to modify restrooms, to modify building entrances so that there were door opening facilities and so on. And then we developed a set of standards for the campus to use. That all preceded federal standards and state standards. In fact, Jean Hansford, who was the staff person primarily responsible for that, later on served as a consultant to the state for development of the state program for making public facilities accessible to people with physical handicaps.

Q. Did the Board of Regents give separate funds for upgrading facilities for the handicapped? Or did it just have to come out of every institution’s budget?

A. I think both. There were some funds available, not only to Ohio State but other state supported universities. But I think as time went on, that mostly came out of the standard building budget. When we began that program, there were very few
universities in the country that had done anything in that area. The University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana was kind of a pioneer and we went out and looked at what they had done and talked to their people. And then applied some of what we learned that way. But I think what we did was somewhat pioneering in that we were out ahead of any government mandates. We would see to it that people with physical handicaps could access and use the University’s facilities. What we strived for was program access. Because funds were limited at first, we tried to make sure that students could get into all the buildings where different programs were available, rather than saying we wanted every building accessible. We made sure that people could get into all the different programs. Later on then, it was expanded to where all buildings became accessible. So that was I think one of the major things that we did.

In the late 60’s, we found that the University was reacting to proposals by developers for making changes or developing things in the areas around the campus. We were in a reactive mode and we decided that University and the neighborhood ought to be proactive instead of reactive. So we did a major effort to try to describe what the neighborhood surrounding the campus was like. And we did that with dozens and dozens of photographs and slides to illustrate problems and issues. And then we tried to interest neighborhood associations and other institutions like Battelle, Chemical Abstracts and so on in working with us. And to make a long story short, the upshot of that was creation of an organization called University District Organization, Inc., which was incorporated under the laws of Ohio. It’s mission was to try to keep track of what was going on in the
campus area and to develop some kind of planning process for the area around the campus. We did this with the University’s blessing of course. As a matter of fact, the University put up money annually to assist this organization.

Q. Before we leave that, the one aspect that I know of, that has always been a sore point has been the area around Don Scott Field, and the neighbors there who have always felt that the runways were too close to their houses, the noise levels were too high, and so on. Did that fall under this effort to worry about the surroundings of the campus or was this just worrying about central campus?

A. What I have been describing was right around the main campus. And that organization then hired a young guy, a staff person, who worked with community people and developed a University District Plan, which as I recall was a unique kind of plan and was adopted somewhat as a model for other neighborhoods by the City of Columbus. Kind of pioneering effort in that sense. Since you mentioned Don Scott Field, there always was a master plan for Don Scott Field which gets updated periodically using funding provided by the Federal Aviation Administration. And sure, there have always been problems with noise and noise abatement. But the University Airport staff, as I recall it, made a pretty hard effort to try to work with neighborhood areas around the airport to control noise, doing such things as no flights after 11:00 p.m. and trying to make sure that flight patterns didn’t go unnecessarily over some of the more heavily populated areas. But I think a lot of people who did the complaining discovered there was an airport there after they bought their house or built their house. So in other words, who was there first? The University Airport goes back to the early 1940’s, when
there was nothing around there except farm properties. But that sounds like kind of hard-nosed. I didn’t mean it to sound that way, because I think there’s been a real fair and careful effort made to help with the noise problems and that kind of thing around the airport.

Q. Can we turn to some of the things now that, if you’re finished talking about some of the developments of the master planning process, can we turn to some of the aspects of planning that eventuated or took place on the campus while you were there, such as the development of west campus?

A. Sure, we can.

Q. How did that get started?

A. Well, the original concept, if my memory serves me, was that there was to be a Columbus branch. The University had branches at Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark. And then there was the idea advanced of a Columbus branch. And so that was the germinator of what we now call west campus.

Q. Was there special funding for classes taught?

A. I don’t know the answer to that.

Q. I vaguely recall there being some portion of special funding going into there.

A. There might have been. But initially the idea was to locate a Columbus branch at the northwest corner of Lane and Olentangy River Road. But that idea was soon supplanted by a notion of putting it where it was then located. And we did a master plan for the west campus. I can’t tell you the year that was completed but it was late 60’s or early 70’s. And it provided for I think as many as a dozen buildings over there. By that time the concept had moved away from the
Columbus branch to it becoming a location for lower division instruction for the campus. And that was the concept that led to the development of the master plan. It was still in effect when the first five buildings were constructed with state funding.

Q. Why do you think that didn’t work out as a suitable teaching facility?

A. I don’t know that I can tell you chapter and verse why. I think students felt kind of tucked away in a corner, off the beaten path. Almost like being in high school again. Because here they were coming to this large University and then finding themselves off by themselves, freshmen and sophomores, away from the hustle and bustle of the main part of the campus. So that may have been part of it. And I think departments felt that it probably cost more for them to do instruction over there versus on the main part of the campus because they had to send people over there.

Q. I know as Department Chairman it was difficult to coerce faculty to go out to west campus to teach classes.

A. But that continued that way for a time. I think then when Ed Jennings became President in ‘81, it was decided that that was going to cease as a location for instruction, that those people were going to be brought back to the main campus. And so we had to develop plans to do that because there wasn’t enough classroom space on the main campus. That’s what led to the renovation of what used to be the services building into a classroom building. A large number of classrooms were located there. We tried to provide for classrooms in a number of buildings and I think most of that transition took place over a several year period. I retired
in the midst of that and so I sort of lost track of what ultimately happened with it.
But once that decision was made, then the buildings that were already in existence
over there had to be transformed into some other uses. So we had all kinds of
things located there including some research and some University services and so
on. Although it started out originally as a Columbus branch. I don’t think that
idea lasted very long.

Q. Were there strong advocates for that Columbus branch in the administration that
you were aware of?

A. Not that I’m aware of. I think it may have been an idea of the Ohio Board of
Regents, that the University was expected to do. But I don’t think there was
strong support for it.

Q. As I was told at the time, it was a way to circumvent the 50,000 full-time
equivalent student cap that the legislature was mandating for the campus.

A. That’s possible.

Q. That these enrollments that took place there were outside that limit.

A. That’s quite possible that that was the case. I wasn’t privy to all the decision
making about that, so I won’t speak to it.

Q. I wasn’t either. But just a rumor that I heard. In the spring of 1970, we had on
this campus some very disruptive riots, as a lot of campuses did. And we never
really knew, but was there significant physical damage done during those riots?

A. Not to my knowledge. There were a few small fires set in buildings in
wastebaskets for example. I don’t think any of them did very significant damage.
There might have been some smoke damage.
Q. There was tear gas that had seeped into closets, so that when you opened the door you suddenly got a whiff of later on.

A. And there were windows broken. Primarily in the administration building which later became Bricker Hall. But I don’t think there was a tremendous amount of damage, not that I was ever aware of. And I was on the campus.

Q. Did that result in any changes in the physical nature of the campus?

A. Yes, it did. The campus master plan called for the central core of the campus to become a pedestrian zone. The concept was, to put parking ramps around the perimeter and to take the cars out so it becomes pedestrian.

Q. Where did this idea come from?

A. It was one of the primary concepts of the master plan. The idea being that people walking about going to class and so on, didn’t mix very well with moving automobiles. Then you had the question of, “Gee, does it look very good to have cars lining all the streets.” So that’s what was called for in the campus master plan.

Q. We were told, as an aside, that this was an idea that Ned Moulton got after going to a Rose Bowl game and OSU stayed close to and practiced on the UCLA campus. And UCLA at that time had a comparable design, pedestrian central campus, and parking structures on the periphery, with a loop road that went around. Any truth to that rumor?

A. Not that I know of, no. That was one of the early formative ideas for the campus master plan. It was in it solidly when it was adopted in 1962. So when the so-called riots occurred, and by the way I say “so-called” purposely because I never
really saw much rioting. I saw a lot of demonstrations and I saw a few hundred students involved while the other 30,000 plus went to classes. There might have been another 5,000 to 6,000 watching, but actively involved it was small, a few hundred at the most. Anyway, when that happened, as you may recall, the University was closed, completely closed, for a couple of weeks in May, 1970. Neil Avenue, which at that time was a public open street through the campus, was closed. And so I got the bright idea, “Hey, this is what we’re trying to get done. Let’s not open it again.” So we went to the President, Nov Fawcett at that time, laid the idea out and he said, “Can we do this?” And I said, “We’ve already done it. Let us develop some details on the plan.” So we did and we presented it to him. He gave it his blessing. That led to removal of some cars, some streets were closed. Not all of them but some of them. And it led to key card access gates and so on. It was a major step toward implementing that concept of the master plan which was one silver lining in that dark cloud over the campus in the spring of 1970.

Q. I know that there was a lot of discussion in the newspapers about the closing of Neil Avenue for public access. Was this a major hurdle you had to hurdle, or did you just ignore it?

A. We didn’t ignore it. The City Traffic Department complained long and loud about it. But people soon adjusted. We took traffic counts. There was as I recall somewhere between 5,000 to 7,000 cars a day going through campus on Neil Avenue. And we had the two large dormitories along the river, having full use by that time. We had several thousand students crossing back and forth three or four
times a day. It didn’t make much sense to us to keep that conflict between autos and pedestrians. And so we snapped at the opportunity. And yes, there were some complaints, there were some letters to the editor and there were a few news broadcasts and so on. But we had decided to do this and we’re going to tough it out. It didn’t take very long for people who might have come through the campus on their way downtown or conversely to find another way. In a matter of a few weeks it was forgotten about and people went on with their lives. So I just think that was the chance to do something good out of all that turmoil that we had.

Q. You mentioned the two towers, the two dormitories. What prompted their construction?

A. Well the need for student housing of course.

Q. There appeared to be a need for student housing at that time?

A. Yes, there was. The campus master plan contained three primary, driving concepts and several sub-concepts. Those three were the pedestrian campus, which we’ve mentioned, the river campus, seeing the river not as a divider but as a focal point, and I’m not sure my memory is going to tell me what the third one was. But I know there were three. If you look at the old campus master plan, it envisioned a series of small dormitory buildings along both sides of the river, with pedestrian bridges across. There was a large argument among the University administration people about what was to be done. And out of it came those two large towers which the campus planning office was opposed to by the way, but that’s one that we lost. And so those two were built. In retrospect, I think they were too large, too concentrated for students. Originally they were built to house
sixteen students per suite, six suites on a floor, or ninety-six students to a floor. Later I think the University reduced that considerably, because it was too fraught with all kinds of human relationship problems. And as I’m sure you know, by the late 60’s, early 70’s, campus housing became unpopular with students once again, as it goes through cycles. So the University was confronted with empty dormitory space. And the result was half of one of those two large dorms was converted into administrative space. In fact, a little more than half.

Q. But it wasn’t very suitable for administrative space.

A. Oh, it was never designed for that. But we moved in and used it as it was. And then over time, some of it got remodeled and modified into a little more suitable space. The campus planning office moved there. The thought being, “Well, look, you’ve moving all these other offices down there, you better go yourself.” And so we did. And the office was there from middle ‘71 up to sometime in ’73, when we came back to Bricker Hall. My own view is that those two large towers were wrong in concept. The idea of having student housing along the river was fine but I think they were just too big and too concentrated. But that’s hindsight.

Q. Did the labeling of the two towers as “Sodom and Gomorrah” by someone in Cincinnati make the Office of Campus Planning feel justified?

A. No. No. That didn’t really help. I heard that term but that was just one of those decisions that was made that didn’t work as well as was envisioned. And that happens.

Q. What about the decision to tear down University Hall? It obviously was quite an old building. First building on campus.
A. It was completed in 1871.

Q. And essentially later it was showing its age.

A. Well, it was torn down 100 years later. I think it was ’71 or ’72. It was a contentious thing. Of course it was. Because it was the original building. There are several things that people didn’t commonly know about that building.

Number one, the building that was there for people to see in 1971 was not exactly like the one that was built in 1871. It had several modifications to it. The clock tower was smaller, not as tall. It had been struck by lightning and damaged and it was rebuilt smaller. There were other changes to the exterior. The auditorium was built on the back. It wasn’t part of the original building. So it wasn’t the original building. Secondly, the walls of that building were neither plumb nor square. We had an engineering study done of the building. And the engineers said “Frankly, we don’t know how it’s (the north wing) standing.” The north wing was then closed because it was considered unsafe. And so the question of what do we do. At that time, preservation of old buildings was not quite as popular a decision as it is now. And so the decision was made to tear it down and replace it with a building that looks like the old building.

Q. On the exterior.

A. On the exterior, right. But which was of course modern inside.

Q. Who came up with the idea of keeping the doorway arch?

A. The architect who designed the new building, who by the way was a local Columbus architect, for whom I have very high regard. He’s now deceased. Curtis Inscoe was the fellow’s name. And he did I think a very fine job with that
project and tried to come up with a design that would respect the history and the architecture of the older building. But it was a very contentious issue.

Q. The alumni seemed to be very upset about the tearing down of that building, even though they may not have known anything about it’s current condition.

A. Right, they wouldn’t have known about that of course. And it’s understandable why they were upset. If they tear down that old house I was born in, I’m not going to like that either. It’s that kind of emotional attachment that people would have to places. That made me think about the third major concept of the University master plan. One was pedestrian campus, another the river campus, and the third was the academic core campus. A corollary concept was to see the campus as not just a collection of buildings, but as a collection of open spaces and buildings with emphasis upon the open spaces. And that’s what led to preservation of the Oval for one thing.

Q. The area around Mirror Lake I assume?

A. Yes. And the area north of Denny Hall. That’s still an open space I hope. It was the last time I was through there.

Q. I think it’s been encroached on a little bit.

A. Yes, a little bit I suspect. And then when we were able to close some streets, North Oval Drive for example, which was converted into a pedestrian mall, and part of South Oval Drive. And little streets on either side of Bricker were closed and converted to mall. That creates additional open space. We actually gained some open space that way.

Q. I think this tape is going to expire.
A. Is it? Okay.

Q. Just give me a moment here and I’ll let it go. Let’s just take a break for a moment. I see no black on one reel.

A. Okay. It may have already expired then.

Q. No, it’s still turning.

A. It’s still moving? Okay.

Q. We’re moving right along. You came very well prepared, I must say.

A. Well I’ve sat and thought about it a little bit. So that helped.

Q. How did you see the Office of Campus Planning change from the time you started there until the time you retired?

A. Well, several things changed, I think. The basic functions of the office changed a little bit. It started off originally to try to systematize building project planning and to develop a campus master plan. And then we added to that I think. The campus mapping that I mentioned, the signage that I mentioned. I think we tried to more formally develop the building planning process and develop forms to assist departments with putting together information. We tried to complete the campus mapping so that we had a planning tool to work with. I think I mentioned that earlier. We did similar projects by the way for the branch campuses. They were all mapped. Those maps were very important when it came to making decisions about locations of new facilities, for locations of parking and that kind of thing. And then I think we tried to develop in a more systematic way the capital budgeting process, which is also part of the office’s responsibility, so that we worked with the colleges and in some cases departments in trying to ferret out
what their long term facility needs might be, so that we could get those needs put into the capital budgeting process. So there’s a little bit of new activity but I think also an effort to further perfect and develop some of the processes that were already in place.

Q. You mentioned initially you reported to Edward Q. Moulton.
A. Initially to John Corbally. Then we were switched over to Moulton, when he came back to the University from an assignment as president of a university in the west, I’m not sure where.

Q. North Dakota, if I recall.
A. North or South Dakota, one of the two. Anyway, when he returned to the campus, I remember this quite well, Nov Fawcett was then President. He asked me to come down and meet with him, so I did of course. And he said that Ned Moulton, (I didn’t know Ned Moulton) is coming back to the University and was to be a Vice President. He said, “I’ve got to give him some kind of portfolio. So I’m thinking about your office? Is that alright with you?” Well, what was I going to say? So I said, “We’ll make it work.” And we did.

Q. And how long did you report to Ned Moulton?
A. I think it was two years.

Q. And then who?
A. To Dick Zimmerman. He had been Dean of University College and he came over to Central Administration as, I don’t know how to title it, fiscal officer of some sort, when Harold Enarson became President. And we were then switched over to him.
Q. And he was in that position for how long?
A. I don’t know how many years, Charlie. Let me think a moment. I think about two years. And then Bill Vandament was brought in as the University’s chief fiscal officer, and we were assigned then to him. And that lasted until he left. We could conclude nobody wanted us, you know.

Q. There was a real succession of people moving through here, wasn’t there, in those years?
A. Yes. And then the last two years of my tenure it was Weldon Ihrig who was the chief fiscal officer.

Q. And you reported to him rather than to the Vice President for Business, Dick Jackson.
A. That’s correct. I think it was two years that the office was under his purview. Well it was even after I retired. However many that makes.

Q. You had a number of bosses, didn’t you? You said maybe nobody wanted you.
A. Maybe nobody wanted us. Maybe I was too hard to get along with, I don’t know.

Q. Maybe this was a very choice plum to have in your portfolio.
A. Yes, I like that. Let’s think about it that way.

Q. What about the other direction? What about the people you had working for you? Were there people who left Campus Planning to do other things in the University or outside?
A. Yes.

Q. People you can take credit for?
A. No, I wouldn’t take credit for it. But I had one staff person who left who became the planning development director for Muskingum Technical College. We had a couple of others leave and go into private business. And they were successful. But I didn’t have anything to do with that. Staff tended to stay. There were two or three who left during the time that I was there, sixteen years. But there were a like number who stayed on. We had a staff with fairly long tenure as a result.

Q. And a lot of experience then with the University.

A. Right, right.

Q. What do you consider your most important accomplishments when you were Director?

A. I’ve mentioned several. I wouldn’t say “my” accomplishments. They were the accomplishments of the staff. But the signage system, the modifications for the physically impaired, the development of processes for planning. I had always in the back of my head that while we were planning facilities and we were allocating space and all that, that we’re doing this to serve people. And I tried to let that govern decision making as much as I possibly could. It had a lot to do with the efforts to improve open spaces, to get cars out of the central part of the campus, and so on. Because campuses are first and foremost people places. They’re not places for buildings. Yes, they’re there, they’re necessary but they are primarily places for people to live and learn and function.

In the late 1970’s the State was constructing the Olentangy Freeway and wanted right-of-way land through the campus. Some people in University administration wanted to charge the State for the land, but I took the position that
the University should offer the land in exchange for construction of a road and a necessary railroad underpass to the west campus with costs borne by the State. My position prevailed and the road to west campus, now called Woody Hayes Drive, was built by the State at the same time as the freeway, and all at State expense.

In the late 1960’s or early 1970’s, I learned that University recovery for facilities use from federal research contracts and grants was based upon overall campus facility costs per square foot. However, I knew that facility costs for laboratory space, where most research was done, would be higher than overall campus facility costs because of higher utility use for power, gas, water and for maintenance costs. So we developed a method for allocating facility costs based on facility use which recognized the higher utility and maintenance rates for laboratory space. It was a statistical method which was accepted by federal auditors. That resulted in the University being able to recover more funds from federal contracts and grants. I don’t recall the precise amounts but know it was several million dollars over a period of years.

Q. What were your biggest disappointments?

A. One was that we could not get all of the cars out of the central part of the campus. We fought long and hard for that. Couldn’t get it done. Another was that we could not get enough interest generated to completely re-do the campus master plan, which we pushed for starting in about the mid-70’s. We thought it was time to revisit that and completely update and revise it. Couldn’t get enough interest to
get it done. So those were the two principal ones I think that I found disappointing.

Q. What have you been doing since you retired in 1983?
A. As little as possible.

Q. Have you been involved in the planning process since then?
A. Well after I retired, I spent another seven years doing part-time work in Campus Planning the office and trying to stay out of the way of the rest of the staff. But I did two principal things. I had charge of development of a memorial for Jesse Owens. I shepherded that process. We had a juried competition for the memorial sculpture which is part of the plaza on the north end of the stadium, which I proposed originally. So, that was one of the things I spent quite a bit of time on. Another thing I did was to work with colleges to develop college facility plans. I worked with the College of the Arts, the College of Biological Sciences, and the College of Agriculture. All three of those over a period of years. And did facility plans for them. I hope they valued what we did. That’s about the sum of it. I just did part-time work the rest of my time because I really didn’t fully retire in 1983. I worked part-time on the campus and I did consulting with other universities around the country up until late ’92.

Q. Did you find that some of the ideas you had developed here on this campus were applicable on other campuses?
A. Yes, absolutely. I did some work for the University of Missouri Columbia campus for example, and talked to the President there about the idea of a pedestrian zone. She subsequently came here to see what we had done. Then I
went back to that campus a couple of years later to assist their College of Veterinary Medicine with facilities planning. And lo and behold they had closed some streets in the core of the campus and converted them into pedestrian malls.

Q. That must have made you feel good.

A. Yea, it did. And as a consultant I was involved with doing campus master plans for a number of universities around the country. Several here in Ohio but also at Arizona State University, Cornell, we did some work there. I enjoyed that until the travel got too old.

Q. Well do you have any general observations about the changes you have seen and been a part of here at OSU over these years?

A. You know I do. I have one comment I want to make which is positive. I served under three Presidents, Nov Fawcett, Harold Enarson and Ed Jennings. And my observation is that, the people who selected those three men did a damn good job. They were the right person for the time in each case. Nov Fawcett had been Superintendent of Schools for the City of Columbus and had overseen the development of a very large building program for the public schools. When he came to Ohio State, in 1956 I think it was, the University faced a huge growth period ahead. He started the Campus Planning Office and employed John Herrick as the Director because of that. And indeed the University did go through a very, very large expansion, starting in the late 50’s and all the way through the 60’s, 70’s and the early part of the 80’s. And he was the right man for the time. Harold Enarson was appointed President in 1971 or ’72, I’m not sure which year. But not long after all the turmoil. He was a healer. He helped bring people back together.
He was the right man for the time. Then Ed Jennings was appointed President in ’81. The University was in serious financial problems. He was a finance man. That was his faculty field. He was a professor of finance. He was the right guy for the time. So my observation is, the people who chose those men, the Board of Trustees and those who advised the Board, did a good job. They were the right people for the circumstances. That’s one observation. Another observation is that I think the University still has a way to go to become a campus that focuses on people. That goes back to controlling automobiles a little better. I don’t know where the institution is now with respect to making the campus accessible for people with all kinds of physical impairments, but there’s got to be more work to do there.

Q. Do you think there’s an inherent difficulty because of the size of the campus in making it really serve people as you would like to see it done?

A. Yes and no. It’s large and it tends to overpower people in a way. But even so, people adjust, especially after their first year or so, when they’ve selected a major and they’ve developed affiliations and ties with a particular college and department and they develop a cadre of people that they know and interact with. And so I think the size of the place soon fades away as a problem. Some think size is really not as much of a problem as it is an advantage, because it allows one to have a wealth of opportunity. I don’t know how many programs the University now offers but it’s a huge number. Size in that regard is not a problem. It’s an advantage.

Q. Particularly library resources.
A. Yes.

Q. Well Bill, is there anything else you’d like to add at this point? We’ve covered an awful lot of ground. Are there other things that we haven’t raised that we ought to?

A. No, I don’t think so.

Q. As you look back at your career here, you know what the high points have been and what you have been involved in. I think we’ve covered an awful lot of them this afternoon.

A. Yes, I think we have too. You did a good job of putting the questions together.

Q. Thank you. I had some help from Bill Studer and Rai Goerler.

A. It was a pleasant session.

Q. Okay. Well I guess we’ll stop this right now.