Q. Interview with Wendell Ellenwood for the oral history of The Ohio State University. We are recording in the conference room at University Archives on Kenny Road. The date is July 18, 2002. Wendell, let me begin with a question about where you were born and what your family background is in general.

A. I was born and raised down in a farm in Jackson County. My father had graduated from The Ohio State University in 1915 in Horticulture. He had been selected by the Patterson interests in Dayton to come down and plant an orchard on some hills in Jackson County that had been mined for coal. And so that’s where I was born.

Q. Was your family of German origin? I ask the question because later I’ll ask you about your contribution to the Columbus Maennerchor. And I know that you must be fluent in German because you’re singing with them.

A. That’s not necessarily so but no, our ancestry was primarily Scotch Irish. My wife’s family was German. Her mother was a Daehler from Portsmouth, Ohio. That’s my connection with German primarily.

Q. When did you come to Columbus?

A. Well, I came in 1939, when I entered The Ohio State University. And I have been primarily in the Columbus area since then except for a few times we lived in Washington, D.C. and Cincinnati and Dayton.

Q. And then from Ohio State you received a B.A. degree in 1943?
Q. What attracted you to The Ohio State University and what did you major in?
A. I guess what attracted me was primarily my father. We didn’t really know much about any other college or university except The Ohio State University. And I remember coming up with dad to football games and other things, Farmers Week, and so forth, all the time I was growing up. You hear today about people traveling around when they’re juniors to see different colleges and universities around the country. As far as we were concerned there was only one university and that was The Ohio State University. As a matter of fact, in going through some stuff here, I found this commencement booklet of my dad’s, from 1915. How about that?

Q. Oh yes. And I see the picture of William Oxley Thompson in the front. It’s a nice book, leather back, with the University seal on it. And the commencement program.
A. Matter of fact, I’ve got a silver loving cup on my desk now, full of Buckeyes, that was presented to dad by President Thompson, for having had the best horticultural exhibit in the student horticulture program that year. It’s called The Prexey’s Cup.

B. That certainly is a keeper and an object of importance to the archives, certainly to your family. And this leather five by seven booklet, is also a valuable historic item. What subject did you concentrate on then?
A. Political science was my primary major at that time. I guess I was thinking in terms of a pre-law program. And political science was my major although I spent a lot of time in other areas including languages. But people like Dr. Harvey
Spencer and Fred Heimberger and others kept me involved in political science. Most of the people that were my classmates at that time ended up as lawyers here in Columbus. I was the renegade.

Q. You mentioned some of the leading teachers at that time. You mentioned Heimberger and what others?

A. Spencer, Dr. Spencer. He was the jurisprudence scholar of that day. He was, I guess, my idea of a most distinguished scholar. He was a true scholar. And I can still see him up there talking in terms that I didn’t really understand. An old farm boy, I came up here, and all these other people were talking about AT&T and so forth. I didn’t have any idea what this was all about. But it was interesting.

Q. You certainly were in touch with great minds. Along with your studies, you were also very active in student affairs in the old Stadium Dorm. You were a manager or had managerial responsibilities.

A. I was a student there in the stadium scholarship dorms. You were selected on the basis of financial need and scholarship. They started about 1936 in the depression years with the Tower Club in the southeast tower of the stadium. It had about 200 men with about 20 people in a room. We had double deck bunks and a locker for our clothes. Next to that, the Stadium Club was established a couple of years later. It held 120 men. The Buckeye Club was started first under the mens’ gym and moved to the stadium area in 1939. Vice-President Bland L. Stradley, Beanie Drake and Dean Park were primarily involved in getting these dorms started. We had 120 people in the Buckeye Club, 20 to a floor, three floors on each side of the main stairwell. We all took turns doing KP, washing the windows or working in
the kitchen, and that sort of thing. It was a great group of people. We established an alumni organization and provide scholarships to current students in these dorms. A wonderful group of people.

Q. How well did you get to know Beanie Drake in those early days?
A. I had known Beanie Drake from the time I was growing up. That’s when we would come up to football games. Dad would usually stop by to see him. Dad worked for Beanie in the Ohio Union when he was a student. I have a picture of the student employees on the front steps to the old Ohio Union with Beanie Drake. This was taken back about 1914 or 1915. So we’d stop in and talk with Beanie. So I knew him from way back.

Q. You got your start on your later career right then and there.
A. That’s right. Well there were just a few people that were running the University back in those years. The President, Bland Stradley and Vice President Lew Morrill and Edith Cockins, Carl Steeb, Joe Park, and Beanie Drake.

Q. You certainly knew who was in charge in those days. You didn’t have the rather complicated administrative structure as in later years.
A. Absolutely.

Q. I think John Mount was also involved with the stadium dorms.
A. He was in the Tower Club. Two or three years ahead of me. But he was in the Tower Club at that time. There was intense rivalry between all those clubs, particularly in recreation and intramural, football, basketball, and so forth.

Q. Probably in scholarship too.
A. Especially in scholarship. Vice-President Stradley was invited to come down to
the Club for Sunday dinner. I can still hear him say in his Harvard drawl – “I put
you in here, and I can take you out.” You had to keep your scholarship up. The
Club average was about a 3.3 p.h.r.

Q. Speaking of scholarship, you were honored by becoming a member of Sphinx, an
Ohio Stater, and Scarlet Key.

Q. What were the main requirements for those kind of membership in those
organizations?

A. I’ve got to be quick to point out that my membership in Sphinx is honorary. It
didn’t come until some time later. Back in the time I was in school, those were
the people that were greatly involved in student activities, student senate, Makio,
and so forth. I was involved in working most of that time but Scarlet Key was an
organization of managers of different athletic groups. I was the manager of the
last polo team that we had here. I guess primarily because I was a farm boy and
knew how to handle horses. So I got my Varsity “O” that way. One of the
responsibilities of this organization was to plant a Buckeye tree for each All
American. As President, I was in charge of planting the last tree before the W.W.
II break for Chuck Csuri. Then I was involved in the ROTC, Advanced ROTC
and __________.

Q. Pershing Rifles?

A. No, that was more of a freshman honorary group and I wasn’t that much involved.
Matter of fact, the first two years I played in the ROTC band. I wasn’t really in
the basic R.O.T.C. but I applied for and was accepted into the advanced ROTC,
primarily because of the impending war. This was in ’41 and they needed bodies.
That’s the way I got into the marching band too. I played clarinet primarily, and
played in the concert band and the symphonic orchestra. Prof. Manley Whitcomb
was the Director of Bands at that time and I remember once, probably after my
sophomore year, he came by where I sat and said, “Hey Ellenwood, you live on a
farm, don’t you?” And I said, “Yes, I do.” And he said, “Well, look you’re in the
advanced ROTC. You’ll be back next fall and we’re going to need people in the
marching band. Take this tenor horn home this summer and get out behind the
barn and work on it. And you’ll come back and you can play in the marching
band in the fall.” So that’s the extent of my musical prowess. But it was great
fun and a great experience.

Q. I was in the ROTC in the last group that had horse drawn artillery. And I think
the horses that were used in the artillery were also used as ponies. They were not
really the best horses.

A. That’s right. What year would that have been?

Q. Well that was in 1935. Anyway, going back now, did you ever play the clarinet
again? You were in the marching band playing the tenor horn.

A. Yes, I played clarinet in the concert band. When we formed the TBDBITL
(Marching Band) Alumni Club and I started marching in that, I think I played a
tenor horn one year and realized that my lips weren’t up to that. So I reverted to
the clarinet and was one of only two clarinets in the TBDBITL Alumni Band.
The other fellow kept on playing until he was almost 90. I stopped after I had
completed by 50th anniversary year, which was ’91 or ’92.
Q. We were talking about the artillery. You served as an artillery officer with the Third US Army in Europe, did you not? Do you want to tell us as much as you care to about that adventure?

A. In March of my senior year we were put on active duty. And I was taken out of the Buckeye Club and put in some fraternity up near Iuka Ave. And in about a week or so I was moved right back down into the Buckeye Club, but this time the Army was paying the bill for it. Since we were going to graduate at the end of that quarter, we were allowed to stay in school. I had my uniform on under my robe on graduation day. I think I was given until about 2:00 that afternoon to report to Fort Hayes. And then they really didn’t know what to do with somebody who hadn’t gone to ROTC camp during the previous summer. (I had been home working on the farm). They finally decided we needed to go to OCS (Officer Candidate School). And so that summer, they put us in OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. We graduated as 2d Lieutenants just before Christmas of that year, 1943. And we came out of that and was assigned to a 155 m.m. Howitzer outfit that had already been through maneuvers and was ready to go overseas. We didn’t know but at that point they were forming the Third U.S. Army under the command of Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. And so we went overseas pretty shortly. As the youngest second lieutenant, I was naturally assigned to the envious job of being a forward observer. We had these little planes so we used aerial observation and also ground observation. We went to England, picked up new guns, loaded onto beach landing craft and went across the channel to Utah Beach. We went in at the time of the breakthrough at St. Lo. The Third Army was
activated at that time, so they could use tanks to spread out and race across France into Germany. As an independent artillery battalion, we were normally assigned to augment an outfit that was making a push to secure a military objective. My first job as I recall was as a forward observer with the Fourth Armored Division. At various times we were supporting the 4th Armored, the 6th Armored, the 35th Division and the 80th Division as we raced across France. I remember pulling off the side of the road though and letting the Second French Armored Division go through, so they could take Paris. And we went on south of Paris and got to the Siegfried defensive line in Germany. The Germans were not occupying these defensive forts the first time we were there. We could have just gone right on through. But about that time, we ran out of gas. And we were sitting there the whole month of November. Pouring down rain and we were digging foxholes. I have some pictures showing us coming out of rain drenched foxholes. It was just about that time, just before the Battle of the Bulge as we were crossing the Blies River into Germany, that I was hit by shrapnel. At about the same time we had some bad experiences back at the battery. I say back at the battery because I was usually out with the infantry or the tanks, whichever we were supporting. Our battery commander was hit and the battery exec was hit and both of them seriously wounded and we lost several of our men. Just a stray round. The Germans were firing interdictory fire on a bridge we were crossing over. Unfortunately a round fell short and hit the side of the stone house near our battery position. It just splattered all over. So at that point, instead of being evacuated, I had to become the battery exec. The person who took my place as
forward observer was killed in the Battle of the Bulge just a short time later. I also served as acting battery commander for a while too. I was the only officer who went over with our battery and was still there when the war was over.

Q. I know you were awarded the Purple Heart and I know you had other decorations as well.

A. Kind of came along with the territory I guess.

Q. That’s a wonderful record.

A. The Bronze Star and the French Croix de Guerre. I got two of them. One came after the war for some reason. Also, the Air Medal (for aerial observation) and the European Theatre Medal with five campaign stars.

Q. Your war-time experience with the military was a very good background for working with most veterans. That was a great era in the history of The Ohio State University.

A. Yes, it was.

Q. So with that record, beginning with the ROTC you had quite a military experience. Then you returned to OSU and received a Masters Degree in 1947. And what field was that in?

A. Public Administration. I came back and pretty much decided not to go to Law School. I was married and we had a child on the way.

Q. And then you had your advanced degree and became employed with the U.S. Civil Service Commission.

A. In between there, I came back and registered here and then I had a call from Bill Guthrie. You remember Bill?
Q. Yes.

A. At that time he was Junior Dean of the Arts College. And he said, “We’re looking for a trained veteran who can be in here to counsel returning veterans.” They had a wonderful staff in the College Office, including Howard Hamilton, who was then Secretary of the College, but they didn’t have any young veterans who could relate to the returning G.I.’s. I had the illustrious title, Assistant to the Dean. When veterans came in to talk about appropriate courses or something like that, I got the chance to sit down and talk with them and try to help steer them in the right academic path.

Q. With your background in the military you certainly had their attention I’m sure.

A. We were all on the same page at that time.

Q. Tell us about your Civil Service experience.

A. When I finished my Master’s in 1947, it didn’t seem to me like there was much room for a young person to move up very fast around the University. A lot of the staff had been there during the war or had returned after service. So I began looking around for something else that I might be interested in. The Civil Service Commission had their Regional headquarters in Cincinnati at the time. And they came to the campus regularly to interview people. The Regional Director happened to be on hand one day when I was there. And he talked to me about coming with them, which I ultimately decided to do. I hated to leave the University, but I thought that was a good spot to be in for a while. I served with the U.S. Civil Service Commission from 1947 until 1958. During the Korean emergency, I was the Civil Service representative at the Wright Patterson Air
Force Base in Dayton. In 1955 I went to Washington, D.C. as a Field Operations Supervisor. This was during the Eisenhower administration and I served as Liaison between the Civil Service Commission and the office of Personal Management at the White House. So I had some good experiences there. During all this time, I kept my contacts with Ohio State. I was the Volunteer Development Fund Chairman in Dayton and Cincinnati and Washington, D.C., and served as President of the O.S.U. Alumni Club in Washington, D.C. in 1957-58.

Q. All of those experiences dovetailed, didn’t they? Your experiences in the military and the Civil Service and your degree in the field, and your management abilities. I can see how that would qualify you very, very well for the role as Director of the Ohio Union, which was in 1958?

A. Yes.

Q. And how did you come to be appointed to that?

A. I guess it was because of my contacts with Ohio State. I hadn’t had any thinking about this, but I had a call from Bill Guthrie again. You never know when these connections continue. And he said, “We’re interviewing people all over the country for the position of Director of the Ohio Union.” Fred Stecker, who was in that spot after the war under President Fawcett, had been appointed Executive Director of University Relations. And he said, “We’ve been looking all over, interviewing people in the field and outside and we haven’t come up with the person yet that we think is just what we’re looking for. Would you like to come in and interview for it?”
Q. Where were you at the time?

A. In Washington. One of my mentors there was Willard Kiplinger, Publisher of Changing Times Magazine, and I went in to talk to him about this. I was finishing my Ph.D. at American University at the time too. And we had three children then. I said, “I’m perfectly happy where I am.” He said, “Well is this something you’d like to do?” I said, “I always loved Ohio State and working with students.” He said, “Well if it’s something you’d like to do, you probably ought to do it. You can always finish up that Ph.D. if you need it or you don’t need it. This may not come around again.” So I came in and Prof. Bruz Russell met me at the airport. And we established a long relationship. Bill Guthrie was very careful not to be part of the interview process. He absented himself and I met with Fred Stecker, Chris Conaway, Dean of Women and several students. And Vice-President Gordon Carson since this position under their new organization chart reported to two Vice Presidents, the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Business. So I met with them and went up and met with President Fawcett. It reminded him that, about a year before, we had him as our speaker at the Washington Alumni Banquet and he had been talking about some changes they were planning and now here it is a year later the changes have been made. Shortly thereafter I got a call saying that I had been selected. Like almost everybody else, that meant taking a cut in pay to come to the University. We had to think about that but we decided that this was something we would enjoy doing.

Q. That had to be a twelve month contract.
A. That’s right. Very much so. And back then we did an awful lot of work in the summer time with conferences and so forth. The Ohio Union was the main conference center for the University. So that’s the way it came to pass. And I told Mr. Kiplinger and he said, “We’re going to miss you here but I’ve already written to them and told them if they want something done, they ought to get Ellenwood to do it.”

Q. Of course, Kiplinger had his own recommendation by the School of Journalism.

A. He sure did. He sure did. I do remember a little hassling I got into with him later on. We both respected each other but as you say, he’s a great advocate for the School of Journalism. I think Dale Kinzel was the Director of the School at the time. The Ohio Union Student Board had to allocate space in the Union for different student organizations. And they had allocated a space for the Lantern to have representatives there. They thought that, with an office in the Union, The Lantern would cover more student activity events than worldwide events you know. Well, after about a year or so, they felt that this wasn’t happening. The Lantern wasn’t giving anymore publicity to student organizations and the Union Board was upset about it. And so they moved The Lantern out and assigned somebody else to that space. Kinzel was really mad and pretty soon I had a call from Kiplinger. But the students stuck to their guns. They said, “Well you didn’t do what you were put in there to do. So we’ve got other people.” All the things that you remember.
Q. Yes. You of course knew about the past history of Ohio Union through Fred Stecker and was Beanie Drake still around by the time that you took your position?

A. Yes, Beanie was around but we didn’t see much of him. With Fred, it was a whole new regime and Beanie wasn’t much involved with it. And I thought that was not really fair to Beanie. So we established our contact with him and we had him out to dinner several times. And I would pick him up and take him to the weekly Ohio Staters luncheon meetings, which he really enjoyed. I remember also taking him to the 50th Year Association of College Union annual conference in 1964 at Indiana University. Beanie had established it in 1914, with about six people, mostly from the Big Ten. And so we took Beanie with us to go to that. He was the hit of the conference because he could tell them the way it was. And he did. He was, I thought, a very notable character.

Q. He was a legend in his own time.

A. Yes.

Q. But he must have had all kinds of wonderful stories. I wonder if he ever wrote those down or were they ever recorded in any way?

A. I don’t think so. He had a lot of books. He was well read. He was into nature and he had a lot of books on Hocking County. As a matter of fact, he was called the father of the Hocking County Parks system. He brought that area to the attention of Wilbur Stout, the state geologist back at that time. He was a man for his time. He wouldn’t have gotten along at all in the 60’s, 70’s. He was a southern gentleman.
Q. Well he got his just recognition when the Drake Union was built. Tell us a little bit about that development.

A. The master plan of the University at that time was to move westward. There were going to be four high-rise dormitories down along the river. Two on each side. That didn’t come to fruition. But the Union was to be the connecting link between them. One of the early drawings provided, that it would span the river, so that the Union would be right over the river, connecting buildings on the east with ones on the west. We didn’t have enough money to do the job and the Theatre Department was also planning a theatre and they didn’t have enough money. So we put the two together and built this building with the idea that the theatre would be a part with the Union. So that came about very naturally. We had good relationships with the Theatre Department at that time. I already had a lot of contacts with people like Roy Bowen. This was in 1972, right after the student riots and we were being hit hard financially. So we opened up the Drake Union without having one additional staff person on our rolls. The person responsible for a specific job at the Ohio Union just assumed those responsibilities at the new Union also. When it came time to name the building, I made a proposal to The Ohio Union Council, which was made up of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. And was responsible for setting program policies for the Union. And they unanimously agreed that it would be appropriate to name this the Drake Union in honor of Edward S. (Beanie) Drake, manager of the original Ohio Union from 1914 to 1947. The proposal was submitted to the Board of Trustees and it was approved. When the theatre, the main theatre there,
was named Thurber Theatre, that was very appropriate because Beanie and James Thurber had been friends long ago. And it all came about. And now the stadium theatre in the building has been named The Bowen Theatre in honor of Roy Bowen, which I think is very appropriate too.

Q. Roy Bowen just had his 90th birthday last week, I think.

A. How about that? I didn’t know that but I saw him in the Faculty Club some time ago and we had a nice little chat. He looked great.

Q. He’s very, very active in the Theatre Department advising and so forth.

A. I’m digressing a bit but Roy Bowen started the Stadium Theatre years ago under the Stadium without any additional allocation of any money. Nowadays, if you say to somebody you want to start a project, they’ll say, “Well how much money do you have to provide for this? We don’t start without the money.” But he got the thing up and going.

Q. Money not only to get it started now but to maintain it for a long period of time.

A. And I think that’s part of the difference between today and yesterday.

Q. Definitely. Did you feel that the separation or having two, an east and west axis, was a useful thing for the students or did it separate their interests too much to have one on one side of the campus and one on the other? Or did it make a difference at all?

A. Well, the Drake Union was primarily to serve the people in Morrill and Lincoln Towers there. Because they did not build into those towers the space for student activities. It really never caught on that much with them. Also, the people in the stadium dorms. There were 800 or 1,000 students in the stadium dorms at that
time too. And had no place for student activities. But the rest of the master plan didn’t develop, that is, they didn’t keep on moving west. They didn’t build additional dorms on the other side. And we also had plans for a Union on the west campus. Things change and they didn’t continue with the master plan to do that. So the Drake Union never really picked up. All of the main student activities were still centered in the Ohio Union. We changed, instead of the Ohio Union activities, we had Ohio Drake Union activities. And we had an office over there, so that they could orient themselves to Drake Union. And we did have functions over there. They could seat many more people for a film program in the Thurber Theatre than we could in the conference theatre at the Ohio Union. We had a very active student films committee and they wanted some good top-notch films which they had at the Drake Union.

Q. That film program started at University Hall.

A. That’s right.

Q. We had that in University Hall because the first and only 35 millimeter projectors were over there. The instigator of that program was Edgar Dale. He was at that time nationally known pioneer in audio visual education, as it was called in those days. The film program was later moved to the Ohio Union. Was that during your period when it was moved over, or was it before that?

A. Moved to High Street?

Q. When the film program was moved from University Hall to the Ohio Union.

A. It must have been before.

Q. I think it was. But anyway, the program went on and was very successful.
A. You talked about the mission of the Ohio Union. It was intended to be the hearthstone of the campus. A home away from home for all students as well as faculty, staff and alumni. There was a large recreation program with sixteen bowling lanes. The faculty bowling league bowled there regularly. There was a large billiard room; 24 tables of billiards. It wasn’t pool, it was billiards. And it wasn’t bowling alleys, it was bowling lanes. So we tried to teach the students some of the social aspects of these games. We had a large program of what we called creative arts. Non-credit courses for students and other members of University family. And at one time we had up to 10,000 enrolled in a year, about 2,500 a quarter, in 400 or so different programs. And we taught Chess and duplicate bridge in the game room; there was a person in charge. She was a most gracious person, a graduate of the class of 1925, who taught students how to be gracious at winning or losing. It was the union activities program and the students were responsible for putting on some 400 different programs a year, ranging from a renaissance festival to jazz concerts, and film program. We had what we called faculty fireside chats with faculty members who would come over and sit and talk with students about whatever they wanted to talk about. And this was a very popular thing at one time. Woody Hayes came regularly and would just sit and chat. He was one of the most popular figures with students. We had at one time large ballroom dances. And we taught ballroom dancing and square dancing and we had square dances. Then the Ohio Union Activities Board had what they called their “Candlelight Dances” in the ballroom with candlelight and
a big band and the girls and fellows would dress up and follow accepted social
etiquette. All part of that era.

Q. What years would that have been?

A. Mostly the 60’s I would say. Everything became much more informal in the 70’s.
But you know it’s starting to come back now. They’re teaching ballroom dancing
again. I learned what I knew about dancing on the top floor of the old Ohio
Union (now Enarson Hall), when they had dance classes up there. There were a
lot of conferences held in the Ohio Union before the Fawcett Center was built.
This was the main conference center for the University and we had a lot of
professional conferences, particularly in the summer time, so that the summer
time was a busy time too. We had meeting rooms for all the different student
organizations, and we had offices for about 60 different student organizations. So
this was really the center of student activities. We had a large food service
operation at one time. At one time it was the largest food service operation in the
City of Columbus. If you wanted a banquet for 1,000 people, you had to come to
the Ohio Union. The biggest ones that I recall were the football appreciation
banquets. We had four tiers of speakers tables, seating about 200 people. Back in
the Woody Hayes’ era, we celebrated every year it seemed like. But we also did
catering for small groups and we had the Terrace Dining Room, which was a very
nice table service dining room. Woody wanted to teach his boys something about
the social graces of dining, so when they went out they wouldn’t be embarrassed.
So he brought the football training table over to the Terrace Dining Room. And
we had the training table there. Roy Gossage was our food director at that time.
Q. Who was it?

A. Roy Gossage. He had been recruited out of the hills of Tennessee to go play football at San Francisco. And then after the war he finished up at the Denver Hotel School and he was in charge of food service at the University of Nebraska when we brought him here. He had been very much involved in sports and he knew their language. And he kept them under control. Fred Taylor brought over the basketball team too. And then the girls’ basketball team started coming in too. We had a large food program. The cafeteria was a wonderful place for students to gather and socialize while eating. We had a lot of faculty and staff families who came there for their evening meal and Sunday dinners. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, when the campus was closed in the early 70’s, we lost almost all of that business. With our high overhead costs due to Civil Service benefits for food service employees, we couldn’t compete with the fast foods operations along High Street. We could see the handwriting on the wall. If you can’t lick them, join them. So we converted. We contracted out space to McDonalds and Pizza Hut, and an ice cream parlor and a Deli. This was the first operation of this kind on any college campus. We kept the catering operation, so that we could continue to handle the banquets and so forth. As a matter of fact, Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonalds, had a public relations campaign, “McDonalds Goes to College,” and this was the first place that they had on a college campus. We had a grand opening with Ray Kroc and we had the marching band playing, “You Deserve a Break Today.” Woody came down and talked with him. It was quite a night! But we had a lot of those kinds of experiences. We went from losing money, to
where we had the highest net profit of any food operation in the Big Ten, primarily because of the fast food operations.

Q. You were a little ahead of your time there weren’t you, in getting outside corporate type assistance.

A. We sure were. A lot of my colleagues in the Big Ten were chastising me for selling out. I think every one of them has a similar operation now. We had to. We had to meet the competition. We had to get the Attorney General’s approval to be able to do this. And then to be able to serve beer in the Union was another thing. There were so many changes. But it was never the same. Up until the student riots and the closing of the campus and so forth, it was a pretty tangible operation and I missed it. But you have to exist and that was another thing. One of the primary differences in the Ohio Union and other student unions in the Big Ten was that we were the only one that didn’t have a per student fee for the operation of the Union. This was alright when things were going well but then when the University began to get pinched, we went from having 80% support to 25% support. And it meant that you had to change your operation. I always felt that the Ohio Union should be considered an integral part of the total academic program of the campus. We had just as much responsibility for the total education of the student as a professor of English or History or Political Science had. I will say this. When I reported to Gordon Carson, the Chief Business Officer of the University, he was very much student oriented. And he would fight for them. Sometimes more than the Vice President for Student Affairs. You may not be able to serve two masters but in that case I think it was for the benefit of
the students. Other facilities in the Ohio Union included the music lounge and the browsing room, two of the finest facilities in the Ohio Union. The music lounge programmed good classical music. You could go into individual booths and listen to good music. In the Reading Browsing Room, we had good books to pick up. We had a complete collection of year books and all of the periodicals and hometown newspapers.

Q. You had a lot of activities in the main lounge, where most of the major activity was a display area or meeting area.

A. A lot of study did take place in the lounge but we also had a lot of individual programs in there, primarily, as I said, the fireside chats and this sort of thing. Just a place for people to meet other people. “Meet you in the main lounge at the Union.” That was the sort of thing that was happening. We still had the diversity we have today. We looked upon the Union as a union, people coming together, so that all races, creeds, color could come and mingle. And we had international students programs. We had lots of exhibits there. We had more people viewing art in the Ohio Union than in all the art galleries in Columbus. And we used to have some very good ones.

Q. In May, 1977, you celebrated the Union’s 25th anniversary, with 900 pieces of cake, 20 gallons of punch, 5 gallons of coffee. You certainly knew how to throw a party. It must have been a great occasion.

A. Well we had a lot of great events like that. Then we had the 50th Anniversary of Ohio Union Activities and the person who had been the President of the first Union Activities Board in 1914, was toastmaster for it. But the biggest one that
we ever had was, the Centennial Charter Day celebration for the University in 1970. We had a huge party in 1970. And we had a “Centennial” cake then and there must have been several thousand pieces of that. The President cut the cake with the President of the Alumni Association. And we had special programs going on in each area of the Union.

Q. This is the Centennial year?

A. Yes, 1970 the centennial year. We had a “Gay Nineties Room” in the Main Lounge and we had a “Roaring Twenties” Room in the Tavern area and a “Nostalgic Forties Room” in the Cafeteria and a “Soaring Sixties Room” in the Franklin Room area. Each of these areas was lavishly decorated for the occasion and we had a band and live entertainment for each one. It was a great event. Those were the kinds of things that we enjoyed doing.

Q. You were the Grand Marshall of the homecoming parade in 1983. That must have been a nice experience.

A. That was the students doing that. I was a long time advisor to Ohio Staters and Sphinx. They knew I was retiring and they had this appreciation day. And so I guess it just kind of grew out of that. But it was a nice thing and I appreciated it. They showed their appreciation for M.J., my wife, also and she rode along with me in the carriage. That was nice. And we had to get an extra lot of buckeyes, so we could throw out buckeyes all along the parade route.

Q. You were well rewarded for your activities and your contribution to the history of The Ohio State University when you received the Distinguished Service Award at the June commencement, 1991, after spending 25 plus years of your life in the
service of your Alma Mater. And you are also exemplary for your service to your country and to your community. Some of the activities I see listed in your resume: you were Chairman of the OSU-Hamilton County Development Fund. You mentioned that earlier, in 1950. Regional Representative of the Association of College Unions International, 1968. The Alumni Centennial activities, of course you mentioned. And you were on that committee. And the Columbus Maennerchor, where you served not only as an officer but also as a voice in the choir, which was a wonderful, beautiful music organization. Are you still involved in some degree with the Maennerchor?

A. Still a member but I’m just not able to get away now since I’m a full-time caregiver for my wife. You’ve got to be there for practice. But I did enjoy that. I remember, in 1998, we were down in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Padre Island, where we used to go in March with some other friends and I had a call from the President and he said, “The Chairman of the 150th conference has just resigned in a huff. The conference is coming up here in about six weeks and we need somebody to take hold of this and put it together. Holy mackerel! We’re hosting German-American choruses from all over the U.S.” Only because I thought a lot of Dave Haueisen that I agreed to come back and try to take hold. But we pulled it off with a lot of help from a lot of people. First thing we did was to get organized.

Q. And you had a lot of experience in organizing.

A. And that tied right in with some things that I had done in the past. And it came off very well.
Q. I remember the Maennerchor. My father and my grandfathers belonged to it.
A. Wonderful!

Q. We all lived in German Village. That’s where I grew up. I’m a member, not like you. I had to promise not to sing. You were the real thing.
A. I enjoyed it. We had a good Director there. I still get calls from them and keep in contact with some of my special friends.

Q. You’ve mentioned a lot of your activities on the campus. I’m sure you enjoyed your work there because that’s why you said you came to Ohio State, because you enjoyed being here. What time in the history of Ohio State during your tenure could you describe as the “good old days?” Was there any one particular moment or period of time or whatever, or was it spread over?
A. There was some fluctuations there but I guess I’ll probably have to go back to the 60’s. And think in terms of that as the era of good feeling. I thought we had people, at least the people I associated with on campus, who were interested in the University as a whole and not just their little segment of a particular department. If you wanted something, you could talk with somebody and generally they were receptive. We worked very closely with the Music Department and the Athletic Department and several other departments. Just wonderful people. The top leadership, President Novice Fawcett, in those years made a big difference in the University. He had empathy for everybody, the staff as well as the faculty. And staff didn’t feel like they were second-class citizens. There’s been so much emphasis on the faculty and that’s all well deserved, but as Novice Fawcett said, “People like you and your staff at the Union working evenings and weekends is
what keeps the University alive.” I had a personal feeling that if something at the Union was important enough for the President to be there, then it was certainly important enough for me to be there. So I thought I should be there. This was before we got so mercenary. Not that we had all the money in the world, but we got along with what we had and we tried to do with what we had. But now it seems to me as though there’s a price tag on everything. Even friendship.

Q. I noticed something that complements that. There was a time during the 60’s and earlier where there was more collegiality. You were friends with everybody.

A. Real camaraderie.

Q. And then later it seemed to become more competitive in many ways.

A. That’s right.

Q. For money, for tenure, for getting what you wanted, and so forth.

A. That’s why I said the student riots in the Vietnam era had a lot to do with the change in the early 70’s and other things. But there were people on and off campus that were willing to help you do whatever they could to assist.

Q. In the Alumni Monthly, June 1981, you were quoted as saying, “The students today, are quite similar to those back in 1958.” Would you say the same thing about the students who came later? Like those today?

A. Basically so. In the 80’s, they were just coming out of the rough period of the Vietnam era and that was a bad time, a bad time. I remember I was embarrassed by some of the things that were happening. And the disregard that students had for authority. And I think we are seeing some change back. You said that was in the 80’s, ’81, but I just recently participated in conducting interviews for the
scholarship program at the Ohio Union. These people were real student leaders. One is Marketing and Transportation Logistics has a 3.62 grade point average. One in Marketing has a 3.4. One had a 3.8 in Accounting. We could use people like that in Accounting today. One had a 3.76 in English. They all came in neatly dressed and they were very respectful and well spoken. I remember the era when people came in in cut-off raggedly shorts and they went to banquets that way too. And then they cut out having the banquets. But I think we’re seeing, and as I said, they’re teaching ballroom dancing again now. And students are paying attention to it. I hope that we’ve come through that rough period and who knows what effect the current global situation will have. But I am encouraged.

Q. You had a wonderful description of the function of a Student Union. You called it and you made it the “hearthstone of the campus.” And you’ve had a great hearth and it was a wonderful place to be.

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Thinking of the future, what would be the main form and function of the Student Union of the future, architecturally. Is it still “the sense of place”? How would you build it?

A. That’s kind of a sore spot. I think that we’ve diversified so much, on large campuses anyway, and maybe some of this was necessary. But I think the College Union as we’ve known it in the past will exist only on the smaller campuses, where you have one central spot to gather. And I think that’s where it will do the most good to bring all people together. Blacks, Whites, Mexicans, Asians, etc. I’m very much opposed to having a separate center for each one of
these, so that they go to that and they don’t get to interact with other people. They’re going to have to interact when they get out in the world. After all, the motto of this University, “Disciplina in Civitatem” means just that, “Training in Citizenship.” And citizenship continues throughout your whole lifetime. And we hope that we have been able to start them off with a feeling of working with others to accomplish a common goal. Those were some rough times when you had somebody calling you a racist and they were the biggest racist there could be. And that seemed to be the thing to do. I think that the future of the College Unions as we’ve known it, will be on the smaller campuses, the liberal arts schools, and so forth. And I think it has a very definite place there.

Q. The students that are coming to Ohio State have totally different experiences than the ones who came earlier, mostly from the Ohio farms, Ohio small towns, Ohio cities. And before television and before many of the things that have happened since World War II. And they needed a sense of place.

A. Very true.

Q. Do you think the University can still provide a sense of loyalty to the institution or do you think the devotion to an institution that certainly you had and I had and I think everybody I know had at that time, do you think the same kind of loyalty to the Alma Mater is still there?

A. I’d have to say this, that the University is going to have to work at it, to achieve that in the future. And you don’t achieve it just by increasing the cost of football tickets and basketball tickets and annual dues structure, that says if you don’t pay so much you don’t get this or you don’t get that. There has to be something
deeper than that. And that’s got to come about to everybody, the individual faculty member in his class, giving the students something to hold on to. The top University administration, I think, needs to be concerned about our roots and remembering that we still have our primary responsibility to the people of Ohio, and not so much concerned about what might result in a little squib in the New York Times about some building or some program. And having activities and the programs that appeal not to the ordinary student, but to a certain very elite group of people. That’s where the money is and that’s where the attention is being given now but I think we’ve got to reassess this. And know where we’re coming from. Or we’re not going to have that kind of commitment down the road.

Q. You may be aware that John Mount started a new course in “History of the University.”

A. I read about that the other day.

Q. That’s one of the promising things that’s developed by somebody’s who is devoted himself.

A. John and I have talked about this several times. There’s just nobody around in the hierarchy of the University who knows the history of the University. Who has experienced this. They talk about history and they go back ten years. So I hope some good will come out of that. I think we’re treading on very dangerous waters now, when you talk about loyalty.

Q. Certainly one of the objectives of what we’re doing right now and what Bill Studer and Rai Goerler and the Archives people and Library people are doing, is
trying to get an oral history. Because we don’t even have a formal University
historian anymore.

A. Like Jim Pollard?

Q. Well Jim Pollard and Paul Underwood I think was the last one that wrote in that
capacity. So you are now helping through this program close that gap.

A. That’s great. It’s great that you are trying to do this.

Q. Is there anything else you’d like to say that wasn’t on our agenda? I think your
last statement was certainly a stirring comment that deserves final attention. But
are there any questions which I didn’t raise?

A. Gosh, we could go on for days, couldn’t we? I think I mentioned something
about President Fawcett and his relationship to everybody. But also, Mrs.
Fawcett. Such a gracious lady who was involved in all of the programs that the
President’s wife is supposed to be involved in. With the Womens’ Club and this
sort of thing. Something like the minister’s wife. The minister used to live right
next to the church and was there all the time and his wife was involved in
everything. Well, we’ve gone through a period since the Fawcetts with top
administrators who don’t have that. And we talked about engendering alumni
support for your alma mater. I think it takes starting at the top level and just
going all the way down. I know when I came here, Bill Guthrie made a lot of the
fact that faculty and staff needed to associate with students outside the classroom.
He and his wife did this very well, at their house much of the time. And so my
wife and I followed suit. You need to have that feeling in force today where
University personnel work at establishing close personal relationships with students. That will result in loyalty for Alma Mater in the years to come.

Q. The President of the University used to live right on campus.
A. That’s true.
Q. And the Fawcetts lived there.
A. That’s right.
Q. We did kind of a memorial slide show on Mrs. Fawcett’s life. And she recalled that students from the dormitories would come over occasionally, even to borrow some eggs. “Do you have some eggs,” or “We don’t have any salt. Some of them were obviously excuses just to see us but some of the girls really wanted some help with their needs.”
Q. And she did.
A. And she did it very well.
Q. I think you’ve done this very well.
A. There’s one other thing I was going to mention something about. Some time ago I ran across a clipping from The Columbus Dispatch from 1992 which stated: “On this day in Columbus in 1968, the Right Wing Young Americans for Freedom at The Ohio State University erected a cardboard “Berlin Wall” at the entrance of the Ohio Union to protest an exhibition from the Soviet Union that was to be there for a month. Fifteen minutes after it was erected the wall was removed by the order of the Ohio Union Director.” That was an interesting incident in the life of the Union. This was during the cold war, but we had this cultural exchange program between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was sponsored by the
U.S. State Department and the Soviets had brought in their art and craft objects and equipment and set up in the Ohio Union ballrooms. They had a group of about ten people here including a KGB agent but nobody knew who that was. But the Young Republicans had this idea of building a wall. It was very well organized. They had cardboard boxes to resemble cement blocks. They must have had 15-20 people and they came in and in a matter 5-10 minutes they had this whole wall set up. And they had a person impersonating a Russian soldier outside there guarding the wall.

Q. Where was that wall erected?
A. Outside the west ballroom.

Q. The west side. I think I remember that.
A. And I had a call to go down and see what was going on down there in the ballrooms. And I went down and before I could get back to my office I had a call from the U.S. State Department. That’s how fast they worked. The person in charge of the Exhibit had called their Embassy and they called our State Department. The President of the Young Republicans was a very reasonable fellow. I knew him and I said, “Hey, you’ve made your point now. You’ve had The Lantern there taking a picture of it. You’ll get your story. Now let’s take this thing down,” which he laughingly did. But it was just one of those things and what could have been a nasty situation with our students was averted because we had a good personal relationship with the students involved. We had this group of Soviet staff out to our house for dinner and evening entertainment one night. They were very interesting. We sang and our children played instruments and
they sang. In this setting, we related very well. One of the persons had been a fighter pilot and flown in combat. And she was very emotional and crying before the evening was over. I think it did an awful lot of good for Soviet-American relationships. I have a picture of the fellow who was in charge of it. Ivan Ivanoff Igorovich was his name. He liked those chairs that we had in the Terrace Dining Room that had wheels on the legs. That was a new thing then. So I got in touch with George Gasser in Youngstown who had made these chairs. I said, “George, how would you like to have one of your chairs in Russia?” He said, “That’s one of the few places that we don’t have chairs and I’d be interested in doing that.” So George came down. I have a picture of the three of us there presenting this chair to Ivan Igorovich. He sent me a picture later in his study using that chair there. So things like that you know helped to keep things from being boring.

Q. Was that event the one that the Governor’s wife came down and made an appearance?

A. The Governor was here.

Q. I was there that day because I remember the Governor being there

A. Yes. We got a lot of publicity. And President Fawcett always came over for these events and would participate. And he participated in things like Christmas on Campus program that the students put on. He always lit the Christmas tree and had very appropriate remarks to make.

Q. Fawcett also had the Speakers Rule here for a time. Were there any problems with that?
No, we really didn’t. Because people that came in had to have that decision made before they came. So we didn’t get involved in that decision. I do remember that we had a call from the Rabbi of Hillel Foundation. He said, “You’re having this Christmas on campus. All about the Christians. This isn’t right.” I said, “Well, what would you like to do? If you’ll bring over artifacts, we’ll have an exhibit of Jewish religious symbols in our main lounge showcase there. And we’ll set up a time for you to have a fireside chat about it.”

Q. What happened?

A. He did and it was well attended and a lot of Christian people were there. And the students got out and really worked on getting the publicity. I think we had thereafter at Christmastime, we had a thing on the Jewish faith and the Christian faith. That’s the coming together that the whole Union idea was to be.

Q. The Ohio Union was a centrifugal force that brought people there during those periods. It served a unique purpose because it was all campus. It was all people. It was the center. I guess every generation looks back and says, “Those were the good old days.” But for today’s students or faculty, these may be the good old days.

A. I remember Dr. Murphy, Father of Dr. Bob Murphy, long-time O.S.U. football team doctor, saying, “People talk about the good old days. The good old days are now. It isn’t going to get any better than this.”

Q. Looking back and reviewing what you’ve said, you mentioned so many
names of people and things that I remember in my own experience, that we were
together for a long period of time. I think there was a time when, as you put it,
there was a hearthstone.

A. Yes.

Q. And maybe something is lost but something may be gained. And I don’t know
what that is but it’s good to go back and log the events leading up to whatever is
happening.

A. I’m trying to think of the coach of the polo team. Distinguished professor in
Psychology. And he was around for years after.

Q. It wouldn’t be Harold Burtt, would it?

A. Yes.

Q. There was a Renaissance Man.

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. He was an ornithologist, a psychologist. He was the Assistant Coach of the
fencing team. He was also an excellent photographer.

A. And he coached the polo team.

Q. I never knew that.

A. I remember the day that they came and took the horses away. They needed them
for something else. I guess pack horses for the Army but that was the end of polo.

Q. He was one of the founders of the Faculty Photographic Society and wrote a very
amusing history of that whole things that’s still going. That history is in the
University Archives.

A. Is that right?
Q. Yes. Anything else we should include?
A. We’ve probably taken enough time.
Q. No, no, there’s plenty of tape here. The Archives have provided all the facilities.
A. I remember when I was serving on the Board of Trustees at Rio Grande College, about the time that I retired. And they had just been able to get what amounted to a College Union there. And the difference it made in their campus. A place for students to come together.
Q. Rio Grande, that’s Bob Evans country.
A. Yes, that’s Bob Evans country, for sure.
Q. He got a Distinguished Service award from Ohio State too.
A. He wasn’t on the Board at the same time I was. Their Chief Executive Officer, Bob Wood, was on the Board of Trustees there at that time. And they were very influential in the future of Rio Grande. I thought when Shawnee was made a state university down in Portsmouth, that would be the end of Rio Grande. Shawnee had started out as a branch of Ohio University but Vern Riffe was determined that it was going to be a state university. The Board of Regents objected but Vern Riffe said, “This is not a Board of Regents matter, this is a legislative matter.” And he and Jim Rhodes pursued it. And when those two politicos got together behind something, it was bound to happen. And so Shawnee became Shawnee State University. But it was not the end of Rio Grande. It is still going strong. They have a two year program down there that is state supported, a community college concept. And then the last two years have been enlarged so that it is now...
Rio Grande University. And it has its hearthstone in the campus center just as Shawnee State University has its hearthstone in the New Campus Center there.