

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
BRUCE ELLIOTT  
JULY 27, 2017

Q. Good morning. This is Kevlin Haire at the OSU Archives on July 27, 2017. And I'm conducting an oral history interview with Bruce Elliott. Bruce, welcome.

A. Thank you.

Q. It's good to have you here. Let's start off by asking, your full name, date of birth and where you were born.

A. I'm Bruce William Elliott, Jr. That's my full name. And I was born on April 30, 1948, so I was a baby boomer.

Q. And where were you born?

A. In Oak Park, Illinois.

Q. Okay. And tell me a little bit about family background, where did you grow up, how many siblings did you have, what did your parents do, that kind of thing?

A. We grew up in Cleveland Heights. And I had three siblings, two brothers and a sister. My oldest brother also went to Ohio State.

Q. Okay.

A. And my parents, both my parents, as well as my grandmother, went to [the University of] Michigan.

Q. Oh, they did?

A. They were very big fans of Michigan. I was the first one to go to Ohio State and they were okay with that. So we had a nice rivalry.

Q. Okay, it was friendly.

- A. Indeed.
- Q. Okay. Well, tell me how your older brother went to Ohio State.
- A. Actually he's younger. I'm the oldest.
- Q. Oh okay. How did you pick Ohio State if everybody else had gone to Michigan?
- A. I did apply to Michigan, but I didn't get in. I think the standards were a little bit higher for out-of-state students. And it didn't really bother me because I had been looking at schools in Ohio. One example was Denison. And I was just not impressed with the small size of the university and its location in a small town.
- Q. Particularly back then, I'm sure.
- A. And so my dad said, he's an architect, he said, "I think you'll like Ohio State because I was just down there and I think you would like to live in Baker Hall because I think that's an architecturally significant building." So then I came down here for a quick visit.
- Q. This was in high school?
- A. This was in high school. And I was really impressed by the huge size of the University.
- Q. You liked that.
- A. I liked the huge size of the campus. It was very exciting to me. It had a well-known Big Ten team with a famous coach. And I always wanted to be part of a big university. I don't think I would fit into a smaller one very well. Ohio State is also a research University and I was interested in going to graduate school in Microbiology. I don't know what the status of the research funding was at the University then, but having retired from the position of Director of Sponsored Research at Northwestern, I can tell you that Ohio State gets a lot of funding from the federal government.
- Q. It does.

A. So that impressed me as well. And once I was down here I knew this was it. And in high school everyone was very selective. “Oh, you’re going to Ohio State.” It’s almost as if they felt sorry for you because they were going to other more prestigious schools. But for me, some of those schools weren’t really research universities. They were great for undergraduate and maybe graduate, but in terms of being trained for research, they weren’t as good. And they had nothing of significance for sports. And so I have been very happy with my selection ever since.

Q. Now when did you matriculate?

A. I started in the fall – we had quarters then – fall quarter of 1966.

Q. Now, your father had mentioned Baker Hall and I know you’ve mentioned to me before that you lived in Baker Hall. So talk to me about how you got to Baker Hall, because that’s where you lived first.

A. Yes, I came down for orientation later, sometime that summer. And the orientation happened to be housed in Baker. At least that’s where they put the men. So I got a chance to look at it. And I also got a chance to meet two other guys who, and I’ve never forgotten this, one of them told me was in egg school. And I had never heard of it. I didn’t know what it was. It turns out he was talking about agriculture. And I’ve never forgotten that because I thought maybe I’m naïve. But that was part of the orientation. In terms of selecting Baker, I probably just requested it. It was much easier then than now where they have an elaborate selection process.

Q. Very elaborate, that’s true. Okay. So your first quarter, tell me what your first impressions were, how it went that first quarter.

A. My first quarter and the last quarter, spring of '70, when they had the riots, are really the only two quarters that stick out in my mind. Even the next two quarters of my freshman year, winter and spring, fade away compared to the first one. And it was all a good experience. But it was dramatically different from living at home. Then it was a matter of getting used to living in the dorm with very crowded rooms. All the rooms were triples. The baby boomers were going through at that time. And it was a tight squeeze. Getting used to your roommate. My first roommate flunked out, and I knew he was going to flunk out because he asked me to type a paper for him and I had to seriously edit it. So I knew that he wasn't going to come back, and he didn't.

Q. He didn't come back after freshman year or after the quarter?

A. He didn't come back after the quarter.

Q. Oh, wow. Does that mean you had a room to yourself?

A. No, no, no. We were quickly reassigned roommates. Attending class is something I also remember back then because I thought all of my classes, at least for many years, until graduate school, were highly impersonal. And I know that's not the case now. Or at least that's the way that most schools try to portray themselves. The faculty wore suits and jackets. They called you mister, Mr. Elliott, and I wasn't used to that. The first time I heard that, I thought, "This seems to be unnecessarily formal." But they weren't the kind of professors or TAs who would be willing to sit down and chat with you about your experience, much less the coursework and so on. And I'm not critical of that, but it just stands out in my mind.

Q. Oh, okay. You would think that would be a natural impression to have of somebody who comes to a big school. But you wanted to come to a big school.

- A. I wanted to come to a big school and I thought that's what it was. That's why I was okay with it.
- Q. Okay, I see.
- A. I remember the football games. They were very exciting. Back then there were only 10 games. You started school in September then, and you got out in the middle of June. All of the football games were over the weekend before Thanksgiving when we played Michigan. Woody Hayes was coach at the time. And that really is what makes fall quarter so exciting, I think.
- Q. And you went to the games.
- A. Yes. All the students had passes. The other thing I remember, and it is very different from now, is that you could drink 3.2 beer when you were 18. I think that's probably the equivalent of light beer now. And so there were bars all up and down High Street. And for freshman who were kind of learning how to drink, especially the women, coeds they were called back then, a lot of people got sick, drunk and so on. And it probably took half a quarter or so for people to get an understanding of how much they could really drink. But that's just part of it.
- Q. It was part of the freshman experience.
- A. And so those are some of the highlights of my first quarter there. And they carried through the first year, I think.
- Q. Now you lived in Baker the whole time and I wanted to ask you why, because a lot of students, most students, can't wait to get off campus.
- A. That's right. I lived there for six years, actually. I graduated four years later with a Bachelor's and then I stayed two more years for a Master's.

Q. And that's highly unusual I would think.

A. Very unusual, but I was a student staff manager in the dorm at the time. And I wanted to keep that job because it paid well. And I did not want to live in an apartment. You're absolutely right, most of the guys on the floor wanted to get out as soon as possible. But look what they were moving into. Just as I came to campus today, looking at the housing on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Chittenden, and so on. It's really in bad shape and it was worse then. I think they've fixed them up. And I could not see myself living like that, having to fix your own meals. It just didn't appeal to me at all. And I really enjoyed living in the dorms, so I just continued. All your meals are prepared. It's close to campus. Everything is there.

Q. There are a lot of things you don't have to think about.

A. Yeah, and I didn't want to think about that. And I think some of the guys that moved weren't really that happy. And when I would see them at parties or visit them, their living room and bedroom, it was just terrible. I think some of that old housing has been torn down now. But I just would not want to live that way.

Q. So does that mean you changed roommates every year?

A. After my freshman year I had a single. There were a lot of singles in that dorm.

Q. Oh nice.

A. And so I was lucky to have one.

Q. And that was a single even when you were getting your Master's, I assume?

A. Yeah.

Q. Cool, that's nice. Now I had found a Lantern article. The Lantern is online, I can show you the archives if you haven't found it yet. And there was a story about a time capsule,

and you were involved in that. You have to tell me about that before we go any further, because I think that's fascinating.

A. Oh sure. First of all, I have no recollection of the article. I'm surprised about that, too. But in 1970, it was the University Centennial. And the University wanted all of the organizations to develop a history of their organization in relation to the campus for the first 100 years. So dorms, fraternities, sororities, associations, clubs, sports, and all were supposed to come up with something to help celebrate the Centennial. So the dorm director suggested that I write a history of Baker Hall. And I was really interested in the structure, the actual physical architecture of the building, the symmetry of it, how they had it walled off for East and West Baker. And how it had changed just in the 30 years since it had opened. And so I undertook that. I got to use the Archives here because you had a lot of material. And I wrote a small pamphlet and it's in the library now. I have a bound copy. And that was my contribution to the Centennial.

Q. How did you get involved with the time capsule?

A. It was the dorm director's idea to have a time capsule, so we were all thinking about what to put in it. And one of these old phones I'm donating today was the first thing to go in it because they had just been removed from the walls, from the rooms, the year before. And we had an old safe, and the safe didn't have a lock on it. But we put all of this stuff in. We put old fire globes that were hanging in the halls that had been removed as they renovated, newspapers about the dorm, articles about people in the dorm, and so on. And it was actually pretty nice. But to lock it up, we had to put heavy chains around it with a big padlock because it wouldn't lock and no one would remember the combination anyway. And I came back 20 years later and I went over to East Baker and I saw the safe.

It was wide open. Everything had been removed. I don't know when but probably just one year after it was made.

Q. Were you disappointed or not surprised, or both?

A. I wasn't surprised. I wondered how they got it open. They probably hit the lock until it broke.

Q. Right. I'm actually surprised the safe was still there.

A. Too heavy to move. I wasn't surprised, but I think that if they had kept some of those items, the students, the residents, would have liked to see them now. And I have no idea where they went.

Q. Right. That's too bad. Well let's go back to academics, because you mentioned that you knew you wanted to study Microbiology. How did that come about, because your father was an architect and you said you were interested in the architecture of Baker Hall.

A. I had a great teacher for biology at Heights High. She was a Ph.D., and she really had an influence on my career. She had a unit on bacteriology and I just loved it. And so I knew that Microbiology, which is the newer term, was what I wanted to major in. And I never wavered from that. I majored in Micro and then in grad school, Immunology, which is often in the same department as Microbiology.

Q. Then later you got a Ph.D., not from OSU but that was also in ...

A. Yes, my Ph.D. was in Immunology from University of Illinois, Chicago campus.

Q. We'll talk about what you did after school a little bit later. Now you said you graduated in 1970, which was the Centennial, but also was kind of the height of student unrest on campuses everywhere. When we interview students from that period we always ask them about that because everybody has such interesting perspectives of what went on. Tell me

what you remember about that, about the general climate on campus, your memories of that time.

A. Actually since '68 there was the women's movement, the black students felt they were underrepresented and so on. And so this had kind of been developing. But in the spring of 1970 it really took off. This was also the Vietnam War era. I'll tell you about the draft in a little bit but there were many movements going on on campus. And many students were unhappy with the lack of progress the administration was making. And the fact that the administration, mostly older men, didn't seem care at all about the students' concerns. So it was this *in loco parentis* idea that was rapidly fading away but was still in place in 1970, where you do what the University tells you to do. In addition to that, there was the Vietnam War going on and there was a great deal of protest about that even before May 4, when the Kent State shootings occurred.

Q. May 4.

A. Yes, May 4. There were demonstrations for all of these different groups all over campus. Some of them involved thousands of students. If you look back in the literature, you can see that they had one demonstration with 4,000 students, as I recall, on the Oval. They also tried to take down the gates at Neil Avenue, which were the old original gates of the University. And they blocked off the East 15<sup>th</sup> entrance to the campus. And they also prevented you from going to class by putting their arms around the doors so that you couldn't get into class. And so it was, I thought, pretty exciting because it just came out of nothing for me. In the matter of that quarter alone, things literally blew up. And there were demonstrations on High Street and damage to the commercial buildings. There were fires set in the campus buildings as well. And they called in the State Troopers [Ohio

State Highway Patrol], but the State Troopers were completely unprepared to handle this type of civil disobedience, which is what it was. So they called in the National Guard, and that is when it really got serious because the National Guard brought tanks onto campus. They used tear gas and pepper spray. That's the first time I had ever experienced that. They used it to disburse the demonstrators, but they would simply run elsewhere on campus or over to High Street. And I remember trying to figure out how to deal with this because I was going to graduate school the next year and I had to maintain my grades. I was able to go to my Microbiology classes because they were in Edith Cockins Hall, which is on Neil, because the demonstrators didn't go that far west. But I was unable to go to Accounting after a while, which was in Hagerty Hall because I couldn't get into the building.

Q. You couldn't get to class at all?

A. I couldn't get to class. And so I'm wondering, what shall I do about this? Because there was no communication like email back then. So you were out of touch with your professor who probably couldn't get into class either. And I just wasn't sure what to do. On top of that, there was so much activity going on at night, so much noise, sirens, fire trucks, the National Guard with the tanks and everything, that you couldn't study if you wanted to. And you kind of were drawn into what was going on. And then May 4 came. President Nixon had invaded Cambodia one or two days before, I think. Kent State had unrest and four students were killed by the Ohio National Guard. I went down there a few years ago for the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and it's very interesting to see the memorials they have. Wherever the students fell, they have a memorial. And two of them fell within the parking lot, and so they have a parking space walled off.

- Q. I've seen that. It's very compelling, actually. You wouldn't think so.
- A. It's very compelling. And you can also see bullet holes that pierced one of the steel art structures on campus. I didn't think a bullet would go through steel, so I thought, "Is this fake?" But I read up on it later and it's actually true. Ohio State had demonstrations the morning of May 4 before the students found out about Kent State. I think they found out, we found out in the afternoon. And then the campus just ignited. The entire campus was out of control. And the National Guard was all over the place. I mean, it looked like a war zone. At the time I wasn't sure what to do. I wasn't involved in the demonstrations. I was trying to go to class and keep up with that. But I couldn't. I just couldn't. And I was pulled into all of what was going on but I didn't want to get too close, because they were really coming after the demonstrators – the pepper gas and pepper spray. It got in your face. It was very difficult.
- Q. Two days later President Fawcett declared that the campus should shut down. Actually, it was the next day and they had to shut down May 6, I believe. And everybody was supposed to get out. So what did you do then?
- A. Well, as I recall, there was an enormous demonstration in front of his house. And his house was on campus at the time. It was right across from Bradley Hall.
- Q. It's now the Kuhn Scholars House.
- A. And I think he responded in a way that many other universities were responding at that very same time, the same day or a day before or the day after. He closed the campus. I remember this very vividly because I was working at the desk in East Baker. I had plenty of extra time since I wasn't able to go to class. And we got the word that the campus was going to be closed at 12:00 noon the next day. And there was no other background on it.

It was just going to be closed, which meant that everyone who lived in a dorm had to be out of the dorms and off campus. If you lived off campus, you were fine. And so you can only imagine how much was going on as people were trying to make arrangements. My brother was a Sigma Chi, and I was trying to reach him. And you could not dial more than three numbers before you got the busy signal. There were no calls going through. But we eventually arranged a ride and got up to Cleveland. And then we didn't know what was going to happen. There was no further word. I was graduating that quarter and so I was very concerned, as many were, about whether they would have graduation, or whether we would get credit for the courses. And there was just silence. And the same thing on other campuses was going on. Finally, we heard via television that the campus was going to re-open. It was almost two weeks later. It was, like, the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. And so we came back and it was a very different campus at that time. They had put Jersey barriers up at all of the entrances to the campus and you could not drive your car on campus anymore. That's where the car-free campus originated. People don't know that. And you had to show your ID to the National Guard to get on campus if you were on High Street. And so in order to try to make up for the ten or more days the campus was closed for classes, they ran classes through finals week and they got rid of finals. You had the option of taking classes on a pass/fail basis or for a grade. So for my non-major courses like my Accounting course, I took it for pass/fail because even if I had wanted to take it for a grade, I couldn't study previous to all this. For my Microbiology courses I did take them for a grade because I had to. And I was able to go to those classes as I mentioned because the demonstrators didn't care about the buildings off the Oval.

Q. Didn't care about Cockins Hall.

- A. They didn't care about that.
- Q. And then you went, I assume you went home, no, then you had graduation.
- A. We did have graduation. It was very tightly controlled. I think you had to have invitations. But it went on as normal.
- Q. Now, we had a yellow band that somebody donated, and she said she wore it around her arm that was in support of the protests. It was just kind of a demonstration in and of itself. Do you remember seeing those?
- A. Yes, there were different colors for different movements. I didn't wear any because I think I just didn't have time for that. I understood the movements and I agreed with them. But I couldn't take time off from courses at that time. I saw my brother in a demonstration on the Oval once and I couldn't believe it.
- Q. Did he end up graduating, just as an aside?
- A. Yes. He was two years behind me.
- Q. Okay.
- A. Last homecoming weekend, in 2016, there is a University administrator whose name is William Shkurti.
- Q. Oh, Bill Shkurti.
- A. Yes, and he wrote a book called The Ohio State University in the Sixties, and he had a seminar in the library. And I drove down for it because I looked at the book and it was everything I wanted to read. It wasn't just the late '60s but it was the earlier years too. And it was very well attended, mostly people my age, who had probably travelled for it. There were some younger students there who I think were taking notes for The Lantern or something like that.

Q. That was actually a First Year Success Series event. The event was also a First Year Success Series program, so students could sign up for that to get, to kind of get credit, for that program. And they were there, too. We co-sponsored it, that's how I know about it. But go on.

A. I loved it. I just thought it was a fabulous seminar. They had several speakers who were on campus in the 1960s. And each one of them had a slightly different perspective but taken together it really did capture the time. And it wasn't just the riots that Mr. Shkurti was talking about. It was the campus administration at the time that was old-fashioned and uncaring. Students had no ability to participate on high-level committees in the University or on the Board of Trustees. Students couldn't do anything. And that is actually the basis of everything that had happened in the last couple years there. All of that kind of faded away as the older administrators retired, I think. We're in a very different environment now.

Q. Oh, very different.

A. But mostly that book was about how the University was responding to students' needs and demands during the '60s, and then it ended with the riots of '70.

Q. Yeah, definitely. Now you had mentioned too, one of the aspects of protest was the Vietnam War, which for a male student kind of hung over your head, because we still had the draft back then. So can you explain the whole draft scenario for you as a student and for other male students?

A. Well, at the time the draft didn't affect me because I had an educational deferment as did most other men on campus. And there was a lot of criticism of that at the time – that it was racist because most of the white men went to school while the blacks did not, so

black men were drafted in larger numbers. And maintaining your educational status was unfair, particularly after you had gotten your Bachelor's degree. As a result of all of this, the government came up with the first draft lottery, which was held in November 1969. It was a very nerve-wracking event because it suddenly changed the way all men would be drafted. If your number came up, you would be drafted. They held a lottery just like the state lotteries on TV, with 366 balls and a date on each ball. They pulled one out at a time and put the date up on the board. All of this was on TV. They said that the first third of the dates would probably be drafted. If you were called, they would allow you, as I recall, to complete your education but just to the Bachelor's level and then the deferment was ended. You had to go at that time.

Q. Whether you'd been accepted to a graduate program or not?

A. Yes. So suddenly you can understand the mood on campus. There was no way around this. And it was, your future was really at stake, at least for the next several years. We didn't have a lot of TVs in the dorm rooms back then. I went down to the rec room where they had the TV and all the guys were down there. And I'm sure all the parents were watching at home because so much was at stake here. So my number was 208. That put it kind of on the line of what they had been describing as those who would be drafted, the first third. The second third would possibly be drafted and the last third would probably be off. And so suddenly this started to occupy my mind. The idea was that, in 1970, that entire calendar year, if your number was pulled and they needed you, you would be drafted in 1970. If you were not drafted because your number wasn't called, you were home-free. You would never be called up. That was the deal. I remember, it was probably in April of that last spring quarter of '70, that I received a draft notice. I had to go up to

Cleveland and take the physical. So I went up and my mom was very worried. As it turned out, I came very close to being drafted. They stopped drafting that year at 195. But they had called in advance at least 25 numbers of where they thought they might end up so they wouldn't fall short. So I knew at that time I would never be called up. But I do know guys that were drafted, and it was a life-altering event for them. So the first draft lottery was one of the things I remember most. I can even remember the seat I was sitting in watching TV. It was just like President Kennedy's assassination. Everybody remembers where they were at the time. That's how big of an event this was.

Q. Wow, I did not know that. I did not know that that would be happening in the spring of '70. That must be why that quarter was so memorable to you, a lot of stress going on.

A. There were a lot of things happening. I then went to graduate school for two years at Ohio State. And everyone was wondering, will the spring of '71 be like the previous one, but it wasn't. The campus was fairly quiet.

Q. That's so interesting. I didn't know about the draft, how that played into that spring. Especially for the male students, that was a big deal. That would have been a big deal.

A. Some people went to Canada. Some tried to claim the deferment based on saying you can't kill people. People still wanted to get out of it, but there wasn't really any way after that.

Q. I can see that. You mentioned going on to your Master's degree and I think it's particularly interesting, I want to ask you about the differences between being an undergrad here and a graduate student, particularly because you stayed in Baker Hall. You see these undergrads coming up. You're no longer an undergrad. You see it from both sides. But tell me your experience.

A. I did stay in Baker because I had a good job there and they let me keep it even though I was in grad school.

Q. And you were on the staff of the dorm?

A. Yes, and so I was in charge of the office and all the employees.

Q. Gotcha.

A. I found graduate school to be extremely different from undergraduate, and you're right, I really didn't feel part of the school anymore. It was all academics and all research all the time. And so I didn't really have an opportunity to keep track of what was going on on the campus as I had before. And I was getting a little bit older. I mean, relatively speaking, compared to the younger guys in the dorm. So it was hard to make friends with the younger guys because they were just beginning to experience campus life themselves. So it was different. All my tuition was paid for by the University because I was a TA.

Q. Oh okay, nice. So you were a TA and the student staff manager?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, how did you go to school and have two jobs?

A. The TA was really part of being in graduate school. One, they needed teaching assistants and two, the experience of teaching was part of being a graduate student.

Q. Okay.

A. And so in return for that, your tuition was covered. I never paid a penny in graduate school, even for my Ph.D. program.

Q. Oh, nice.

A. The other job in the dorm, I could work whenever I felt like it because I was the one who assigned the hours. Basically, I worked in the evening maybe once a week or so.

- Q. Did you get your dorm room for free as well?
- A. No, I had to cover that.
- Q. Okay. Now did you have any teaching experience before that, and if not, did the University train you in any way for that teaching experience?
- A. I didn't have any teaching experience, and the University and the department didn't provide any training. But as you went through undergraduate, particularly as you started your major courses, you began to see how the graduate students in Microbiology a couple of years ahead of you were handling the labs. And you kind of followed their lead.
- Q. Now did you have, you talked about your teacher in high school who had a big effect on your career, were there any faculty like that, at least in your graduate school career here? You talked about how undergrad was kind of impersonal. You didn't really have much contact.
- A. I thought Dr. Melvin Rheins, who ended up being my mentor, left a big impression on me. And he also taught a course that was very popular with undergrads. I learned from him how to do research, how to read the literature, how to be critical of the literature. And I think he was great. There were many other professors in the department who were also good, but for me he stood out.
- Q. Well, good, there was one at least. You got your Master's when, in 1972, correct? The spring?
- A. Spring.
- Q. Did you go to commencement?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Well, that's good.

- A. In fact, I'll add, when I graduated with my Bachelor's degree, I was really impressed with the magnitude of the Commencement ceremony. The entire stadium was practically filled. I was so impressed that I went in 1971, between my degrees, just to sit there. Now they telecast the ceremony. I watched it online this year.
- Q. You may be the only person.
- A. I'm just telling you that. I probably am the only one who would do that.
- Q. It is quite a spectacle and it is amazing how efficient, it's a well-oiled machine.
- A. It's hard to understand how well it works. They never mess up.
- Q. I know.
- A. And there are thousands and thousands of graduates in different colleges. That's the impressive part. Plus the music and all of the gowns.
- Q. And the speeches are also really good, too.
- A. I didn't go for my Doctorate though, because I had moved on to a post-doc in Boston and I was poor at that point, so I didn't go.
- Q. Now, tell me, in general, and this can be both from undergrad and graduate, what your best memories and your worst memories were, of being a student at OSU? Be honest.
- A. As I mentioned, I loved living in the dorm. It was a great experience for me. I met a lot of guys there, made a lot of friends. I had several jobs there. And I really enjoyed it. So I put that down as a plus. Another plus that stayed with me for many years, was returning to campus in the fall. It was a very exciting time, I think, for most students, to come back to campus, to get settled in, to go to the football games. And for a long time after I left Ohio State, maybe 15 years, every time September came around, I would think back to Ohio

State. And then after that period, maybe 15 years, I didn't think about it as much anymore. So that was a good experience.

Q. Now, you talked about being in the dorm. You also worked in the dorm. What exactly did you do in the dorm that you liked?

A. I worked at the desk, so you would get paid for doing that. I also worked on the switchboard for Baker Hall the last year they had dorm switchboards on campus.

Q. Now for people who don't remember that, because a lot of people will think, didn't they just have phones or nowadays students would think, "What? You didn't have a cell phone?" Explain the switchboard system for people getting and for people receiving calls.

A. I'm sure that most people will not have any idea how it worked back then, but it really was a relic of the past. The way it worked in Baker Hall, and now I'm speaking for the other dorms that had switchboards too, was that Baker had 10 trunk lines coming into the dorm. That meant at most 10 people could be talking on the phone, either outgoing or incoming.

Q. And how many people lived in the dorm at that time?

A. Probably around 600 combined in both East and West Baker.

Q. And so your job was to direct the calls?

A. Yes. So you sat there, just like on those switchboards you see in the movies, this is why I liked it, it was an elaborate system of cords and colored lights. A call would come in, and you would answer the call, and they would tell you that they wanted to speak to Mary in room 2165. And so what you would do is put that call, that trunk line call, on hold. And then you would pick up another cord that was used for internal calls and you would plug

it in to Mary's room and ring it. And Mary would answer and you would say, "You have a call on line 5." So Mary would then go down the hall to find a free telephone. There were only a few hall phones on each floor of Baker so she had to find a free phone. Then she would pick it up and tell me that she wanted line 5. And then I would plug line 5 into her phone and she was connected.

Q. Oh my gosh.

A. And so that's it. You had to kind of keep your eye on how long people were talking. There were no rules about it, but if somebody was on there for half an hour, you had to kind of ask them to wrap it up, because there were only nine other lines available for the entire building.

Q. So could you hear their conversations?

A. I could if I wanted.

Q. Or did you just buzz in?

A. I would just buzz in. I would never listen in on a call but I could.

Q. That would have been interesting.

A. And so in 1969, that summer, they made a conversion from the switchboard system to what they called Centrex, which was an individual dial phone in each room. When you came back in the fall every room had a regular phone with its own phone number.

Q. Gotcha. And so the people in the room controlled it. They didn't have to wait for somebody.

A. Right. The switchboard was removed from the office that summer. I don't know what they did with it.

Q. If you remember, when was it most hectic?

- A. In the evenings.
- Q. Okay. Was there a particular evening? Was it Saturday evening? Maybe Thursday evening. People were asking each other out on dates or something? I don't know.
- A. It was busiest in the early evenings Sunday through Thursday. Then on Friday and Saturday it was busy in the evening when guys came over to pick up their dates in West Baker. They had to ring the phone in the lobby, and that would ring the switchboard and you would connect the internal call to their room and they would come down. By the way, the switchboard closed at night.
- Q. Oh it did?
- A. Yes, it closed maybe around 11:00. I'm not sure exactly when but until 8:00 AM the next day there was no phone service. You had to use the pay phone if you wanted to make a call. During the day they had a permanent employee work the board. And then after 5:00 they had students working it.
- Q. Okay. A very labor-intensive way to receive calls.
- A. That's the way it was. Nobody complained.
- Q. No, no, I guess now. I would actually think that maybe Sundays, because when I think back to college, my parents always called me at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday. By then they had phones in the room.
- A. I did work on Sunday morning many times and there were hardly any calls.
- Q. Did you do homework when there were no calls? Were you allowed to do that?
- A. You had all these cords in front of you. There was no place to put any books. So no, I couldn't do homework.
- Q. That sounds like a fascinating job.

A. It was really fun.

Q. Do you remember how much you were paid?

A. I think about \$1.25 an hour, and that probably went up to \$1.75 or so. But I worked a lot. I made a lot of money between there and the desk at East Baker.

Q. Okay. Now what were any of your worst memories?

A. One more good experience was that whole spring quarter of '70. It was good in the sense that it was exciting, because I had never seen anything like it and I've never forgotten it. And I think that's the way most people that year felt and still do. The only bad experience I had was during my junior year, when I had just a crushing course load. And it was very difficult to keep up with it because I had organic chemistry and that had maybe six or more hours of lab a week. I had physics. I had the same number of hours of lab. I was taking French then as well as one other course. It was a requirement that all students have four quarters of language. And that seemed to be quite a bit at the time. But the language courses were extremely demanding, and you had to go to the language lab every night, and they had a different lesson, and then you would have to prepare a paragraph that you would write on the board in the morning during class. And if you didn't do it you fell behind fast. And so going to the language lab, doing all this.

Q. And you were still working?

A. Took time away from my other courses. So it was a very difficult quarter for a year for me.

Q. I bet you didn't get much sleep.

A. I don't recall but I recall being very anxious quite a bit. If I had not been a science major all those labs would have been gone. So maybe 12 hours a week in class would be

available to students who majored in non-science areas. But for me it made for a very tight day. Had to start at 8:00 to fit all this in. So I was glad when it ended.

Q. Did you get your Ph.D. right after your Master's?

A. I moved to Chicago. I worked a little bit, then I started it.

Q. And you got that from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

A. Yes.

Q. At least your last position in your career was at Northwestern.

A. Yes, I've had several positions since I graduated, all in teaching, research and administration. My last position, that I retired from, was Director of Sponsored Research at Northwestern Medical School.

Q. And when did you retire?

A. About three years ago.

Q. And where do you live now?

A. Beachwood.

Q. Okay, good. We always ask this of former students. What has been your connection, if any, to the University since you graduated?

A. Really nothing.

Q. That's okay.

A. I subscribed to the Alumni Association for a few years. But so many other things take over. I was in Boston for several decades. And when you're on the East Coast you never hear about the Midwest. So Midwest football games, Midwest Schools, you never hear about them and slowly it faded away. Now that I'm retired, this feeling of nostalgia takes over and you think back about your experiences. Ohio State is certainly one of those

experiences. And I've noticed on Facebook that there are a lot of groups remembering this, remembering that, there are thousands of people who have joined, and based on the discussions, most of them are my age. Because they would have little time to do it during their career but they have the time now.

Q. Would you consider going back to your, because your 50<sup>th</sup> reunion is coming up in a couple years. It's the same time we celebrate our Sesquicentennial as a University. Would you consider going back to that?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Why not?

A. Because I don't know anyone on campus now.

Q. But your friends from back then may be coming. I'm just curious. I'm not trying to get you to come.

A. If I was in touch with them, then probably yes. But otherwise, no. And I'll tell you why. Last homecoming I was down here for the seminar I mentioned earlier, and homecoming was the next day. And it was great. I went to the band concert. I didn't have tickets for the game but I watched it in the union. I don't feel connected to the campus as I was as a student. And I'll tell you why. It looks different. It's architecturally different. The students are so young and it's hard to connect to them. I found it very difficult to relate to the campus during my last visit and that bothered me. Rather than coming back for my 50<sup>th</sup>, I think it would be more fun to just attend a football game

Q. It's like coming back to a school you didn't go to in a sense, because it's changed so much.

A. Yes. And I think that's what anybody would expect. I haven't even thought about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary but I'll keep it in mind.

Q. Now that I've planted it in your head. Do you have any other thoughts that you wanted to share before we end? I always ask this at the end. It wasn't one of my questions I sent you. But I do think if somebody thought of something that they wanted to talk about. For example, you talked a lot about living in Baker Hall. Just maybe residence hall life in general.

A. I thought I'd give you some talking points about what it was like to live in the dorm back then, because it's very different now.

Q. Very different.

A. And I'll speak about the dorms on south campus. The dorms were strictly segregated by sex and when they had open houses or visiting hours, it would only be for, like, two hours one Sunday afternoon a quarter. And the RA's were instructed to make sure that your door was open, a little bit ajar, and all of your feet were on the floor. And you may think this is ridiculous but this is that *in loco parentis* aspect of living in the dorm back then. Men's dorms were open 24/7. No security. But women's dorms were closed about 11:00 or 12:00. I don't remember the exact hour during the weekdays, but all of the coeds had to be in the dorm by then. The doors of the women's dorms were alarmed at night and there was a security person sitting at the desk. If the door opened at night, an alarm would go off. The coeds, women, at that time, had to sign out when they went on a date, on an index card that was in a box on the desk, where they were going and when they were coming back. And they had to be back by 1:00 on the weekends. You would get, like,

five 2 o'clocks per quarter. And this was strictly enforced. They had a Dean of Women back then, too.

Q. Yeah, that's true.

A. The women's dorms outside of West Baker were further down on West 12<sup>th</sup> and they formed their own campus. And there was a gate there. It's still there. And that was locked at night, so you couldn't get in and you couldn't get out. And the other doors were locked. Another aspect that's very different is that they had a mandatory food plan that was part of your room and board. We ate at Baker Commons, which is not used anymore but was the cafeteria for East and West Baker, Smith, and Park (Halls). Bradford Commons, which was directly next to West Baker and served Stradley, Steeb, and some of the women's high-rises. That's been torn down. They only have one commons on the south campus now. And that shows you how many options students have now, to go elsewhere for meals and so on. During my time, you might have one choice of meat, two choices of vegetables, salad and dessert. Even the first year I was there, they didn't have Coca-Cola or pop or anything like that. They finally put those in. And there were long, long lines for dinner because most people went down around the same time. Only one meal was served on Sunday at brunch time and everyone dressed up for that meal. One other interesting aspect is that East Baker Hall and perhaps some of the other men's dorms on South Campus had maid service my freshman year. That was the last year they had it.

Q. Really?

- A. Yes. They made your bed every weekday and they would dust and mop. They changed your bed linens once a week. Our maid was named Jean, I remember. I heard that this was a holdover of when men were living in the dorms during World War II.
- Q. That could be, yeah.
- A. And they had to focus on other things. They ended it, I think, at the end of my freshman year. It did not happen on north campus. I think they were very jealous.
- Q. And they didn't have it in the women's dorms that you know if?
- A. No, it was just, as I understand, a holdover, and it may have only been in the men's East Baker Hall.
- Q. Interesting.
- A. The maids still worked there the following years but then their responsibilities were less and you had to go down the hall and get your sheets and make your bed yourself.
- Q. So they provided the sheets and everything?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Because I'm sure that changed over time.
- A. There was a University laundry. Everything went there.
- Q. You didn't do your own laundry either?
- A. Your own clothes, but your sheets, pillowcases, and bedding were provided by the University.
- Q. That's pretty nice. One more thing not to think about.
- A. So it was different back then. Baker Hall at that time was divided into two parts by a cinder brick wall that separated East and West Baker. Men lived in East Baker and Women lived in West Baker. I still have some pictures of it, the wall was in the F

corridor of West Baker. And that was taken down the year after I graduated with my Master's in 1972. So '73 was the first year that some dorms on campus became coed. [Note: The first dorms on campus to be co-ed were actually Lincoln and Morrill towers, which opened in 1967.] They were coed by floors usually. But if you can think about the speed with which the dorms became coed after the resistance of the Administration just two years before, a huge amount of change occurred as an indirect result of the student unrest then.

Q. Yeah, it is amazing. We talk about the speed of change now because of technology but that was a period where, I don't think ever since then there's been any period where there's been so much social change going.

A. The '60s was really a decade that's never been replicated, I think, and many will agree.

Q. Yeah, I agree too. Anything else, sir?

A. No.

Q. All right, well thank you very much for coming in and doing this. I appreciate your time.

A. You're welcome.