

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
OF JEFF SCHWARTZ
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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
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Q. This is Bill Shkurti. I am talking with Jeff Schwartz. The date is November 16, 2012. Jeff, if you could please start by discussing a bit about your family background and how you ended up attending The Ohio State University.

A. Okay, thanks, Bill. I was born in Columbus, Ohio, at White Cross Hospital, in September 1943. I lived in Columbus most of my life until I graduated from Ohio State University. Part of the reason I attended Ohio State has to do with the location of my birth. Another factor was that nearly everybody in my family had gone to Ohio State University. My uncle had gotten a Ph.D from Ohio State. My dad got his master's from Ohio State. My mom got her bachelor's from Ohio State. My brother went to Ohio State. My sister went to Ohio State. I have nephews and nieces who have gone to Ohio State. Only my nephew, Andy, chose not to go to Ohio State, and we call him the "blue sheep" of the family. He went to the University of Michigan.

So part of the reason for going to Ohio State was that it was a family tradition. Another factor was that I applied to three schools, so when it came time to go to college and I was not accepted at one of them, Oberlin, and I was accepted at Brandeis – yet they offered no scholarship money – I could not afford to go to Brandeis without a scholarship. So, I went to Ohio State and lived at home during most of the time I was going to OSU.

Q. And the high school you graduated from was?

A. I graduated from Bexley High School. I went to Ohio State from 1961 to 1965. During most of my growing-up time in Columbus we lived in Bexley.

Q. Okay, can you tell us a little bit about what the campus was like when you arrived at OSU?

A. My freshman year at OSU started in September 1961. That was the year that Ohio State's football team was invited to go to the Rose Bowl. The Faculty Council, however, voted not to accept the invitation to go to the Rose Bowl. A student demonstration to protest the Faculty Council's decision materialized at the corner of 15th [Avenue] and High Street and it turned into a kind of wild thing. Some people called it a riot. But saying that I arrived at Ohio State in 1961 is officially true but not literally true. The reason is that my brother, Niki, who is five years older than I, had been very active at Ohio State, and he and I were not only brothers but very good friends. And so Nick included me in a lot of things, invited me to come to the campus and meet people and introduced me to professors and other students before I ever graduated from high school. So I felt like I was a part of Ohio State even before I arrived as a freshman.

Q. I see. And can you talk a little bit about your involvement with the civil rights movement and how that shaped your outlook.

A. My family felt very strongly about a number of things in society, and one of the things the family felt strongly about was that the country and particularly parts of the south where segregation still prevailed, was really on the wrong track in terms of our racial relationships. My parents taught me that ever since the founding of the country, the existence of slavery, and the approval of slavery in the Constitution – they had been a fundamental mistake. So I was raised in an environment where there was a high degree of consciousness about civil rights issues and concerns. Early on I became a member of Columbus [chapter of] CORE, the Congress on Racial Equality, and was involved in picketing at a local roller rink that had an effective policy of separating the races and providing less nice accommodations for the African-American patrons

when they were allowed to use the rink, than were provided for the white patrons. So while I was still in high school, my older brother Niki, myself, and my younger sister, Sondra, all were involved in picketing the roller rink. That was in Columbus.

During the early '60s, I saw students across the South start to oppose racial segregation by law and the practice of racial segregation and discrimination – at the lunch counters all across the South and in the Freedom Rides – and I felt akin to and connected in spirit with the students who were trying to make changes that would make our country a more democratic and fair place, and eliminate racial segregation and racial discrimination. Niki had been involved at Ohio State in arguing that the University shouldn't allow the registration of off-campus housing which discriminated against African-American students. At that time [if you lived off campus] you could only live in University-approved off-campus housing. Niki was involved in trying to get the University to change its policy not to register landlords and off-campus housing that practiced racial discrimination and would refuse to accept African-American students. So I was aware before I ever got to the campus about increasing efforts to change public policy, about the University's own complicity in discrimination, and I felt like I should be more actively engaged in fighting racial discrimination. On August 28, 1963, I attended the March on Washington, for Jobs and Freedom. This is the march where Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. I invited Nick (Niki) to join me; he met me in Washington, and the two of us went to the march together. It was a very moving experience for me. I particularly remember the portion of Martin Luther King's speech where he congratulated those who had worked in the South and elsewhere to change the policies of racial segregation and discrimination. And he ended the speech saying, "It's great that we've come here together, but now it's time to go back. Go back to Alabama. Go back to Mississippi. Go back to Louisiana. Go back to the places from

which you've come and continue the work to make America live up to the promise of the American Dream." And I thought, "Well, if I go back I'd go back to Columbus, Ohio, what's there for me to do there?"

So in the summer of 1964, I signed up to go to Louisiana, and during two months of that summer, I was a voter registration volunteer for the Congress of Racial Equality in Hammond and Ponchatoula, Louisiana, as part of the Freedom Summer Project in Louisiana. That was the same summer that the Mississippi Freedom Project occurred, which got most of the publicity. That was the same summer that the 1964 civil rights law passed, called the public accommodations law. That was the same summer that the three civil rights workers, Mickey Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman, were murdered in Mississippi. That summer civil rights issues came to the forefront of national attention.

My experience in Louisiana was very important for me in helping me understand and think strategically about later events like the Speakers Rule at Ohio State and the free-speech movement because it gave me a sense of the potential power that young people working together across racial, gender, geographic and other boundaries – ideological boundaries – the power that we could have when working together for a common purpose to help the country achieve a level of fairness and liberty [and] freedom that was aligned with what I think were the country's highest values and aspirations. That summer's experience also introduced me in a more powerful way to principles of non-violence which I had believed in before. But that summer, I got training for how to deal with violent opposition that would likely develop during the summer by refusing to retaliate with violence but instead [learning] how to protect myself in the face of violence. As it turned out, we actually were subject to a violent attack during that summer. There was an incident in which the car I was riding in was shot at after working at a voter registration clinic in

rural southeastern Louisiana. So that involvement with the civil rights movement was a major factor in preparing me for leadership in the free-speech movement at Ohio State the next year – in 1965. Another factor was, even before that time, Nick and a number of other students on campus had gotten together to talk about how some kind of march or rally could be mobilized at Ohio State to try to get the students who had recently gained the right to vote to come together and to write to [U.S.] Sen. Frank Lausche, who was a conservative Ohio Democrat, to help urge him to end the filibuster and vote for the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. At that meeting, [which was] about organizing a student movement to try and get the civil rights issue publicized and students mobilized to write to Sen. Lausche, Nick, who was in law school and a number of the other people who were the sort of founders of the meeting, indicated that they didn't really have the time to organize this event. They said that they wanted to help plan it, but they didn't really have the right [amount of] time to organize it. Then they turned to me and said, "Jeff, why don't you do it?" Up until that time I had had no self-image as a leader of anything. I had thought of myself more as a follower. But when the people in the meeting who had this idea turned to me and said, "We think you can do it, and we'll help you do it," I said, "Okay," with a sort of uncertainty as to whether or not I could do it. But it turned out that we had a very successful rally – march – and we deposited several hundred postcards from students to Sen. Lausche in a campus mailbox after the rally urging him to vote for the civil rights bill and to vote to end the filibuster against it. This experience made me realize that I could be a leader and could be part of helping make change occur that was aligned with my own values and my hopes for the country. That's a long-winded answer, but I guess the bottom line is, that my participation in the civil rights movement had a profound effect on me. It affected my engagement with the campus, my

self-image, and it was an important precursor to elements of the free-speech movement that subsequently developed.

Q. Okay, well you've kind of led up now to the Free Speech [Front]. So why don't we switch to discuss now, given what's happened, how you got involved with what they were doing.

A. Even before I arrived as a freshman at the University, I was aware of the free-speech controversy, in part because of my brother, Nick. Nick was one of the plaintiffs, the lead student plaintiff, in a lawsuit that had been filed against the University, challenging the constitutionality of the Speakers Rule. That lawsuit resulted from previous banning of proposed speakers by [OSU] President [Novice G.] Fawcett. These speakers were going to be invited by a group called Students for Liberal Action. Almost any speaker who opposed the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) or who was otherwise regarded as extremely liberal would wind up getting vetoed by President Fawcett. So I was aware of the Speakers Rule issue before I ever became a student at OSU.

As far as the start of the Free Speech Front in the spring of 1965, I didn't originate it. There were a couple of people, Dennis Knepley and a pal of his, I think his name was Bob Lenzo, who started the Free Speech Front and, gave it the name. I never loved the name. I actually thought the name was a big mistake. They were going to have a rally because there was a popular teacher in the [College of Education], [Prof.] Charles Brauner, I believe his name was, who had been fired or who had his contract revoked, and students were upset about that because they liked Brauner a lot. There was another case where the University was making decisions about student access to knowledge that wasn't consistent with what the students wanted. There was not even a mechanism or interest on the part of the University administration in considering students' point of view about things, like which faculty should be retained and which shouldn't.

And so Dennis Knepley and Bob Lenzo organized a rally to protest Brauner's firing and to begin to raise questions about the Speakers Rule. I contacted Dennis and said, "I'd be happy to help be part of the effort to design and execute protests around the Speakers Rule." I had run for student body president unsuccessfully in the spring of 1964, and had gotten several thousand votes the previous year, and so I was relatively well-known on campus. And Dennis, Bob and their friends agreed that I could be part of the organizing committee. Over time I became one of the chief spokesmen for the organization in public rallies, meetings and negotiating sessions.

Q. Okay. And why don't you talk then a little bit about how the FSF [Free Speech Front] interacted with other student groups involved in the controversy, then walk us up to and through the Herbert Aptheker appearance in May of 1965.

A. There really weren't very many other student groups that were involved in the controversy. The folks who had been involved in Students for Liberal Action, basically joined and were at the heart of the Free Speech Front. The Student Senate at that time did a little bit of work on the Speakers Rule issue. They issued a publication providing background on the Speakers Rule controversy and while the Student Senate was basically supportive of the idea of changing the rule, they weren't very aggressive about it and beyond passing a motion, didn't do much about it. There was a kind of awkward situation at the time because the candidate who beat me in the student body election was Stan Darling, who since has become a good friend. But Stan at the time was dating President Fawcett's daughter, Jane, and he obviously couldn't or wouldn't therefore be very critical of the administration. I think most of the Student Senate at that point felt sympathetic to and supportive of the administration overall, but they would have liked to have seen the Speakers Rule change. Whereas I think the students in the Free Speech [Front] felt that the University leadership was a bigger issue at stake than simply whether or not the Speakers

Rule should exist. For us, the bigger issue was about the role of the University altogether – whether it was going to be a lively place in which a marketplace of ideas and exchange of ideas could be promoted, even controversial ideas, whether students could be trusted to make up their own minds or whether they had to be treated like children, the whole concept of *in loco parentis*, which means the University standing in the place of a parent and overseeing these “youthful and not very trustworthy” adolescents. That seemed to be the dominant theme from the administration. This attitude was evident in lots of ways: about what kind of clothes women could wear on campus and what hours female students had to be back in the dorm. There were all kinds of rules, regulations, and policies that were constrictive of student freedom and showed a paternalistic attitude. At the same time, while there was a great deal of paternalism, there wasn't very much interest in consulting students or including students in decision-making in any way. The Speakers Rule was just emblematic of that kind of culture and set of attitudes.

So the students in the Free Speech Front were attracted to it partly because it represented the statement in favor of a different kind of university, a far less conservative place, a less anti-intellectual place, a university far more open to a variety of different points of view and more vibrant, more intellectual place. A number of us, for instance, would have been sympathetic to the faculty who voted against sending the football team to the Rose Bowl, and I was one of those. I didn't make a big noise about that because it wouldn't have been very popular. But at the time I thought Ohio State was far too oriented towards football. It's not that I don't love Ohio State football. I do and still go when I can. But it's that football was the dominant image of the University, the dominant export of the University, instead of the University being known for its awesome professors, its great research, its commitment to solving important social and technology problems, and so on. And obviously the University has changed since the 1960s. A

number of us in the Free Speech Front wanted to change the University, and wanted to see it changed. I think that's what brought a number of us together.

There were cross-currents within the Free Speech Front. Some of the students who were members of the Free Speech Front saw this as an opportunity to create a much more fundamental protest against the conservative authority running the University, and against the politicization of the University, against a number of things in the society that were of concern. So there was some underlying tension -- which showed up later in the Free Speech Front organization -- between some of the students who felt like the Free Speech Front should be an agency of confrontation as much as possible, and others who felt like that instinct had to be constrained. I was one of those who felt like protest was necessary, but the important thing was to keep the initial focus on the Speakers Rule and on change of the rule, not on using more extreme tactics for their own sake.

There were also some students on campus, for instance, particularly in the fraternity group, who basically were supportive of the Speakers Rule and the President's authority to decide who could speak on campus and who could not. I think most students were not in favor the rule. Yet there were some students who were supportive of the rule and actually at one point staged a student march from the fraternity district to oppose the Free Speech Front at one of our events.

Q. I think polls at the time showed about 80 percent of the students supported getting rid of the rule or modifying it significantly.

A. That's right.

Q. Okay, you want to go on then to the events leading up to Herbert Aptheker's appearance in May (1965)?

A. Sure. There were a number of rallies and events in the spring of 1965, to try to highlight the students' concern about the Speakers Rule, the President's authority to ban speakers, and his

selective use of that authority to ban speakers with a certain political perspective. Those events included a rally where a former student, the well-known folk singer, Phil Ochs, came to campus and sang. Interestingly, there was no question about whether or not Phil Ochs' appearance was a violation of the Speakers Rule, because he didn't speak, he just sang. So that was an interesting thing that I always wondered about. We never got permission to bring Phil Ochs to campus. But Phil Ochs sang a great song, which basically said, "I'm going to say it now." It was a free-speech-oriented song that he had written. So we held that rally. There was eventually some picketing that occurred at meetings of the Board of Trustees because the Board of Trustees had enacted the rule. The picketing urged the Board of Trustees to change the rule. There was a sit-in that occurred at the Administration Building, because the students felt like the Administration should be advocating for a change in the rule.

One of our deepest frustrations was that we thought that a University President ought to be leading the charge for creation of an open environment. And that's part of the reason that we went to the Administration Building and held a sit-in. We felt like President Fawcett saw himself more as a passive administrator than he did as an educational leader. We thought that was part of the reason why the University wasn't achieving the level of academic prominence that it should have. In our view, President Fawcett was acquiescent to the politicization of the University and the political control by [U.S.] Senator [John] Bricker, who was a member of the Board and by other politicians appointed by the Governor who didn't have any particular education expertise. We thought those were all signs of what was wrong with the University and what was wrong with the Speakers Rule. So a first sit-in was held in the Administration Building. We had a very democratic process – and the University didn't take action against us during the first sit-in – but we decided to leave the building before closing time and police ourselves up pretty well, so that

arguably there would be no violation of the University rules by staying beyond closing time. We hoped that that demonstration would mobilize additional student support and get the attention of outside media around the state, which it did. We hoped that that would lead to changes in the position of the administration. Although there were some negotiations and discussions with the administration, they didn't produce any apparent change in the administration's position in favor of the Speakers Rule.

So when no change occurred, the students in the Free Speech Front voted to go back in and hold a second sit-in in the Administration Building, and this time to stay beyond closing time and potentially risk arrest if need be. That's what we did. The University, having watched what went on at [University of] Berkeley and seeing the challenges that went on there after mass arrest of students, decided as senior leadership in the administration, not to arrest us. So we stayed overnight and then left the next morning, but with a kind of triumphant sense that we had accomplished something pretty powerful. The University hadn't wanted a confrontation with us, and so we had been able to stay the night and made sure that we did no damage, left the place clean when we left, and continued to get good press because of our decorum. But we had to think of another way to keep the issue escalated and ensure heightened attention in order to bring about the changes that we thought were necessary.

Q. Jeff, before we get to that, I do want to get to it but it seems to me that what would fit in in this part of the narrative right now well, is what lessons you took from the Berkeley free-speech demonstrations in the fall of 1964, and how they affected the tactics and strategies that you used. And then that will set up, I think, moving ahead.

A. Sure. I think that the free speech movement at Berkeley was quite influential. For many of us it underscored the message that concerted student action for a noble purpose could be

influential in bringing about national publicity and change in campus policy and programs. So I think the Berkeley Free Speech Movement was an important part of the context that helped lead to the kind of action that we took later in 1965. But I also think that different people in the Free Speech Front took different perspectives on the Berkeley movement. My view was that Berkeley was taking place in a much different environment than the Ohio State campus. I had grown up in Columbus. I knew how conservative a place Columbus was. I knew how conservative a place Ohio was, and Columbus was even more conservative than Ohio generally, at that time at least. I knew how conservative the University leadership was. And Berkeley was a much different situation.

My view was that the students at Berkeley, while they accomplished a great deal in terms of public visibility and mobilization of students' concern about free speech, in many ways I didn't see the Berkeley student movement as a success. It produced some pretty radical confrontations but in many ways it looked to me like the student movement at Berkeley ultimately failed for its objectives and resulted in less student power, not more. I believe that the tactics of the Berkeley students provoked and gave an excuse to extreme tactics by those officials of the University and then in the Board of Regents in California. So my view was that there were cautionary lessons to be learned, that we had to be careful in how we did the work, not to provoke extreme responses from the Administration yet in line with the principles that Martin Luther King announced about the need for creative tension as a mechanism to help drive the urgency for change. I thought we had to create a balance between increasing creative tension but not going too far. I was concerned that provoking an extreme reaction from the Administration would cause the issue to stop being the legitimacy and the appropriateness of the Speakers' Rule and the role of the University, and instead change the focus to the question of whether or not the

tactics used by students were appropriate, or whether the Administration was right in cracking down on us. So the lessons for me from Berkeley were: Be very cautious and considered and balanced in how we escalated tension to keep the focus on the Speakers Rule, while at the same time not going too far. Other students viewed it differently and viewed Berkeley as a complete success for the students and wanted a Berkeley-like confrontation. But happily they were in the minority in the Free Speech Front.

Q. Good. So in a way now you've set up the next step, so you've done the second sit-in in the Administration Building, stayed overnight, voluntarily left then and cleaned up after yourselves, but then have the issue of what do you need to do next to try to get the Administration to change its position?

A. Right. That was the circumstance we faced in May. The school year was coming to a rapid close. Before the students left for the summer, we needed to do something dramatic to further escalate the issue. So the decision was made to invite Herbert Aptheker to come and violate the Speakers Rule by having him speak, even though he would not receive approval of the University to speak. Although Aptheker was a renowned Ph.D. historian who had won prizes for his work on African-American history and the history of slavery and segregation in America, he was also an admitted member of the American Communist Party. So it was pretty clear that he was not going to be approved to speak at the University by the President. But the Steering Committee of Free Speech Front decided to invite him to come and speak anyway. We hoped that violating the rule would provoke a confrontation over the legitimacy of the rule. We tried to choose somebody who had profound academic credentials and who would be able to give a speech that would be relevant to the whole idea of achieving power for the powerless in a situation in which there was inequity of some kind. In this case, we were not so much looking –

this is an important point that represents a big difference between the Berkeley effort and ours – we were not so much arguing for the right of outside speakers to speak at Ohio State. It was not so much a free-speech movement, although we called ourselves the Free Speech Front. It was about the students’ right to hear rather than the speaker’s right to speak. The issue for us was the students’ right to hear a range of opinions and to do it on campus in a place where we had easy access and could use the culture and environment of the University to have public debate about the important issues of our day. So, we invited Aptheker to speak, and Aptheker agreed to come and speak.

As the day approached for the actual event, however, there was discussion within the Steering Committee about whether it was really wise to have Aptheker speak. I think there were a number of questions raised about our decision within the Steering Committee. One, there was concern that once we were arrested for violating the rule, the issue would stop being about the rule and start being about our violating it. We had always tried to keep the focus on the rule, not on our means of protesting it. In honesty I have to admit that at least part of my concern was, I wasn’t very anxious to be thrown out of school. I thought that that was a real possibility and that my career future would not be so promising if I was expelled from school for intentionally violating one of the rules. Maybe there were other students on the Steering Committee who felt the same way. But I think, what really moved the majority on the Steering Committee, was the belief that it would be a tactical mistake at this point to intentionally violate the rule. A second option emerged that caught the fancy of a number of us, and that was to have Aptheker come and remain silent on campus. Under this option, Aptheker would not speak, but while he remained silent, one of the students would read aloud from his books that were in the Ohio State Library to show how stupid the Speakers Rule is. Here, the University has accessible in its library the works

of this man, and we're allowed to read what he's written, but we're not allowed to hear him speak it and ask any questions and challenge him. This just seemed to demonstrate the complete foolishness of the rule. And the idea of demonstrating, that this really was a gag rule which prevented students from hearing different points of view, could be illustrated by having somebody come and say, "I can't speak to you because this rule won't allow it. You'll have to read my books from the library." And we didn't think the University was about to start a book banning effort and start burning books in the library. If they had, it would have shown our worst fear about what the University could become.

So we brought Aptheker to the University and then had him not speak. It was a non-speech event. The mere anticipation of his speaking at OSU produced a tremendous amount of publicity, a tremendous furor. There were calls to the Administration, at least one of the members of the Administration told me they'd received a call that somebody was coming to campus ready to kill Aptheker. Now you have to remember this was not long after President Kennedy had been assassinated and after Medgar Evers had been assassinated. So I took seriously the idea that extreme right-wing interests in Ohio could bring a gun to campus and start shooting. And I didn't want that for Aptheker. I didn't want that for the University. I didn't want that for me and the Free Speech Front. So a number of us agreed on short notice to hustle Aptheker out of the building and off-campus, and he agreed to be hustled out. We continued with the event after he left. There were pickets that developed, but these were pickets from members of the Free Speech Front leadership, a small fraction of leadership, who felt that we had betrayed one of the basic principles of the Free Speech Front and movement we were trying to build by not democratically consulting all the members of the Free Speech Front before deciding whether or not to have Aptheker speak. This particular faction wanted to have him speak and wanted to

break the rule. They were right that in making the decision not to have Aptheker speak the Steering Committee didn't use the same principles of democracy for deciding what we would do as we had done when conducting the sit-ins at the Administration Building. Before deciding whether or not to leave the first sit-in, we had had open discussion, pros and cons, about whether to leave or whether to stay. Then we voted to leave. Later, when the Trustees refused to change the rule, the Free Speech Front had another meeting where we had a discussion and vote as to whether to go back and stay beyond official closing time. So we had developed a culture of open debate and democratic decision making that was one of the strengths of the movement. By violating that principle and making the decision to not have Aptheker speak by a divided Steering Committee, and not openly discussing the decision with the whole membership of the FSF, we undermined one of the strengths of the movement itself, and contributed to the schism that developed within the Free Speech Front.

Anyway, Aptheker came and left without speaking. A great deal of publicity followed from that 'non-speech' which was very interesting. When the rumors of the plan to invite Aptheker to speak came out, there were admonitions from *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* and from other interested publications and spokespeople around the state saying, "Oh, the students will cause tremendous disruption if they insist on violating the rule." They urged us not to do it saying, "It will be the students' fault if the Speakers Rule is not changed, if they bring Aptheker to campus." That was kind of the message being sent even by papers around the state that were critical of the rule. But afterward, when we refrained from having Aptheker speak and had him do this non-speech and the reading aloud of his works, and then the Trustees met again and again failed to change the Speakers Rule, the climate changed. Around the state, many of the

newspapers and commentators said, “It’s the Trustees who are to blame for this increasing agitation at the University. They should change the Speakers Rule.”

I guess there was one other important thing that should be noted here, which is that the Speakers Rule was a complete anomaly, even within Ohio because at Ohio University, seventy miles away in Athens, students were free to hear whoever they wanted to speak. There was no banning of speakers at Ohio University, which is a state school. It’s just that that wasn’t located in Columbus where all the politicians were, and it wasn’t nearly as visible as what was going on at Ohio State. That made it all the more ridiculous, to try to maintain that the Speakers Rule had to be maintained as a matter of protecting the well-being of students in Ohio universities. That was the situation after Aptheker came and left and didn’t speak.

Q. Okay. And you’ve kind of talked about this a little bit but could you elaborate a little bit now on the relationship between the Administration and the University and the Board of Trustees at this point, and how that may have changed or not changed over the time you have been at the University?

A. I think it’s pretty clear that President Fawcett saw himself not as an educational leader in his relationships with the Board, where he was supposed to provide leadership, but rather as an employee and administrator of the wishes of the Board. I think it was pretty clear that that was his perspective about his role, given where he had come from and how he behaved. He did not see himself, I think, as a leader, and that’s the way we saw him, as basically simply somebody who was willing to carry out the policies that were established by the Board without regard to their impact on the educational reputation or educational purpose of the University. The Board, up until that time, was largely controlled by John Bricker who had been a former senator and vice presidential candidate of the Republican Party. He was very influential in Ohio. The Board

of Trustees members were appointed by the Governor and, historically, Ohio had appointed conservative businessmen and politicians to the Board, not educational experts or thought leaders. So the Board was largely about keeping control of the University and operating, not as an independent educational institution, but as an arm of the conservative Republican Party in the State of Ohio – in effect, reflecting the perspectives that they had. The whole purpose of the free-speech movement in a way was to say, “It’s no longer okay for this small clique of Republican appointees to the Board to tell the University president what to do, and to have the University president say, ‘Aye, aye,’ and carry out those orders without much leadership or direction to try to make the University a great academic institution.” We felt a robust student movement mobilized by the Free Speech Front could help elevate the conversation about what Ohio State University needed to be for the benefit, not just of the current students, but of the whole state. We wanted to elevate that conversation to get it out of the control of the Wolfe family, who ran *The Columbus Dispatch*, [and to get it out of the control of] the governor, and the Republican-dominated Trustees, and help move it toward a state-wide conversation that would get the Cleveland, Toledo, and Akron papers, the other TV stations, and the public, involved in asking the question, “Is this what we want?”

Of course, we also wanted the FSF student movement to appeal to the larger academic environment, the whole culture of universities across the country, because future professors were going to be recruited to Ohio State from other universities. We wanted Ohio State to have to make a choice between, we want to be an appealing place to come for faculty and for research and for open dialogue versus we want it to remain a part of an arm of the conservative Republican party of the State of Ohio and keep it under tight control. That’s why elevating the

controversy and conversation to a higher level was so important to the FSF. I think that also describes the context and relationships between the parties at the time.

Q. Could you just talk a little bit about where the faculty was while all this was going on?

A. The faculty was divided. There were some faculty members who clearly were supportive of President Fawcett, the Speakers Rule, and the Trustees and wanted to keep things as they were. It's hard to generalize, but there were some departments like Engineering and Business and Medicine and a few others that were pretty conservative and pretty aligned with the President. There were other departments and faculty, particularly in the College of Liberal Arts [Humanities] – including the English Department, the History Department, Political Science, Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology, a number of other departments – that were far more sympathetic to the students' perspective and opposed the rule. There had been debates within the faculty about the Speakers Rule. There had been faculty committees that had been formed to evaluate the rule, and they were somewhat divided. A few faculty members had been supportive enough to serve as faculty advisors to the groups that had invited controversial speakers to campus. So the faculty was divided.

One of the key moments for me in my decision to play a bigger leadership role on this issue and to support more aggressive confrontational activity, was that I had been hoping that the University faculty who were opposed to the rule would take a more active position and a more confrontational position themselves. When it became clear to me that that was not going to happen, that's the point at which I realized that if the situation is going to change the students are going to have to be the ones who have to take some risk. I realized that students have greater freedom than the faculty, who have their employment at risk and their family's financial well-being. Students were a more marginal group in society and were and considerably freer to take

more controversial and confrontational actions. It became clear to me that if we were ever going to get the Speakers Rule changed – except through perhaps the lawsuit that my brother had brought and was still pending at that time – if we were ever going to get it changed, it was going to take student leadership and student action. Understanding that we could not count on the faculty to lead the charge and the related realizations I came to caused me to step up and feel like, “Okay, just like that moment at the civil rights meeting: ‘Well if nobody else is going to do it, I guess I’m going to have to do it.’ ” It became clear that the faculty would only go so far in raising concerns about the Speakers Rule, and if we were going to get real change it would take the student action to mobilize that change.

Q. Okay, and so we were up to the point where you did the Herbert Aptheker appearance where he appeared but didn’t speak in May of 1965. There was a lot of pressure now building from the outside on the trustees and others. President Fawcett actually proposes to the Board of Trustees a modification of the rule at the July board meeting and it’s voted down five to three. Then they come back in September and a slightly different proposal is presented and it passes four to three. What in your view happened between that July meeting and the September meeting to cause that change?

A. I think several things happened. I did my master’s thesis on this question at Columbia University after I left Ohio State. I spent a year in New York at Columbia University in the Public Law and Government master’s [degree] program, and wrote a thesis about the Free Speech Front and the Speakers Rule, to try and understand what happened, why it happened, and what significance this political movement had for future understandings about how to bring about social change effectively. One of the things I discovered in the course of that research is that eventually all this fuss that was going on at Ohio State had created political pressure on the

governor. Governor [James] Rhodes' motto was, "In Ohio a profit is not a dirty word." His approach was, we want a state that's attractive for industry to come. We want a University that's functioning smoothly. We don't want a lot of fuss here. We don't want a Berkeley here. We want things to work orderly because that's good for business. That was basically his point of view. So as he saw the University Trustees and the President being unable to create order but instead having escalating, not only disorder, but also increasing criticism of the trustees and of his appointments and of the University, etc., for its failure to respond adequately to the student concerns. As Governor Rhodes saw that he decided that something had to be done about it. So what he did was, he appointed James Shocknessy to one of the positions that had become open. Shocknessy was a conservative Democrat who worked closely with Rhodes on a number of things and Shocknessy's vote represented a switch in favor of effectively abolishing the rule. That's one thing that happened.

Then Governor Rhodes arranged for one of the other trustees not to be present at the meeting. This was [John G.] Ketterer, who was the counsel for Timken Roller Bearing Company. While Governor Rhodes wasn't particularly close to Ketterer personally, it's clear that he was close to the Timken Company. The Governor worked it out so that Ketterer didn't have to change his vote; he would just be absent from the meeting. With one other absentee, Fred Jones, I believe, it was possible to move the vote from five to four to retain the rule to four to three to effectively abolish the rule. That's how the final vote on this issue changed. I found that out because during my master's thesis research, I interviewed the then-chairman of the Board of Trustees, Alan Loop. Loop was a Toledo attorney who was a moderate Democrat. Loop agreed to speak to me on condition of anonymity at that time, and told me how it went down and why it went down that way. Obviously, there were other factors at work. The existence of the lawsuit

and the fact that the University believed [with] the lawsuit they would probably lose. There were other factors that were at work, but I think that Governor Rhodes' decision that all this disorder had to stop at Ohio State – and that meant changing the Speakers Rule – was what was the decisive factor. I hadn't revealed in my thesis who I had spoken to here because Mr. Loop asked for anonymity but now that it's more than 45 years later, it seems fair enough to reveal a key source of this information. I don't even know if Mr. Loop is still alive [Loop died in 1986], but I can't believe that he'd be very upset at disclosing that he's the ultimate source of the information. I also talked to others who confirmed that that was why the vote shifted in the later meeting.

Q. And your master's thesis is now what you've given it to the University Archives.

A. I've given it to the OSU Archives, and it includes the footnotes that were previously listed as undisclosed or confidential. I included the key that shows who actually made those statements, including the information that came from Mr. Loop

Q. Right, and you also talked to some members of the governor's staff and state house reporters who were in a position to know at least part of the story.

A. That's right. I talked to Mr. [John] McElroy who was the Governor's [chief aide], and a major political operative in the State and a number of State House reporters and other officials in the state [government], state legislature and so on, who had familiarity with the situation.

Q. So the Speakers Rule was changed. It was liberalized considerably. The controversy died and, in fact, I think Herbert Aptheker was invited back to the University in October and was allowed to speak without incident.

A. He actually did speak, I believe.

Q. So on one level it certainly seemed to be a success. So what's your sense of the overall perception of the Free Speech Front to be, and do you feel you were successful?

A. As I look back on it, I think in many ways we were successful. If you look only at the question of, did the Speakers Rule change and was our campaign in the Spring of 1965 a major contributing factor to it, I think you'd have to say, "yes." I think the Free Speech Front, had some bigger aspirations than even changing the Speakers Rule, which involved changing the whole culture of the University, to get it to be a more academic place, a more open place, a more respected place in the higher education community. I think the University is that now. I'm not saying it's perfect, but I think the University, because of changes of leadership and many other things that have happened, has become a more open and certainly more respected institution. It has attracted great faculty and no longer is seen as a second-class university. I don't think we deserve credit for that. There were intervening events that happened after the free-speech movement ended, after I left campus and left Columbus for other things that were critical to the culture of the campus changing. These events included the occupation of the campus by National Guard during the time of the Kent State events and 1970s protests over the war in Vietnam. There were many things that happened after I left that were contributing factors. So I would say that the Free Speech Front didn't accomplish everything that it sought to do, but I think on the major issue, yes, I think we were effective. I'm pretty clear that our success in that effort, and the lessons I learned in 1965 had a big influence on the work that I've done ever since and on specific activities that I have undertaken since. There's no question that that spring at Ohio State was a very powerful learning experience for me.

Q. Did you receive any threats against you while this was going on?

A. Yes, I received a number of letters or hate mail. Some of them urged me to go back where I came from. I found those letters ironic, because I came from Columbus. I could move back to Geers Avenue in Driving Park. That's where we first lived before moving to Bexley. I received some weird religious prayers and so on from various religious cults. There were a few threats that occurred, vague in nature. The thing that was most serious was the threat to come and kill Aptheker and take care of the student leaders who were causing all this. That threat, again, was not directed to me but came to the University Administration and they passed it along to me. So, yes. There were other less ominous kinds of critical messages sent my way. One funny thing was that *The Dispatch* couldn't quite grapple with who the free-speech movement was, because I routinely showed up in coat and tie and clean-shaven and I just wasn't the image of what they wanted a student protest leader to look like. So they had a funny headline about "free-speech leader sans beard." I never had a beard. So yes, there was some criticism and some threats, some serious and some silly.

Q. Now 40 years later, you've kind of answered this. We probably need to take one more look at it. Nearly 40 years later, how do you perceive all of this? What are you really proud of? Anything you regret? Any other thoughts?

A. I think several things. Forty years later I've become an organizational-effectiveness coach and consultant. I help nonprofits and foundations do what they do better, by helping them develop stronger messaging, clearer statements of their goals, effective tactics to achieve their goals, and mobilizing and appealing to outside stakeholders to strengthen their programs. So a lot of what I do in my everyday work is sort of akin to the organizational and communication work that I did in the free-speech movement. I find that kind of interesting. One of the key ideas that emerged from my work with the FSF has proved valuable in many other aspects of my

organizational-effectiveness work and advocacy. Effective organizations work by bringing together different viewpoints and perspectives, as we did in the free-speech movement, some of whom were more political in nature and more than others. Some of them were more concerned about the University's academic standing than about any particular principles of students' rights. Others, who were more radical, wanted a more fundamental confrontation between student power and the University power. I learned that we had to bring together diverse points of view and then harvest the highest wisdom from those diverse points of view, and steer a strategic course that would operationalize that wisdom. That's an important part of what I teach in the work that I do now.

That wisdom and experience has influenced my professional career, [for instance,] as committee counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Committee, working on clean-air and safe-drinking-water legislation. I had to help bring together Democrats and Republicans, which in the 1970s was still possible to do, on our committee and to try and do it by finding the highest wisdom, not the lowest common denominator in the development of policies and respect for conflicting values and different points of view. I've found that insight useful in my subsequent role as a leader of a hopeless cause, which the free speech movement might have felt like at the beginning.

I worked with a number of other dedicated parents to try and change national vaccine policy to make sure that we get safer vaccines, that we realize the dangerous side effects [that] vaccines (like other medicines) can produce, and to encourage doctors and parents to be more mindful of these potential adverse reactions. I helped lead a movement of parents that changed national vaccine law and policy and has created a program that has produced over \$2.5 billion in payments to families of children injured by mandated childhood vaccines. We helped get safer

whooping cough vaccine brought to the market. This started as a forlorn group of parents of children who have died or were severely injured by mandated vaccines, including our daughter, Julie. I think the courage to help lead that movement to find a way to be successful when we were a very struggling, small, poorly financed organization, to find a way to mobilize allies, to articulate our cause, to bring about change through education and confrontation, articulation, and appealing to other audiences, I learned all of that at The Ohio State University in the free-speech movement, as well as in Louisiana.

I like to say I got the best education in the world at Ohio State University. In addition to everything else, I learned how to root simultaneously for the football team and against the coach (then Woody Hayes) because, I like to say that that skill enabled me to succeed in Washington and lots of other places. You have to learn how to deal with ambiguity in life and conflicting feelings, and in my case, I was a patriot for The Ohio State Buckeyes. I still am. I love coming to the games and was lucky enough to come most recently to the Cal Berkeley game at OSU in 2012. I feel like a patriot, but at the same time I despise the kind of behavior that resulted in Woody getting fired because he felt so strongly about the rightness of his point of view, that he was willing to go out in the middle of a game and slug an opposing player who had intercepted one of our passes. That kind of excess, I think, was present at Ohio State University during the time I was growing up. I got a great education in learning how to deal with it, and how to bring about the changes that I thought needed to be brought about in our society. I'm proud of my education at Ohio State, and I'm proud to be considered an Ohio State Buckeye.

Q. Have you had any other involvement with the University since you've graduated?

A. A little bit. Besides coming back to a football game every year or so, I've stayed in touch with very good friends over the years. Friends, including my former adversary for student body

President, Stan Darling, who I referred to before and his running mate, my dear friend, Sam McGavran. We came back to Ohio State when Sam was diagnosed with cancer and had a sentimental reunion there. I've been a member of the Alumni Association, but until this connection, Bill, and you and I have had now with this interview, the University hasn't seemed to be all that interested in looking at what happened years ago. The fact that there is some interest in looking at what happened years ago pleases me. I know that the University has honored my brother. Niki's been honored at the law school for his work, not so much in suing the University, but in his settlement of the prison riot at Lucasville, and for his successful Supreme Court advocacy, and I'm pleased that he's received that. For one reason or another, my involvement in the University has been limited over the years, and partly that's because I moved away from Columbus. Partly that's because I really did feel for a long period of time ambivalent toward the University because of its lack of attention to this important part of its own history. And so it's really great for me to have the University be interested, at least for the Archives, in doing this kind of interview and getting the master's thesis and taking a look at the students' perspective about this. That's about it. I haven't had many other significant connections with the University since. I've been pleased to see the leadership at the University improve and see its status and reputation improve over the years. So now it's not just known as the University but as a great school in its own right as well as having a good football team.

Q. Well, the University is the sum effort of all the people that have attended and worked here and been here.

A. I like to think that that is so too. That it's all of us and I appreciate your taking some time to go back and look at the past and see if the past can be beneficial for the present and future of the University.

Q. Well, and we appreciate you taking the time to get this oral history down so that others who follow us will have a feel for what those times were like. One last big-picture question: Can you say what you think were the most important legacies of the 1960s student movement here at OSU and why?

A. It's hard for me to answer that, Bill, partly because I left the University, left Columbus to go to grad school, and then law school, and then Washington, D.C. I left Columbus in the fall of 1965. So I didn't see up close what happened to the University in the second half of the '60s (and beyond), and I think those were very influential times. So it's hard for me to comment on the student movements of the '60s as a unified phenomenon. I just don't have a useful perspective to provide. I do think that in some way the student Free Speech Front and the Speakers Rule controversy helped educate a number of people around the University and around the state on the importance of having and including students in decision making and that students could play a responsible role in social change. I know that there were much more difficult times that followed after that on campus, but I'm not really familiar enough with them to comment well enough.

Q. Okay, fair enough. That concludes the formal part of our interview. Let me turn off the recorder and then we can wrap up.

A. Great.

Q. And thank you very much. This is very helpful to the Archives.

A. Thank you.