

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
OF MARLENE OWENS RANKIN
AND STUART RANKIN
JULY 2, 2013

Q. Okay, I am Tamar Chute, and I'm with Marlene Owens Rankin, and we are in Chicago. It is July 2, 2013. All right, well, first of all, thank you.

A. Sure, no problem.

Q. We're going to talk about your time at the University [as a student] and then whatever else you'd like to talk about. So we'll start with, how did you decide to go to Ohio State, or did you have a choice? Were you automatically going to Ohio State?

A. Right, I always tell the story that you go to grade school, you go to high school, and then you go to Ohio State. There's no question about where you're going to go to college. There's none of this shopping around like kids do today. It was just sort of written, that you would go to Ohio State. And that was okay. I don't think I had anywhere else in mind, but my sister did. The one who was supposed to go to Ohio State with me, she was a year ahead of me, and she went to Northern Illinois, and then we were going to go to Ohio State together after I graduated. But she decided to get married. And so she got married and I went off to Ohio State alone.

Q. Which sister was this who was to go with you?

A. Beverly. She's the middle one. There's Gloria who is the oldest, and she went to Ohio State. And Beverly is the middle, and I'm the youngest.

Q. And so when did you graduate? What year was that?

A. I graduated from high school in '57. Then I went to Ohio State. I entered spring quarter. I think it was spring quarter because it was, [when] I graduated, at that time they had mid-year high school graduations. So I graduated in January and so I started at Ohio State in the spring, which was something like March.

Q. Were you able to find housing and everything, for March?

A. Moved into the dorm.

Q. Okay, so that was no problem?

A. Nope, not at all. Moved into Canfield Hall, had two really wonderful roommates. They were upper classmen. One was a junior; one was a senior. And that was nice because they kind of helped me with my homesickness and the adjustment to being at Ohio State and just away from home for the first time by myself. And they were really very helpful. In fact, one of them was from Cincinnati and she didn't quite introduce me to Stuart, but she knew he was coming over to the dorm to meet me. And she told me a little bit about him. She knew who he was. So she kind of gave him a seal of approval.

Q. Did you drive? How did you get from Chicago in March to Columbus?

A. The train. We used to take the train all the time. And I remember, it was really so different than it is now. We [would] pack our trunk or they are good-size footlockers. And the big deal was getting that all packed up and shipped by railway express, so that it would get there in time for you when you got there. So I took the train.

Q. Did you go by yourself?

- A. No, my mother went with me. Let's see, yes, we took the train, or did we drive? I just can't remember, but I know that I took the train all the time back and forth. But my mother went with me when I first got there. And I remember when she left, she must have been driving because I don't think she would have taken the train. We might have driven there. And when she left, oh my goodness I was so sad, when she left. That was it. But I adjusted. It didn't take too long.
- Q. Canfield is pretty big. I mean, it still is a pretty big building.
- A. You know, it never seemed big to me. I lived in the old wing when I first got there. Those rooms were really large.
- Q. Were they?
- A. Yes, very large, and there were three of us in the room. And then, I think by my sophomore year I moved to the new wing, to a double. And a friend of mine from fifth grade in Chicago came to Ohio State and she became my roommate. And then she moved out into a rooming house, and then I had a roommate from Cincinnati. That was really kind of the first time that race really entered the picture, because when I got there, my roommates were black. And then my girlfriend from Chicago was black. When I got a new roommate, she was White, from Cincinnati, and her mother was very upset, that she was going to have a black roommate. And so the next quarter, her mother said, "Oh, you're not going to do that again, are you?" And my roommate said, "Of course I am," because we had become very good friends. She was a really, really nice person. I was in Columbus a few years ago and asked about her because Woody's [Woody Hayes'] niece lived in the dorm as well. And I saw her [Hayes' niece] a few years

ago. And I asked about my ex-roommate, and she said that she died. And I just, it just was shocking and a blow, because she had been such a nice girl, just so full of life, so full of energy, and to learn that she died so young was really, really very sad. So after that, I had another roommate.

Q. So she was your roommate junior year?

A. She was my roommate junior year, and then senior year I had a roommate. Her name was Serita Hartstein. She was Orthodox Jew. She and I struggled a lot. Not so much over her religion. Well, yeah, it did have a lot to do with it, because she was so strict. There were things that she just would not do. She wouldn't answer the darn phone. The phone would ring and I would say, "Sereta, could you answer it?" Nope, she wouldn't touch the phone, things like that. Little things. But she was my campaign manager when I ran for Homecoming.

Q. So during the summers you came back to Chicago?

A. Yes, during the summers I came back.

Q. So when we had lunch in Columbus you were explaining a little bit about the whole campaign season. When did your campaign season start?

A. Right after you get back in September. At that time, we started in, like, October. We were on the quarter system.

Q. Right. Now did you know the spring quarter before that you were going to be?

A. Actually, how did that go? Yes, I did. I knew that I had been nominated to run from the dorm. And so then in the fall, you begin to think about or work on your campaign and what it's going to be. Serita was my campaign manager and roommate, so we kind of talked about what we were going to do. And then we got

other girls in the dorm. Once we decided it was going to be a chorus line, and the theme was New York, and I think it was all built around, what was it, you had to have a talent of some sort. So Serita said, "Okay, so what's your talent?" I said, "I don't have one." She said, "Well, can you sing?" And I said, "Not really." She said, "Okay, sing something." So I sang something. She said, "Okay, that's good. We can manage that." So we decided to do the song "New York, New York." Then I had to decide what I was going to wear. And then after I decided what I was going to wear, we based our give-a-ways on my dress, which had pink carnations all around the hem. So we then got lots of volunteers. The girls in the dorm were really wonderful and willing to volunteer. And we sat around and made pink carnations out of tissue paper, out of pink Kleenex. And you know you had a wire and we took a little tag and put my name on it. So that became the leaf like and then the stem and then the carnation. And we gave those out all over campus. But the rehearsals for the performance took forever. I mean, night after night after night.

Q. Where did you rehearse?

A. In the basement of the dorm, because Canfield had this wonderful basement that was all finished and everything. It had seating and everything down there. It was really where you could go, and it was recreational. So we would go down to the basement and rehearse. And then get the costumes together for the girls and the chorus line.

Q. So you're going to sing and then you had a chorus line behind you?

A. Yes, the chorus line came out first and they sang and danced, and then I came out.

- Q. How did you pick the people that were going to be in the chorus line?
- A. They volunteered.
- Q. Oh, okay, all right.
- A. And they wore black tights with black leotards and top hats and canes. And then they had pink carnations right here. And they sang and danced. And then I sang, "I Like New York in June," and added, what we did was to make it a little cute, like, like Woody Hayes' looks instead of somebody else's looks. So we got our little act together and performed at every fraternity house and every male dorm on campus for two nights.
- Q. So who were the competition?
- A. Oh, gosh. Sorority houses put up women and other dorms put up. So there were, I don't know how many, I'd say twenty.
- Q. So did you all, like, did they say, "On Monday we're going to X?"
- A. We all did it in two nights.
- Q. So all twenty of you did it at the same time?
- A. All twenty of us did it. And so you would just rotate through the housing units. Oh my gosh. So for two nights they would sit around, the crowd would gather, and every girl who was up performed. Some sang, some danced, some did different things, depending on what their talent was. And so for two nights – there were designated nights that this would happen. And you did it for two nights. And then, I think there was a vote in the housing units that would then bring it down to a smaller number, maybe like ten. And then those ten would go to Mershon

[Auditorium], where local radio, television personalities were the panel. And they would raise questions.

Q. Did you have to do your dance again?

A. No, no, no, this was strictly testing how you were on your feet, I guess. So I think you had to answer three questions. And they were the ones who asked the questions. From that, they reduced the number from ten to five. So the panel made that decision. And then it was an all-campus vote. So everybody voted for one person.

Q. So was that when you used the carnations that you handed out? Was that for the whole campus, or when?

A. No, we handed those out during the performance time. I think it was just during that time. And then, I forgot about the motorcade. Somewhere in between all of this, there was a motorcade and it was all about Homecoming then. I think it was when there were ten. And then you had to have a convertible. We didn't have one. And one of the Jewish fraternities loaned us a car and a driver, which was very nice of them, very generous. And it really just sort of spoke to the kind of support on campus that I felt that I got. And so for, I think, for two days you do a motorcade.

Q. And that went where? Around the Oval?

A. Just around the Oval, yes. And it was during kind of peak time when most kids would be out on the Oval.

Q. Switching classes?

A. Yes, it was just to call attention to Homecoming and to drum up interest in the game and stuff. So after you did that, then I think it was Mershon. And then the election, one campus election.

Q. So once you got to the five, then you were definitely on the court?

A. Right.

Q. And then it was just a question, overall was to elect the final queen?

A. Exactly. So once the panel narrowed it down to five, then it was an all-campus vote for the one and the court. The remainder would be the court. But an example of the kind of support and pride there was, and just the fact that I was one of five, down to five, a lot of the black students at that time didn't live on campus. They either lived in town or peripherally on campus. But they all got together and gathered in the dining hall, which is where Patterson and Canfield and Mack, the dorms, those women's dorms, had our meals. So it was a pretty large space. And they all came together and gave me a horseshoe of 100 red roses. It was for good luck, which was really amazing. It was just so touching. It really was. So it was an interesting time and it, I guess it just generated a lot of energy and a lot of enthusiasm around campus, just to think that a black woman would be among the five finalists.

Q. Had you decided you were going to run? Did someone say, "Marlene, I think you should run?"

A. You know, it's really funny because I didn't decide to run, no. You're put up from your floor. I mean, this is such a long process. You start out on your floor.

Q. So your floor nominated you?

A. Yes, my floor nominated me. And then every floor nominated somebody. And the dorm decided who would be the one that represented the dorm from all the floors. So that's how it really started.

Q. When they had the election, when did they announce the final vote, the campus-wide election, when you knew you were on the court?

A. It was at the ball, the Homecoming dance. And you knew that you were on the court. And you had to have a military escort. So Stuart could not escort me. We had been dating for four years. And he could not be my escort. But my mother came and brought me a lovely dress because she knew that I was on the court anyway. And brought me a beautiful white dress. So she came to the dance. And they didn't announce the queen until that evening.

Q. So, like, the Friday night before the football game?

A. Yes, Friday night. But it was interesting because, I guess there was a lot of buzz about this, because here's a Big Ten school. It's unusual. It's 1960 and it had been on the radio. And I didn't know it. And apparently the word had gotten out that I had won. And it was on the radio but I wasn't listening to the radio. I was so nervous. So a friend of ours, my husband's best friend, was just coming home from the service. He was in Cincinnati and he heard it on the radio in Cincinnati, and got in his car and drove to Columbus, to be there. So everybody was excited. But I didn't really learn about it until the dance.

Q. Did your mom know?

A. You know, I think she did. I think she did. And so she called my father and he came in and was at the game. So they announced it at the dance and then the next

day is the game. And then they announce it again. There's a motorcade around, at that time the track was there, on the track around the field. And then again the presentation of the trophy because I think I had the crown then. I've got to find that book. So it was an exciting time.

Q. So after that, after the game, was there anything after the game?

A. No, not particularly. There were things that you get invited to do, like I did go to Dayton for, a friend of my father's, Dave Albritton, who was a State Representative. And I think he was running again. And there was an event for publicity for his campaign and Jackie Robinson was there. And he asked me to come. So you made personal appearances. And then there was one with the Navy. The Navy presented me with an anchor of flowers. But I can't remember what the occasion was. It was on campus, and it's funny, because it was just an odd thing, but it was the U.S. Navy. It was on the corner near Mershon.

Q. Interesting, like on 15th?

A. Yes, right on the corner. And I can't remember what their celebration was, but it was this huge anchor of flowers, which was very nice.

Q. You took them back to your room and, "What am I going to do with them?"

A. Right. So it was things like that, personal appearances. But I was getting ready to graduate.

Q. So that was fall quarter of 1960.

A. Right. I graduated in January. It was winter quarter.

Q. So it would have probably in March?

A. Yes, '61. It was very cold.

- Q. So graduation would have been ... would have been in St. John Arena?
- A. It was, yes. It wasn't outdoors. It was cold. I think it was St. John's.
- Q. Did most of your friends live in the dorm with you, or were they all sort of scattered all over the place?
- A. Yes, they were kind of scattered, but most of my friends lived in the dorm. The guys lived in housing units. Stuart and his friends had a house on Lane Avenue. This woman, Mrs. Lucas, owned two houses and she rented out to students. And my friend from Chicago lived in the one where the women lived. And Stuart lived next door in the one where the men lived.
- Q. Did you stay in the dorm because you thought that was where most of your friends were, or was there another reason?
- A. No, I liked it. Yes, I liked the dorm. Most kids who didn't live in the dorm were in rooming houses and it was difficult, because meals were difficult. It was cheaper to do that, so that's why a lot of them did it. But it was not the most convenient, because usually they were far, off campus somewhere, so getting to class was quite a haul. So I really liked the dorm and there weren't apartments then. There were mostly rooming houses, so you either had a room and you were really on your own in terms of meals and all of that stuff. And I didn't want to be bothered with that. It just never occurred to me to do that. I liked the idea of going downstairs and having the meal ready. And all I had to do was make a choice. So no, that was not, and you know there was not, the kids who lived in the dorm, there wasn't this burning desire to have an apartment. I don't even recall anybody having that idea. It's just not what we did. One year, a group of kids came, a new

group of students came in from New York. Oh my gosh, they were such characters. They had more clothes than you could wear in a lifetime. They brought televisions. Now this was really new because we didn't do that. Nobody had a television. We really didn't watch much television and there was a lounge with a television, if you wanted to watch it. But these girls had, what we did have were, record players. Nobody even knows what that is today but we had record players. And we played music all the time or we listened to the radio. But no televisions and so, here they come with televisions and all kinds of stuff. They had so much stuff they couldn't get it in the room. The rooms weren't big enough. And they were always in trouble because the rules were difficult for them to manage. They apparently weren't used to rules.

Q. What kinds of rules were there?

A. Well, we had pretty strict ones. We had hours. Do they do that anymore?

Q. No.

A. They gave up on them. We had to be in by 10:00 and we had what was called midweek. And you could then stay out till 12:00 on a Wednesday or a Sunday. But you only had so many midweeks a month, depending on what year you were. If you were a freshman, you only got two or three. And then [the number of midweeks] went up as you got older. These kids, midweek didn't mean a thing to them. They were always late, so then they would get disciplined because there was the women's self-governing board. And they'd have to go before the board. And so they were judged by their peers. So many of them ended up leaving.

Q. I can see that.

A. They didn't last very long cause they didn't study. They were there for a good time. And they just didn't last very long. They were really funny. There was a whole group. But it was a different time. I guess most of us were very accustomed to rules and being pretty disciplined. We had a night watchman who stood at the door when you came in. Everybody knew him, Robert. He was wonderful, very nice man. And he made sure you were safe. And he locked the door, I think it was 10:30, something like that. Many times those girls got locked out, couldn't get in. Oh, gosh. It was, I really enjoyed it. You felt safe, never felt unsafe. Never even thought about that. And you formed really good relationships. The girls, you know, were fun. So it was a good experience. It really was.

Q. Obviously, Homecoming took up your entire senior year pretty much.

A. Pretty much.

Q. Before that, were there other, like were you in any student groups?

A. You know, it wasn't like it is now, where there are lots of all these honorary groups and things like that. I don't recall that. I recall a few students, some of the dorm students, being a part of that because of really good grades and stuff, which I'd never really had. Mine were just mediocre. Which is really funny because I was a very good student in high school, a very good student. I don't know what happened to me in college but it was difficult. It was a struggle.

Q. Did you start off in social work?

A. No, I was in the College of Commerce. It just seemed that my choices of courses just were not my strengths. And I think that comes from not really knowing what your strengths are, and not having any guidance.

Q. Was there a person to help you?

A. No, you were on your own. I was on my own. And my sister kind of helped me also. Her choice got the worst for science. She said, "Don't take Botany, it's boring. Don't take this because you won't like it, Zoology, you wouldn't like that. Take Geology. That one's easy." I didn't take Chemistry in high school, so Geology, there's a lot of having to know that. Terrible choice.

Q. Now was Gloria still in school when you got there?

A. No, she had been gone for four years. She's seven years older than me. She graduated in '53. Is that right? Yes. She graduated in '53. And I didn't get there until '57. So she had been there and out and I figured, "You know." So she suggested this. It was so awful. So that was my first worst course. And I was in the College of Commerce. I wanted to be an Executive Secretary, big ambition. But in those days that was a high ambition. Of course, you had to take Accounting because you're in the College of Commerce. It was as God-awful as Geology. So I decided, I think I should do something else.

Q. Probably a good idea.

A. Yes. And the School of Social Work was in the College of Commerce, which makes no sense but it was. I began to look at courses and I had taken some courses that were more human, sociological, and had enjoyed those courses and had done well. Had done well in Philosophy, all of those kind of human behavior courses. And so decided, okay, since it's in the College of Commerce, I won't lose as many credits because they're all the same for this college. So I'll switch to

- Social Work, which I did. And that went well but it took a long time for me to find that. It was just good they held on to me for that long until I found myself.
- Q. At least you took the courses, and then they sort of were in the same school.
- A. Right.
- Q. Not too awful.
- A. Right. So I got my degree in social work and that was great because Ohio State was one of a few universities that had a Bachelor [degree] in Social Work program. And so I was recruited for a position here when I graduated. An agency where they really preferred for you to either have a Master's or Bachelor's in Social Work. And it was really a good agency. It was an adoption and foster care agency.
- Q. Did you start there right after graduation?
- A. Right after graduation.
- Q. Wow, that worked out wonderfully.
- A. It did, it really did. And they had a recruiter ... (husband walks in).
- Q. So we've been all through Homecoming. I brought that page from the yearbook. You're listed as the "enthusiastic supporters plotted with Marlene's fiancé to plan a welcome program." ...
- A. Stuart speaking: Who was your roommate at that time?
- A. Marlene: Probably Serita. Was that senior year?
- Q. I think so.
- A. Stuart: Yes, because I think that's her sitting right next to you.
- A. Marlene: That probably is her sitting next to me.

- A. Stuart: With the bangs. That's funny.
- Q. They must have told you all to wear white shirts that day.
- A. Marlene: Another one of those discipline kind of things.
- A. Stuart: That's interesting.
- Q. Stuart, yesterday you said you were originally from Massachusetts. How did you get to Ohio State?
- A. Stuart: I'm actually, my mother remarried. My parents got divorced when I was about five, and I lived in Amherst [Massachusetts] with my grandparents for about seven years or more. And my mother remarried, and my father, who I consider my father, was from Cincinnati. So he moved us to Cincinnati. Which was a good thing in retrospect. When I look at what my cousins did and everything, growing up in Amherst and staying in western Massachusetts, except for one, he did well. He taught at Amherst College for a while. He is an anthropologist. He teaches out in California now, if he's not retired. But that's how we got to Cincinnati. Went to school there, high school. Are you recording this now?
- Q. Yes. We can edit. I was telling Marlene. Everything is editable.
- A. Stuart: Well, I haven't said anything. But my sister was really a good student. And she was governor of the Buckeye Girls State. Do they still have it?
- Q. I think they do. I know that we had something similar in Michigan when I went to school. So I think that's a huge deal.
- A. Stuart: Oh yes. She went through all the processing there and she became governor. And she met a photographer who worked for the Columbus Sentinel,

and he was in law school. They ended up getting married. And then when I went through high school at Withrow, she and her husband thought it would be a good idea if I came up and went to Ohio State. That would have been the first quarter or two to get acclimated. And they actually paid for my first year of school. So I didn't have to work then.

Q. So you lived with them for the first year?

A. Stuart: I lived with them part of the first year. I think probably the first quarter. It's hard to remember. I sort of lived with them off and on because it was during the break sometimes I would stay with them. But for the most part I stayed at 244 West Lane.

Q. That's very nice.

A. Stuart: I always liked that one (looking at a framed photograph).

Q. Oh wow, that's beautiful. Is that a painting or a photograph?

A. Stuart: It's a photograph that they painted over.

Q. It's beautiful.

A. Stuart: It was a process they used a lot in those days to put color into the picture.

A. Marlene: So I'm getting warm; I'm finding things. Would you be interested in this?

Q. Yes.

A. Stuart: I worked most of the time I was in school. Some quarters I had three different jobs. My classes would be over at like 10:00 [am], I'd go down, I worked at Lazarus in their parking garage. And then I worked in their auto accessory department, changing tires in the evening.

Q. Is that the big one downtown?

A. Stuart: Yes, the big one downtown. Then for a while I worked for the State Auditor's office. Mr. Owens helped me get that and by that time I was a junior. I also worked as a bartender at night at a country club.

Q. Wow, that's a lot.

A. Stuart: I got smarter as I got further into my career at Ohio State.

A. Marlene: Sounds like me.

A. Stuart: I cut down on the number of hours. I was carrying too many hours.

Q. Credit hours?

A. Stuart: Yes. And I had too many classes. So a couple quarters, I cut down to, like, 11 hours or 10 hours or whatever. I went to summer school almost every year to catch up. Then by the time I was in my junior year, we had really gotten serious by that time. I don't know whether we were engaged when we were juniors.

A. Marlene: No, senior year.

A. Stuart: Senior year. But we were talking about marriage. And her father got wind of it and decided he better make sure his future son-in-law, if that was going to be the case, he got through school. So he actually got me a Jesse Owens Scholarship.

Q. Really.

A. Stuart: Yes. It was direct financial aid and I used it, because the matriculation fee, and I forget, the other fee that [OSU] had, was only like, when I first started it was, like, \$90. Then it got up to maybe \$136 or so by the time I was a senior. But most of my expenses were living, paying rent, food. So the scholarship money I

- got from the Jesse Owens fund at that time, was funded by another source. But that helped get me over the hump and cut down on some of the work.
- Q. Right, and then take more classes.
- A. Stuart: And take more classes and get my grades up. Then I graduated close to on time, which was a big deal then. Now it doesn't mean a damn thing. We have kids take five, seven, eight years to get out of school.
- Q. So when did you get to Ohio State? What year was that when you started?
- A. Marlene: Spring of '57.
- Q. Did you both graduate at the same time?
- A. Stuart: [I started at OSU] Fall of '56.
- Q. Did you both graduate then in '61?
- A. Stuart: Yes, we graduated in the same class. And was it at Mershon Auditorium. Yes, we didn't go to the Horseshoe. It was winter quarter.
- Q. I was thinking it was at St. John Arena.
- A. Stuart: Okay, was it St. John?
- A. Marlene: I think so.
- Q. I think that's where they would have held it.
- A. Stuart: So '56 is when I got there and so I graduated in '61 and then went to the Army. We met in her first quarter, '57. But you had some questions on here.
- Q. Well, that was one of my questions, how did you meet? Because Marlene said her roommate gave you a passing grade.
- A. Stuart: She was from Cincinnati. I was Vice President of my senior class in high school and President of the Student Council, co-captain of the football team. So I

had a good rep. By the time I got to be a junior and senior in high school, before then I was following in my sister's footsteps and that's what kept me going. Teachers would say, "Are you Joan Rankin's brother?" And I would say, "Yes." And they would say, "Well, you've got to have some potential." So the counselors sort of looked out for me. One of the things they did [for me] – besides playing football, which really was a big thing for me – was speech class. They put me in speech classes, which gave me confidence and really was a big motivator for me, education for me. Because it gave me the confidence that I needed. Then I became a big blabbermouth.

Anyway, when we met I had seen her at a dance, at a basketball game, at a dance. I knew Louise. And then I just sort of, I lost track of her for a while. And my roommate, Jack, who had a number of ladies around campus, we had been to a concert, Duke Ellington, and that night he was playing at the military ball. Was it the military ball? I think so. It was one of the big dances on campus. Well, the concert at St. John's was free. And we decided, "Man, we'd like to see Duke Ellington again." This was, like, the concert's over at like 3:00 in the afternoon and the dance is that night. Jack gets on the phone and calls this girl and says, "How would you like to go to the dance tonight, the military ball?" And she said, "Oh, I'd love to." And he said, "Well, there's two hitches. I don't have any money and Stuart wants to go and he doesn't have a date." So she said, "Well, try to scrounge up some money." I think it was like five bucks to get in. And so we ended up, Hadley might have loaned us some money, I don't know. And then the two girls, the girl I was with, it was a blind date for me. I had never met her. And

- so we get to the dance and I had explained to her – to Marlene [because] by that time we had been going out.
- A. Marlene: And I had been dating.
- A. Stuart: And she asked me if it was all right.
- A. Marlene: No, no, no. You said you couldn't go because you couldn't afford it. And I had been asked to go.
- A. Stuart: By a guy named Leroy Walker who was known as a great dancer.
- A. Marlene: And I loved to dance. He was a good dancer.
- A. Stuart: So I said, "Sure, go ahead. I'm not going." And of course when I showed up with Jack and his date, and my date, [Marlene] got pretty angry about it. And then we had a discussion later on in the week and decided that we wouldn't go out with anybody else. So that was the beginning of our relationship, really. And so 55 years later we're still together. And there were a whole lot of things in between. What was it like as a student? I loved it. This is another question, but I didn't really get serious about school until I met her. Before that, I was making decent grades but it was just a ball. It was just fun. And it stayed that way all the way through. By the time we were seniors we were doing a lot more studying. We had been there, done that, as far as partying was concerned.
- A. Marlene: And as I said, you kind of find yourself, where your strengths are and what you should be doing.
- Q. You said you were in football in high school. Did you do any sports at Ohio State?

- A. Stuart: Intramural [sports], which was a ball too. The program they had set up was really a good program. And so a lot of guys who were talented athletes were in the intramural program for one reason or another. I had friends on the football team who wanted me to come out as a walk-on and they said they could get me on. Jim Marshall, who was an All-American, Clark, Jimmy Roseboro. And I said, “No, I’ll just play intramural sports.”
- A. Marlene: Plus, he was small.
- A. Stuart: Yes, but I was fast. I weighed about 140, 150 pounds with my equipment on. And they had me listed as 165.
- Q. Marlene: Well, if you put on everything.
- A. Stuart: There are a lot of small football players even today. But that was fun. And then just general campus stuff. I never missed a football game, went to most of the basketball games, and we spent a lot of time together. We played bridge with friends. Hung out in the Union.
- Q. So you always lived in one of the rooming houses?
- A. Stuart: Yes, I never lived in the dorm, no. Couldn’t afford it. The rooming houses were nice. Good and clean. When we rented a house, we had the whole house.
- A. Marlene: It was awful. Wasn’t that, that house on 11th?
- A. Stuart: Yes, that was on 11th. I’m talking about Mrs. Lucas’ house.
- A. Marlene: Oh, you’re talking about 244 [Lane Avenue]. That house, yes, it was nice.

A. Stuart: We had the whole house. And actually we did live, on 11th Avenue, we had half of a duplex. Some guys lived upstairs over us and it was the pits. Roaches and rats.

Q. When did you live there?

A. Stuart: I don't remember the year, but I know we left there in the middle of the night owing a month's rent. But she should have taken that money that we had to pay her and gotten an exterminator. That was terrible. We only stayed there for maybe five or six months, I think.

Q. How did you find where to live? Was there a listing?

A. Stuart: Usually, you'd be walking through the street or when Wilder was there with his car, you would see a "For Rent" sign. We got turned down too because of being black. But this one was right on 11th. It was right around the corner off of High Street, about half a block or so. So the rent was like \$30 a month. So it fit in the budget pretty well. We got in there and tried to straighten the place up, but it was impossible. So after we talked to Mrs. Lucas, with whom we had lived early on as freshmen – that was the rooming house [she owned]; her brother and his wife had passed away. I told you that story. And she was renting basically a room in the house to Hadley, the graduate student, although he got the whole house to himself. And she said, "You guys can go over there." So there were three or four of us, no more than five at one time. And I think we were paying \$35 a month apiece. And we kept that place clean. Living there was, you're right there on campus, basically.

Q. Did you have a car to get downtown to your job or did you take the bus?

- A. Stuart: I took the bus and I took the bus to the country club, too. I don't remember where it was exactly, but I caught two buses to get there. And I'd start work there in the evening around 5:30 and work until about 10:30. I had a great deal with the cook, so I'd mix them bottles of Whiskey Sours and Gin Fizz and she gave me pork chops and steaks. The waiters and the cooks were on the outs for some reason at the country club. And one of the cooks would give me a ride. One of the waiters would give me a ride sometimes, and I'd have this package of meat. And he's say, "How did you get that?" I said, "They just feel sorry for a poor student." I never told him how I got it. I paid my tuition one time from playing poker, won \$125, which was a lot of money at that time. I had been playing chess with a guy who we played the best three out of four. If he won three, he won the bet. He was a much better chess player than I was. If I won one, that would be considered a win for me, and I lost all four. And I owed him \$11, ran into him in front of the Heidelberg [bar] and he said, "There's a poker game," and he saw that I had a couple of bucks. So I paid him the \$11 I owed him and had \$7 or \$8 left. I was on my way back to Cincinnati because I didn't have a job, and won that money, and Mrs. Lucas let me pay her late.
- Q. Did you go back to Cincinnati over like summers? No, because you said classes were in the summer.
- A. Stuart: I took classes and worked. And saved money. It was a good existence. I never felt like I was in a hardship.
- A. Marlene: It was a struggle always.

- A. Stuart: Yes, it was a struggle, but it was one that you accepted and you found ways to make things work. I never sat back and said, “Oh man, what am I going to do?” I was always figuring out what am I going to do to stay here, not worrying about why I’m having troubles.
- Q. You mentioned the Union. Was that sort of a gathering place?
- A. Stuart: Absolutely. The Tavern.
- A. Marlene: And there was no alcohol or anything. It was the first place when you went into the Union and you turned right, it was the very first space. It was a tavern. You could eat there. Bob, Stuart’s friend – well, our friend actually – would always be in that first booth and there would just be this huge crowd. He was the funniest person. He could have been a Bill Cosby. I’m not kidding. People would literally sit around just to hear Bob talk. And he was so funny. Oh, my gosh. I laughed all the time because he was so funny. He was very bright, read a lot, and just would sit there and talk, and make you laugh.
- A. Stuart: He read all the time. In high school, actually he went through Walnut Hills, which is a very good school in Cincinnati with higher academic standards, and most of the kids go to college. And he was there. And he was taking Latin. He was reading a book in class that didn’t have anything to do with the class and so the teacher said something to him in Latin and he spoke it back to her. And she said, “How can you read this?” Well, he always got in trouble because he was always ahead of everything. And he was a smart-ass too. So he’d challenge the teachers, and sometimes in front of the class. So it didn’t make the teacher happy. So they bounced him from Walnut Hills, and he went to Withrow, did the same

thing there, and they bounced him to Hughes, which is another school in Cincinnati. I don't know that he ever graduated from any of them but he ended up getting a Master's [degree] at the University of Cincinnati. And he was the one who was in the procurement department. We had a long relationship. When I first went to Cincinnati he was one of the first kids I met, he and Jack. Jack Sherman, who is still a good friend. Bob died about four years ago. Jack is retired as a judge. I had a long good career in marketing, advertising.

Q. Did you get your degree in the College of Business?

A. Stuart: Education.

Q. Oh, in Education, okay.

A. Stuart: When I got out of the Army I came here and taught high school.

Q. Did you guys get married before you went to the Army?

A. Stuart: After.

Q. After you came back from the Army?

A. Stuart: Yes. The whole Ohio State experience was wonderful in retrospect. It was hard at the time. I remember having a counselor when I was, like, a sophomore. And I was having some problems. My grades were pretty good. I think I had like a 2.3 or 2.4. And I was just looking for some help to get me out of where I was. I thought I wanted to be a lawyer. But after living with my sister and brother-in-law after a while and seeing all the crap he had to read – torts and all that kind of stuff – I thought, “This isn't for me.” So I talked to this counselor and she said, “Well, if I were you, I'd just leave school for now and join the Army. You're going to have to get it over with anyway. So you should just join the Army or the Air

Force or something like that.” I said, “I’m not here to get that kind of counseling. Why?” And she said, “Well, you’re not struggling, but I think that if you continue with your financial situation you’re going to have a hard time.” So I said, “Thank you, see you later.” I later ran into her at a party. She was young but she seemed older than me at the time. She was probably in her mid to late 20s, late 20s or early 30s. And she shows up at this party where I am, going with a graduate student who I knew. And she was like flabbergasted to see me at this party. It turns out that they were doing things that I wasn’t interested in, and me and my friends left the party. It was ironic that she was the one who told me to join the Army. I didn’t consider that good counseling. That was probably the worst experience I had there because if this is what they counsel you to do, I don’t need it.

The best thing that happened to me, though, was meeting her [Marlene] and having the focus to graduate. Because before that, I could have taken it or left it probably. If I had flunked out or gone to Europe like a friend of mine, a Jewish fellow who I became really good friends with, and I point that out because he had an interesting story, too. His uncle was a very wealthy man and had shipping contracts and he wanted to quit school for a year and go to Europe and we could go across on one of his uncle’s ships and back whenever we wanted. And I might have done that if I hadn’t met Marlene. Because she said, “Well, if that’s what you plan to do, I don’t know whether I’ll be around when you come back.” So that killed that trip. That was the kind of focus that I had at the time. And it turned out to be the right decision.

- Q. I'm thinking about some of the activities and that kind of things. Obviously, the Union. Where were intramural sports played?
- A. Stuart: Football was played down there by the hospital. And basketball was in the gym that's around by where the natatorium is now.
- Q. Larkins.
- A. Stuart: Larkins. There was a big gym complex there.
- Q. Was it kind of [pick-up games] or did you sign up for it?
- A. Stuart: No, no, no, you had teams. And leagues. You had a fraternity league; you had the independent league. And of course, I played on the independent league. And then the independent league champion played the fraternity champ. And usually the independent league won because we had better players. We had guys who weren't in fraternities. We had a good team. So I was in the Speech Club and didn't get into the Debate Club. Jack got into the Debate Club. But I competed in some speech contests and won one. I don't remember what I talked about, but again, that helped my confidence stay up.
- Q. So did you think after the Army you were going to be a teacher?
- A. Stuart: Uh-huh, yes. I came here and I taught in an elementary school just to get started. And then I moved, taught at Hyde Park High School [in Chicago], just right down the street. I got recruited by the Urban League. At that time, it was at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, and corporations were looking for minorities, some of the more enlightened [companies were]. And they had a contract with the Urban League to seek young black males especially. Ironically, Johnson Publishing Company was looking for people, too. And they were into the

deal with the Urban League and they sent me down there and I didn't know where Johnson Publishing was. And I ended up getting interviewed by a guy named Leroy Jeffries, who was the Vice President of Advertising in the Midwest for Johnson Publishing Company. He was such a bombastic character. He spent most of the time telling me about him and how he got started. And I would maybe give him a lead question like, "How long were you there?" And he'd go on and on and on. And then after about an hour, he said, "I think you'll be a great salesman for Johnson Publishing Company." And I'm sitting there thinking, "Well, what is the job?" So he says, "When can you start?" And I said, "In a week." He said, "Okay, on the 19th." I ended up being mentored by a guy named Lincoln Hudson, who was a Tuskegee Airman, very laid-back, very research-oriented. This guy really had a background. Jeffries was a salesman. He basically sold me on taking the job. So anyway, I worked there for 2 ½ years and I got recruited by Leo Burnett [advertising agency], because the Civil Rights Movement really was taking off and they were looking for minorities. And Leo Burnett himself was an enlightened person. He had mandates there, and I ended up going there in '66, I think, it was and worked there until '71. Then my father-in-law and I started a business together. He was already in business. I just branched it off into some other things, research and things that I learned from Burnett especially. And then I left there. When [my father-in-law] passed away in 1980, the company sort of went down, too, and I went to the New York Times Co. – the magazine division.

Q. Here in Chicago?

- A. Stuart: In Chicago and worked in the Midwestern area and did some national programs in marketing for them. And then I left there and started an advertising agency with two guys that were both creative. One was a writer and one was an art director and I was the business account executive. We had a very successful agency for ten years. And then I sold out to them and retired in 1996. It was a trail that was just not planned. You got to a point where you said, "Hey, this trail looks pretty good." So you take it and it turned out to be great. A lot of luck involved but also always being focused and not afraid to take risks. I always had Marlene as an anchor and somebody who, she always backed something that I was going to do. Like I'm writing children's books now.
- A. Marlene: You gave her one.
- Q. They're great. My daughters love it. You have to let me know when the next one comes out.
- A. Stuart: Actually, a whole series is coming out.
- Q. Good, good.
- A. Stuart: It's a little diversion from the two birds. This is Miles and Chloe who are sister and brother.
- A. Marlene: Our grandchildren.
- A. Stuart: And they face trials that young kids face, like how to use 911, bullying, stranger danger, if they find a gun. And that's happened a lot in Chicago. My niece, our niece, said that at least two or three times a year they have a kid come into school with a gun that they found in the ally.

- A. Stuart: She's a principal of a grade school. So they have a need for kids to know what to do when that happens. But anyway, those are the four books starting that series. And I got the birds down there on the way to Australia, to Europe, Africa, Antarctica, and now they're on their way to Australia.
- Q. Well, Vivian said when you were done you could put them all in one volume. And you could go through all the different countries. So I thought, "Well, I'll suggest that. He does the individual ones; he could put them all together into one big volume."
- A. Stuart: Condense it.
- Q. Not even, they've got several compilations where they are all individuals but they're in the same bigger book, to make it all together.
- A. Stuart: My partner now, his name is Al Hawkin, is the illustrator, and he used to work with Burnett. He's from an agency background. He said, "Let's start our own publishing company," because we tried to go through the traditional publishing companies and they all want to take possession of what you have. And then they want to pay you a stipend, which is peanuts. And then the major distributors don't even want to give you the time of day. And even independent book stores will say, "Well, we only deal with such-and-such distributors." And they're the biggest in the country and they won't take you on. A few book stores around have taken me on and the book has sold well. So we're going to start our own publishing company. We've got a printer. So we'll see what happens. So I've talked a lot, so you go ahead.
- A. Marlene: Don't you always?

- Q. I think one other thing I was wondering about is sort of what your relationship is with the University since you graduated, and sort of what you think overall about your relationship with the University.
- A. Stuart: Much better than it was as a student.
- A. Marlene: Well, the University sort of reached out to us actually, and that was [former OSU Alumni Association Director] Dan Heinlen. And I think the first involvement really was when Dan asked, no, someone called and asked if I would run for the Alumni Association Board of Directors. And I did. And so I was on that Board for five years. It was like maybe '89 to '93 or '94, something like that.
- A. Stuart: It was before then, wasn't it?
- A. Marlene: No, I know it was, I was still. I believe it was maybe '95. I'm trying to look at the certificate because I have a certificate that tells you when. I can't quite remember. But from that point on there were certain things to be involved in. And then, of course, with the [Jesse Owens] Foundation, I initiated the contact with the University about our dinner event. What we were trying to do was join the Jesse Owens Track Classic to the dinner, make it a complete weekend. It would generate funds for the foundation and hopefully generate spectators for the Track Classic. It didn't work out that way. So what we did was change it to become a Sportsmanship Award event, where it recognizes sportsmanship. We recognize sportsmanship behavior in athletes. We recognized Jackie Joiner Kersey, Robert Smith, Marion Jones and Rulon Gardner. [Gardner] was in a snowmobile accident and he froze his foot and lost his toes. Marion, we know what happened with her. We only had it for two years and we recognized two people each year. But we

formed really good relationships. The University was extremely helpful. We met at the Alumni House every month. And Dan was involved, and we had a number of committee members who had either been at the University or still at the University. It was great because it helped connect us to other resources like Kroger's and some of the other major sponsors. Mills-James [Productions] donated a lot of their time for the production process. Because we had the event at the "Barn," which is a Wexner property, and also a very generous donation because most people really want to go there. It's not a Barn.

Q. I've not actually been, but I've heard.

A. Marlene: It's really lovely. But you have to do everything inside. Lighting, and that's where Mills James came in. They did all the lighting and everything and it was wonderful.

A. Stuart: We had a caterer, too.

A. Marlene: Kroger did all the food. So anyway, we made some very nice connections there and the University was really very, very helpful. So you know, we've had nothing but positive experience with the University. It's been a *quid pro quo* kind of situation. I have very, and I'm sure Stuart does too, very warm feelings.

A. Stuart: And Dan was very good. He kept us involved because when [Marlene] got off the Board, he got me onto his Advisory Committee. And then when my time on the Advisory Committee was over, he re-upped me automatically, as a member at large. And then I got involved with the President's Advisory Committee with [former OSU President E. Gordon] Gee. And so, I mean, when you stretch all this

- out over years, and then [OSU Alumni Association President and CEO] Archie [Griffin] is a friend, and we go to the Big Ten luncheon and we're going to a football game in the fall. But Dan, we just haven't seen Dan.
- A. Marlene: When Dan retired, he retired.
- A. Stuart: He just disappeared.
- A. Marlene: He's gone. I mean, we haven't even heard from him. It's really interesting.
- A. Stuart: John Mount was really involved with the Foundation too.
- A. Marlene: Yes, John was on the Board and was invaluable. He is such a dear man. He really is.
- A. Stuart: He knows everybody.
- A. Marlene: Knows everybody. He was really good with our students. He reached out to them and stayed in touch. He just knew what it was all about and was just an excellent, wonderful ally. What else about the University? The University has been very good to our family, I think. The fact that there's this wonderful stadium for our father is quite something. And the fact that there are the Quonset huts.
- A. Stuart: And then there's a street.
- A. Marlene: And then there's the plaza. So it's really quite an impressive and good relationship. It is. We hope that the new President follows what Gee has started, because he's been wonderful.
- Q. I think they're looking for someone who will continue that.
- A. Marlene: Yes.
- A. Stuart: That's too bad because he was sort of a branding force for the University.

- A. Marlene: He really was. He was. You're right, honey. Because when you see Gee you think of The Ohio State University. And that bow tie. He was branding. And gave it some personality, a different kind of a personality.
- A. Stuart: Some panache.
- A. Marlene: Yes, because he was funny. Those things that he said were hilarious. I think maybe they clearly didn't go over well with other people but it was really funny.
- A. Stuart: And knowing him, it wasn't meant in any derogatory way. That doesn't excuse it from the point of the people who were offended by it. That's obviously what got him into trouble. But we've had dinner with him any number of times and he's one joke after another. It's just too bad that his humor wasn't appreciated by everybody and he got carried away.
- A. Marlene: And the University, I think, is doing some really good things with the community, which is new and different.
- A. Stuart: Especially the immediate community.
- A. Marlene: It is what Universities are finding they need to do. They can't exist in isolation, that the surrounding community is important to their well-being. And I think they've learned that. It certainly was a different situation when we were in school and you lived in roach-infested housing. But now, it's lovely what they're doing. It's really good.
- A. Stuart: I don't know whether Gee started that or whether someone else did.

- Q. Gee's first term is when it really started. Because he was brought in the other direction, instead of coming in off of High Street. And when he took the job and he came in off of High Street, he was ...
- A. Marlene: He said, "I can see why they brought me the other way."
- Q. And so that started it. And certainly the other Presidents have continued the momentum on it, but I think that first term he sort of was just amazed and appalled and pushed it forward.
- A. Stuart: It's for the benefit of the University from a physical standpoint, but it's also the students who live in them.
- A. Marlene: And a way of attracting and maintaining professors and students and families. It's very important.
- A. Stuart: I had mentioned something and I just want to tell you real quick, about this Jewish friend, Sylvan Markman. The reason it's important to know that he was Jewish is that he was born in Belgium. And I guess his parents were interned by the Nazis, and his uncle, the one I referred to, got out. They were in the jewelry business, I believe. And went to New York. But his father and mother were interned, and he was little. And they gave their jewelry business to another partner to take care of him. They were Catholic. And they had a family of, like, five or six kids, a bunch of kids, and they just incorporated Sylvan into this bunch. And so when the Germans came in, he was living as a little Dutch boy, Catholic Dutch boy. And it turned out that the headquarters was like right down the street and he had a picture of himself sitting on a motorcycle with a German officer. And these people protected him through the end of the war and stuff. His uncle got over here

and they became his parents. But he was a really, really good guy. I was talking about our friendship. We had an eclectic group of friends. And by the time we were seniors, it was very eclectic. It was many diverse types of people. I just wanted to tell you about him.

Q. It's good that there was opportunity for that.

A. Marlene: Yes, it was.

A. Stuart: I don't know whether it was Larry's [bar], is Larry's still there? It was a beer joint. The two Heidelberg bars and Larry's were the only two places you could get beer. And it was 3.2 beer at that. But the more intellectual types hung out at Larry's. I never hung out there. We'd go in there every so often. But Heidelbergs were our main hangouts to drink beer.

A. Marlene: Compared to today those were innocent times. Really, we didn't do much.

A. Stuart: And when we did, we did a lot. We just didn't do some of the stuff kids do now. We didn't do any drugs or pot. Whether that's good or bad, I think for the most part it's good. Of course I would think that. But you know, they're into too much stuff now. This new social communications networks are crazy. Who needs to know all of that information?

A. Marlene: Did we answer them all?

Q. I think so. Thank you.

A. Marlene: You're welcome. Thank you.