

Rock Voices: The Oral History Project of SRU
Jean Richardson Interview
July 24, 2008
Bailey Library, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania
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BC: Okay today is Thursday, July 24 [2008]. It is nine o'clock a.m. and I am Brady Crytzer.

JR: Hi, I'm Jean Richardson, I work in the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Office here at the university, and I've been here at Slippery Rock since November of 1971. A long time. I originally came here to the university as a part of the Registrar's Office, which is now called Academic Records and Summer School. I started as what was termed a "clerk typist I." The university was a part of the state system at that time so all university employees were civil service employees; classifications were done by the state and that did not change until we became a part of the Pennsylvania [State] System of Higher Education in '83.

I've worked mostly in administrative offices and in the Academic Affairs division the entire time I've been here. After Academic Records I had the first position in the Academic Advisement Center—I worked for Dr. Watson at that time. I then went to the Admissions Office, [and] was working with transfer students and then I finally went to the provost's office twenty years ago, in 1989. In between times I was working part time for many of those years while I was raising my family, so in order to pick up a little extra money once in a while I would fill in in different offices. So I also filled in, in probably about a half a dozen offices across campus, departments [like] Public Relations, different places. So I've kind of gotten an experience in just about every area of the university through the years I've been here.

BC: Alright, you said you started in '71. What was your relationship with the university before you came here? Were you familiar with it, were you from far away and you saw the opening . . . ?

JR: I lived in the Grove City area at the time. I had no affiliation with the university other than that when I graduated from high school in '68 I considered coming to the university to become a teacher. Biggest mistake of my life was not to follow through on that.

I came to the university basically because it was a state job. It was going to be a very good paying job if I could get in but because of it being a state employee position, the testing was pretty extensive and you had to rank pretty high on the test to even get an interview at that time. I was very fortunate that I got the opportunity to be interviewed and get a job. There were many, many people who were trying to get into the state at that time and the education area in particular was being very well funded at that point in time. So there were many people [who] were being

hired here, and there were lots of job openings and opportunities once you got here on campus too, to move around.

BC: Okay. We've [gone] through certain transition periods from teachers college to state college and university. Do you remember any certain things that happened during those transition periods?

JR: Because I worked in the front line ranks of the state and dealt with students a great deal, most of those changes did not have any effect on me at all. [Pause] The grassroots of the university, the Admissions Office, the Registrar's Office . . . the departments were not affected a whole lot by that. Our life kind of went on as it always was. I think the upper administration was much more affected by those types of changes. The only single change I would say that probably affected all of us on campus was when we went from being Slippery Rock State, [a] state college, to part of Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. There was no longer civil service employment here on campus. It became a different type of hiring system, and those of us who were civil service employees held our civil service status which meant we could transfer to another state position that was civil service if we wanted to at that time. But once you were promoted out of that rank you were currently in to another position on campus you lost your civil service status. It didn't really make a whole load of difference to most of us who were unionized at the time, and as far as I know there is no one here on campus anymore who still maintains that civil service status.

BC: Okay. You mentioned departments you worked at earlier, what were the biggest changes you remember in each of those departments from time to time?

JR: Probably the biggest change was the computerization of campus: the technology for at least me and for a lot of the frontline people. When I started in 1971, computers were big, bulky things and the computer center itself [pause] stored information on huge reels. There were no such things as microchips and gigabytes and . . . it was just a very antiquated technology system compared to today, but at that time it was cutting-edge technology. The Computer Center itself had terminals that were called CRTs which is like our computers today, and a great deal of the work was done actually at the Computer Center by the computer employees: the programmers, the key punch operators. . . . But [the] Registrar' [Office] where I started was one of, I think, maybe the only office on campus that had computers and we thought we were pretty snazzy at the time, because at that time we could go into the mainframe and we could change an advisor and a major [laughs] and looking back on what we did today it's unbelievable the changes.

Even the Xerox machines [photocopiers], if you ran them for too long, the paper would start coming out brown because they overheated. There were no word processing systems [pause] and secretaries were typists. We typed tests. Duplication wasn't even done on Xeroxes. It was done on old machines that you typed something on a paper and it imprinted on the back of the paper

with the blue type dye and when you put it into the duplicating machine, that blue picked up the ink—oh what's it called— [mimeograph] ink, that ditto fluid, and that's what put it onto the next paper. But if you saw the old tests, they were all on white paper but the print was always blue and that was because the ditto that you used. The really advanced ditto machines actually counted [for] themselves and turned on their own. Some of them were still cranked and done by hand, so when you did thirty-five copies for a test, you were actually going round and round and counting to thirty-five, and you did two extras.

BC: [Laughs]

JR: I was here for the first computerized registration and it was a disaster beyond belief [laughs]. Indiana University of Pennsylvania was computerized by this point, and the registrar and assistant registrar at that time went to IUP to watch their computer registration to get an idea of what we needed to be doing. And at that time they moved all of the computers from the Computer Center and the two from the Registrar's Office down to the University Union. There were about ten computers set up, and there was an operator at each computer; there were two extra operators to kind of relieve everybody so they could go on a break or go to lunch or whatever you needed to do.

And the first registration they downsized the number of students they were going to send through because they knew that this would be a new procedure for our students. Little did they know that the students were not able to understand the system and one of the biggest problems was that students were confusing section letters with time periods, so they were marking down English 101 and it would be time period C and they'd put "C" in when actually C period was section A. So they were getting time conflicts, they were getting closed sections. They didn't—there were no such things as closed sections prior to this because it was done by a key punch method, and they keypunched thirty-five cards and you just went and picked up a card so when the card was picked up, the last card, the class was closed. And each operator had a checker that sat right next to them and the point of the checker was to communicate with the student and tell them what was wrong so that the operator could go on to the next registration. And then that student was to go to the back of the line, correct the problem, [and] come back through.

Needless to say, after about an hour and a half or two of registration, the students started backing up. And there was frustration beyond belief [pause] and our whole system as how we had it set up was obviously not working. They finally closed the doors so that even if you had a time card you couldn't get in because we had to get the students out of there, and what we did was basically one at a time take the master schedule of classes, figure out what the problem was, correct it, get the student registered and get them out of there. We worked from seven-thirty in the morning until eleven o'clock that night, without hardly any breaks at all and we still did not register every student that was scheduled to come through.

So needless to say you can imagine how advanced our registration system is today. It took [pause] about a year or two for students to begin to catch on and to learn and of course as technology became more a part of their lives in high schools and homes, they came already prepared knowing what they needed to do. That first registration the Computer Center people worked all night long, running off lists of closed classes and posting them in all the dormitories so that the students would know what was closed before they even came into the arena. It took us about three days to get everybody registered and back then there was a five dollar fee to add a class and a five dollar fee to drop a class. And so, with the disaster that the registration ended up being they of course waived that fee for everybody.

BC: [Laughs].

JR: We were doing drop/adds for weeks afterwards trying to get everybody's schedules straightened out. So that was, that was one of the big events that I will probably never forget [laughs].

BC: Okay. It seems like everyone, you know, in similar positions as you . . . we know the answer to this question, but what buildings did you work in when you first came through now?

JR: I've been in the Old Main building when I was in [the] Registrar's [Office]. When I worked in the Admissions and Advisement area it was in the Maltby Center. I filled in part time in [the] Parks and [Recreation] Department which is in Eisenberg classroom building. I filled in at the Advisement Center later on which was in Bailey Library. I worked in the Lowry Center part time for somebody who was off on maternity leave. So I've worked in a lot of the buildings across campus in varying positions.

BC: Okay, alright. What were your first impressions of the university when you first arrived?

JR: Well I was very young at the time, so most of the students I was waiting on were my age, so it was a wonderful experience for me because I was dealing with my peers at the time. [Pause] During the early seventies there were fairly big groups of people on campus. The Vietnam War had been going on for quite a few years, so we had a large group of Vietnam vets on campus, [who] were very obvious because they all wore their fatigues from the Army or whatever [branch of the service] they were in. And we had no idea about post-traumatic stress syndrome; there were no such terms back then. We just knew that this group of vets were always together, did everything together. And looking back now we've realized we didn't have a clue what they'd been through and they were providing support for each other. So that was one of the big groups on campus that was very prominent.

It was also during the seventies that the push came to get more minorities on campus. There was a very large influx of the African-Americans mostly here at Slippery Rock because they were more available from the Pittsburgh area and Sharon, and some of the surrounding areas. And that

group was also very noticeable not because they were African-Americans, but because they too kind of came together and formed a group together. They were thrown into the college campus with very little preparation for it, very little of true support that helped them. They . . . it was a learning experience for everybody trying to acclimate the African-American population into the campus and unfortunately it wasn't real successful, because they didn't have the preparation they needed and we didn't have the support that would give them the prep to make them successful. So, they, I know felt very alone and very cut off from the rest of us. The university worked very hard and I'm sure this was true of all the universities to make them a success, and it took quite a few years for that to happen.

There was also a big push in the seventies to increase the international student population. And at the time when I started there was not a huge international student population, but through the years and prior to 9/11 it became much more prevalent here on campus and there was great support from the administration to internationalize the campus so that the students here—who were mostly pretty rural western Pennsylvania students—would have an opportunity to interact with people from different countries and different cultures to broaden their horizons and make it more of an international world to us rather than just rural western Pennsylvania.

BC: [Laughs] okay, can you talk about some of the activities or committees you were involved in?

JR: I haven't been real active in a lot of things on campus, the extracurricular types of things obviously because of the position I hold and because for many of these years I'd been raising my young family, so my main goal was to go home at night after work. I have worked homecomings before. I've worked the inaugurations, I worked the last inauguration of President Smith, Bob Smith, and I've been on some committees here on campus. There was a committee (and I can't even remember the name of it now) that they offered grants to faculty and staff for programs—extra learning programs here on campus, and I served on that committee for a number of years. And of course I've been secretary to search committees for many years for deans and vice presidents and I've gotten to see the inner workings of how hiring procedures are done here.

BC: Okay. What do consider your biggest accomplishments here?

JR: Well, thirty-seven years [laughs] is one of them! I never realized, I guess, at the time when I started here at the university that I was going to actually have a career. [The] mentality when I first started working was that you got married, you worked a few years, when you had a family you didn't work. You stayed at home, raised your children and your husband went off to the mill and worked everyday. That was pretty much how I grew up and the environment that I grew up in. I had no clue that I would be working these past thirty-seven years. Many of them part time, but out of financial necessity, working. So the thirty-seven years here has been a real accomplishment and it's been a good accomplishment; it's been a good experience for me. I've

had wonderful opportunities with learning and I've had wonderful bosses through the years. It's just been a really good work environment and although I'm looking forward to retiring in a few years, it's a big chunk of my life and I'm going to be leaving a lot of that behind so it's going to be a big change for me. And probably the biggest honor that I ever received was in 2005 when I earned the President's Award for Outstanding Service. That . . . you can't get more of a crowning point in your career than that, and that was very, very touching for me to be recognized. They only recognize one or two people a year, so it was a real honor and privilege for me to earn that.

BC: Okay. You know, you've worked pretty closely with a lot of—you said movers and shakers. Do you remember anything about presidents you've worked for, anything about them in particular?

JR: The early years I worked down in the lower ranks so I didn't have a whole lot of dealings with the presidents. When I started here in 1971, Al Watrel was the president here at the university, and he was here for a number of years; I couldn't tell you exactly how long but he was dismissed from the university. So, I do remember even though I wasn't directly involved in it, I do remember the uproar on campus and the scandal. Dismissal was not real common back in those days and [pause] there was a lot of uproar. There were those who supported his dismissal and those of course, who didn't.

Dr. Jim Roberts was the vice president for Academic Affairs at the time when I started here, and Billy Wayne Walker was the dean of Education. Al Schmittlein was one of the deans, Pat Annable was one the deans [pause], Mike Wartel, Joe Mcfadden. Those were the bigger names in the Academic Affairs Division; Champ Storch was the vice president for Student Life, and Don Thompson was his name, who was the vice president of Finance & Administrative [Affairs]. There wasn't even a university advancement division at that time; they were unheard of.

But to me the real movers and shakers in the campus have not been the vice presidents and the deans, I mean they all do a tremendous job and they all serve the university and in capacities that are absolutely necessary, but to me the real movers and shakers on the campus are the faculty. Because most of the students have never met the vice presidents or the presidents, if they have it's been very briefly when they've come to welcome them at an orientation or when they hand them their diploma at a graduation. But the faculty are the real people who mold the students who prod them to learn, who have such influences on their lives. And if you talk to most of the alums there's always been one or two faculty in their lives who have made a huge difference to them.

So to me the movers and shakers have been those faculty who probably are very unrecognized as far as the history of the university but who have actually have had the biggest impact on the history of our students. Mark Shiring in Education, Bernie Freyberg in Philosophy, Blase

Scarnati in Music, I mean they just go on and on. And of course the biggest loss we've suffered here at the university was just a week or two ago when [professor] Dave Dixon in History passed away. And Dave was one of those faculty members who was a wonderful scholar and an even more wonderful teacher. And anybody can give knowledge to students, but a real teacher has talents and abilities that you just don't learn, they're just God-given. I would say those were the movers and shakers. The administration, presidents, vice presidents—they provide the framework for the faculty to do the job that they do. So they're important, but the faculty to me are probably the most important.

BC: Okay. Did you have anyone that sort of influenced you when you first arrived, or since you've been here? Because it seems like a lot for someone just coming in to have a lot thrown at you; did anyone kind of help you out?

JR: Unfortunately as a support staff member there wasn't a lot of mentoring done in the seventies. You just came in, the person sitting next to you told you what you had to do, and you were just kind of on your own as to learn how to deal with students and how to handle them. And unfortunately when I first started the attitude towards students was not good. They . . . they were not held in very high esteem and they were not treated very well. It took me several years of working here to realize that there had to be a better way to deal with students than to just shove a card at them, yell at them and tell them they did something wrong [laughs].

So I learned a lot on my own at first, but probably the biggest mentor I had, biggest close staff member, was from the provost and vice presidents administrative [staff], (well she was an executive staff assistant [pause] when I went up to the vice president's office twenty years ago). Her name was Alice Holden, and she was the epitome of professionalism on campus as far as I was concerned. She was bright and articulate, very capable, very well respected on campus and people skills did not come naturally to me, but they came naturally to her. And sitting in the same office with her for seven years, watching her and watching how she handled people in such an easy manner and got across what she needed to without upsetting people. I learned a great deal from Alice.

And of course bosses; I've been blessed with having bosses who trusted me and allowed me to work independently and to handle projects on my own and only have to come back and ask them question if I had them. And I have been very appreciative of the bosses I've had. Lou Razzano, who was the associate provost for *many* years here at the university, who was such a wonderful man who helped so many kids that were in academic difficulty, kids who really would not have become very successful. [He] was probably one of my biggest mentors on campus, and who always treated me very fairly and recognized what I brought to the table even though it was just as a support staff position.

BC: [Pause] major events or activities you can remember, whether it be national or very local since you've been here?

JR: Well probably 9/11 was one of the ones that's always gonna stand out in my head. It was so unexpected for all of us and the day that it happened, because of us working on the third floor in Old Main where the presidents and vice presidents were, we were able to call the IT [Information Technology] division, come hook up a television across the hall from us so that we could watch the events unfold.

There've been a lot of events on campus in the seventies, there were, there was a lot of unrest on college campuses and Slippery Rock had its share of unrest too. I remember hundreds of students on several occasions storming Old Main with their bullhorns and chanting whatever it was that they were upset about, and, of course in Registrar's, because we had all the academic records we always had to run and lock all the files in the vault just in case it got out of hand because there was no microfiche backup on any of the paperwork back in those days, so if anything was destroyed or lost we were probably gonna be in trouble trying to replace it.

Mostly Slippery Rock's been a fairly quiet campus. There have been times when students have been upset, most recently when some of the varsity sports have been cut because of financial budgetary reasons. There were a couple book-burning—yearbook-burning periods when one group or another on campus felt that they didn't get their fair share of space or recognition. But basically most of the students at Slippery Rock come to get an education and that's exactly what they do.

BC: Why do you think it is that we don't, we don't see these [now]. 'Cause the last, the last march on Old Main I can think of was the faculty union not the students [inaudible] [laughs]. Why don't you think we see the students demonstrating like that anymore like they used to?

JR: I'd have to say as a mother it's because they've got it so good [laughs]. [Pause] having been an old-timer here and seeing what thirty years ago students had to go through, our students really do have it good. And I'm not talking just about the ease of accessibility of education, but their lifestyle is so much easier and it's very easy I think to become complacent when your own lifestyle is very easy. When you have the opportunities to get an education, to have your own car, to live in your own apartment, to have your own job and your own money plus having the support of your parents behind you; a lot of our students have that kind of lifestyle. I see students on campus driving newer cars than what I drive.

And I don't mean to say that there aren't students who don't stand up for causes, because there are. And we have them and they're in leadership positions in SGA and different organizations on campus. But I would say it's probably the sign of the times. The unrest just isn't here in our country, because basically our lives have been pretty good. During the Vietnam era, there was a lot of unrest because of the war and a huge amount of the population felt that we shouldn't be

there and thousands and thousands and thousands of men that we lost over there; it was a terrible loss. But basically our lives in this country have not been touched very much by the bad things in life.

BC: Are there any other memorable events that we haven't touched on yet that you would like to talk about?

JR: [Pause] I would say probably one of the other events that I was really at firsthand lengths to was the dismissal of [President G.] Warren Smith from the university, which wasn't all that long ago; and it was a very unsettling time for the university. His dismissal by the chancellor was very unexpected by most of us, in fact I would say by virtually the entire campus. I know even the vice presidents and upper echelon of the university had no idea that this dismissal was going to happen. And I'm sure President Smith himself did not understand that he was on such shaky ground politically with the chancellor.

And it happened so quickly. President Smith got a phone call from the chancellor [Judy Hample] and less than two minutes later Bob Smith, the current president, who was the provost at that time got a phone call from the chancellor. And it was rather funny in one way because when the phone call came through for Bob Smith, the chancellor identified herself and asked to speak with Dr. Smith. The president's extension here at the university is 2000; the provost's extension is 2001. Both were Dr. Smiths. I was certain she had the wrong office, that she had hit the wrong button when she dialed. So I said to her on the phone, I said, "Do you want Bob Smith or Warren Smith?" And she said, "No, I want Bob Smith." And I remember as I put her on hold thinking that's very unusual because it's very rare. I don't know if I've ever talked to a chancellor other than that one time.

And I transferred the call in to Bob Smith, and the door was open, so immediately I knew what was going on. And he was very shaken, because she pretty much told him what had happened and asked him if he would act as interim president. And he had had no prior time to even contemplate such a move and when he had come to the university that was not his intent to become a president. He had come here to be a provost, and I don't think he had ever aspired to be a president. He was in his fifties at the time and, you know, would be retiring in not that many years and he just wasn't climbing the academic ladder, so to speak.

So when he told the chancellor that he would need a little bit more time to think about it, the chancellor gave him two hours. And of course in the meantime the assistant to the president had already come running over to our office saying there was an immediate cabinet meeting, which was the vice presidents and the highest ranking people on campus. And I of course knew immediately why the meeting was being called, and I told her that the provost was on the phone and I would send him over and she did not understand that it was the chancellor that was on the phone with him and I had to tell her, you know, what was going on.

So Dr. Bob Smith had about two hours to make a decision as to whether he was going to come in and act as the interim president or not. He was trying desperately to get a hold of his wife because this was going to affect their personal life too. And of course she never was able to be contacted and he had to make a decision without her input.

But at the time I think it was decided it was much better to have a Slippery Rock person in that position who knew the university, would make the transition easier for the university and he did: Bob Smith did a wonderful job on the transition. There were a great many upset people on campus who felt there had been a very unjust act and Bob Smith had to kind of calm everybody down, get everybody back on the same track, getting them recognizing that we had to go on, we had to make this not disrupt the students and their learning any more than it was going to.

He was very good with communication. He met with all of the unions, all of the faculty. He appointed Bill Williams (who's now the provost) as the interim provost, and Bill Williams had been an APSCUF president for years and was well respected among the faculty, and of course that eased tension on campus that one of their faculty was now acting in the provost position so that they . . . everybody kind of calmed down pretty quickly. But it was a very hard time for a lot of people and the transition was pretty dramatic when it first happened.

BC: Do you remember what year that was, from Smith to Smith, when that happened?

JR: Exact year, no, but I would say probably about [pause] eight or nine years ago.

BC: And do you remember what the grounds were for his dismissal, what they were saying?

JR: I don't think that it was ever publicly announced, but when the chancellor at that time, Judy Hample was here—and she has since just left—Judy Hample came in and set up a whole new system of accountability to the universities and set up a system of goals that she wanted all universities across the state to work towards. An increase in women on campus in higher positions and full professor positions, an increase in minority hirings on campus; better retention rates of our students, better graduation rates and not just graduation rates but students graduating within a four year period or four and a half year period rather than a six year period because they couldn't get the classes they wanted. Good solid goals, all of them, and each year the presidents were rated on how they met these goals.

Warren Smith's goals as president were not the goals of Judy Hample. His goals were very different and he was working very hard toward his goals and he was, he was reaching those goals, and they did not mesh in my opinion—and this is all my opinion—they did not mesh with the goals of the chancellor. And because of that he was not meeting what she felt were desirable goals for the university.

And we were suffering from that. The budgeting system was set up in such a way that every university got a certain amount of money and I believe that was based on how many students there were on campus so that it was fairly distributed. But the results of this other additional amount of money, this pot so to speak, on the side, and the higher your university was in the ratings on these goals, the bigger percentage of this extra pot of money you got.

Well at the time when Warren Smith was dismissed, we were very, very far down on that list of the universities. I would say probably in the bottom three. Since then, since Bob Smith has come into the presidency, we've moved up and I think we're number three on the list, we are very high up, which financially benefits the university because we now have that money to work with, because we're getting a bigger portion of this extra pot of money.

Plus, the goals that were set were good goals: more [diversity] on campus, more women in higher positions, better retention rates, better graduation rates. Those are all things that benefit the campus as a whole. So I think it was a win-win situation at the end, but it was a very unfortunate situation for Warren Smith because he did have goals that he was working towards and attaining, they just did not mesh with the state system goals at the time.

BC: Okay, what do you miss about being . . . well I guess you're still here so that doesn't affect. . . but what do you think you'll miss most about being at SRU when the time comes?

JR: You know it's kind of hard to know; I've got about two and a half years left to go so it's kind of hard to know for sure. I guess probably the friendships I've forged [pause] the socialization that working outside the home presents to you.

Also many of the skills and abilities that I've gotten to use here. I've worked the academic honors convocation, I coordinate it every year and it's the second biggest event on campus so it takes a huge amount of organization and help, and getting everybody working together to get it to happen just like graduation is the same thing. And once I retire those skills and abilities that I have I don't think I'm ever going to be called on again to use [laughs], unless I find some extreme volunteer work to do. So I will kind of miss using some of those skills that I have that I don't imagine I will probably ever be called upon to use again. But I also think there are some skills and abilities I have that I haven't been able to use because I've been so busy working that I will probably find time to use on a volunteer basis.

BC: If you, say hypothetically, were to run into someone who's debating whether to work at Slippery Rock, or you know, somewhere else, and they ask you: is this a good place that I should work, what would your response be to them?

JR: That Slippery Rock has been wonderful to me, and for me. It's provided a tuition waiver for my two daughters to get an education and it has saved me a huge amount of money, not that I didn't have to pay fees and books and room and board; but the educational opportunities [are] for

anybody who wants to take advantage of them—for the employee, for their spouse, for their children. It's phenomenal.

The opportunity to see how the educational process works up close has been a very enlightening experience for me. If I had worked anywhere else I wouldn't have the slightest idea why education worked the way it did and what they were trying to accomplish, so it has given me a real insight into how that works, and it's also given me an insight into the politics because of working in the vice president's office—because I'm behind the scenes. [Pause] I haven't always liked that part of the job [laughs].

But yes, I would suggest [to] anybody if they had the opportunity to work at any of the state system schools they're very good jobs. They've provided me with a good income, good retirement, but also opportunities because it's a larger organization that I would've never had working in a small local place: forge or mill or office. You get to interact with a lot of different people. When you interact with a lot of different people you get a lot of different personalities and those personalities, good and bad, shape you as a person, make you better than you would have been if you hadn't run into them. So it's been good.

BC: Alright. And [pause] what we'd like to close with [is] how would you ultimately like to be remembered?

JR: That was a hard one for me when I looked over the outline for today's talk. I tend to be a caregiver by nature; mothering came very easy to me because I'm a giver. And I guess the biggest joy that I've had in my positions has been being able to be a service to the students and the parents and the bosses that I've worked for. I enjoy that. I find great satisfaction in that. And so I hope that anybody who has come in contact with me would remember me as someone who would go out of their way to help find the answer, help solve the problem; or if I couldn't solve the problem at least be able to sit down and explain to the person why the policies and procedures are in place and why I was not able to accommodate the requests that they had.

BC: Okay, is there anything else you'd like to mention before we conclude?

JR: [Pause] only one comment: life is full of changes, we all go through them, big and little. Every day is a series of decisions that you make and the little decisions that you make every day through the years accumulate into who you become and how people remember you. And education is invaluable; I don't care how much it costs you to get the education, it's invaluable because it will teach you lessons that you will never learn outside that educational institution. And it will provide and open opportunities for you that you wouldn't ever have otherwise. I regret deeply not doing it for myself. I made darn sure that I did it for both my kids [laughs].

And I think probably the biggest thing that education to me does is it provides you not only an opportunity to be a part of the change—because it will happen, [there] will be change—that an

education helps you provide an opportunity to help shape the change. The more education you have and the more drive and ambition you have, the higher up in any organization or company you're going to be, and the more opportunity you're going to have to shape what that company, that business, that school does. That's invaluable. So get all the education you possibly can and then use it constructively and help others.

BC: Okay Mrs. Richardson, thank you very much.

JR: Sure, thank you.

BC: I appreciate it. If you ever want to come in and share with us again we'd be more than happy to accommodate you.

JR: It's been fun; it's been fun.