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SRU ORAL HISTORY

"SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY IN THE SIXTIES"

INTERVIEWEE: MR. JOSEPH MARKS

INTERVIEWER: DR. JOSEPH RIGGS AND LEAH M. BROWN

23 JULY 1991

R: Our initial question is how did you get here?

M: By car. There was no other way at the time. I had known Dr. Carter, who had been President of Slippery Rock. I had been an undergraduate student of his back in 1950. Just prior to coming here, I was principal of an area vocational high school at Heath, Ohio, which was also a comprehensive high school for the town of Heath. Dr. Carter was still at Denison University where I had gone to school, and so he and I renewed our contacts at that time. He placed student teachers with teachers in our school, so I had had some contact with him between 1950 and 1965 when I came here. Anyway, after he took the presidency here, he called and asked if I would be interested in coming up and looking at a position of either dean of men or dean of students. That's the background of how we proceeded. This was, of course, before the days of affirmative action. Our trip to Slippery Rock was very interesting. This was before the days of I-79. Being in Ohio, my wife, Ramona, is from Ohio so we came north close to East Liverpool where her home is and stayed there overnight prior to

M: the day we were to come up here. There was no good way according to the map to ever get here. So we came in Route 422 and then came up Route 528, up to where the Stone House is now. At that time, in the area where Lake Arthur and Moraine Park is, the land had just been acquired for the lake. The dam hadn't been built yet but people had left their homes because all the land had been acquired. The road was going to be covered or a portion of the road was going to be covered by the lake so it was in very poor repair. No repair. Here's all these old, deserted houses that had been deserted for a year or so. Everything growing up. Nothing maintained. We really wondered, where in the world are we going to end up? Then coming into Slippery Rock by an indirect way, we were then really surprised at the village of Slippery Rock. Our impressions of college towns had pretty much been determined by having lived close to Granville, Ohio, and close to New Concord, Ohio, where Denison and Muskingum Colleges are. Each have broad main streets, divided main streets, a boulevard, large stately trees down the boulevard, some large expensive houses, older homes, mostly in the style of New England, and then here we are in Slippery Rock with its power lines overhead and narrow streets. It took us three trips back just looking at the town before we ever decided to say yes because the town was the real drawback to coming here. That's basically how we got to Slippery Rock in a roundabout way. It was interesting though. The people

M: of the town really made up for what the facilities of the borough lacked. We hadn't sold our house in Ohio. So Ramona was living over there trying to sell it, and I was here trying to find a place to rent. I finally found a place to rent just about the time she got the house sold. The moving van was coming and I needed some money to pay the moving van. Incidentally, at that time it took a long time to ever get on the payroll. I was working for six weeks before I ever saw a pay check. So I stopped down at the First National Bank and told the teller that I wanted to borrow some money. I had established an account there with a small amount of money in it. I expected to be referred to a loan officer someplace and she just said, how much do you want? I said, two thousand dollars. She said, I can do that. So she just wrote me a check, and I signed the little form, and that was all there was to it. I expected to have to put up collateral, give some references or something, but I didn't have to do any of that. That was a nice, nice part of Slippery Rock and it's kind of always been that way as far as I've been concerned. Kind of easy going. So that's basically my introduction. Both good and bad.

B: What position did you take?

M: I took Dean of Students as opposed to Dean of Men. At that time the Dean of Men lived in Patterson Hall which was the only men's dormitory, and there's a nice apartment there but not for

M: a family.

Of course, at that time, Slippery Rock was quite different. This is July of 1965 and Slippery Rock was quite different than it is now. The furthest building east was the field house. Vincent Science Hall was under construction, just out in the middle of a field. Well, of course, it sits well beyond the field house. It was kind of hard to visualize why it was over there by itself.

R: It was part of the grand plan. (laughs)

M: Well, yes. In fact, I don't know who actually developed the actual plan for this part of the campus. A lot of it had to be cleared through Harrisburg. As Dean of Students, I got in on a lot of the planning for a number of buildings including World Culture, Eisenberg, College Union, all the residence halls.

When the World Culture building was built, Dr. Carter was very much opposed to it being placed where it was, but he could not get the master plan changed in Harrisburg. His objection was that it was sitting right on a bank in that there was the field house parking lot and then a drop off. And it was going to be sitting in a hole, which it is. But if you'll notice, that there is a door under the bridge, which goes across from the field house parking lot over to the World Culture building. There is a door opening right, almost up against the bank there. Well, the planners in Harrisburg had that as the main, or as one of the main entrances to the building. The actual bridge is an afterthought. When they finally got everybody convinced, somebody can't read elevations or a topography map. And so the building was really put in a poor location. And, like I said, that bridge is just an afterthought.

✓ *where*
R: ~~Where~~ there other problems with that building? Something about underneath it?

M: Well, I don't know all of them, but if you recall about probably ten years ago, they had to reface the whole part that was facing the main quadrangle because it was splitting away from the rest of the building. See, a lot of that land is fill out there. It apparently just hasn't all settled yet. I'm on a tangent here but let's go on. The land where the Kiester Road tennis courts are now, and all that land on out to Harmony Road was a part of the Claire Garlow farm. Claire Garlow still owned the land at the time that we moved here. He, himself, was quite a character. The house, and I can't think of a house in the area that was in the state of repair that this large brick house was in. It's been a beautiful brick house at some time, but it was to the point of where it was just all but collapsing. He was a man probably in his seventies or eighties, and people said that rather than sleep in the house, that he slept in one of the old sheds around because of the dangers of being in the house. There's also, speaking about topography, there's also an area of I suppose quicksand, out beyond those Kiester Road tennis courts. In fact, I see that we are now dumping a lot of stuff, a lot of debris, in that area. Our son, when he was about six or seven, and one of his friends were out playing in that area, and the friend got stuck in the mud, and was just going in it. The two kids couldn't get one

M: another out. At that time, we were living on the corner of Harmony Road and Kiester Road, and so my son, Joe, came charging across, and my wife saw him running as a little seven or eight year old, running across the field. She knew that something was wrong so she came out the front door to see what was going on. He told her that Dean was stuck in the mud and couldn't get out. She wasn't sure what was going on, but Ramona went charging across the field, and at that time, of course, it was not nice playing fields. A ~~gentleman~~ ^{gentleman} driving along the road saw her running and realized that there must be something wrong so he stopped. It was Barney Barnes, who used to teach in Grove City and also ran the golf course out here. He caught up with her and she told him what was going on. By the time she got there, Barney had already gotten hold of Dean, lifted him out of his boots, and had gotten him out of the mud.

R: President Carter had been here a year or two before you came?

M: About six months.

R: Six months. So when you got here, all of the political mishmash that was about to come about, were you aware of the ~~...~~ ?

M: Tensions?

R: Yes.

M: There was a certain amount of tension because, I believe that Harold Wieand had probably been a candidate for the presidency, and he was, of course, still on the faculty. But,

✓ M: no, ^{basically,} basically, there was no more political give and take than there was at most times during any college administration. Dr. Carter was a good planner. In fact, as you look at the campus as it is now, it has his mark on it considerably. Although all the buildings weren't funded while he was president, the planning was done for World Culture, Eisenberg, the library, the student union, and I believe all the residence halls except one of the high rises and I'm not sure which one of those was not done. In fact, he did not like the type of dormitories that we have at all. He tried to get apartments and suites built into residence halls for students rather than just the straight corridors with the stalls off of them. He was never able to convince the powers that be in Harrisburg or even some of his fellow presidents that that was the thing to do. Also, one thing which he wanted to do, speaking about residence halls and so forth, was to have a fraternity and sorority circle. It was his idea to have it up on the hill behind the water tower. Not where the baseball playing field is, but on around the hill a little further, with the University owning the buildings and leasing them, long-term leases to the fraternities and sororities. I think had something like that ever occurred, some of the housing problems in Slippery Rock might have been alleviated. Of course, it may have created others. I kind of strayed away from your question, Joe, on the political climate. Really, I would say

- M: the first year and a half or two that I was here, that they were really very progressive years. A lot of planning was done. Unfortunately, it took a long time to get things through Harrisburg because at that time everything went through Harrisburg, and everything was very frugal. Is that the right word, rather than cheap, maybe? It was always the lowest bid. The state cars, for example, were the basic car. You had a car with a heater and a defroster. No radio, no air conditioning, no automatic shift, they were just the basic car. I remember when Dr. Carter first got a car, and he was insisting on a car with a radio and air conditioning, and how much effort it took for him to finally get a car that would do that.
- R: Was there a cabinet operating then, the deans and vice-presidents?
- M: This was before the days of vice-presidents. We had an administrative staff. You had the president, a dean of instruction, a dean of students, and under the dean of instruction there were various department chairmen. Dr. Carter had an administrative assistant and a public relations individual. Marc Selman served as the administrative assistant and Mark Shiring as public relations.
- B: So that setup was arranged by Dr. Carter?
- M: I don't know. I don't know whether that was or not, because it was changed within a year or two to where a couple of other deans were appointed. The first dean of instruction that I recall, and

✓ M: I think his title was changed sometime to dean of academic affairs or something, was George Moore. George, if you know, wrote a book on the history of West Virginia which was the bicentennial book accepted by the state as the official book. George was interested in politics. If I may stray from the academic for a minute and talk about people as I was thinking about George. The custodian in Old Main was a lady named Mary Book. Mary was a large lady and also very interested in politics. It was not unusual to go down to the basement of Old Main where Mary had a chair and a wash basin in a little closet-like room there, and hear the Dean of Instruction and Mary arguing politics. Sometimes it would be so loud that you could hear it out in the hallways out there. But they would both get very loud as they yelled at one another.

R: No way to tell who was winning?

M: I don't think that anybody would have wanted to know.

R: Marc Selman was brought here by George Moore.

M: I don't know.

R: Well, I think. I'm not sure. I know that they were friends, and they had a West Virginia University connection.

M: As for a cabinet, there were really generally no official cabinet meetings or administrative meetings. At that time, the president's office was on the first floor of Old Main. In fact, maybe I ought to describe Old Main first. The president's office was on the first floor. All the other administrative

M: offices were on the first floor. The book store was in the basement and had two rooms. That, I believe, was all that was in the basement. On the second and third floor were classrooms and academic offices. So, of course, there was a lot of student traffic and a lot of faculty traffic through the building all the time. Administrators would kind of migrate towards Dr. Carter's office where it was just kind of a lot of informal discussions, and if something came that needed somebody else in on the discussion, why he would send for them. Maybe I should say one thing more about the Old Main plant before I forget. The state was notorious for not doing preventive maintenance as it still is. So the roof of Old Main leaked, and after every hard rain, the maintenance men would have to go to the attic and empty the five gallon buckets of water which had collected as the rain came through the various leaks in the roof. Now back to the basement. As I said, the bookstore was in two rooms which included rooms for textbooks and rooms for sweatshirts and tee shirts and things like that. So if you look at the size of the rooms in the basement, why you know that there's not much room. In fact, Jim Wilson and Al McClymonds' offices today take up the whole book store space. When textbooks were sold, the textbooks were moved out into the hall and were stacked on the floor. Then students could file through and pick up their texts and pay for them.

R: About 2,000 students then?

M: There were 2,500 some students when we came in 1965.

R: And you were Dean of Students. A lot of disciplinaries?
Did you have many problems?

M: In a position like that you always have problems. But the problems then were not the type of problems that you have today. In fact, I don't envy the people in student personnel their position today at all. There was a disciplinary board which handled all discipline. I don't remember who all was on the board. I know I was on it and Dr. Gamberoni was on it. I don't remember the other people. Anyway, it was commonly known throughout campus as the bounce board. So I think you can probably guess what most of the actions were, which was recommend academic suspension. The discipline problems were generally for drinking or having alcohol in the dormitories. A couple incidents of rape were handled at that time. We had one unfortunate incident and this is entirely off the subject of discipline but as I think about rape, two of our coeds ^{were} ~~where~~ on a date with a fellow from, I believe, V.M.I. or V.P.I., and a male student from Slippery Rock. Some place up around Mercer they were accosted by two or three men and the four of them were kidnapped by the men, taken to the woods. The two fellows were tied to the tree and the two girls were raped. In the process, the male student from V.M.I. or V.P.I. was shot and killed. So that was rather a trying time as you speak about problems for the Dean of Students.

R: And upshot of all that was did they get the criminals?

M: Yes, the criminals were caught.

R: Was there a large panic over this bad situation?

M: There was a lot of publicity but not panic.

R: Parents weren't taking youngsters out of school and all that stuff?

M: No. The actual incident happened around Mercer and so they were well off the campus.

R: The security force on campus, is that how you found out about the drinking and alcohol and all that sort of thing? I know it changed when President Carter came. You're going to tell me a story.

M: The security force consisted of two men. One of the gentlemen was probably 65 to 70 at the youngest, and, of course, he did not move around too fast and had been here for years and he was the night watchman. Then his relief was a younger man probably in his 30's. Although they had the title of security force, they probably weren't too secure, but they were just around and if something was going wrong they would get to the telephone and give someone a call. Most of the disciplinary problems that got reported were reported in at the local police or through residence hall advisors. I'm sure that a lot of things were missed. If I may digress again here as the word police comes to mind I'll speak of the local police. The local police force

m: at that time was Sandy Sanderson. Anyway, he had no office in the borough so the cruiser was the office and it stayed parked down at the corner of Main Street and Franklin. Right where the Boron station is now. He could not even call for police reinforcements from his car without driving out to the hill on Cemetery Road and broadcasting from there, and then on a good day he could contact Butler. Other than that, he had to go to a telephone in order to do it.

B: Good thing it was peaceful around here.

M: Yes. It's a good thing it was.

R: What do you remember most about the student body? Were they very different from today?

M: Of course, not being a large number of students here, you knew a high percent of the students whether you were in administration or teaching because you taught a lot of classes and so you saw a large portion of the student body. It was a rather friendly campus. You didn't start to see the changes of the 1960's hit this campus until the late 1960's. We were probably four or five years behind. It was just about that time that I stepped out of the role of Dean of Students. By that time, Dr. Carter had left, and I could see how things were going in higher education in other universities that a lot of things, a lot of changes, would have to take place on the campus which really did not enthuse me. Such as, coeducational residence

M: halls, things like that. So I felt when the job of registrar came open that this would be a nice way of stepping out of that. So I stepped out of the dean of students obviously before a lot of the drastic changes took place. One thing which Dr. Carter wanted to do, by the way, each of the residence halls had house mothers. All of the women's residence halls had house mothers. These are generally women who are probably in their 40's, and one of Dr. Carter's aims was to get these people phased out, and to get in younger student personnel oriented women for the women's dorms, not as house mothers but to serve as resident hall advisors. But now we still have one house mother, by the way, left over from Dr. Carter's regime and that's Mrs. Yartz.

R: We've been looking for her. We thought she would be a good interview.

M: Yes. She would be.

R: Dr. Watrel then hired you as registrar or was there an interim?

M: No. There ^{were} ~~was~~ a couple of interims and I'm not sure I can really give that one in chronological order because I really hadn't thought about it because Marc Selman was acting president for a while and then Dr. Carter was back in for a while and then, I believe, Bob Lowry was president for a while. So just about the time Dr. Watrel came I moved into the office of registrar, but it really wasn't because of his coming, it was just because

✓ M: of some of the changes which I saw in other schools that I would just be so opposed to that I knew I wouldn't be happy making them, and I find it hard to justify it to myself. At that time the registrar's office did need help. Mrs. Billingsly had died unexpectedly. In fact, registration was an interesting operation at that time. It was done by cards, and it was done over in East and West Gym. And the computer center, which is another interesting topic back then, well, actually ^{there} ~~they~~ were key punch cards for each course. Students would go around and pick up the cards and try to build a schedule. It was about a day-long process for the whole student body, at that time, for two thousand some students to build a schedule. I don't believe there was any such thing as a time card, you just got in line at three or four o'clock in the morning and first ones in and maybe the first ones out. But some of the people also found that if they were the last ones in it was probably easy to build a schedule if you went around and looked on the floor and picked up cards because there were always a lot of cards thrown away. A student would pull a card for a class they thought they might want and then someone would talk him out of it or it conflicted with a time of another card so they would just throw it down on the floor. So you could go around and you could pick up enough cards that you could build a pretty decent schedule just by picking them up off the floor when registration was over.

B: The cards corresponded to the number of seats in that class?

M: Yes. And they were keypunched for the class and the period.

R: We were still doing that in the 1970's at the multipurpose room?

M: No.

R: It was different? They got cards from us, each student.

M: Really?

R: Well, I worked for you when I first came.

M: Maybe we did. I know by 1974 that we were doing the registration by computer. Using computer terminals.

R: Well, we had computer terminals but that was for the exit line or something like that. It was being checked by computer at the end. I may be confused, but I know the faculty sat in a huge circle by department and we had these boxes and boxes of cards.

M: Okay. That's right.

R: Then you were over there at the terminal and everyone had to go through you or your folks to get out of there and that's where whoever you were communicating with out there was taking place.

M: In fact, that was the initial way that we did the registration when we first got it computerized, and then we finally got it to the point where we could have people write down their courses and just take it from there. You probably remember then the first time that we used our computers. I might digress before I tell about this. We worked very closely with IBM in getting the whole computer system on campus. IBM took a number of the

✓ M: programmers to Poughkeepsie (New York) or to San Jose, California, for a lot of training. They also had ~~one, and they've only~~ ~~had~~ one training school for college registrars which they had at Poughkeepsie and I was fortunate enough to go to that. So in our training, our registration was built on the plan which IBM had for registration. The only thing that happened on that first time that we did it was the fact that the computer went down, and nobody could get it going again. Well, at the time, it had been up and down a number of times during the day, and we handled registration in the multipurpose room, I believe spread out over three days at that time for probably 4,000 students at the most. Before it was obvious that we weren't going to get the computer up, we had so many people in the multipurpose room that it was bedlam. We had to finally just send them out, and start all over fresh again the next day. We had to extend registration, I believe, two more days that particular time, and that was the only time, but that was a real fiasco that first time that we did it. Well, among registration I might also say that IBM in their training of people, and this is back in the early 1970's, did such a good job that in the mid-1980's I visited a gentleman who was also at that registrar's training school at Iowa State and he showed me some of their displays on their terminal, and the only thing I would have had to have known was they had a little different

M: access number, in other words instead of RO 10, it might have been RO 35 or something, but if I knew the access numbers everything else looked so much like Slippery Rock that you could have just moved it from one place to another.

✓
✓
R: I was also amazed at registration. Of course registration everywhere was a nightmare of one kind or another, and you had 4,000 people suffering anxiety neurosis because they all wanted to get that teacher at that time, and you were over at your desk or back in this multipurpose room and it was just a huge. ~~X~~ mess.
~~but~~ the casual observer would come in there and say, "What kind of chaos is this?" I was always amazed that you were over there, very calm and didn't get rattled, and when anything went wrong everyone pointed their finger at you, and when things went right nobody paid any attention to you. ↗

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That's part of the price you pay for being registrar.

B: What kind of satisfactions are there for being registrar?

M: Well, in my notes over here, you had asked a question someplace about best experiences and disappointments, and I could put that job in both categories. I enjoyed a lot of the administrative work and the contacts with people. My greatest disappointments were also attached to the job, because although I enjoyed the challenges, a lot of the times I couldn't get the support either financially or administratively from people in higher authority or from the computer center to do some of the things we really wanted to do. In fact, some of the things are being worked on now which I had worked on back in the early 1980's. I spent a lot time, in fact I took a sabbatical leave to outline and to study a

means of doing a graduation check, academic review, which would take care of all facets and all majors across the campus. Back in the 1980's there were several universities which had very comprehensive systems. Now some schools thought that they had comprehensive systems, but whenever you got to studying them they were not as comprehensive as they appeared to be. Miami of Ohio had an excellent system. In fact, it still does, and it is used in a number of universities and I recommended that Slippery Rock adopt that. Well, the computer people at that time didn't feel like that was a priority item. I understand now that they are working, programming the Miami system for Slippery Rock, but they're about ten years too late. But that was really one of my biggest disappointments because there were a lot things which we could have been doing with the computer a lot earlier. But getting people sold on it was very difficult.

R: It would have simplified all kinds of things like scheduling, hours, and rooms?

M: It would have simplified many, many things, and made information a lot more available to a lot more people, much easier and much sooner. But I did enjoy the office. I did enjoy it. But there were a lot of headaches, and as you said earlier, people didn't recognize when things were going well, but when things were not going well why, of course, you were responsible.

R: In my 18 years, I dealt with you probably several hundred times because I was an advisor and I had a lot of students, and I

summer time .

✓ R: was always here in the summertime. The kinds of things that happen to students on their way to degrees shouldn't have happened to an armadillo. The rules about registration and about graduation requirements and all of that, those rules were there for a purpose, but they could be bent a little bit where an injustice had been done or where the faculty member had created the problem, and was mainly responsible for what had happened to the student. I was always impressed that somehow we could work those things out if we took enough time to do it, and if the registrar had the right amount of patience. What I didn't know, I think, was that you had been through all those problems many, many, many times, and while I was fiddling around trying to think up an answer, it had already been answered and all I needed to do was call you. So I would think that *the* satisfaction of solving so many problems like that so that youngsters could graduate, you know, kind of on time would have been one of the best feelings you could have gotten?

✓ M: Yes. As I said, I enjoyed working with people, and I enjoyed the administrative problems, but yet there was always a certain amount of pressure and a certain amount of stress always connected, because it was like we were always shorthanded help-wise and I ended up doing more clerical work than I should have. So I was happy to finally get the opportunity to get back to teaching.

- R: How did you decide which faculty you were going to overload?
I know when students had problems you overloaded faculty. You overloaded me several times.
- M: I think usually I would call you.
- R: Almost always.
- M: Almost always.
- R: There were one or two exceptions.
- M: Those I don't remember. Well, I probably figured now he's one of those fellows who doesn't count well anyway.
- R: The other thing that I remember you talking about was space allocation and what a monstrous headache that always was.
- M: Yes. Well, today as then departments were assigned classrooms for their use. Then once they had put in their claim for the certain days and periods which they wanted then, it was anybody's game to get the rest of the classes scheduled because some departments had not enough space. And there's always some departments who always want to schedule Monday, Wednesday, Friday from period two through period five and periods B and C on Tuesday and Thursday and that's it, only in the prime periods. And then there are other departments who have other scheduling priorities like because perhaps they don't schedule period four, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, because they like to have a faculty meeting at that time. So there are always

M: classrooms that are vacant or not used at these different times, so it's a matter of kind of dovetailing things, and it can be done.

I wonder if I could back a way up here a minute? We were talking about the disciplinary board. I also want to talk about the cooperative activities board for just a minute. All the changes or a lot of changes which happened in our bookstore were the result of the cooperative activities board. As I said, the bookstore originally worked out of two little rooms in the basement of Old Main which was much too crowded. So at textbook selling time, why the cooperative activities board said we just have to find another place. Well, South Hall had been a men's dormitory, and this is now in 1969 or so, which had been condemned and was still standing on the campus but was not being used. So we used the first floor of South Hall for the selling of textbooks. Students could file in the front door and walk down the hall, and here's all the piles of textbooks and you helped yourself to the textbooks and then you checked out through the cashier and it was all self-service, not as it is today where you tell them what textbooks you want, and you are then served, but everything was all self-service. But the cooperative activities board also allocates money to the various organizations, and it was always interesting because certain organizations would

- M: always appeal. No matter how much money you gave them, you wouldn't give them enough, and, of course, we were trying to keep down the student activity fee. It was always a question of whether the college band should have enough money so they could spend an overnight at an away game or go to an away game, and, of course, that was just one of the examples of an appeal for additional money so that they could take a hotel or motel to spend a night at an away game, or even go to an away game. That was a long process as you heard many, many appeals for additional funds, and from the athletics since a lot of the athletics are also funded through cooperative activities.
- B: So you were part of that board as part of your position of dean of students?
- M: Yes. I was part of that board. In fact here again, Dr. Gamberoni was the chairman of that particular board, and always did an excellent job.
- R: You know when we started the day-care center, Dr. Gamberoni, I think, was our first chairman of that board.
- M: I believe he was.
- R: What about the part-time students and their struggles for degrees? You know, we kind of told the nontraditional students in the early years, I go back to 1971, that they could matriculate here, and they'd eventually get a college degree. And then they would

R: end up having to appeal for waivers for this, and take courses in other places. Were we promising more than we could deliver to folks who came here under those conditions?

M: I think part of that was a lack of administrative will power. Some departments were very cooperative about offering evening courses and courses at odd times to help these part-time students. Other departments were reluctant to break from the traditional schedule that they have always offered courses only in the daytime and only between the hours of nine and three and something like that. So without arm twisting, some departments would just not cooperate, and, I think, that was really the biggest drawback. A number of departments were really very cooperative.

R: Consequently, they got more majors out of it. Students would have to change their majors and take another kind of degree because they couldn't get what they had originally wanted to have.

M: Yes. A lot of that could have been avoided.

R: Just said here's the way it's going to be.

M: That's right, and it would not have made a lot of hardship on some departments if they would have done it. Even today, if you look at certain departments' schedules, you will see that they operate basically between period two and period six or seven on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and a couple of periods on Tuesday, Thursday.

B: Who has the authority or who should put pressure on such departments?

M: That should be the dean.

R: And if the president has to order it then that's what should be done.

M: That's too bad if the president has to order it.

R: Because that means that someone else isn't doing their thing.

M: That's right, and we've seen a lot of that where certain administrative individuals do not do the type of job that they should be doing.

R: Well, Dr. Aebersold talked a little bit about the contract, and some of the complications there with assigning people to teach off campus, for instance. More than five miles away, maybe.

M: This is really the same thing. I mean if we're going to have a viable off campus program, you have to have the cooperation of all departments. We have dropped the ball, as a university, a number of times with off campus programs just because departments would not cooperate. At one we were offering off campus courses at the Vo-Tech in New Castle. We had a pretty good enrollment. In fact, Dave Long from the English Department, could always build a course over there. So often the responsibility for building the course rested with the instructor rather than with the administration going ahead with a little bit of leadership in that area.

- R: The same principle applied to contingency. That was kind of a contingency operation?
- M: Yes. But we couldn't get the people to attend the classes in New Castle because they were never sure whether we were going to offer the course until the last minute. It's something that needed to be worked on and you can't work on something like that and set in an office in Slippery Rock. You've got to have enough ingenuity to go over and do some leg work.
- R: Did Penn State take some stuff out from under us because we weren't more assertive or aggressive.
- M: Of course. BC3 [Butler County Community College] is doing the same thing with us right now down at Cranberry. It's the same way of not being willing to put our money where our mouth is.
- B: It almost sounds as if they don't want to get mixed up with the common people. If we're offering this, then you should just come and take it.
- ✓ M: Well, as you talked about part-time students, that was sort of the way a lot of departments felt when we started to get a few nontraditional students. Now, I think this idea of offering the senior citizens free courses is a great idea because that's added some emphasis to our part-time student base, but middle-age people coming back, I think we're doing a lot better than we did. But we're just doing the same thing with our off campus offering that we kind of did with

M: the part-time students. We're just waiting for it to be forced on us, or to let somebody else just take the whole thing away from us. All you have to do is look at the number of people who have tried to handle continuing ed. over the last ten or twelve years. There's probably been a new person every second or third year.

B: Because they're not getting support?

M: That's never their prime job normally. I mean you've got to be willing to spend time, and it takes time other than just eight to four.

R: If we could go back to President Carter for just a minute. You and he were personal friends, and you came because he asked you to come. Did all of the things that happened in his administration between the time you came and the time he left, did that have a large impact on you and your work or anything because you were friends? How did you react to all those things?

M: Well, I had never been involved in a political upheaval, for want of a better word, as happened. I was disappointed. I still feel that Dr. Carter was very good for this University. I think had he had two or three more years there would have been a lot more concrete things which you could say Bob Carter did this for the University. Personally I was disappointed. I did not

M: consider leaving the University or the college because I did like it here. Dr. Carter was probably his worst own enemy. As well as being a brilliant man, he had low tolerance for anybody who was not efficient. He was not the world's best diplomat. In other words, he kind of tended to call a spade a spade. Sometimes that did not go over too well.

R: Then the Watrel years came along, and Dr. Watrel was here nine years?

M: I believe so.

R: I think so. Then there was lots of growth in terms of students, buildings, all kinds of things were sort of exploding around here. Did a lot of things change in the administrative structure, because you were by that time a registrar, and the cabinet was about to take place?

M: Yes. And there were a lot more individuals. The administration expanded considerably with additional deans, breakdown into various schools, vice-presidents for academic affairs, for administration, vice-president for student affairs, as well as a dean of students. So, yes, the administrative structure mushroomed at that time.

I want to go back to what I said earlier about all these buildings. The buildings which grew in Dr. Watrel's time are really the buildings which Dr. Carter had pushed through Harrisburg and were just being funded, and being bid. In

M: other words, most of the buildings which you see on the campus today on the new part of the campus were all put through by Dr. Carter.

R: Was that managed through legislative liason, or was he in Harrisburg a lot promoting this, that, and the other? Is that the way it worked?

M: Yes. He was in Harrisburg a lot. He also had a very strong backer in Emma Guffey Miller, and Emma Guffey Miller, of course, had strong political clout in Harrisburg even though she was then probably in her mid-seventies or maybe early eighties. But she had a lot of friends, a lot of contacts, and generally with her help he accomplished a lot in Harrisburg.

R: So she was the major liaison person then? Is it fair to say that?

M: I suppose that you might say that. Yes. I don't think that we've ever had anybody on the Board of Trustees since who ever had the political clout which Mrs. Miller had. Now Don Oesterling was on the board, and Don would have liked to have thought that he had that much clout, and although he had a lot, he did not have all the contacts which Mrs. Miller did.

R: Well, she was a national figure.

M: Yes. And Dr. Carter, of course, realized her value, and he certainly did everything to keep her happy. In other words, he would send a car out for her, or go out and get her personally, and try to make everything as smooth for Mrs. Miller as he could.

B: Of course she had official and unofficial contacts in Harrisburg, and through her brother as well.

M: Right. Her father was also, as I recall, very active in politics in the state.

B: So it was really smart of Dr. Carter to take advantage of that influence. What is he doing now?

M: I've not had a lot of contact with him in the last few years. About all I know is what I have heard second and third hand. He taught at Ferris State University and then retired just recently. I understand that he's living in a condominium around around Big Rapids, Michigan someplace. Not too sure of that.

B: Do you know anybody who does maintain contact with him?

M: I imagine that Dr. Roberts, if he doesn't maintain contact, that he would know how to get in contact with him because he's also from Michigan.

You asked under general topics about memorable people. I'd like to just talk about a couple of them if I could. I've talked about two or three. LaMonte Crape was on the faculty here. He has since retired from Butler County Community College, but he left here to go to Butler County Community College. When I first met LaMonte, he was an impeccably dressed gentleman, red hair, always had a cane or swagger stick, and always going very briskly through campus. An excellent teacher. All the students enjoyed him, but he had some sort of a falling

- M: out on campus, and I am not sure to this day with whom or why, but anyway, he resigned to take a job at BC3 when it opened. The story goes, and this was before my time, that when he first came to Slippery Rock he rode a motorcycle and was dressed in jeans, and dressed rather casually in class, and that Dr. Weisenfluh who was then the president called him in and suggested to him that if he wanted to remain at Slippery Rock he was going to have to get dressed up a little bit. So the next day LaMonte was seen riding his motorcycle through Slippery Rock in a tuxedo. Apparently, ever since that, he just turned over a new leaf that he was going to be the best dressed person on campus, and he was. There was no question about that.
- B: I had a ride on his motorcycle once. He was a teacher in the Butler Elementary School before his college teaching, I think, and was a memorable teacher to those students. Remembered for more than his motorcycle.
- M: But he was very talented in a number of fields. I mean, he was an airplane pilot.
- B: He's a musician.
- M: Yes. And had done a lot of mountain climbing, and I mean just multitalented. And, I think, a real loss to our campus when he left.
- B: Yes. Someone out of the ordinary.

- M: Coach Thompson was still living when we first came here. He was certainly, I mean all the contacts that I had with him, he was always an upbeat gentlemen. I have never shook hands with a person with larger hands. My hand was always dwarfed in his. I kind of felt like a little six or seven year old taking hold of my father's hand because of his size. He was just a big, rawboned man.
- R: That's what he spanked his players with. I had an older sister and she had a big hand. Her hand was famous in our family. What about athletics? Did all the athletic programs, and our notoriety as an athletic school, did that have an impact on the registrar's office?
- M: I'm glad you asked because I should have had that in my notes. I was never asked as registrar to ever alter a grade, change a grade, look the other way on checking an eligibility list. I was never asked to do anything like that as far as athletics were concerned. By the way, I did check all the eligibility lists, and I normally checked them personally because there is always publicity in the paper about ineligible students in other institutions, and so I always saw that they were checked personally. I mean I might have somebody do the work or pull the information out for me, but I always checked it myself just to be sure that it was correct. There was never any question with anybody. I was never approached.

- B: That's a wonderful tribute to the integrity of that department.
- M: We talk about student athletes, and I think that's really what we have. Now granted, some of them aren't such great students, and some don't graduate, but yet they are here strictly to get an education, and nobody's going to give them a course in basket weaving to get them to be graduated.
- R: Do you suppose that's in any way tied to the fact that our coaching staff for a long time were also faculty, tenured, and so forth. Their job security, I mean, would remove some of the competitiveness that you might find normally. You know, where coaches could be fired overnight. I don't know that there is any connection.
- M: I don't know either, because if you look at the success that the Slippery Rock athletic teams have had over the years, I mean, you realize that the coaching has not been win at all costs. I think perhaps the few coaches that we've had who came in with that idea of coaching didn't really last or stay around for much more than a couple of years or less. I think our coaching, either faculty or nonfaculty coaching, has really been on a very professional basis.
- R: Who did the registrar report to? Were you kind of one on one with the President?
- M: Oh, it depended on what phase the moon was in. At times, I reported directly to the President. At times, the Vice-president

M: for Academic Affairs. Never to the Vice-president for Student Affairs although there occasionally was talk of that. I was normally able to talk folks out of that because academic records are academic rather than student affair type record. Then to one of the other deans at one time or another. So, anyway, it was kind of pushed around.

R: Has the evolution of privacy laws, as they relate to academic records, did you go through a lot of that stuff where you had to change the rules in your office?

M: Really not a lot because we were always very conscious of the privacy of academic records. In fact, I always used to say, it's just like your own bank account. It's your information, and you know what amount of money that you've got in the bank, and the bank teller could look it up, but the bank teller doesn't go home and talk about nor does anybody else. And academic records ^{are} is just the same. Even before the Family Rights and Privileges Act was even discussed or thought about, we were always very conscious of student privacy.

B: You talked about some of the problems of the disciplinary board early on and that they are different from today. Are the students different today from those you encountered?

M: The students themselves aren't different, but you have more ability to get yourself in trouble or more opportunity I think maybe to get yourself in difficulty because of the

✓ M: fact that alcohol now is much more readily available in Slippery Rock than it was twenty years ago, complete with a State store, and an outfit which sells beer right in the borough. Drugs, of course, are much more on the whole national scene than they were then. A lot more students have cars and vehicles. We have a lot more students, period. And just in size, you get a microscopic view of the population of the country. Here's three or four hundred students in apartments which we did not have earlier, and if you put that many students together without supervision you can expect a little more trouble when you add alcohol and cars, or drugs and cars or whatever. So I don't think the students are different, I think their opportunities are different.

B: Earlier they had to live on campus? They had to be in the dorms?

M: When I first came here why, I think, all the women had to live in the dormitories, and I know they all had hours. Men didn't have hours, and I believe that some of the upperclassmen were permitted to stay off campus. Maybe some of the upperclasswomen were too, but not many. Maybe when you were only student teaching. I'm a little bit hazy on that.

R: I'm curious about the changes that have taken place in the length of time it takes for people to graduate from college. I know that when I was student, and for years and years while

R: I was a teacher, an 18 hour course load was considered a fairly normal load. And you could graduate in four years, or if you went to summer sessions, you could get out in three years. And you could crack along and get yourself a college degree kind of efficiently. Now there are so many people who are taking 13 hour loads, 14 hour loads, 15 hour loads, and the length of time it takes to graduate has escalated. I wonder if that was necessary?

M: One other item that you didn't add is that we've also shortened the number of weeks in the semester.

R: I won't want to talk about that.

M: When you and I were in school, we were in school with a lot of the G.I.'s just coming back from World War II, and in that stage there were a lot of mature men. You talk about non-traditional students in school now, I began college right out of high school, and I was the nontraditional student in the classes because most of the people in my class were 25 to 40 years old. And most of them were men because they were just back from World War II, and the G.I. bill was paying their way and in turn they were ready to get out and get about their life's business. So 18-21 hour loads were not unusual. Everybody doesn't want to stay in school forever. Our students today I don't think have that motivation to really get out. So it's not unusual to be in school for five years for an

- M: undergraduate degree. It's not the number of hours you have to take because you can still graduate with 128 hours, so with that you should be able to take 16 a semester and do it.
- R: Exactly 16 a semester will get you out in four years.
- M: Of course, that's what I said.
- R: I think I am appalled by that. By the fact that their regular course load has dropped. I try not to let that happen with my advisees. If they were pretty good students, I wanted them taking 18 hours, but it seemed to me that there were a lot of other things at work that was causing people to take 13 hours. I probably don't understand what my problem was.
- M: As registrar, I used to publish every semester a summary of the number of hours that was generated by all the students and also the average semester hour load of undergraduates and graduates and so forth. It was very obvious that the average semester hour load was dropping all through the 1980's. In fact, I think even right through the 1970's it was dropping. Not by much, but by just a percentage point every semester or something like that. And, of course, it starts to finally show up in the fact that you are going to have to take four and a half, or five years.
- R: I thought it was because the state needed the money, but it's not fair to say that.

M: Well, no, I don't think so.

B: One thing I wanted to mention and it is a digression, but you were so extremely helpful when the library was starting its library research course, and with advice on how to schedule, and how to set up class hours, and when students would have time take that, and I don't think we could have managed without that help. Did other departments ask for that help, or did they just ^{decide} we're going to schedule now and that's all we will do?

M: Thank you for the compliment. Some did ask for help and others would never ask for help. Sometimes their scheduling showed it. More than once I've called a department and said, do you realize you have scheduled two major courses at the same period on the same day, and that your majors need both these courses as seniors for graduation, and how are you planning on getting them the course? Oh, we had never thought about that. For some folks*, scheduling did not come easy for them.

R: What about summer sessions? We've done fairly well. Isn't there a lot of competition for the available students who are willing to go to college in the summertime, and haven't we done pretty well in our attracting them?

M: I don't know what the statistics are for the present summer, and now since I'm out of the registrar's office I've kind of lost track of all of that, but yes I think really we have done

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M: very well. As long as we're willing to offer courses without calling them contingency courses, I think we'll do well. Some of the institutions got into trouble by making all of their courses contingency courses, or many of them contingency courses, then canceling a lot of courses. And when students couldn't depend on the school offering certain courses summer after-summer, they said, in order to be sure I can get into a summer course, I'll go someplace else. California State University here at California, Pennsylvania, learned that lesson about the middle of the 1980's. Their summer school was declining tremendously because of their lack of firm courses.

B: So reviewing the parts of your career that you told us about, you were a principal of a high school, vocational school. Did you teach in public schools also?

M: Yes. I have run the gamut. I have taught math in high school and junior high. I was an elementary principal. I was a high school guidance counselor and set up a guidance program in a high school of about 1500 students. I was an assistant high school principal. I was a high school principal of a comprehensive vocational school and I've been at Slippery Rock. And as a part-time job, I worked as an off-campus coordinator for Muskingum College to sort of just keep myself out of trouble.

R: Did you enjoy getting back to the classroom?

M: Yes. I did. I've told a number of people that the telephone doesn't ring and people don't call and complain about the fact that transcripts aren't out.

Almost forgot one thing. If I can reminisce just a little bit more, and here again I don't have dates. But back in the early 1970's, and, Leah, perhaps you remember this, when the faculty unionized. Where you here at that time?

B: Yes. I was.

M: There was considerable debate. This was not an easy hurdle for a lot of faculty members. At the time that the faculty union vote came up, many faculty were very strongly for remaining with the Pennsylvania State Education Association [PSEA]. The time that the vote was finally taken, PSEA lost and so we then became unionized with APSCUF. Then as a part of the negotiations, as you recall, there was a move to drop a number of people from faculty status including librarians and administrators. And after much discussion it was agreed that the faculty would be divided into a Unit One which would be the teaching faculty and included the librarians, I believe.

B: That's right.

M: And a Unit Two which included administrative faculty. The administrative faculty were only to be the individuals who

- ✓ M: had faculty rank before the unionization took place. Then unfortunately, there was a discrepancy between the actual pay schedule of Unit One and Unit Two faculty from the mid-seventies through the early 1980's, where the Unit Two people were being paid less than those of the teaching faculty. A number of us contributed to a class action lawsuit which was finally resolved after seven or eight years which finally got rid of the Unit Two faculty salary and got everybody on the same faculty schedule. I have been involved with APSCUF for several years on the APSCUF executive committee here on campus and with a lot of Unit Two activities. In fact, I have about a thousand dollars invested in that lawsuit which I don't know if I ever actually regained or not. But the unionization, and I'm not too well versed to actually discuss how it all transpired, but I'm sure it would be an interesting topic for someone who was much closer connected to it than I was as to the politics of campus unionization.
- R: Wilma has given us one interview, and I thought in kind of great detail about very complex information.
- B: But I don't think she spoke of the Unit One, Unit Two problems. That's something that should not be forgotten. It was so difficult because Unit Two people had twelve month contracts, different pay scales, and certainly professional in every way, and yet were somehow ignored on a lot of issues.

M: Yes. That was a very poor decision. I'm glad that people finally recognized it, but it took a long time for it to be done.

B: Well that was a management ploy to try to divide the union, I think, to have a smaller group.

M: Probably so.

R: So we were going to talk about some other memorable people.

M: Well, most of these are contemporaries of the three of us, Mark Shiring being the first one that comes to mind. Mark, I mentioned earlier, was the Public Relations for Dr. Carter. He had taught in Butler, I believe, before coming to Slippery Rock, but I don't know exactly what he taught. Then I really had a lot of contact with him as he was teaching Orientation to Education courses. I don't know of an individual who ever spent more hours, and worked harder with more people than he did. He was not required to be here but to maintain five hours of office hours per week, but he was generally here by eight to eight-thirty in the morning, and frequently was here well after five o'clock in the evening, meeting and counseling with the students. To me he was always remarkable and is always remarkable for the fact that by the third day of class he would normally know all of his students' names and could walk across campus three or four years later and could still call that student by name as they walked by. I walked with him a

M: number of times, and he would speak to someone, or they would be in a conversation, and he would say, I had them in class three or four years ago, and he could call them by name just as slick as a whistle. Mark was a very dynamic teacher, an excellent teacher.

I think Jack Dinger was also an interesting individual. Jack probably brought, in fact, did bring more recognition or as much recognition to Slippery Rock as our athletics ever did. Jack was in the realm of special education. If I were to pick out an outstanding department of the 1970's, I would say the Special Education Department, thanks to Jack Dinger, was that, and because of all of the government grants and so forth which he was able to get for the University. Very knowledgeable individual. And here again, a very good teacher. Interested in young people.

We could talk about Billy Wayne Walker. Wayne came here as a professor in the School of Education. A couple years later was the acting assistant to the Vice-president for Academic Affairs and later then moved from there over to the Dean of of the School of Education. Wayne could always calm an argument. He could always get you to agree with him, and usually it was with a story or a joke. I never saw him excited or bent out of shape. Now he could well have been irritated, but he was able to always mask it behind a story

M: or a joke. When Wayne retired, I think, the school lost an excellent diplomat that was able to deal with a variety of people and a variety of problems. He generally kept people pretty happy around him. I think probably his farewell dinner attested to that, the number of stories that were told and the number of people that were in attendance there.

As far as good teaching is concerned I've got to mention Dick Medve in the Biology Department. I think Dick probably personifies what an excellent teacher ought to be. He enjoys students, and he makes things very personable and very practical. If you've ever followed him around on a nature walk or in one of these nature workshops, wildlife, wildflower workshops or something, he has high expectations of everybody in the class and he makes it all so interesting that you want to bend over backwards to see that Dr. Medve is not disappointed in your work. He is certainly an asset to the campus. And, of course, his text or his cookbook of wild plants, although I don't have one, I'm sure I'd be afraid I wouldn't recognize them as wildlife plants too well, but it is apparently a real classic cookbook.

Another mover in the science area is Murray Shellgren, now retired. A lot of the water analysis in the Slippery Rock area as far as keeping streams clean and so forth has rested on research which Murray Shellgren did, and the fact that all of the strip

✓ M: mines and the coal mines in the Lake Arthur area were plugged, Murray ~~apparently~~ was quite involved, and has extensive notes and research on that and was considered an expert on the streams of this area.

Those are the people who just jump out at me as I start thinking about outstanding individuals.

B: I think you've told us some very important pieces of Slippery Rock history. Those pieces start to fit together but only certain people have those pieces. It's very important to hear what you had to say.

M: The only thing I didn't mention here was that I was going to talk about the physical plan. I was going to tell you that Harner Hall sits on the entrance to a coal mine. Here again I think it's a case of the placement of buildings by people in the Harrisburg area. When they built Harner Hall, it was built over a coal mine, and there was one episode where the coal mine opened apparently after a hard rain or something, and thousand of gallons of mine water flowed through the lounge of Harner Hall. I don't remember if it got into the rooms, I don't believe it did. I think it was just in the lounge area.

R: Only in Slippery Rock can a coal mine flood a room.
Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

M: I hope I haven't rambled too much.

B: No, we learned a lot. Thanks so much.