Rock Voices: The Oral History Project of SRU
Terry Steele Interview
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Bailey Library, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania
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JN: I'm Jared Negley, and today is Friday, January 7th, 2021 [sic]. It's approximately 10:50 a.m., and I'm here interviewing Terry Steele for the Rock Voices Oral History Project. Terry, thank you so much for being here for this interview with me today. I really appreciate it.

TS: I do too. It's good to be a part of it.

JN: So, yeah. I'm just gonna run down some of these questions here and we're gonna see how it goes, and hopefully increase our knowledge of you, and also the university. So, kind of basic biographical information about you: your name, date of birth, where you're from originally, and some of your education.

TS: Okay. Terry Steven Steele. I was born October the 4th, 1947 in Stillwater, Oklahoma. My dad was a professor at Oklahoma A&M, and that semester he flunked the star athlete in one of the pre-med classes. So the president called him in and said, "Floyd, you need to pass our star athlete," and my father said, "I can't," and then the president said, "No, I'm telling you to," and my father said, "Then I resign." So, my father was a professor who resigned out of integrity, and we moved to Wichita, Kansas when I was two months old and [I] grew up in Wichita. And he had a veterinary license, so he was a veterinarian. He just didn't do professorship anymore.

JN: And was that a big influence on you as a teacher yourself?

TS: Well, yeah. For my life. You know, I mean, if you don't have integrity what's left? So, yeah.

JN: Great, so you said you grew up, I guess, eventually in Kansas, and then from there, [where] would your education lead?

TS: Well, Kansas was a surprisingly good place to grow up in the '50s because, I don't know how it is now because I don't go back anymore, but I had a really good education, good high school. Wichita State was a wonderful state university; got my bachelor's degree in Music Ed[ucation] there. I actually taught in high school for two years in Wichita after I graduated, and then decided to get a master's degree because I wanted to go into college work. So, I went down to North Texas State and did my master's and worked on my doctorate for four years. And then in '75 was offered the position at Slippery Rock State Teacher's College. It was actually called SRSC at the time: Slippery Rock State College.

JN: Yes.

TS: So, I started as Instructor of Music in August of '75 at SRSC.

JN: So, how did that connection come about from Texas all the way here to Slippery Rock?

TS: Well, I had never been to Pennsylvania, but when I was looking nationwide for college jobs, Slippery Rock came up and I thought, "Well that's kind of a funny name." But you know it had a Music Department and so I applied. And my qualifications fit what they wanted so they brought me in for an interview. And during my interview they said, "So, how's Dorothy?" and I just kind of was stunned and I looked at them and they could see that I was uneasy, and then one of the faculty members said, "You know, you're from Kansas, like The Wizard of Oz."

JN: [Laughs].

TS: My mother's name was Dorothy, and I thought they had done some kind of weird background check on me or something, or knew my parents. We all laughed about that. So I got hired.

JN: Wonderful, and so what were you initially hired to do?

TS: I was hired to teach all the woodwinds. So, I taught clarinet, sax, flute, oboe, and bassoon, and we had a smattering of all of the above. And I'm not a performer on oboe and bassoon, but I went through the Music Ed process, so I was knowledgeable enough to teach it. And fortunately my wife was a flutist, so I had a good flute background being with her. And then I was a professional performer in clarinet, sax, so that was okay. Also, I taught History of American Music, History of Jazz, and various other classes as needed throughout the first several years.

JN: Yeah.

TS: Until we grew. And actually, in '75, we did not have a degree. We had a dozen faculty, several part-time people, but there was no music degree granted. The students that we had that were majoring in music were Music Therapy majors. They could come for two years and then transfer to Duquesne and get a Music Therapy degree at Duquesne. Sue Shuttleworth, who started the year after me, was our music therapist, and she, along with other members of the faculty, worked really, really, hard to get a music therapy degree. Which they got at about the time that we moved into Swope [Music Hall], and then it was followed very closely by the Music Ed degree. We all worked on the Music Ed degree very hard in the late '70s.

JN: Wow. So that's really interesting; I didn't realize. I mean it has to start somewhere, from apparently two faculty, then to sixteen, and then you build the degrees. I'm just curious, did they hire you specifically for your jazz background?

TS: No, but that was something that they wanted. The man before me, who was a pianist and his name was Joe Rohm, and he had a little kind of a jazz ensemble that I'm not even sure that it met for credit. They saw that that was something that the students really liked, and the faculty liked it, and it was an area that they wanted to pursue. When I came in as a woodwind player they said, "Do you have jazz experience?" and I said, "Yes." So that was not the reason I was hired but it was certainly part of the reason that they liked me, because I had that diversity.

JN: Yeah, that's interesting. I was doing a little digging through some of the course catalogs. I found in the 1974-76 [catalog] they had a stage band. And I don't even know what that . . . it said "Stage Band" and then to "Neophonic Orchestra pieces."

TS: Well, that was Joe Rohm. That wasn't me. The Neophonic was the name of a band that Stan Kenton had back in the '60s. Stan Kenton and the Los Angeles Neophonic. He had a jazz band that had French horns and other classical instruments in it, and he would--Mr. Kenton would--play big, extravagant pieces.

JN: Yeah.

TS: It was some wonderful music that came out of that. But I think Joe just, he was trying to figure out something that was nontraditional. So that kind of got it off the ground. And then when I came in, we really didn't have the students to make a Neophonic, I mean, we didn't have any French horn majors and we didn't have any strings, so I just called it the Jazz Ensemble. So, when I started in '75 it became the Jazz Ensemble.

JN: Yeah, that's nice and I noticed that because we're missing a couple [issues] but by the '80-'82 [catalog], that's the Jazz/Rock Ensemble. So, I'm just curious, was that a decision on your part to attract more students because of the popularity of the fusion jazz at that time?

TS: Sure. Yeah, all of the above. The jazz/rock came from jazz and rock influencing each other. It came from Blood, Sweat & Tears and Chicago from a decade earlier. There were a lot of things going on in the '70s and '80s that was fusion. But, in addition to that, this is Slippery *Rock*, so the Rock was part of the name of the university. So it just kind of fit together. And students gravitated. In those early years I had a lot of students that came that weren't music majors, but they were very good musicians. So, somebody majoring in mathematics or education but not Music Ed that was a really good trumpet player or a trombone player, they were welcome in my band. We did a lot, we played around the community a lot, we played in high schools a lot even in those early days.

JN: Nice. So by the time I was here in the 2000s it was no longer the Rock Ensemble it was just the Jazz.

TS: No, we dropped the "Rock." I think the "Rock" was dropped in the '80s sometime, late '80s maybe.

JN: Which, I guess, that sort of follows the fusion's popularity and then back to now.

TS: And truly we didn't play jazz rock music really much after that. It was a jazz ensemble, so we were playing, really, jazz music for the big band at that point.

JN: Cool, so then let's see. Moving on to the next pre-chosen question. So, you started in the State College era, and you continued through the University era. So, anything, thoughts or recollections to the differences between the era? Maybe the change from the College to the University might have affected the Music Department at all?

TS: Well, you would think so because that's a huge leap between a state college and a university, but in reality, our duties and our classes in the Music Department were unaffected by the change. We were all proud to be a university at that point, but we were also proud of what we did as being a state college. So, as I look back on, interestingly, the first three years I was here we had three different presidents. I came under Al Watrel's last year; he hired me. The next year was Jim Roberts; [he] was an interim. And the following year was Lawrence Park who was here for a couple of years. So, it was a revolving door of presidents. But then after Park . . . I think it was Herb Reinhard who was next up after Park, and things really got on the ground and it might've been under Herb that we became a university. The presidents really, even though they had their strengths and weaknesses, didn't affect us directly. I would say looking back on how the department was affected in big ways, getting the Music Therapy degree, followed by the Music Ed degree, and moving to Swope were the three things. And that was in the first few years I was here.

JN: Oh, okay.

TS: And even though I was here for thirty-three years, those first three years were the biggest change. So, everything else, once we got into Swope and we had our two degrees things flowed from year to year with incremental adjustments and, you know, added a faculty or two, and added classes, and gained more credibility throughout the area. Students would choose us over YSU or Duquesne. And that whole time in the '80s and '90s was a really good growing time. But there wasn't a quantum leap like there was in the late '70s when we got those two degrees and moved to Swope; that really put us on the map.

JN: Yeah. I do want to talk about that move to Swope. So, I guess that sort of covers the next question, I don't know if there's anything else you wanted to mention about that, just the sort of general changes of the department while you were here, but I think it was pretty well.

TS: There is an interesting story about Swope that most people don't know. We were involved with the architects and the planning because they came to us and said, "What do you want? How big of a band and orchestra room do you want? How big of offices do you want, and where should they be, and what floor?" So, pretty much, the department decided how the building was going to be laid out in terms of offices, and rehearsal spaces, and recital hall, and so forth. Well, George

Bentel was the organ teacher at the time, and he was really rallying to get a pipe organ in the recital hall. We were all about that too because we thought that's a nice thing not only for a student who wanted to major in music and be an organist, but also recitals and other concerts, whatever. So, the building was finished and we did a walkthrough, and the architects or the builders had put up the wall, the back wall of the recital hall, with no room for an organ pipe. We were ready to move in, and this was maybe the summer before we moved in, and they had to tear out the whole wall. They brought a crew in, they tore out the back wall of the recital hall, and built a platform and wall that the organ pipes could be put in. It was a pretty interesting breakdown of communication, basically. It wasn't a breakdown between Music Department and architects, it was a breakdown between architects and builders. And so, I don't know that the organ pipes were even in; I don't think they were in when we moved into the building, but soon after.

JN: Yeah, I was trying to find some information about it, and it seems like Swope the building was in plans since like the '60s.

TS: I don't have any information about that. When I got there in '75, we were in the planning stages. And it felt like the early planning stages because there wasn't anything concrete, there hadn't been any meetings with architects yet. But it wouldn't surprise me that people had been planning for a long time because our base was in West Hall, which wasn't big enough for us so we had to have some classes in Miller Auditorium above the entry. The lobby of Miller Auditorium had two classrooms above it, so we gave classes there and also, I think, a class or two in McKay Ed building. My office was in Miller Auditorium next to one of the classrooms and I shared it with Cal Holden, and then there were two other faculty on the other side above the other classroom. Most of our classes were in West Hall, and at night when I would go back up to do some planning for the classes the next day, occasionally I would see the bat fly over my head. The bathrooms in the basement always had an odor to them that you didn't spend any time down there in the bathrooms. And I'm so glad that Carruth-Rizza, you know, the hall has the name Carruth-Rizza. Is it Carruth-Rizzo Hall now?

JN: Yes.

TS: The remodeling has just, it's beyond belief, it's just wonderful now. I was so happy to see that.

JN: Yeah, I saw a reference to that, so the Music Department was--the three buildings were West Hall, Miller Auditorium, and then you said McKay as well?

TS: Yeah, just for a class or two. Really, our department was in West Hall. That was where our headquarters was. It's just that we needed a little more space for the classes.

JN: So, how did that work with--before there was Swope how did that work with the students? Because I know at Swope they have all the practice rooms, and you have your own office to teach lessons in. Like, what were they doing? Were they just wherever they could find an empty classroom they would practice in?

TS: Yup, and we did have some rooms that were used as practice rooms in West Hall in the basement. But that was one of the reasons that we needed to move out of there because with a growing Music Department we needed to have practice rooms. So, it was actually holding them back to not have the space. And that was one of the things that led the administration to fight for us, to get the state money to build Swope. Interestingly, the very first planning of Swope I remember being Music and Dance. They thought that this new building at the lower end of campus could house the Music Department and Dance Department, and we were excited about that because it's always nice to work together with the Dance Department. I've done that many times. But, as soon as we saw the budget and, well it wasn't just us it was the architects and the people in the administration they said, "Look, you have this much room, so the Music Department needs it more than anybody. We're going to just make this Music Department." So, that's how we went with that. And the Dance Department, they had the Field House and they had it all. That worked for them for a long time. I'm not sure, they might be more spread out now.

JN: Yeah, well now they finished Miller [Auditorium]. They finished remodeling Miller.

TS: Oh yes. So, I haven't been in there. I want to go see Miller so badly; I bet it's just stunning.

JN: Yeah, I haven't been inside it yet but I've seen some images and it looks like they really . . . .

YS: It looks great from the outside.

JN: I think they have at least two dance studios to rehearse in and everything. Okay, it's interesting, I was going to ask you about that because it seems like at one time they were thinking of Communication, Art, and Music and, like you said, maybe going between different departments, but there just really wasn't the budget to have anyone but Music is basically how it turned out.

TS: We had a lot of big plans early on. Basically, the state trimmed those plans with the amount of money they were going to give. You might want all of this and all of that but this is how much money you're gonna get so this will be what you get.

JN: Also, in terms of, again, you working with the architects. I remember when I was in school, it was always going around that--because right now there's that parking lot that's the Swope parking lot, but in the early 2000s when I was here was when they actually paved that because it was just grass for a while. And I remember hearing that was supposed to be more of Swope that they didn't have the budget to finish it. Is there any truth to that?

TS: Well actually, I do have a pretty funny story. Yeah, it was just grass with a stone parking lot. There wasn't a paved parking lot behind Swope. And so, it was not uncommon for faculty to get there at 9 or 10 o'clock for morning and afternoon classes and not have a space to park.

JN: Sure.

TS: So, we would park at the end on the grass or, you know, wherever we could find, and get a parking ticket. And so, I got a parking ticket and I went over to ask if I could have it waived because I'm a faculty member. And I think at that time, they were waiving them for a while, and then they just stopped waiving them. So, I paid the parking ticket. And I won't say who, I won't use his name, but a man that was in charge of the decision about parking lots saw me coming out of the police building (or wherever it was) [where] I'd been appealing. And I had a BMW convertible at the time and he said, "Oh Terry, I really like that car." And I said, "Well, thank you, it is a great car." And he said, "I'd like a ride in it sometime." And I said, "Well, it's interesting that you should say that because we've been trying for several years to get the parking lot paved behind Swope." And he said, "Yeah, I know, it's just we have so many projects on campus." And I said, "If you'll pave that lot, I'll just give you my car to drive; you can drive this car." And he said, "Seriously?" and I said, "Yes," and it was paved. I was kind of joking. I didn't care if he drove my car, that was fine. But I guess he loved that car so much that he thought, "Okay, I'm gonna put you guys at the top of the list; I want to drive that car." So, he drove it and we got some paving.

JN: Hey, you do what you got to do I guess, to get to the top of the queue. But when Swope was first built and you first moved in . . . I found this letter to the editor of *The Rocket*. I don't know if you recall, I think he was a student, George McDowell?

TS: Of course! Yeah.

JN: Okay, I found this letter to the editor where he had a lot of complaints and I was wondering if you could confirm some of these. There [were] leaks and there was water in the ground level, the air conditioning units just stopped working, the elevator was blowing fuses and just didn't work.

TS: Well, all of those things happen with a new building. I shouldn't say they always do but, it's not uncommon for little things to go on until they can be fixed for good. Yes, one of the rehearsal rooms in the basement across from the lockers on the basement level did, it had a leak, and what they had to do is to go out and get a backhoe and dig up and reseal that side. Because there were no windows in that room and it went against the ground and it just seeped in, and they didn't use waterproofing enough to seal it. So, once that was sealed there was never any more water there. As far as the elevator, I think the company figured out what it was and it stopped blowing fuses and it was fine. With the air conditioning, that's something that was a big problem for many years, and what they did, and this is not something that we asked for, it's something that the architect thought would be a good thing, is a climate-controlled building. And now, you would think climate control was a really good thing.

JN: Yes.

TS: But we couldn't even open the windows. So, you couldn't get fresh air, everything had to be recirculated. It was computerized and there was a man in New Castle who worked for the university that sometimes, when we had a concert on Sunday afternoon and we went in at noon

and it was too hot or too cold, we had to call his number in New Castle and he'd get on his computer and type in and then the heater would come on to heat it up or cool it down. Which just seemed goofy to us. I mean why is this? So, that went on for a long time, and it was frustrating. The windows, there was a special key that you could use to unlock the windows and they had a hinge on the top. Now these, I'm talking about an office window, so our office windows were like 18 inches wide and six feet high, so it was a long, tall window with a hinge at the top. You unlocked it at the bottom with this special key, and only Barb Frankenburg had that key. She was the most powerful person in the building, even though she was the secretary, she had some power. So, you'd go to Barb and you'd get the key and unlock it and then you could prop it open and get some fresh air. And I did that regularly just because I like to have fresh air in the springtime or in the fall; it's nice. Or if it's too warm in the building or whatever. So, of George's complaints, and you know, he was not inaccurate with those complaints, things were all fixed except that the way it was designed with those windows that you couldn't just put up and down or whatever; that remained a problem. I don't know that it was a problem for everybody, I just felt it would be nicer to have a building where you had some flexibility with fresh air.

JN: Well yeah, I don't feel like you opening your office window is gonna mess up the climate of the whole building.

TS: And I don't know that fresh air ever hurt a person either. But, really the climate control, which was the buzzword at the time, seemed like a really good thing, but it just meant that everything was recycled, and it was all enclosed, and all that machinery was piping it through the ductwork and the windows were shut. I'm not a claustrophobic person, but I did grow up in Kansas and I like fresh air; so that's sort of where I come from.

JN: And it's also funny, you mention the pipe organ story because that was also one of his complaints that the campus movers were kind of begrudgingly moving all the pipes for the pipe organ and were kind of dragging their feet which, I guess considering it was already supposed to be installed when the building was built but they had to tear out that wall. . . .

TS: Well, I think the movers, they might've been moving an old organ from upper campus down to storage in Swope or something. Because my memory is that we actually got a new pipe organ, new pipes and a new organ when Swope was built. But, I also understand, the guys that work for maintenance and have to move things around, that's a thankless job. Because it's hard, hard work.

JN: Yeah, for sure.

TS: Although, I remember one guy and I think his name was Cecil McBurnie, this was thirty or forty years ago. They had to move a piano from one part of campus to another, and they rolled it onto a flatbed and strapped it on, and he sat and played ragtime on it while they moved. Here's a maintenance man who is twice as big as me sitting there playing ragtime on a piano as it went across campus. I just wished I'd had a video of that, because it was so cool.

JN: That's amazing. So then, what were some of your first impressions of the college and university? Especially, you said you'd never even been to Pennsylvania before, let alone Slippery Rock.

TS: Well, since you know that I spent my early years in Kansas and Texas, I hadn't seen many trees. Because, you know, the trees grow on rivers in Kansas and Texas and most of the rest is prairie or farmland, and we don't have woods pretty much. So, when we moved here we just thought we had gone on a vacation. There were forests everywhere we went. I mean every time we had a weekend we would take the car out and drive and deliberately get lost just driving all over western Pennsylvania, just seeing the beautiful country. So, in terms of us landing here not being in Pennsylvania before, it was just overwhelming to see such a beautiful state.

The thing that I liked about Slippery Rock is the faculty that we had then, and since then too; we became very good friends. We had lots of picnics together and hung out. And not many of them lived in Slippery Rock or even close. They lived in New Castle, or Sewickley, or Butler, or other places, but we'd get together and it was a really collegial group of people. And what we found with students is they were all really good young people. They didn't have attitudes; they didn't think they were better than others; they just came and they wanted to learn. And the reason I say that is because where I went to graduate school there were two thousand music majors and it was just fighting and scratching to get to the top, and so there was a huge amount of competition and bad attitudes and everything to go along with a more competitive school. Well, we weren't a competitive school; we didn't even have a degree at the time. So, we were basically a service department servicing other departments, or humanities classes and things like that. And so, the students that we did have were just really neat kids. I mean, I told you when you walked in today that last night we were at one of my former students' homes. She's 65 years old now. She was only nine years younger than me when she was a student.

JN: Did you find that sort of quality of student was still able to kind of continue even as the university grew, the Music Department got larger?

TS: Absolutely, because into the '80s and '90s as we grew, as our reputation grew, and we became more of a serious Music Department with both Music Therapy and Music Ed degrees, and people from all around this area of the country are noticing us. It didn't change the type of student that we got because a music student that wanted to go to Juilliard is just gonna go to Julliard. So, we didn't get a student that comes here and is not happy. Basically, every student who came in was happy here and graduated. We had very, very few that dropped out. They liked our department, and it felt good.

JN: And then, sort of in the similar vein, from 1975 to 2007, maybe even general changes in the university? Was there anything you witnessed there that you thought was for the better or even for the worse of just general university changes?

TS: There was nothing for the worse that I remember. I suppose budget constraints because there were times when the State System just didn't have enough money to spread around, and all the state colleges were trying to get buildings done or expand. And it was hard. But, other than that I just . . . I can only speak for Slippery Rock. It was a steady, progressive climb to be who we are now, and I didn't feel there was any time where we had a fallback or anything, it's just been very steady and good. You know, when the money has been there from the state we got some building projects going. If you had taken an aerial photo in 1975 and an aerial photo today and looked at the two it would just be astonishing with how different it looks. Over those 40 years there's been a lot of great projects that have come to make our campus what it is now.

JN: Going back a little bit, I know we talked about this briefly when I got here, but the music building Swope is named after Claire M. Swope who, I think overlapped; he was here when you were here. He retired a few years later, and according to *The Rocket*, he was twenty-four years the chairman of the Music Department, and he helped grow it from two to sixteen faculty members. Outside of things like that and a few pictures, we don't know a lot about Claire M. Swope himself. So I'm wondering if you had any other recollections. I actually found this, I don't know if this'll help jog anything, but this is from, I think, the '76 yearbook. So, the faculty there. . . .

TS: Yep. Yeah. Oh my gosh. Yeah, there's Kate [Brennan] and Allen [Hersh]. Allen was chair when I came; he's next to Kate and Ed Sims. There's me with my long hippie hair. Dwight and Jean Baker, George Bentel, Chet O'Bannon, Cal Holden, Jim Uselman, Blase Scarnati, Maribeth Knaub, Nelson Cleary. Yeah, that was our faculty; it looks like 1975, probably. It probably was 1975. All good people. And Claire, when you read about him being the chair for two decades, you would think of this powerhouse person. But when you were around him, he just was very calm and quiet, and had a really wonderful vision of what the department could be. He was a very good educator, very smart man. I think he was here my first two years, so I got to know him. When he retired, he came to me and he had a case and he said, "Terry, I want you to have this," and I said, "Well what is it?" And he said, "Well, open it and see." And I opened it up and it was a C melody sax from the 1920s.

JN: Wow.

TS: And I said, "Oh, my gosh." I'd never even held a C melody sax, and these were the saxophones that were used back in Dixieland in the '20s. They were in the key of C, so you didn't need transposed music. You could stand next to a piano player and read off their music. And I said, "Why do you have this?" Because he wasn't a saxophone player, and he said, "You know, I've just had it for a long time and I don't even remember. But you're the saxophone teacher so you should have this." And I thanked him profusely, and when Jason Kush became the saxophone teacher here, I just passed it on, so he has that sax now.

JN: That's wonderful.

TS: It's staying with the saxophone teacher in Swope. But I did perform on it a lot. I might've even performed on it with you because we'd done so many Dixieland-type gigs.

JN: Yeah, with Joe Barth.

TS: So, yeah, old silver and it sounds real old-fashioned, but I've played many gigs on that old Dixieland.

JN: Those are fairly rare, right?

TS: There were a lot made back in the '20s, but they weren't made after that. And so, I wouldn't say that they're rare, but you don't see them really very often. It's not something that's really in the thousands of dollars. It would be worth several hundred dollars but not thousands of dollars. So, it's not a really expensive, rare item, but most people have never seen one.

JN: Yeah, I think I kind of remember you bringing that in every once in a while. So, when you first came to campus, who were the, I guess, leaders? You mentioned some of the presidents, but they're talking about deans, the unions when you first came, or the--this is just a standard question--"old timers, movers and shakers." What were your impressions of, I don't know if you'd call them the old guard, or the people that were there at the time?

TS: Well, the movers and shakers were the people in the departments that were doing good work, you know? I made friends with several of the Art Department people. Bob Crayne and Dick Wukich--wasn't a close friend with him because he was kind of a crazy guy and you know, but he had a heart of gold, and he actually helped me in the '90s bringing in a lot of famous jazz musicians. Michael Changnon was the photography teacher back in the '80s and '90s and he was a very close friend of mine. The Art Department had some really, really strong people. I think it was Jim Myford who made the sculpture in front of Swope. That was Jim Myford's construction, and the name of it is "Sing," and Kate Brennan is the one who paid for it. So, Kate--she was the chair of the Music Department back in the '90s, and she contacted Jim Myford and paid him whatever, however many thousands of dollars to make that. And so it was Kate that was responsible for that beautiful sculpture in front of the music building.

Other people, naturally the presidents are the people who make all the decisions. Chuck Faust--who was the provost in the '90s--he was very supportive of the Music Department and bringing in really famous people. And so, we were very fortunate to have him on our side during that time, and it was very lucrative. We had just a long list of amazing people: Billy Taylor, and J. J. Johnson, and Elvin Jones, and Tony Williams, and Kenny Burrell, and Paquito D'Rivera. I mean, the list just went on. John Scofield. And they were playing with my jazz band, they were performing, they were doing clinics. The way we did that is we had a relationship with Manchester Craftsmen's Guild during the late '80's and through the '90s. Marty Ashby with the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild would bring these people in and then give me a call and say, "Is there a time or a place to get this next month? Can we get this in? And, "He can do a concert and clinic." And I would

contact the administration and the three of us would work it out, and it happened several times a year, actually.

JN: Wow.

TS: And my students, I remember in the early '90s when Stanley Turentine came, and the kids who were playing sax were just, they couldn't even say anything to him. They were so in awe because it's Stanley Turentine. And he was like 6'4" or something, great big shoulders. But he was just legendary, and he was standing right next to these 18 to 19-year olds who were playing sax. It was a pretty wonderful thing for the jazz band kids at that time.

JN: So yeah, with all those clinicians you brought in or even the people that performed on campus, were there any that really struck out to you? I mean that was one memory, but more memorable for you? Like, heroes you got to meet, or people that were just maybe amazing clinicians, or that you didn't necessarily think they would be?

TS: Yeah. The most surprising thing was Elvin Jones because he was the drummer for John Coltrane in the '60s and basically changed how everybody thought about jazz drumming. But it was because of his powerful drumming, he was very, very aggressive. And so, when you hear those recordings it's just, it just sets you back, and you can't believe the power of him. And what surprised me was he was so soft-spoken that, when he did a clinic, you could barely hear him talk. I mean, seriously, he was whispering and here is this giant of the music/jazz industry that everybody just revered to be the most influential drummer of all time, and he talks just so softly. You had to lean forward to hear what he has to say. And he was also just really friendly.

I'm not really big on autographs but I had "A Love Supreme" LP at home so I brought it in, and I said, "Would you mind signing this?" And he took it from my hands, and he looked at the cover and just silently, he held it for ten seconds without saying a thing and opened it up and then just, almost in a meditative response, and he signed it: "To Terry: Love, Peace, Elvin." And my son has that album now. I passed it on to him. But I also had a Bill Clinton t-shirt on at the time because Clinton was running for president, and Elvin loved that. He wanted his picture taken with me and he put his hand over Bill Clinton and had this really funny, cheesy grin on his face with his arm around me. It was kind of crazy.

But the clinicians ran the whole gambit from not being very approachable to being just almost like another faculty member, just wanting to hang out with the kids, and just being available. I very specifically remember Paquito D'Rivera when he performed with the band. We played an arrangement of "'Round Midnight," and of course it was just an amazing performance. But when he got to the end he did a cadenza where he quoted probably thirty Thelonious Monk tunes, just weaving in and out. And things like that just blew me away. I mean, it's not just that he plays better than everybody else, it's that he has such a mind and such creativity that he can put all that together in a spontaneous way in a cadenza, bringing the whole history of Monk's compositions into the end of that tune. I mean it just, those moments just . . . I run out of words talking about how moving

it was for me and for my students, and for the audience sitting there watching it. It's incredible. So, it was a good ride.

JN: When you brought people in for clinicians, did they have charts that they would suggest that you play, or did they sort of come in and work with whoever you're working with, or did it kind of vary based on . . . ?

TS: Yeah, there was almost every situation you could come up with. Some of them didn't do a clinic. Some of them came in and just played solos on the music that we had. So they come up from Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, and Marty says, "He didn't bring any charts, can he just play solos on what you guys play?" And I said, "Sure." So, I don't remember specifically who did that but that worked fine because we were well-rehearsed on our own music, and he just came in and would play lots of choruses on open section in that tune. There were others like John Scofield who sent music ahead of time and we worked on it. And he in particular I remember because the music was really challenging. I mean it had multiple meters and lots of lines that were hard to fit together, and so, we worked really, really hard putting Scofield's music together. And then he came in, and as a musician I can say to you that the chord changes didn't often make sense with Scofield's. I mean, he would have melodic lines with chords that were just sort of, it's almost like "Giant Steps," they were just going in places that music doesn't normally go. But, when Scofield put his melodic stuff over it, it just made so much sense. He performed, well, he wrote beautiful music, and it was just really hard to play, but when you heard it performed it sounded so logical and correct. He was such a great guitar player, and still is.

JN: So, how long were you the main conductor of the Jazz Band? Because I know, by the mid-2000s, when I was here, [it was] Steve Hawk.

TS: Yeah. So, I had the jazz band from '75, the big band, from '75 to '97. And in '97, I went on sabbatical for a semester. Up until then I had been doing combos like a Dixieland band or a jazz combo that would play for a campus function, or we'd go out and play for Rotary, or things like that. So, we had an unofficial--a couple of unofficial--jazz combos that were doing that. And the Dixieland band--I had all written music so the students didn't have to be great improvisors to play in the Dixieland band because they had Dixieland tunes that had arrangements. But the jazz combos of course needed students who were good improvisors. So, I was doing that in addition to the big band through the '80s and '90s. And Steve started I think in '88. So, for the first ten years he was here he didn't have any part of the jazz program. But in '97 when I took a sabbatical, I went to Steve and I said, "Steve, you'd like to do the big band, wouldn't you?" And he said "Oh you bet, of course I would," so I said, "Okay. So the big band is yours. I'm gonna start the combo program with the combo on the books." Now, in '97 I'm not sure if I actually got it on the books, the combo as a class in '97, but it was soon after if not in '97. And then we had . . . most of the time we had two to three combos in addition to the big band, so Steve did the big band and I did the combos. And that went on that way until I retired.

JN: Yeah, that was one of the things I wanted to ask you about. Because I found on your info on the emeritus faculty page on SRU it does say ‘97 was when the combos were added as a class. So, I guess you sort of answered this already, but I don’t know if you want to mention anything else, because I was wondering if there is . . . I’m sure students were probably jamming themselves in different groups. And how much, like, you mentioned you had that Dixieland band, and that was just something you did on your own, on your own time I guess? With students that were willing. So, yeah, I mean, how much were you involved in just regular, just general combos at that time? Or was it mainly just that Dixieland crew, and then the students just kind of jammed, and maybe you peeked in every once in a while to throw them some pointers?

TS: It was partially as needed. Because maybe the administration, the dean or the president, would contact me and say, “Terry, is there a musical group or a little jazz group or something that could play for our alumni banquet?” And so, I would prepare the students and rehearse with them to get them to do that. And I would sometimes use the Dixieland band, which, the personnel changed over the years, we had that going for fifteen years or so. But if it was a situation where they wanted an open-ended jazz number for background music for something, then I would have the students who could improvise well, and put things together, and have the fake books and they’d rehearse and I would be with them most of the time to help coach them because, if they’re not very experienced they won’t come up with intros and endings. Even though they might know how to read a fake book they’d need extra help. So, I was putting a lot of time in. So, when the combos really went on the books then that was part of my load at that point, because I didn’t have the big band. And the big band takes a lot of time, as you know. When I handed that over to Steve that was part of his load.

But the big band . . . we played a lot, we played at state conventions throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s. Went to Russia in ‘91, which was quite an interesting thing how it happened. I think it was the fall of ‘89 there was a visiting person on campus from Russia, from Moscow. And he and Charlie Tichy of the Modern Languages Department, who was the person that was his interpreter, because Charlie made trips to Russia all the time [and] was fluent in Russian. So, the guy said, “Is there any jazz here at Slippery Rock?” And Charlie said, “Well, yeah, Terry Steele’s jazz band is giving a concert tomorrow night." And so the guy wanted to come, and Charlie, who’s probably never been to a jazz band concert, brought him and this man just flipped out. And he came up afterwards and he says, “I have to bring you to the Soviet Union." And I said, “Oh, yeah okay, whatever." He came over to my house and we talked about it afterwards and I still just, I thought, “Okay, I know you liked the concert but, you know." I didn’t tell him “No." I just said, “Sure, yeah whenever we can do that." Well then, a couple days later Charlie called me, and he said, “Do you understand that he’s really serious?” And I said, “Actually, I just thought that’s something he wanted. I didn’t know there was any possibility of it.” And Charlie said, “No, he really wants to make this happen, and he’s going back there, and he’s getting people to sponsor us, and we might be able to do this.” And so, for the next year and a half we worked back and forth and ended up with a ten-day trip.

We played seven concerts to standing-room-only audiences. The administration picked up a $25,000 tab for the tickets to get there. And then once we were in Russia they took care of us, they

fed us and bussed us around to all the places we were travelling. We played in, started in Moscow, and went down to the Ukraine and did those seven concerts, and then back to Moscow and flew home. What we found out much later is that probably it was the Russian mafia who was taking care of us. And I think Charlie knew that all along. He'd had so many trips to Russia that he knew how it all worked and everything. But they were very nice to us. And people just couldn't believe that these young musicians from America came and played music for them. Women were crying. They were bringing flowers to us between tunes on our concerts. It was just, a military soldier gave me a bottle of vodka. You know, I don't drink vodka, but knowing that they like trinkets and American things I bought a lot of cheap Mickey Mouse watches, so I gave the soldier a Mickey Mouse watch and he was so happy, he loved it. But it was a very emotional and eye-opening experience for all of us to see that powerful country, which, when you're there, it was really a third world country; you go into a store and there was nothing on any shelf. They were just really struggling. And we heard from people that we were there with regular citizens, that something big was going to change. And it didn't sound like they were trying to overthrow the government. They just knew that there was something big changing. Three months later the USSR dissolved. It was just three months after we were there. We were there in May, and I think it was August of '91 and there was no more Soviet Union. It was weird.

JN: Wow, that's almost like the last jazz tour then of the Soviet Union.

TS: Well yeah, because then it was just Russia, and then the different countries. Actually the way it was set up in this year and a half before we went, that we would do a tour and then we would host a Russian musical group. And the name of the group was Red Rage, and it was a rock group, and I was going to have to host them and get them around and everything. So I was working on that. So, they were going to come one year after we went there. And, as soon as the country fell apart, all of that just dissolved so they couldn't. Even if I was ready for them and had everything in place, which was starting to happen, they just dropped the ball because the government just fell apart.

JN: From that experience are there any particular, I don't know, maybe you or your students experienced kind of a cultural shock in terms of the differences of being there in the USSR or even versus the similarities that maybe you wouldn't have expected going the whole way over there?

TS: All of the above. The thing that really struck us so hard when we were there was how poor the country was and how they didn't have anything, they didn't have . . . there wasn't toilet paper. I mean it was pretty disgusting in these beautiful concert halls, and the bathrooms were just so disgusting. But there were gilded concert halls and people dressed up, and it was just so weird. It was really third world. But the people themselves were absolutely beautiful. It was like family. They welcomed us, they hugged us, they just thanked us over and over and over. Sometimes it was hard for us to leave because they just wanted to hang on to us. It was really emotional in that way, and I had many conversations with Russian people saying, "We didn't know that Americans were like you. We were told by our government to fear you, we were given this propaganda." And I said, "We were too." I grew up in the '50s and there was the Cold War. So it was very striking to

see, not only is their quality of life so challenging, but they had the same misconceptions about us as we had about them. Really lovely people, and we kept in touch for a long time with several. It was pretty neat.

JN: I guess that's one of the powers of music that can just bring people together and show the humanity of everyone. Wow, what a wonderful experience. So, I guess, getting back to the states here, and campus, were there any other people who influenced you or were really significant to you while you were here, while you were teaching? Other faculty or administrators?

TS: Well, my colleagues. People like Kate Brennan, who was just a wonderful friend, and department chair, and colleague. When she was chair, she just made it easy for us to work at our peak. She supported us with, well, one example is when I wanted to have a practice room for the students who were into jazz. And, by this time in the '90s we had a lot of students who were serious about playing jazz, so I wanted a practice room for those students that would have jazz CDs in them, and so they could go in and there would be a lock on the door. They'd all be issued a key, and they could go in, they could turn on the stereo unit, which we call it different now but I'm old-fashioned, so I'll just call it turn on the stereo. But there's a book that has the jazz tunes, the standards in it, and it's in the key if you play trumpet, or if you play sax, or if you were in a C instrument. And then the CD: you can play the tracks on the CD and just practice playing along with the rhythm section. This kind of thing has been around for decades, but wasn't available to SRU students unless they were buying those albums on their own. So, I just made the room to play these and outfitted it and Kate helped me with getting the money to do this because it cost a couple thousand dollars. And then I issued keys to all the students who wanted to go practice jazz, and so they could go in there any time, open the door, and practice with the Aebersold. They were Jamie Aebersold Company. So, it got dubbed the Aebersold room.

JN: Yeah, I remember it being called that when I was there.

TS: Because they were all Jamie Aebersold play-along albums. But the funny thing is, our president at the time was Bob Aebersold. I actually had a conversation with him about that and I said, "Bob, you know that we named a room after you in the music building?" and he looked at me and said, "You did?" And I said, "Yeah, it's the Aebersold room." and he said, "Really?" Then I told him the story and we both had a good laugh.

JN: So, is there anything else you'd like to mention about maybe other campus activities that you were involved in? You already mentioned a bunch with the jazz, but committees or anything you were on that maybe seem significant looking back?

TS: I am embarrassed to say that I was never active throughout campus on committees, and my hat's off to those professors who did spend time on committees, the promotional committees or the interdepartmental committees. I was so busy in Swope putting in sixty to seventy-hour weeks, and being there on weekends for rehearsals and concerts, I just simply didn't have the time. Plus, I was practicing myself because I was active as a professional musician in Pittsburgh. So, really, I

just, my weeks were used up to the point where there weren't any minutes left, so I never served on a university-wide committee. And I think that most people on those committees that were friends of mine knew that I wasn't available to do that because I was just too busy.

JN: Is that sort of the same for the union [APSCUF]? Were you involved with that very much, or were you still so busy with everything else?

TS: I wasn't a member of the union for the first few years just because I didn't think about it very much. Then, when I found out that my salary and benefits were there because people in the union fought for that I thought, "Well, that's appropriate I should be in the union." So I joined the union. But I never was a union organizer or even attended any meetings. I just felt that because of what the union did for me I should pay my dues, so that's why I did.

JN: And speaking of the gigging in Pittsburgh, when you first moved to Slippery Rock, to get to Pittsburgh that was kind of a pain, right? Because there was no I279; you either take Route 8 or you would take I79 and have to kind of come back in. I mean, after I279 was completed . . . obviously it's easier for you to get to gigs in the city, but did you find there was, even between the faculty, or bringing people in from Pittsburgh, or students going back and forth. Was there a qualitative change in the amount that people were able to bring Pittsburgh up to Slippery Rock and vice versa?

TS: Yup. It was huge. In the '70s and '80s--early '80s--I hardly ever played in Pittsburgh. I played a lot of things around here. I actually played in a Greek band for seven years; we'd get in a van and travel all the way up to Buffalo and play for Greek weddings and everything. But nothing in Pittsburgh until I279 went in. And then you're absolutely right, that just completely changed everything. Then, it was in the '80s that the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild started and brought in the jazz musicians, and that corresponded with I279 being there, so that made that connection work. Professionals coming up here, our students having Pittsburgh as an option going down to concerts or being with friends that they might know in Pittsburgh or whatever. It changed a lot. Then, when I was hired to play Civic Light Opera [CLO], I did that for twenty years and played in the symphony for twenty years, all of those things just fit. Still an hour, but it was a little less than an hour in my BMW.

JN: So, coincidentally, another colleague of mine recently interviewed Dick Wukich. He mentioned that in 1988 the Summer Arts Academy was started by the Art Department, and when I was in high school I actually went to the jazz portion of the Summer Arts Academy, and a lot of my friends did as well. How did that come about, just starting with art? When did jazz get added to that?

TS: That Summer Arts Academy at SRU was patterned after the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts, which had not only art and music, but theater, and creative writing, and dance. So, from maybe the '60s and certainly by the early '70s, the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts was a 5-week, intensive, live-in session for really, really outstanding 200 students from

around the state of Pennsylvania who had scholarship and they had no tuition; it was funded by the legislature. That was so immensely successful that Dick and others at SRU wanted to start an art academy in the summer that was patterned after that. And so, in '88 it started. I was at PGSA, I was teaching there, so I wasn't part of Slippery Rock then.

JN: What is PGSA, is that the Governor's?

TS: PGSA is Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts. So I was teaching at the Governor's School in the summers when it started. And I think the early years it was just art here, and I don't know how jazz was added. That was probably Dick and Steve Hawk who talked and got that going, because Steve was the director of the jazz portion. But then, when I quit the Governor's School in '95 because I wanted to be more accessible to playing CLO in Pittsburgh, I started working for the jazz academy. And then, one year, when Steve took off, I was the director of the jazz academy during that summer. And it was really, really successful. I mean, there were a lot of students. We had really good faculty that came in, and it was the place to be. It was pretty cool.

JN: I remember getting quite a bit out of that summer session. You can learn so much just by being immersed in it, especially students coming from disparate high schools where there might only be two other people that really play jazz to a level that they can get together with and improvise.

TS: You'd think, "how much can you learn in just a couple weeks?" But, it's so intense that you really do learn a lot, and then you take it back home with you and you keep learning because of all the information you got.

JN: Was that Art Academy one of the big connections you were able to make with the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild? Because I remember Dick Wukich was talking a lot about working with the Craftsmen's Guild and sort of modeling it with them as well.

TS: Right. Well, Dick's a very controversial person, because he's confrontational to people and there were a lot of people that didn't like that. But, with everything that I had to do with Dick was benefitting [to] me. I mean, he was really helpful to me when I had the jazz band because he had this connection with the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild with the art aspect, but he also was very supportive of the jazz as an art form. And so, he came to me and he said, "Terry, we have these heavy-hitting jazz guys that are famous coming into the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, and there might be an opportunity for them to come up and do concerts or clinics here." And I was like, "Man, I'm there. You don't have to convince me of anything more, you've got everything from me. I'll just open the doors and let's do it." So, it was Dick approaching me, and of course I was excited about it, and then Chuck Faust, who was the provost, was in on it too because we needed some money. Marty Ashby wouldn't just send people here for free because he was having to pay thousands of dollars to get them to Manchester. So, we actually helped in his cost, I mean, if somebody said, "I'll be at Manchester for three days, and it's gonna be five thousand dollars." Well, Marty would check with us, and if we could throw one thousand dollars in then that made his more possible. And Dick was the one who basically started that connection with Manchester.

So he was very helpful to me. And he also did a lot of really, I mean, we don't have to talk about Dick anymore, but he travelled to places and did water purification for people in third world countries; he really was an unusual guy. He had a big heart that most people didn't see because he was hard to be around sometimes. He was just so confrontational, but he had a great heart.

JN: Yeah, he did have a few controversial opinions in the interview. But I can definitely see that, especially with how he praised a lot of his colleagues and the good things that they did. So, another interesting thing I was wondering. . . .

TS: Before we go on, there's one thing I want to say about Dick Wukich: He's the original Harry Potter.[Editor's note: hairy potter].

JN: Oh really? Oh! I got it! [Laughs].

TS: [Laughs].

TS: Most people will get that.

JN: It's a nice pun. [Pause]. So, we already talked about a bunch of clinicians that you brought in, but I remember even looking through some of *The Rocket* articles. I guess it's just a changing of the pop music, but I could've sworn that the Kenton Orchestra came and performed here at some point over the years. That might've been before your time. But in terms of bringing artists in to play those concerts on campus, were there any of those that were particularly memorable? Was there ever a time where they needed sax players so you just sat in with a band that was performing here on campus?

TS: I wish. When Basie's band was here and Buddy Rich's band was here, I would've given anything to sit in with those guys, but they were all healthy and they were all sitting in their chairs. A lot of those came not because of me but because of the University Programming Board [UPB], so there's always somebody over in the Union that had . . . and it was through Cooperative Activities. They'd have a budget for bringing in concerts, and they'd like to have different venues throughout the year, so it wouldn't be just a jazz concert in the fall and the spring, but it would be a magician, and a pop group, and a jazz group, and a theater group. So they would mix it up. And so, when they came to jazz, they would usually talk to me and say, "Well, we have these possibilities, what do you think would be the best to do?" So, I would sometimes give them input, not every time, but when they asked me, I was happy to help them pick the right group to bring in. And boy, we had some wonderful, wonderful things, usually in the Multipurpose Room [MPR]. The acoustics were not so good in the Multipurpose Room, but you could fill up the place with a lot of people and have a fabulous concert.

JN: Yeah, yeah, I know in my time here there weren't a whole lot of acts that I really wanted to see, but I think that's just the changing of the times and what was popular. I mean, looking at some of those past acts. . . .

TS: The ‘80s and ‘90s were really awesome.

JN: So, shifting gears a little bit here, I saw that you were the PA state president of the International Association of Jazz Educators, or IAJE, for a time. What was that like and how did that influence your work at SRU, your teaching styles, or even who maybe could be a connection you could bring to campus?

TS: It didn’t have much impact on what I did at SRU. The Pennsylvania unit of the International Association of Jazz Educators had been dormant for a few years in the ‘70s. And I went to an IAJE conference, I think it was in Daytona Beach, Florida in the late ‘70s, and came back really excited about everything I saw and heard and the people I met and talked with. So, I sent a letter out to all of the IAJE members in Pennsylvania saying what this experience was and that I didn’t see anybody there from Pennsylvania and we need to get to know each other, and we need to communicate and so forth. So, it was the next season that somebody contacted me and said, “Would you be our president? Because you seem to have more energy than the rest of us do and you kind of lead us into the next decade.” So, I served three terms as president and got communication; and I did the first All-State Jazz Band, and it’s been going ever since. There’s been an All-State Jazz Band every year. And a lot of the pros were in All-State Jazz Band. I mean, it’s been . . . I’m trying to think of a name, he’s forty-five now and he’s—no, not forty-five, he’s about forty-eight now. And he’s really big and he’s played with everybody. Bass player. He’s from Philadelphia.

JN: Is he here now?

TS: No, he’s in New York.

JN: Christian McBride maybe?

TS: Christian McBride. So, when I got the All-State Jazz Bands going basically that was just one year at a time. So, this year, then the next year, another All-State Jazz Band, then another All-State Jazz Band the following year. But each year I would be at the--and it wasn’t the PMEA conference, I mean it wasn’t the IAJE conference, it was the PMEA conference that we do All-State Jazz Band. But all of these IAJE guys were doing their part and making this all work. So, it kind of raised the level of communication and active participation in the state. And then we had people, students, who were 17 years old that played, like Christian McBride, that grew through the All-State and went on to become international stars. And it all started with, well it didn’t start with All-State Jazz Band, but that was the first that they got an open door to the state people who saw them. Pretty cool to be a part of that.

JN: Yeah, what a legacy for jazz. I mean, Christian McBride, he’s one of the top in the world.

TS: I don’t know any better than that.

JN: So, yeah, I guess unfortunately the IAJE has since dissolved as an organization, but do you have any thoughts, other than the things you mentioned, on its legacy on jazz education in either Pennsylvania or in the country?

TS: Yeah, more than anything else, it gave jazz teachers a way to communicate. Because there was an organization that was really about communicating with each other, and the conferences that they brought in all great heavy hitters to the conventions. I went to conventions for like thirty years, just all over the country. It was wonderful. And I was sad that it disintegrated because it was such a great part of our jazz education communication. But, some things just don't last.

JN: Well I guess, at least now especially with the ease of the internet it's a lot easier for people to communicate, so maybe the need isn't quite there as much. And also, I remember when I was a student here you took us on a trip if we wanted to sign up and pay to go to the IAJE. When did you start bringing students with you to these conferences? Was that just a decision that you . . . ?

TS: The first one was probably 1980. The IAJE conference was in Philadelphia, could've been '79 or '81, but it was around '80. It was in Philadelphia, and so the national unit contacted me and said, "Can your students be the ones who are in charge of all of these rooms and all these venues for the conference?" And so, the jazz band, the SRSC Jazz Band, all the students went with me to the conference, and they had responsibilities at the national convention. So it actually started that far back. That was forty years ago.

JN: Yeah, I mean, those were also great experiences too.

TS: Oh my gosh, yeah. Being in a little room that holds thirty people and someone like Dave Liebman is playing; I mean, it just takes your breath away. And to be an 18 or 19-year-old student and to be involved in that is just life-changing.

JN: I remember I got to see Kurt Elling and he performed "Resolution" with the Bob Mintzer Big Band and that just. . . . I think that was, for students who haven't experienced much of that because, myself, I didn't go to Pittsburgh that often to go out late to clubs. I mean, that was the last show of the evening. It was going past midnight and, even though it's in the ballroom of a hotel, it's more of that kind of authentic experience, that sort of late-night jazz atmosphere. I remember that and also just the CD room was . . . for someone for whom jazz is usually this little, tiny section. And I think after the first year we knew to bring a bunch of money so we could stock up our CD collection.

TS: It wasn't an expensive place to go until you found out what's there, it became an expensive place to go.

JN: If you think that there's any worth mentioning, maybe your best and worst teaching moments from your tenure at Slippery Rock?

TS: I can't think of any worst teaching moments, because I loved every minute of it. And I can't think of a best moment because it just was all good. There's absolutely no part of my career at SRU that I would take back, or want to do over again, or want to do something different. I have no regrets; I loved it. I retired in 2007 not because I was too old or didn't have the energy, I was just playing so much in Pittsburgh with CLO and symphony that I thought, "I'm gonna pass the torch on to somebody else who's younger and is better in technology, and I can still perform." And so, my wife stayed there, and she's taught for several more years. But I only look back on my years at SRU with a smile. It was all good.

JN: Yeah, I mean, that's beautiful. I think it really says a lot about both your impact in the department and with the students, as well as Stacy's impact, because both the sax teacher [Jason Kush]--former student came back--as well and also the flute teacher [Cassandra Eisenreich]. To bring that legacy that students come and learn from you and they also want to come back here.

TS: And they have doctorates, and we didn't. You know, we never finished our doctorates and then we had these students that went on to do their graduate work and finish their PhDs and come back. And they're doing just great work. It's so thrilling to see what Cassandra and Jason are doing in those studios. It's fabulous. They're right on top of the game.

JN: So then, we've already talked about a bunch of different things, but is there anything else that you could think of, like major events or activities, building projects, weather events, national events with local impact that happened during your tenure here that come to mind?

TS: Not other than the ones we've talked about. You know, the Jazz Band did a tour every year, and Steve Hawk continued to do that after he took over the big band. And we'd play in high schools. Those weren't big events, but it kept growing and growing over the years that the high school band directors in western Pennsylvania started seeing what we were doing and then we'd go play for them, and they'd see right in front of them on their stage what good students we have, and what good instruction they've had. And so, as the years went on, more talented students came into our Music Department, and so it just grew, year by year by year. Every year it got better for thirty years.

JN: And was that more of--I know you said you were pretty busy gigging and teaching, but was that the growth of the department? I know the whole of the university itself was growing as well, but did that seem to be with the music more of an organic kind of growth or, I mean I'm sure there was work from professors, or was there a really big push that we want to get more and more students? Especially jazz from you and Steve Hawk at the time? Or was it more of just sort of naturally as your acclaim grew and more students came as you offered more high school programs, more kids would come?

TS: I would not use the word acclaim for me, but for SRU we could use the word acclaim. It was really more of a subtle, organic thing that happened gradually. Because as the quality of our

department grew, the attraction of SRU to graduating seniors grew, so just little by little, better students came, they were better prepared, they were more serious about their career. Not that the ones in the '70s weren't, it's just that the level of musician who would've gone to a famous music school but they're from Butler, goes to Slippery Rock and then goes to a famous music school for their graduate work. Which is precisely what you did. So you didn't go to Rutgers when you were 18, you went to Slippery Rock. Then, after you graduated, you went to Rutgers to get your masters, I think it was Rutgers, wasn't it?

JN: Yes, in jazz history, yeah.

TS: So, that's a famous school. As our credibility increased over the years, that's what happened. People like you saw we were doing a really good thing and it would fit with you when you were 18, and when you graduate, then you can go to the big school and get all of that stuff too. And I think that that's what Slippery Rock can be really proud of, because we did function in that way for so many people, you and Jason [Kush] and Cassandra [Eisenreich], and dozens and dozens more did that. A lot of our students went to get master's degrees in various places after they left Slippery Rock.

JN: Oh yeah. Yeah, I know like Justin [Chesarek] and Brandon [Musko].

TS: Yeah.

JN: So, what would you say you miss most about teaching at Slippery Rock?

TS: Well, the personal interaction. There's no question that that's the thing you miss most. But I'm still in touch with a lot of former students, so Jason and I are on the phone every week. We're still close in touch. Many others, Sam Eisenreich, and Brady [Amerson], and lots of others that are playing professionally in Pittsburgh now. And then, like I mentioned, the student that I had forty years ago, we were at her house last night and had a nice dinner. It's good to stay in touch.

JN: Something that just occurred to me is we recently got a donation from Mary Scarnati of a bunch of recordings and programs and things from the Slippery Rock Concert Band when Blase was the conductor, as well as the Musicians' Concert Band. He was there for quite a while, while you were teaching. Since we have a collection of his now, do you have any recollections of working with Blase, or his personality, or anything like that?

TS: Oh yeah, he was a very personable guy and students loved him. He was like a father figure. He had the Marching Band and the Concert Band, and I think that the Marching Band was probably his forte. He really, really loved the Marching Band. Now, when you drive out to the stadium, you see Blase S. Scarnati Practice Field, and there's a sign there to commemorate him. And he had a very integral part in knowing the band directors in this area 'cuz he grew up around here. I think he went to Indiana University for his undergraduate. And he knew . . . I never knew as many high school band directors as Blase did. He was connected to all those guys. He was a part of our

department in communicating with band directors and making sure they knew what we were doing, how we were improving, and bringing students in and everything. And students liked him a lot, he was a good guy.

JN: Yeah, I got that impression from talking with Mary a bit because they lived just a little closer into town, right off of Water Street. So students would come over for dinner and things like that. And actually, I don't know, but you probably saw them, the scrapbooks that she made. Yeah, we have those all at the Archives now, and they're just amazing. Yeah, just wonderful stuff. So, I guess also just asking if there's anything you want to mention about, you know we're talking about you, and we mentioned Claire Swope and now Blase Scarnati. Anything about Stacy's teaching legacy at Slippery Rock? Anything you'd like to mention with that and her work over the years before she retired?

TS: Well she, in the early years that I was here, she was not a faculty member, because she didn't have a master's degree. But interestingly, she was teaching a lot of flute students in the area that were high school students. And of course, because she's such a good teacher, many of them got very, very good and were used to driving to Slippery Rock to take a lesson, and so they matriculated right into SRU. And who had to teach them? Me! And some of them were better flute players than I was, so that was kind of interesting.

So, in the mid-'80s or the early '80s when I was teaching more and more really good flute players because of Stacy, Stacy and I had a full-year sabbatical in '83. The academic year of '83-'84. And we went back to north Texas where I worked on my doctorate. I didn't ever finish my doctorate, but I got all the coursework done during that year, and she got her music performance master's degree at North Texas. So, coming back from North Texas with a master's in performance, that actually gave her the credentials to be hired. She wasn't hired right then, but by 1988 we just had to have a flute teacher. It wasn't me pushing, because I just thought I shouldn't be the one to try to get her hired, I'll just back off. I wasn't even on the search committee. Other people did that and I excused myself, or I guess the word is *recused* myself. But she just won it hands down. And, of course, the faculty knew her and trusted her. She'd been playing recitals with other faculty members. So, she just walked in. It was part time originally, and then it was three-quarters time, and then full time. And in 2006, maybe, she won the outstanding professor award on campus. She had the top honor, she's that good. She touched a lot of lives and was a great teacher, great classroom teacher, great studio teacher. She took care of business and everybody knew it.

JN: Yeah, I remember all the flute players like Cassandra thought very highly of her. So, any words of wisdom or other things you would like for current or future Rock community members to know?

TS: Well, when I was much younger, maybe before I even came to Slippery Rock, there's something that caught my attention that I have lived by, and it's very simple. *What you put your attention [on] will grow*. So, all of my students knew this, because when they were in lessons with me, I would make sure that they understood not only what you put your attention on will grow in terms of their instrument and practicing, because certainly if you put your attention on practicing

your instrument, you're going to get better. But also, if you put your attention on studying and preparing for tests, you'll have better grades. If you put your attention on your friends and being a better listener, you'll strengthen your friendships. So, actually, it's all aspects of life are enlivened by that little statement: *Whatever you put your attention on will grow.* And that also is good for mental health, because if we think of positive things we will feel better. And, conversely, if you put your attention on negative things, which is easy to do these days, we all do it, we have to fight against it. But if you put your attention on negative things, it'll go the wrong way. And you won't have a good day if you're [focusing] on negative thoughts. So, my advice to my students was always put your attention on positive things and everything will go better for you, and try to let those negative things just dissipate. *Whatever you put your attention [on] will get bigger*.

JN: Yeah, that's great. Great words of wisdom there, and it reminds me of . . . you probably remember you gave me a couple bass clarinet lessons back in the day when I was somehow able to pick up one of those. And I just remember one of the things that has always stuck with me was you didn't like to call it 'the break'. You like to call it 'the flower garden'.

TS: That's right! That actually was from Stacy's brother. He was a wonderful clarinet teacher out in Iowa, and he called it 'the flower garden'. I can't take credit for that; that was Jack's.

JN: It still follows in that line of thinking, because you're thinking it's just this scary thing, but when you're thinking of it as this beautiful way to ease into it. . . . So, how would you like to be remembered, either in general or as a teacher at SRU?

TS: I just want to be remembered in a positive way. You know? Just, "Terry was there helping us and he took me from point A to point B. Then I went to graduate school and got to point C and point D." I really, really loved helping young people move forward, and that was what gave me the most happiness, just helping them out. And believing in them, because not every 18-year-old believes in themselves, so they need a teacher that will believe in them and help them.

JN: Well, wonderful. Beautiful way to be remembered. That's all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else that you'd like to add or mention before we finish up this interview?

TS: I think we've covered quite a bit, yeah.

JN: Well, again, thank you so much, Terry. I really appreciate you taking the time for this interview.

TS: You're welcome.