KB: Today is February 17, 2006, and I’m Karen Blair. I’m about to interview Ken Martin, a member of the Board of Trustees at Central Washington University, but also a former student. [Tape resumes mid-sentence] years in the 1960’s and 70’s, as well as the contemporary scene with President Jerilyn McIntyre. Well Ken, would you tell us a little bit about why you came to Central, and when you came?

KM: I graduated from high school in 1967, in Cashmere, and wasn’t sure where I was going, as – as I think students were then, and are now – and decided to go to Wenatchee Valley College. And I was working at the local Safeway store so I had a good job, and it was easy back then to fund the education personally, and so it was – but it was about two weeks into the first quarter that I realized that maybe leaving home would have been a better idea for both me and my parents – great people and a great relationship, but there is a time, and that was my time. So I had participated in the mock United Nations at Central when I was in high school, and probably some other events also, but I also remember coming to the campus. I also remember the Central Singers coming around, and they would do their routine at the different high schools each year, and so I was generally familiar with Ellensburg and the University.

Ellensburg was farther away from Wenatchee in 1967 than it is today. The Blewett Pass wasn’t as drivable. The new road between here and Blewett Pass had not been built yet, so it was a longer, more treacherous trip, and farther away from home. And because of my knowledge of the campus, and – and just who I was at that time, I started looking at transferring to Central. And so I kept catalogues, and said this is going to work for me, this is where I think I belong.

KB: Did you lose a term?

KM: No. No, I finished out through the year in Wenatchee, so I did the year, and was very, very conscious of what would transfer and wouldn’t, so I worked – as soon as I knew where I was going, I made sure it all – all fit.

KB: Did you have any friends or relatives who came to Central?

KM: No. No, I’m the first in my family to have attended college, so I was a very typical student for then and now. I was a community college transfer, first generation college student. My parents weren’t particularly encouraging of going to school. They were never discouraging, but uh, my Dad was a Safeway manager and my Mom was a homemaker, and neither of their careers or lives had – had revolved around the educational experiment – experience. But having come out of that era of Sputnik, and the moon shots, and everything that was going on, I – I really knew I wanted to go to college. It was very personally important to me, and I didn’t need anybody driving me to do it. It was just something that – uh – somehow I knew I was going to do one way or another, and –

KB: High school counselors did not push it?

KM: No, um – I went to school in East Wenatchee till the eighth grade, and East Wenatchee was a very progressive school district at that time, and they taught new math, and all sorts of things. And then we moved to Leavenworth when I was in the eighth grade, and Leavenworth was a very basic school. I went into the eighth grade, and I didn’t know how to do long division. I knew how to divide under a method that doesn’t exist today. But I went into a very traditional environment, and was behind.
And then moved to Cashmere, which had an outstanding high school program, and a group of kids that – uh – just fortunate to drop into the middle of them when I was a Sophomore, although I was behind because of moving around to schools and going through different systems. They were just a very bright group of people that, if you look at the profile of that high school class today – tremendous success in all sorts of different fields. And being somewhat of a competitive individual, that had maybe more influence, because I had to catch up, and they were very good, and I wanted to compete with them. I wanted to compete successfully. So that was probably more of the driver, although I knew because of – why – that I was going to go to college. Because that competition with that group of very academically talented students – ninety per- no, no – a large percentage of them went off to four-year schools, and they were all friends, and we were in con- and I – and I just understood that it was time for me to uh, to move – move to a four-year environment, and came over here.

I didn’t – it also didn’t hurt that the Ellensburg Safeway was in the same district as the Wenatchee Safeway, and I could transfer. And that was an advantage in the – you know – paying for school. I was able to transfer my good job over here to Ellensburg, and made my college experience very manageable. I might have worked a little too much, in hindsight, because there’s a balance there, and uh – but that was a – that was a part of the decision, also. But the driver – the driver was – I was thinking about this discussion – the driver was probably the mock United Nations experience. If there was a hook anywhere along the line that made the difference, it was having been on the campus, and whatever short experience I had here. It just was comfortable for me, and it’s where I decided I wanted to go, and it was – it’s – I’ve always said it was absolutely the right place and the right time, and what Ken Martin needed, and it served him very, very well. So I’m pleased with that decision.

KB: How was it different from Wenatchee Valley Community College?

KM: Um, you know, even as toady we talk about how the – the educational experience is – at the community college level is excellent, and it’s a great way for people to begin the process if they’re intending on achieving a four-year degree, or even the two-year degree. But in my case it was home – still living at home, and it was an extension of high school, and a lot of the same routines that I believed that there’s the academic experience, and then there’s the social experience, and talking to all my friends that had gone elsewhere, they – it was clear that they were getting a different kind of experience on the social side that I wanted to experience.

KB: Did you live on campus?

KM: Yes, I lived on campus. I came over and moved into Muzzall Hall, and I very much enjoyed the residence hall experience. Most everybody else was trying to – and I was coming over as a Sophomore – was trying to get out of the residence halls. The traditional story – “Dad, I can’t study because it’s too noisy. Mom, they don’t cook like you do.” – and the whole idea is just to move off-campus and live a different lifestyle! But that’s the report to home to get the parents to buy into that change. But I actually spent two years in the uh – in Muzzall Hall, and really enjoyed that environment. I had roommates, I had a single room, and think fondly of my times there.

KB: So for your fourth year you did move off-campus?

KM: Fourth year – uh – I was living – I actually went to summer school between my Junior and Senior year to make sure that I could graduate on time. I was – I had plenty of credits, but I would drift around, and I wanted to make sure I had enough to get out in Spring of ’71, so I went to summer school, and I lived down the street in Pioneer Village, that’s still down there, and then moved into a house up by the fairgrounds Fall of my Senior year.

And at that time they were introducing the legislative intern program, and it was the first year of that particular program, and I was generally focusing on a business degree – certainly being a banker now, that makes sense, and econ – but I’ve always been very interested and active in politics, so I was taking Poly-
Sci classes for the enjoyment and the learning experience, not necessarily with any degree intentions. But I became aware of the legislative intern program, and applied for that, and was fortunate to be selected for the legislative intern program the first year, and spend Winter quarter in Olympia. And that was a fantastic experience.

KB: Who did you work for?

KM: I worked – I was the legislative intern for Bob Curtis, who was the representative from my district over in Wenatchee, and uh, he was the Chairman of the Business and Professions Committee, so that matched up very, very well. And they used to have executive sessions back then, before the Open Meetings Act, and it was at his discretion whether or not the intern got to stay in the executive sessions, and not every intern was – was given that privilege, and I was in all the executive sessions, and that was just – the Department of Ecology was being formed at that time. That committee passed out the original gambling legislation for the State of Washington. Just had a great, great experience. Had a lot of impact on other things I’ve done in life – contacts I made back then continue to this day, and that was very fortunate that I was selected for that program.

KB: Were you the only Central student who went?

KM: No, there were several of us. I remember there were 30 total, in the state, and I can’t remember how many others were Central, because once we got over there I ended up matched up with non-Central people – which was good – a great experience – and that was a real honor to be selected, because it was a fairly competitive – I know a couple of my friends that wanted to go, even one of my good friends today was one of the people that didn’t get that opportunity. So I feel, of the many positive things that have happened to me –

KB: Did we get in on the ground floor?

KM: We were the – we were originally – we were in the original group, and that program continues today. And it was just great. My – I had a friend who was from Western, who was also from Wenatchee, but he was assigned to the Speaker Pro Tem, and we were – because of my connection with him, I was in some rooms when some things happened that – um, you know – still amaze me today that I was in the room when certain things were happening, and how it happened. And for somebody that was – at that point I had just turned 22 – it really made me aware how the world really works, instead of how you think it does.

KB: Did it take the stars from your eyes?

KM: Yeah, it did. It did – uh – but not in a bad way. I didn’t see anything that I ever thought was unethical. Um – I probably saw more pragmatism, and it wasn’t – anyway, that’s how it was coming together, and made sense, and how – that’s how they were trying to work the process.

KB: Did they provide housing for you?

KM: Yes, we were housed at St. Martin’s, which was – having come from the Central experience to the St. Martin’s experience was a reminder of how it was at Central when I first arrived. Because when I first came to Central in the Fall of 1968, Freshman girls still were, uh – had hours. The 10:00, you know, and no keys, and that kind of routine. It was very Preppy. When I first came that first year, it was the Sixties, and it was – we dressed the Sixties, with collared shirts, and generally nicely dressed, and the Freshman girls were locked up, and all of it – the traditional stuff that was more of what, you know, if you had designed the Fifties and the Sixties, it was still the last hours of that environment. And I’m so happy I experienced it, because that was fun. It was interesting to be a part of, and contrast what happened.
Because the world went upside down in the next three years, and Central was part of that. And everybody thinks their college years were the best, from whatever era, but I would be happy to debate – you know, as I’m – as you were there at the same time – what a fantastic time! Change, and the dynamic that was going on, and you went from Freshman girls having keys, to co-ed dorms in that period of time. You went through the Black Student Union, the Viet Nam War issues, not wearing collared shirts to tie dyed, and all that went on with that, and it was so exciting, and such a fun thing to be part of, and Central went through all of those same things.

KB: It wasn’t a backwater, compared to Seattle or bigger Universities?

KM: No, no, no. It was – no. No, it went on here. It went on at an appropriate level, but it went on. I remember there used to be the Air Force ROTC building at the edge of the Mall down here, and I remember the authorities dispersing a crowd that was getting a little out of hand throwing some things one night that – and I think probably some windows being broken, if I can remember back – because of a war protest kind of thing that was – you should never break windows, but – but it was appropriate because we needed to be part of it. That was what was going on at that time, and that was the emotion that was flowing, and I would have been disappointed if Central hadn’t been mainstream in that. And you know, there were some Black Student Union issues at that time, but I never remember it getting out of hand. I think we participated in the evolution of our generation at the appropriate level, but nothing was done to the extent that it was going to ruin somebody’s – the rest of their life. It was just a reasonable expression of what was being debated at that time.

After the Viet Nam War, and the friends of mine that talked about not being respected coming back from Viet Nam, and some of the issues that went on – I’ve always been a little bit amazed at that, because I never remember that being the flavor. We were – we challenged the War, because even in – in – I was in high school debate in 1967, and the question – you know how they would have the national question? And the question was, “Should the United States of America continue to be involved in Southeast Asia?” I mean I debated both sides of that so many times I still remember the question. And so it had been going on for a while, and I had a cousin who was seriously wounded in Viet Nam, and lots of friends that went, and came back to Central, and I never remember any disrespect for the people who participated and did what they were supposed to do for their country. There was a reasonably strong anti-War feeling because that’s just how we felt about it, and I think we were right, but there was no disrespect of our country or the people that were going over there fighting. But there was disrespect for the politicians.

KB: Were there hippies and a counterculture? Drug Culture?

KM: Was it? Excuse me?

KB: Was there a counterculture that was pretty . . .?

KM: There was. [Laughs] I’ve said that on a bed in a dorm room in – residence hall room on the Ellensburg campus I saw more cash one night on a bed, stacked, than my – until my third year in banking when I opened up a vault. Yeah, there was – there was – as there was everywhere. Again, you know, I never participated in that, but everybody was around it. It was just going on constantly, and – and I don’t remember thinking it was a big deal. I was concerned about friends that would be going overboard in it. I remember having that concern.

I remember that – you know, when I was in high school you were always told that if you ever smoked one marijuana cigarette, the next thing you were going to do is take heroin, and you were going to be a druggie for the rest of your life. And what I remember about the drug activity in college was the people smoking marijuana and me thinking, “Oh, they’re going to be on heroin next week and they’re going to be dead,” and they would – some of them would say, “Man, I don’t want to do this anymore. I don’t like this. This – you know – this isn’t my thing.” And I thought, “You know, we’ve been taught this. We’ve been led,” and I’ve often thought back, that was one of the greatest disservices, because we were lied to. And I think
people may have experimented with other things later because they were lied to about marijuana, and when they tried those other things, some bad things happened to them. But there certainly was the very normal college culture.

I – my best friend went to the University of Washington, so when I was out wandering around somewhere else it was often on the campus over there while visiting him, and I didn’t notice a lot of difference between the two. The U had the reputation of being very mainstream, in the middle of it all – uh – I don’t – I didn’t see any difference. I didn’t go over there and say, “Wow, this is a different perspective.” We were all feeling the same things at the same time. But again, it just never seemed to go over the top here.

KB: Now what about the drinking culture? That party school? Was there still plenty of that?

KM: I – yes. I’ve sat in on a – actually, I was Chair of the Student Affairs Committee a few years ago, and they – Nick Trumpey came in and talked about the drinking, and what was going on on the campus, and some of the concerns. And I thought, “Nothing’s changed.” Really, it sounded so similar to the experiences that we were having then. I have a son right now who is a Junior at WSU, and it’s going on over there right now. I lecture him regularly, and I – I told him that, “You know, the way you are in college, if you were out in town doing that, they would call you a drunk. In college they call you a student. And go ahead and have your fun, and I understand the evolution, and the social part of it, but you know, come on, let’s manage. Let’s just be responsible or there can be serious problems later on.” And I think that’s the message that we need to – I don’t think we’re ever going to stop it. It’s the first time they’ve been away from home. Nobody’s telling them to go to bed, nobody’s telling them to clean their room, and they’re experimenting. But we have – and I support all the efforts to have them think about what they’re doing and the impact. Central – uh – had been, and I guess to some degree has now, but I don’t think it’s been any better, or any worse than any other environment that’s similar.

KB: Did we have a reputation as being a party school?

KM: Um, I think we wanted to have a reputation of a party school. I don’t know if we achieved it to the degree, but I think we felt good about that, if I – you know. It was nothing – you know, when people say you’re a party school, I didn’t ever hear anybody trying to deny it. It was kind of a macho thing at that time. We had the Sweekey weekend environment. You’ve heard about that. That was a version of Spring Break in Ellensburg, and everybody would come to Ellensburg because it was a – you know, particularly the schools from the West side, because it was Spring, and usually the weather was significantly better than their weather, and it was Eighth Street before it was University Way, and it was packed with cars going both ways, and there were bands on the Mall, and – uh – it was a party, and Ellensburg was the destination. But – and – and eventually it was cancelled. But again, it was – I still don’t remember that being out of hand, and I’ve been in out of hand situations – uh – but it was – uh – it was college kids doing what they do, and I don’t ever remember anything that was – was destructive, or –

KB: Do you have any sense of town/gown relations at that time, or was that simply not on your radar screen?

KM: I – I probably did more than the average student because I worked at Safeway, and so I would – you know, I was down there, and I knew – I knew people in town that were other than the students because of that connection, and I had co-workers that were people that I’ve – I’ve run into later in life. So I had a sense of the Ellensburg community. I think – um – I think I had a stronger than average because of my employment downtown, but I don’t think I was unique. I think people would often – instead of say, “I go to Central,” would say, “I go to Ellensburg.” You know, that connection. And we shopped at the stores, and chased around, so I’ve always felt that there was a good relationship between the community and the University, and the students think of Ellensburg fondly, and they – when I ran into friends, they talk about – I remember living in – living in Ellensburg, and that’s – it’s not all “I remember going to Central”, it’s “I remember living in Ellensburg.”
KB: What about the community? Were they disgruntled with some of the student behaviors, or do you think that they welcomed the school?

KM: I think they welcomed the school. I don’t – I don’t remember – you know, at that time, with the Viet Nam War stuff, and the Black Student Union stuff, I’m sure the conservative element of Ellensburg may have not been on the same page, and I don’t think we expected them to. But again, I don’t remember it as being any – any particular conflict. I remember – I remember the rodeo. I remember the cowboys coming into town, and they were a conservative bunch. And you know, at that point in time, you know, our hair was a little longer, and you know, a tie dyed shirt and bellbottom pants, you know, and you saw a guy coming down the street with a big belt buckle and a cowboy hat on, you might have had some concern. But I think that the general citizens of Ellensburg have always understood that the college is a big part of what this community is, and some of the student perspective goes along with that. So I don’t – uh, I remember the Caesar Chavez grape boycott, and them walking – a bunch of students walking around Safeway with placards saying “Don’t Buy Grapes,” and of course I was working that day [laughs], and I remember – and actually helped carry out groceries and do those things, and I remember the few times I’d go out in the parking lot, that my friends – I would actually have friends walking around with these placards hollering at me with the grape thing, and some of the comments by the people I was with – customers – saying, “That’s crazy, that’s ridiculous, we don’t buy into that.” But that’s a pretty mild recollection of any conflict. It was more, you know, “Why don’t they go home?” kind of stuff.

KB: Well before we move to academics, are there other extracurricular activities, or – I mean, um, reminiscences about homecoming, or parent’s weekend? Did you miss the fact that there were no fraternities here?

KM: I always wondered about that, because I did have some friends that had that experience in other environments. So I remember thinking about that because it wasn’t available.

KB: Were there substitutes? Exclusive Clubs, or –

KM: Yeah, it was – there was one house that was – and I’ve heard others mention it. I can’t remember the name, but there was a house on H Street where a bunch of guys lived then that had a kind of a fraternity feel to it, but it was not affiliated with anything. But – but I remember thinking if – that – not that you want something, but if it was available – and – and – and not having the fraternity system here was something I remember thinking about – um – both my sons went to environments where there were, and they could have if they wanted to, and chose not to. I’m not sure what I would have done in that environment. But staying in the Residence Hall like I did, and enjoying that environment – that’s kind of my makeup. I would have – you know, I enjoyed the group kind of focus, and living in an apartment by myself somewhere really wasn’t what I was all about. So I probably would have been more attracted to that than the average student, but the – the Residence Hall life certainly made up for that. I – I stayed on the same floor with the same group of guys for both those years, and we all became very close through that, so –

KB: So what did you do for a good time?

KM: For a good time – and one of the things you do around as students do – you have parties. But we used to go to Vantage, and I remember going to Vantage and laying in the sun, and playing volley ball – those kinds of things. I remember intramural sports being a big deal. We always had a flag football team. We always had a basketball team. We always had a softball team. And I can’t ever remember a season that I wasn’t involved in that kind of activity, and very much enjoyed that. I don’t remember being particularly good, but we – we had a good time doing that, and that was always important.

Dances were big then. I don’t – I just have a sense that’s not as big a deal now, but there were more live bands, and so that seemed to be – a lot of memories of live bands, and live concerts, and often they weren’t on campus. A number of them were in town, and they were sponsored by, you know, some local promoter, and often the high school kids were there, so it wasn’t a drinking thing. It was go listen to the band.
KB: Would that be at the Elk’s Hall, or?

KM: I can’t remember.

Transcription of Tape 1, Side 2

KM: [Tape begins mid-sentence] insides of them, but I can’t remember – you know – the experience. But that was – you know – those things – um – were a big deal, you know. We watched a lot of TV as a group, and I remember, you know, you always scheduled your classes so you could watch Jeopardy together.

KB: Did you bring your own TV to college?

KM: No, there was the one in the – the – I think at that point in time a TV was way out of our financial reach because they weren’t the price they are now.

KB: Did you have a car on campus?

KM: I had a – not my first year. I – I later had a car – um – it was really never necessary, but I did have a car. At least the first two years I didn’t need a car, but the third one I did. But you know, a lot of sitting in the lounge and just talking with the people, and we – coming from Cashmere and that part of the state, you know, the – coming to Central was my first experience with people from out of state, my first experience with people from out of country, people that grew up in Western Washington, and the diversity – you know, my first African American friend was on the fifth floor of Muzzall Hall, and just being immersed in that.

KB: So the dorm was your family.

KM: Yeah, it was. It was just – just, uh – I made the statement even recently that, you know, you were with them, and they cried when their Grandmother died, you were with them when their sister, you know, broke up with her boyfriend and called them, and you knew, in one case, when his mother ran off with a truck driver and he had to actually send money home to help his Dad with his siblings. In those kind of environments – and you’re living with, you know, 25 people in that environment, and you have that – that relationship for a year or two, and then along comes a June day and you say “See you later,” and you never see them again. And I think that’s one of the emotions I remember about that, because you were so close, and you suffered over grades, and girlfriends, and parental issues, and money issues, and all of a sudden you never, ever see that individual again.

You – you do build extremely tight relationships, and respect. I’ve even said to one of my friends that’s from that era that there were – there were girls that were friends. Not girlfriends, but, but, but gals that were an important time in our life, and they were part of that struggle in figuring out who we were going to be. And I’m always curious as to what happened to them. And of course they change names – usually – and they’re more awkward to contact. One of my friends actually had a girlfriend, and he says, “You know, I’d really like to talk to her and just see how she’s doing, because she was such a great friend, too, but I’m sure it would look like an ulterior motive, and all I want to do is say, ‘Hi, how’s your life going?’” And so as great as those relationships were, I think it really creates a void because you separate, and you never find out what happened to some really important people in your life.

Years ago I was sitting watching – actually, I was reading the newspaper. I remember I was living in Yakima, so it was probably in the mid-80s, and I hear the name – something – Family Feud’s on, not watching it, and they say, “The Fugell family from Spokane, Washington,” and it was one of the guys from across the hall, and I hadn’t seen him in 15 years. Never heard his name again, but he said he was a State
Patrolman, and so there’s one guy out there that I know – I – he’s probably retired now, but – yeah, great
relationships that – not enough of them continued because the way you disperse after that.

KB: Did you live in a co-ed dorm?

KM: I never lived in a co-ed dorm. There were co-ed dorms by the time I was done, but I never – um –
never wanted to. Never understood why that was such a big deal. I just thought, why – you know, that was
a real push. That was a big deal to a lot of people, and I remember going, you know – I enjoyed the
environment I was in so much – maybe I was stuck in the past. You could probably challenge me on that
and say, “Well you were just stuck in the past, because you had different kinds of relationships, and all
that,” but by the time that was being challenged as an alternative, I didn’t want to break up the group that I
had for the benefit of having a gal in the next dorm room. That wasn’t what was important to me at that
time.

KB: You said women’s rights were changing on the campus. What kinds of rules were falling away?

KM: Well I think the – my – my – I perceive that I’m in the first group that understood that you
competed heads-up with women, and they were equals. And I don’t think that generally – and there’s
exceptions, but – but – I think the people from the class of ’71 understood that you competed heads-up, and
that there wasn’t the male/female thing. It was, “Better compete to win, or you’re going to lose,” and one –
one gender, or race, or any other situation – it really, honestly didn’t matter, and I think that was very much
supported on this campus, and was generally what was coming out of the colleges and universities at that
time. And then you go into the work force, and it’s still there.

And so that’s what I remember, is coming out of college with it very clear in my mind that – you know –
women weren’t nurses and men doctors, and that kind of stuff. There was no stereotyping. You were what
you wanted to be because of your ability. And then to go into the banking business, which was still about
15 years behind the scene, was a very interesting experience for me. It wasn’t so much this was different –
the university experience was what I expected, and you were in an environment that everybody agreed.
It was harder to go back out into the real world, and see that the world hadn’t changed like it needed to, and –
and – the frustration, because Ken Martin wasn’t going to change it. It would certainly be part of the
change, but there were some old-school people still hanging around that had a very different perspective
than what we had evolved to during our experiences.

KB: And what about your classes?

KM: What about my classes – uh – like I said earlier, I probably worked to much, and if I think about my
academic experience, if I had to do it over again I probably wouldn’t have worried so much about getting
out with no student loans, because I worked a lot of hours, and I had reached journeyman – however the
salaries went – I was at an upper pay scale, and I could work all the hours I wanted to, so back then it was
very easy for me to pay for school. I bought an almost-new car my senior year, just as an indication of how
much I was working. And I probably – I did enough, and if I could go back and do it over again, I would
have done – I’d have been more committed to that part of it.

KB: When did you decide to major in Business?

KM: Uh, well actually I ended up beginning my degree in Poli-Sci because of that experience, you
know, I – I was – always had had the business orientation, and took all the Business classes, and I was
taking the Econ classes, and like I said, I was taking the Poli-Sci classes because I was just always
interested in Political Science. I’ve been involved in lots of campaigns and lobbying over the years. It’s
been one of my passions. And so I was taking the Political Science classes just out of pure love of the
subject. And when I had a chance to go to Olympia as a legislative intern, I was actually sponsored by the
Political Science department – that’s where that came out of. And they must have liked me, because there
were a number of people that wanted it, and I was one of the ones – I must have been perceived to be
enough of their world at that time. I wasn’t – as I’ve thought back on it, that had to be their perception, but certainly it wasn’t mine, necessarily.

And so when I went to Olympia and did that, there were certain classes that I had projected to take winter quarter that were going to put me out in June of ’71, and I got married during Spring Break of my senior year, and had very much wanted to get on with my career. I was kind of one of these guys that, you know, “I gotta get out there, and I gotta start playing the game, and winning the game, and – and” – so much of my generation. I’m very typical of how we were coming out. We wanted to take that degree, and we wanted to go conquer the world, and we just wanted to get started as fast as we could, you know, and if you didn’t get going somebody was going to beat you to the starting line, and so I – um – came back after that experience, and I – I think it was 180 credits to graduate, and I remember having something like 210. That may be wrong, but – that may be selective memory. That’s the way I choose to remember it. And I went in, and said, “How have I fouled this thing up?” And basically it was, “Well you’re going to have to come back and pick up this stuff that you fumbled around on because of getting out of sequence,” and I could graduate if I took Constitutional Law in Spring of my senior year. And that’s not the way I would suspect everybody should pick a major, but my goal was to graduate from college, and that was probably more of the goal at that time than would be appropriate now.

I would really coach – I’ve coached my kids, and I’ve coached – to be more specific and more directed, because in 1971 when you came out of college and you had a degree, that opened a lot of doors for you. And they didn’t – and in the banking business was where I wanted to go – they didn’t ask you “Was it in Business? Was it in Finance? Was it in Econ?” And I started off in my banking career with History majors, Geology majors, English majors, and Ken Martin, a Poli-Sci major. Now certainly the – the Business classes that we had all taken played into that, but the fact that you – your degree wasn’t specific really didn’t matter in 1971, and we knew that, and that changed how we thought. I am sure if it was today and I was in exactly the same position, I would – without a doubt I would take advantage of the experience to go to Olympia. I’d make exactly that same decision. But I would have come back and been more specific in my educational effort, and that was – and I don’t think that was a mistake at the time, because that’s how it was in those times, and it’s just a difference. It’s a difference today. The student today needs to be more specific in what they’re doing – with the classes they’re taking, and their longer-term game plan.

KB: So it didn’t hurt you that you were not a Business and Economics major.

KM: It – it – it never. Never, because I took enough to – to be able to do the job. I had lots of credits in Business and Econ. I just didn’t have the – the – the mix for the major. Interestingly, some of the stuff that I didn’t do well, or didn’t enjoy – Accounting was one that was something to me that was just really difficult to deal with in the academic environment, but in my work environment, I love it, and I think I’m really good at it. I mean, I work with some real professional accountants, and I can stand toe to toe, and always have been able to. So you know, certainly, whatever I – because the only formal training I had was what I got at Central, so – so it certainly had to be sufficient, for me to have enjoyed the success I have.

KB: Are there particular professors or classes that stood out for you?

KM: Oh, uh – certainly – who just retired – Wolfgang Franz was somebody that I’ll always remember as one of my instructors. Great guy – still run into him. Um, there was an Econ professor with the last name of Galbraith who I remember as somebody that was very – I’m trying to think of a word other than entertaining, but – and what he did was entertaining, and enjoyed his classes. An instructor name – with the last name of Legg [he spells it] was somebody that I remember. I remember him because whatever the assignments were, I was trying to take a shortcut, and he was always really good at figuring that out, and keeping me on task.

KB: How about in Political Science? It sounds like you took a lot of courses over there.
KM: Yeah, well Legg was Political Science, and Yee was Political Science, and there is another individual that I’m struggling to remember his name – um – that was here for a short time. His first name was Ken – that’s easy enough. But he was somebody that was – uh – out of the Northeast, and he had done his Doctorate – Doctoral work on the birth rate of Catholics declining, and how that was going to change a shift in the political dynamics of a particular state. And that was just fascinating to me. And he – and that was right after the Democratic convention blew up, and we spent most of the quarter debating the structure of the Democratic convention going forward, because of how – of what had happened at that time. So that’s a specific memory.

I remember – I always enjoyed Science, and uh, you had to take the basic courses. I remember a Physics class where we – we uh, learned about the coefficient of friction and braking, and – and – I’ve used that in my banking career, and that was – over there, and I remember an experiment. So I’ve always – in banking – the wonderful thing is, there isn’t anything that you learn in previous work or a class that sooner or later doesn’t come in and apply in your banking career, because so many different things go on from different directions, and you’re dealing with so many different people with different interests in different backgrounds that absolutely everything that you’ve ever done somehow applies, and makes you better at your banking career because of those experiences. And I think that’s a little bit why – me – as I went through college – not being as focused as I would be today, but certainly that style has served me really well in my banking career. Because sooner or later something comes up that I know because I wandered off somewhere and interacted with people, or took a class that maybe I wouldn’t have taken if I was focused as strictly and being a CPA, but it gave me the broad, great Liberal Arts background that has served me pretty well.

My son that – my older son who’s 24 has a Computer Science/Math degree, and he is – you know, that just comes easily to him, and he spent his last year at Western taking the basics because he never wanted to take Art, he never wanted to take a Music, or a Philosophy class, and he struggled with that. And I always – I told him, I says, “Greg, you know, I don’t care that you want to be left with your head in a Math book. This stuff is really important, and it’s just – you’re going to be a better person because you’re willing to broaden – you know – your perspective a little bit and not get over-focused on just this narrow little slice of life. Life’s a fairly long journey, and a lot of things come at you from different directions, and you need to not – not put them all through a real small filter, but you need to –”

KB: Did students of that college generation have a sense that they were changing the dynamic in the classroom? Was there maybe a sense that more dialogue, less lecturing was going on, or am I putting –

KM: No, I – I’m going to take – I’m going to spin it the opposite way from – my sense was that we came in, as I said, during the Preppie era, you know, with the collared shirts with the pencil – you know, city – like we were supposed – that’s how we were trained. We came out of a high school environment where, you know, you got knocked pretty hard on the head if you didn’t behave, and sit up straight, and it was a very programmed, and – and – so that was the world that we came out of, and we came into this Preppie environment, and that was still the – the expectation.

What I saw were the instructors change. I – you know – I saw the structure – the instructors changing the world, and being more aggressive in how they taught, and what they taught, and the risk they were willing to take during that period. I don’t think we were leaders in that. I think we were more followers in what was going on, driven by – the academics that had probably come out of the earlier Sixties, that were, you know, five, six, seven, eight years older than we were, were coming in and changing it, and we were – because they were the leaders, is my sense of that. It was – it was driven by – from the outside it was “What are these crazy students doing, and why do they have such a different perspective?” I think we were being led into that by – by the next generation of the instructors, which was fine.

KB: Last question – the sweetie that you married, was she also a Central student?
KM:  No, no. She – actually she had a job back in Wenatchee, so that was one of the things I wanted to do, was to get on with it – get back in, and – and that was something that she should have. You know, I think that right now, you know, in education – and education’s always been critically important, but today it’s more important than ever, and to just make you a better person. Even if you’re still in the Ken Martin mode of not being all that specific and driven, which I said earlier you should be – but if, for any reason, you’re not, I still think that there’s a great value in – in being exposed to the diversity. I think that’s just one of the important parts of the campus experience, and that’s why, as we began – I wanted to be here. I wanted to get – and I heard my friends that had left talk about their friends from here, their friends from there, and I made a couple of visits to – and it wasn’t to Central but to see them – but to see how they were interacting with new people, and new thoughts, and new ideas and challenges, and just – I think being part of that just makes you grow up, makes you be more open-minded, and it’s an important part of Central today. Those are things that we measure at the Trustee level, and I’m very much a supporter of it, because those were the experiences that were really important to me while I was here.

KB:  Well let’s jump 30 years and talk about your experience. How is it that you came to be a trustee? When did you start on the Board, and how does it look different? And the same?

KM:  Well I was talking to my brother in the late Nineties, and being the President of a bank, you get asked to do a lot of things and be on different boards, and I said to him, “You know, I get asked to do this, and do that,” and Wilfred Woods was the publisher of the Wenatchee World, and he served on the Board here, and for some reason that was in my head, and I said to my brother, “You know, of all the things I would have a chance to give back to and participate in, I think, you know, serving Central would be something I could be very passionate about, because it’s something that did so much for me that I really love and respect.” And I dropped it.

And he called me one day and said, “Hey, meet me for lunch,” he says, “I know a guy who’s connected in that process, and I want him to meet you.” So I met the guy at lunch, and he was actually an Eastern Trustee, and he’d been in the loop, and so he – and he was connected with Locke in some way, and I’ve been a lifelong active Republican, and it’s a political appointment, and that’s a big piece of it, so I – uh – he said, “Well, why don’t you send in a resume – just if you’re interested.” And then I mentioned it to Wilfred Woods, and I have had a great relationship with Wilf over the years – great guy – and he was halfway through a term, and was ready to move on, and he says, “You know, we’re going to go through some change here, and I think it would be really good if – if it’s time for me to leave, and maybe a new person to step up.” And I said, “I’d really like to do that.” Well, subsequently I get a phone call and said, you know, “If you would like to, we would certainly like to have you.”

So because of the political affiliation, a lot of people have been surprised that I would be, but I represent, certainly, a geographic area of the state. Certainly being a graduate of the institution – although that’s not a requirement – I think helps me. I’m in close proximity. I think there’s a value to that, not that everybody should be able to be here, but I can be here when I’m needed – uh – and so I’ve just been fortunate enough since May of 1999, I was – was my first meeting. I’ve been reappointed once, so I finished off half of Wilf’s term, and I’m now on the second – my own term that runs through 2007.

And Gwen Chaplin was the Chair of the board when I came on – just a fantastic lady – and we went through the Presidential search, and – and – and a group of us on the Board have been together for quite a while: Jay Rich, Judy Liu, Leslie Jones, me, Mike Sells have all been there since that ’99. It’s highly unusual to have that kind of stability on the board. A couple of new, excellent Trustees, but it’s been a great experience. When Gwen went off the Board, they asked me to be the Chair, which – following Gwen Chaplin is something that no one should try to do because she’s just an outstanding lady that did an outstanding job. But with the excellent work of Dr. McIntyre and her senior group in Administration, and just the whole University, it’s been a pretty easy job because of the dynamic of what’s going on around here. The enrollment has been strong. Just from my perspective, all of the things are happening.
You asked what’s different. I tell everybody I run into that they’ve got to come and see campus these days. Because camp – it’s just – it is really attractive. And we thought it was attractive back then. I don’t ever remember not thinking, you know, because those buildings along 8th Street have always been just the front door any University should have, and the commons, and the Mall area. But one of my earliest recollections is – was it Walnut, went through? I actually remember cars going up and down Walnut. Now that went away right away. I think that probably – I may have seen the last group of cars to go through. There was the railroad tracks and trestle through the middle campus – uh – but never remember that being detracting from the campus look or environment. But certainly with the new buildings, the job the landscapers have done, the signs on the corners that say Central Washington University – this is a beautiful place. A beautiful, beautiful place to go to school. It’s the right size, you know? It’s big enough to have what bigness brings, but yet it – you don’t get – it’s not so big you can get lost in a crowd. You have the opportunity to know people. It’s just – it’s just a fantastic place to go to school and I think people should come back and kind of get the feel, if they haven’t recently. And the new SUB Rec thing is just off the charts. That’s amazing. No, things are very good around Central these days, and I’m proud to have the opportunity to go to school here.

KB: Could you talk a little bit about President McIntyre’s leadership style, and also the – the challenges that Central needs to attend to now, and in the future?

KM: The impact that President McIntyre had on this University in the time frame she had amazed me. You know, I – I was here a year or so before she arrived and went through the process, and was aware of the strife on campus, and have gone into different organizations smaller than this, and – and watched people try to change things for the better, and knowing that that’s a very, very difficult task that can take a very long time. And the changes that occurred on this campus after her arrival, and the rate that they occurred, shocked me. I still don’t understand it, because it went from an uncomfortable situation to a comfortable situation very quickly. And I think – it’s just her style of dealing with people. She works extremely hard.

Transcription of Tape 2, Side 1

KB: Ken Morton’s interview.

KM: I think – I think she – in bringing the people in that she’s brought in – you can’t do it alone. And I think she’s – she’s brought in a group of people that work well together, and match up with her style, and share her goals. I’d also give some credit to the campus community in how fast it happened, and to the degree it happened, because if they had resisted what she wanted to accomplish, and the changes, it wouldn’t have happened that way. And so I think part of what happened was a cooperative, sensible, mature campus community saw a leader that they could trust, shared their ideals, and contributed to the pace of the change. Because it took – it took everybody to have Central move from a place that was generally recognized as having conflict, to the poster child of a place that got along, and shared common goals, and worked together. And it wasn’t just on this campus. It was in Olympia, it was in the Seattle business community, it was people I ran into on the street in Wenatchee. And that’s an amazing thing. And it – it – her leadership certainly was the trigger, but I – everybody, you know, had to be participating and supporting to make that happen.

KB: How would you characterize the strife beforehand?

KM: Well I came on at – you know, there was – there was a – um – not necessarily a buy-in to her predecessor’s philosophy and style. I liked Ivory, got along with him fine, but I got a sense that – in that short period of time that – that wasn’t the general feeling on campus. That whatever his goals were, whatever his perspective was, whatever his style was, didn’t match the Ellensburg campus community –
and – for whatever reasons, good, bad, or indifferent, that can happen. And so when that went away – you know, they were looking for leadership that would take them in a different direction.

KB: So what should happen next? Any forecast? The union was announced today to have won 96% of the membership support. The contract looks like it’s going to roll.

KM: I think, having watched that process, that both sides managed that so well, and came to what appears to be something that works on both sides – that it – you know, the Trustees aren’t involved in that other than – you know, at the end – but are very interested spectators. Two groups of people came together and said, you know, “We need to come to a conclusion that works for both of us,” and the way that all has happened has been an amazing process to me. So my reaction is, I compliment both sides for just doing an outstanding job of coming together with something that both sides can buy into.

Obviously by the union vote, they certainly feel good about it from their perspective. I know what I’ve heard from the Administration, they feel good about it from their perspective. So when you can have that kind of even happen that potentially could cause more conflict, and instead have everybody walk away from the table and not really have it be all that visible of an event – you know, I kept expecting more visibility out of that process, and to have them come to the conclusion the way they did is – is something that I think is a contributor to what’s going on, when it could have been just the opposite. It’s a contributor to this place moving forward, and communicating, and working collegially.

When you run a bank, shared governance is not a concept that you’ve ever heard before, and – and that’s been one of the fun things for me coming into the University, not just – a University is a very different animal than a bank. You know, I’m corporate America all the way, and to come into this environment – it’s been so rewarding to me to see a different structure, and a different philosophy, and participate, and see how it works. And I don’t understand everything because I didn’t grow up in it, but to have all those issues dealt with, and have come through this – this union thing, and be where we’re at is something I think both sides can be very, very proud of. It’s just something that could have untracked a lot of good progress, and it hasn’t done that at all.

KB: What else should Central be proud of? You’ve gotten to see the long haul.

KM: I think Central – I think Central needs – and this really comes from Jay Rich, and he actually planted the seeds for this thought – I think we should be very proud of what we do well, and not worry about things that we don’t do well, or – I don’t want to say we don’t do well, but we don’t do. I think that who we are, the way we are, is something to be very, very proud of. I don’t think we should strive – look at another model, or a different University and be jealous – say, “Well they’re doing this and we’re not.” I think when you look at, you know, some of the different departments in this University – and I’ll only name one that I don’t remember ever having anything to do with, but would be an example, is the Geology Department. You know there’s something [inaudible] and the earthquake stuff, and all the study that goes on there.

Now that’s – and there’s lots of those kinds of things at Central Washington University – all sorts of those things, and I think we should be so proud of that. We should protect those, and make sure that we continue being good at what we are good at now. I think we need to be sensitive to accreditation, because that’s something that as we move forward we need to be good at, where that’s appropriate. I – I – I’m just – I’ve always been proud of Central.

KB: What’s the same, and what’s different from the college that you attended?

KM: I think there’s very little difference. I think that it feels the same. When I walked over here, and the wind was blowing, it was cold wind, and I actually thought, walking the 100 yards from my car was “It’s the same. It’s the same. It’s that same spring day I remember thirty-some years ago,” and there were students with backpacks on that looked a lot like the students. There’s some newer buildings, but I think
the – as I wander around – it’s the same. I don’t feel – and new buildings don’t make the difference. I think the – the atmosphere, the feel, has not changed, and I think that’s good, because I think when I was here it was a great place, and it’s a great place today. So students are still students.

There’s probably a little more, uh, non-traditional than there were then. I guess that’s the one thing that – that – where I wasn’t sensitive to it then – because I was so traditional, if they were there, I wasn’t looking. But I would suspect there’s more – more non-traditional students today than there were, and that might change a little bit of the dynamic, but I can’t see how that wouldn’t.

KB: The centers were a small part of the experience in the early Seventies. What’s that going to do for Central?

KM: I don’t – I don’t know if the students on campus today are any more sensitive to the Centers than I was back then. I’m not sure they’re aware they exist, or not, because you’re so inwardly focused on your life, and your world, and your goals. So I don’t know how – from that perspective, I don’t think it impacted then, and I don’t think it impacts them now. I think the Centers is a great model for the efficient delivery of four year degrees to people that are place bound, and I have a couple of those people that work for me right now, and I’ve seen examples where that has met their needs and they wouldn’t have a education otherwise. So I think in those cases it’s – it’s – we need to offer those kind of alternatives to people. The – uh – up in Wenatchee – you know, the Hispanics don’t all – aren’t as anxious to move away from home as maybe I was personally, and so I think that’s a way to meet some of their needs. They have a different family orientation, and certainly there’s some opportunity there, and some great people that we want to give an opportunity. There are financial issues for people that need to be home, or where the job is, or in the non-traditional where there’s the family and they’re still working.

I think the Center model is – serves a great purpose. Um, I’ll take a little bit of risk and suggest, though, that for me, because I wasn’t that – I needed the campus experience. I – I – as we support the Centers and think what a great job they do, I don’t want to ever forget that a large part of my experience at Ellensburg was living on campus, the new relationships, the diversity, the new experience that came along with that. And I’m not sure that as you deal with some of those other issues at the Centers, and that’s driven by the students, that they get that same kind of experience. But at the end of the day, getting the education is the goal and the bottom line, however you do it.

My brother did a distance-learning thing after – he said he took a quarter off – 25 years. And he went back and did the WSU computer thing, and got a great education, but he has no sense of going, and he’s been to Pullman twice. My son over there, he says – he asked my junior son to email him and tell him what’s going on, because he says he’s living his college experience vicariously through my son, although he has the diploma on the wall. So I think the campus experience is still – has some dynamics to it that I would encourage people to take advantage of if they can.

KB: Any last thoughts? Topics we didn’t cover, or supplements you care to add?

KM: You know, it’s a great place. It’s a great opportunity as a Trustee to participate. We’ve got great leadership, great programs, the demographics [inaudible], we’ve got a bunch of people that we need to educate, and Central’s the right place for a lot of those people. And we just need to make sure that they know about us, and – so that they can make the right choice.

KB: Okay, well thank you very much. I learned a lot.

KM: Thank you. Well –

[End of tape]