Beverly Heckart interview

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(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 1)

BH: If I look at my notes, will that be picked up on the tape?

INT: Well, we’ll see you do it, but that’s okay.

Videographer: We’ve always said, “This is informal.” Read your notes. They can see them. There’s no problem. If you want to stop the tape and talk to Dale, just say, “Can we stop for a minute?”

BH: (inaudible) wants to start (chuckle). Oh – Gee, we got the expensive photographer (chuckle).

DC: Today is December 14, 2004. This is the CWU Living History Project. My name is Dale Comstock, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics; and today’s interviewee is Professor Beverly Heckart, Professor Emeritus of the Department of History. Uh, Beverly, let me first ask you to give us a brief history of your life before you came to Central – as your lower education, higher education, where you were born, etcetera.

BH: Oh, well, alright. Well, I was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but, um, that was in the middle of the Depression. As a matter of fact, I was born in the year of the Roosevelt Depression; and so Dad took Mom and me – oh, when I was six months old – to, uh, Baltimore, and that was where I grew up, and so that’s really the town with which I identify. And for the first six years, I went to the Baltimore public schools, um, and Dad had actually chose the place for us to live where the schools had a good reputation. Uh, but then Dad died in 1949 and I became a very difficult oldest daughter for my mother to raise; and so my great aunt, who had very good connections, was able to secure a spot for me in a school called The Samuel Private School – called the Samuel Ready School for Girls. Uh, now I do want to talk a little bit about that because the question of, uh, separate female education comes up a lot in conversation, even nowadays; and I have to say Samuel Ready was, probably, the formative, uh, basic formative experience of my life. You know, I went there when I was twelve, and I stayed there until I was seventeen. Uh, when one talks about a private school, one thinks it’s a little hoity-toity, uh, but this was not a hoity-toity school. Samuel already was a chandler and also a real estate speculator in Baltimore, who never married, uh, lived with his two spinster sisters and, of course, when they all died, there was no family to give the money to. Uh, and as a chandler, of course, he worked on the waterfront; and so, he saw – went – at that time would have been called a lot of “fallen women.” And so, he left his money to charter a school for female orphans and half-orphans. Uh, and all the way up until World War II, uh, everybody who went, went on full scholarship. Uh, in order to save money, there was a share the work program. The girls did all the cleaning and, at that time, sewing and cooking. Uh, but the inflation of two World Wars really diminished the endowment and so, after World War II, uh, orphans and half-orphans continued to go to the school on very generous scholarships, and I certainly had one; uh, but the school began to take full paying boarding students and also full paying day students. But the thing that was so good about it was all these women were expert, and we had all women teachers. They were all extremely well educated, very well traveled, uh, had a lot of experience educating girls and so the education that I got was very good. The life that we, um, led was very disciplined. They were consistent disciplinarians and what they gave all of us really was a lot of self confidence. And so, once I graduated from there, I went on to Hood and spent my four years there; and then because I had gone to Hood on a full scholarship supplied by the State of Maryland, I had to teach in the Maryland public schools for two years to fulfill the terms of the contract that the, um, Maryland State had made us sign. Uh, but it was always the plan to go on to graduate school; and so I went on then to Washington University in 1961. That was another formative experience.

DC: That’s the Washington University in St. Louis?
BH: In St. Louis. Uh, and, um, that was intellectually very stretching. Uh, and I probably had one of the two best teachers in my whole life, uh, at Washington University, and I must say, uh, he formed a lot of things I’ve done here at Central. Uh, and once I finished my coursework there, uh, I was able to go off to Germany for three years, um, to Gertingen, uh, and two of those years were spent on a Fulbright Graduate Fellowship. And for the third year, because I didn’t want to come home, Washington University, very generously gave me a grant that enabled me to stay that third year and actually write the first two drafts of my dissertation. But then, the money ran out and I had to get a job, uh, and um, so the University knew that. Uh, and all of that year, I applied, uh – the University was also applying on my behalf and therein hangs the tale. We had talked before I had even left for Germany about my applying once the time came, uh, for the special program that, at the time, Stanford University ran. I don’t know if Stanford still runs that program. Oh, but they had a program whereby, um, young scholars like me, uh, could teach in their Western Civilization Program for three years. The contract was always limited - just three years and then you were supposed to go out and find a real job. Uh, and so I had applied, and the University had recommended me. The University was also sending out CV’s all around the country, and so eventually, the contract came from Central, and Germany in the sixties still had, um, somewhat, um mediocre infrastructure. There were no phones. So I telegraphed back to St. Louis and I said, “This contract came. What shall I do?” And so the Department Chair of Washington University telegraphed back and said, “Take it.” Ten days later, the contract came from Centr . . . – from Stanford. Uh, at that time, I did not really know enough to know that I probably could have cancelled the contract with Central and gone off to Stanford. Um, I didn’t know enough. I didn’t do that and I came to Ellensburg, and here is where I stayed.

DC: What year was that?

BH: That was in 1967. September.

DC: What were your first impressions of Central and the town of Ellensburg?

BH: Well, first of all, I had never been west of the Mississippi; and if you’ve ever driven this country, and I’ve now driven it sixteen times – back and forth, you know that things get a little dry and desolate, uh, somewhere west of the Iowa border.

DC: (chuckle)

BH: And so, as things got more and more and more desolate, I got, um, a little bit more and more surprised, and then I hit the Columbia and then – That was in the days before I-90, okay; so I took the old road from Vantage. And as I started up that hill from Vantage, I thought that my, um, radiator was gonna boil over. The car – the temperature gauge kept getting hotter and hotter and hotter, and I thought, “Oh, my goodness, what is this?” Uh, but at any rate, the radiator didn’t boil over and I made it to town; and I have to say, the first thing that hits you then, when you drove in on that road, was the sign outside the two high rises, which at that time were new, that said, “Central Washington State College, Home of the Wild Cats.” That was your introduction to town if you came from the East. And I thought, “Oh, dear.” Uh, and then I drove further into town, and all I could see were bars. Uh, one of my friends here subsequently said to me there were more bars than churches in town. Uh, but I had to say, “Oh, my goodness!” yet again and then there’s a very funny story. I had very little money, very little money, and also, I sorta let my wardrobe go into tatters during that whole time in Germany, because I spent the money to do all sorts of other things. And, at that time, the Webster’s Hotel was still in existence; and I’d learned all away across the West that you could go to one of those old hotels and you might have to share the bathroom with everybody else but it was inexpensive. Well, this was in the week before Rodeo. So I march in, in my tattered dress and my old car and I said, “I would like to have a room for the night.” And the clerk or the proprietor (I don’t know which it was) really questioned me – Why did I want a room? How long was I going to stay?

DC: (chuckle)
BH: What was I going to do in town? And so, I explained all that to him and so he then, finally, rented me a room for, my memory is, two dollars and fifty cents a night, (chuckle) until I could find myself an apartment. Well, I did go upstairs and I took a bath in the communal bathroom and I put on what was, at that time, my best dress, and I marched myself back down to the desk and I said to him, “Now would you please tell me, is there anyplace where a lady can eat undisturbed?” And I finally figured it out – why he asked me all those questions (laugh). And so, he sort of looked at me with a startled look and he sent me then to Webster’s Restaurant, uh, which, remember, was also the smoke shop and in back, it was a fairly nice restaurant, and so I had myself a nice meal. And then I found an apartment at Brookside Manor, which was very nice with the creek on the side and everything, and stayed maybe at the hotel for about five days and then, I guess it was a relief to him when I left.

DC: So, what was your rank and your first assignment up at Central?

BH: Ah, well, my rank was an Assistant Professor of Western Civ, and then I taught German History. They did assign me my specialty. But they also assigned me, um, European Diplomatic History, which was never a best seller, let me tell ya.

DC: (chuckle)

BH: And then, something else that they thought would be very good to have in the curriculum, and that was European Economic History. And I taught that, actually, for the whole thirty-seven year – I mean, well, I taught European Economic History and then, subsequently, American Economic History for the whole seven years that I was here, even though that was really never my specialty, but it was such, um, a deep investment – a really, um, expensive investment, to gear myself up for economic history that I really never wanted to let it go because I had put so much into bringing myself up to speed with economic history.

DC: Who was chairman of the department then?

BH: Oh, chairman of the department at that time was Walt Berg, and I’m still in touch with him; and as a matter of fact, just finished my Christmas letter to him last night.

DC: Very good. Very good. Well, during all that thirty-seven years that you’ve been at Central, who are some of the people that you think are – were most influential on you, and some that you probably would like to forget?

BH: (chuckle) Let’s just talk about the ones I want to remember (laugh). I mean there’re going to be people read this afterwards. Uh, well, the first person I really want to mention is Ed Harrington. Ed, of course, did not come until 1971.


BH: Is that so? Oh, I always associated his arrival with 1971. Uh, but, at any rate, as both you and I know, I had at that time, apparently, just become the chair of the AAEP. Was that correct?

DC: That is correct.

BH: Uh, and then, of course - I mean I was not (inaudible) chair of the AAEP for several years after that, but, um, became very active in campus politics via the senate, also via the co-committee; and I think that many times I was probably, um, a thorn in Ed’s side. Uh, but what I wanted to say is through all that activity, I got to know him really very well; and what I got to know was, that, first of all he had a sense of humor, contrary to what many other people thought. He had a really marvelous, dry wit. Uh, he really cared about Central, uh, really cared; and he cared about his role as Vice President for Academic Affairs and the kind of leadership that – academic leadership that he could exercise. He was an extraordinarily
patient man. I mean really very patient. Always respectful to me; and I have to say, given how much of a
thorn I must have been, uh, he was very indulgent towards me. But he taught me a lot. He taught me a lot
about leadership, I think. He taught me a lot about, um, the legal situation of the university, about the
university’s budget. And he also taught me a lot about the limitations of any given situation at any given
time and, I mean I worked with Ed for, I guess, twenty-five years; uh, and I just really developed not only a
tremendous respect for him, uh, but also a great deal of affection. And, um, so I really enjoy getting
together with him still, and we go out to lunch still, and he was really very influential.

The other person’s probably gonna be a surprise to you. Uh, but that person is Claire Lillard. Uh, Claire
Lillard was, um, Professor of Economics and, uh, also became, in the 1970’s, and my memory is for part of
the 1980’s, uh, the Director of International Programs. As a matter of fact, I think he was the person who
developed International programs. Uh, Claire and I and, by the way, the other economists, got to know one
another because we were all in the Shalsmyser together before Shalsmyser got devoted purely to the
Business School. Um, the close association between Claire and me really developed in the 1970’s, and a
bit of background is really necessary. Um, first of all, well enrollment declined. I mean, there had been
that great expansion of enrollment and, then also the faculty in the 1960’s, and enrollment declined
dramatically at the beginning of the 1970’s. Uh, as the enrollment declined, the History Department still had
seventeen tenured faculty members, that means full time. Along with the decline in enrollment, however,
came a change in the general education program. During the 1960’s, history had been a required subject,
like English and math. Everybody had to take a history course. That changed, my memory is, at the end of
the 1960’s, and was certainly the situation when the enrollment began to decline, along with the History
Department having all these faculty members. Now, already at that time, the History Department had a
reputation as being a fairly rigorous department; but certainly, what had developed even in the four years
that I was here, was that I became the most rigorous faculty member, uh, in the Department of History and
that meant that not only the department’s, um, enrollment plummet, but my own personal enrollments
plummeted. And, as a matter of fact, the situation was really catastrophic. Uh, the situation was probably
made even worse because I refused to compromise standards. Let’s put it this way, I compromised a little
bit, uh, but, I never ceased to give essay exams and, not only that, to give research papers. And not only
did I correct the historical content, I also corrected the spelling and the grammar. And of course, then my
enrollments got even worse (chuckle). And, uh, I, um, complained a lot at the lunch table, uh, and it
probably would be worthwhile to say here that as the enrollment plummeted, Central began to admit as
students, everything but dead bodies. That sounds rather harsh, but that was true. And as that all
happened, I complained and I complained and I complained; and finally, Claire said to me one day at the
lunch table, “Beverly, the student body is probably not going to change, and you do not have to
compromise your standards. Just simply take them where they start, and bring them up to your
standards.” He said, “Now, I know it’ll be a lot of work, but you can do it.” So that was really very helpful
as advice, but Claire and the economist did something else. They two were (inaudible) as the rigorous
department; and they would send students to me, and they never sugar coated it. They always told the
students that it was gonna be a hard course, that they would have to write a lot, but that it would be
worthwhile. And so they began, then, to feed students into my courses and that helped. But – and they did
that for a long time – way beyond the 70’s – as a matter of fact, they were still doing that into the
1990’s. Uh, and my memory is Claire died in the 1990’s, but people like Wolfgang and Don Cocheba and
even others were still sending me students. But Claire did another thing as Director of International
Programs, um, the first time we had a financial (inaudible) situation, was in 1974. Uh, well, actually, yeah,
the situation began in, uh, 1973, and went into 1974. Uh, the History Department, as an overstuffed
department was, of course, on the firing line, and, uh, I felt very bad about the whole situation, because as
Chair of the AEP, I had, of course, worked to build up the membership, had collected a lot of money from
older faculty members who were tenured and not so much in danger, but also from younger faculty
members who were non-tenured, even though tenure track and were in danger of losing their jobs. And
then, of course, there was the whole enrollment situation, uh, so I thought it would be a good idea to try to
get off the payrolls; and Claire, as Director of International Programs, had entered the university into a
consortium of Northwest schools that was associated with American Heritage, um, Association in Lake
Oswego, Oregon. Uh, the consortium would send faculty members, along with, uh, United States students
from the Northwest, to a variety of sites in Europe, uh, and at least one of those sites at the time was
Avignon. Uh, and so I decided to go ahead and apply for at least one quarter in that program, get myself
off the payroll if I won the competition – and it was competitive – and spend some of my savings to spend
the whole year in France. Uh, I think Claire probably had something to do with the fact that I was able to
go to Avignon for winter quarter that year, was able to spend, uh, the whole year in France, and get started
on what subsequently became, uh, the research project of my life, Comparative Urban History, alright. Uh,
but at any rate, that helped, okay. Uh, it helped the university, it helped me, uh, of course, subsequently,
even while Claire was still I think, Director of International Programs. And later, I went on to teach in the
very same program in Cologne, um, at the end of 1970’s, at the beginning of the 1980’s, and I did the same
thing. I went. I would do my quarter or quarters, uh, teaching in that program, then would take unpaid
leaves of absence, uh, and spend the whole year. Uh, in Germany, uh, that I did three times. Uh, but by the
end, or actually, by the beginning of the 1980’s, when we were really facing, as a university, a terrible
financial situation, my savings were depleted. And so, in 1982, ’83, I really couldn’t go abroad anymore,
and I didn’t. But, at any rate, Claire, I must say, was very, very helpful in all sorts of ways.

And the last person I want to mention, uh, is Keith Reinhardt and also his wife, Irene. Uh, Keith was in the
English Department and I got to know him through AAUP, and, uh, Keith was just something wonderful
because both he and his wife gave me a lot of moral support, particularly where academic standards were
concerned. Uh, and I have to say, I just remember both of them very, very fondly. And they not only
contributed a lot to me, but to the university and also to the community.

DC: Uh, talk a little bit about, uh, program changes in your own department over the tenure of your time
at Central, as well as organizational and other kinds of changes at the university as a whole.

BH: Um, actually, the, um, curriculum changes in the Department of History came rather early. One of
the things that happened with that great expansion of the ’60’s, and into, actually, uh, 1970, was that the
department not only offered American History and a European History, which were sort of standard in
every university at the time; but branched out into what is today called, “Non-Western History.” So, we
hired an Asian Historian and we hired a Latin American Historian. Later on, we hired an Historian of
India, Pakistan and the Middle East. And, uh, those faculty members were, um, very interested in
“cosmopolitizing” the history curriculum. So, I think we were one of the first universities in the United
States to switch from Western Civilization to World Civilization, and that was also right then, in the middle
of the 1970’s. Of course, we never ceased then, after that, uh, to offer World Civilization, and we’re
offering it, even now. Now, of course, what happened was that the Middle Eastern Historian, um, fell
victim to the RIF in 1982-83, and subsequently went on to a college in New York. We were never really
able to replace him. Uh, Paul LeRoy, of course, did both the European and African History, though he had
started out as a European Historian, uh, and did it for a long time and – well, actually even until this very
day, we were without a, um, Historian of the European Middle Ages; and now, really, there is no expert on
Medieval History. Uh, the person who offers that course, does it as a service, uh, to the Department,
ookay. Uh, but I think very early, we began to offer Non-Western History and I think that was a good thing
and I think the Department intends to continue along those lines. I mean, there’s now a young Historian of
China, there’s a young Historian of Latin America, and I think someday the Department would really like
to get back an Historian of the Middle East and that would, of course, be very helpful, uh, for a lot of
reasons.

DC: What’s your perception of how the upper part of the administration has changed over the years? I
assume, when you came here, McCann was the Dean of Faculty.

BH: Yes.

DC: Since that time, of course, the organization of the upper administration is quite different. How
would you perceive that?

BH: Well, I mean, the real thing that happened was – simply was that the university grew; and along
with the university’s growings, so did the complexity of the administration increase. I mean, when I came,
there were really two schools. There was the School of Education; and I’m not sure it was called that at the
And there was the School of Arts and Sciences. Well, then we added the School of Business. And then, of course, even though enrollment stayed fairly slack, and the numbers of faculty too, um, it was – the School of Arts and Sciences got divided; and the School of Arts and Sciences has gone through a lot of permutations over time, but it eventually did get divided into Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. So that then made four schools. Um, interestingly enough, as I said on my talk – in my talk on faculty morale, the faculty itself demanded a proliferation of Associate Deans, uh, because they wanted Associate Deans to pay a little bit more attention to personnel matters. Uh, and so, another whole layer got added, actually, in the course of my, uh, time here. The other thing that’s happened, of course, is because of growing interest of the federal government in education, there’s been a proliferation of a lot of different offices that have to do with reporting to the federal government, or, for that matter, even reporting to the state government; and, of course, one of the complaints of the deans since the 1970’s has been that there’s been more of their time generating paperwork for the state than exercising academic leadership, which is really what they would like to be doing. So . . .

DC: Uh, you spent a period of time as Department Chair?

BH: Yes. I did.

DC: Reflect a little bit on that period.

BH: Oh. (chuckle)

DC: What the experience was like. (inaudible) and all those other kinds of things.

BH: Well, by the time I became Department Chair, we had all become an old solidified family (chuckle) and we all knew where each other’s sore points were and what each other’s strengths were; and so the really, uh, the beginning of that tenure, um, was fairly easy and one had a lot of support. Uh, there weren’t a lot of people coming up for promotion because we were all tenured, full professors, okay. Uh, and so actually, the first part of the time when I was Department Chair, I did, more or less, what I had always done – I worked on the code, uh, and did my teaching, uh, and did, uh, some of my research work. The real change came, uh, really, uh, as we began to hire new people. Uh, and, uh, as the older faculty members retired and, I don’t know whether you remember, but actually, there were three of them who retired in the same year you did. Uh, that would have been Dan Ramsdell, and it was Zoltan Kolmar, and it was Paul LeRoy; and they all retired in the Spring of 1996, okay. And then, we began to, um, appoint younger faculty members and, of course, what we got into then, was a generational change. Uh, and they had some new ideas, although I’m not sure there were a lot of new ideas. I guess I would say that the real change that came about as I became Department Chair – although I now know that the process had started in the 1980’s – uh, was the appointment of adjuncts. Uh, going back over the record, I realized that the university began to rely more and more on adjuncts, first I think in English or math, and then in other fields in the late 1980’s, indeed, as the generations began to change. And then in the 1990’s, the university hired more and more and more adjuncts and the History Department did, too. Uh, I have to say that, um, I’m not sure that, um, the employment of so many adjuncts is good for them, for the university, or for the department or for any department.

DC: How have you perceived the relationship with university and its community with the larger community of the city and (inaudible) the county.

BH: Uh, well, alright. There’s been a cons (inaudible)

DC: It’s had its ups and downs.

BH: It’s had its ups and downs and actually, because Milo had forewarned me that that might be one of the questions, I gave that some thought. Uh, first of all, the relationship with the community with rowdy
students is hundreds of years old. I mean, you can read complaints of townspeople in Paris in the Middle Ages, and complaints of townspeople in Bologna in the Middle Ages about rowdy students and that will always be a problem. And, of course, when I first arrived, uh, the main complaint of the community, uh, with the students, was not that they were rowdy and having a lot of parties, but that they were indulging in those anti-war marches. Uh, and that did cause a lot of bitterness in the community, particularly on the part of people who had soldiers fight – or had sons, uh, fighting in Viet Nam.

DC: This was in relation to the Viet Nam war.

BH: Yeah, to the Viet Nam war. Well, there were those. And then of course, along the way, there have been other kinds of frictions. Okay? Some of the most recent ones, of course, we can think of, was the frictions with the high tension poles, that the President of the time, in the 1990’s, wanted to raise very high and in the eyes of some of the townsfolk, deface the esthetics of the community. But, if one thinks back on the relationships, for the most part, I think they’ve been fairly amicable. I mean, we can just think of Irene, who served - who, as a faculty wife, served on the City Council.

DC: That’s Irene Reinhart, wife of the (inaudible) English.

BH: Yes. Irene Reinhart. I mean you saw her for seventeen years on the City Council and who has a park named after her, and who was very well respected. My memory is that Marie Anshutz, wife of another English Professor, Bert Anshutz, not only served on the City Council, but at least, for a short time, served as Mayor. Then, there are a lot of faculty members who serve on various city commissions and make a contribution, uh, and all that seems to me to be an indication of good relationships between the faculty – uh, between university and the, um, town. And by the way, I mean, it’s not just the faculty that serves on those commissions; uh, it’s also staff people, and not only that, I mean, one need only think of all the different people associated with the university on a permanent basis, who are active in the Rotary or active in the Kiwanis, or active in other clubs here in town, and who have made contributions. So, actually, I think that the relationship between town and gown overtime, has been very good. I mean, you have to put it in perspective.

DC: I assume now that your current department has really done a changeover, almost entirely, from the faculty that you knew when you came here in the ‘60’s.

BH: Oh, yeah. I was the last old timer to leave.

DC: How do you perceive the difference in the training and quality of faculty in the ‘60’s, as opposed to faculty that are joining the department now?

BH: Actually, Dale . . .

DC: Are they younger? Are they more experienced? Are they . . .

BH: Well, actually, uh, I think we were all hired when we were somewhat younger than they are now. Um, history, like other humanities, and also, I think, like some social sciences, um, has more supply than demand where faculty members are concerned; and actually, there is a surplus of four thousand history Ph.D.’s in the United States at the moment. So, many of the people that, um, the History Department appointed in the late ‘90’s and the beginning of the 10’s, uh, had a hard time finding a job which means that they enter Central at an age much older than we were. I mean, for instance, I was only 29 years old when I came, and I thought that was hardly old at the time, but I now realize it was very young. Uh, so they’re older. They’re in their 40’s. Uh, perhaps the youngest person that – uh, the youngest people that we have hired have been in their 30’s. We’re the tiniest concerned. I don’t think that that’s all that much different. Uh, what had begun to happen in the Arts and Sciences here already with Jim Brooks, uh, was, uh, to appoint people with Ph.D.’s. I know, at that time, that that caused some consternation among the
people who had been associated with the old Normal School. Uh, but, Jim, um, was persistent and my memory is that except for certain fields in which there was more student demand than there was supply of faculty, we didn’t hire anybody else but Ph.D.’s. Uh, so the training is more or less the same. I would say, um, that, um, there might be two differences. One is that the current generation – cause they had such a hard time finding jobs, are very research-oriented. Uh, by that I do not mean that the older department did not publish. It did. And, actually, one of the things that I admired most was Floyd Rodine; and Floyd Rodine was, um, faculty member in History, uh, was Chair of the Department of History, one term; and he died, my memory is, in the spring of 1977. But, he had been appointed perhaps ten years before the wave of appointments in the 1960’s. He was really more oriented to teaching, but as some of us arrived in the 1960’s with, even then, a research orientation, Floyd decided he would write a book and publish it – and he did. And it is a very readable book in – on Yalta, and it’s in the library. Uh, I do remember Dan Ramsdale, um, worked a lot, uh, on a statistical study of representatives to the Japanese diet and published that in the 1980’s. Uh, and so I think what has happened is that overtime, there has been a gradual shift, at least within the History Department, towards an emphasis on research; and I think practically everybody there now is working on some research project that they intend to publish. That’s for starters. Uh, the second thing that happened was that this new group that’s older, with its emphasis on research and scholarship and publication, has also, I think, contributed within the department to, um, greater consistency of high academic standards. It pains me to say it, but, uh, within the older department, there were people who were very (inaudible) and there were people who were not, and so there was great inconsistency in standards and that contributed really a lot to my own situation. Uh, the new department has a greater consistency of academic standards. There has been, however, another development. Um, the first thing is that we did manage at the end of the 1980’s and, um, at the beginning of the 1990’s, in a kind of gradual way, to write into the code that the departments had to set up written criteria for the award of promotion and tenure. And as departments began to do that, they also then began to think, um, about the evaluation of teaching in a way that was completely different from the old evaluations – student evaluations that we used to do in the ’70’s and ’80’s. They began to think a little bit more about, um, how vigorous they wanted the scholarship requirements to be. Uh, and I think that that helped to develop, not only consistency within the department, but I think it helped to develop consistency, uh, throughout the university. And then, of course, the other thing that happened was, uh, certainly with the current Provost, and even probably a little bit before, in a very diplomatic and maybe even discreet way, uh, the word went out that one would not be promoted and given tenure unless one had published something. And so, um, that particular shift really has been occurring over the last forty years, because I remember Jim Brooks was very interested in that, but it was not possible for him to make such demands, as the university was changing during his tenure.

DC: Why don’t you comment similarly on student changes? You talked about this a little bit before, but in the ‘60’s when you came, many of them were subject to the Draft to go to Viet Nam, and so they came to the university instead. That’s changed a lot, (inaudible) to student changes.

BH: Um, first of all, yes, there were a lot of students who were trying to escape the Draft who came to only Central, but other universities and colleges in the 1960’s. There is something else, however, to mention about the 1960’s. We drew students from all over, not just the state of Washington. We drew students from Alaska, we had students from California. We had students from Oregon. If they wanted to come from the East Coast, and they did, they came and went here because those were the days before the legislature had raised out-of-state tuition to an unaffordable level. So we had a great mix; and it was not only a great geographical mix, it was a very good intellectual mix. Uh, and because universities, as physical plants, were not expanding as fast as the student bodies, Central itself, could pick the cream of the crop and was doing so. Uh, now, I had some bad students (chuckle), uh, at the end of the ’60’s. Uh, I also looking back on it now, know that I had some very good students and I certainly had, at the very beginning of the 1970’s, a small group of very good students who have become my friends and just really are wonderful people, and went on to make really something very good out of their lives. With the enrollment decline of the 1970’s, uh, quality in the student body just simply plummeted; and of course, they had just started to raise out-of-state tuition, so we were no longer getting the same sort of geographical mix. We certainly weren’t getting the kind of intellectual mix; and my memory is that in terms of the quality of the student body, the 1970’s was the absolute worst. And it was not only so much that they had a poor academic background, it was that the motivation was terrible. I will never forget a young man, and he was
even an older student saying to me when I, of course, demanded that the essay be written with good spelling and, uh, with grammatical English, “Well, I don’t really care about that, Miss Heckart. I’m just going to go and do my thing in writing however I want to do it.” And I took a deep breath . . . and failed him (chuckle). But, um, the ‘70’s was just really awful. Uh, there was an improvement in the 1980’s, and it came from two or, actually, it had, uh, two backgrounds. One was the election of Ronald Reagan (chuckle). This sounds absolutely horrible. But Ronald Reagan’s emphasis on individualism and his constant preaching about it, and also his emphasis on, um, having to do a job, being disciplined in a job, showing up on time, performing to the maximum, rubbed off on students, so the motivation just simply became a whole lot better. You didn’t get anybody saying, “Well, I’m just going to do my thing now.” Uh, students really began to work again and you could actually make demands on them and they would not complain. But there was another thing that happened. The legislature, of course, capped enrollment.

DC:   Yep.

BH:   That stabilized the whole situation. Finally again, we could take something a little bit better than just dead bodies (laugh). Excuse me. And the quality of the student body improved a little bit, along with the improvement in the motivation. But actually, I think it was the improvement in the motivation that made all the difference. Uh, what then happened in the 1990’s was that, depending on what the enrollment or the admission situation looked like in the Spring, the quality would go up and down like a rollercoaster. I can remember in the ‘90’s still, there was some years you had really, really good students; and there were other years – once again, it seemed like the 1970’s because the spigot – the admission spigot was being turned on and off according to the projections of the enrollment situation for the next year. And it was not only I that complained, it was also other faculty members. They would say, “Last year, I had a really good crop and this year is just terrible.” So.

DC:   You’ve certainly got other comments that you’ve made that we probably haven’t covered. Would you like to launch into some of those?

BH:   Well, actually, I think we have covered, uh, just about, um, everything that I had written down and that Milo had warned me, uh, might be asked. One of the things, uh, that you wanted me to comment about was moments of pride for the University. Uh, and as you know, I had to think about that quite a bit. Uh, what I really think that the University can pride itself on is that, despite the vicissitudes that did face us, and despite its location which does have an impact on enrollment, and also sometimes, despite the great run of the mill (inaudible) or background in quality, Central has managed to graduate some very good students that went on to one, either very good graduate schools – either good medical schools or law schools, okay. Uh, and they really made something of their lives. And I, as a concluding note, used to say to the really good students, sometimes, when they would complain about this or that instructor or this or that situation, “You can get a Harvard education at Central if you choose right.”

DC:   That’s a very good comment. Very nice comment. You served under, what, five or six different presidents?

BH:   Uh, well, let me count them. Dolph – not Dolph. First of all, Brooks, then Garrity, then, I suppose you could say that I served under Jimmy Pappas in the interim.

DC:   Yes.

BH:   Uh, and then, of course, Ivory, and then there was Dolph, as the interim, okay. And then, of course, Jeri McInyre. So how many does that make? Six or seven, I suppose.

DC:   Yeah.
BH: If you count the interims.

DC: Right. Any perceptions you want to make of those people?

BH: First of all, I think that Brooks and Garrity were very good, academically, for the university. Brooks, I don’t think, was able to achieve everything that he was able – that he really wanted to achieve; but Don Garrity certainly, uh, had a ground that was well prepared for his ideas of what a university should be like. I would like to say something about Ivory, about whom there has been a great deal of conflict. I liked the man, personally. I liked conversing with him. Uh, you could always have some kind of discussion with him, and it was give and take, and he never held it against you. At least, he never held it against me, and I argued with him about a whole lot of things, not only in the Co-committee, but at the lunch table, and he would actually come and go to lunch with the faculty and sit there and talk about books he was reading or problems he was having or whatever. And I think, maybe, part of Ivory’s problem was that he talked a little too much (chuckle). But he was really, I thought, very personable, you know.

DC: Well, I think we’re coming sort of to the end of this. Are there any things – any feelings about Central that you want to sort of sum up.

BH: No. I’ve already talked a lot and I think that all of my impressions come through even tone of my voice or in the facial expressions, and so . . .

DC: Well, thank you very much, Beverly. It’s been an excellent time in talking with you. I served almost the same period you did.

BH: Yeah, exactly. When did you come?


BH: Oh. So, three years before I did. Okay. Yeah, but then, Dale, you retired a whole seven years before I did (laugh).

DC: Thank you very much.

BH: Okay, you’re welcome. Is that ever going to get edited at all (laugh)?

DC: Oh, no. There’ll be no editing.

BH: (laugh)

DC: (laugh)

END OF TRANSCRIPTION