Martin Kaatz interview

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Lowther: This is November 22, 1996. Today we are interviewing Marty Kaatz who retired from the geography department at Central and the interviewer is Larry Lowther. The equipment operator is Ham Howard. Marty, before we get into your career at Central, will you tell us a little bit about you personal background, your family, where you grew up, where you got your education, any career that you might have had before coming to Central?

Kaatz: I was born in Cleveland Heights, Ohio in 1924. About five years later my family moved to Detroit, Michigan where I resided until I entered the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Well, other than that service in the military from 1944 to 1947.

Lowther: Which branch?

Kaatz: Army Signal Corps. I went back to the University - I had finished one year at the University of Michigan before I was drafted. I went back to the University of Michigan and got an undergraduate degree in geography. Finished that degree. Went on for a master’s at the University of Michigan during which time I met my wife-to-be. We were married in 1947. Stayed at the University until my wife gave birth to?. Let me back up a notch. Anyway, after I received my master’s degree, I spent a year studying at the University of - Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. During that time, Carla interrupted her education. She was a musician. She played in the symphony in Syracuse while I did my graduate work. Then I returned to the University of Michigan not receiving a degree at Syracuse and completed a doctorate there in 1952. I had no particular specialized work experience. I worked while I was going to college. I worked while in high school part time and I came to Central in the autumn of 1952.

Lowther: What was your beginning rank?

Kaatz: I came here as Assistant Professor of Geography.

Lowther: And when you retired - what year did you retire?

Kaatz: In 1983.

Lowther: Okay, and you retired as a Full Professor?

Kaatz: Yeah.

Lowther: When you were hired, who did the hiring? Do you know?

Kaatz: I was interviewed by the then President, Dr. McConnell and he was called the vice president but he was the second in command, Ernie Muzzall. We were in Michigan for a meeting nearby Ann Arbor and they came out and interviewed me for the position which I had already applied for.

Lowther: Do you know what the process was at that time? Did the geography department evaluate the credentials?

Kaatz: There was no geography department at that time. We had the division of social sciences and that was headed by Harold Williams.

Lowther: Oh yes. And was it the division that made the decision about you or was
Kaatz: Well, my impression was that whatever the division may have made, Dr. McConnell pretty much would make the decision.

Lowther: What is your impression of Dr. McConnell?

Kaatz: He was a very handsome, very officious individual, had very definite ideas about things, seemed to want to have his finger in all of the pie, he didn’t delegate much of real authority, he even, I think, was the decision maker when we bought maps for the department, I should say the division. He was a rather formal person in many ways also. At the moment - I had a lot of opinions of him in the past but maybe they’ve kind of gotten lost in things but he had a great deal of personal pride. He was very much concerned for the institution as he saw its role. Certainly promoted the teacher education program. That was the principal mission of the institution although by that time it had already begun to grant some liberal arts degrees. He was strongly in favor of classroom - what shall I say - audio visual type things. I think if he were around during the computer age he would have been taken by computers and made sure we all had one. I think he was generally supportive of the faculty. His ideas and the faculty’s ideas were not always in sync but –

Lowther: Did he take much of an interest in the personal lives of the faculty?

Kaatz: I really don’t know except that at the time I was being interviewed I think he spent more time interviewing my wife than he did me while Ernie Muzzall interviewed me. He was very much taken by what was the trend at the time. I remember very distinctively there had been a lot of things in the press about the importance of executive wives of corporations and so on. He’d taken that to heart and spent a fair amount of time querying my wife and I suppose other wives at that time.

Lowther: Do you think the purpose of that was to see whether she would fit in?

Kaatz: I really don’t know and I don’t know if he did either. He may have some model he was given and was pursuing. Faculty wives were a fairly active organization certainly at the University.

Lowther: What was your academic assignment at the time you were hired?

Kaatz: My assignment was to teach 15 credits per quarter of geography. Some of which were courses that I had never taught before in addition to courses I had taught.

Lowther: What was your specialty?

Kaatz: My special area when I came here was historical geography with a very strong interest in physical geography which eventually submerged the original interest. Although I consider myself pretty much a generalist, taught a wide variety of things and pursued a wide variety of things. Taught many courses - many regional courses certainly not always areas I was always familiar with but interested in and I think I should just as an aside point out that when I first came here I shared an office with many faculty members and my office mate was Eldon Jacobsen. Now this was common in Shaw Hall and one of the very important things I believe at that time was the experience of being cheek by jowl with people in the other departments not only in your office but in neighboring offices so that there was a good deal of what I would call cross fertilization. We didn’t have departments then, we worked as a division. The division varied in terms of how many might be in history or geography. For a long time there were never more than two or three representing a discipline. For me coming from the University of Michigan and a very strongly liberal arts academic area which tended to look down at the school of education. It was a very enlightening experience to deal with colleagues in that field and discovered that they were not necessarily the kind of people that they were made out to be very often at that university. I was also impressed with the caliber of the people that I encountered here. I really didn’t come here expecting to stay very long. I was not a small
town boy and I was won over by that. Ellensburg is a very welcoming community, very nice community. It was harder on my wife used to urban things than it was on me. And partly by being in an area like this I think that awakened my interest in physical environment, natural environment and I have developed many interests along those lines which I obtain today but the lasting impression of those early years was that sharing of interests with colleagues and discovering what their interests were. As I say, at that same time that I came, there were two other fresh PhD’s who came. One of whom left and the other remained. I think shortly thereafter Keith Rhinehart arrived. There were several people at that time who were arriving at Central and I think were very impressive people.

Lowther: You –

Kaatz: I should probably add that I was very much impressed with the geographer whom I joined, Bob Funderburk. An exceptional person who I don’t think has ever achieved the appropriate official university recognition that retirees began to achieve and appeared in large numbers in later years. He was really outstanding. I came as a replacement for his colleague, Reginald Shaw, who had died the preceding spring who incidentally was replaced until the end of that quarter by Jim Brooks, a graduate student from the University of Washington.

Lowther: Now, you speak of having a rather close relationship with people in other departments or other disciplines and said you shared an office with Eldon Jacobsen who is in psychology, what kinds of opportunities existed on campus for people of different disciplines to get together and share experiences and knowledge?

Kaatz: At that time the AAUP was quite strong. I guess there had been - the year prior to my arrival there had been - or two years, I don’t know how recently but there had been some problems with the discharge of a faculty member here and the AAUP was a very strong group in terms of people getting together quite frequently and sharing their academic interests but particularly those concerns that they had about academic freedom. That was one way. We had rather frequent faculty meetings. I can remember in my naiveté in an early faculty meeting objecting to a president that we were being called upon to act on things for which we were not receiving an agenda. That did not win any particular brownie points for me I don’t think but it was of concern. But the faculty meetings were although run by the president were by no means dictated. You had ample opportunity to say what you like. You may have stepped on toes by doing so. There were social functions obviously. After all it was a small school then.

Lowther: Do you think something was lost then as the college grew and became departmentalized?

Kaatz: Well, perhaps but I think that early - that early tradition - that exchange persisted really quite long. Well into Jim Brooks’ tenure as president. I think the break down of what I would call collegiality first began when we were threatened with reduction in force because of budgetary problems coming out of Olympia.

Lowther: That was in the 1970’s. ‘74.

Kaatz: That’s right. I don’t recall the actual dates but there was a good deal of tension brought about as people sought to survive and in one sense, if you were an advisor you were pretty apt to advise students quite broadly on campus. I think the numbers became important unfortunately. Advisement became limited to the extent that many advisees were pushed into disciplines which they had ?. It was a period of threats and people I guess used ordinary human nature reacted accordingly. So I’m rather proud to say that in our department, no back biting that I was aware of and the department on two occasions came up with plans that would have permitted everybody to stay on to weather the storm by various staff members volunteering to take off a quarter here or there so that in any combination we had the same number of people. The plan was never accepted and the adjustments as I recall were largely made by ? where faculty members were put part time into some kind of administrative position or taught in some other department. That kind of thing happened to reduce that problem.
Lowther: There was another horrific time in the early 1980’s. Was the geography department affected by that?

Kaatz: I think, I don’t recall whether our department was any more or less affected by that. We did not lose anybody per Se. I don’t recall whether or not we suffered in the sense of not getting replacements. I think probably that may have been the case when people for whatever reason resigned. Although we only had two resignations from geography in all the time I have been at Central and in only one case was a person who was asked not to reapply because they reneged on not pursuing the doctorate that they had promised they would in their contract. So the department has always been very cohesive. I’ve always been proud of the collegiality within the department. The geography department always took an active role in interdisciplinary teaching. The department I was involved in the first honors program ? economics. So there were - we had the environmental studies program. Many programs that we had been participants in have not necessarily been geography. That continues today.

Lowther: You - the emphasis shifted, didn’t it, to and were you involved in that and what produced that change?

Kaatz: This all - that occurred after I was chair. I think at that time correctly staff members perceived the need for more emphasis on applied geography. People were becoming more job oriented and things in the University and when it first surfaced as a possibility, it was not something that I had any enthusiasm for. I wasn’t going to fight it but I didn’t have any enthusiasm for it and it developed gradually and very effectively as a matter of fact. Almost to the point as I hear from some colleagues that the department has gone too far in that direction - the applied area rather than the traditional area but that is a hard thing to evaluate.

Lowther: Do you remember about when that occurred?

Kaatz: That would have occurred, I think, in the late ‘70’s.

Lowther: Do you remember the years which you were chairman?

Kaatz: Do you want to turn that off for a while?

Kaatz: The department originated in 1962 and I became chair at that time.

Funderburk declined to be chair and then we began to add staff and I remained to be chair until 1976 I think. But in fact - I believe that was it and that was the time during 1976, ‘77 when the name change occurred and John Ressler became chairperson.

Lowther: Were there any particular problems or achievements, anything outstanding during your tenure as chair?

Kaatz: Well, I suppose the outstanding thing was the leadership position that geography took in a number of ways. The institution of the environmental studies program. The department was able for a long time to hold one position open and bring in visiting professors, preferably foreign professors which we did for a number of years to fill that vacancy and we had people from Britain, South Africa, Norway, ?, that capacity but when the crunch, budgetary crunch came we lost both the opportunity and the position really because we were not allowed to bring in visiting staff members. That was a particularly exciting time but I think in general during the roaring ‘60’s when we really began to add staff we went from - in the ‘60’s we must have gone from 3 to 9 people. A tremendous amount of stimulation from the staff occurred. A lot of interaction so that was a - that was very satisfying. The department - well I was even somewhat active,
reasonably active in the symposium period which was another rather exciting time here. I think the University was taking leadership in a lot of ways. Geography was not anxious to get into a graduate program but they were happy to be part of the graduate program where students could specify what they wanted to do and when geography was involved and they felt we were equipped to do it why we would be participants in such a program and we had three or four people who graduated then. Some of our people went on to get advanced degrees at that point. Our department I would say probably led all departments for many years - probably not any more - in public service activities. The various commissions and so on in the city, county, region, state and sometimes national. The department like I already said was active with other departments. The members of the department involved in special projects, we put out a map of in Kittitas County Centennial map of Washington, provided studies for then port district of Kittitas County. Economic development studies were involved. I think we had a rather interesting mix of staff members coming from private industry as well as the academic area. The department was involved in professional organizations. I was the President of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers. Ken Hammond and I served on the board of trustees for the Northwest Scientific Association. Other members have been presidents of the Association of Washington Geographers.

Lowther: That was an association that involved high school and junior high?

Kaatz: The Association of Washington Geographers had no boundaries. It turned out in effect during the early years mostly in the community colleges and universities. In fact it wasn’t - I shouldn’t say the universities - it was then colleges but some four year colleges and universities were very slow to get involved in the Association of Washington Geographers.

Lowther: I was under the impression that you were involved in a lot of the public schools - the secondary teachers.

Kaatz: Not in the early - it wasn’t because we didn’t want them but for whatever reason in the early years there wasn’t very much of that happening.

Lowther: That was later.

Kaatz: I think it happened as the outreach became greater. I think particularly as more and more community colleges had geography and their contact with the high school but –

Lowther: I want to ask you about some of the administrators that you worked with.

You already told us about Dr. McConnell, do you have any particular impressions of Dr. Brooks or Garrity? You served under both of them.

Kaatz: Yes, whoever is president at the time of course is the butt of the faculty. Potential antagonism, I mean people are very alert to finding fault - very successful at finding fault real or imagined and I think in the case of Jim Brooks he was very young when he came here, very inexperienced, very earnest. I still remember what I said to the person sitting next to me when I heard of his appointment at a faculty meeting. I said, “You know, if he expects the rest of us to have the energy he has, he’s going to have a hard time getting that fulfilled because he’s a workaholic.” Jim in retrospect was a good president in many ways. I think there were weaknesses he showed appeared later in his career. I think that is typical of college presidents as they become more or less comfortable but he had strong concerns for academic standards, a very strong concern to build the liberal arts to come into the university but nothing any president could do I’m sure would prevent him from being criticized for one reason or another. He was under a lot of pressure during the incidents when everybody was so worked about communists. There was –

Lowther: Gus Hall.
Kaatz: The Gus Hall incident. As critical as people were of him I think he did quite well considering the pressure that was brought to bear. Garrity I think I’ve already recalled my first impressions while he was not my first choice of candidates I was quite favorably impressed at first by the results of meetings I have had with him and colleagues at the same time and later on that diminished quite a bit. I think we had great expectations for him but I think that - I don’t know - I can’t second guess what it was about him to be less collegial, less aware of faculty interests, that seemed to be the case. He seemed to be neglectful in many ways of things he should not have been neglectful. I think it would be safe to say that during his turn in office that collegiality really went down hill. It already started and I it plateaued a little bit and that’s been something that’s been probably dating back to the early days but it impressed me the importance of the institution needs to have that and particularly when you want to attract good people and you want to attract good students. You have a very high esprit de corp it seems to me a long ways toward doing that. That was one way that Central would stand out. I have no way of evaluating the collegiality that existed at our sister state colleges or state universities but - and they perhaps evolved in a similar fashion. I don’t know if they started out with such a high degree of collegiality. I do remember early visits at Western Washington particularly and I can’t say whether it was or was not there as strongly.

Lowther: How about some of the deans that you worked with? Any that stand out in your mind either in a positive sense or a negative sense?

Kaatz: Ed Harrington was a very interesting person. I don’t think we’ve ever had anyone with more integrity than Ed Harrington. Probably the most misunderstood person. He had an unusual personality but I think now in retrospect most faculty members realize how supportive he was but he had an unusual style. Among deans, I was very much impressed with but didn’t know very well.

Lowther: Burt Williams?

Kaatz: Before Burt Williams, a historian.

Lowther: Oh, I know who you mean and his name –

Kaatz: Warner, Don Warner was an outstanding individual in every way. He was a colleague before he became a dean. I first encountered him here during summer school and I think he was highly respected by all. Burt Williams was a very good dean. He probably stepped on a lot of toes of people who were not used to having their toes stepped on. He was very candid pushing, I think, in the right direction. People felt threatened by his concern for research an overreaction on their part. He probably was blunter than he should have been. He could have been more diplomatic I think but I don’t know of anybody who fought more vigorously and more independently and courageously for the things he believed in. I don’t think we’ve ever had a dean to compare with that and, of course, since that time we’ve gone through a whole host of deans of mostly people who have served some time on the faculty here which can be good but can also be a problem.

Lowther: Did you have any association with members of the board of trustees? Did you have any impressions of the board as it functioned over the years?

Kaatz: My first association with the board was during McConnell’s time. We had a three person board and I don’t now recollect why I should have been involved but it was at the time that we were engaged in constructing the new Nicholson Pavilion and the high rise dorms and the architect at that time had already been chosen and he had this unusual plan he called three suspended bridge construction for the erection of the pavilion which meant that the root didn’t have to have any interior supports to suspend the cables from outside and whatever reason I was there at the presentation and I remember him pointing out the diameter of those cables. They were designed to withstand winds of 50 miles per hour. That really rang a bell with me and I remember saying at that time, “Well, that’s not enough for Central. We have had winds in excess of 65 miles an hour.” I said they ought to do something about that but that was my first memory really of the board. Subsequent to that three person board we had a change in the state administration and the boards
at all the four year institutions were enlarged I think from three to five and Elwyn O’Dell, a political scientist was a very influential person apparently in Democratic politics and the governor at that time and he was able to I think have some role in the selection of those people and I don’t know what that role may have been whether he said yes to these and no to others but we got two extreme- three very liberal board members. Much more liberal than faculty and they were leading the faculty really. Some outstanding people at that time. I think they did a great deal for the institution. The board meetings were much more open then. They made visits to campus. They were on the campus fairly frequently. They met with the faculty on the campus. I can’t remember how much of that time was overlapping the troubles of the protest movement. I think it preceded that. With subsequent administrations - different political parties we had different board members. One of the most conservative board members I remember was from Yakima, Herb Frank but it was a pleasure to be on the opposite side of somebody like Herb Frank because he truly was a man of integrity who knew where he was coming from. You could disagree with him and find it was not a disagreeable experience. I remember he too addressed the faculty on at least one occasion, maybe more than one but he stands out in my mind among the board members who succeeded in this area. Later, the only contacts I had with the board would be to ask - well either to be present at the board meetings or on a couple of occasions to ask to make a presentation to students but until the power line issue I haven’t had much reason to interact with the board.

Lowther: Was it your experience that the boards very often acted independently of the president? Did they usually follow the lead of the president?

Kaatz: I don’t know that I can actually give a candid answer to that. I think that it may have varied during the tenure of the presidency as well as composition of the board. I have been critical - most critical and I can’t cite all instances of the boards during Garrity and shortly thereafter. They had been isolated from the faculty by choice or whatever. Well, I do recall Garrity made a very strong effort to reduce the number of board meetings and to reduce their involvement with some success at first but not so much later.

Lowther: I know that you served on a great many campus wide committees. Can you recall some of them that you served on?

Kaatz: Oh I’ve been on - I don’t know their formal names anymore. I’ve been on a building committee during the time the psych building was being built.

Lowther: Were there any particular problems or anything outstanding while you were on that committee?

Kaatz: What I remember when I was on that committee was the extraordinary arrogance of architects who didn’t seem to take much advice from the faculty members who were - who had the most at stake and most in that case wanted - bothered me most was the architect involved with the library I thought was extraordinarily arrogant. I’ve been on a campus psych committee, curriculum committee.

Lowther: Were there any particular experiences that you would like to relate in connection with those committees?

Kaatz: No, I don’t think there is anything special about my experience versus anybody else who was on a committee. The curriculum committee probably still has the same kinds of debates going on that they had then.

Lowther: Were you on the faculty senate?

Kaatz: Yes.

Lowther: Can you give us your impression of the role of the faculty senate and the institution –
Kaatz: You know it’s interesting. I was on for only a very brief time. I can’t recollect when and I don’t have a strong recollection of the issues. It’s interesting that of all the committees I’ve been on, unless somebody would press the right button I can not remember distinctively. Part of the reason I think in that case was that I had attended many faculty senate meetings so there is a blur between the attendance and the participation.

Lowther: Well, you probably have an opinion about the role of the faculty senate and about the institution?

Kaatz: I think it was a role that was very strong during McConnell’s time and strong during much of Jim Brooks’ time though toward the end I think when - well particularly when reduction of force was involved I think there was a lot disillusion with the senate because they were not able to impose more strongly some of the ideas they had about reduction in force. I retired in ‘83 and although I continued to teach part time until 1989, still too many years have elapsed to have cognizance of things that happened. Now and then I have enough concern that I have written a letter to the chair.

Lowther: You said you were also a member of the faculty organization, the Association of University Professors. Did you take an active role in that group?

Kaatz: Yes, I think I would like for that?. I was very active. It was a rather exciting time early because the Oppenheimer case from the University of Washington was going on and he was refused permission to speak although he was allowed to speak at Oregon and I remember we had the statewide meetings here in Yakima and the University of Washington people came over here with their side of the story and so on. There was the Canwell Committee or something like that.

Lowther: Yes, Senator Albert Canwell.

Kaatz: AAUP was very much interested in reducing his influence. There are some people at the Washington State University who became presidents of the state wide who were very impressive I recall. AAUP was a very dynamic organization here. We have the same? There was overlap but there always people who refused to join one or the other and you know at one time it had been discussed what my evaluation was and why the AAUP diminished so much but it didn’t?.

Lowther: Kind of a rival organization, the AFT developed about the middle of the 1970’s, right?

Kaatz: That’s true, there was that whole issue of who would do the most for faculty and I suspect in so far as faculty became more concerned with the pocket book than other issues. Organizations like AFT became more attractive I think. AAUP has always had a pocketbook - had always had a pocketbook of concern but it was always much more than that I’m sure AFT also went beyond the pocketbook. I think the pocketbook part of the AAUP was less obvious than it was in the AFT. There was a period of time when wages here were very severely impacted and faculty was very upset about and AAUP wasn’t able to do anything about it.

Lowther: Did AAUP take any stand about the issue of collective bargaining?

Kaatz: As I recall initially, they were not much involved - not supportive of it. I think that was a reaction to AFT in later years.

Lowther: Let me ask you about students. First of all, do you have any impressions of how the student body changed over the years either in terms of academic performance, preparation or in terms of diversity of the students on campus?
Kaatz: One of the early impressions I had when I came here was the difference very broad general picture in the attitude of those students that came from the upper county and those students that came from lower county. This is ignoring the larger body that came from outside of it. I would be aware of them - their county origin and the upper county students were extraordinarily hard working kids and the lower county students to a very large degree didn’t push very hard and I soon became aware of the immigrant origin that was apparent in the upper county and the degree to which their parents must have really pushed those kids. Forget the coal mines, get an education. I also recall at that time in Ellensburg as a community the upper county people were kind of looked down upon I think like the immigrants today. Not quite that bad. They didn’t have - it was like kind of a WASP attitude almost. I recollect even failed to either appoint or retain any superintendent of schools who had the county origins went on to much greater things in Tacoma from Ellensburg so there was within the county a kind of prejudice. When I first came here my chairman, Harold Williams, clued me into it already and he said, “Now, if you want to buy liquor, don’t go to the local liquor store. Go to the upper county.” And I said, “Why is that?” Apparently a dim view was taken of faculty members - strange?. Regarding the students again, in geography, amongst our majors, something that really stood out in my mind most often we didn’t get majors until kids were juniors and we also seemed to get majors mainly among older students, students who had left awhile and come back. We rarely got majors out of high school either because geography was not known and there was a certain amount of satisfaction in that because that meant that having been exposed to us we were able to convert them and get them interested in geography. As far as their abilities, I think that there would be times we thought the students were doing better than at other times but as far as I can tell the complaints of faculty about students having changed I don’t know whether expectations are any different today. Certainly the most common complaint goes way back we still hear it is reading and writing so I suppose it’s a talent they came here with and they haven’t changed a great deal. I think we’ve been successful in trying to attract better students. Actually making the attempt. At the time I don’t think we did that.

Lowther: Were you involved in the attempts to attract better students?

Kaatz: Only in so far as the honors program.

Lowther: Were you involved in the Douglas Honors Program?

Kaatz: No. As far as I know the first attempt. I’m trying to think whether this was when Don Warner. But students were selected out and invited to join this. It was not at all like Douglas Honors. It was a cross disciplinary thing most people?. Special reading, a lot of writing, reporting and of those students I can’t remember - they were good but I can’t remember any real bright lights. Brighter lights than the regular student population.

Lowther: One of your students went on to write a textbook for the schools, ?

Kaatz: Oh yeah.

Lowther: Do you have any recollections of him as a student?

Kaatz: You know, he had more courses from Otto than me. He was a good student, he wasn’t a shining light.

Lowther: Do you recall any particular problems between students and faculty or students and administration and with particular reference to the 1960’s, the activities in those years?

Kaatz: Well I remember we had very few black students. They got organized and we had a meeting at Dr. Brooks’ house.

Lowther: Were you involved in that?
Kaatz: Yes, I don’t know in what capacity. At that time, Eldon Jacobsen was called the academic vice president and there was an attempt to get them to hear all their concerns. I guess chairpeople were there because I remember Helmi Habib remarked that she was the only true African American in the room since I was only born there but they were concerned and rightly so. I don’t know how much of their activitivism was generated within the school and how much was propelled by someone from the west side of the mountains. There was some of that coming over here and getting the students. You know, I think in general you could say that the bulk of our students then perhaps since then too certainly then were blue collar, children of blue collar and they would not likely be activists in their - their parents were union activists so I think it took a little bit of prodding.

Lowther: Usually activist campuses have a very strong graduate program.

Kaatz: Yes.

Lowther: Leadership.

Kaatz: And the University of Washington, of course, was one of the very active ones so they were?

Lowther: Do you have any recollection of Ron Sims?

Kaatz: Only that he was here then and he didn’t seem to be very radical at that time.

Lowther: Do you remember, and I’m not sure just when this might have been, probably around 1970’s a one day strike on the part of the students?

Kaatz: No there was some hanging in effigy. I don’t know if I was part of that that time or not. I don’t recall that. I could have been. Not in the early ‘70’s. In the early ‘70’s I don’t remember but I was here then?

Lowther: Were you involved then or did you recall anything about the red tag system and the student protest to that?

Kaatz: No, refresh my memory on that.

Lowther: The red tag system, it would be in the education department. Faculty members could submit a concern about any student they could go into a file and if he got a certain number of red tags he could be pulled from the program.

Kaatz: I have only a vague –

Lowther: It was kind of a secret –

Kaatz: I have only a vague recollection.

Lowther: Okay, you don’t have much of a recollection of that, All right, let me move then to another topic, town gown. Do you have any recollections of the relationship between the Ellensburg, the Kittitas County community and the college or university?

Kaatz: I think there was a good deal of tension between town/gown in the early years that I was here. It seemed to melt very quickly when there was a threat that the University was going to be closed. We got a great deal of support from the community. I think town/gown relationships pretty much were uphill - were pretty much improving over the years up until Garrity - the backlash because of Nicholson and so on so I
think there has been a pretty steady improvement from the time it plateaued. I was always aware though because I was involved in some town matters that if you wanted the town people to participate in some kind of a program that involved their response you shouldn’t hold it on campus. Have it at a place like Holmes Center. There was a tremendous aversion, more particularly the ranchers but in general an aversion to coming on campus for meetings of that type. They certainly would come in for a play or a concert but there was an exchange even if all the meetings they had on campus it would to some extent be less well attended perhaps because of that.

Lowther: Okay, what would you regard as your greatest contribution to Central?

Kaatz: Well I would say that I would like to think that my tenure as chair in geography, building up that department and having a department evolve and be effective as it was I think it’s always commanded respect from other departments and the administration. They never felt threatened by them in any way, pressured by them in any negative fashion. Never had the support we would like but that was not unique to us and I think that my colleagues particularly while I was chair were very productive and effective people and I think we were very well liked by students and faculty so that would be my?

Lowther: Marty, do you have anything that you particularly wanted to share with our audience that we haven’t covered already?

Kaatz: Well I don’t know how you define our audience, I think that Central in the past perhaps was underestimated in terms of the quality of education it provided. I think the quality of our staff and our program shows up in spite of deficiencies we’ve had in leadership. Leadership has not been as effective as our staff - I mean our faculty have been to the extent that I wonder at all. We can operate on our own momentum pretty well.

Lowther: Thank you very much.

Kaatz: You were right about the time. I didn’t think I’d be here this long.