Corwin King: Welcome to CWU's Living History Project, jointly sponsored by CWU and the CWU Retirees Association. I am Corwin King, president of the CWU Retirees Association in 2014 and 2015. The date is July 5th of 2014 and our interviewee today is Dr. Warren Street, recently retired from the psychology department on campus and also holder of some administrative positions while he was here.

Warren, let's start off with sort of a general question: Could you give us a brief personal history of yourself before you came to Central?

Warren Street: Well, I was born and raised in the Los Angeles area and went to school there, both undergraduate and graduate school. I went to undergraduate school at Occidental College, a small school in Los Angeles and went to Claremont Graduate School for my doctoral degree, so I had kind of grown up in an urban area. And, you remember this is the 1960s and it was sort of a time, a back-to-nature period in American society, and so when I left graduate school in psychology, I thought it would be interesting to apply to -- for positions at schools that were within 100 miles of a national park because I thought that would provide a very livable environment and here Ellensburg is, within 100 miles of Mount Rainier National Park, so I wrote asking if there were positions.

You know, the hiring environment was very different than -- you could look at the ads for open positions or you could just sort of go on your own initiative and inquire, and so I inquired. And I had already been to Washington State. I came up here for the World's Fair in Seattle in 1962, so I knew what this environment in Ellensburg would be like. This would be a forested wonderland, just like the Puget Sound area. So I was very excited when I was offered a job. I was offered a job here and I was offered a job at Western Washington [University] as well.

So my wife at the time and I flew up after I had been hired. I didn't even have to interview for the job because the baby boom was just beginning to fill the high schools and college classrooms and teachers were needed desperately to handle this influx of the young student population. So by the time I came here in 1967, I had already been hired. I didn't need to come up for an interview. I had been interviewed on the phone and when we got off of the airplane in Yakima, we were both carrying umbrellas because we were fully expecting it to be rainy because of Washington's reputation.

So our drive from Yakima to Ellensburg was a real eye-opener. Instead of this...
forested wonderland, here's this desert, sagebrush, and we had came up late in
the day and night had fallen by the time we got to Ellensburg and the person
that met us, the psych department chair, drove us into town kind of by the back
way. So we drove in on these side roads and he ended up depositing us at our
motel. Oh -- he took us out for a drink before we went to the motel room. This
was -- so it was cowboy and rancher night in the bar and this is just a really
alien environment. I had never -- to show you how sheltered my life in Los
Angeles had been -- I had never seen anybody wear cowboy boots except as a
costume -- you know, for a costume party or something like that, but here I was
in this rural environment. So I remember that we went to our motel room and
just sat on our bed and said what . . . what have we done?

Corwin King:  (Laughter).

Warren Street:  Well, that was a pretty low point. We got up the next day, drove
around and it turned out to be a nice town after all, new hospital at the time,
schools, all of that. So, I mean, your question was about my life before coming
to Central, but I guess I have moved ahead.

Corwin King:  What was your first impression of the campus when you saw that,
you moved into your office? This was sort of before the real building boom --

Warren Street:  Yeah.

Corwin King:  -- on campus. So what did you think of the academic
environment?

Warren Street:  Well, the first part of your question was what did I think about
the campus? The campus was much smaller then. The northern part of the
campus had yet to be developed. You -- you commented about moving into my
office. Remember, as I said, this was a time when the student population was
really exploding and they didn't have enough offices for the new faculty that
they were hiring to absorb these classes. So my first office was in a dorm
room. I had an office with twin beds in Wilson Hall, which is still a dormitory on
campus and it's just north of Black Hall and where the current SURC is, kind of
in that environment.

At the time the campus was bordered -- kind of bordered on the north by a
railroad track that went through behind Black Hall and if you look around
campus, you can still sort of see where that railroad track was. A lot of it has
been re-landscaped, but there are some places on the campus that cut
diagonally across the campus, like the border of the Japanese Garden goes
diagonal to everything else. You wonder why -- you know, why isn't that nicely
squared off? And the reason is that it follows the line of the old railroad tracks.
So that was kind of the north border and everything above about where the
Japanese Garden is now, that was pretty much undeveloped. So it was a while
before the institutional infrastructure expanded to kind of equal the full complement of student services, both academic and non-academic, that the baby boom required. So that's -- that's sort of the environment as I found it.

And I have now forgotten the second half of your question.

Corwin King: Well, it was about the academic environment.

Warren Street: The academic environment, yeah.

Corwin King: They were hiring people right and left then as I understand it. It must have been an exciting time to be here. Things were expanding, but what about programs and services, things like that?

Warren Street: It was an exciting time to be here and I think part of the reason why it was so exciting and interesting for me was that my age was -- was pretty close to that of my students and I found out later this is a happy time that doesn't go on forever. You actually get older than your students after a while, but the -- the first several years of my students -- we really formed research and scholarly partnerships.

I thought our students – uh -- as somebody once pointed out to me -- students always occupy a range of abilities and at any school you will find some of the very best students in the country and some of the most disinterested and apathetic ones and that range is pretty much the same everywhere. The difference between institutions may be where the center of that range falls. So I thought our -- this campus was centered, well, pretty much close to the middle. I didn't think that we had a predominance of exceptionally gifted students, although we had, as I say, many who were the equal of any in the country, and I didn't think we had an exceptionally sluggish student population either.

One of the things I have always been proud of Central -- it's been a source of pride -- has been our sense of mission toward students that are the first in their family to attend a university, and if not the first, well, at least their family doesn't have a long tradition where it's just expected that automatically, of course, you will go to a university or a college and get a degree. No, it's a big decision for them.

You know, I think that -- that that's a special calling that we execute very well here at Central, and I think that it's a -- it's something that -- that's important to the longstanding survival and -- what? -- a place in the world for our country -- the ability to reach out and offer these educational opportunities for people that may not have had them before.

Corwin King: Well, you have already kind of touched on this, Warren, but could you talk a little bit about your first rank and assignments. When you came, what
were you teaching? What kind of academic duties did you have?

Warren Street: When I first came -- so I was hired as an associate -- sorry -- I mean an assistant professor at the princely sum -- and I've remembered this for 40 years now -- 45 years -- of $9,720 a year, which was pretty good. Anything close to $10,000 a year in 1967 was -- was a pretty good salary, excellent.

My first teaching assignments were in subjects that I had never taken a class in and had indeed avoided taking classes in when I was in undergraduate and graduate school. The first class I had was in human growth and development -- developmental psychology. I also taught that same quarter, I taught a class called Learning and Evaluation -- theories and research in learning and evaluating behavior, testing. So these two classes were part of the teacher training curriculum and psychology served as a major provider to the teacher ed program and these two classes were the vehicle for infusing psychological research into that teacher training program.

As I say, I'd had never had a class in child development. My specialty was social psychology and as I went along during the quarter I was always one or two chapters ahead of the students and we all got through it together. And I still see some of those students around town. They have gone through teaching careers and they have retired and they are here in Ellensburg.

Later, during those first few years, the classes that I taught expanded and I did get a chance to teach social psychology, my specialty. I taught research methods in psychology, you know, the tactics and logic of research. I taught a class in beginning and intermediate statistics, two different classes. Later on I taught classes in the history of psychology -- a subject that ended up being one of my real passions, real interests -- history and philosophy of psychology, but those were the first few classes I taught.

I taught those in the Grupe Conference Center. The psych department at the time was housed in Black Hall and our rat labs were -- I am trying to think what's there now -- I guess the Dean's offices, maybe. I won't comment on that further.

Corwin King: I was going to say, it's almost too good.

Warren Street: But -- (Laughter). But there was -- and our offices were in -- now, finally, I got moved out of the dorm and into a true office. Some of the offices in Black Hall were windowless. They were on the inside and they were -- we called it the Black Hole of Calcutta and you disappeared into here. We had very small offices and we shared them with one other person. That was a measure of how much the new hiring had outrun the physical plant in the late '60s.
Corwin King: What about some of the people that you worked with back then? Are there some that you look back on as being particularly influential or unforgettable?

Warren Street: I made a special note if this came up. There was one person that was really unforgettable and that was someone in the classified staff and her name was Ruby Tripp. The reason why she was especially unforgettable, she was in the accounting office, and it was Ruby who reviewed your travel claims -- vouchers that you submitted for reimbursing you for travel that you did for the university, and she was very watchful for, you know, your legitimacy of everything that you claimed.

And one of the things that made her memorable was that she assumed that everybody -- that this was what everybody else was thinking about, too. So when she was reviewing your travel claim, she pretty much knew that that was on your mind, too. And I remember once getting a call and I picked up the phone and the voice at the other end of the line said, "You can't do this!" No "Hello:" No, this is just Ruby's voice saying "You can't do this!" and it was Ruby who had caught an error in my travel voucher. So, somehow that was a memorable person.

But there have been many that I have worked with that have been exceptional -- added so much to the quality of the experience here. One is my wife and colleague, Libby, with whom we have together an excellent academic relationship as well as a personal one, obviously. When each of us does some writing, then the other person serves as a sounding board for that writing. We consult with each other a lot and team up on projects that really expands their meaningfulness.

Ed Harrington, who was provost and vice president; I remember him because he -- he was -- he promoted my interest in computers. I had an undergraduate job way back in the early '60s with the first computer that my undergraduate institution had on campus and it trained me to be a computer operator and I managed to keep my hand into computer affairs all along through graduate school and then when I came here -- and as luck would have it, the computer that Central had when I first came here, was the same one, the same model as the model that I had trained on in 1963 as an undergraduate, so I had kind of a sort of automatic transfer of training and took off from there. Ed Harrington kind of promoted my -- oh, he put me in charge of some faculty training on computers and gave me some released time for computer development. I got an NSF grant one year to develop a class in computers. This was all kind of nurtured by Ed Harrington.

Don Schleisman was the -- gosh, what was his title then? Dean of the Faculty, I think.
Libby Street: Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Warren Street: Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Don helped me -- Don recruited me to help in developing curriculum guidelines for the university and that was kind of a nice change. It made the curriculum more a matter of policy and less a matter of person friendships -- you know, what kind of deals you could cut to get a new class.

Dean Burt Williams was very influential. He was -- he suggested the formation of an honors college and when I volunteered to head the committee that developed the Douglas Honors College, he was very supportive. His office provided secretarial help, funding for the printed materials that we needed, released time and encouragement for faculty, just lots of the things that were sort of make-or-break issues for the early years of the Douglas Honors College.

Anne Denman hired me to be an Associate Dean and that was a great experience for me. John Ninnimann, who was here for only a few years, but also continued me as the Associate Dean; that was -- that was a very helpful to me and expanded my view of the university.

In the psych department, my colleagues Don Shupe, Max Zwanziger, Don Guy, and Terry DeVietti and Phil Tolin, have all been great colleagues. We've formed, you know, a very nice working academic and research working community. Those people all came at about the same time I did in the late '60s and early '70s and we had lifelong partnerships. Terry still teaches for the department.

And then other memorable people have been on the classified staff and the administrative exempt, Chris and Rick who are doing the filming today, for example, a couple of the outstanding staff members here. Shirley Sadler had a long history here, Fred Stanley in computer science -- excellent. Jim Thomson, who was the tech person in psychology was more of a paraprofessional faculty member, too. He just really saw things from the faculty member's point of view. Mark Lundgren, who was in the assessment office, not quite the right [office] name, but that's the -- the office in the university that gathers and distributes data about the university.

Dave Storla in tech services, Linda Hoff, Estelle Matthews, they were always very helpful. I think that the classified staff provides the continuity that a university really needs to get every day's business done and we just have outstanding classified staff members up and down the line.

Corwin King: Let me jump to a slightly different question, Warren. You came in 1967, you mentioned.

Warren Street: Uh-huh.
Corwin King: And that of course, was a period of, you know, great upheaval on university campuses. What was the political situation like here at Central, when you came?

Warren Street: When you talk about upheaval on university campuses then, much of that upheaval was centered around two issues: The civil rights struggle for expanding African American access to simple things -- what we think of as simple things now -- as voting, rights to accommodations, university admission, all of that stuff -- all of that was a very pressing issue. Opposition to the Vietnam War was also very strong current on American campuses.

And sometimes I would tell people that -- kind of using an analogy to the tides -- you know there are some parts world where the tides rise and fall between extremes and then some parts of shore where the rise and fall is rather moderate and our campus was one of rather moderate places where the rise and fall of social issues was not as strong as it was on some other campuses. We had some -- I think that the political orientation of our students was very much in sympathy with national trends, but there weren't the -- you know, the riotous demonstrations.

Taking politics on a different -- refocusing it, you can talk about campus politics, potential sources of conflict on campus between different aspects of the academic community. I thought in general that across the staff, administration, and faculty, we have worked together well. There are some times when -- when each sector kind of responds to a different set of demands and then that can bring them in conflict.

So the administration -- since I served in the administration, I kind of had a chance to see this from their point of view -- they are called to account to various things by the public agency that funds us. So we have to -- the administration has to fork over these reports and data and account for what we are doing.

That usually involves, then, the administration asks the faculty, what are you doing? And sometimes faculty -- this represents an interruption in what they are doing -- sometimes they will say, you know, I have been asked to account for what I am doing so much that I can't do it anymore. I don't have any time left for doing it. So that -- those conflicting demands, I think, are responsible for some of the political -- so-called political frictions on campus.

Corwin King: What about stresses, if any, maybe thinking back to the '60s, but bringing it forward, too, between the campus and the community? Have you noticed any town-gown problems?

Warren Street: You know, I think there's town-gown differences, but I don't
think they rise to the level of a problem very often. I mean, some of the
town-gown differences are a difference in political and social perspectives. The
campus tends to be much more politically liberal than the town.

Corwin King: Uh-huh.

Warren Street: And there are town-gown differences in that the -- the gown in
this case, the university -- is a public institution and our town is very much
oriented toward private enterprise.

Corwin King: Uh-huh.

Warren Street: And sometimes these differences don't rise to the level of a
problem because we all agree just to not talk about them. It's sort of like going
to Thanksgiving dinner with your family and [there are] just some things we are
not going to talk about. Sometimes -- the only time that I have personally felt it,
was -- well, because we are a public institution, sometimes there's a tendency
to resent having to support anything publicly, especially among politically
conservative people, perhaps.

Corwin King: Uh-huh.

Warren Street: That, you know, that public works in general all should be
privatized. So there can be some resentment that any of my tax money is going
to pay professors here. So the few times that I have had unfriendly comments
have always been when I have gone downtown shopping during the daytime
and had shopkeepers say something like, "Hmm, taking a little time off the job?"
or "You must be taking a break from teaching today," something like that. It's
kind of a reminder that you -- you should be at your desk, shouldn't you? But
those are the only unpleasantries.

Corwin King: What about changes on campus during your tenure? Again, you
might think about different ways of looking at that: changes in the organization,
maybe in programs, the physical campus?

Warren Street: Well, the physical campus has changed a great deal, of course.
But, you know, that's kind of superficial. It's just making new buildings. I think a
more important change has been the change from Central as primarily a
teacher preparation institution, where almost everything fed into the teacher
preparation program, to becoming a much more comprehensive university. So
when I first came, for example, the math department, the biology department,
all these departments in the sciences that now have very independent lives as
science departments, their main role was to train science teachers; so, much of
their curriculum fed back into teacher preparation. Or family and consumer
sciences -- a separate department now -- that was virtually entirely devoted to
preparing home ec teachers. P.E. teachers, shop teachers, business teachers,
all the people in business training keyboard operators and that sort of thing, so
that has changed a great deal over the -- over the span of my career and those
are now separate academic pursuits in their own right.

I think that the growth of women in the faculty and administration has been
noteworthy over the years and has broadened the talent that we can call upon
to inspire our students.

Over the years, there's been, I think, a greater separation between the
administration and the faculty rank and file. It used to be the case -- and this is
partly I think, because of our history as a teacher training institution -- there was
a tendency for people to be in the faculty for a while and then to migrate to the
university's administration.

Corwin King: Uh-huh.

Warren Street: So all those administrators now had teaching experience
among these people who were their colleagues, but more recently, dean is
about as high as you go rising from the faculty ranks and the upper
administration above that almost entirely hired from outside. So there's this
disconnect now between people who have a lot of experience and people who
have rather little in this environment. So that has been a change.

And another small change that I was just thinking about this morning was -- this
is minor, but definite -- people used to smoke everywhere. You would smoke
on committee meetings. You would smoke in the classroom. Teachers would
smoke; students would sometimes smoke in class. That's all changed. You
asked about what changes I had seen. That's a small one.

Corwin King: This isn't a logical segue, but are there some moments in your
tenure here that you are particularly proud of, maybe some events, activities
that you were involved in?

Warren Street: Hmm... Well, I have already said how -- that I think a source of
pride for the university is its outreach to first generation students, people that
might not otherwise have an opportunity. I think we have some -- many -- very
solid programs, academic programs, and some that are just very noteworthy
and in a larger urban environment, would be in the newspaper every day, but
here at Central, we have to kind of be satisfied with maybe less national
coverage.

But I think our geology department and our music department have been
excellent. Our physics department is coming on very strong now, I think.
Psych, we have always been proud of our psychology department and the
accomplishments of our students.
In the '60s and '70s, there was a program called Symposium that, for a week or ten days between winter and spring quarters, we brought in national speakers -- speakers of national prominence -- and I was very proud of that -- to be part of that, and more recently SOURCE, the undergraduate research and performance symposium held every spring. I think that's a wonderful display of our students' accomplishments. So those are all things to be proud of, I think -- oh, and the Douglas Honors College, I should not leave that out, my involvement with that, kind of developing it and then as its first director. I was tremendously proud of that liberal arts program.

Corwin King: How about the -- you have mentioned your perception of students --

[Conversation off camera]

Warren Street: Take a break?

Corwin King: Stop for a minute?

[Recording stops, then resumes]

Warren Street: Really, I was afraid I was gassing on forever.

Rick Spencer: I like that term, gassing on forever. I might use that. I call it rambling. That's what I do a lot of.

Jean Putnam: Interesting because you came the year I came, '67.

Rick Spencer: While he's walking, could you just answer a couple questions about Douglas Honors?

Warren Street: Sure.

Corwin King: Just tell me, you know -- I want to make sure you are framed up.

Warren Street: Okay.

Rick Spencer: Tell me how the Douglas Honors College, when you started it, what was the purpose of it, and maybe first describe what is the Douglas Honors College?

Chris Smart: Want me to sit there?

Rick Spencer: Sure.

Warren Street: Ready to go with that question?
Rick Spencer: Yes.

Warren Street: Whenever we talk about the Douglas Honors College, we say it's Central's program for talented and motivated students. It's a very selective program in inviting people to participate. In its early years it focused on a four-year program of reading a series of books of western literature that had, you know, proved to be of enduring value.

So we would start with reading the Greeks and work our way up to the most recent, noteworthy books, and try to learn from the authors, what they said. More recently the program has kind of divided itself into a two-year and a four-year option so that people who transfer from community colleges can finish out the honors college after not being here for the first couple of years, and it's expanded its perspective into more than just this great books program, but honors level courses in many different disciplines. So its original conception as a great books core has expanded and blossomed into a more full-fledged program.

Rick Spencer: What would students expect to achieve if they -- what encouragements could you say to have a student join the Douglas Honors College or be part of it? What advantages would that be for a student or what would attract them to that?

Chris Smart: Yeah, if they are sitting on the fence.

Warren Street: If they are sitting on the fence, we would always tell them that they were going to be part of a cohort of equally interested and equally talented students that was going to stay together for four years.

Chris Smart: Could you do that and embed the questions with the answers -- "the student" rather than "they" would, and then that way...

Warren Street: Okay. When we approach students and they might -- might or might not follow up their interests and become a member of the honors college, we tried to emphasize the bond that they would be forming over a four-year period with other students that were equally interested and equally talented and who would be sharing at least one common course for their whole college career -- community building with a group of like-minded other people.

You know, sometime students would come to us especially if they were -- they just had a really strong academic passion. They might have been one of the few people in their high school that had that kind of passion for learning, but now we could offer them a chance to be with other folks, other students, for a long time who are going to see things the way they did and have an interest in just learning new things and talking about ideas. So that was -- that was what we could offer them and the best thing was we could tell them the truth about it.
This is what you will get from being an honors college student. You may turn this into an occupation or a career later on when you leave college, who knows, but you will come away from this experience with a common core of learning that's shared with educated people everywhere.

Chris Smart: That's what I think is nice because it creates an environment for students to come in and learn together and participate.

Warren Street: Yeah, plus you can do the New York Times crossword puzzle better than other people can.
(Laughter)

Warren Street: And you can shout out the answers when Jeopardy is on the air. That's also one of the benefits.

[Off-camera comments: ]

There you go.
Corwin, you are fired.

Jean Putnam: When did that start? What year was that?

Chris Smart: You played a role in the Douglas Honors College, am I correct there?

Warren Street: Yeah.

Chris Smart: Let's -- could you talk a little bit about your role in the development of it? One last question, it's your role.

Warren Street: Okay. The Douglas Honors College started during a time of economic recession in the state. And our dean at the time, Dean Burt Williams, came to the faculty and said that, even though we are in depressed economic times, we can still act like interested and engaged university professors and he had a list of ten things that he thought we, as a college -- the college of social and behavioral sciences -- that we as a college could do and here's this list of ten things: Anybody interested? I took a look at the list and one of them was to create an honors program. So I wrote back to him later and I said, "Sounds good to me."

I volunteered to be on that committee, and as the usual fate of the volunteer, I was appointed the head of the committee. So we gathered some other members of our college. We spent a couple of years in surveying other honors programs around the country and we settled on a program that's the core of the curriculum at St. Johns College, which has campuses in Annapolis and Santa Fe. It's a curriculum that's centered around the great literature of western
history. So that became our -- the core of the honors college was this great books reading program, still -- still survives up to the current -- in the university. We --

[Pause for conversation off camera]

Off camera voice: I'm sorry.

Off camera voice: I can't think of anything.

Warren Street: That was kind of the founding -- that was the founding concept.

Jean Putnam: In the '70s?

Warren Street: In the '70s. We recruited students. We went to all sorts of sources where we could find out the best high school graduates in Washington State. We sent them letters of invitation. Dean Williams' office was very helpful in supporting all the publications, the materials, that you need to make people aware of these opportunities and we would recruit 15, 20, 25 students a year, but because it was a four-year program, they would sometimes fall by the wayside as the years went by.

The new . . . the revised Douglas Honors College program has made it much more attractive to be in and out of the program and to take it in bits and pieces so that you can continue to be engaged as an honors student without -- you know, if you can't participate this one quarter, that doesn't now mean that you are -- the thread is broken. You can stay in the program.

Chris Smart: That's good.

Corwin King: Thank you, Warren.

Chris Smart: That's really good. OK, you're done.

[Off-camera conversation among tech staff]

Jean Putnam: [unintelligible] . . . in the honors program. . . . Jim Nylander.

Warren Street: Oh, yeah, Jim was great.

Jean Putnam: I want to keep asking questions. [Laughter] I'm not going to. Nothing.

Jean Putnam: Who is the guy that took over the honors program?

Off campus voice: Barry Donahue.
Jean Putnam: He bought that . . .

Corwin King: The old Elks building.

Warren Street: The YMCA building. Linda Marra became the director for a couple of years after I stopped and then Barry Donahue and then Matt Altman.

Corwin King: Until just recently.

Warren Street: Yeah.

Jean Putnam: That was after my time. Yeah, interesting.

Rick Spencer: I am rolling.

Corwin King: Are we ready to roll again? Let me try to pick up here in mid-sentence. Warren, you mentioned your perception of students' capabilities a little bit earlier, but let me shift to something slightly different. Do you feel that Central provides an ample cultural environment for its students?

Warren Street: Well, I think so. I think more than ample. Now, whether the -- whether the students think that this is the -- the -- these are the cultural opportunities that they are looking for, that's a different question.

Earlier you asked about changes over time. You know, one of the changes I didn't mention then was that we have gone from being a commuter campus that was vacant on the weekends. People would evaporate from Ellensburg and go back to their homes every Friday evening and then show up again Sunday night, but now there's much more of a continuous campus life, students stay around town. This really has become more of a home for them and I think it's partly -- well, I think it's greatly due to the Student Affairs programming and the building of this new student recreation center, the student union and recreation center, offers all kinds of opportunities. I think a lot of the online opportunities that are available to them make it less attractive to have to go someplace else. By online, I mean access to electronic media through wireless connections all over the place, wired connections in their dorms, lots of connectivity and I think that -- that makes being on campus much more attractive.

There are lots of -- in kind of the narrow sense of cultural opportunities -- there's lots of theatrical, musical, athletic, you name it, events that are performances by one group for the benefit of the rest of the student body and those are practically daily events. If you wanted to go to recitals or theater rehearsals or speeches or whatever, you could -- you could do that every day of the year, so there's lots of opportunities.

The one drawback to this, I think, is that these -- you know, the day hasn't
gotten any longer just because we have found more ways to fill it, and so the
tendency -- I think there may be some tendency for these events to successfully
compete with the real work of -- of a student, I mean the learning tasks of a
student. It's just much more easy to be distracted, I think, from those things.
So maybe it's sort of Darwinian, where the strong student survives, but I would
hate to be part of -- sort of a conspiracy to sidetrack people from the thing that
we all believe is of the most lasting value about their being here.

Corwin King: Let me ask a couple of sort of summary questions, Warren. The
first one is as you look back on your career, could you talk about some of your
personal contributions to your department or maybe to the university as a
whole, that is things that you think were particularly important that you did here?

Warren Street: You know, I really think that the most important thing that any of
us do and I certainly feel that for myself, is we have a responsibility for
transmitting -- transmitting knowledge, transmitting things that are valuable to a
new generation that unless -- unless we intervene on their behalf, they will not
be able to carry these -- carry this knowledge and these abilities forward. We
don't understand this very well, I don't think. But we always sit on the brink of
extinction, sort of, as a society, a developed technological society that gives
full -- full blossom to its artistic and creative impulses. It doesn't take many
years of neglect for that to go away, and so I think that the most valuable -- kind
of the most noteworthy thing we do is contribute to the preservation of -- of an
enlightened society. That just doesn't happen by accident, you know. You
have to make it happen. So that I think is the most important personal
contribution that any of us can make.

I was -- I was pleased to be a part of a transformation of this university from its
teacher preparation role, which it continues to execute well, to a more
comprehensive educational mission. The Douglas Honors College, the role in
creating it and directing it for ten years, that was -- I thought that was a
substantial contribution. I have already mentioned under Don Schleisman's
encouragement sort of regularizing the curriculum, trying to reduce duplication
across the curriculum, trying to get departments to cooperate rather than
compete in their offerings by cross listing departments -- or cross listing courses
or team teaching courses so that different departments could participate in what
essentially was the same subject matter.

As an administrator, I hope that I was able to encourage people to look at
accreditation and assessment exercises as something that -- something of
some value to the program, not just the creation of a -- a document to be sent
off to satisfy some external body, but something from which the department
could learn by a process of self-examination. All of these assessment and
accreditation reports are just very burdensome and so if a person can -- can
convince -- convince the people who have to write them that there is value to
them in doing it, beyond just getting a re-up on their accreditation, that would be
a good thing, and I hope I helped departments see some value in that. So those things I thought were good, but teaching students, that was the most important contribution.

Corwin King: As a semi-summary question, Warren, could you give us a statement that sort of wraps up your feelings about your time at WSU -- or at CWU.

Off-campus voices: We would love to hear about that.

Warren Street: (Laughter).

Corwin King: Sorry, brain burp.

Warren Street: Well, I had a son that went to WSU and he appreciated it very much, but here at CWU, to summarize things, you know, during the middle of my career, I would have thought -- I think I would have told you that it was very much a mixed bag, that there were some good things and some things that weren't so wonderful and these might be about equal to each other, but looking back now, I think that -- that I had an unmerited gift to have been able to serve as a university faculty member and -- and here at Central. I had wonderful colleagues. I got to get up and go to work every morning and talk with some of the smartest, most talented people in the country who came here just to talk with me. That was pretty wonderful. Looking back now, all of the discontents that I had, they all revolved around money and salary, but as it turns out, that was all okay and I shouldn't have fretted as much as I did. So just -- just the opportunity to be with some of the most rewarding colleagues and students, later became friends, good friends, that was quite a gift.

Corwin King: Well, said. Well, thank you, Warren, it's been a pleasure talking to you and this concludes our living history interview.