

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

John Herum

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 1)

BJ ...1996. I'm Bob Jones doing the interview, and Ham Howard is running the camera. And we're interviewing John Herum of the English Department.

John, would you start off with a brief personal history of your life before coming to Central, including your birth, your home town, your family, your parents' occupation and your public school education? I think that pretty well covers it.

JH It certainly does! [chuckles] Well, both my parents were public school teachers, so I was born in the business. I really wanted to be the same thing.

And I was born in Bismarck, North Dakota on a New Year's Day, 1931. And since I was the first baby boy in Burleigh County, in Bismarck, that year, I should have had the front page of the paper. But the state capitol burned down that same year, and that disaster took the first page, and I got put to the back in 1931.

So I was raised in North Dakota, in little small towns around North Dakota, where my father was superintendent of schools and a troubleshooter.

I left North Dakota as soon as I could. I was 16. I went to college at Carroll College, a small private college in Helena, Montana. Got my English degree there.

And then, took a – my father died that last year, and I just about didn't finish because of that. But I did. And then I went down to Fordham University for a year, in the History of Classical Education.

They're the ones that gave me a little money – a *very little* bit of money [laughing] – to go to New York. And then, as with – now, I'd had a lot of graduate school, you see. This was the first time in graduate school.

But Tony Canedo once told me he was trying to get me my full professorship. "I mean, you've got twice as many hours as anybody else in the department, and no higher degree. Why is that?"

So here's part of my story. The degree of Fordham – what happened there was I went back for my thesis in Montana, back at the college where I was, to write the history of the college.

Well, it's a diocesan college, so I had to get into the records of the bishops. And I found out they didn't want [laughing] a lay person in those records! So I was stuck waiting there, teaching part-time.

Then I got drafted and ended up in Korea. Not in the Korean War, though. I didn't end up in Korea because I kept on them for a [inaudible] deferment.

I was lucky. Got into the Signal Corps, my first lucky break. It was real luck. And then from that point, kept going in the other direction – California, to Signal school; Georgia, I got a chance to volunteer for Fort Monmouth.

The farther away I could get from getting shot at, the happier I was.

Then I volunteered for Vienna. Actually, two of us volunteered for Vienna. I was again lucky, I got the assignment. So I spent the year, at government expense, in Vienna. The assignment was learning the city, among other things.

And it was there that I met the person that set me in a new direction, away from teaching. A man called [inaudible], James Howard [inaudible]. It was in intelligence, counterintelligence, in electronics.

[Inaudible] work for some of us operatives a job after we got out. And so when I got out and went back to North Dakota and looked around [laughing], called up [inaudible] in Washington, D.C., and said, "I think I'll take that job!"

Because there really wasn't much for me to do in North Dakota, except teaching. And they wanted me to teach there, but I had sworn off teaching in North Dakota after I saw what happened to my father.

Because he was looking forward to retirement there [but] he died. He didn't get the retirement. It was a fraud. And so it was a political thing there, and he didn't get any help from teachers' organizations.

He got a lawyer. Went to the State Legislature, changed the law, and swore off of that organization, the teachers' organization. It was kind of a scandal.

But I did into the National Security Agency, where I became a technical writer and editor, in the research and development area with computers. Those were the first computers that were ever done.

It isn't told, the public story, but the first real full-fledged computer was for the NSA, *before* the one that went for the Census Bureau, down in the basement. And finally, of course, the NSA had as many computers as the KGB had before they got through.

And then after three years, when my G.I. Bill was running out, I took a little sample of graduate school at – saw that there was a course being offered called the History of Literary Theory, and I was interested in that.

At that time, the agency encouraged education in whatever, and so I could get time off for that. And I took the first of the series of courses from an absolutely brilliant person who turned my life around.

His name was James Craig La Driere. And I became, after that, more eager to leave the super-secret business, which is very boring after a while. Because you can't talk to anybody about what you do.

"What are you doing?" "Well, I work for the State Department." "Oh, NSA or CIA?" And you can't talk to anybody!

On the other hand, you can leave the work [when you go] home. You leave the work there. You can walk away from it and leave it there.

But while I was there, I noticed that all they guys had their on their desks a handbook of English by Porter G. Perrin. A good book, one of the best ever done for English handbooks.

And I said, "Well, I think I'd like to work with him, take my graduate training with him. And he's at the University of Washington."

And it happened that I had fallen in love with a woman who was from Seattle. And it just seemed to be fate. She was taking classes at Catholic University. I met her, and we fell in love. Turned out to be a permanent condition, and I came out to Seattle.

And went to the University of Washington and started working with Perrin, and it was a wonderful time for me.

Other things happened. [Inaudible] I didn't much care for the usual graduate program [chuckles].

Perrin and I got along fine, but unfortunately, Perrin died. He was lifting a box of apples out of his trunk, and he died in his early fifties. And my main mentor was gone.

And I discovered a funny thing. I found out that [inaudible] was opening a new series of lectures under a different number, which I could legally take.

So I crossed the country. My wife took a job out there in Washington, D.C. Had another round of studying at Catholic University with what I thought must have been one of the brightest teachers I'd ever met. And then [inaudible] take my degree.

But it's hard for some of us to leave the Northwest after you've really experienced it. And so, back again I went to Seattle. And I was married by that time.

The first baby came along, the first youngster came along. [I] had no more courses to take. I had to get a job. I looked at the bulletin board, and in those days there were jobs all over the place, right?

Ellensburg! Ellensburg, Washington. That sounds convenient. [laughing]

But I always had had a rule that you always tried for several jobs first before you make the choice. And so then I was also considering high school teaching. I always wanted to help people teach English better.

I knew I'd only had one or two good teachers of English in my years at school. I thought it was an important discipline, but I thought it was almost routinely done badly. [Inaudible.] But I wanted to help.

I didn't know where to start. But then I realized the reputation at Ellensburg. This was a teacher training institution, and a very good one. At least as far as I knew at that time, [chuckles] and continued on.

Versus, I asked about a job down in a high school, just to see what I would get. I got the offer from Richland High School and I got an offer then from here from the Department of English. And so I had to make my choice.

BJ What year was this?

JH This would be in the late 1960s. So I came here in 1962, so this would have been the spring of 1962 I made this major decision to start down here. Do I start down there?

And there was a good chair down there. Tom Barton was down there, and then he went to the State Office of Public Instruction and did a good job there. Got himself a professorship on the basis of that one, and on the basis of his academic credentials at Pullman. Did some fine work at Pullman. We worked together later on, on some grants.

But I thought, You know, I think the teacher training might be the best for me. I'd probably have more impact there than I could by myself in a high school.

In the high school, the teaching work, I thought, would get in the way of the research and studying I wanted to do. I didn't know they were facing a boom, you know, with three or four classes a quarter, and at one time 70 students in a class and so forth.

So, I came here. As I said, I came here in 1962. Came here as an instructor, at a wage that seems ridiculous now. [laughter]

But I did escalate it. I managed to talk to Reinhart and I said, "Well, I've got this other offer." [laughing] He went back to his dean and got it a little raised.

I'd actually tried that with the personnel community and they said, "No!" But in those days, it was OK. And that was it.

And I've never left it. I found – I couldn't have answered the questions at that time, but I found a very congenial faculty. I found a lot of people – I found a lot of goodwill towards students. And I found a lot of people that cared about teaching, and wanted to do well at it, and were working in getting better.

I found a really large cadre of just really dedicated teachers. And that's all I needed to be around. I just needed to [inaudible] people who were concerned.

BJ What was your academic assignment when you came?

JH English. In particular, they were looking for somebody who could teach the ground course, the History of Language course and [inaudible] Composition.

They were a [inaudible] theory and a lot of interest in linguistics at that time. That got me the job, I expect. And, of course, the writing.

I had been a full-time writer and editor for three years by that time. And also, the report writing in the Army in the Signal Corps was also part of it. But I had had experience writing other places, too. I'd worked for Boeing for a while. So the writing program, the writing part, the language part of the English Department.

BJ You came as an instructor. What rank did you have when you left?

JH Full professor. I've got a reverse-snobbishness about that. There were only three of us in the state with full professorships with a B.A. degree. One was a poet over at the University of Washington. The other was Tom Barton.

And then there was me. And I've never [laughing] quite – I think we have a problem with credentials rather than competency. And we let credentials count more than achievement, you know.

It's a problem all the way through. It's the same way with teacher training. And people are taught to understand that, but how to get at it is another problem. It's one of the big problems.

BJ Uh-huh. Did you ever have an assignment in any other department?

JH No, never. English only.

BJ So you came here in 1962, is that right?

JH Uh-huh.

BJ And you retired when?

JH In spring of 1993.

BJ Did you enter into phased retirement?

JH No, I *quit!*

BJ You cut the cord?

JH Oh, yes! I really was ready to retire.

BJ Do you have any opinion on the phased retirement option?

JH No, I was on ... I forget, with all these committees ... at one time we were dealing with phased retirement, and people on and off, as to what to do about it. And I heard several opinions about it, and it seemed to me to be a viable option.

One of the things that happened, in the history at that time, was that people went into it but didn't stay on it very long. But those that did, didn't see any problem with it. [chuckles] I think it's between departments; it depends on how your department handles it that makes a difference.

But I just – I wanted to be totally free to do what I wanted to do. I didn't want to stay there. And besides, I didn't want to [sigh] ... I think we were entering – I *knew* we were entering – into a very bad time with the Administration.

Not only at the school, but in the department. I think some very bad decisions were being made in terms of hiring and so forth, and I didn't want to continue to battle. [laughing] I got tired of battling for competence.

BJ The next question, what do you recall in areas you might identify as problems in each of the following: Faculty versus faculty; faculty versus administration; faculty versus students; or any university element versus a town group?

JH Let's take that first one, faculty versus faculty. That was the biggest surprise in my young life was to discover how much contention there was in this seemingly peaceful academic tower. I've never *seen* so much politics. I've never *heard* of such politics! [laughing]

It was only later I heard Wilson talk about how easy national politics was after the politics of academic life at Johns Hopkins.

It's OK if it's fun and games, but it did seem to me that some of us make it their full-time job, rather than scholarship and teaching. And they, in my opinion, tend to cause more problems than it's worth. And I just was astonished at that.

But notice, the attraction of Central was that, at least for a long, long time, those contentions were worked out. And there was always this very large cadre of very competent, hardworking teachers, and friendly teachers.

I don't know how many students have talked to me about that fact, when they came here. Just a good place to work. You always had contention and tension, but they were mostly useful.

The politics, yeah, it gets mean and ugly. And you get tired of it [laughter] real fast!

BJ How about the faculty versus the Administration?

JH Oh, heck, most of us are faculty that are in the Administration. That's come a long way.

I had a problem with the faculty, the one that set up that. But I do enjoy Ken Hammond. [laughing] Sometimes I miss him.

But it seems to me that we administer a lot of what we do as teachers. We are administrators in our classes, or should be, all the time. And a lot of fingerprinting really ought to be [inaudible]. We do ourselves in an awful lot. And it's needless. The administrator should always be cooperative.

And we did pass it on so much to other teachers. I remember when I was working with the Richland [School] District later on, a teacher saying, "Oh, I can't ask administrators to do this."

I said, "Have you asked them?" [Inaudible.] "Have you even asked them that you need this and this and this? Have you asked them?"

We'd been working with the assistant superintendent down there. I said, "Why don't you just try and ask them." They did, and they got it!

But it's easy to sit back here and blame an administrator. Yes, we've had – if you have hardworking, competent people who know what the business is here in the administration, they are of enormous help.

But then if you don't have, it can be an enormous burden. Because piled on top of the usual politics, and all the teaching load, they've got this mismanagement going on. That's a terrible burden. But I don't see them as an automatic enemy. [Inaudible.]

BJ How about the relationship between faculty and students?

JH [Sigh] Both should learn from each other. The best classes, or the profs, I think, have been those that were the most open, and listened. Not necessarily with a lot of discussing in class, but certainly wide open to being heard afterwards.

And again, I saw a lot of that in my years here. A lot of listening to students. A lot of friendship. And that's been abused sometimes. And it may well be both ways. But it seems to me that ... the notion of collegiality starts there.

They're in college with you, and you're in college with them. You're helping them to become people who can help you, help you learn. When they get to the point where they can ask questions that really stump you and you've got to go back and think about it, that's a good thing.

BJ And the last [inaudible], the relationship of any university element and a town group or groups?

JH Well, again, that's varied. We had some very good relationships, some faculty members, I think, with local groups of various kinds.

If I had to make a generalization – maybe it's unfair – but universities do tend to get aloof. And, of course, there's *always* been, even from the beginnings of universities, a suspicion of the academics. It doesn't take long to scratch somebody who's not [inaudible] and discover that mistrust.

I can think of at least one example on a committee here in town, in which there was an unnecessary distrust of an academic member that they were talking about. In fact, he was working on another committee in town. That's been with us since the beginning.

BJ Do you have any humorous incidents that you might be able to relate to us?

JH I thought a lot about that question when I saw it on the list. I loved that.

The one that has a bit of history to it, and I think was the funniest, happened early on in my career, in making various kinds of blunders and so forth.

Some time about my third or fourth year – I can't remember exactly what year, but it was the year – it was here – it was late enough that Charlie McCann was already on the scene, the one that became the first President of Evergreen.

And he got his career in the State of Washington here in the English Department. And it's been fun to watch that happen! He wanted to get rid of me. [laughing] Didn't have that doctorate, see? But Reinhart, the chair, said, "You're wrong," and saved me.

But anyway, he was Dean of the faculty and had a lot of clout. Well, as the Education Department had been doing for years, we had visiting professors in. They've stopped doing it in many departments; maybe it's funding.

We had this fellow, nice guy from San Jose State, up here, a linguist. And I was to introduce him at a talk over in Black Hall. Black Hall has a situation with it. They have a couple of classrooms that are like auditoriums, auditorium classrooms.

And they're both at one end. They're together at one end of the building. If you come in one way, you might not notice the first one. If you come in the other way, you'll notice that there's a first one and then a second one.

It had been scheduled, the talk had been scheduled, for the first auditorium. And I was chatting away with the fellow. And then they went outside to see what was happening. They then realized that both rooms – people going into both rooms. So we ended up with half the audience in one side, and half the audience in the other.

And so I went to see which one had the most people in it! [laughing] So I went back to where the linguist was. And Charlie McCann was sitting in the back watching this, this young guy from the

English Department – not yet tenured – and he was enjoying this. And as the episode went on, he was really getting a kick out of it.

I said, “Well, people are going into two rooms here, this room and the next room. And there are more people in the next room, so I have to ask you to get up and move over to the next room, so that the fewest number of people were bothered that way. It’s as nice a room as this one.”

And it seemed reasonable, going on like this. And then a faculty member who had been here for a long time – a very formidable faculty member, sitting up toward the back – with all the authority she had, which was enormous, with her voice and stance – said, “Young man, there is no room next door.”

Well, who are you going to believe? This formidable person or this sort of nitwit-looking character here, who tells us there’s a room next door? And Charlie had a big grin on his face, watching how I was going to handle this.

I saw Bob Yee, the Political Science prof, and I said, “Well, Professor Yee can help me. If he would come with me, I shall go up, past our Dean of faculty, out the door, and I will turn to the right and go into the room that isn’t there. And will leave Professor Yee there. And so if I come back without him, you’ll know that he is in that room that isn’t there. And please join him.” [laughter]

And then I saw Charlie McCann really smile. And that’s [laughing] so the people did go out, one by one, and we did have a nice talk. [Inaudible] gave a nice talk. I didn’t always handle things that well! [laughing]

BJ Are there administrators or faculty members that come to mind as important leaders?

JH I’m going to take that very personally. Because these people I’m thinking of right now were leaders in a very personal sense, as teachers.

The first one I happen to think about was my very first roommate. We had to share offices in the first years. And the English Department was right in this building, in Barge, on the floor down below us.

And I shared an office with a marvelous teacher called Hazel Dunnington, who was in charge of children’s drama. And she taught me lots about just how to handle oneself. And I learned a lot by watching how she handled students that came to her desk and came [inaudible].

She would tell me afterwards when I did well and not so well. Even told me to make sure [inaudible]! [laughter] Very helpful and very [inaudible].

And similarly, Sidnie Mundy was a colleague in the English Department, and was English Education. She knew I was interested in teacher training. I think it was even the first year or the second year she sat in on my grammar class. She said she wanted to see where things were at this time.

And I was glad to have the help, because she was very helpful. She sat in the back, and she said, “As long as you don’t call on me for anything!” [laughing] And she helped me.

I said, “OK, you have to help me with my teaching, and show me things.”

Because I was not a natural teacher. I had to learn everything. I found out afterwards that was Reinhart's analysis, when I saw the papers he had on me.

To save me from Charlie's dismissal, he said, "Well, he hasn't got the naturalness, say, that Tony Canedo has. But he works hard at it, and he'll get good."

And it took me a while, something like ten years. [laughing] But anyway ... she was very helpful, the most helpful thing. And then, I knew I could do it. If Sidnie thought I could do it, I could *do it*.

And she introduced me to the profession in the State, to the Washington State Council of Teachers of English, the outer politics, the regional politics.

And I guess I have to say that I've always admired and respected Keith Reinhart's administration. It is obvious we didn't always agree. But he was very supportive in most ways. And you knew where you stood. He'd tell you.

So at one point, I was [inaudible] he wouldn't be chair, because he didn't believe that us non-Ph.D. people should ever get full professorship. And I didn't think that was fair, since I knew of two others. [laughing] But I didn't [inaudible]. But I liked him. And I respected his leadership.

BJ There's a whole list of things that we'd like to have you react to. The question is "Please react to and express your thoughts you might have on the faculty for each of the following." And the first is the faculty salary schedule.

JH [Pause] The ... it's hard to know what to pinpoint. I'll tell you what I thought, what I always thought, after I'd been here for a while and was on the committee, and having had government experience.

I really do think that the best way to handle the college profs who were tempted to politics, make it like civil service. But take the major steps along the way very seriously. Very seriously.

Have an examination before you're tenured in. We have lots of tenure now. It's become almost like a door prize – so, take the tenure decision very seriously.

And after that, year by year. Just time. I don't know of any other way to prevent some of this ridiculous hassling. It's a civil service job.

And then you do it again for the major full professor. And, of course, there should be evaluation of you for the various steps. But the final one, the associate and the full – and the last one especially – very serious evaluation.

And it probably shouldn't wind up in the department. You should be allowed to bring in regional advice. I mean, leave it alone. Just say you've been here 15 years, you should be at least at this level. I don't see any other way to do it without it causing more trouble than it's worth.

Our salaries aren't that big. They're not that bad, but they aren't that big that it's going to cost the State much more to do it that way. And you'd have a much more stable faculty situation.

BJ What do you think about academic freedom?

JH We had some interesting tussles in the 1960s about that. I think basically that some of the freedoms are necessary. But so are some of the responsibilities that go along with that freedom. We ought not forget those that often.

I sat and talked about it. Every freedom has a concomitant responsibility. And we ought to be talking about both of those. Your freedom is this, what's your responsibility?

If you're free to say whatever you want to say, and you're a professor, you'd better know what you're talking about. Because you're in a position of authority. You'd better be astute [inaudible]. You'd better be open to question, because you are a professor.

And what I always found interesting in the 1960s is the enormous cult of the old medieval idea of the classroom as a sanctuary, for that very reason; a sanctuary for study.

And I found out, to my surprise, that the FBI was on the campus for a while. But that still is in place. There are certain things where the classroom can be a real sanctuary.

There are certain things that cannot be intruded into. Like the library card, a list of the library card and what books they took out. That should be [inaudible]. It does [inaudible.] You should be able to [inaudible].

BJ Would you comment on the faculty and administration collegiality?

JH [Pause] I think we already touched upon that when I talked about the faculty and the Administration. I think the fact is that if the faculty [wants to] have collegiality, they have to be collegial. They can't automatically assume the administrators are against them. They've got to work with them, and to do what they can do. They do administer lots of things.

And it's like everything else, it comes and goes. You're doing real well for a while, and then you're doing not so well, and then you're doing better. It comes in waves. Everything seems to come in some kind of wave.

BJ Then long-range planning, of course.

JH Yeah, I think there's a lot of time wasted in setting up goals that you try to make specific, when you have no idea what's coming up. No idea. No one, not even people in electronics – and I know something about this ...

Like computers. I have on my desk right now at home more computing power than NSA had when I was working for them. *No one* predicted that. But ten years before that, they were making long-range goals but they had no idea what was coming up.

But what you can do is make – uh – setup ways of accepting the challenge, and setting yourself some challenges. So that when change comes, you handle it well.

I think that some of the best examples come to us from other places, the environmentalists versus the car companies, things like that. And you stop worrying about quotas, and specific things, and work out ways you *have to* work together. And not pretend you can predict the future, but you *have to* work together to resolve the differences. That works. Because at the big moment, you pretty well know where you're going and why you're going that way.

You need some better rules for how you can work together. You can guess what accomplishments you might have, but don't set up these real specific goals. If you could predict the future, or if I could do it, I'd be wealthy. I'm not wealthy! [laughing] And I think it's foolish for a whole bunch of people to *pretend* that they can do that.

BJ How do you feel about the academic organization, or reorganization for that matter?

JH That's constantly going on. I wish they would try a little bit more sometimes – I'm not sure this would work, but if you look at us as a community, if you notice the various kinds of plans that small cities particularly have in order to administer well – and I think they do pretty good in this little town – you notice that you have the city council versus the administrative staff.

And in some ways, I'd like that better. I think the city council – in fact, let me go on to the board of trustees. I think that the board of trustees idea comes from 200 years back, and it wasn't as good as the idea of the Constitution.

You had more of a hierarchical [inaudible]. It came from a [inaudible] background. But I could see something like a city council that's local or regional. And a staff that's a more professional staff, and academics who are doing their thing, teaching and scholarship and administering their area.

I don't see ... it doesn't seem to work out that way. The administrators tend to get too much staff-oriented, see? And sometimes aren't very good at that; and we have no easy way to get rid of them.

[Inaudible.] You can get rid of the [inaudible]. The people who are administering have to be more accountable than they can be when they're colleagues.

BJ Would you care to comment on the Faculty Code, and also the Faculty Senate?

JH I think they're both a great idea! [laughing] I've been on those kinds of committees. I was on the Faculty Senate probably [inaudible].

You know, it's too bad [inaudible] that the Board of Trustees don't seem to have much idea about collegiality. And I guess, you know, they have the power.

The system – it's not so – you know, we [inaudible]. The system is, in the public's view, how we should be accountable and to whom. And we need a far better liaison with Legislature than we have. And the Board of Trustees aren't it. It has to be a much stronger liaison.

And I think something like a city council. They have to work with the county whether they like it or not. Something more honestly political would be better, and not so –

The board of trustees is an idea that should have been rejected long ago. Even a board of directors [isn't] a good idea. It needs to be [inaudible].

But you do need to work better with the Legislature in some way. That's the bad part about it.

BJ How do you feel about the pre-college preparation of the students that you taught?

JH We've had some very good students. At this kind of university, unlike those that can screen so carefully to get the cream – I noticed, by the way, that whether it's Stanford or Central or Harvard, 50 percent of them are in remedial English. So I spent 30 years trying to improve that situation and it hasn't happened! [laughing] Who knows what all the reasons are.

I think if there's been a problem – and there has been – grade inflation and things like that – that happened with 'Nam, where grades were inflated, and it filtered down. Because I remember making those decisions. If you even put a "C" down, that could mean that young man was liable for the draft. And you can't recover that.

I think when they're liaison with the high schools – which was much stronger earlier [inaudible], a very strong liaison with the schools. And much more cooperation with the schools. Not just the Ed Department, but all [inaudible].

So they never tried to. They always tried to involve the other departments. And sometimes the other departments worked with them, and sometimes they were as aloof as could be. “Oh, I won't touch that!”

And maybe you were too, but then you deserve the students that you get. If you are not going to work with [inaudible] department, with the liaison at the schools, and work directly with the schools yourself, you've got no chit coming.

The last chair we had that did any heavy liaison was Keith, was Reinhart. He knew not only the chairs of the other colleges around here, and was friends with most of them, he also knew chairs of the English departments around here. You've got to do that.

Then we've had chairs that just ignore that whole job. There was a committee on this, and there was a recommendation, which was turned down. But the Education Department has been more than accountable. It's the academic departments that have been unaccountable and unresponsive.

Over and over again, the recommendations that the committee made were completely ignored. We got a note from the Assistant Dean saying, “Sorry I wasted your time, folks.”

BJ Were you ever rewarded or honored [inaudible]?

JH You mean like an award “Distinguished Professor” or something like that? No, no.

BJ But you must have been recognized somewhere along the way.

JH You know the one that really warmed my heart, and still does? And that's when the [inaudible] project was here. And the person running it organized – uh – [inaudible] the faculty, in part on what the students with learning disabilities identified as those professors that had been the most help to them when they were teaching. And that's one of the main criteria that she used.

And when I found that out, I was quite touched to be one of that group. And it was – it was – I don't think anybody in that group did not enjoy the experience. “Oh, you're here? What are you doing here?” [laughing]

And there were some of the nicest talks about teaching, and discovering what way that you were helpful. One guy was help simply because he would talk a lot to the students. And that was really the only way they could get the course. So students were hovering up to talk with him with him a lot.

And I liked that. I liked that a lot.

BJ Your approach to teaching Composition was somewhat different than your colleagues.

JH Yes.

BJ What was different about what you were doing as compared with what they were doing?

JH Well, basically most of them did what was done to them; and they did what was done to them; and they did what was done to them. Which is why we have 50 percent remedial work. Because most of them just did what was done to them.

And I tried that. I'm not untraditional. I tried that in my first year or two here, and it just didn't make any sense. I was a full-time writer. And I'm not talking about writing literature –

And this course is not for writing literature. That's the other thing. [Those courses] are in the Literature Department. But the course was supposed to be in the [inaudible] Department.

And you're not writing a lyric essay, which is one of the hardest kinds of writing to do. Yet that's the goal against which the students are matched, and it's an inappropriate goal.

And I just went to a place where you were doing writing, real-world writing, because I kind of thought that was important at the time. And they got bored when I gave them the same reading, and they were supposed to write about that reading.

And I realized this is silly. Some are interested, some are not. So you've got this beautiful bell curve, you know. Had nothing to do with their ability, it had to do with their interest.

And the more I got studying this thing, the matter of finding out where they're at and where they're coming from, it's not a matter of catering to the student. It's how they learn.

And so I went, This is silly. This isn't how I'd do it.

The editing guides they had were silly. That's not how you did it. You had to really edit, for serious, for real; but that's not what you did.

And so I just rethought it, and started anew. And I found out there were others that were doing it this way. That tradition – the big tradition, which is do what was done to you – was all along the way [inaudible].

And I couldn't find statements that I could tell you that supported how I would do it. You're not denying your [inaudible], but you have to start where the students are at, and what their problems are.

And the whole point of writing, in terms of services, is what can we do for you? So you [inaudible]. What problems do you have – they may be temporary – that writing about might help? Or getting into it. How did you get into it?

Writing should serve a social and personal end. That's what [inaudible]. Mostly it had always been social, but it became personal quite late.

And I just started with that, but it turned out that a lot of people were doing that, too. And we wrote – [D.W.] Cummings and I wrote the first – it's now called the "Process Approach." I don't think I like that anymore. We wrote the first little textbook on it. At the time, it got great reviews and lousy sales. [laughing] So I don't know.

But it was – first of all, coming from full-time writing, and secondly, reading and educational theory. Mind you, I didn't have the History of Classical Education. That's where you'd find out that some of your great new ideas had been tried 200 years ago, or began 300 years ago. Multimedia is at least 300 years old, in education.

BJ Weren't you one of the first to let them use the word processor?

JH Oh yeah, sure. But again, you see, at that time they had been writing about computers and knew about computers long before they came. Wondered what the big deal was, you know?

So under [inaudible], I knew what kind of a tool they could be. And I didn't want to see – I wanted to make sure they knew the tool was there, and I didn't demand that they had to know computers before they – I had talked to the Dean about this, to make sure it was squared away and everything.

If I talked in a computer lab, if they didn't know anything about computers, I could make a third of the grade learning the computer, learning how to do it well. So it's very intuitive.

And so the first programs were much more intimidating than they are now. They [inaudible] things, you know. So that was agreed upon. That was okayed.

And the ... the main thing is if you know how to really help, you can put it on the screen. You don't have to know grammar, see? They do have to have grammar that's correct. But real grammar, the discipline of grammar, or linguistics, is perceived.

I can see things on the page that the student can't see. Now, I'm not going to spend ten years teaching him that kind of grammar. But I can show him, and I can give it a name. And on the computer, they can watch.

"See? Is that right?" "Oh, yeah! How'd you do that?"

"Let me show you. Down here, you have the same kind of problem. Here's what I did. What's the most important word in this whole text – that's what you were leading up to. See what I'm saying? Right there. That's right. We're going to end the sentence there. Now, what are you going to have to do to make sure the sentence ends there?"

The technical term is called "friendship [inaudible] force," and it came from – and oddly enough, it's a commonplace knowledge; but the elaborate theory behind it comes from Halliday and Hasan, who came out of an Edinburgh school, a British school.

Now, I did a lot of studying to be able to explain that to myself. I could see it for myself, but it didn't take that much to explain it to the teacher.

Now, [inaudible] English Department. [chuckles] That's really been a help. You don't have to learn it, but we're going to throw it out! [Inaudible.]

They wanted to throw out all of this education. You can't do that!

I spent my middle ten years here as an English educator. [laughing] It wasn't my original assignment. But their whole department was going to throw it out!

BJ Did you serve on any major campus committees?

JH I guess so. I don't know what you mean by "major," but I've been on a lot of committees in 30 years! [laughing]

Actually, it's neat, because you meet people on campus that you wouldn't. Especially after the late 1970s, when the campus got bigger and bigger. And it got so you didn't really see anybody anymore because we just got spread out all over. And the only place you met new faculty was on a committee, you know? You got new friends there.

I loved being on the committee with [inaudible]. We had a great time. I still think the Curriculum Committee is one of the great committees. And I would call it a major committee.

BJ Which do you think provided the most progress?

JH That's it, right there. I think that's it. What happened was we very seriously considered recommendations.

The last couple of years, it's just been ignored, or undermined. And it happened at the department level, it happened at the faculty level. So maybe it doesn't work anymore, because nobody's going to invest their time, their energy and their minds when [inaudible.] [End of Side 1]

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 2)

JH I didn't serve in the Department of Psychology. I didn't serve on the L&L Building. I had some very strong recommendations for the L&L Building, none of which anyone paid attention to! [laughing]

I'm not sure that a non-professional could do what an architect could do. You had to know enough to control the architect, but I'm not sure they ultimately did.

BJ Did you ever serve at any level in the Administration?

JH Only when I was Director of the Writing Resource Center. That was administrative. I think I only had one class every quarter.

BJ Do you think there are any programs, courses or activities at Central which you think are out of place on a university campus?

JH Well, I happen to think that about sports. But that's so entrenched on campus. There's plenty of documented evidence that they do exploit the young. And they undermine the quality.

And they're undemocratic – baseball, the least. When you see baseball, you think of college football, right? That's very democratic. [Inaudible.]

Let's look at who the big stars are: tobacco-chewing farmhands. That you've got to go to college to play football is ridiculous. It should be like the European – the Continental plan, where if you're a garbage collector, you can become the world's greatest soccer player. You don't have to go near a school.

It's unfair to the talented unschooled who could have a career and their talent demonstrated, if they got the money. They've got to go to school, get into school.

It *wraps* the school, because it's doing something it shouldn't be doing. And wraps it in all kinds of odd little ways. [Inaudible] their salaries, for one thing, like the University of Washington. And I think if you probe some of the pressures as to why they aren't staying, they aren't particularly nice. They're not nice reasons.

But anyway, [inaudible] sports in America and he was a sports figure. But anyway ... I pretty much agree with what he discovered.

That's the main one. But anything else [inaudible]. I can't tell, you know.

The first Business courses that came on campus, well, I don't know. I think anything can be studied well. And disciplined. So it's not what's being studied, it's the quality of the studying that makes a difference.

You hire good thinkers, with experience in their field, you've got a good course. No matter what they say [inaudible]. So it's not the kind of subject they study.

BJ I think you already touched on this. You were married before you came to Central?

JH Yes.

BJ And your wife was educated where?

JH Well, she finished her degree at the University of Washington in Latin. She learned Latin. She likes languages. She graduated – well, the speaker at her graduation was [inaudible], so I remember it that way.

She went on to ... Ha! Her first job was writing ads for KIRO Television. Because of the Latin degree! [laughing] I think she knew how to write. She did!

BJ Has she continued to work professionally?

JH No. She worked, she had a writing and editing job – when I was going back and forth across the continent, she got a writing job at the Department of Health there. Had her own page pretty soon. But then, we decided to start a family, and she wanted to take care of the youngsters.

Now, she's – well, she got a master's here, an English Language Learning degree. And then she's taught at [inaudible], and now she teaches part-time at [inaudible].

She has to continue the tradition of using writing as a way of making students solve their problems. Usually academic problems, of course, because you have to use language.

BJ What do you think about a member of the same family serving on the faculty or the staff?

JH It used to be a big deal! [chuckles] But I don't know. Even though they call it nepotism – that's what they called it – "Nepotism!" I don't think anybody should care about any part of your personal life, except if you're an absolute rake or something, or you're selling drugs or something.

Whether somebody is else on the faculty is married to you now should be of *no point*. What are you going to do? Fire Madame Curie *and* her husband? You know? It doesn't make sense.

You're just looking for talent, and that's beside the point. We look at too many wrong things. You should look whether they're talented or not for the job.

BJ Another thing here, have you any relatives who have attended Central?

JH Yes, my son. My son got his degree from here. And it was in French. He takes after his mother! [laughing]

BJ So where did he go from here?

JH He's still here. He's taking Spanish now. He's going to get another degree, in Spanish.

BJ And the last question here, this Milo's input, is would you be willing to assist the Living History Committee as an interviewer?

JH [Laughing] You know, the first year of retirement, I said yes to lots of things. And I just about [inaudible] myself. Because I am busy with a project.

I don't feel I'm retired. I am busy with a project. I'm working with a former student, preparing materials [inaudible] for English that talk about English grammar; how it can be used to create programs that hold together. And it's heating up, and I don't want to make any promises to anybody else right now.

I like the idea a lot. I like the whole idea of a living history. I've had students do this thing, and it's wonderful. And I think it's time. We've used up the tape! [laughing]

BJ Are we through?

JH You think –

BJ We can start another tape if you want, if there's other things that you want to get into or discuss.

JH No, but this is a good example of how I would see language used. I think that Living History is one of the best of the programs in the school that's being done. And it can be done earlier.

One of the things we didn't always do, but we're doing now in our department – in the freshman, sophomore and graduate level – I saw a freshman text at the graduate level here – is condescend to students.

A fourth grader told me when I was visiting the class of Jennifer Trent down in ... Sunnyside, I guess it was, about two years ago, [inaudible] to see where they're at.

And the little girl wasn't talking about her teachers, her teacher. It was a very difficult situation, really. She was referring to the material. And she said, "They just think we're dumb little kids."

You know, we've been condescending *a lot*, at all levels. And that's the quality of the students. The students? Same quality.

But there's been a habit of condescending to them, I think, coming into the culture. And it's not just being tougher. It's being condescending. Stop condescending! Assume they can do well.

BJ You must have a question.

JH Yeah. Behind the camera?

BJ No. I certainly thank you.

JH Well, you're welcome. It's good to see you folks again.

BJ OK.