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William Schmidt interview

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My name is Robert Jones and we’re interviewing William Schmidt from the A/V Department, today. Today is March the 16th of 05 – and, uh, Bill, you might start off by telling us what your position was at the time you retired.

W.S.: I retired in 1999; and at that time I was Professor of Instructional Media and Director of the Educational Technology Center in Black, in the new Black Hall.

R.J.: Well, let’s go with your brief personal history of your life before you came to Central and you might also include your military service.

W.S.: I was born in Nebraska and went to school in a little town in Southeast Nebraska, called Johnson. Uh, after graduation, I went to the University of Nebraska and received my Bachelor’s Degree. Uh, I went into teaching – high school teaching – I taught in a little town out in Central Nebraska called Blue Hill and it wasn’t much of a town and it was . . . I was almost thankful that I was drafted into the Army after the first year. Not really, but . . . (laugh) If you look back on my life, it was a good thing.

R.J.: What year was that – when you were drafted?

W.S.: Uh, in 1957. And, uh, so I served in the Army for two years. The good thing about that, I was able to spend two years in Germany and that was a very, uh, very nice experience. After the Army, I came back to Nebraska and took a job in Nebraska City, Nebraska, and I taught high school history and English in that high school. I was there two years and I went to the university in the summer and took a, uh, course in history; and I took a course in audio/visual education. The only reason I took that course is when I took the job in Nebraska City, the superintendent, as he was showing me around – he, uh . . . it was the summer and place was full of equipment – audio/visual equipment, and he said, “We really need someone to manage this stuff.” He said, “Do you know anything about it?” And I said, “I don’t know a thing.” But he said, “Well, I’ll give you two hundred dollars if you’ll do it.” I says, “Well, two hundred dollars sounds like a lot money.” - because I was only making thirty six hundred. (chuckle) So, I got interested in it and I wanted to learn more about it and that took me to the University of Nebraska for summer school and, um, I learned, um – I looked at the – took a course in history and A/V; and, uh, I tried to make a decision – what do I want to do with the rest of my life? And I couldn’t identify too much with the historians and their lifestyle and the audio visual thing was just starting and it seemed like a very, uh, interesting field. So, I asked my professor who was a pretty well known national person in the field, where would be a good place to go? He told me San José or San Diego State, so I ended up going to San Diego and got my Master’s Degree; and then from there I went to, uh, took the job here at Central.

Now, I came here in 1963 and in that year there were, uh . . . I was told later, that there were faculty hired in that year than anytime before and probably since. I think there were some sixty faculty hired; and, uh, maybe because there were so many of them, I was interviewed over the telephone and never came campus to look at it. Took it cold. (chuckle) And they took me cold. Chuck Wright and Wes Crum interviewed me.

R.J.: What was Chuck’s position at the time?

W.S.: He was Director of the Audio Visual Program here.

R.J.: Was he by himself or before you were hired, how many people were in the department?
W.S.: Oh, he had, uh . . . In that year, he hired two more faculty – myself and Jerry Bruner, and um – and then he had a staff of some clerical and maintenance people. My first assignment was to, uh . . . This program, at that time, was in this building, Bouillon Hall, and it was about two years old at the time, and, uh, everything was brand new. And, uh, my first assignment was to supervise the media productions services upstairs. I was the coordinator of that program, and, uh, at the time – You had another question here, “What were your first impressions of Central in Ellensburg?”

R.J.: Well, let’s, uh, Melba appeared in the picture here somewhere. Where were you – somewhere along the way, you were married and . . .

W.S.: We were married in Nebraska right after . . . or during my senior year as a student at Nebraska University and she was a nurse and that was a, as it turned out, a good profession to have – to marry someone with that profession if you’re gonna spend about one-third of your life in school. Because nurses can get jobs anywhere in the country. And uh, so uh, we have three children. They’re all grown and they all live here in Ellensburg. They moved away and they all came back and they have jobs here.

And so, uh, when I came to Central, this was a brand new program, it was exciting. This building, Bouillon, uh, library, also housed the audio visual program. It was a . . . It had national prominence, because they tried a whole new experiment. I can still remember the article that attracted me to this, uh, program, because it was in a national journal, and it said, “All services under one roof.” And so, a couple of years before I arrived, the librarians and the audio visual people were able to get together and combine programs to make it very convenient for users to come to one location to get all the services they wanted. And that was exciting and people got along extremely well in, uh, in those early years.

R.J.: Who was the librarian at that time?

W.S.: Uh, a fellow by the name of John Allen. And John Allen was very easy to work with and had a good philosophy as far as audio visual and the whole program. Later, George (inaudible) became the Director and later the Dean of the Library Media Services.

R.J.: Where along the process did the A/V Department become a part of the library?

W.S.: That happened before I arrived; and I think it was a part of the planning for this new building, Bouillon. Originally, they were over in the SHAWSMEISER Hall. That was the first college library.

R.J.: You mentioned the A/V Department and (inaudible) organizational hierarchy, and it came about before you came. Did John Allen’s responsibilities change or were they different from George Bonwright’s? Was George given any kind of assignment as far as integration of various aspects of the A/V Department were concerned? Or was it more or less a continuation of what John was doing?

W.S.: I think it was a continuation, but when George was here, uh, before too long there were frictions between the library and the audio visual programs; and a real effort was made to better integrate them into an organization, rather than two programs housed in one building. Uh, there were, through the years, pretty serious frictions between the library side and the audio visual side, called media. And I’ve thought about this a lot and I think that the good . . . and I’ve traveled a lot all over the country and looked at other programs – spent an entire sabbatical doing that one year; and I think a big part of the problem that we had through the years is that the person in charge of the library and audio visual programs didn’t have the right kind of training to integrate programs of that nature. If you look at them, they’re basically very different. The library is pretty structured and everything in order and, uh, primarily dispensing of books and printed materials. Audio Visual people are very outgoing and action-oriented, and just different type of people. And, uh, we had a succession of administrators of the total programs that weren’t really equipped to deal with that difference and, uh, primarily because they didn’t have the background and training in that. (inaudible) other programs that did have people that got their doctorate and had a background and coursework in both fields; and most of those programs were very, very successful. Still exist today. Uh . . .
R.J.: Do you feel that all the personalities were a problem? Any relation to what went on here or . . .

W.S.: Uh, personality certainly entered the scene a lot. The, uh, Chuck Wright was the person that originally hired me; and uh, unfortunately, died at a very early age. I think he was only about 53. But, uh, he seemed to work very well with the program until later years, then he had some real clashes over budget and decisions that were made by the, uh, Library Dean. So, uh, then later Charlie Valchek succeeded Chuck Wright and, uh, he had personality conflicts with the administration also. So that, it’s not just philosophy and training, but personalities did play a role.

R.J.: You taught the Instructional Media Program, as well as directed the Film Department or Media, uh, I forgot the name of it . . . the Film Department, and the A/V Department, itself. Uh, were there conflicts relating to you commitment to both the Education Department and the responsibilities as far as the A/V Department was concerned?

W.S.: Uh, when I came here, uh, there were three faculty in the Audio Visual Services. We all came here with a, uh, split assignment. We were two-thirds in the Audio Visual Services within the library and one-third in the Education Department. And, uh, as far as conflicts, uh, I don’t really think there were too many conflicts. Teaching a course is very time consuming, and, uh, in that respect, there was maybe a little bit of conflict because you didn’t have full time to devote to the Service Program, but teaching was good for all of the – us that were involved in it. __________ kept us up-to-date and, uh, in contact with a lot of students who, many of them became employees of our program. So, overall, it was a very good experience being able to teach at the same time. That continued for a number of years and finally, you mentioned personality due to – personality conflict between, uh, my Director and the Director of the Education Department . . . uh, our teaching role ended and that was unfortunate because we had developed a Master’s Degree program and placed graduates all over the Northwest, which were some of the better people that were in the field at that time.

R.J.: You (inaudible- coughing) this subject, but, uh, during the early part of your tenure at the A/V Department, the Instructional Media Program at Central enjoyed a national reputation. What caused the program at Central to deteriorate or evolve into its present form?

W.S.: Well, I went from that model program that people from all over the nation – in fact, foreigners – came here to, uh, look a this program. It went from that over a period of thirty-five years to a, uh, disintegrated situation that still largely exists on this campus, where rather than the users being able to go to one location to get the kinds of learning resources that they need. They have to go everywhere. And I know that when I was still working here, that, uh – That was a frustration because people didn’t know where to get the services and there were so many hands involved, administrators involved that people didn’t tend to work together very well; and so it went from that great model to a, uh, disintegrated, uh, situation that, uh – I thought, from time to time, that this was gonna be corrected, but I don’t think it has. It least it hadn’t been when I left here and probably still hasn’t. Where you can . . . At other universities that I visited, I saw programs that would put all, uh, all – you can call them many things, but Learning Resources is a good term. Anything that deals with learning or instruction support for the faculty and the students ought to be pulled together into one organization, where people are more apt to cooperate – a program under one administration. So, uh, what’s happened through the years is pretty deplorable in my estimation and, uh, you look at who you’re trying to serve, the faculty and students. Unfortunately, the administrators, in many cases, lose sight of that. Who are we serving, here? So, um – And I know when I was in charge of Black Hall – that program and building the new building, uh, getting services from across the campus was, uh, sometimes rather nightmarish, because, “Who did what?” And “who did it when?” And uh, it um – But it all, in the end, it worked, but it’s not the kind of model that I think that Central should have.

R.J.: Oh, do any of the institutions across the state provide the media program that you – similar to the one we once had here, or is it just died across the state? There was a time when WSU had a program, Eastern had a program and, uh, (inaudible) Are any of those still in existence?
W.S.: Uh, I don’t know what the current situation is. I haven’t been involved, uh, professionally for, you know, about six years, so . . . Other programs had problems too, but again, those other programs – a similar problem of they were part of the library organization and there were those same kinds of conflicts and issues. But if you go to places like, uh, University of Wisconsin, Stout, and, um, a number of other programs around the country – They were able to get over those conflicts and, again, because the right type of administrator was hired with broad-based experience and, uh, and training in both fields.

R.J.: Oh, where were teachers being trained to go into the A/V program in the state at the time you retired?

W.S.: Only at, uh . . . Well at Eastern, they trained personnel, but primarily school librarians. And, uh, Seattle Pacific had a program; and Central was completely out of it.

R.J.: Well, as things evolved within the library program on campus, uh, your assignments changed as well. Could you give us some history of your various assignments throughout your tenure? And where along the process did you earn your Doctorate?

W.S.: In the early ’70’s, I, uh, well, late ’60’s, I got pushed up against the wall on going up the salary schedule, and, uh, I . . . It looked as if to go up any more, I’d have to get more, uh, more education or an advanced degree. And so I decided to make the big plunge and, um, took a year off, well, year and a half, and went to Ohio State University and, and, uh, got my Doctorate there. Then I, uh, well I didn’t com . . . I finished everything except the dissertation. And I came back here and there was a period of about four months where I wasn’t due to come back to Central. So, one of our graduates of our old media program was the new Media Program for the Evergreen State College, and he was . . . He hired me as a consultant for four months and, um . . . Charles McCann, by the way, was the President of Evergreen State College, who had been a, uh, Provost here at Central. And so, uh, while I was working on my doctorate back in, uh, at Ohio State, my wife easily got a job and that helped. And I had the G.I. Bill. Uh, they had reinstated the G.I. Bill, so I . . .

R.J.: You hadn’t used it all up in San Diego?

W.S.: Uh, I wasn’t eligible then.

R.J.: Oh. Okay.

W.S.: In the meantime, after . . . They enacted legislation that made it active again. And that was great.

R.J.: Hmm. Well, as time went on here, and we moved into the new building, how did your assignments and responsibilities and what not change?

W.S.: Into the new library building?

R.J.: Yeah.

W.S.: Uh, through, uh, pretty much throughout my career in the library, I continued to be the Coordinator of Media Production Services. And after that teaching assignment ended at, uh, with the Education Department, for many years, I taught courses in the Communication Department. And I taught filmmaking, I taught script writing, uh, primarily those two courses. And, uh, I guess that was about - basically, was my assignment.

R.J.: But at the time, uh, Gary Lewis made his appearance, uh, weren’t you reassigned to something in the Education Department?
W.S.: Oh, yes. Overnight. (chuckle) I hadn’t planned to get into that, but, uh, Charlie (inaudible), who was the Director of – had been the Director of Media – Instructional Media program, still the A/V Department in the Library, uh, had made – He and I had made overtures to the Education Department to, uh, go down there and teach and develop some new instructional programs, to try to bring back what we had so many years ago. And, uh, there was some real conflicts, primarily between Charlie and Gary Lewis, the Library Dean. And, uh, I supported Charlie and so overnight, he reassigned us to the Education Department. We got a letter and it says, “You will, as of tomorrow, report to the Education Department.” We, uh . . . There were a lot of things that led up to that. We were, uh . . . Among other things, Charlie had been demoted and, uh, Bill Craig had been appointed to take his place. Charlie and I prepared a grievance to the whole process; and that’s what tripped the whole thing, and Lewis said, “Well, I’ll reassign these two guys.” As it turned out, it’s the best thing to ever happen to me.

R.J.: What were you reassigned to in the Education Department? What were your responsibilities?

W.S.: I was reassigned, uh . . . We were to develop a Master’s Degree in Instructional Technology and we were gonna develop some other degrees - one to train people to become directors of corporate media programs, uh, a program to train, uh, school librarians. And so we worked on that for the first year. Charlie taught some courses and I, uh, I did some research on developing these programs. Uh, Charlie, about two years later, died of leukemia and, um, so I was the only one left there. And, um, about that time, the State funded the Black Hall remodel project, which is kind of a mislabel because it was, uh . . . In the process, the building looked like an abandoned parking garage. That was all that was left of it – just these concrete walls. And, uh . . . So there’s – It was a remodel project on the book, but basically, Black Hall was a totally new building. And uh, I was on the Committee for that process a couple of years before they built the building. And uh, later, about two years before the building went up, I was made Chairman of the Building Committee, a committee of faculty that worked with the architect and other entities to put this program together. Uh, since I’d had a background in media and technology, I was pretty much involved in everything that dealt with media and technology that went into that building. The building is, of course, as you know is a, um . . . At the time it was built in, uh – I think it opened in ’98, was a state-of-the-art, high-tech building serving teacher education. And our goal was to make all the media and technology very user-friendly and so we did a lot of background work, put in the instructional consoles that are pretty much automated and teachers has easy access – push-button access to technology. Uh, I think that was very successful because . . . And I stayed around for a year or two after the building was up and the people were using a lot more technology; and they loved it. I don’t know how many faculty told me they loved this resource-rich building. Now, you gotta know where we came from before that building. The old Black Hall was (inaudible). It was a, uh . . . The books were purchased in the 1960’s and they’d never been upgraded; and we had no software and very few computers. They had some discarded Macs that no one else wanted and, uh . . . So, it was a pretty disastrous program and we went from that to what Black Hall is now. It’s just, uh – It’s mind boggling and, uh . . . So, uh, having been given the opportunity to work in the . . . doing all those things – In fact, I ordered five million dollars worth of equipment. Ordered it, checked it in, installed it or worked with others to install it. It was a wonderful way for me to spend my last five years – to work in such an outstanding program and, um, go out, retire with a good feeling. Cause I’ve seen so many people leave this institution, burned out, uh, ticked-off, can’t-wait-to-get-out-the-door type thing. And I went out with a very positive feeling and I still feel very positive, primarily about the Black Hall experience. But, also about the early years when I was teaching in the program and, uh, all the student contacts and, uh . . . And another . . . And the fact that working with faculty was very satisfying – where you could create things for them. They appreciated it. They became your supporters. And, uh, there was a couple of times we had to call in those supporters to back us up when we got into tussles with, uh – over the program.

R.J.: You actually Chaired the Black Hall Building Committee, didn’t you?

W.S.: Yes.

R.J.: And, uh, did you have any kind of a program in place to bring the faculty up to speed on the use of the materials and equipment you had in there? That must have taken some time, too.
W.S.: Uh, yes. As part of the planning, we created a lab, which was called the Media Production Lab; and in that, we duplicated the instructional situation that you find in all the classrooms. The mediated console, uh, the... everything the automated features of the program and the same tables and chairs and light switches and everything. And so we trained all the faculty in small groups before they went in the classroom. It was in the summer and once they received the training, they got a key to the console where they could unlock and deposit their video tapes or whatever, if they wanted to use them on a certain day – and they were ready to go.

R.J.: Did you find some people refused to use it?

W.S.: Uh, not really. I’d seen that at other campuses. I’d visited dozens and dozens of campuses around the country for different reasons. And I can remember that one person mentioned that they put all this automated equipment and, uh, one prof came in and says, “Get all that junk out of the way. All I want is... Where’s my overhead projector?” That’s all he wanted. So we put in overhead projectors and I really didn’t see any, uh... It was so easy to use that there wasn’t any resistance to it. To this day, I’ve never heard anyone complain about the fact that they didn’t like what we had done.

R.J.: They weren’t overwhelmed with what they saw (inaudible) great equipment they had access to.

W.S.: Yeah. Some of them called me Mr. Black Hall. (chuckle) The whole thing consumed my life for about five years. That’s all I did was plan that building, planning on building the technology and, uh, I pushed to hire a, um... The architect had a, um, consultant, but he was primarily an audio-type person in television. And I pushed to get another consultant put on, and so we brought in a person that I was aware of from Virginia Tech University; and he reviewed our plans and helped us and so it was a, uh, big job, but it was very satisfying.

R.J.: Well, from the size of the building and the size of the accomplishment, that would be a big job.

W.S.: The architect, Jim Sang, did that building, he did the Science building, he did the Archives building. He, uh... Let’s see, I think it was those three. He’s from a firm in – he’s the owner of the firm in Tacoma; and his firm works all over the United States. But, uh, I worked very closely with him and at the end he insisted on getting his picture taken with me and then he handed me the picture and he says, “Bill, we couldn’t have done it without ‘cha.” And that was pretty (chuckle) kinda nice to hear. So I’ve got that picture on my wall at home.

R.J.: Well, did the advent of Black Hall have any effect or impact upon the Education Department? Did it do much to enhance their image or increase their student body, uh...

W.S.: Well, it’s – It’s one the biggest, if not the biggest teacher ed program in the Northwest. I don’t know if it enhanced their image across campus, but I do know that everybody on campus wanted to – all the other pros wanted to get in here and teach in these classrooms and a lot of them did, because they, uh... Obviously, it’s not just a teacher ed program. That’s the top priority, but, uh, it also... There’s courses from all over campus that are taught in Black Hall, as well.

R.J.: Did they use any of the technology that you installed or developed in Black Hall in the new Science building?

W.S.: They were being built at the same time and, uh... The consoles and some of the things are different, but the same architect was involved, so there are a lot of similarities. Uh, Craig and his staff were involved in that building. Steve Douglas was involved quite a bit.

R.J.: Well, besides the Black Hall accomplishment, were there any other things that you felt – or got a lot of satisfaction out of?
W.S.: Uh, back in the ‘70’s, and into the ‘80’s, I got involved in student media festivals; and I got involved in this through a national organization I belonged to. And so, I developed a state media competition for video and film production; and I did that for about eight years. And then I went on to do that at the national level, through this organization that I belonged to; and that was quite satisfying because, uh, it’s a way for students for things besides athletics, which serves only a minority. And uh, to see the thrill of these students when they won an award and, uh, to be able to offer them this opportunity was quite satisfying.

R.J.: Do you hold any national offices? Or state-wide?

W.S.: I was President of the State, uh, Media Association. I was Regional Coordinator for a national organization – Northwest Coordinator. Um . . .

R.J.: What was the national organization?

W.S.: A.E.C.T. Association for Educational Communications and Technology. And I was President of, uh, oh, the local education fraternity on campus – Phi Delta Kappa.

R.J.: Would you care to comment – You have made some comment – But would you care to comment on any of the campus or departmental politics that you were affected by or involved with?

W.S.: Higher education is just – politics is everywhere; and, um, if a person is meek and, uh, doesn’t want to play the political game, they’re gonna get lost in this environment.

R.J.: (chuckle)

W.S.: You soon learn that you have to be a self-promoter; and if you want to be promoted, you have to jump through all the hoops and you have to do the right things, and you hope that most of that’s on merit, but sometimes it probably isn’t. But, uh, there’s a lot of politics on that end of it. Merit – the wording merit, here, is kind of a joke, because no one really knew how to measure what was merit, and, uh, and then there was the politics within the library, which I’ve already talked about, between the A/V or media administrators and the library deans. Uh, a whole lot of politics between departments and, uh . . . But that’s just the nature of the beast. I mean that’s the way it is here and everywhere. Uh . . .

R.J.: Did you feel that the A/V Department was treated fairly as far the budget is concerned? Or were there some conflicts, problems in that regard, or . . .

W.S.: Huge conflicts. (chuckle) Uh, sometimes we were treated fairly; and a lot of times, we felt we weren’t. Uh, and that was a big part of the problem. There were just so many dollars and who it went to, and, uh, ultimately, the library dean made those decisions and we had to live with them.

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 2)

W.S.: What have we overlooked so far?

Audio Tech: I didn’t hear you talk about the impression of Ellensburg when you first . . .

W.S.: Well, I haven’t got around to that yet. (chuckle)

Audio Tech: Oh, I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m rolling.

W.S.: You’re rolling?
W.S.: Well, I mentioned the influential. (chuckle) Uh, Jim Brooks was the President when I arrived. Uh, I always felt he was a very fair person and a good person to have as your top administrator. And, uh, Chuck Wright was the Director of Audio Visual. He’s the individual, along with Wes Crum, who was the first Provost, um, that I had an experience with. Um, interviewed me over the phone and I, uh . . . Wes Crum was pretty much running the institution under Jim Brooks, and he was a hard worker and a very approachable guy. Uh, one time I said, “Chuck Wright, I want to develop a media lab for students to be able to produce their own media.” And, uh, Wes called me and he said, “Pick me up and take me to the old . . .” Uh, I think it was the Antlers Hotel, which was the bus depot, he said, “And then tell me about this proposal you have.” So I had about ten minutes. (chuckle) I talked fast and that’s quite a chore for me. (chuckle) And, uh, when he came back, he was going to take the bus to somewhere and then take an airplane; and, uh, came back – he says, “Yeah, I’ll get you some of the equipment and, uh, get this thing going.” So those . . . And then there was an individual called, Charles McCann. He was a literature professor who was made Provost. He admitted that he didn’t know anything about audio/visual or media, but he came over and he spent a lot of time with us to learn what this was all about. And, uh – So I respected him for that. Later, uh, he took over . . . He became the first President of Evergreen State College which was media in abundance. I mean it was throughout the – everywhere. I mean they . . .uh - Probably because he got some that experience here with this program; and the fact that his new media – the media director over there was one of our graduates. I think that probably had some effect with him in getting that job. So, uh, I respected him because he didn’t know about our program, but he wanted to be informed. Unfortunately, a lot of the administrators who have paraded through this institution don’t take the time to do that; and as a consequence, they really aren’t adequately enough informed to make some of the decisions they made. Uh, I, uh, I guess that’s about . . .

R.J.: I guess I always felt that Chuck Wright’s death really left a big void in the program – that had he been able to hang around a little longer, that things might have come out a little differently.

W.S.: Yeah, Chuck was a skilled negotiator. Uh, but, uh – and Charlie Valchek, who took his place, and was a very good friend of mine, uh, was more combative in nature and he had the audacity to almost refuse orders of the Library Dean, and that’s not gonna get ‘cha anywhere. And so that didn’t help the program that he took on the Dean and, uh, he might win a battle or two, but he loses in the long run - which he did.

R.J.: Well, to change the subject a little bit, what was your first impression of Ellensburg when you came?

W.S.: (chuckle)

R.J.: - if you hadn’t been to the place before you took the job?

W.S.: We came, uh – We drove up from California – I was in San Diego and uh, I went to San Diego State a year and then I taught at Sweetwater High School in San Diego for a year and finished my Master’s; and I took the position up here. So we took off and we drove up to – came up through Goldendale and (chuckle) – up 97 – and I thought, “Where are the trees? What kind of country is this?” We cut all the way into the Yakima Canyon before we saw any trees. And I go, “There’s a few.” And we got to the point where we could see the town and uh, we could see the trees in the background. And, um – So it was quite a – We were pretty, um, a little bit antsy about what we were getting into, but as we got settled in the community; and as I look back, it’s an excellent place to live and to raise a family.

R.J.: Did you have any trouble finding housing when you came?
W.S.: No. Chuck Wright had arranged that. He’d rented a house for us; and, um, it wasn’t much of a house but we stayed there for a year and then we built a – We bought a house up in, uh, up on Skyline Drive. And the house was right next to Don Murphy’s house, which is a whole – another story. Well, that’s one thing I haven’t covered that was quite satisfying, too. Uh, Don Murphy was an Ed Professor and, uh, he and I spent many, many years working together, developing films and, uh, slide programs and different type – audio tapes, different types of media for education. And most of those we, uh, sold through, uh, distributors and, uh . . .

R.J.: (inaudible)

W.S.: Well, that came later. We got greedy and we decided, let’s cut out this distributor and be our own distributor. So, we formed our own company and, uh, downtown Ellensburg, called Educational Media, Incorporated. We operated about five years and we took on all kinds of media, media supplies, and sold them all over the country - even exhibited at a national convention. But, in the long term, it didn’t pan out too well. We had a lot of fun. We had Charlie Valchek. We had, uh, Reino Randall that we named the Art Building after. Frank Bach. John Lebohee, used to be on the staff here. All of us were involved in this company; and we had a ball doing it, and became lifelong friends in the process. Well, we lost a few thousand apiece, so it didn’t hurt us that much, but, uh, we still laugh about it. Uh, well, actually, I’m about the only one that’s left (chuckle). Uh, most of ’em have passed on, ex- well, Frank Bach is, uh, still with us. In fact, he moved back to Ellensburg, recently. And, uh, John Lebohee lives in Colorado. But, uh, no Ellen – getting back to Ellensburg, it’s, uh, I think, uh, because it is such a nice place to live and a great and beautiful environment, uh, I think that’s a large, uh, part of the reason why so many faculty stay here for long periods. Uh, I – uh, at one point, I did try – I did apply for a job elsewhere, but it was very difficult. The family didn’t want to leave and, uh, so nothing came of that. So, overall, I liked it. You gonna ask somethin’ about the Clymer Museum?

R.J.: Yeah. I want you to tell us about your (inaudible) experiences in the Clymer Museum, as well.

W.S.: Uh, that experience was – you’d lump under the, uh, community service aspect, that so many people that are on the faculty and staff here at Central do some kind activities in the community. And, uh, through a friend of mine, I was asked to become a member of the Clymer Museum Committee that was searching around or playing with the idea of developing a museum to honor John Clymer, who was born here and went through high school and became a famous, uh, western and, uh artist and illustrator. And, uh, - so I spent a year or two with them, uh, planning for setting up the museum; and I got into grant writing. I successfully wrote a number of grants for them. And we bought a building and we opened the building up – we opened the museum up, uh, excuse me, in the early ’90’s and I stayed on for another five years. I was President of the Board, uh, I developed a lot of their media things that they had in there. I developed a video disk system where the people could – could view different programs on Clymer. Uh, it, uh, like everything else that I got involved in, I just, uh, got too involved and, uh, just really drains your time; and so, uh, eventually, I – I, after seven years, I got out of it – at about the time Black Hall was coming on the scene; because I couldn’t handle (chuckle) two of those projects at the same time. So, I was heavily involved in the Clymer Museum, doing everything from rippin’ out old cabinets and things when we got the building ready, to running yard sales, to writing grants, to producing media . . .

R.J.: Were you involved in the purchase of the building?

W.S.: Yes. Yeah.

R.J.: That all came about after you became a member of the Board?

W.S.: Right.

R.J.: Mm-hmm. Well, tell us about your, uh, fun and games as a rancher.
W.S.: (chuckle) Uh, I married a farm girl from Nebraska and she never got that out of her system. So, when we got settled here, we started with a couple of 4-H calves and that grew into the point where, uh, we have as – we had at one time, eighty cows, which every spring, have a calf. We’re down somewhat from that now. And we also raise Timothy hay – about forty acres of that and, uh, I’m about in the position now to decide that I don’t want to plant anything – any more crops. I want to plant houses on that property. And so we’ve started that and that’s worked quite well because we bought the property when it didn’t – it was about a thousand an acre and you know what’s happened since that. Uh, an acre goes for about, uh – oh, uh, forty – forty, fifty thousand dollars a building site. So, we bought a hundred and sixty acres two miles from Ellensburg; and so, the farming thing and the cattle and hay operation paid for all that land. So all that’s worth – that’s worth now better than TIAA-CREF, really (chuckle). But that’s a – Another thing since I mentioned that – uh, so many of the people younger than me, uh, when the stock market was goin’ bananas – I said, “There’s gonna be a downside.” “Aw, no, this is going on forever.” So, I would, uh, through the years, I’d take a hundred thousand out at a time, put it into T.I.A. And so, when CREF crashed, it didn’t hurt me that bad. And, uh – But I was born in the Depression. I have seen the downside (chuckle).

R.J.: Is there anything you, uh, we haven’t covered that you’d like to, uh, revisit or . . .?

W.S.: Uh, I think that pretty well covers it.

R.J.: Well, I certainly thank you. It’s been a fun experience.

W.S.: Well, what’s gonna happen to these tapes?

R.J.: Uh, will you turn this thing on or off?

Audio Tech: Sure.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION