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This interview was conducted with Roland L. DeLorme, Professor Emeritus of History and former Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. The interview was conducted at the Aberdeen Museum of History in Aberdeen, Washington, on Friday March 5, 2004. The interviewer is Tamara Belts.

TB: Friday, March 5th 2004. I'm down in Aberdeen with Dr. Roland DeLorme and we're about to conduct our oral history. He has just signed the Informed Consent Agreement, we're ready to go. So Dr. DeLorme, how did you get to Western?

RD: I had just agreed to accept a position at one of the Colorado state colleges in 1966 as a result of some interviews in San Francisco at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting. When I returned to Skagit Valley College, the president there, who had his doctorate in history, said, "I have a friend who happens to be the history department chairman at Western Washington State College and they're looking for somebody with your credentials." He said, "I hope you don't mind, but I've taken the liberty of setting up an interview." He added: "I'm going with you." I had mixed feelings about that. Does he really want to get rid of me so badly that he would go to this length (laughter)? But we went together, and virtually the entire department sat in on the interview. Of course, it was a small department in that period, but it was a very good interview at the end of which they offered me [the job] (that which I was applying for was just a summer job). And then they said, "We were so impressed, we would like to offer you a full time contract." So, having not signed anything at the other school, I notified them that I was going to take this position. I started in June of '66 and became a full time member of the faculty in the fall.

TB: You said the hiring process was...

RD: Very informal. The word went out very informally. There were no published advertisements of the position. There was no process, really. It was if anybody in the department knew somebody they thought might fit or knew a graduate advisor or a department chair in a graduate university, they would contact them, and so the process was very, very informal and very personal. It's not the way we do hiring today, and quite frankly, the department needed to change that. But it had worked, as they saw it. It had worked well for them, so that's the way it was done.

TB: What was the atmosphere in the history department like when you first came?

RD: Well my initial sense was that it was a very friendly department-- that people worked well together. But as I came to discover in the fall, there were some difficulties in the department. The department was determined not to grow too quickly, which sounds a little funny these days, but there was a department chair and then there were two other people who pretty much ruled the roost and made most of the decisions. Department meetings were rather

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perfunctory. There were no committees whatsoever, and really not much debate. A couple of the people who had been there a year or two put me up to asking questions. It was about the second meeting that I got called in by the department chair and told that really this behavior was not acceptable and that my seniors knew what was best. I had no great serious disagreements anyway, but it was clear to me as time went on that they were beginning to have a little bit of disquiet in the ranks. That continued for a time.

TB: What about students? What were the students like when you first started?

RD: The students were enthusiastic, they were optimistic, they were full of a sense that the world was going to open up to them, that there were all kinds of things to do out there. You have to remember, this was a period when the Peace Corps was already established and in its early years, and there was enormous enthusiasm for it. Vista, the so-called “domestic Peace Corps” was also very popular. They were excellent students for the most part. I never had a sense, throughout my entire career, that Western had any problems with quality. Even in these early years of my career I was impressed with the students. The difference that I saw as time went on was that later students were more competitive and had come to Western with higher GPAs out of high schools whereas in the earlier years, there were students who might not have gotten the nod immediately at say, the University of Washington but in fact were good students who were just maturing a little later. So I was very impressed with the students. I remember my first year was a year of absolute joy because of the sense that these were people who were communicating back and forth and there was a great deal of exchange of views and it was fun to teach.

TB: What about the president or administration or outside that? What kind of sense did you have about the campus as a whole?

RD: Well, when I arrived, Harvey Bunke was about to leave. The campus was small enough that you really got to know everybody in a big hurry. Keith Murray was kind enough to take me over to Old Main and introduce me to the president, introduce me to the dean of the College, who of course was Jerry Flora at that point, and his assistant dean, who was R.D. Brown, formerly of the English department. Then, the most dramatic meeting of all, even though I had met the president, was when he took me to the second floor of Old Main in the south wing into an area that had a floor of planks fastened with, I believe, brass nails, to see a man who was sitting behind his desk trying to shave with an electric shaver. His name, of course, was Herb Taylor. He was the dean of research and grants. He put me through what I later thought of as worse than my oral exam for the PhD! My gosh! But out of that came a series of research grants. So you got to know people very quickly. But I had no sense at all in that short period of time of what Harvey Bunke’s approach to the presidency was or any particular direction. I thought he seemed liked an intelligent and genial man, but I was just a fledgling faculty member. I didn’t have access to meetings and discussions and any sense of what kind of administrator he was. He was gone before I could form an opinion.

TB: What about the physical plant, the campus as a whole? I think there had just been a lot of building and there was still some building going on when you first came.

RD: There had been some. They had gone through two different remodelings of the library, and my sense was that the second one was really ugly. They used plastic bottle glass in the windows, for example. The Humanities Building was only a few years old, what was it, about three or four years old when I arrived. They had run out of money in building the building and had been forced to eliminate a planned additional floor, and then had not put an elevator in and had given up on putting in proper flooring, so they had used a woven grass material on the floors. When I got there, you had to watch where you stepped because there were already holes in this material. If you caught your foot in that, you’d go sprawling on the floor. That was not a good thing! But the bottom floor was very nice. The classrooms were, for that day, considered very modern, very good. Offices on the second floor, which was where the history department was, were adequate, though never designed for communication among faculty.

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TB: What do you think would have made the communication between faculty better?

RD: Well, they needed to open up the hallways. They needed to reorganize the rooms in a way that would have permitted more exchange, more discussion. The architect, whom I believe was Bassetti, had made the statement that he had had a monastery in mind when he designed the building. I think for some faculty that sounded great, but the result was that there was a tendency to be absorbed by your room and not to come out into the halls and have discussion. There were no large meeting rooms on the second floor, and that would have helped to bring people together. There was a so-called map room, but it had no air movement in it, and nobody wanted to be there. And the so-called coffee lounge was so small, not more than two or three people could be in there at a time.

TB: Any other thoughts about the campus government structure in terms of either faculty governance, the power of the president, the power of the board of trustees, student government, how that all worked together?

RD: Well, in that early period, I was just learning the ropes, trying to master the library, become more aware of student needs and master my classes, prepare myself from day to day, so I didn't pay a lot of attention in those first few years except that I had a sense that there was a tendency of certain members of the board of trustees to intervene in campus activities and programs. That ended, but for a time it seemed to me there was a lot more tendency for members of the board to get involved in things that were going on on campus. That doesn't have to be a bad thing, but in this case it disrupted the administration of the university or of the college, as it was in those days. I got involved fairly quickly in some of the committees that were established between faculty governance and the university administration. Change was in the air, and there was discussion of what was then called the cluster college concept, and of course the first of those was Fairhaven College. So I got involved in those debates and those discussions fairly quickly. And then, within two years of my arrival, I found myself called to the role of director of general studies by the dean of the College. That introduced me very quickly into the administrative activities of the school. There was a lot about it that was fascinating and exciting, but it didn't work as well as it probably ought to have.

TB: Now how did you happen to become director of general studies? Did that come out of a curriculum change?

RD: No, the college had established, just at the beginning of the 1960s, the humanities program as an addition to a general education program that had been built up over a period of many years. It really got started under President Fisher, with the idea that they should be moving beyond what is usually determined to be part of a teacher college curriculum, mostly applied courses – “how to teach” courses - but rather that there needed to be a core of courses that dealt with the civilization in which we live, how it came about, who were the great thinkers. So the humanities program was put together. It was to be taught by the most gifted teachers on the campus. It would get full funding. And then problems arose. The college suddenly began to grow very rapidly. They began to look for shortcuts. The senior faculty who had taught those courses, particularly in the humanities program, began to back away from it. The word got out that with the new kind of faculty coming on board and the thrust of the college in the direction of becoming a university some day, that you needed to have research and publications, and that service on the campus and in the community and good teaching were great but they weren't all that was required. So faculty began to back away, the new didn't want in, the senior faculty were tired of shouldering the burden. So they broke it up; they asked the senior faculty to offer the lectures, and they began to bring students together in large numbers eventually into the Music Auditorium, dimly lit, to try to take notes while somebody performed on stage. The discussion sections were led by far less senior faculty. By the time that I arrived on the scene, those teaching the courses were quite often hired unseen, over the phone, from University of Washington. They were masters students, working usually on a doctorate. They had no interest in working with the senior faculty. They disagreed on the books that were required.

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It was becoming a mess. And so “what are we going to do?” was the question. The dean, R.D. Brown, decided he needed somebody with an interdisciplinary background in charge of the program, so he looked around and talked to a number of people, and somehow my name came up because I had a Masters in American Civilization. But he didn’t give me a chance, really, to say no. I was untenured; I was off in Boulder, Colorado doing research on a summer grant. He phoned me and said, “You are going to do this.” It was a very tough thing to try to pull off, and I’ve never been happy with the end result, but we were faced with some alternatives that were even worse.

TB: So then what was the evolution then from general studies to liberal studies?

RD: Well, shortly after I took charge of the program it became obvious that there had to be some changes made. With the dean’s insistence, we formed an all-college committee that was reporting to the Academic Council to put together some alternatives and we asked Carl Schuler of the history faculty to chair the committee. His field was in ancient history. He was a good, steady hand, he knew everybody on the campus. He was a no-nonsense type. Everybody knew they could trust him, that he had great integrity. He took this committee and set out to look at what was possible. In the end, one of the questions was should we do away with it entirely? Of course, there were departments that wanted to move to a so-called free elective system. They already were building majors that were huge, 110 credits in some cases, that would virtually crowd out any elective courses in other fields. They would have loved to just do away with it, have a few courses that you are required to take and let it go at that - but no core program. Then there were others who wanted to go back really. They thought of it as saving the humanities program. But what they envisioned was a program that none of us recognized. It was the very beginning program that had been put in place with Jarrett’s support. And it had disappeared almost before it was established. As I say, once your core faculty began to drift away from it then it became difficult to hold it together. And so finally the committee recommended, and the council agreed, to establish a department of what we called general studies and make it clear from the outset that the criteria for tenure and promotion within that faculty would be different – that we would stress teaching. Certainly research was a good thing and publication, but the main focus would be to bring master teachers into that program and that their sole responsibility was to teach and teach well in general studies courses, general education. Within a year after it was established and I was back in the history department, they decided they wanted to have their own major, and that was, of course, the death knell of what we had tried to do. But what came out of that was first general studies and then soon they changed their name to liberal studies. Of course then they began to alter the core curriculum of the college subsequent to that.

TB: What about in ’69 and ’70, the student protests?

RD: I’ve heard a lot of great stories about it. One of the people who has some great stories to tell is Pete Elich, who was at that time apparently assistant dean of students or was a dean of men ([it] may have been before the consolidation). He likes to tell the story of how he was delegated by a group of frightened chief administrators to go out onto Red Square and try to deal with the crowds who were demonstrating. In the end, the only thing that saved him from being picked up bodily and thrown into the fountain was a group of football players who rescued him! That’s a great story. I don’t remember that. I’m sure it happened, but I didn’t happen to be on the scene and see that, but I saw demonstrations.

There were two occasions when it seemed to me that some sort of probably minor violence, some property damage, could potentially have occurred - it didn’t but might have - one of which was engendered by somebody who was an untenured member of the philosophy department, as I recall, at the University of Washington. I looked out my window and there was this fellow standing up on this pile of dirt (because they were beginning to put the brick into Red Square or finishing it,) and he was standing on this pile of dirt and orating to a crowd of students. They essentially walked away. It went on for quite a while; he wanted to lead a demonstration across the campus and

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downtown, then surround the Federal Building. But that eventually just faded away. The other was on the occasion of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. The following day there was a small demonstration of people led by a faculty member from Western from the political science faculty. Essentially what they were doing was talking about committing violent acts in protest of the assassination of King. I pointed out to some of my students out there that that was completely contrary to the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. We were all upset and all angry, but we'd be renouncing what he taught if we committed violent acts, no matter for what purpose. And that particular gathering did not gather steam and do anything in particular other than, they did march downtown and they should have, but there were no violent acts. I didn't see any violence on our campus. There was a lot of unhappiness and as the war in Vietnam went on, increasing bitterness and some negative behavior, in terms of veterans of the war who were treated badly. All in all, a lot of it got channeled off into volunteering for community projects and doing other things, [which] I think are good things. There was a lot of political activism on the campus, but nothing that would have kept one away from the campus.

TB: Was there any reaction when RFK got killed in California?

RD: Yes, but you know, this happened in June. I remember I had a clock radio; I had it set. I had stayed up to watch his victory speech. I had then retired for the evening and I was awakened by this voice on the radio talking about the death of Robert Kennedy. We all walked around shell shocked. I went up on campus, but there were very few people around. One of the people around was Barney Boylan, and Barney came out of his office as I approached and he said, "My generation died with John Kennedy and your generation died last night." A lot of us felt that way. It just took the wind out of our sails. I had been very active in the county for Bobby Kennedy, and it took away any interest I had in politics for a time. I look back now and think that was foolish, but it did. I just had no more desire to participate for a while, it was hard.

TB: Okay, what about the 1970s when Flora was president?

RD: They used to talk about Al Smith of New York, the governor of New York, who eventually ran for president against Hoover, as the "happy warrior." In fact, Franklin D. Roosevelt nominated Al Smith for president at the National Democratic Convention in 1928, and when he did he gave what was called the happy warrior speech. I've always thought – you're wondering where this is going – but I've always thought of Jerry Flora as the happy warrior; small in stature, fiery, with a delicious sense of humor, unflagging, huge amounts of energy and commitment. Even when I disagreed with things that he did or said, I had enormous respect for him. I thought he was a fantastic president. There were certainly people who derided him and disliked him, but I found him a real breath of fresh air. He sure knew where he was going. And I liked the fact that he was close to students. The students respected and loved him. He was a great teacher -- mucking around along the shoreline of Chuckanut Bay with his students on weekends! I think he was an excellent president in a very, very tough time.

TB: I guess I'll back up. Do you have some thoughts then about all the cluster colleges and that kind of growth?

RD: I think that had they known what was coming, a lot of things would be different. They would probably not have done it. That's the difference between so-called master plans or long-range plans on the one hand, and strategic planning at its best on the other, is that nobody is looking at some of the factors that over the long run could change, and budgeting is one of them. And so all they saw was this spurt of growth. It was assumed that growth would continue well into the future, so you could build on that. Faculty did not wish to lose the opportunity to teach well in small groups, and there was an equally strong wish not to forsake the opportunity to move beyond specialization. That was an increasing issue on campuses around the country. The important goal, many believed, was to find ways to bring people of disparate fields back together to seek syntheses. These were great ideas. The trouble was that

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they were expensive ideas to do right, and I think that, had they realized where state budgets were heading, they would not have established the cluster colleges. It was an expensive approach to higher education. That doesn't mean that I'm opposed to them, it just means that once you commit to that, then eventually you're going to have to make serious retrenchments, eliminating a lot of things you that you thought were part of that. I supported the establishment of Fairhaven College. I spoke at a couple of meetings, though I was just a fresh face in the crowd, I wasn't a well know faculty member. I thought it was a terrific idea and I supported the others as well.

TB: By 1971 I think you were chairman of the history department?

RD: Yes.

TB: What did you see as the role of the chairman? What were your goals and objectives?

RD: There had been a change in the department, really a sea change with Bill Bultmann coming in for a short time as department chairman. He did what had to be done in the sense that the department had really outgrown being able to get together as a small group. He saw the handwriting on the wall in terms of the informality of our hiring process. We were simply duplicating ourselves so you had an all-male history department with but one minority member. There was really no attempt to do anything about it. Nobody was opposed to diversity; it's just that the opportunities weren't developed. There was no outreach in our recruitment process. So Bill immediately established some internal committees, one of which was a hiring committee. And then the process began of trying to develop a more sophisticated structure within the department. So when I stepped into that role after he'd moved over to Old Main, it was just simply a matter of reinforcing that new structure. It did not go down well with the more senior members of the department. They were not happy and I have more understanding of that now than I did at the time. It just seemed so clear to me that we couldn't go back. But it's true that there was a lot of dissension. Shortly before Bill left the chair, we started having cutbacks.

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We went through a large RIF of the college faculty and in the process, history was told that it had to let one tenure track faculty member go. Bill called us together – none of us knew this was happening – called us together and on an afternoon told us we had to vote for one of the three untenured faculty members to terminate, with them sitting there! The decision, I think, partly was based on personality, and I just thought the process was unacceptable, but it was done. It was very, very painful. It embittered a lot of people. Stepping into the role later, I was confronted almost immediately with a huge RIF that came about and we went from there. It was not pleasant. We had to again cut several tenure track positions on the faculty. There was an all-college committee from faculty governance. They had fought like crazy to get the right to do this. Once in there, they talked a lot about how they were going to do this scientifically. So they were going to make decisions based on where should the curriculum grow and where could we cut back on the curriculum and so on, instead of just on the basis of seniority. But in the end, they surrendered to the easy way out. So they just handed out cuts and history was one of those that was nailed in that process. I, at the time-- this was early to mid-seventies--and about the time this all broke on the scene, I discovered that my marriage was ending, which also came as a rather brutal surprise to me. I was in the middle of trying to deal with my home life and my children, and at the same time, I've got people who are going to be fired, and so of all the departments on the campus – I think there were three that voted for this, but only one (history) that actually followed through on it – we voted to find a formula by which members of the department would cut their own salaries to find a way to save their colleagues. I took a one-third cut, reduced my load, even though I was to be department chair, so that we could save colleagues, and in the end we put people on summer, guaranteed them summer jobs. Others said, "I'll opt out on that," and so on. So eventually we were able to save those members of the department. And again, I can very

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well understand why a full professor with tenure moving toward retirement would deeply resent that kind of a policy. But we did it, and in the end it did save those members of the department. Years later, I'd say about three years before I retired from Western, I got a funny little memo in the mail from George Mariz, who by that time was department chair, telling me that he had come to the realization of what I had done as department chair in saving those people. I didn't think it was that complicated, but I also would say it wasn't just me, it was the department itself. Everybody pitched in. Even the ones who were unwilling followed along and did what they were asked to do.

TB: How long did it take history to get those positions back?

RD: It took two years. It was not a pleasant time.

TB: What were some of the highlights of the early seventies? I know you started the archives program.

RD: We did some other things, too. We set in motion an effort to diversify the department faculty. What it really boils down to is -- do everything you can to recruit potential candidates from throughout society, whatever their gender, whatever their ethnic and racial backgrounds, and encourage them to apply. It enriches the pool. And that's what we did. We were able to begin to hire tenure track women in the faculty and begin to open things up a little bit. I'm proud of that. That was a department-wide effort. [In] my role as chair, I think that I might be seen as too dependent upon the majority view in the department, but that may not be the whole story. I had to build my majorities. Department chair is a little like a ward boss where you've got to go out and persuade and cajole and talk to people until you build a coalition that is a majority, and that's hard work. I don't think any of us do a perfect job of that, but I tried very hard. I also tried to keep the doors open.

We were under a lot of pressure at the time. Cuts were being made on the basis of how many jobs do students get when they go out. And no matter our feelings about history as a wonderful background for anybody in the liberal arts, it serves you well throughout your life and so on, that didn't sell very well in terms of those who were making decisions about allocating resources. So I thought to myself, what could we do that fits our discipline that would set us aside as distinctive, that would give students a chance at real life jobs. I happened to be on the Regional Archives Council at the time, which had been set up by the National Archives. They got into this long discussion one day about how they need trained archivists and nobody was doing it. We went around the room and all the universities in the state were represented there, plus Oregon and nobody wanted to do it. After the meeting, I went up to Paul Kohl, who was the commissioner of the National Archives at that time, I said, I have to go back and talk to my colleagues, but I think we could do it. "What do you think?" He said, "You do that, I'll come and teach."

So we went from there. I'm very proud of that program, it's still alive. When I go out to do research, I think it's kind of humorous. A lot of the people with whom I now work in doing historical research are former students and interns. The Southwest Washington Regional Archivist for the State Archives, is Wayne Lawson. Wayne. Not only did he grow up here in Aberdeen, but he was in the first year of students in that program and that first year, I taught. I very quickly passed the ball off. I brought in the retired state archivist of Oregon, David Dunaway, to teach for a couple of years, and then eventually Paul Kohl came when he retired from the National Archives. It's great fun to bump into these people. They're all over: Presidential Libraries, National Archives in Washington D.C., and Suitland, Maryland, state archives in Oregon and Washington, municipal archives, on and on.

TB: Any other comments about either the Flora or the... well actually, I guess Olscamp comes in '75. Any thoughts about him and [the] campus? What did you think of Paul Olscamp?

RD: I had mixed feelings. I'll admit I had mixed feelings about him. It seemed to me that he would form views based on what a couple of people said to him. For example, he condemned what had happened with general education without knowing the full story. But I did get on the all-college committee to work on things and we worked them through. There was a tendency on his part, I think, to jump the gun on some issues. On the other hand, he did bring a level of sophistication to the administration that was needed. He was a very colorful leader, capable sometimes of great division, but often of symbolizing the fact that Western was going somewhere. He was a very witty, intelligent man. I think he made a contribution to Western.

TB: I think right at that era when Flora steps down and we're getting Olscamp there is a lot of bad feeling, [with] RIF and everything else that had happened. Did he help heal that?

RD: I think anybody who walked into that role, especially from off the campus, people would say, "Well now we're through that." I may have a slightly different view on that whole picture than some people do. I really never blamed Flora, oddly. I blamed faculty governance because I felt that they really didn't communicate. Department chairs were left completely out in the cold. We never knew what they were going to do in the Senate or anywhere else. They took stands that didn't reflect what I thought was reality. If I were President Flora, and somebody said to me, "We want to make the cuts," I would have said, like he did, "Okay, you go ahead and be the bad guys." I just thought that was all wrong. I was sorry because when I saw the so-called votes of confidence on Flora, a lot of it had nothing to do with Flora. It had to do with things that nobody could correct. We were in a bad budgetary time, a lot of things were wrong. But he ended up taking the rap for it. I had mixed feelings.

Olscamp did represent a change and therefore there was a certain amount of lessening of the strife that had gone on on the campus.

TB: So what about this shift from the state college to the university? He was certainly instrumental in that, although it must have been sort of in the works or have been talked about for long time.

RD: It had been in the works for a long time. If you follow the way in which Western became a Normal School in the first place and funded, it's the same kind of process where political leadership builds over a period of time and they begin to put votes together. You just have to wait until the votes are there, until it's the west side's time to get something out of the legislature, and in this case, it was going to come.

The one thing that I saw that I thought was very effective was the Olscamp administration working a little more closely with the other state colleges so that it became an effort of all of us rather than just one school. They were all pursuing it individually. When they came together, they were able to put a little more pressure on the legislature. It got public pressure going, too, from all over the state. That was a good thing to do. I don't remember when Olscamp made a change in the school's legislative liaison; I think he may have kept Mike Barnhart on for a time as our lobbyist in Olympia, but I don't remember when Mike stepped out of that role. He started under Flora and continued partly, I think, under Olscamp. There was a genuine effort at the legislative level, at any rate, to build support for university status.

TB: What about, back up a little bit to, there's the evolution in administration of the provost's position, right? I think Flora's the first one to have a provost?

RD: Yes. That was really the beginning of what appeared to be growing dissension in the ranks. The president used to preside over faculty meetings. They didn't have a senate, they didn't have a council set up, they just had faculty meetings where they would come together in a room in Old Main, and they would all be there. And then the

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president would join them, and they would discuss institutional issues. We were a long way down the road from that by the time that Flora became president. The faculty was simply too big. There was no place on campus where you could have that kind of an intimate conversation. People had gotten used to what President Haggard [did]; for example, he used to leave notes in faculty boxes telling them that he wanted to see them, "A moment of your time, Dr. Murray." And you'd appear and find out that he'd seen you throw a Kleenex on the ground as you walked through, or stepped on some lawn when you shouldn't. In fact, Murray enjoyed talking about how Haggard used to stroll through the buildings, checking to see if there were any light bulbs out, or toilet paper holders that needed new toilet paper rolls.

So everybody liked that idea of a hands-on president. You could talk to him, even if you were a little afraid of him. By the time Flora became president, that just wasn't possible, and people started complaining about lack of access to high administrative positions. He was reaching for some kind of an organizational tool and came up with the idea that now that you were going to have (with the cluster colleges coming into position), you were going to have more than one dean, and you needed somebody over the deans and between the president and the deans so that there was someone you could go to. Looking around the country, he saw that many universities had positions that were called provosts and he decided to put that together.

TB: So then moving on, when Talbot becomes provost, did he change or build, or how did he and Olscamp work? Any thoughts?

RD: Well, I have to divide my views in two here. On the one hand, speaking as a former provost myself, I would say I think Talbot overall was a really good strategist; understood what he wanted to do, very clear in his direction and followed through. [He] knew a lot about administration. I'm talking about the nitty gritty. And could sit someone down and explain academic budgeting to them.

As a department chair, I developed some antipathy for him because he made it very clear to me that he had no regard for history as a discipline and no interest at all in doing anything for the history department. When it came time for our review from an outside person, we brought in a celebrated historian from California, W. Turrentine Jackson from the University of California at Davis. His job was to assess the department. When he went to see the provost, the provost told him, "I'm not interested in any proposal that would give extra money to the history department." Wherein Jackson stood up and said to him, "I don't know why the hell you paid for me to come here," and walked out. He did the appraisal, nevertheless. I have heard all kinds of theories about why there was this lack of interest or dislike for history as a discipline, and I don't think it was attached directly to our department per se. But it was very difficult to get access. It was very difficult to have a conversation that didn't turn into kind of a mini brawl. I found him aloof and somewhat cold, and not interested in our discipline. Obviously, in my role as department chair, I was a dedicated advocate for a department, its programs and its faculty. That role shaped my reactions. He, on the other hand, was responsible for all academic programs, and his perspective had to be different from mine.

Talbot served as provost at a time when American universities and colleges were obliged to adopt quantitative measures in budgeting programs. The clash between those, like Talbot and other central administrators, who were seeking measures for the allocation of resources, and chairs and directors, who were trying to protect existing but sometimes inefficient programs, was inevitable and very painful.

TB: And then in 1980-84 I have that Don Eklund was chairman of the history department. Do you have any thoughts about that period of time?

RD: He was elected department chair after I stepped down in 1980. Don is a friend of mine. In fact, I was the one delegated to tell him he was hired. I was in Colorado-- remember, I earlier told you--on a research grant, and I met him there. I went to see him. He was living there. We became well acquainted that summer. He was a zany guy! The things he did! The first time I was ever with him, the two couples went out for supper at this little café in Boulder. We got out of the car and there were flower boxes around the outside of the restaurant beneath the windows. People inside were looking out and there were beautiful flowers in the window boxes. Don said, "I love flowers." He walked over and began eating the flowers out of the boxes. He could have been Robin Williams!

There was a serious side. I have known very few people who have the ability to hold on to as much discrete detail on any particular subject that he focused on, [as he could]. He knew a lot about the history of American technology. His own dissertation was on the Baldwin brothers, who were both aerial balloonists in the late nineteenth century and paved the way for a lot of the flight theories that helped the Wright brothers and others who were pioneering in manned flight. He had the scholarly tools. He didn't do a lot of writing, but he was a very good mentor for students.

I believe Don is still alive, but have not had contact with him in a long time.

TB: I think he is, that's why I was listening to you thinking maybe he had, but I think he's still alive.

RD: He showed up at my office one day just before I was hospitalized as provost. I was in a meeting and I couldn't break away to talk to him. He came to see me but he had no appointment and I felt really badly. I went back out later and he was gone.

TB: So you probably came back in then because of administrative reasons?

RD: Oh no. We had another RIF. What's his name? Paul...a provost. Paul...

TB: Paul Ford.

RD: Paul Ford held hearings again. Department chairs were required to make presentations. In the end, the two of us represented the department in the meeting with Ford, largely because I had served a long time as chair. After that, then faculty starting coming to me saying, "You've got to come back in, we're in trouble." Even though we didn't get cut, in the end they found a way around it and we didn't get cut. He didn't run again, and I really didn't want to do it again, but I did it up until I left for Old Main.

TB: Were there any other kinds of curriculum changes? We're talking the '80s, you're hiring more women for sure then. What kinds of other changes [were going on] in the department?

RD: We were fleshing out the specialties within the department. We wanted someone to teach western medieval history. We didn't really have someone there. Horn was trying to do it, but he was a really a Renaissance and Reformation scholar. Carl Schuler tried to do some of it, but his field was largely the east -- Byzantine history more than the west. And so we were trying to fill in positions like that. We were trying to build specialties then and strengthen our areas of western civilization so-called, and American history. We were also looking at Canada and South America as areas where we needed more faculty focus. We did some changes to the major during that period. We strengthened the archival program and eventually brought in the former archivist of the United States, James "Bert" Rhoads.

TB: What's your take on having more women in the department? Was that fine, or was that difficult for some of the long-time faculty, or was it just having new people, new focuses different than what...?

RD: I felt that it went much more smoothly than you might expect. For the most part, it was because the majority in the department wanted this. They recognized that this was needed and that it was only fair. There was only a very small group of people who complained about it. They were eventually so isolated that they didn't count. So you just knew that there were certain circles, but there wasn't a great division of the house, and there wasn't a lot of strife at all. Had I been one of those women faculty members, I might feel differently. They were sensitive to this kind of thing and they probably felt like they were left out on occasion. I could not be aware of all the interpersonal strife that goes on. Yet the department's diversification greatly strengthened and enriched us. Amanda Eurich, for example-- how could you ask for a better colleague? Incredible human being: good scholar, good teacher, good sense of humor, good colleague.

TB: In 1989 then I think you [become] associate provost?

RD: Assistant provost in the fall of 1988. I served as acting provost for a summer period when Kelly resigned and Karlovitz was coming in. Karlovitz asked me to stay and be his associate provost and I agreed, and then he got very sick and died. So then there was a quick search and I was appointed.

TB: I realize I want to back up quick. What were your thoughts about Bob Ross when he comes in '83 and also the plane crash?

RD: Again, the only times when I saw much of him were the meetings of the Chairmen's and Deans' Advisory Group. All the department chairs and program directors and deans and vice presidents would meet, and the President would come in and he did mostly -- and that was started under Olscamp -- Ross would do mostly announcements. He'd just talk a little bit about what was going to be on the board of trustees meeting. Then I was asked to serve as chair of a committee to look for one of the administrative posts. I agreed to do that, and I spent a little time with Ross on that. And then finally I was asked to chair the committee looking for a new provost. That was the year that we picked somebody and he didn't accept. I spent quite a bit of time in Ross' office then. He could seem warm and fuzzy in large social gatherings.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE TWO – START OF TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

But in some private meetings he was a bit distant. I understand from some of the deans that he was very pleasant to be with on fishing trips and so on. I didn't see that side of him, but I thought he was a good president.

TB: We talked about Ford. Ross, in a way is acting as both president and provost. And to me, the meanings of these terms and what each function [should be] is not maybe, as a staff person, as meaningful as it [should be], but I know that Ford did not have the title of provost. He was only vice president for academic affairs. Does that mean anything? What are your insights on that position?

RD: They didn't get along.

TB: Okay.

RD: It just didn't work out. I wasn't present for the meetings, but I was told later by Sam Kelly that they'd get into a big row. And in the middle of the row, Ford would get mad and leave. Sam's comment was, "When you leave the

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field of battle you're going to lose." So he never won anything. Ross knew how to get him mad, and he'd get mad, and he'd get up and walk out.

I was not privy to that. I did not see any of that. But it was clear when the other title was withheld that this was not going to be a long term relationship.

A provost does much of the day-to-day operation of the university, certainly the academic side, but more than that. You handle huge amounts of budget and you do things for the inside of the university on a day-to-day basis that are at the central level in making decisions. Western has never come to terms with the full meaning of a provost. It's always been hard to define. I think it has to do with the personalities of past presidents and provosts because in some universities a provost is clearly not just the first among vice presidents, which is what you are at Western, but rather you truly are a kind of assistant president of the university. At Western, under certain presidents that's taken place, but it's never been out there for everybody to see and the academic side can't figure that out. Their big search committee came to see me the year that I was being considered for the permanent position and they wanted me to define the role of the provost on the campus. Oh, that was fun because I knew they'd be talking with the president right after they talked with me. I led them [on] a very merry chase, never really came to terms with their question, which was risky but it was a lot riskier not to do that. Ken Mortimer probably among presidents is the one who has really best understood the role of a provost.

TB: He's next. He comes in 1988. What kinds of comments on him in general would you have? He came with a lot of academic background on what a presidency or what a university should be. How did that work out in practice?

RD: He had also been a provost at Penn State on their main campus, so this wasn't all theory. This guy had been around. His biggest problem at Western as he arrived was that morale was low. We had lost a president, a couple of vice presidents, and things did not seem to be going very well anyway. A lot of people were cynical about planning because they had done this long range planning that never panned out well, and they assumed that call it what you may, that strategic planning was nothing more fancied-up [then] long-range planning. And so in comes this fellow, who is going to teach us all about strategic planning. They didn't care whether he was the world's foremost authority on strategic planning, they just didn't want any more planning. So there was just kind of a general turnoff among a lot of department chairs and some deans, I'm sure, although they were a little quieter about it in public. In fact, I've always argued since then that we probably should have come up with another name for it. Maybe just call it "strategizing" because the important part of it was not the plan, so-called, but rather to assess your strengths and weaknesses. To take a look at what can you do something about and at what are you at the mercy of some other agency or force [for]. Make changes where you can, plan in ways that will take advantage of your strengths. That's what it's all about. In fact, nobody likes to admit it, but we actually achieved our first strategic plan's goals and moved on to the second one. I remember when Karen asked me to lead the second one and I said, "Oh, no!" I didn't want to do it, even though it meant that we succeeded and we were moving on.

I have a great affection for Ken Mortimer. He took a lot of heat while he was at Western, but he really pulled that place together. It was a much more efficient, confident university in many ways by the time he left. He breathed life into a lot of things at the campus. For example, he was a president you could talk to about programs. He had no particular bias going in. For example, I told him about Canadian studies. "Oh," he says, "Who's head of that?" I told him. "Well, maybe we ought to get together and talk to them." We went over and talked to them, came back, he says, "Give me a report. What's the strategy for that program? What can we do and what can't we do?" So we did some things. "Let's give them some money." That was kind of [his philosophy], take it from here where we're not making headway and put it over here where we can. You may have a shrinking budget, but you use it more

effectively. I always thought Ken was a great guy to work with. He told me the role of the provost and the role of the president can be defined in this way: *All the bad mail goes to the provost.*

TB: Well I did notice that he did a lot to -- and maybe you could speak to this in terms of how does [an] administration really communicate with campus as a whole? He [regularly] published things that everybody could read. And at least on paper there's a lot of [effort made to communicate].

RD: That's right.

TB: What other ways do people communicate that are effective or not effective?

RD: One of the things that Ross had been working on and Olscamp before him, were trying to develop some better ties with the community. There was a lot of anti-Western stuff going on out there in the community. I remember going to a barber shop where they spent all their time talking about *this* at the college and *that* at the college. "They're all a bunch of maniacs up there." And I'm sitting there, "What are you talking about?" "They're all a bunch of commies running around with their long hair and throwing bombs." "What?" Just a general bad attitude. But Ken really went to work on that. He started having all these dinners and parties and gatherings and free tickets to games and stuff to pull in the business community and general outside community into what was going on at Western. It was very effective. And then looking at the alumni lists, they weren't even up to date. Half of them didn't even have addresses on them. "Get this down! I want this information!" And he started calling people, and then he had others call people. "Let's get them up on campus! Let's do this, let's go out to them." Ross had done some of that and Ken took it a step further, very effectively. He also would go eat meals with the students.

There was a very hurtful thing. At one point the *Western Front* was nagging at him about 'nobody ever knows where President Mortimer is.' He was really hurt by that. It really broke his heart because the fact of the matter was, for lunch he'd go over and sit with the students. At dinner time-- I was with him on a couple of occasions--he went up to the residence halls and wandered around, talking to people and eating with them. He really, really wanted to be out there, talking to the students.

TB: What about then your role as provost working with him and working with the departments? Do you have some more comments about maybe how you developed that position?

RD: A couple of things. Working with Karlovitz, one of the things that Les was concerned about was the -- and Ken, too -- was the lack of uniformity. Not uniformity, but similarity among the criteria for tenure and promotion and merit increases that existed among the colleges. They wanted to see something a little more objective, a little more acceptable so that when you took it before a university level tenure and promotion committee, it made sense. One of the things that he gave me to do was to go through all the recommendations that came from the deans. I started looking at them and I went in to see him. I said, "These don't make any sense! This person, who's being recommended for promotion, a full professor in the 'X' college, wouldn't get tenure over here in this college! This is crazy!" It was not just different disciplines, it was that they did not have shared criteria. And sometimes they did not even give you an explanation why so-and-so should go up. That was something that I carried forward as provost, and it was very effective. Les had come up with a very clever idea: make the deans make their presentations in a Dean's Council meeting so that they're talking to the provost, but the other deans are there to hear them. Oh, they started to clean up their act very quickly then! We continued that and I think they felt better about it as time went on because they could justify their recommendations. Also, they could get tough but blame it on the provost, which is always the game that people like to play. That's one thing.

We made a conscious effort to increase the efficiency of the provost's office. There's a lot of people in there and a lot of work gets done. I remember asking one of the executive secretaries to order a scanner. This was when they weren't working entirely great yet, but they were there. She kept putting it off, she kept not doing it. I finally had to call and order it myself to get that scanner in there. I said, "Now I'm going to show you why I wanted you to get this." I proceeded to show them the things that they could do with that. We increased computerization.

Often, the staff in a large academic administrative office like the provost's are not accorded the credit deserved for what gets done. I was very, very fortunate in the high quality of those who supported my efforts. One would have to look far to find a person as intelligent and dedicated, for example, as Beverly Jones, who served as my primary administrative assistant.

I felt very strongly about information services and computers on the campus. We were not making the kind of progress we should. When Mel stepped aside as director of the Computer Center, we reorganized the whole thing and put it under a vice provost, did a lot of recruiting and got Jerry Boles, and Jerry's a wizard. There were a few people who didn't like him because he broke up a lot of little kingdoms around the campus, but he came in and proceeded to start putting things together. He used to come into my office and say, "What are the problems that I have to solve, boss?" And I'd say here's this and there's that and he'd write them all down. At the end of the week he'd come back in and say, "I solved all those problems. What's next?" One day he came in and I said, "My God! I don't have anything else for you!" I said, "You're fired." He said, "Okay! I'll go back to California!"

I'm very happy with what was accomplished there. The whole process of students going into computer labs and having to pay to use a computer-- Jerry's point was that such a policy discourages people from using computers, when in fact what you want to do is to encourage them to use them. We have to open this process up and make them available not just to one set of departments or one college on the campus, but to everybody. That's what he did and he's been very effective.

The library project is right at the center of my heart. I've always been a believer in sharing knowledge and I've always felt like there must be better ways to share resources in the state and in the country. I had been reading about some of the things that were available. I called Jerry in one day and I said, "Suppose we could do this. What do you think of the idea that we get all the universities, all the public universities in the state and all the community colleges and we all get together and we put together, using our computerization techniques, that we put together a system in which students everywhere could share library catalogs." "We could do that," he says. I said, "Technically we could do it. But how are we going to pull this off?"

So I made a trip down to the University of Washington. I found out that their chief lobbyist was absolutely opposed. Her attitude was, what's best is what's best for the UW, and what's best for the UW has nothing to do with any other institution. But when I went to the head librarian, she immediately grasped what I was suggesting and said, "I'm with you. Let's do it." I said, "You know, we may have some problems with the other state university library directors." "Oh no," she said. "I'll take care of that." Which she proceeded to do, eventually. It was tough for a while. Once they were on board, because that was the big one -- to get them to see this as not just their having to surrender their resources to other schools, but a sharing would take place that would build over time and help everybody. I was able to persuade the state's other provosts of the value of the project, and Terry Teale of the Council of Presidents, organized the effort to win over the legislature and governor's office. Out of our efforts came what came to be called the "Cascade System." I'm very proud of that.

TB: You've been very supportive of the library, and even helping us to go online with the LIS.

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RD: That was tough!

TB: I was just curious; I've heard stories about how Mortimer decided to come along. I've only heard stories. Do you have any...?

RD: I never had any trouble with Ken Mortimer on that. He bought into it immediately. Anything that moved Western ahead, he was for. There were problems with communication within the library and there was an attitude which I was very impatient with at the time. Since then I've had time to give it a lot more thought, and I think I understand it better, and that was this attitude that was there, clearly there, that the library was on its own and the provost was an enemy. I could not understand that. And I [kept saying], "But, but, I'm trying to do this for you!" Again and again and again, I'd ask for information and I wouldn't get it. I'd ask for a budget, I'd get incorrect information. Just on and on and on and I finally had to just say, "This is what we're going to do. I don't care whether you like it or not, but this is what we're going to do." And then it got done, but I hated that. Now I look back and I realize there probably are times in the history of an institution when part of it feels like the rest of the campus ignores it and only intervenes when they want to do something to them and not help them. So there probably had been all kinds of instances where there had been clashes between a library director and a provost or a dean or a president. That was tough going. But I didn't encounter serious opposition within the Library's administrative ranks to the LIS. Diane was very supportive of LIS, for example. I believe the person who deserves enormous credit for the planning and successful completion of our Library Information System was the then Acting Director, Marian Alexander. She fully understood the usefulness of the project and worked closely with our office—especially with Jerry Boles—to build a system tailor-made for WWU's needs.

TB: When Mortimer left and you were actually interim president for about nine months. Is that totally a holding pattern, or were there some things you were able to initiate?

RD: Well you know you have to look at the environment of the university. When Ross was lost, Froderberg was acting president and Al took the view that in a period of shock and upset, a holding pattern is what should be appropriate, and that's what he did. Very little was expended on new programs or anything else, he'd just hold the line. Just keep things as they are and wait for somebody new to come in. That made all kinds of sense. But when I became acting president, we were in the middle of completing some of the objectives of the strategic plan, and I thought a holding pattern is going to be the wrong thing entirely for that. So I took some steps, like I asked Jack Cooley to take a look at what money was still in the budget before the new budget year opened that we could use for projects around the university and we came up with a modest amount of money. Then I called in some faculty, put a committee together and had them go through and make proposals about what might be done. The whole idea was to follow the strategic plan; here're your guidelines, now what can we do within that? And we actually proceeded to do some things. That was really basically it. I went on doing the things that a president would do off campus, but recognizing that an acting president is not going to have the same impact. A lot people, it's odd, they will commit to a president as a person. They won't commit to an institution. You go out and ask for money from a particular corporation and they'd say it right to you: "I'd rather wait until your new permanent president is in place." I think part of that also is what if I commit to this and then a new president comes and does not want to do it? But I did what I had to do in that regard off campus and then tried to keep the morale up and the process went on until we brought in Karen.

TB: Thoughts on President Morse, and did she continue in the Mortimer pattern, did she do a lot of innovations herself? What happened with the strategic plan?

RD: Well, she certainly believed in strategic planning. Karen had the advantage of, again, having been a provost and then being president at Western. She came in with a background. She understood budgeting; she understood what a provost does. Although what a provost does at a state land grant institution like Utah State is different, but not that different. She is very intelligent, very committed. The thing I really loved about Karen was how Western became her home just immediately. She said, "I want you to tell me, I want you to be honest, it will go no where, I just want you to tell me if there were any misgivings about me, what they are so that I can show them that I can do these things." So we talked about that, and my goodness, she just went right out there. I was very impressed with that. As I say, we finished the first plan and wrote a new one. She was a good person to work with.

TB: Obviously gender is always a big thing people talk about. Does a female president bring some different either style or view? Do they bring something different beyond – I mean every personality is going to be different? Is there ...

RD: The only thing that I could put my finger on would be that a woman president, or for that matter, anyone representing diversity, stirs the hopes of people who are themselves minorities or women that now there's someone there who will listen. Now there's somebody there who understands the special problems of my group in society and will respond more to this. I think there were men presidents along the way, who could have been just as responsive, but she held out promise there, and I think it had a nice effect on the campus and on the community. Being a role model at a high level can be very important.

TB: Any overall thoughts about the changes in campus, again, going back to the faculty governance? We haven't really talked too much about the power of the board of trustees. Are they just a review board, or...?

RD: Oh, no. They really are the final authorities below the governor's level, and they have an enormous amount of power. But a good board, which Western had been lucky to possess, can play a large part in improving a university. For the most part, Western's board members during my tenure as provost and acting president were experienced, sophisticated individuals. They had been in positions of authority themselves in society, and they understood that their role is not the day-to-day nitty gritty of the campus. Their role is to help to plan the future and make decisions about the direction of the university, and I never saw them walk away from a problem.

TB: What about faculty? I guess what I'm thinking of is has the faculty view of their authority changed since you were there and/or as you move and have been in different positions, do you see the role differently? As provost, do you see it perhaps, because you're in a different position to see, you suddenly realize, "Oh, they don't [have] it right at all?"

RD: Well unfortunately I think, both faculty and administrators have a set of beliefs about the other that are rather naïve. Some faculty believe that administrators spend all their waking hours trying to figure out how to make life difficult for faculty. They really do. They think that anything they do, anything they say, any move they make is calculated to sow dissension in the ranks. On the other hand, there are administrators who think that faculty know nothing about administration and cannot be reasoned with, and that's not right either. It's frustrating at times. It's probably a waste of one's energy to try to bring the two together to understand that, but there is that, they operate from that so that if you're really trying hard to make a difference as an academic administrator, a provost or a dean, it's I think probably best to go into the situation prepared to do battle, but to go in giving the other person the benefit of the doubt. I've found that if I was open and honest with Senate leadership, for example, their initial reaction was to be very wary, and then to be shocked, and finally to be appreciative. Eventually you extend the olive branch, you know, and we could work together on things. So I felt pretty good about that. That set of attitudes is probably found

in every university, I suspect. It's a way of protecting yourself against disappointment, I guess, to feel that way, but I think that was the one thing I saw as I changed positions along the way.

TB: One other comment about students. We talked a little bit about students in the beginning, but how have you seen students changed over the years, or their activism on campus or non-activism on campus...

RD: I can't speak for the present, but I can say that throughout my career that I saw less activism and involvement after the early 1970s, and it's perfectly understandable, it's just when you think about the national/international scenes that they would turn away from the kind of commitments that were made early on. It's disappointing. But on the other hand, I felt over the years and certainly in the '90s, that in terms of academic preparation, students coming to Western clearly were the best and the brightest in the state. My colleagues at the University of Washington after I became provost used to grump at me about that and how...one of their people is Fred Campbell who was assistant provost used to say what truly irritated them was that they would run annual surveys of freshmen and find out that a significant percentage of them had wanted to come to Western and couldn't get in!

I missed the daily contact, and when I was first provost under Ken I decided I was going to do a seminar, 499, you know, senior research seminar. So I set it up from my office and they would come in for this seminar. One day, I got a terse note brought to me by Penny Glover from the president. It read, "Are you in trouble?" "No," I replied. So later he said, "My God! What's going on in there? I saw all those kids trouping in." I said, "Their taking [my seminar class]."

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TB: All right. Now, is there anything else I haven't asked you or that you haven't had a chance to say that you'd like to say about your time at Western?

RD: I don't think so, actually.

TB: Otherwise, we're also trying to make sure we catch up on what people have been doing since they retired.

RD: Okay. No, I think I'm done with this.

TB: So what have you been doing since you retired? It sounds like you're still researching.

RD: Well, I put in a stint as an interim member of a local school board from February of last year until the end of November. That's the Mary Knight District out by Matlock. We live in that district. And I've been working on some of my publication projects. I'm supposed to give a paper at the Pacific Northwest History Conference in May. I'm writing a paper on a murder case in Aberdeen, 1940.

TB: Oh wow, okay.

RD: Looking after kids and grandkids. I'm spending a lot of time with my younger son because of his battle with cancer, over a year of that. When I was in the hospital for all that time, every single day I was there, I got a postcard from Bob Monahan. Bob collects old postcards. Not the kind that have already been written on, but old postcards you can buy. Every day I would get a postcard from him, usually something like, 'Hope you're feeling better today,' or 'Hope you're better today than you were yesterday,' that kind of stuff, just funny little notes. This went on until

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after I came home from the hospital. I finally phoned him up and said, "You can stop now!" But it meant a lot to me, it's knowing there's somebody thinking about you. So when my son Rich became so sick, we agreed we would talk every day on the phone if I wasn't with him personally. And we still are doing that. A lot of energy and time has gone into being there for my son. My wife thought she'd retire too, when I did. We got down here and people started talking to her about a position, a part time position with the Squaxin Indian tribe as a counselor, so that's what she's doing. They keep pushing for more of her hours. And then I'm on the board at this museum (Aberdeen Museum of History).

TB: Well, unless there's anything else to say, I will just say thank you very much. It's really been a pleasure to interview you here today. I learn a lot every time I do these about how campus works. Thank you very much.

RD: Sure.