

INTERVIEWEE: Rae O. Weimer

INTERVIEWER: Samuel Proctor

April 4, 1969

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P: We are going to tape an interview this afternoon, April 4, 1969, with Dean Rae O. Weimer [College of Journalism and Communications]. Rae, please just say something, and we will play it.

W: The girls in my office are always interested in the spelling of my first name, Rae. Half of my mail, or a lot of my mail, used to come in addressed to Miss. If I do not get it spelled Ray, people who do not know how that I spelled my name differently did not know who to send it to. [laughter]

P: OK. We can proceed with this. I think the voices sound very good. We are going to start, Rae, by asking you for a little bit of your biographical background. Where were you born?

W: I was born in Mason City, Nebraska, which is a small town in the center of the state with about 500 people.

P: That is west of Lincoln?

W: That is a couple hundred miles west, right smack in the middle of the state. And that was November 2, 1903.

P: What about our folks? Is your family from the Middle West?

W: My mother was born in Nebraska, and my dad originally came from Ohio. The Weimers had the first federal land grant in Ohio. My mother came up to Mason City [from eastern Nebraska] on the first railroad that ran west from Lincoln to Grand Island and on west as far as Mason City. She was on the first train [to reach Mason City]. She graduated from the first high school [class] in this little town--[there were] three people in the class. [She was] the only girl, with two boys. It was really a kind of a frontier town. No paving. We had kerosene lamps. I can remember when they put in electricity. We had sidewalks; as a matter of fact, I think we had more sidewalks per capita than Gainesville did when I come here. But it was a nice little town.

P: How did your father make his living?

W: He was a, kind of a jack-of-all-trades. He was a painter by trade; he did painting, paper hanging, and interior decorating.

P: Was there much call for that in a frontier town?

W: Well, I guess as much as he wanted to do. He never made much money, and my family really did not have any money. There were two boys in the family, and when one boy got a pair of shoes that meant the other one had to wait till we got enough money from butter and eggs and selling chickens or something so we could buy the next new pair of shoes.

P: So you lived on a farm?

W: No, we lived on the edge of this small town. I say it was small because from our house on the edge of the town we were only about six blocks from the post office. That is how small it was. But we had a 480-acre farm three miles south of town. For a long time we rented it, but then my brother and I grew older we farmed it, driving back and forth.

P: This was an older brother or a younger brother?

W: Older brother. [He was] about a year and a half older than me.

P: What is his name?

W: Claud. He has been dead now a number of years. He died in a heart operation. He was in newspapering [and] public relations for a great many years. As a matter of fact, when I left college he and I bought a paper in North Platte, Nebraska. It went broke. So then we started out together. The first job we got was by Claud in Des Moines, Iowa, where he became known as Doc. He worked on the copy desk of the *Des Moines Register*. We stayed in the YMCA until I found a job in Moline [Illinois]. Doc then came and lived with me. We kept working our way east until we got back into Ohio and New York and Indiana. We barnstormed around together this way for several years.

P: Any sisters?

W: No. Just the two of us.

P: So you are the only survivor, then.

W: My mother and father died down here in St. Petersburg here about two or three years ago.

P: So you grew up, then, on the edge of a little farm community and had a typical middle western child's background. Where did you go to school?

W: I went to high school, of course, there, and then I went to Kearney State College, Kearney, Nebraska. I could not go to the University [of Nebraska] in Lincoln for lack

of money. I was able to save forty dollars and had a new suit of clothes when I went to Kearney. I got myself a job on the janitor's force and lived in the basement of a real estate man's house. I tended his furnace. It gets [mighty] cold in Nebraska in the winter, so I had to get up about 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning to start that furnace. It heated the water for family [for baths as well as heated the home]. I hauled out his garbage, mowed his lawn, and shoveled snow off the sidewalks. That was just for my room. One year I also cooked in a restaurant for my board. I worked on the janitor's force for thirty cents an hour to get what money I needed.

P: Obviously, no money was coming from home.

W: No, I got no money from home. So this put me through school until . . . I quit before I graduated. My brother had been out two years ahead of me at Kearney, and he had not graduated either. He got the idea of buying this paper in North Platte, which is up the Platte River from Kearney. So we went in together and borrowed the money and bought it. We soon found out we had more debts than we could pay off. Result: we went broke. Then we had to take off to pay the bank loan.

P: Let me ask you this. Did anything happen as you were growing up that sort of encouraged you to go into journalism? Or perhaps I might ask you, what encouraged you to decide to go off to college?

W: My brother and I were the first students from Mason City who went to Kearney. I think there were two older boys who went to the university from Mason City, but no one else [from Mason City] had ever gone away to college. I wanted to study law, but I had been involved in the high school paper. At Kearney I got a chance to be editor of the college paper, and this paid me twenty dollars a month. This little extra money was handy; it was a lot of money in those days. I really took the journalism job for the money, but as I got more into it for a couple years I began to like it. Having left and gone into the North Platte project [and failing], it seemed like the quickest way to cash in what education we each had. So we just gravitated into it, and law went by the boards.

P: Was there family encouragement for you and your brother to go off and get an education?

W: Sam, yes, I think my mother was anxious for us to go to college, but she knew she did not have the money. She had graduated from high school--my father had not--and I believe she very much appreciated education and the value it might be to us. She encouraged us; both of us had a lot of encouragement from our mother. I remember we had a mailer, and we would mail our laundry home each week for her to do. [Generally, she would mail the clean clothes back along with some cookies.]

P: So you would really hold her responsible for your making the decision, perhaps, to leave, without any funds, and go off to college.

W: This is very true. She wanted it more than anybody else, although not entirely. The high school principal--we called him superintendent of the high school, a man named Hetrick--lived right across the street from us. He graduated from Kearney, which once called Kearney Teacher's College. [Later it was renamed Kearney State College.] He was very anxious for my brother and me to go to college. He told us who to go see in Kearney. I remember going to see a man named Arnold who ran the janitor force. I got a job for 30 cents an hour.

P: Did you involve yourself in any activities in college other than going to class?

W: Yes. In high school my brother and I had both been on a state-champion debating team. When Doc was in college he was on the debating team, so when I got there someone invited me to go out for the debating team, and I did. I was on the college debating team for a couple of years. In those days this was pretty important. I think football and athletics have kind of overshadowed this in modern times, but in those days we had a full schedule of intercollegiate debates. On account of my arm, I could not make the first team in football, but I played on the second team. Then, of course, as editor of the college paper, called *The Antelope*, I used to travel with the football team and write up their games. Sometimes I went out to scout for the coach. [laughter]

About a year ago a former Kearney coach, a man named Fred Fulmer, out in Seattle, Washington, saw my name in the alumni notes, and he wrote me [here in Gainesville]. He had long since retired, but it was very surprising.

P: A voice out of the past.

W: It really was. Fred was a great guy.

P: So you did not get your degree?

W: No.

P: You have not yet?

W: No. I went through my junior year at Kearney, and then I went one summer at Ohio State. I have about six hours of graduate credit at Syracuse. I intended to go back and get my degree after I came here. That is the reason I went back to Ohio [State] in [the summer of] 1950. But I got so busy with school--back then it was called the School of Journalism--and . . .

P: I suspect you just will not bother with it now. [laughter]

W: No, I do not think I will, Sam.

- P: Even if you are supposedly in a state of semi-retirement, you are probably busier than ever.
- W: The president has not demanded that I have a degree. I think some people, when I came here, sort of sat back and looked askance at a director of a school without a degree. As I went on in this business, I went to all the national meetings of journalism [deans and] directors, and I found I was the only dean, I guess, in the United States in journalism without a degree.
- P: I think that is a marvelous thing for the University. [laughter]
- W: Well, Walter Williams, who founded probably the first journalism school in the United States at Missouri, had no degree. I did not pattern myself after Walter Williams. He later became president of the university, so it can be done.
- P: I think that is marvelous. Anyway, you went into journalism because of this background and because you and your brother bought the paper. And then that paper went broke, as you said.
- W: It sure did go broke.
- P: What was next step?
- W: We left North Platte and went to Des Moines. He worked there. Funny thing about working in Des Moines. On the copy desk there was a man named Phil Stong who wrote *State Fair*--a movie was made of it. Phil was reading copy on the desk along with us. [I say "us" because I went in also to get some experience in editing.] I went to Paragould, Arkansas.
- P: You went where?
- W: I went first to Paragould, Arkansas. I worked there for a few months. Then I went up to Moline, Illinois.
- P: You worked on the *Moline Dispatch* then?
- W: Yes, the *Moline Dispatch*. I worked there and also over in Rock Island. The *Dispatch* kept a reporter over in Rock Island, which is the county seat, and I worked in both places. Then Doc joined me in Moline. After a while he went back to the *Marion (Ohio) Star*, which was once [Warren G.] Harding's newspaper. Doc had worked there before we bought the North Platte paper. In Moline I was getting twenty-five dollars a week. Doc called me one day from Marion and said: "I can get you a raise. Come back to Marion," so I said okay. I quit and went to Marion.
- P: Now, let us get a date on this so we can keep our chronology.

- W: Well, let me see. This must have been about 1925. When I got to Marion and got my first paycheck, it was for \$22.50 for the week. I said to Doc, "Gee, I got a pay cut." He said, "No, you got a \$2.50 raise." I said: "No. I was getting \$25 in Moline." He thought I was getting \$20. So I got a pay cut. [laughter]
- P: Now, who was running the paper in a Marion?
- W: Harding had sold it to Roy Moore and Louis Brush. Roy was in Marion, and Louis was in Ohio where they owned a couple of papers. Mrs. Harding was still living in Marion following the president's death.
- P: She was still alive.
- W: She was still alive, and Harding's father was still alive, the old doctor who drove a horse and buggy around town. As a matter of fact, he drove that horse and buggy until he got married again. His new wife could drive a car, so she had him buy a car, which she drove.
- P: Was the town completely permeated with Harding?
- W: Pretty much. Harding was a very popular person in Marion. He was the kind of a guy who would stop on the street corners and talk with everybody. [He was] very much loved if not admired in Marion, I think. He make his bad reputation, I think, mostly in Washington, not in Marion.
- P: And it had not yet really exploded in 1925 to that degree.
- W: No. That is true, although he was dead. But the Teapot Dome and [the Harry M.] Daugherty [scandal] had been kicking around. Harding's body was placed in a temporary tomb in Marion, and then when she died, she was put in temporary tomb alongside hi. Then they built a beautiful mausoleum or whatever you call it for them. Then they had trouble getting anybody of national stature to come and give the dedication address. Finally, I believe, they got [Herbert] Hoover to do it. No one wanted to speak for Harding in those days.
- P: Mrs. Harding was not particularly loved and admired in Marion?
- W: No, Mrs. Harding was not at all admired. She was rather ruthless and domineering.
- P: Did you know her?
- W: No. I had seen her a few times, but she did not pay much attention to us at the paper. Roy Moore and Louis Brush had signed a contract with Harding when they bought the paper when he became president that they would pay him \$1 million for ten years for his writings, but he never wrote an article. His heirs went to court and

made the contract stand up, so she got this money and never had no worry about funds. Harding's father used to come into the paper every week or two, just to visit.

One of the interesting things at [the] *Marion [Star]* was we set up a room as sort of a memorial to Warren G. Harding. We had his desk and a big high-back chair. One of the things that really made it human was a set of books the some book agent had sold him that I do not think he ever looked at. I do not even remember what the books were about. [They were] probably of no earthly use to him, but he had bought them, and they stayed around the newspaper as long as he had it. So we put the set of books in there. [laughter]

P: It is part of the memorial.

W: It seemed to give a touch. [laughter]

P: A real Harding touch.

W: That is right. Harding was not very deep.

P: No.

W: As my brother used to say about such people, he was about as deep as a pie pan. Maybe he was a little deeper, but he never made a great contribution.

P: Mrs. Harding's mother and father had a winter home, I recently discovered, in Daytona Beach.

W: I did not know that.

P: I did not either until very recently. The Hardings came to Florida very often, long before he was president, and paid periodic visits to this home in Daytona Beach.

W: Is that right?

P: Of course, Harding himself loved St. Augustine and came down very often as a senator and as a president to winter in St. Augustine.

W: I never saw the man. I was in Kearney when he died. I was reminded of it this week when the train took [Dwight D.] Eisenhower's body back to Kansas. Harding, you know, died in San Francisco, very mysteriously. But as that train went through the country, from the [west] coast clear to Ohio, people stood on the platform and held out a handkerchief and rub some of the soot off the train and preserve it--the morbid souvenir hunters that Americans are. I can remember yet that train going through Kearney with people standing there . . .

P: Brushing the side of it.

W: My brother was in Marion at that time, and the funeral procession of people lined up to go through the body [was extremely long]. [It was] hot as could be. You could not buy a glass of water for a dollar. You did not dare get out of line. If you fainted they carried you off, I understand. But such a mob descended on that little town. I thought of this in Abilene. The paper said there were 100,000 people were in Abilene [for his funeral].

P: And it is a little 8,000-population town.

W: They just were not fixed to take care of that many people.

P: Sort of like Gainesville on a football weekend. [laughter]

W: Yes.

P: What did you do on the paper, the *Marion Star*?

W: I went to Marion first as--we tried something new there--a bureau man. [I covered the counties] all way around Marion. I started in Mount Gilead, the county seat of Morrow County. Then I went to Crawford County with Galion and Bucyrus, which is the county seat, and then to Upper Sandusky, which is the county seat [of Wyandot County] and Marysville, the county seat [of Union County].

P: You were not married?

W: No, no. I just wrote everything. I covered everything. We filled the paper full of local news.

P: Everything from society to obituaries?

W: Everything. I even managed a semi-pro football team while I was in Mt. Gilead. The circulation people would come in then to sign up subscribers. Then I would move to the next county seat. [I made the whole circuit and eventually wound up] in Marysville. This took about one year. Then somebody left (I believe they fired a drunken state editor), and they brought me into Marion as state editor. I stayed there for about a year.

P: I hope your salary increased somewhat as state editor.

W: I got that \$2.50 back. [laughter] In the meantime, Doc had gone on to Olean, New York. After a while I did not think I was progressing enough--I was rather ambitious--so I went to Olean as sports editor and city editor. He was managing editor. [We were living in the YMCA.]

P: Now, tell us where Olean is.

W: Olean is straight west of Salamanca, near the Pennsylvania border, north of Bradford. [It is] quite a distance south of Buffalo. A man named Velie had owned a sewing machine factory and sold it and bought this paper. He did not know the first thing about a newspaper. I cannot remember, Sam, what happened, but he and Doc got in some kind of a quarrel, and he fired Doc. Doc did not leave right away, and a rumor got around that Doc and I were going to try to start another paper. So Velie came in one morning and told me that I could go pick up my check, too.

P: How much were they paying you then?

W: I think I was getting about twenty-five or thirty dollars a week, something like that. It was not much, but I did not need much. I did not worry with money in those days.

P: Not living at the YMCA. [laughter]

W: No, but you know a funny thing. Several years after we had gone from there, I was married and came back through Olean, and I needed some money. I went back to the YMCA and asked them if they would identify me so I could go to the bank and cash a check. I thought surely they would cash one for twenty-five dollars. No, he said, they had a policy of never cashing checks. So I drove on to Aurora, New York. I had never been in the town before in my life. I walked into the bank, told the man my problem, and he said, "Write out a check, and I will cash it." Strangers sometimes are better than "friends." [laughter]

P: So you were the sports editor, and were you also the telegraph editor, too, of the *Olean Herald*?

W: I guess I was telegraph and city [and sports] editors, Sam. We had no other city editor. I believe we [Doc and I] shared the work.

P: This obviously was a catch-all kind of a desk that you were operating. You were writhing everything, again, pretty much?

W: Sam, those were the days before radio.

P: This was the 1920s.

W: This was late 1925 and 1926. We used to have a scoreboard outside the window for the World Series. Can you remember those?

P: I remember that.

- W: We had a magnet, and you moved the magnet to move the ball on the board. Someone would announce who was up to bat and what was happening with a megaphone. [These boards drew huge] crowds--200 to 300 people would stand down below the window and listen and watch. Inside we would slow it up enough so that the game would end while we were still announcing the ninth inning. That way we could get to press and get our papers out on the street to sell before the crowd left. [laughter] Great business of selling papers!
- P: Some of those tricks ought to be re-employed. I think it might help the field of journalism a bit today. So you stayed there and then got canned because of the publisher's fear that you were going to set up a rival newspaper. You left and went where?
- W: We went to Logansport, Indiana.
- P: You turned west, then?
- W: We turned west. We looked in *Publishers' Auxiliary*, I believe, or something, and found they needed a man. He [Doc] either called them or wired them, and they said, "Come on," so we went to Logansport. It was quite a thrill for me. I got up in the morning and looked out the hotel window at this muddy river flowing by the hotel [the Wabash River]. Doc worked there, and I did not have a job. Then he got an abscessed tooth and had to lay off, so I went in and took his job at the *Logansport Press*. Do you ever remember the Oliver typewriters that the keys came down from the sides? Well, they had the whole office equipped with Oliver typewriters. They must have taken them on an advertising account. [They were] terrible things to write on. I stayed there until Doc got well, and then I went up to Fort Wayne as state editor [for the *Journal Gazette*]. I stayed there for a couple years. Then I went to Indianapolis and worked on the *Indianapolis Times* for Scripps-Howard. That is the first time I joined Scripps-Howard chain.
- P: This was about 1927 or 1928?
- W: I went down there in the fall of 1927.
- P: This was a time of prosperity in the country as a whole, was it?
- W: Yes, it sure was.
- P: In the 1920s, before the crash.
- W: Fort Wayne was prosperous [and was] doing real well. It was a morning paper I worked on. I enjoyed that part of Indiana; it is a beautiful part of the state. You can go north from Fort Wayne to South Bend and northeast to Angola, which had so many lakes it seemed to have more water than land. It was great for fishing and swimming. Southwest along the Wabash River was just beautiful. It was a great

place to live. I was single at the time and enjoyed traveling throughout the territory as state editor.

About six months after transferring to Indianapolis I sent a birthday card to my former managing editor in Marion. He was then working as a managing editor on the *Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal*, owned by the Knights who now own the *Miami Herald*. I had no motive or ulterior motive. Within a few days of his receiving that birthday card, he wired me and offered me the position of state editor [laughter], so I went to Akron.

P: You were certainly moving around a little bit right there in the early 1920s. You had been on four or five or six papers in four or five or six towns.

W: Yes. That is the way I really learned the business, both my brother and I. Well, you are always more ambitious than you should be, probably, or you do not progress as fast as you think you ought to. One way to do this was to move. Every time I moved, except once, I got more money. Once I did not; my brother helped me take a pay cut. But when "Doc" Kerr in Akron asked me to come, this was a big paper, a prosperous paper, and I was interested in going somewhere else. I went over to Akron, and I stayed in Akron for ten years.

P: What did you go as?

W: I went as state editor and then moved up to assistant city editor. I was there when the crash of 1929 came, followed by the Great Depression. We got a 10 percent cut and then another 10 percent cut and then a 5 percent cut [in pay]. The rubber factories [and the banks] had all closed, so finally the *Beacon Journal* had to print its own scrip because we had no money. We got paid in scrip, and I would take piece of it down to a restaurant and deposit it. Then I would go there and eat until it was gone. He would say, "You are out of scrip," and I would give him another piece of it. He would take this to a commission house, and eventually it would get back to the newspaper to buy advertising. We would go down to the department store and take a five-dollar piece of scrip and buy something that cost about two or three dollars. There was enough money floating around town that they give us that in change. We used that to pay our life insurance. For all other purchases like gasoline or clothes or food we used scrip. You could not go out of town.

P: Because it was not any good.

W: [No one out of town wanted the scrip.] You had to stay in Akron or in close proximity to it.

P: That extends "buy American" to "buy Akron."

W: That is right. But after we got off of the scrip I did not seem to think I was getting back to where I was fast enough, so when the *Times-Press* offered me a job, I returned to Scripps-Howard.

P: Was this an afternoon paper?

W: They were both afternoon papers. I went over there and was restored to my sixty dollars a week that I had been getting before the crash. I stayed with them about five years. Then they sent me to the Buffalo Scripps-Howard paper. They knew they were folding up the *Times-Press* in Akron two months later.

P: Were you giving the kiss of death? [laughter]

W: I do not know, Sam. Scripps-Howard was becoming pretty hard-headed. They always were, but they got to the point where they just were not running papers that did not make money, which is quite proper. In Buffalo they had a tough time competing with the *Buffalo News*, a powerful newspaper. In Akron they could not beat the *Beacon Journal*. The *Beacon Journal* bought them, and in Buffalo nobody would buy them, so they just closed it. Scripps-Howard then sent me from there to Cleveland, on the Scripps-Howard paper, the *Cleveland Press*. I stayed there until Ralph Ingersoll founded the experimental newspaper *PM* in 1940.

P: In New York?

W: In New York. I went down there as assistant managing editor and then later became managing editor of *PM*.

P: Before we get into the *PM* situation, which I think is a whole chapter in itself, what about your personal life? Had you gotten married by this time, and, if so, were there children? This brings us up to 1940.

W: Yes and no. The former woman's editor or society editor of the *Oklahoman* in Oklahoma City [came to the *Times-Press* in Akron as society editor]. Her mother had died, and she wanted to get out of Oklahoma. The former editor there had become editor of the Scripps-Howard paper in Akron. She contacted him, and he hired her as society editor, and then she became woman's editor.

This is a roundabout way of telling how I happened to get interested in her. I must have been the only man on the staff, apparently, that had a tuxedo, because I was home on my day off when the managing editor called me and wanted to know if I would take this girl to Cleveland to cover the opera. [Harvey] Firestone had sponsored a young singer who was appearing with the Metropolitan Opera in Cleveland. I cannot remember her name. I took the Oklahoma girl, Ruth Meister, to the opera. We dated on and off, and after I had moved to NEw York we were married in Riverside Church.

P: So your first date was a trip to the opera.

W: That is right. We have a son and daughter [Bill and Ann], both born in New York City at the Doctors Hospital where you looked right down on the mayor's Gracie Mansion. As school age approached we decided we did not want to stay in New York City. This is when I was working on *PM*. That is, of course, part of the *PM* story. After eight years we were in the red. Marshall Field had lost considerable money--millions--and we [Ruth and I] were trying to decide what we were going to do. We left New York largely because we wanted to get started in school in some place [other than New York City]. In 1948 Bill was 4 years old and Ann was 2 years old. But that is personal family life.

P: Now, let us talk about *PM*, because that is a real chapter in American journalism history.

W: Yes, it really is, Sam.

P: What was the concept of *PM*? Who developed what amounted to, I guess, a revolutionary change?

W: Ralph Ingersoll was the founder of the paper.

P: Tell me about Ralph Ingersoll. Was there a relationship with the famous Ralph Ingersoll, the agnostic, an orator and Chautauqua speaker?

W: [Ralph Ingersoll is a genius, a magazine literacy genius. In the 1920s and 1930s Ralph was a sensation. The *New Yorker* magazine was a struggling publication when Ralph joined it as a reporter. In a few months, at the age of twenty-five, he became its managing editor and helped make it a success. At age thirty, in 1930, he became managing editor of *Fortune*, a five-month-old failure published by Time, Inc. His outstanding success at *Fortune* led to his appointment as general manager of Time. It was during his managership of time that he planned, designed, and created *Life*. He fully expected to be named publisher of *Life* when it was launched in 1936. Henry Luce kept that position for himself and named Ralph publisher of *Time*.

Unhappy with this turn of events, Ralph began to dream of having a publication of his very own. During his phenomenal rise in the highly competitive publishing field, he never had worked on a newspaper. But by 1939 he had his plans ready to announce the forthcoming birth of a new kind of newspaper.

That is a long answer to your question, Sam, but let me add two other things about Ralph Ingersoll. At the beginning of World War II, he fought the drafting of

newspaper editors---he being the object of such a move. When he won that battle, he enlisted in 1942.

His rise in the military was no less phenomenal than it had been in magazines. From private first class he soon became a captain. With his college training in mine engineering, he eventually convinced the higher-ups not to attempt a secret invasion of Europe but to use a plan of deception. He planned and showcased his plans of diversion to make the enemy think the landing was to be at Calais, while in fact it went to Omaha Beach. Success in that strategy brought him a promotion to lieutenant colonel. Ralph got himself included in the invasion forces. Later he wrote three best-selling books on his experiences.

P: Rae, let us talk about Ingersoll's concept of this new kind of newspaper he was proposing.

W: Ingersoll was not only creative but innovative, and extremely good at it. His first outline was some thirty-six typed pages. With the help of his first managing editor that was boiled down to some twenty pages, and it became a "confidential memorandum to the staff."

Foremost in Ralph's thinking, I guess, was the handicap and privation suffered by minorities in that tremendous metropolitan area. A sentence in his prospectus that stood out and more or less became a slogan for the paper was: "We are against people who push other people around." Really there was much more to his thinking and concept of what his paper would be.

He began with a hypothetical question: Suppose there were no other newspapers in existence, yet there was a great desire by the populace to know what was going on. That premise, I think, was illogical thinking.

Another lapse in practical thinking was the title he used in his mock-up. It was "Newspaper." I never heard him admit it, but those involved in the early planning said he envisioned that buyers would come to the newsstand and ask for a newspaper, and this one would be handed to them. As you know, all newspapers were sold from newsstands; there was no home delivery in New York City at that time. Of course, his timing was to enter the New York market where there were ten daily papers. If this was to be a period of no other newspapers, any title would do. But there was some basis for the belief that he titled it to meet competition.

But overall his concept and ideas made a lot of sense. Here are the highlights. Physical appearance: The paper would be the same number of pages every day--32. It would be a tabloid, but shorter and more square than the current papers. The pages would be four columns wide, each column fifteen picas wide instead of the standard five-column papers with columns eleven and a fraction or twelve picas wide. The type would be larger. All of this made for greater ease in reading. The

pages would be stapled on the press, and a really unique feature would be that ink did not rub off on your hands.

Editorial content: It was to be a complete newspaper, on the premise that the buyers had read no other paper from one day to the next. News would be told in writing, pictures, and drawn art. The content would be completely departmentalized. That, of course, reflected his magazine experience. There were to be only five departments: New York News, News of the Nation, Foreign News, Sports, and Financial News. Actually we ended up adding others.

The front page: This page was to give the reader a thirty second answer to "What's news?" It was to have informal headlines, written by the writers of the stories. The pictures were to be dramatic. Each department would lead off with a brief summary of the day's news. Stories and pictures would carry the initials of the writer and the photographer as credit. Sports pages were much like any sports department, and Financial News was never given much attention or space.

P: What about the financing of this paper?

W: With well-defined objectives and great confidence, Ingersoll turned down Henry Luce's offer of a \$1 million-a-year salary for Ralph to remain as publisher of *Time*. That was an unheard-of salary in the 1930s. In early 1939 he drew up the "Newspaper" dummy and went out to raise the money for its start. He went to wealthy friends and many in the millionaire class and sold them on the concept of a minority-voice paper. They contributed a total of \$1.5 million.

P: One would have to be pretty persuasive to do that.

W: He would have been a great salesman. Not only did he get those kinds of donations, but with no strings attached. He reserved complete authority to do with the paper as he wished. And you know the very liberal format for the paper was not the normal position of these contributors.]

P: They must have had a real social consciousness about them to be able to put up cold cash to support this kind of a concept and philosophy.

W: Yes, and Ralph knew these people. How he happened to be in their social strata I do not know. [Maybe he knew them from his *Fortune* magazine days.] He was on a first-name basis with many of these people, or he would know one that would take him to another one. As a matter of fact, I think he reached Marshall Field through Marshall Field's psychiatrist, who was a friend of Ralph's. [laughter]

P: Marshall Field really became the major angel.

[W: We started June 18, 1940.] In September we ran out of money, and Marshall Field was willing to take on the paper and buy out the rest at ten cents on the dollar. A few years later Marshall inherited a cold \$75 million in cash and had no taxes to pay. This is the way it was left to him and, I believe, a cousin when they reached their fiftieth birthday. Before Marshall turned fifty the other boy had died, so it all went to Marshall.

He had a real sincere conviction for the underdog and for the minority person and the people who did not have anything.

He had lived rather a worthless life in most ways of evaluating it, and I think he wanted to do something worthwhile. His wife--I believe this was his second wife--joined him in this and supported it. Both of them used to come to the paper frequently. She would sit alongside me at the desk and try to find out what I was doing, how we put out a newspaper. He became so interested in newspapers that he started the *Chicago Sun*.

P: How did they get you into the *PM* operation?

W: Well, the editor at Buffalo was George Lyon, and the managing editor at Buffalo was John Lewis. [I was the news editor.] When the Buffalo paper closed they sent John Lewis and me to Cleveland. John went with NEA, Scripps-Howard's feature service, and they sent me to the *Cleveland Press*. George Lyon went back to New York. Ingersoll picked him up as managing editor for *PM*. Ingersoll had done some hiring, but there were darn few newspaper people in the staff.

Ralph had an idea that you should hire an educator to write education news, a labor man to write labor news, etc. It did not matter whether you could write or not. It was your connections, he thought, that would make you good. Well, when Lyon got there he decided that a few [professional] newspaper people [were needed to get the paper out], so he sent out an SOS for Lewis and me to come down from Cleveland. John went down on the first of April, and I went down on the first of May, and we started [publication] in June.

P: So you were there to help launch the first issue.

W: Ingersoll's original idea, Sam, was that no copy reader would touch the reporters' copy. He thought that these experts would write the story and that no copy editor would spoil it. It was horrible! So I was brought in to hire a copy desk and get some copy readers that could edit all of this copy. Ingersoll had another idea of improving the writing, and that was to hire a man named Dashiell Hammett, who wrote *The Thin Man*. Dash was to come in there and read the copy as a means of showing the reporters how to write.

P: This was sort of like a journalism school, in a way.

W: It was wild! We were then back to putting up the paper in the early morning.

P: Oh, you moved from an afternoon paper to a morning paper?

W: We tried about every hour of the day.

P: From P.M. to A.M.

W: At this time we wound up in the A.M. field with *PM*.

To get back to editing, Ralph would pick up these carbons [of copy written during the day] and take them home to his apartment to edit. At the same time we would start to work on the desk. Dash would come in and sit right beside me--the copy desk was behind me. Dash would do some editing, and the copy desk would do some editing, and we would send this copy to the composing room. Ralph would come in at 10:00 in the evening with his edited carbons for a staff meeting. The other copy would have been set into type. Then I would get the proofs and try to reconcile Ralph's editing with copy that already had been edited differently and proofed.

Sam, I almost went nuts! Finally we gave up. Dash left, and I believe we convinced Ralph that if he wanted to edit any copy he would have to do it before the copy desk handled it or we would never get to press. A daily newspaper was far faster-paced than what Ralph was accustomed to in magazines.

[P: *PM* was an unusual name. How did that come about?

W: Nearly half of that \$1.5 million was spent before we published the first edition. That promotion and the many innovative plans for the paper caused no small amount of attention in the city's daily press. Columnists began to write and speculate about the paper.

Originally the paper was planned to be an afternoon paper. In New York the morning papers were referred to as the A.M.s and the afternoon papers as the P.M.s. With all of that free publicity about the new *PM* paper, we decided to name it *PM*. Before publication we discovered there was a small house organ in New Jersey titled *PM*, so we went over and bought the publication to avoid any possible legal problems.

P: You mentioned other departments. What were they?

W: Largely these were innovations that reflected that *PM* was at least twenty-five years ahead of its time. One was the coverage of consumer news. Ralph's early concept was that the paper would print no paid advertising. Incidentally, Nelson Poynter, editor and publisher of the *St. Petersburg Times*, was an adviser and consultant to Ralph in the early planning of the paper. He made the first suggestion, or at least

convinced Ralph, to make the bold departure of carrying no advertising. That brought the creation of the News for Living department. A digest of the paid advertising in other papers was printed in *PM* the same day. *PM* also shopped the huge produce markets and each day printed two menus based on best buys in the market. One was for a medium-priced dinner, \$1.20 to \$1.45, and the other for a low-cost meal, 50 cents to 90 cents for the ingredients. *PM* printed news of store sales that were not advertised, and this department also carried news on problems of living, such as housing, health, education, medicine, etc.

*PM* was a pioneer in its health coverage, and today there are magazines devoted entirely to health, and no daily paper is without a health column.]

At the end of four years we decided to satisfy those who wanted advertising, and we certainly needed more revenue. So we started taking advertising. The first year we made a profit of \$100,000, [half of which was divided evenly among the staff, including copy boys and girls].

I mentioned we needed the money. By that I mean that those of us at the management level wanted us to at least break even. Marshall Field never complained about picking up the tab.

P: He did not complain?

W: That is right. We started out charging a nickel per paper, and that next year the war brought prices up. We could not get our fancy ink, and it was just impossible to make it on a nickel anymore. *PM*'s circulation fluctuated between 90,000 and 120,000 a day. If Walter Winchell . . . Do you remember the days when Winchell was on radio on Sunday nights? His lawyers would not let him say many of the things he had prepared for fear of libel. Walter would call me every Sunday afternoon after the lawyers had gone over his script and would tell me what they cut out. We could carry a headline Monday morning: "Here's what Walter Winchell couldn't say on radio last night." Our circulation went up 15,000.

P: Winchell was not on your payroll?

W: No. He was a [William Randolph] Hearst man. Hearst editors were not happy about this, but his lawyers checked the contract, and there was nothing they could do about it.

P: It was all right. It was open territory.

W: You know when Wendell Willkie ran for president [in 1940], Winchell was so pro-Roosevelt (so were we) that he wrote a column for us free. Willkie and Winchell had the same initials, so we called this column, "Willkie Buttons by W. W." It appeared to be by Willkie until they read it. Then there was no doubt that Willkie

was not poking fun at himself. Only a few of us knew who wrote this column needling the Republicans and Wendell Willkie from end to end.

P: And he never admitted it?

W: Winchell was such an egoist that I suspect he could not resist telling people he was the author, but if they did not like it, he probably would not. I do not think I ever ran into a man so egoistical as Winchell.

P: I guess this continues right down to the present.

W: Walter is out in California now. A girl who graduated in journalism here wrote me once, and she was his secretary. Isn't that strange . . .

P: How things come together.

W: It really is. That must have been four or five years ago.

P: Your wife was not working on *PM*?

W: No, Ruth did not work in New York at all. We were there a couple of years before we had our first baby. I had gotten a pay raise by that time, Sam. We did not need both of us working.

P: Who else worked on *PM* with you in the earliest years?

W: Well, Jimmy Wechsler, who is now editor of the editorial page of the *New York Post*. He was the chief antagonist with McCarthy in the McCarthy days. Jimmy is real smart. He was our labor editor.

P: What happened to the idea of the labor man writing labor news?

W: Ingersoll hired Leo Huberman as own first labor editor. I suspect Leo probably carried a card.

P: I was going to say he was later accused of being a communist. *We The People*, I think, is his book.

W: That is right. Whether Leo was a member of the party or not I do not know. He probably would have denied it, but you get all indications that he probably was. Anyway, we finally convinced Ralph we could not use him. Leo could not even type. That is the kind of people Ralph hired. One night I wanted him to write a caption on a labor picture. He said he could not do it until his secretary came back. Then I found out he could not use a typewriter.

Then there was Ken Crawford, who now writes a column in *Newsweek*, and Harold Levine was our national editor. Harold is now national editor of *Newsweek*. Albert Deutsch, who is dead now, became . . . Albert could not write very well, but he was a real conscientious guy who probably did more than any other writer [in those days] to alert the American people to the problems of mental illness and institutions. We put a good writer to work with Albert and teach him how to write. *PM* lead the way in establishing health as a news department. Today all publications run health articles.

Ken Stewart, who was teaching journalism in Michigan, now is at Stanford. He was one of our Sunday editors. Bill McCleery was another Sunday editor for a while. I do not know what he is doing now. He wrote a number of plays. I believe is back in New York.

Others were Cecilia Ager, our movie critic; Louis Kronenberger, a Broadway critic who was our theater critic; Max Lerner, whom I mentioned earlier; Nathan Robertson, our foreign correspondent who was killed in World War II; Frank Sullivan, who wrote the *New Yorker's* Christmas poems of famous people for many years; Alex Uhl, a war correspondent; [I. F. Stone, a Washington correspondent; William Ley, a German refugee and a rocket expert;] and others, Sam, who distinguished themselves later in journalism. [I should also mention Ted Geisel (Dr. Seuss), who drew editorial cartoons for us, and Margaret Bourke White, a famous photographer.]

P: A very auspicious group.

W: Lillian Hellman, [Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, and Ben Hecht] wrote for us for free, and James Thurber contributed cartoons for us.

P: How about your association with Max Lerner? When did that begin on *PM*?

W: Max came to us on our second or third year. World War II had started, and Ralph, who had been writing our editorials, was off to England. He went to England when Germany was bombing the daylight out of London. Later he wrote his first book, *The Battle Is The Pay-off*. We needed somebody to write editorials, and we got Max. Without prior newspaper experience, Max was great to work with. He accepted readily and could come up on short notice with editorials on the day's news. He had a difficult time adjusting to deadlines. Max was in great demand as a public speaker. He would come in the office or call me on the phone about 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon and then take off by plane to fulfill a speaking engagement. We would agree on the editorial content. When his plane touched down enroute to his destination he would file the first page of his editorial. When it touched down again, he would file another page. When he arrived at his destination he would file the final pages. Sometimes these would reach me ahead of earlier filing. If these pages did not come in in the proper order, it was a madhouse to try to put them together piecemeal.

Max came to the campus several times at my invitation. I told this story one night when I introduced him here. He was late with his editorial one night, and we were getting ready to go to press, so I went down to the composing room and had the editorial page laid out with a big blank space [for the editorial]. I did the same thing that we did when an advertisement was late: I had printed in the center of the white space, "This Space Reserved for Max Lerner," and told him we were going to press. I thought Max would drop out of his chair. It helped to demonstrate deadlines. But he was a great guy to work with. Max is a true friend, and I am a great admirer of him.

P: Knowing his political philosophies, certainly it fitted in with the philosophy of the *PM*.

W: Very definitely. we were ultra-liberal. We were the first newspaper in the United States that said, "Let's go to war."

P: You never gave up this being the voice of the minorities?

W: No, we never did. It was difficult to find an editorial writer with the ability to write and with convictions on social issues that blended so well with *PM's* position.

P: These were troubled times.

W: Very much so. Roosevelt was a great friend of ours, and we were a great friend of his. Ingersoll had entree to the White House, and when we went overseas, John Lewis was often in touch. Those were difficult times. Later we found the Communists agreeing with our policy, which resulted in accusations in some quarters that we were Communists. Actually, I think one or two, maybe more, were party members. I am sure there were not as many as our detractors thought.

P: I was going to say, you certainly were accused very frequently of being the voice of the Communist party.

W: Because we stood for the same thing sometimes. We defended minorities and in these days were strongly anti-Nazi.

P: By this time the Puerto Ricans were moving into New York.

W: And the Communists were doing the same thing. It was very difficult to draw a line to explain the Communist line and our line. Max used to spend a lot of time trying to write this. One of the ways we did it was to show how the Communist line vacillated from one side to another, how they would flip-flop. At one time the Communists were in support of Hitler, and then they suddenly flipped to the other side.

P: And you stood fast?

- W: We stood fast. But we never completely convinced them. When I came to the University of Florida, one newspaper raised this question about be coming from a "pink" newspaper, I believe they said.
- P: Yes. Well, this was common talk in the United States about the ultra-liberal policy of *PM*.
- W: With a newspaper that hit so hard, you were bound to be noticed.
- P: I was wondering about Mrs. Roosevelt's connection with *PM*. Certainly she was a supporter of its [political] philosophy and line, buy did she write for you?
- W: No, she did not. she was a great friend of John Lewis, Ingersoll, and Lerner, but I do not think she ever wrote for us. La Guardia wrote us a column and delivered it in person [every Friday afternoon for the Sunday paper].
- P: Now, what was your official position on the paper, and what did you do?
- W: When I left I was managing editor.
- P: What did you do as managing editor?
- W: Far different from most managing editors today. I worked right out in the news room, and everything that went into the news columns came through my hands. Nothing went in there that I did not either see or confer with the editors in its preparation or read the proofs before we went to press to be sure of what we were printing, that it conformed to our basic principles and that it was not libelous. We were sued once for \$200,000 libel after the lawyer told us go ahead and print it. Two brothers ran a radio station in New York, and we said they were Fascist. They sued us. I think we could have won it, but Field's lawyer said he would rather settle then defend it, so we paid them \$100,00. But as managing editor there, I had complete control of everything that went in the news columns. I had nothing much to do with the Sunday paper.
- P: Yours was more than just a newspaper. Did you not actually go out to expose evil?
- W: Yes, our principal role was to expose wrongdoing, to speak for the minorities, and to represent consumers. We hit pretty hard, which was all the more reason to guard against libel. We decided, I think rightfully, that we could not beat ten other newspapers in New York with a little tabloid our size, so we had to do something different. We exposed what we thought was an insurance racket in America. We had twenty-four pages, and we took twenty pages of those twenty-four one day for just one story. We did this quite often--we would take twenty pages for one subject, so we had many different stories on the one subject. We would keep the other

pages--one for sports, one for the national news or city news, and one for the News for Living.

P: How about entertainment?

W: At the beginning we could not buy comics, so we had to create them. Crocket Johnson drew "Barnaby" for us. It was such a delightful comic with a little boy who had a fairy godfather. "Peanuts" is kind of like it today.

P: Oh, I remember "Barnaby."

W: The fairy godfather could be seen by the boy but by nobody else. We went to South America and got a comic called "Patarusa"; we had to translate it from Spanish into English. We created another one with a smartly dressed girl and much sex appeal to it.

P: A little sex angle?

W: Yes. It was titled "Claire Voyant."

P: How about your political cartoons? Were you something of a forerunner with that, too?

W: Our first cartoons were done by Ted Geisel who you know as Dr. Seuss. Sometimes James Thurber would do one. One night he drew one of our several staff artists. The only editorial cartoonist we ever had on a full-time basis was Ted. Some of the animals were just out of this world.

P: Where were *PM's* offices?

W: Ingersoll believed in putting all of his limited cash in the product, not a printing plant, so we leased a press in the Brooklyn, the Eagle plant. To get this new kind of ink that would not rub off on your hands--velox, it was called--we had to pipe in steam [that was] hot enough to heat the rollers. As the rollers touched these chunks of velox it was liquified, and as the paper came off the press this ink would solidify and not rub off. It felt like it was gloss. Beautiful printing--until the war came along and stopped it. Then we bought a shoe factory over in New York, at Dwayne and Hudson streets, almost next door to where the "Sick Chicken Case" was made famous in breaking the NRA.

P: Oh, yes.

W: We bought this shoe factory building and moved to New York about 1942. It was far downtown in New York.

P: Where did you live?

W: Ruth and I lived in Jackson Heights, not too far from La Guardia Airport, New York's first big airport. Airplanes that took off sounded as if they would come in one of our bedroom windows and out the other side. But one did get accustomed to the noise. I took a subway from there [to work each day]. It took me about fifty minutes each way. [The cost was only five cents each way!]

P: Did you and Ruth enjoy living in New York in those days?

W: We enjoyed New York thoroughly. We had a lot of fun in New York. We did a lot of things. One of our favorite things to do was to ride the ferry across the bay to Staten Island and go around and put in another nickel and come back. In fact, I think that was our honeymoon trip.

P: We still do that in New York.

W: It is great fun, Sam.

P: We did it in August.

W: Did you really? If you were coming back when it was getting dark, the cleaning people would have the lights on in the buildings in Manhattan, and they stood out in the sky like a fairy city. It is very exciting.

P: We saw it about 10:00 on a hot August this last year. Magnificent!

W: Well, we did enjoy it. The only reason we wanted leave New York was on account of our youngsters. Lever Brothers offered me \$15,000 to write four speeches a year for [their president's] national radio talks and then to supervise company publications. At that time they were up in Boston. Later they moved to New York. But I did not think I was a speech writer, and we wanted to find a smaller community. I knew I was going to have to get out of New York somewhere.

P: What was happening to *PM*? It was going downhill, financially?

W: It was not going downhill. It just was not getting out of red ink. We were losing money.

P: When the paper had picked up, you said you added advertising. You said you made a \$100,000.

W: That was only for one year. We soon leveled off at about 90,000 to 115,000 circulation. That was the most we could do, with costs kept going up all the time during the war years. So John Lewis and I went to Marshall and said that we were

not getting anywhere this way. We had a proposal. Either we wanted to leave, or we wanted to make *PM* into a national daily or a national weekly. But Marshall was then more interested in the *Chicago Sun*. He took an awful beating in New York where he had belonged to the Athletic Club and all the exclusive clubs, and the people needed poor Marshall about *PM*.

P: How much did he lose on the *PM*?

W: I suspect he lost in those eight years about \$10 million or more. No one ever reported the amount, and he never cried about it.

P: He did not gripe. Was he a generous boss?

W: Yes. We never asked him for anything we did not get. He was generous to the point that when I left I can just see Marshall saying to his secretary, "Go buy Rae a going away present." He turns up and gives me a green-gold, yellow-gold, or white-gold cigarette case with his handwritten inscription engraved inside. I forget what it said. I saw these advertised in the *New Yorker*, and I think they cost \$295-\$300 each! How much can a man get? The money would have done me much more good. But he wanted to do something really nice for me, and I still have it. My kids or grandchildren will look at that some day and wonder "bourgeois?" [laughter] But he was, yes, very generous. I do not think Marshall ever wasted money, and he never showed off with it. He would come down to the *PM* on the subway and ride back uptown and the subway.

P: What about censorship? Was there any of this exerted by him or Ingersoll on anything that you were doing?

W: Marshall Field never tried to dictate to us not to do something or to do something for him. Never once. He would once in awhile call and ask what our position was on this or that or why we took the position we did. I think we may have embarrassed him sometimes by position we took, but he left it completely up to us. With Ingersoll it was different. The various editors would meet every evening and make decisions for the next day's paper. Ingersoll would participate in those conferences. Maybe once in three months Marshall would sit in. He sat in mostly to listen and would respond if we asked him, but he never dictated.

P: What were some of the writers who really got started on *PM* and who later made a name for themselves?

W: Ken Crawford, Harold Levine, Jimmy Wechsler, Arnold Beichman, Penn Kimball, Ken Stewart, Volta Torrey, Heywood Hale Broun I. F. Stone, Hodding Carter, Max Lerner, Willie Ley, Cecilia Ager.

P: These were not necessarily fledgling reporters. These were men and women of experience already who came into the *PM* program and then moved onto other things.

W: Some of them may not have been widely known, but you are right. They all were experienced newspaper men and women. They were picked from hundreds of applications.

P: Well, in many ways *PM* made Max Lerner.

W: That is right.

P: Certainly it gave him a national audience.

W: It gave him a national exposure that he might not have received from his books or his teaching. It was his first job on a newspaper.

P: It must have been a pretty exciting era in your life, this relationship with *PM*.

W: You hear people saying they want to go to New York but they do not want to live there. For me, living there and working there was really the highlight of my career before coming to the University of Florida. One had to be young and free from many responsibilities to tackle such a venture.

P: Too frenetic? Too frustrating?

W: It was pretty frustrating in the face that we beat our brains out with great ideas, experimenting in many ways to publish a different kind of newspaper. Newspapers today have adopted many things which we pioneered. But we could not make them pay off. We had ten other competitors at that time. Today there are only three daily papers in New York. We printed pictures and maps better than anybody else. If *PM* were there today it just might make it.

P: As you look back on it, Rae, from the position in life that you hold now, what was *PM*'s value to America? What did it accomplish?

[W: We revolutionized the press, made many American leaders aware of the plight of minorities, helped establish certain projects of integration, and pushed through social legislation. *PM* was a revolutionary paper. Since the development of the modern newspaper in the nineteenth century, the editors of *PM* were the first journalists in the twentieth century to make a serious effort to revolutionize the form and content of the press. Its innovations make a profound impact on the press as we know it today.

Our attempt to create a new kind of newspaper failed for the moment. But viewed 20 years later, we did open up a whole new concept of newspapering in America.

*PM* established, labor, the press, health, business, entertainment--including radio and television--and especially consumer news as regular "beats" calling for daily attention. Today they all are handled routinely by newspapers and magazines. In the second quarter of the twentieth century it can be said to their credit that some magazines were beginning to try new techniques in publishing. Ingersoll sought to improve on these and established them in the format for *PM*.

P: What about the consumer? You were fighting the fight for consumers in many ways.

W: We called that department News For Living. This included news often found then only in paid advertising, news of prices and values of food, clothing and other household items, news of sale items never advertised, and news bearing on living--housing, health, education, medicine, and others. Ingersoll believed a concentration in this kind of coverage unencumbered by the conflicting influence of advertising might be more helpful to readers. This concept reflected our basic position that the buyers of goods, not the sellers, were the ones for whom we worked. A column by Albert Deutsch on health was a rare feature at the time. Today every newspaper has a similar column, and there are magazines devoted entirely to health. Very early in our publishing career we got into the problem of housing. As you know, New York City is made up of apartments, not houses. The hundreds of classified advertisements in the other New York papers would include the words "white" or "Christian." We campaigned for legislation to forbid such discrimination. This bears out our slogan I mentioned earlier: "We are against people who push other people around." Instead of covering labor only at times of conflict, we established it as it as an important segment of human endeavor and worthy of news of its problems, successes, and failures.

P: All of this certainly places you some twenty-five years ahead of your time. In addition to rental ads, how else were you interested and active in integration?

W: We opposed segregation in the military, and that was nearly twenty years ahead of federal integration. In our coverage of food costs, we pointed out how much more residents of Harlem had to pay than did white residents of other areas.

P: Do you think you made an impact there?

W: Yes, but not as dramatic as what came more than a decade later. It was the first time that minorities had a voice in the nation's largest city. Although our circulation was not great, it was a voice that was heard in the metropolitan area and in the nation's capital.

P: Of course, the plight of the Negro was not necessarily the major thrust of *PM*.

W: No. Their plight was great--and still is. But because of the war and Hitler's massacre of Jewish people, I suspect we may have given more attention to that

minority problem. We had many Jewish staff members. We make special efforts to recruit blacks for our staff as reporters and secretaries. We did not put our first black secretary in the secretary pool; she was assigned as my private secretary.

Let me tell you an interest aside about her. Her name was Beryl Pogue, and she was a stenotypist for court reporting. Because our staff was young, we lost many to the draft. Because we had no Saturday morning paper, I tried to take Fridays off. Beryl would come out to our apartment where I dictated letters to all of our men and women in the service. She typed these on a prescribed size sheet, they were photographed, reduced in size, and mailed throughout the world.

Our first black reporter was Frank Harriot, whom I had hired earlier as a copy boy. He was a fine young man. Frank had been to college and probably had a degree, but he no newspaper experience. His early training in that regard was the weekly session I had with all of the copy boys and girls to orient them into the newspaper business.

All of this staff had college training. I arranged a contract with Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, to take one of their students every semester. There was great demand at the college to come to New York. One of our Antioch boys was drafted and sent to Europe. Later he became harbor master in one of our overseas ports.

P: You stayed with *PM* until the end?

W: Yes. A year earlier John Lewis, editor, and I discussed our future with Marshall Field. We explained that we were not making any headway and that we did not want to make a career on a subsidized newspaper. The only alternative we could offer him was that he consider changing *PM* to a national daily or possibly a weekly. Because he was much involved with the *Chicago Sun*, he decided against such an option and asked us to stay until he could dispose of *PM*.

In the spring of 1948 Bartly Crumb, a California lawyer, and Joe Barnes, former managing editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*, bought *PM*. No purchase price was ever given, and I doubt if much or any cash changed hands. They took over on June 18, 1948, on *PM*'s eighth anniversary, and renamed the paper the *New York Star*. John bought a weekly newspaper in New Hampshire, and I returned to Ohio to join my brother in Columbus in the Weimer Agency, an advertising and public relations firm.]

P: Your brother had in the meantime moved out of the newspaper field?

W: Yes. Doc had been to Cleveland as news editor, and then he went to Columbus as managing editor of the *Columbus Citizen*. After several years he gave in when they wanted to make him editor. Once you get to be an editor of a Scripps-Howard paper, the ax is hanging over your head. Finally it fell on him when he endorsed

some local candidates the New York office did not like. So that ended his newspaper career. He went into public relations and advertising, and I went out to join him.

We started something new out there, Sam, and it is going on now around the country. We found the private Ohio colleges in financial trouble as taxes began to go up after World War II. They were having a tough time getting money. so we organized all the private colleges in Ohio, kind of like a community fund, and we put on a drive for all of them at one time. The president of every college made up our board of directors. We went to industry and business and collected money.

P: And put it into a general fund?

W: Yes, a general fund, and then we distributed it back. I understand such an effort was made in Florida recently. We got more money for them than they had gotten before.

P: This was something of an innovation, then?

W: I think it was.

P: Where was the headquarters of your public relations firm?

W: In Columbus, Ohio.

P: And it was from this operation that you moved here to the University of Florida.

W: Yes. Herb Davidson, who now runs the paper in Daytona Beach, was my national editor on *PM*. He returned to Florida and was chairman of the committee urging University of Florida president [J. Hillis] Miller to do something about journalism education. Dr. Miller brought in several English professors to be interviewed for the job, and newspapers would not approve of them. Finally Miller, I understand, in desperation said to them, "Well, you guys go and find somebody then." So Herb called me in Columbus to see if I would come down and talk to them. I came down in 1949, in the spring, when the press association was meeting here at the Thomas Hotel. I was interviewed by Dr. Miller, Harley Chandler, Dean Ralph Page, Registrar Dick Johnson, and the press committee.

P: None of these academicians knew anything about a college of journalism or a newspaper or anything like that.

W: It was the funniest interview you can ever imagine. Anyway, the day before I left they offered me a job.

P: So Davidson is actually responsible for bringing you here?

W: That is right.

P: What was Mr. Davidson's relationship to the University of Florida?

W: He was running the Daytona Beach paper and writing editorials calling for something to be done about journalism at the University of Florida.

P: Of course, there was a school of journalism or a department of journalism at the University of Florida.

W: Just a department.

P: That department dates back to the 1920s.

W: But the press was pretty unhappy with it.

P: Was O. K. Armstrong the founder of it?

W: O. K. was an early teacher of journalism, but I believe [John] Francis Cooper [editor, Experiment Station and Agricultural Extension Division] taught the first journalism class here in College of Agriculture.

P: I presume the press thought UF was not serving the industry in the way they wanted it to be served or expected it to.

W: Well, remember, they were not getting any reporters from here. Do you remember Elmer Emig [head professor of journalism]?

P: Yes.

W: Well, he did not speak their language, and they did not feel an rapport with the department.

P: When you came to be interviewed, was the department still part of business administration?

W: No. It had become a department in the College of Arts and Sciences. When it was part of the College of Commerce and Journalism, Dean Walter Matherly and Emig could not get along. I understand Matherly did not want any part of journalism in business, and Emig did not want business in journalism, so it was moved into arts and sciences.

P: Did you know O. K. Armstrong?

W: Yes. O. K. came through here one night when we were having one of our awards dinners. That is the first time I met him. He came to the dinner and gave a little talk. I corresponded with him for awhile. I have not talked to him or corresponded now for some time. He is an editor for *Reader's Digest*.

P: Well, he has been for years and years, ever since he lost the race for re-election to the House of Representatives from Kansas in 1952.

W: I do not know when he lost.

P: He was in Congress.

W: I know he was.

P: I knew him when he was in Congress--I had lunch with him once up in Washington. He took me into the House restaurant, and we had bean soup. His son, I think, was city manager over here at St. Augustine.

W: I believe you are right.

P: He was just kicked out last year, I believe. O. K. comes into Florida very frequently.

W: He is one of the senior editors of *Reader's Digest*.

P: Yes, but he actually got the program started here.

Before we leave *PM* completely I was going to ask you whether anyone has ever done a history of *PM*.

W: No. Marshall invited me to Chicago about two years after I came here. While there I suggested he might endow the J-School here. He said he had set up all of his money into a foundation for underprivileged and crippled children. But he offered me a job: "Rae, why not write the history of *PM*?" I told him I had no time to write while starting the new j-school. He said, "I will pay your year's salary, and you take off a year and write it." Well, Sam, I had been here such a short time and had just begun to see my way clear where this school could grow and amount to something, and I thought it would not be fair to the University. I was really much more interested in building a school here than I was in putting *PM* in the record. So I told him I did not want to take the time.

P: So nobody has done this.

W: So nobody has done it. There have been a great many articles written about *PM* since its demise, but not really a good impartial history.

- P: Where are the *PM* files? In the archives?
- W: I do not know. They were sold or given to the [*New York*] *Star*, and then Ted Thackery took over after one year and called it *The Compass*. He was financed by Mrs. McCormick in Chicago who supported [George] Wallace for president. Ted ran it as a real pro-Communist paper. Then the heirs had her declared incompetent to protect the money, and that shut off the revenue for *The Compass*, so it had to give up. But about the files, I gave UF a set of microfilm of all copies of *PM*.
- P: I was just thinking with you here and Davidson over in Daytona and Max Lerner coming through occasionally, somebody ought to interview all of you and write a history of *PM*.
- W: Great idea. Hodding Carter, who was on our staff at *PM*, could write the history. He is not editor of a newspaper in Greenville, Mississippi. I got him to come down and give a lecture here a couple times.
- P: Maybe someday we will get one of our graduate students to do it as a dissertation.
- W: Somebody ought to do it who went through it.
- P: Or at least while the people are still alive and can remember things. At least they can be interviewed.
- W: Sam, no staff ever worked so hard as that one did. Our first night we published, a fire broke out in the place. I do not know what caused the fire, but we had television cameras in there and cables, and in come the firemen. You know, that staff could have cared less whether there was a fire or not, and the firemen wondered what kind of people we were. Here was everybody battling away on typewriters and getting out that first edition, and smoke was pouring out somewhere. The firemen could not understand it. But that staff was the hardest-working, dedicated staff I have ever known in my life.
- P: Let us get to the University now. You saw Gainesville for the first time and the University for the first time when you came down for this interview.
- W: Spring, about April or March, 1949.
- P: So you saw it at a good time of the year, I hope.
- W: Yes, I did.
- P: What did Dr. Miller tell you that he wanted you to do in terms of setting up a program here?

W: We had an interview in Dean [Ralph E.] Page's office in Tigert Hall.

P: Who attended?

W: Dr. Miller, of course. Then there was Dean Chandler. Do you remember him?

P: Harley Chandler.

W: Harley always had a down look, but when I came to know Harley I found he was a real nice guy. And there was Ralph Page.

P: His personal problems were bearing down on him.

W: I guess I did not know that. And Dick Johnson, the registrar, and I cannot remember who else except the newspaper committee. None of the academicians seemed to know what to ask, and if they asked any specific questions about a school of journalism, I did not have any specific answers because I never went to one. I learned mine the hard way. I did talk about the classes I held for the copy boys in New York, and I thought it was important for those going into journalism to have college training along with professional newspaper training. I assured them I did not plan a trade school. Otherwise, conversation really did not amount to much. I can remember Harley sitting over on the side, never saying a word. I thought, Well, there is one vote against me. But after that they turned me over to Dean Page, and they talked. Then Page talked to the newspaper committee made up of Bill Pepper, editor of *The Gainesville Sun*; Herb Davidson, editor of the Daytona Beach papers; and Henry Wrenn, editor of the *Tallahassee Democrat*. Then finally Page said to the committee out on the steps of Anderson Hall, "Is this the man you want?" and I remember yet they said, "This is the man we recommend to you." Page replied, "All right. I will recommend him." And he did.

Shortly after I arrived and was on the job, Miller called me over to see him and said one of the things that was bothering him was Red Newton and the *Tampa Tribune*. Apparently this was bugging the administration, that Red Newton was continually raising hell with the University. He wondered what I could do about that. A few inquiries of this kind were made of me, and I had to have a conversation with President Miller that I was not really going to be the public relations man for the University. He agreed and said he was going to hire one. So he hired Ed Whittlesy.

P: Oh, yes, Ed Whittlesy. I have not thought of him in years.

W: [He came] about six months after I was here. About that time I asked the president how much he wanted me to report to him, and he said: "Rae, I am giving you enough rope to hang yourself. You go to it." I think, Sam, the reason the school grew, as I look back on it and see how universities are run so much by committees and some proposals being talked to death, is because those ideas that survived

committees on the campus have been awful good. I quickly found the way to do it was to do what I thought best, and then if somebody did not like it I would hear about it. Nobody gave me much guidance because I did not ask for it, and nobody really threw any barriers in my way except lack of money, of course, and getting staff.

[I want to amplify that a little. I did get some valuable guidance and advice in those early months from Paul Jones. He had graduated in the [Elmer J.] Emig-[William L.] Lowry regime in the late 1930s. He earned his master's at the University of Wisconsin and taught in the School of Journalism at the University of Illinois before and after World War II.]

P: Where were your facilities to begin with?

W: For the few months we were in Building E. We had one classroom and no library books, but we did have a dictionary. [There were] no typewriters for students. That was one of the things I remember the newspapers were screaming about, trying to train newsmen with no typewriters.

P: All of this after they had had journalism here for almost thirty years.

W: That is right.

P: And Professor Emig was the sole staff until you arrived?

W: No. A year before I came Elmer Emig and William Lowry had been here for some twenty years. Remember Bill Lowry?

P: I remember.

W: Paul Jones came down from Illinois in 1948. I came in 1949. That fall, after moving into Building E, I began seeking larger facilities. My campaign for adequate quarters for a school brought us a move to facilities where we had room--Building K. There, also, we had only one classroom, but there were offices for the staff and secretary.

P: Now, let me see. Where is Building K?

W: Right across from the gym, to the south, right next to the physics building.

P: Oh, yes, I know.

W: Our quarters were all upstairs. The classroom was in the center of the building. Emig had an office there. We partitioned the west end of the building for offices for the secretary, Jones, Lowry, and me. That is all we had to start with. A year or two later we got two downstairs rooms for Lowry's typography laboratory and a reporting

laboratory. [Bill Pepper gave me an old case of type from *The Gainesville Sun* for the typography lab.

About that time, the army or air force was closing a base near Orlando. I rented a station wagon, and Jones and I went down there and picked out twenty secondhand typewriters. We paid an average of thirteen dollars each for the lot of those Underwoods and Remingtons, so you know they were pretty battered up. It cost me fifteen dollars each to have them overhauled here in Gainesville. From somewhere we scraped up enough desks from army surplus for the typewriters. They were the first that any University of Florida journalism students had in more than twenty years. With the weight of these desks and typewriters and a class of twenty students, we had to prop up the floor to prevent it from collapsing.]

P: Did you have a library to begin with?

W: No, we had no library. Lowry's office was just off from the secretary. When he moved to the type lab, we made his office into a small library. The secretary became the librarian also.

[Two things are interesting about the school's first library. I had to have shelving and figured it would save money to have them built rather than buy office shelves. The University carpentry shop gave me a price which I thought too high. I contacted a Gainesville carpenter who offered to build them for half the University price. When I put through the purchase order, it was rejected with the notation that such work had to be done by campus carpenters. A poverty appeal to the campus shop brought an agreement to build them at the reduced price.

The second item of interest came when our school publications and promotion began to boast that we had a library. I was quickly informed by University library officials that there was only one University library and that all other collections of reference material for students had to be labeled as a branch library. In addition, every time I purchased reference books from the school's funds, I had to purchase duplicates for the main library.

Let me say a word about Building K. It was an old army barracks with no insulation. It was almost suffocatingly hot in the summer.]

P: No air-conditioning.

W: No. I finally put a fan in the window, but it would be ninety degrees up there at 9:00 or 10:00 at night. I do not know how I ever lived up there. Jones and I used to go back to work at nights, and it was horrible.

P: You already had a student base here, did you not?

W: Yes. We had twelve or fifteen students the first year.

P: And, of course, the veterans were moving onto the scene in 1947-1948.

W: I guess, but there were not very many of them in journalism.

P: And you were in the College of Arts and Sciences?

W: Yes, we were in arts and sciences. We stayed several years, but, as I said earlier, soon after I came here I began reporting to the president on most matters.

P: So journalism's history on this campus began first in business administration, and then moved to arts and sciences, and then became an independent college.

W: The j-school grew rapidly. Actually it became the fastest growing unit on the campus. I began clamoring for more space. First the University offered me a white frame building at the west end of the engineering building.

P: Was that a photographic building?

W: I believe it became a photographic laboratory when I rejected it for journalism. It would have relieved our crowded conditions, but I disliked splitting the school into two buildings. So we stayed in Building K. That was about 1952.

Some time later I believe Miller suggested I talk to George Baughman, University business manager. He knew of our need for additional space. Others also were pressing him to expand. Together we surveyed possibilities. One suggestion was that we move to the law school quarters when it moved to its new location, but that was abandoned.

By this time the school had expanded its program from journalism (printed media) into advertising and radio/television. George and acting president John Allen (Dr. Allen became acting president when Dr. Miller died) agreed with me that we should push ahead for a television station, knowing it would require much more space. George was an innovator and an aggressive executive who believed in cutting through bureaucratic red tape and getting things done that needed doing. He decided to develop underneath the football stadium for the j-school, radio station WRUF, the University Press, athletic offices, and a football dormitory. The j-school would have the bulk, with nearly 40,000 square feet of space. The fact that we had jumped into the broadcast field is interesting, and the prospect of having a university television station impressed the administration and helped me get much more space than I had in Building K.

First, Sam, let me say I was not well versed in broadcasting, but I did know more about it than I did about schools of journalism when I came here. I had been

engaged in news gathering and publishing for twenty-five years before I came to the University. While my work was entirely on newspapers, I was well aware of the impact radio had had in this country. Much of that impact involved news reporting. Television's debut had been delayed by the war, but it burst on the scene rapidly after 1945. I did not leave New York until the middle of 1948.

As our professional curriculum was well in place, it became apparent to me that all aspects of news gathering and publishing included broadcasting as well as the printed media. The person who was the catalyst for that development was Norm Davis, a student from Jacksonville. When he came to the University he became interested in radio and found part-time employment at the University's station WRUF. He had been registered in University College and found he had to transfer into the College of Arts and Sciences in order to specialize in radio and television. Those courses were then offered in the speech department. Norm knew he should have some news reporting training, and he came to see me. I immediately drew up requirements for a radio newswriting class. With television on the horizon, Norm transferred to journalism, and I started the wheels in motion to offer a complete sequence in radio and television. Dr. Allen supported my proposal to the University curriculum committee, and radio and television was transferred from the speech department to journalism.

P: That is when it became the School of Journalism and Communications.

W: Correct. That was in 1953. Two faculty members came along from speech: Clark Weaver in radio and Tom Batten in television.

Developing a major in advertising for both printed media and broadcasting also ran into some difficulty. The College of Business Administration was then offering two courses in advertising, so Dean Matherly and I reached a compromise that Bus. Ad. would limit its courses to those who would purchase advertising, and I would design courses for those going into advertising as a career.

P: How did you go about getting a television station?

W: First thing I needed was to educate myself in this new medium. Michigan State and Syracuse universities were offering courses in television that summer of 1953. For part of my vacation I registered for a two-week course at Syracuse where I earned nine graduate credits in the project. They had no station, but we did some programming on the city commercial station. Next I went to Michigan State for a weeklong workshop. They had no station and did no live telecasting. My last out-of-state visit was to Iowa State. There they had a commercial station--the first university to have such an operation. It was quite a lucrative station at that time, but within a year Des Moines began to get commercial stations which cut heavily into the university station.

The Federal Communications Commission had reserved 254 channels for educational television--today that is known as public broadcasting. I found getting one of these licenses was a gigantic undertaking, far greater than I anticipated. The amount of paperwork was unbelievable. Glen Marshall, manager of WJXT in Jacksonville, and Joe Brechner, operator of stations in Orlando, gave me technical help. Bill Kessler, a UF College of Engineering faculty member, was of tremendous help. John allen provided me with a small allocation of funds with which to hire a Washington lawyer.

George Baughman had renovations underway beneath the stadium. I spent long hours with the University architect on plans for our quarters. The other new tenants for the stadium space contributed funds for the renovations. Journalism had no such funds. After the walls and floors were in place for our space the project ran out of money.

P: Was the allocation of funds too small?

W: No state allocation had ever been made for doing the journalism space. Baughman scraped it up by bits and pieces from many sources. When money ran out, work on our space ceased. Then we began making plans for next year's budget and went to the legislature asking for sufficient funds to complete the project. I believe we needed some \$100,000. All of this had gone on from 1953 to the fall of 1955, when we moved in. Even then there was no door in place--not even for the washrooms. There was no air-conditioning or heat all of that fall either. No blinds on the windows.

P: It sounds like they were barebones facilities.

W: You are so right. But all of us were so thrilled and happy to be out of the cramped quarters of Building K that we did not complain.

We started closed-circuit telecasting in the fall of 1956, and a couple of years later WUFT went on the air. I believe it was the first university ETV station on the air.]

P: You never had any responsibility for WRUF, did you?

W: No, but you better check this. I think the decision was made this week. Bob Mautz and President Wayne Reitz have talked about it. I think the decision was made this week to put the radio station in the College of Journalism. Dean John Paul Jones can tell you.

P: By the time we transcribe all of this it will probably be publicly announced.

W: Probably, but I know it has not been announced. And I know it is going to happen.

- P: When you were dean you had no responsibility for any of the announcers or any of the news programs or anything that went on over the air?
- W: No, none whatever. There is one exception. We had our own radio studio, tape library, and full broadcast equipment. For several years we broadcast each evening over WRUF-FM under the direction of Mickie Newbill (now Mickie Edwardson), who was on my faculty.
- P: Now, will the two stations share part of the journalism facility?
- W: Physically there will be little change. The change will be administrative.
- P: WRUF does share some space in the stadium building, does it not?
- W: Yes, they do. We have been there since 1954 on the fourth floor. Their quarters were completely done with their money.
- P: It is just that they all have been under the same big roof, that kind of thing.
- W: Yes, and now they will be more closely integrated.
- P: Tell me about the growth of your journalism staff, Rae.
- W: Well, there were four of us: Elmer Emig, Bill Lowry, Paul Jones, and me.
- P: How did this break up? Who taught what?
- W: Emig continued to teach public opinion and some other courses that were in old curriculum the first year. Lowry taught typography and, I believe, public relations. Jones taught reporting and magazine writing and I do not know what else. I taught a course in applied journalism. I did not know what had been done with it previously, but it was a senior course, so I took it. As I told you, I had worked on newspapers large and small for twenty-five years before I came here. I started to teach that class in September, and by November I had told them all I knew. I went to Jones and said, "What do I do now?" He said: "You have to learn to string it out. Give them smaller dribblets each day."
- P: You have learned.
- W: I had an awful panicky feeling. I had never taught school, and I did not know much about it, but we struggled along. I worked on a new curriculum all the time.
- P: At that point is where you give book research to be done.

W: That is right. Paul was a great help to me. He had come from a seven years teaching in a first-class school in Illinois, and together we worked out a program. Most of this work was done at the office every night. By the following year we had a whole new curriculum, including seminars for the seniors and labs for the writing classes.

My second summer here, 1950, I went to Ohio State, planning to complete my bachelor's degree. After twenty-five years of working on newspapers, I found little to do back in a journalism classroom, and it seemed futile to shift to another discipline, so I abandoned the project.

P: Were there any promises made by Miller or the University that were not kept? Was there enough money to get this program going?

W: Sam, I did not know enough about what it would cost to ask. Miller and his advisor gave me the impression they were ready to support the new school. I did not know what equipment I was going to need, except I did tell them one of the first things we needed was typewriters. I believe I mentioned the need for a library. I found that a frustrating fight for years with the University library. In those days I came to the conclusion that librarians like to brag more about the number of books in the library, but they never brag about how many people can use them. They used the Library of Congress system for buying books. It works against journalism, because all broadcasting comes under engineering. Unless the title has *newspaper* in it or probably *editor*, the Library of Congress does not classify it as a journalism book. For instance, *Mass Communications of Society* is strictly a journalism book, but it will probably be listed under sociology. The library budget for journalism was eighty dollars a year, and they had spent only fifty of it the year before I came. Fantastic! I struggled for years to get more money to buy books. Finally I got a library established in the stadium. The University would not call it a library--they called it a reading room. I understand Dean Jones finally implemented the last step of what I wanted by opening up more space for the reference books--a reading room. This is on the fourth floor, formerly a football dormitory. Before I left the college I was able to get the football players thrown out of there. And, Sam, when you start throwing athletes out, it is tough. [laughter]

P: Oh, yes.

W: In any university. Finally we got the dormitories eliminated and the space given to us. Dean Jones has been developing it this year. So he was able to have another room for the library. Strange thing, Sam. I never could convince the main library that we needed books in our own quarters for students to use. We walk a long way from the main library. I finally made a deal that I would always buy two books--one for us and one for the main library. That cut in half the books for our "reading room."

P: What kind of a relationship did you have with Dr. Miller?

W: I had a fine relationship with him. Whenever I wanted to see him, he was always available, and I felt very welcome. That is how I began to answer to him rather than going through . . .

P: Page?

W: Yes. Dean Page treated me royally. I never asked Ralph for anything that he could give me that he did not give me. But if I had to go through the University channels, that meant through committees. Rather than sending my request through an arts and science committee, I could walk across campus to Miller and probably get what I needed. Miller was very public relations minded, and he knew I came out of a public relations field as well as news work. He was very interested in what I could do public relations for the University. Early in my tenure here I started to reorganize the high school press association. Eventually its headquarters were moved to the school. Paul and I traveled over the state to visit all of the state newspapers. I then arranged Paul's schedule to half time and eventually to full time to work in reorganizing the weekly and daily press associations. He did this and became executive director of the combined association with its headquarters in the school. Miller responded to this kind of activity. He appreciated this kind of a thing. So my relationship with Miller was excellent.

P: Did you have any personal relationship with him?

W: Only as I have described and receptions at his home. I have no complaint in my relationship with him.

P: I want of got back and ask you a little bit about some of the personalities, Rae. You indicated that you and Dean Page had always gotten along very well on a personal relationship. I guess he was something of a controversial figure on the campus. But you did not run into any kind of a difficulty?

W: No. Ralph and I had had the most pleasant relationship. I attended his department head meetings until a couple of years before I left. I was always invited to them. A lot of times I did not go, but I know I was welcome. The things they talked about generally did pertain to my school. Many times he was reporting to them what came from the council of deans, and I had already been to that. Sometimes he would ask me if this had been the correct interpretation of what went on there. Ralph and I have had real good relationships. We have been personal friends. But since we have both retired to other jobs we see each other infrequently. Once or twice a year we and our wives will go to dinner together.

P: About Stan Wimberly?

W: Stan was much--oh, what do you say--dogmatic or insistent on his way. I do not know quite how to put it. Stan was a good friend of mine. I never had any difficulty with him. We may have disagreed sometimes, but Stan and I were good friends. I went my way and he went his. He made no effort to veto what I was doing. It was his leadership which led to the separation of the school from arts and sciences. We conferred often by phone about students and requirements. If I wanted to take his advice I could, or if I did not I did not have to.

P: The fact that he did not have veto power over your decisions, of course, helped to keep the relationship smooth.

W: I am sure it did. I am sure it was an advisory capacity. If he thought of something we ought to be doing, or if some student wanted to come from arts and sciences to journalism, and this sort of thing, he could advise. Of course, we had to have a very close relationship with arts and sciences because one of the things I insisted on when I set up the program here was to require a great many courses in arts and sciences. Ours was the only college on the campus, I think, that required a year of American history, a year of political science, and a semester of many others. I thought this was essential to a journalism student.

P: For any student, but particularly a journalism student.

W: That is right. Then we required economics; we recommended a couple of courses in sociology and psychology. I was not very happy with the English that was taught. I thought the freshmen English course left much to be desired--actually [I thought they needed] more writing. As a result, I put in my own course for beginning writing. What I wanted for our students was hard-headed instructors that made them write and write and write and write and a thorough critique of their writing. It loaded down the faculty with paper grading. Hugh Cunningham developed a writing course that began to draw students from engineering and agriculture. Finally we had to restrict it to journalism students because we did not have enough faculty to take care of everybody who wanted it.

P: From the point of view of your own college, Rae, how do you size up the University College [UC] as being helpful or a hindrance?

[W: I had never encountered anything like University College previously. I arrived at the University on July 1. I spent most of July and August calling on department heads in other colleges trying to get a grasp on areas which I thought would be valuable for the journalism program. It took me much longer to get a grasp on what University College was all about. I think the idea of such a program for giving students a broad picture of information and learning is great, especially here in a large university in which all of the professional disciplines are represented. It could help students explore all areas of information and help them decide on a major and prepare them better for the junior and senior years. If left to their own devices, some professional

colleges would never expose their students to the broad picture if they took in students as freshmen.

But my concept of a college education is different. That concept, of the University College, coupled with problems I saw some students were having. They were failing some of the University College courses, but later doing well in subject matter courses. I do not think University College ever did a good job selling the students on the value of that kind of curriculum.

As I told you, my first revisions in the journalism program here was to require more social sciences, economics, and other electives in place of all journalism in the junior and senior years. Eventually we required a full minor in a field outside of the j-school, and the journalism courses totaled about 25 percent of the total bachelor's degree work.]

P: Yes. The majority of courses were outside of journalism.

W: I wanted a minimum of the how-to-do-it [courses] and [more] exposing students to the world and nation, when we came from and how we got to our project state of society. I wanted to give them cultural material to broaden their appreciation of life. Today we are in a world of specialization, and UC, I think, could have given students better preparation and help for later professional training.

My college education was something like that. Kearney College was primarily a teachers college. I was required to take a year of chemistry, a subject I had no intention of ever using, but its benefits have lived with me all these years. I believe all students need better tools of communication no matter which description they choose for a degree.

P: Yes.

W: I think that a journalism student needs to know something about elements in his reporting, and that is the reason I think he needs to know a little chemistry. I doubt if he gets that out of the general education. Students need exposure to the humanities. I think humanities might better be taught in the upper division rather than to sophomores. I proposed that once to the deans, and they laughed. They said it was a hair-brain idea. But it seems to me the students would get more out of the subject after two or three years in a university. Maybe that is true for many subjects--too many to postpone to the last two years.

P: You think the more emotionally mature student will appreciate it more?

W: Yes, I do. Maybe I am influenced by observations as I take students and adults to Europe every other year. I see their appreciation and hunger for more art, and how students come home steamed up and hungry to study more about it.

P: How would you size up George Baughman as a personality on this campus?

W: George is the kind of a man who could sell you one end of Brooklyn Bridge, and you would buy it with a down payment. George was not only a great salesman but a mover and doer. He was sharp, and, as I said earlier, he was an innovator and implementer. The fact he went ahead and did what had to be done was not always popular with some people. All that he did benefited the University. I believe President Miller liked that kind of person. George might have done some things differently [if he were more interested in] enhancing his own . . .

P: Reputation.

W: Yes, reputation. Bureaucracy always liked to have subordinates follow set rules and regulations. George knew how to get things done with less red tape. That annoyed some higher-ups. States and national governments seem to go out of their way to place restrictions on their constituents. The paperwork we go through to get anything done is almost a crime.

P: George was a very excellent complement for Dr. Miller, you say.

W: Excellent. Yes. They fit very well together. George was an interesting guy. You do not find people like him. He was ambitious. After leaving here became the vice-president of a New York university, and then . . .

P: He became president of New College.

W: New College in Sarasota [FL]. He sure did. George's mind never quit working. One thing you could say for George: he stood out on this campus like a sore finger and seemed at times to accomplish the impossible. But a university does not operate like industry or business in that respect. We operate under many more restrictions and political red tape.

In many ways George was like a friend of mine, Nelson Poynter, publisher of the *St. Pete Times*. Nels can throw out ideas faster than any man I have ever known, and he needs somebody around him who will knock down most and grab those that are good and run with them. My brother was an associate editor for Nels down at the *St. Pete Times*, and he was his managing editor on the *Citizen* in Columbus, Ohio, for a number of years. I think he is one of our great publishers.

P: Rae, with people like Dr. John Allen around (I guess he was still here, or maybe it was during the Reitz period), how did we ever let the Johns investigation take place? How did the University ever let [Florida Governor] Charley Johns get away with what he got away with, as you see it?

W: The University, at the administrative level, has to bow and scrap and beg and cajole legislators for money. You do all kinds of things to get money for this University. The University does not have the clout to defy the governor. Also, do not forget that what Charley Johns was doing was not unpopular in the public's mind, very much like Joe McCarthy in Washington in the post-war days. It was one of those things you cannot defend. It was a nasty situation.

P: Oh, yes.

W: I doubt if Charley Johns really foresaw the viciousness and extent to which the committee went. Its chairman who run that investigation probably was the one responsible. I think it was a man named Strickland.

P: Yes, it was. He was the chief investigator.

W: He was smart enough to know that the accused could not deny, could not resist, could not stand up and defend themselves.

P: It just seemed to me that this is one moment in the University's history where it really needed somebody or a group of somebodies to explain the real role of the University with regard to public opinion.

W: Yes, but Sam, the climate of the times was different then than now. Steve O'Connell might have handled it differently with his legal background and experience. But conditions were different when O'Connell was president more than a decade ago. This has been a very distasteful thing in the public's mind anywhere.

P: Yes.

W: And in America.

P: It was much more so in the 1950s than perhaps it would be in 1969.

W: i do not thing there is any question about that. I think we have now come to believe that this is, to a degree, a mental, medical problem, but we did not do that some fifteen years ago. Nor is it condoned today.

P: Of course, my real interest there was, once again, tying it up with public relations of where the University might have acted differently to have saved its own face, perhaps.

W: Actually, Sam, as you look back, that did not hurt the University.

P: No, I do not think so.

W: It is amazing. We thought it was wrecking us and hurting this University.

P: Of course, it really hurt Charley Johns and the people that he was associated with to a much greater degree than it hurt the University.

W: That is right. It boomeranged. There is no question about it. By the same token, I think . . .

P: There were some personal tragedies that came out of this.

W: Oh, sure. There always is.

P: Yes.

W: I think sometimes these really do bounce back. I think the Haydon Burns thing . . . I forget what the incident was that he criticized us for now, but it bounced back and hit him in the back of the head.

P: Yes. He actually created in many ways Dr. Reitz as a great, forthright liberal and a great educator.

W: I forgot what it was, but anyway . . .

P: He spoke at a barbecue in Hawthorne.

W: That is right.

P: At which he accused us of lodging some pinkos in the staff here.

W: And this bounced back and hit him in the back of the head.

P: How about Dr. Allen? We have talked about him a little bit. I would like you to size him up for me, if you will.

W: John had been a personal friend of mine before he was president. I talked to him many times in the interim, when he was acting president after Dr. Miller died. John did not tell me this, but I think that John, in his sorrow and his shock of Dr. Miller's death, said that night that he did not want to be president. I think John changed his mind after filling in for several months and several of us had said to him that we thought he ought to consider it. He did reconsider, but the wheels were then in motion seeking a new president. Had he not spoken so hurriedly, he might have been named president. But he had pleased the regents, and shortly thereafter they named him the first president of the University of South Florida.

P: Yes.

W: But again, as I said a while ago, I think Wayne Reitz came in at the right time and was great for the University. And I think also it was better for John, in fact, to go to a new school than stay here. But John was a man who never said anything unkind about anybody. I do not know whether this was because he was a Quaker or what, but John was never one to get high blood pressure and say unkind things about people. He was a patient man, always willing to listen. Because he was only an acting president, that undoubtedly caused him to proceed carefully and more like a caretaker governor.

P: Which might not have been so true of Dr. Miller.

W: Dr. Miller spoke his mind. He was aggressive and very candid. John was in more of an untenable position. He never was president, and he was reluctant to make major decisions when he knew that he really was not top man. I think he very consciously felt this, that he sort of kept the store.

He handled the day-to-day things. He did not attempt changes, so we went through a period then of really not initiating anything. He followed a very strong man, as you know Miller was. One thing John deserves much credit for is the support he gave me in bringing television to the University. He is a kindly man, thoughtful of people. He has a very fine cultural appreciation. He recognizes good music and art; these are things one is conscious of in being around him.

P: I think you sensed a great degree of intellectual depth in Dr. Allen.

W: Yes. It is not to detract from Dr. Miller, but Ruth and I had a closer relationship with John and Grace. I should also mention that it was at this time that the j-school took over WRUF-FM in the evenings. Mickie Edwardson was in charge of programming good music. John called me frequently, calling my attention to the mispronunciation of a composer's name by one of the student announcers. If he did not reach me by phone, I would get a note the next day.

P: He would listen to it?

W: He would be listening, which is such a little thing that Dr. Miller would never have done. He would not have cared.

P: Maybe he was playing poker. [laughter]

W: It may point up another difference between Miller and Allen. J. Hillis probably would notice the error, but John would take time to call it to someone's attention for the benefit of the student's learning process.

P: The fact that he did not become president did not shatter him at all, did it?

W: No, it did not. John went about his business. He went to Tampa and initiated a different kind of a program for a new state university. There were some people in Tampa who were slow to warm up to what he was doing, but he developed a university down there that is growing and on its way to becoming one of Florida's principal universities.

P: How would you size up Dr. Reitz?

W: Wayne is another man who has a real love and affection for people, more so than maybe the other two. Wayne is a rather strong family man, and you sensed this maybe because he had children and John did not. Of the two of them, Wayne was not so quick to make decision as Miller or O'Connell.

P: Certainly he was not as decisive in his earlier years.

W: No. I found him to be deliberate. He did not always give an immediate answer. My relationship with Wayne was excellent--on University business and outside. Ruth and I were included in a family birthday party at the president's home that had nothing to do with the University. We knew the Reitz family rather well, including their two daughters. Wayne was always accessible when I needed advice and help. If he could give me a quick approval, he did. For a more complex or questionable problem, he sometimes referred me to Vice-President Harry Philpott to see if it could be worked out.

I was real fond of Wayne in many many ways. I think his regime did a great deal in raising the academic standards of the University. He was an excellent choice to follow Miller. Dr. Miller implemented a very much needed building program on the campus, while Dr. Reitz concentrated more on the academic program. Because of his agriculture background, there were some skeptical of Reitz's appointment in fear he would favor that area over the arts, the humanities, and sciences. But he certainly never did show such partiality. I know, as a matter of act, that one year he did not put in the requested budget an agricultural request. Actually the agriculture interest in the legislature did put it in the final budget. But Wayne did not favor agriculture at the expense of the rest of the University. I was not aware of it if he did.

P: I think that you have already said that you felt he was the right man for the University at that moment in its history.

W: I think he was. I think he did a great deal. He went out and brought in money that we badly needed. Of course, Miller worked at fund raising, also, but Wayne did it not only for buildings but for salaries.

P: When Dr. Reitz started out he may have been a bit indecisive, but as time moved along he became much more decisive, and really when he left here he epitomized the liberal education. What brought these changes about, do you think?

W: He was bound to have been somewhat cautious when suddenly thrust into the presidency of a big university. The University had a strong president for about seven years, then a caretaker regime for two years. Dr. Reitz needed to feel his way, to get to know his administrative council, and generally become acquainted with a complete university.

P: It took him about five or six years, I think, for this transition, truthfully.

W: Maybe not that long, but that is the nature of the man, Sam. We go through cycles, I believe, in the presidency, marked by every two years when the legislature meets, and these age, educate, and mature a president a great deal. They are the benchmarks, I suppose, to the making of a president.

P: They give you presidential fatigue.

W: They sure do. The going is rough sometimes. Now that the legislature will meet annually, it may double that stress. I believe the regents office is going to be stronger now and more active in university governance. Miller and Reitz, in the beginning, had the responsibility for coordinating University efforts in lobbying the legislature. That was a tremendous burden. Now the regents are going to assume that responsibility. We will have to wait and see how that works out. It has its weaknesses, too.

[Back to the strengthening of the academic program, Harold Hanson and Bob Mautz as deans of academic affairs gave Wayne better support than Miller had in Harley Chandler.]

P: In many ways Mautz overshadowed the president.

W: Yes, verbally at least.

P: And I am sure Reitz was aware of this.

W: Yes, I am sure he was.

P: He was a discerning man.

W: Yes, very much so. He had a strong man also, as you know, in the graduate school. Dean L. E. Grinter is a strong administrator. Very efficient, very sure of himself. [Trained as an engineer, he was a perfectionist, and he implemented higher standards and staunchly defended them, not only requirements in the graduate

program, but he upgraded graduate assistant pay, which had a definite bearing on the undergraduate programs.] All of these people around Wayne strengthened him and obviously gave him confidence.

P: Do you, as a result of your close association with the past presidents and now working very closely with one, think a president really is aware of what is going on on campus as far as faculty is concerned and as far as students are concerned, or is he like the public--he sees the protest movement out on the plaza and hears about McGill.

W: Sam, I do not really know about Reitz and Miller. [It is extremely difficult for the president to know as many things as he should, or that would be helpful to him. The president has a very busy schedule that keeps him tied to the office desk. He is much like the president of the nation--he is the center of all activity. He listens to the deans, all budgets come through his hands, he is responsible for fund raising, he tries to keep the legislators and alumni happy, he hopes there is no scandal in athletics, as publisher he is responsible for what the student newspaper prints (but he has no right of preview), and he presides at University Senate meetings, has statewide speaking engagements, close contact with the university business office, student affairs office, and too many other things to itemize.

President O'Connell strengthened his office staff. He was conscious of the need for better communications, for getting information to the public and receiving information from sources outside and inside the University. He served as president in a period when universities experienced the worst student rebellion ever experienced in America. He made it a point to know what was going on on the campus. He tried to see all students who asked for an appointment. When time did not permit, Mel Sharpe or I met with them and relayed the information to the president. For months it was a volatile campus, and he spent an unreasonable amount of time dealing with those problems. Often Steve and I would go to the Rathskeller for lunch where he would sit and visit with students. It probably was one of the most enjoyable parts of his day.

Yes, I would say President O'Connell was aware of what was going on on the campus. And to his credit the University of Florida suffered far less than many universities. Sororities and fraternities invite him to dinner frequently.]

P: He sort of lives his job, then, all the time.

W: All the time. Whenever he has a spare noon, he likes to have lunch with somebody. It may be he will invite somebody in, and they will eat sandwich in his office. When he was talking to me about transferring to his office, the first two meetings we had I ate a hamburger with him in his office. When he went out he liked to talk to students.

P: So then the only area that he is not yet free to fill up in terms of communication is with faculty.

W: Yes, he does not have the opportunity to properly relate to the faculty as much as he should.

P: And he does not have any leads on people there to relate to faculty except Fred Conner.

W: Dr. Conner as vice-president was valuable. When Dr. Grinter moved in there, he too was valuable but was no addition, since he came from the Graduate School. No, I think it is difficult, Sam, for him to really mingle with faculty. If a faculty club were on campus where faculty met for lunch, it might help to fill that void.

P: Or play poker.

W: I do not think Steve is a poker player.

P: I do not know, either. I was just using that sort of as a suggestion, a way that you might communicate.

W: This is difficult for a man in his role.

P: Do you feel, the little you have worked with him, that he is going to be a success as a president?

W: I think he is going to be one of our great presidents.

P: Why?

W: I think we have outgrown the luxury of an academician for a president of a big university. I think at one time we thought we needed academicians. I do not anymore. I think we need administrators. I think Steve O'Connell is going to be a fine administrator. He has a keen mind, an extremely good mind to evaluate.

P: Both people and things?

W: Both people and things. I suppose mostly I have measured this in his evaluation of things that many people bring to him. But it effects people. I think he has a faculty for being able to evaluate and weigh the pros and cons. I think the training he has had in law and as a judge and a [Florida] Supreme Court justice [was invaluable]. You almost see that he has this . . . He asks such penetrating questions before or after you present something. If you write a letter, he has just the right word or the right phrase to put in the middle of it.

P: That just does it.

W: That just does it. [He has] the sharpness, the astuteness, the ability to have strong convictions that he will [call upon] evaluate and then make a decision. He does not delay this.

P: D you think he has much of the same sort of immediacy that President Miller had?

W: Well, I see O'Connell in a different role from my point. I am with him more, and I see him closer. I can see him making his decisions and how he gets lots of material to base his decisions on. He does not make snap judgments. I do not know whether Miller did or not, but if he did not, I do not know how he got the research done quickly enough to get the depth of research on which he might make it. O'Connell has a tremendous memory. Some topic will come up, and he can tell you particular phrase or a particular statement we enunciated or that was printed somewhere last September. If you go look it up, you may find it may have been October instead of September, but there it was.

P: But he remembered it.

W: He remembered it. You have read some of his letters that he has written--masterful jobs. This was not done just off the cuff. He works hard at it. When he wrote the

Slade letter he worked hard at it and long at it. I do not know the difference between him and Miller. Miller did not have the help around him to do some of the research needed. I do not think Miller issued quite as profound or legal statements as O'Connell.

P: Do you think that O'Connell will suffer in the intellectual community of the whole country as a result of his lack of educational background?

W: Do you mean will he suffer in his acceptance?

P: Yes, and will the University be hurt as a result?

W: No, I do not think so. I would not have said what I did a while ago, that I think we have passed that luxury. I think there was a time when you wanted an academician. It was expected. I do not think that is so now. I think the University community is coming to realize that a president is far more than a professor. But I think they realize that a president does not do so many academic things anymore. He has many other important duties and responsibilities. From the letters we get, the public expects him to have answers to everything.

P: To everything.

W: [Such as] question about Madeline Murray to a piece of land that a fraternity wants or does not want. Just a multitude of everything. You find students who protest about in loco parentis, and yet the minute that something goes wrong, they run to the president. They should go to the dean of students or to the registrar.

P: But they go to the top.

W: To the top. And O'Connell is the kind of a person who would like to here every student who has a problem. He has not the time, but if he were to meet some students out here who said they had a problem, he would say, "Come see me," not knowing whether he had time or not. Students often come in his office without an appointment. They will catch him going in or out, and he will invite them in.

P: And somebody else is left waiting.

W: And somebody has to wait. He is very anxious to hear student's problems.

P: Is he sensitive to the things that students are protesting about today?

W: Yes, he is very sensitive to that, and to the public.

P: He is walking a tightrope.

W: Very much.

P: Because these things contradict each other.

W: He is very sensitive, Sam, and you know he is upset by them. He knows the statement he made on Slade was right when he made it or he would not have made it. But he knew it was not going to be accepted by a number people in the state. If we were to lose him, I think it would be because people misunderstand the role of the University and misunderstand why he did something. Complaints would come from outside the University, not from inside.

P: I guess presidential fatigue is really not created by campuses. It was created by situations off campuses.

W: Yes. Although the McGill thing was created on the campus, the big impact came from off the campus.

P: I guess the campus was ready to accept it without very much argument.

W: No question about it. In seventeen months here we have had only one incident that came near having violence in it, and that was the Dow chemical thing.

P: Yes.

W: And that was pretty quickly handled. He has a fine record on this campus in seventeen months for many things that threatened to . . .

P: Cause trouble, real trouble.

W: He handled them very well.

P: What do you see as the future of the University, Rae?

W: I think this University can be a great University.

P: Of course, that is a word that is misused a good bit.

W: It takes more money. We must attract high-caliber students and faculty. They are what make it a great University. It is not going to be buildings alone, although they are important.

P: But with our financial philosophy . . .

W: It is not very close.

P: The money is not going to be forthcoming.

W: If the legislature is not sold on this becoming a great university, then we are not going to arrive at that stage. [One can always look back and speculate about what should have been done. The legislature cannot bring all of this to pass alone. The University of Florida was slower than many large universities in going out and getting private money for its support. If this university had followed examples of other states where the principal university established branches in other areas, we would be much better off. We might have established branches in Orlando and Jacksonville.

P: And other places.

W: Florida State University might have established a branch in Pensacola. Then if the state had only one university in the southeast part of the state--probably at Boca Raton--the state would have had four state universities. It would have been economically more sound than dividing available tax moneys among nine universities.

P: The public probably is not willing yet to support what it will take to make this a great university.

W: But I do believe, Sam, we are in the best position of all nine to become a great university. We are one of only four in the U.S. with all disciplines offered on one campus.]

P: So when we look to the future, you think that we have the potential to become a great university from a practical, pragmatic point of view. That is not an immediate possibility, is it?

W: I do not think so, no.

P: Do you think we will just sort of rock along for the next ten years as we have rocked along for the last ten?

W: Not entirely. I believe we are gaining in stature every year. Every year we send the legislature a budget to meet our needs. It is not that the legislature disputes those needs, but there is always pressure against more taxes, so we move slowly. I think we need a whole new tax structure.

P: And philosophy.

W: That is right. I believe we need a state income tax. I think it is inevitable. We are reaching a point where we must quit taxing just real estate. And you sure cannot go on and increase sales taxes every year. This is bad.

P: Yes. They are too regressive.

W: Of course they are. I think we have to come to an income tax.

P: We are continuing, it seems to me, here at the University the role for which this University was created, that is, to service the state. I do not think that there is any question but that the University will continue to render that kind of really excellent service for Florida and the nation.

W: Oh, I think that is true. We do now.

P: Yes, we do now.

W: I suppose agriculture and engineering are the two top exponents of this.

P: And medicine.

W: And medicine now, yes. Medicine can so easily get big federal money. That is going to be a tremendous complex. You know something funny--when that was proposed, President Miller came to the academic council to tell us about it, and one of the first questions asked was, What does this do to the University?

P: Budget.

W: Yes, budget. And he assured us that this would have no bearing on the University's overall budget. But it has.

P: Oh, yes, it had to have.

W: It was inevitable.

P: Everybody was aware of that right from the beginning.

You are not looking to the future, Rae, with too much pessimism, are you?

W: I am an optimistic person. I do not know that we have to be a great university. I think we are going to serve a great role to this state. I think we have in the past. I think this University will continue to play a very important role in this state, more so than any other institution for way beyond my career here.

P: That is right, for our generation. Is President O'Connell optimistic?

W: Very much so. I do not think he would be here if he were not. I do not think a man could stay in that job and think otherwise.

P: He talks about a great university, but he does not fool himself into believing that the money is going to be available for this, does he?

W: Sam, I do not know. I think he works optimistically, believing we will get money from new sources. He is practical, too, but I believe that with his energy and dynamic drive and foresight he will work hard for higher goals for this University.

P: We are re-recording again on oral history interview with Dean Rae Weimer. This is Friday morning, February 27, 1970. The site of this interview is on the fourth floor of the graduate research library in the oral history taping office. Rae, I would like to continue this interview where we left off last time--filling up the gap. I had asked you how would you describe Dr. Miller as a person. I wonder if you would respond to that.

W: Are you thinking here not of his ability as being president but just as . . .

P: Just as a individual, as a human being.

W: [J. Hillis Miller was an understanding person, a humanitarian, a personable and warm individual. He was a hospitable host in his home, and in any kind of group he was an interesting conversationalist, a fascinating man to listen to. One did not have to spend much time with him without appreciating his intellect, his dedication in his work, and his confidence of accomplishment.

As I told you before, I carried most of my problems to him. I had attended a small Midwestern college some twenty-five years before coming here. I certainly was not oriented to a large university. Dr. Miller seemed anxious to understand my problems and made every effort to help me. He took time to identify areas of the University that might be helpful to our young j-school. He sent me to confer with many persons in different fields of the University.

Dr. Miller was public relations minded. In one of our earliest visits, he said the University had a public relations problem in that some of the state newspapers were critical of the University and did not seem to want to understand what a university was and why certain things were done here. It may be these circumstances that had something to do with his decision to upgrade journalism education as requested by the Florida Daily Newspaper Association. In my more than twenty years here, Sam, I have come to believe that often reporters do not understand universities and, by the same token, universities sometimes have difficulty understanding newspapers.

The newspapers, by and large, welcomed his establishment of a new school of journalism, and it was their committee who recommended he hire me. I came here after eight years as managing editor of the most liberal and outspoken daily newspaper in America. One paper made a mild criticism about hiring such a liberal

editor to head up the new school. Likewise, some faculty members in the higher echelon showed a "wait-and-see" attitude about hiring a former liberal New York editor without a degree for the position here. Dr. Miller obviously was aware of this, but he never mentioned it to me. I think the political attitude in the South has changed in the last twenty years.]

P: It was much less sophisticated in the 1940s than it is in the 1970s.

W: That is right. So when he really decided to bring me here after our interview, he was going out somewhere on a limb. Well, I think this reflects the kind of a man he was. He made the decision. He had heard all his advisors and decided he was going to take a gamble on this. As a matter of fact, a couple of the papers when I retired wrote editorials reviewing this: as they looked back on it they, of course, were complimenting him for sticking his neck out. In the estimation, at that time, he proved to be right. Well, only history can tell whether they were right or not. But they were complimenting him, although he was dead.

I know Miller was a great fisherman, although I never went fishing with him. I know he needed that kind of relaxation from the pressure in the office. He fished with Dean Page, Registrar Dick Johnson, Assistant Dean Stan Wimberly, and I think E. O. Pierce went on some of these trips. But I never went on any of them. My contacts with him were in his home or in his office.

P: Business, pretty much.

W: Business, by and large. Most of the times I went to his home were more University entertainment. Ruth and I had more of a personal social relationship with Allen and Reitz.

P: You were talking about newspapers that were critical of Dr. Miller and critical of the University of Florida in the early years, the late 1940s. Would you name those?

W: Well, one he mentioned most was the *Tampa Tribune*. Some of this, of course, was the *Tribune's* most vigorous, crusading managing editor, Red Newton.

P: Red Newton is still in charge there.

W: That is right. I must say Red Newton was a great supporter of the j-school. I think a state needs newspapers to be continually looking into what its institutions are doing. It is doubtful if all segments of universities will ever understand or approve of it, but this is the kind of society we live in. As I look back at some of the criticisms that were made at that time, I am not sure they were all justified. While the press is not immune to mistakes, newspaper, radio, television, and other publications are essential to our way of life. It was in the [*Florida*] *Times-Union* that comment was made about my being hired.

- P: I was wondering to what degree Sumter Lowery was a thorn in Dr. Miller's side. Perhaps this came out in conversations with you.
- W: No, I am not familiar with that.
- P: Some of his opinions were reported in the *Tampa Tribune*.
- W: No, I do not recall any conversations on that subject.
- P: He was critical of the flying of the United Nations flag and the celebrating of U.N. Day here on the campus and that kind of thing.
- W: It did not involve me, I guess. I do not remember ever meeting Lowery.
- P: Dr. Miller was sometimes criticized for being all of the / kind of a person, for taking total responsibility for the progress and growth and advancement of the University, of being too much of an egotist. Would you agree with that?
- W: No, I was not the one who so labeled him. I think Miller came here at a time when the University badly needed some of the things he accomplished. I have been told that no buildings were erected during the tenure of President Tigert. I understand the University's growth demanded expansion of physical plant. I believe Miller's place in the history of this University was the expansive building program. Records will show, I think, that he did not overlook the academic program of the University. He brought many people of considerable stature during his regime here. I am not putting myself in that category.
- P: Some who did not emerge.
- W: But I really believe his place in history is in providing the physical plant for the University's continued growth.
- P: Rae, talking about physical plant, tell us how you came to move your operations into the stadium.
- W: When I came here they gave me a little office over in Building E, a temporary building. I am thankful assignment was temporary. The School of Journalism was then a department; when I came it became a school. The former chairman of the department had an office, and the other two faculty members had a little office. So they gave me what must have been the broom closet or cloak room. I do not know what it was. It was so narrow that . . .
- P: You had to walk in sideways?

W: I could hardly get around my desk to sit behind it. I was there in the summer of 1949. Apparently they were waiting to see if I would approve of moving to Building K. I knew nothing about any buildings, so when they offered it to me we moved to Building K. It was another temporary post-war building.

P: Now, where was Building K?

W: Across the street, south the gymnasium. I arranged a reporting lab downstairs. We had one classroom and the washrooms upstairs. To reach the washrooms from our offices we went downstairs then outside to the other end of the building and upstairs again. A year later I was given another room downstairs for Professor Lowry to develop a typography lab. Until I came, the Department of Journalism had no typewriters or lab of any kind. It had no library except for one big dictionary. And Lowry had half a dozen pieces of type in which he taught a course in typography. The professor had to hold up this type and say, "This is type," and the students said, "Well, that is type," and that was that. I bought some second-hand discarded type cases for the new lab, and I think Lowry built the stands for the cases. Each student could then stand at a type case and work with a stick and set a little hand-set type. You would think we were going backwards using hand-set type, but I felt it was important for students to get a feel of type. I grew up this way in newspapering, and I thought it helped me to know why you could not get an extra letter in the line--because the type is metal and the line is locked in two inches wide, and it would not take anymore. The coming of computers will change that.

We continued in Building K until the fall of 1955. Long about 1953 we had begun to grow, making it necessary to reinforce the floor to keep it from falling through. About that time a printer downstate told me about a press on which the state's first paper was printed; it was in St. Petersburg. It was an old G. Washington hand press. It came down the Mississippi River From Cincinnati and across the gulf to St. Petersburg. The printer who called wanted to know if I knew of a museum that would like to have one of the first presses in the state of Florida. I said, "Yes. We are that kind of museum." [laughter] I got a University truck to go to Clearwater and get it. The press weighed 2,500, so the floor of Building K had to be shored up to sustain it.

In searching for more space, the University offered me another temporary building at the west end of the engineering building. It was vacant at the time. I believe it was Building L. To use it, we would have had to split the school between Buildings K and L. I turned down the offer in hope we would find space for all our activities under our roof. About this time, Dr. Miller died.

P: He died in November on 1953.

W: Well, it was in 1953 that I decided we ought to be getting into television along with radio. The speech department was not doing much with radio and television,

although they had Tom Battin assigned to television and [Jennings] Clark Weaver assigned to radio. Acting President John Allen became very much interested in this. Norm Davis, who you know (he has now moved to Washington), was the first student to switch to journalism from speech because he wanted some news training connected with radio. I put in some courses in radio news for Norm Davis. Dr. Allen and I spent hours and hours planning for what should be done in television. He made the decision to move radio and television from the speech department into journalism. Then he gave me the responsibility to see what the University ought to be doing in television.

P: This is when it became the School of Journalism and Communications.

W: That is right. I think the Board of Regents must have taken this action about 1953.

P: I remember.

W: The University had radio station WRUF. My concern in radio at the time was largely in connection with news. In thinking of moving, I had to add television, which would require considerable space. That need, I think, helped us get more space for the school. George Baughman was business manager. I know George was criticized on the campus for doing things without authority, but they were things that needed doing.

P: He was the short cut man.

W: That is right. This caused problems. We suffered from it later. I believe the legislature cut off some powers under which George operated. In my opinion, George Baughman did a great deal for this university because he did not wait to wade through red tape.

George and I got together and checked the vast empty space under the stadium. Football Coach Bob Woodruff had built offices for his coaches in the south end of the stadium. His move probably was prompted by reluctance of the physical education department to share space with him in the gymnasium.

P: Away from Dutch.

W: Yes, away from Dutch Stanley. Under the west stands of the stadium George and I found broken-down hurdles and lime sacks and lawn mowers and broken-down equipment--all this under five or six stories high of space. George decided it could be converted for many uses. George had University architects give me blueprints of the space to be allocated for the school. I had never built anything, Sam, not even a dog house, in my life. With much help from the architect and my faculty, I laid out how I would use it. The architect did the rest in drafting the work drawings. I cannot think of the man's name. He was a tall, sandy-haired chap.

P: Jeff?

W: Yes, Jeff Hamilton. Baughman gave the go-ahead. I had no idea when the money would come from. George always could find a way. After the floors were in and the walls were up, George ran out of money. This had not been appropriated funds. He found the money somewhere.

So he had to let all his crew go, and I guess it stood there for five or six months. I do not know how long it was, but for quite a while there was not a wheel moving. When the legislature met, we went and requested that they appropriate about \$100,000 to finish the stadium project. The request was approved. With television we had to have a transmitter, a tower, and all kinds of equipment. I surveyed all around the campus and chose back of the stadium.

One of the strange things, Sam, I discovered was that Federal Aviation [Administration] laws said that area was reserved for emergency landings at Gainesville's airport. At that time the University owned the Millhopper area. Sixteen acres of that tract was allocated for the television tower and transmitter. The University acquired that land, I think, when private development of an outdoor museum attraction there failed. We fenced it off, and we took borings in the winter in preparation to erect the tower--we had to be sure of solid land for the anchors. In the summer when we poured concrete for the anchors we were in water. Now there is enough concrete down there to go to China because we poured in yards and yards of cement, and it floated out. Finally, University workmen built cofferdams for each anchor and filled them with concrete.

P: With a lot of cement and a lot of cussing. [laughter]

W: Sam, I bet I wore that road, now NW 43rd Street, driving out there from the campus at least twice a day, all during that summer. And I did not know anything about television. My background had been in newspapers. Television was relatively new.

Although I had no degree I went to the University of Syracuse and enrolled in the graduate program. I earned six hours of graduate credit there working in television. [laughter] I was up there three weeks. Then I went to Iowa State where the first university television station in the country was operating, WOI. It was a commercial station. I stayed out there about a week and then went to Michigan State. Neither Syracuse nor Michigan State had a station, but I did leave a great deal. Glen Marshall was a great friend of mine at WNBR then, now WJXT [in Jacksonville]. He retired this fall. He came down, and he sent his engineers down to help me design the studio.

[Let me tell you] a sidelight to that studio. Every twenty-six feet in one direction and every thirteen feet in another direction in the stadium are pillars which hold up the

seats. We had to plan around them for all classrooms, laboratories, offices, everything in this framework. Right in the middle of the big TV studio on the ground floor is a pillar. For years when commercial television people visited our station they wanted to know who the "knucklehead was that planned a studio and put a pillar in th middle of it." [laughter]

P: They did not know that the sutdio had to be built around the pillar.

W: And it had a sewer pipe from some of the "johns" upstairs that came right down by it. We had to pad and soundproof it so that the noise of flushing a john upstairs was not picked up by TV micophones. [laughter] We moved school there in 1955.

P: So that is how you got moved in the stadium?

W: That is how we went to the stadium. It is long story.

P: You were still in the stadium, probably . . .

W: They are still over there. We moved in that fall. Doors had not yet arrived for any room or even for the washrooms. There were no blinds on the windows and no air-conditioning. The west sun beat in there, [and it got] mighty hot. Plants and grounds crews put up some plywood doors on the washrooms. Then we got some blinds on the windows, and we had electric fans in the office for a few weeks. The faculty then numbered six, and we had two secretaries. We were fast going into television, but we had no money.

P: That is the story of the University of Florida.

W: I did get an emergency allocation of \$15,000. That, of course, could not buy much television equipment. Those funds did help us get our first cameras (two Videoon cameras) and equipment--the cheapest kind you could buy. The cost came to \$22,500. Maybe the Bloomington, Indiana, company saw honesty in my face, because they let me buy the cameras for \$15,000 on the promise that we would try to pay off the other \$7,500 in the following year. Highly illegal, I would guess, or else they took the risk.

Then I went to the Fund for Adult Education, a part of the Ford Foundation, and asked for a grant. Jacksonville was trying to get an educational TV station by that time, and they applied for money also. The Ford Foundation questioned the ability of a Jacksonville station to sustain programming. So they arranged to give Jacksonville \$100,000 and us \$40,000 on condition we install a microwave to link us with Jacksonville and feed programs to them as they might need. Part of that \$40,000 we used to buy a used tower from Glen Marshall for \$3,500. Glen was installing a 1,000-foot tower to replace the 300-foot tower. I had to have it sandblasted repainted and welded and repaired. It ought to be taken down now.

P: It is still there?

W: It is still there, and that is about fifteen years ago. They continue to repair it, I guess. Those funds also helped us get a transmitter, with some delay in full payment.

P: That is the story of the television pioneer at the University of Florida.

W: Sam, television equipment lasts about seven years in a commercial station, and some of WUFT's original equipment bought in 1956 is still in use.

P: It was old, then, in some cases.

W: Some of it is, but most of it was new equipment that I bought. It has been held together with . . . Well, it has been rebuilt and rebuilt these many years. We really need some new equipment.

The other day someone called and wanted us to do a program for them in Orlando when Accent was here. They wanted us to tape some interviews of these people so they could run it. I said to them, "You are in color, are you not?" "Well, yes," he said. I said, "Well, we do not have any color equipment." He said, "You don't?!" He could not imagine a university without some color equipment.

P: You indicated that Dr. Allen was a strong supporter of this move into television and this transfer of radio and television from speech to journalism.

W: Yes.

P: I would like to talk a little bit about Dr. Allen, who succeeded Miller as president. How would you evaluate him?

W: Well, John worked under a great handicap here. When Dr. Miller died--he and Miller came here together and were very close--that night John made it clear that he was not ambitious to become president. I think later he wished he had not said that. Anyway, as vice-president he took over, and then by action of the Board of Control he became acting president. He was acting president, I guess, for nearly two years.

P: Yes, he was.

W: He worked under a great handicap in that John did not feel like he ought to make major decisions as acting president. He did not know how long this was going to last. I do not think he thought he really had the authority or should take it. He was not the kind of man who would take authority that had not been delegated to him.

I do not think there is very much to stand out that John Allen did here. There are some things. He got us the big microscope, and that was quite a thing on campus. We had none like it. I do not think I would have gotten television in when I did if it had not been for John Allen's personal assistance.

But he worked under this handicap. John was not the kind of person . . . He was not a Miller. Miller and Baughman both would see what ought to be done and would have done it whether they had a right to do it or not.

P: They were two peas in a pod?

W: Oh, yes, very much so. They knew what needed to be done, and they did it. To a degree I kind of operate like that. I went to Miller when I first came here and asked, "How often do you want me to report to you?" He said, "Rae, I will give you enough rope to hang yourself." So I operated this way. I soon found out that you could never get anything done through a committee. If anything gets done at a university it has to be awfully good, because committees talk things to death. So I did things on the theory that if people do not like it they will tell me about it afterward. I think that is really one of the reasons I think this school grew. Allen was not this kind of a person to go and do that. Now, I think he has developed a great deal into more of this kind of a person since he went to Tampa. I think he has made some major decisions down there that were not popular. I do not know the merits of them, but I do know that John seemed to take on the mantle of the presidency and the authority and exercised it. But he did not here.

P: Now, why was he not made president here, when they were willing to make him president of another state university?

W: I think the first thing that got in people's minds was his statement that he did not want to be president [here], so they set up the machinery to look for someone else. I believe--I have no authority for this, Sam; it is my personal belief--that he implanted this in the mind of the board. The way he felt he should act as acting president, of not exercising any great authority, I think some people thought was a lack of leadership, and the longer it went on the more I think some people

thought they did not want him as president. I think it was hard to re-do that first idea that was planted in people's minds that he did not want it.

P: It was a bad strategic move on his part, because later it was pretty obvious that he did want to remain on here as president and was doing a satisfactory job.

W: That is right. I think John would have done very well here, but it is my impression that [although at first he said] he did not want it, he would have liked very much to have been made president here. But it just did not work out that way. I think people saw it.

John was a very intelligent man, I think. He was the kind of a guy that never said many things, if anything, unkind about anybody. Sometimes I thought he ought to [say] things he must have thought and known were true. He was not a kind that would say so. He was a peacemaker. I think he tried to keep everybody happy, and sometimes you reach a point--and I think he found this out as president in Tampa--that sometimes you cannot always do that.

But I have a great deal of regard for John. Ruth and I knew the Allens on somewhat of a personal basis. We would go to their house for dinner, for social occasions, rather than for business, which we did with the Millers.

P: He [Allen] did not move into the president's house.

W: No, he never did. That, too, Sam, reflects what I am saying. He knew he was not president, and he did not move into the president's house. It stood empty. He stayed right over there on 5th Place, where he had always lived. He stayed on when Reitz was named president. He stayed on as vice-president until he moved on to Tampa. I think that was a nice move. I think John did a great job

down there. I suspect he is nearing the end [of his term there]--by age, of course. I believe presidents ought not to stay too long at universities.

P: How do you think both of these men did with students? What was their rapport, both Miller's and Allen's, as you viewed it?

W: I suppose it would not be a fair judgment, because the longer I stayed here the more I understood the University and understood the relationship with students. When I came I did not know much about it. I do not know what relationship Miller had with students, but I suppose on the periphery I was not aware that he had very much relationship with the students. I may be entirely wrong, but I do not think he had as close a relationship with students as the later presidents did. Allen did not have the kind of a home that he could entertain large groups in. It was just a home like you and I live in. He had no big entertaining areas. He had sometimes entertained faculty there and [members of] the Board of Control; I was there a number of times when he entertained them. But this would probably be twenty people, maybe thirty. I do not know. You would know the size of his house, Sam, since you have been there. I would have no way of knowing how much entertaining the Allens did with students, and I do not think Allen went out like O'Connell has. O'Connell has made a point of meeting students.

P: Of communicating with them. Of course, they did not have the problems in the 1950s that we have had in recent years.

W: That is right. That is very true. This is probably one of the reasons. Reitz entertained students a great, I think, in his house.

P: Students--if it is fair to say in the old way of looking at it--"stayed in their place."  
There was a different kind of relationship between faculty and administration and students.

W: That is right. I suppose none of them felt this need to go out and try to . . . Of course, O'Connell had an altogether different approach. He was a student here himself, and none of the other presidents were. I think he had a real kind of a desire to be a student again, to go out and find out what students were doing.

P: It is almost a naive approach to the thing, idealistic but somewhat naive in terms of the pragmatism of this day and time.

W: Although I think Steve also came here wanting to understand the new university, recognizing it was different than his university and recognizing very astutely that the answers to a lot of his problems might lie in understanding students. I think he is real astute about these things. So he would continually--before I went over there [to Tigert Hall] I knew about it--leave his office at noon and go down to every place they serve food on the campus, walk in and sit down with some students, and have lunch with them. And he would go off campus.

P: He does not do this quite so much anymore.

W: Well, I do not think it is a lack of his desire to. I think he has gotten busier and busier and busier, probably, although he still does a lot of entertaining of students. We have students in the office. Phyllis will arrange to invite in a group, helter-skelter, with no affinity particularly, just that they are students. They come in and spend a couple hours having coffee or punch or something. They would sit in the board room right across from my office, the president and the students.

He has a lot of student groups in his home. A lot of days he would say after we had had a meeting that ends about noon, "Where are you going to lunch?" and we would walk out to lunch. Instead of going over to the Flagler, we would go to the Rathskeller. What he wanted to do was not discuss business with my but to sit down with some students.

P: And listen to them.

W: And listen to them. He does not go over there to visit with me. I think he likes to have somebody go with him. He is a friendly guy, and he likes to keep in touch with students.

P: How about Dr. Reitz? How do place him in the history of the University?

W: I think Reitz devoted two things; two things stand out in my mind that Reitz did. I think he did a great deal to improve the academic stature of the University, and I think he did a great deal moneywise. He wore himself out. Of course, Miller did, too, but Miller was getting money for physical plant, and I think Reitz devoted a lot of his energies to getting money for faculty. I never heard much in Miller's time--not that I think they did not need it. I think his first emphasis in those days was for physical plant. I think Reitz did a lot. Reitz was very frustrated by the turndowns he got time and time again in going to Tallahassee trying to get faculty salaries up. He recognized the tremendous lack of support the state gives a university for administrators. Administrators were wholly, drastically underpaid. Not only that, but they had nobody to support them, to help them. You give them a secretary, but that is not what they needed. If administrators--deans or whatever the level--needed people with academic backgrounds and knowledge

to help them, well, they never got it. This is the thing--or one of the things--that marked Reitz's regime, I think. I think he had a fine background academically and knew that this needed continual pressure to upgrade it.

P: You got along with him personally very well?

W: I got along fine with Wayne.

P: Now, to what degree did he support your college?

W: I think Wayne gave the college 100 percent support. If there were anything at all about Wayne and my relationship, I suppose it was not getting a quick answer. There were probably reasons in my mind why he could not give it to me, but I am a rather impetuous or rambunctious guy who wants to get something done today. I suppose this is from working with deadlines on newspapers. It was frustrating

...

P: That he put you off?

W: Yes. I just did not get an answer.

P: What about the growth of educational television? He was a supporter of that, was he not?

W: Yes, Wayne supported this. He supported it well. I think we began to lose ground as more authority began to go back to Tallahassee. I believe that is where we failed to go on. I think we even slipped back in some regard when they began to cut television out of the budget. It began to be identified--and I think that is where we failed to get support--at the state level.

P: They identified it as a luxury item?

W: Oh, Sam, I do not think we generated enough support here for it. Professors are a queer breed of cats. They really are. Well, there is nothing else like them in America--or anywhere, probably. They never could agree entirely on the fact that television could help them. We had a man here who saw television as a great tool in teaching French. He was a Frenchman. Ted Mueller, I believe his name was.

P: Yes.

W: His theory was that you teach French like you teach English. [When you are teaching] your youngsters, you point to a dog and say, "Dog." They do not learn to write it before they know what a dog is. He went to France, and we helped support him. He went over there and gathered a great deal of information and slides and pictures and things there. We had a three-semester course of French. The University of Detroit thought it was so good they bought them, but this University did not support it. They thought Ted was way out somewhere, that this was not the way to teach French, so he left. Then the program died. [John F.] Baxter [professor of chemistry] made a national reputation for himself. He worked with another grant that I had gotten, \$500,000, to produce the first high school course in chemistry, the first ever produced in America. [It was] a whole year in a science--chemistry. Then John was chosen to do the NBC 6:00-in-the-morning program. We came back and decided that we would teach a freshman chemistry [TV course] because of the limitations of that auditorium. John was of the belief that you could show a student closeup [on TV] what he was talking about, whereas in that auditorium you were a long way away from

that desk down there. So we did a whole year's course in chemistry. But some of his colleagues did not think it was good.

P: Some of the people thought they were going to be replaced by a tube.

W: Yes, this is always a threat. And I think John's colleagues were criticizing him. John told me this. It [the chemistry TV program] died; the chemistry department voted it out. They did not want it. We had American history the same way, which did not seem to [work out very well]. I personally think American history could be a great, exciting course on television.

P: Oh, yes.

W: But it was not, because what we did was bring a history professor there, and he just lectured. We did not use the medium to its maximum. That was partly our producer's fault and partly because we did not sell him on it. What I am saying is I do not think we have done a good selling job to promote educational television here on campus. I do not think it has had the support from the University that was necessary to demand it from Tallahassee. So when Wayne Reitz or John Allen or Stephen O'Connell go up there, I do not think they have the support. As the University has grown so much, there are other demands they see as greater.

P: Rae, I want to talk a little bit about the public relations of the University, and specifically some of the problems. Before I do that, [let me ask you about] one that relates to public relations. To what degree, as you look back on it, was Governor [Haydon] Burns a thorn in Dr. Reitz's side? Some people say it was Governor Burns who made Dr. Reitz the outstanding president that he was.

W: Sam, I do not know how to answer that except that I know they were unhappy with each other. I do not know whether that made Reitz . . . I do not know how to tell you.

P: I am suggesting that perhaps by standing up to Burns Reitz emerged with an image of being a man with courage and that kind of thing.

W: Well, I think that is true. I think Wayne did show a great deal of courage in this, but it was not all Burns. We had only one president, it seems to me, that would stand up to anybody in the state. Now, I have talked about John Allen, and I think he has built an outstanding university. He has done a fine job, an outstanding job, let me say, in Tampa. But when the chips are down and it takes somebody to go up to Tallahassee and tell politicians the facts of life and really pound the desk, it seems to me it is always left to the president of the University of Florida to do this. It always has been.

P: And it still is.

W: It still is. That is true. There is no question about it. So I do not think you ought to put the credit or the blame entirely on Burns for Wayne's doing this. He was a very dedicated man. He knew the road we ought to be taking, and I think he reached the point in desperation that he just out and out told them off bitterly, strongly, knowing that maybe it was the end of his career if he did not. I do not know. But he was the spokesman for higher education in the state of Florida. I suppose that a great deal of it centered in Burns because he did not give any leadership in that direction, of course. If Burns had been re-elected, Sam, and this is theorizing, I believe you would have found Burns giving more leadership

and the legislature voting us more money that next year than we had had before.

It you look at the history of every governor who runs for office, he has to run on an economy platform.

P: The first time, anyhow.

W: The first term. Then he is a lame duck at the next session of the legislature (they meet every two years), so he is willing to loosen the purse strings, recommend more money, support a move for more money, because he is not going to run for office. Burns, you see, had only two years.

P: That is right.

W: And he never had the chance to really fulfill that pattern that all other governors had had. I really believe that Haydon would have supported us and given us lots more [if he had been re-elected for a second term].

P: What about some of the public relations problems of the 1950s, first of all? I am thinking of the communist issue and the Johns COmmittee and these kinds of things that caused great embarrassment.

W: One of the things that caused great embarrassment earlier when I came was that somebody--maybe it was Sumter Lowry--came up here from a delegation criticizing us for not teaching American history.

P: That was the American Legion.

W: Is that who brought it? I remember we had a hearing in the library.

P: Lowry was involved with that.

W: Well, I was there, I remember. Of course, one of the things that should have helped us with that, as a matter of fact, was that the School of Journalism was

the only school or unit on campus that required all of its students to take American history for its degree. It did show them we were using it. But I remember that we argued it. That was a public relations problem that bothered Miller. It has been a long time, Sam.

P: What about the Johns Committee? That was later. That was under Dr. Reitz.

W: I believe it was Reitz. This was annoying. Oh, it was embarrassing. Wayne worried a great deal about this. I know. He could not help but worry about it, of course. The Johns Committee was ill conceived; it had little or no purpose to it. It was a head-hunting expedition. People [were involved with that] who did not want to understand a university, who did not care. Things are not what people think they are. If people thought this was a place of homosexuals--and this was always a very distasteful thing to think about--why, they think there is lots more of it than there was and that it was a lot more harmful than it was. They did not understand the problem.

P: I was wondering, in view of these attacks, which came regularly in the 1950s from different groups and against different things, if there was any kind of a positive public relations program that emerged out of this to sort of try to sell the University.

W: Well, Miller was conscious of the need of the image of the University to the public. Not long after I came he hired a public relations director, Ed Whittlesey. Miller made a mistake in labeling him a public relations man, for one. *Public relations* was a distasteful word in a lot of people's minds. They thought that this was a press agent. Nowadays no university has a public relations man--they

have public relations *people*. The army also discovered this. Anyway, Whittlesey was hired to do this, but his program never came off. Ed was better at sitting down and putting a chart up there on the wall that showed you all of our publics, who they were, and the channels you ought to go through to reach them. But we never reached them. We never took any message to them. We always had a news bureau, and I very early was not happy with it. Most people did not want to listen to my criticism about it. [They felt that] I had enough to do with my own school--and I did. But I never thought the news bureau did more really than send out news releases, and they are a dime a dozen. Now, I do not know whether you could ever do this or not, Sam, but this is the greatest need of this University, in my estimation, today. The greatest, number-one [need] is to interpret the University to the people. I think they would vote more money, I think they would give support, I think they would quit yapping at our heels if they knew what we were doing. But there is just problem after problem. I am not sure some of the people here know what we are doing. I am not sure some of the staff people and faculty really understand what a university is supposed to do, either. Maybe that is what makes a university great.

P: Why were we able to do it in the early years, around the turn of the century, when the University first came here, and under Dr. [Albert A.] Murphree? There was a real feeling of closeness between the University and the people of the state. Maybe that is the smallness.

W: Well, the only thing I can think of to answer that is that I was in college in the early 1920s, and there was a whole generation with an altogether different

attitude. In the first place, you went to college because you wanted to learn. You really did not have that dollar sign in front of you quite as much then, I do not believe. [If you did] at least along with it you had a tremendous desire and enthusiasm for learning. This is probably a carryover from Europe, but I do not know. When we were in school, and--I suppose you can verify this--nobody ever cut class. I do not know of anybody that did not want to be in class. I never heard of such a thing. You had respect for the teacher, that he had a great deal to give you, and you did not want to miss a lecture. You just had a feeling--at least I did, coming from a little town in Nebraska--that it was a great privilege to learn from these scholars. I held them in pretty high esteem. I believe generally that we now have become pretty practical minded, maybe, that now we just go to class as a means to an end for that paycheck, for the money.

P: The quicker you get out, the better, the sooner you can start making that paycheck.

W: It is kind of a nuisance along the way to do through the busy work of setting type or other busy work. One of our big problems here is I do not think we have convinced the student body that the University College is a part of their educational program. They cannot see that taking a general course in the physical sciences has a damn thing to do with their writing a news story or their teaching English as a teacher.

P: There is much of the faculty that questions this now today, too.

W: OK. So there is confusion galore.

P: I was going to say that the very people who should see the value and equality of this kind of thing are the first ones to damn it.

W: And so do the students. Who can blame them for picking this up? So when they go to class . . . I studied the figures in journalism, because it bothered me that students did so poorly in the general education courses. They would come into journalism and make better grades. I think it is because their motivation is greater. But it is the lack of motivation [related to their confusion as to] why they are taking biological sciences or American institutions or any of these courses. They have no motivation, so they do not do well. It is just putting in time to get where they want to go.

W: And this carries over, you feel, in terms of when they leave the University and their attitude toward the entire University?

W: I suspect it does. Of course, we have never tried to cultivate a strong alumni association. Only recently have we done so. When I came here we did not have any that amounted to anything, and we never really did much about it. I always have an answer to everything, Sam. I think they ought to be turning all their money and energies into the University instead of into the Alumni Association. Purely personal. Of course, it has been only in the last five or six years that I was in journalism that I asked the Alumni Association to come over and talk to my graduating seniors so they could try and leave them with some reason after they left here why they should support the University. Finally they quit coming. They did not even take the opportunity to come. Now, I suspect the students . . .

Well, I do not know what we are going to have here when they get out of here. I do not believe they are going to have any great love or loyalty to the institution.

P: No. The old school ties are gone.

W: They are gone.

P: And I do not know of any way to regenerate it.

W: I do not know, either.

P: Some of the chief antagonists of the University have been graduates of the University.

W: Yes. Well, the legislature is full of Florida alumni.

P: And oftentimes they go against appropriations for the University.

W: Yes.

P: Who have been some of your outstanding journalism students, Rae?

W: Well, I mentioned Norm Davis a while ago.

P: What is he doing in Washington?

W: He works for the same people that own a station in Jacksonville (I do not know what the letters are), but I believe he is with *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*.

P: The Graham interest.

W: Yes, the Grahams. He was a graduate of here.

P: They are from Miami. Bob Graham was in the legislature.

W: Now, is Bob a brother?

P: Sure. Bob is Phil's youngest brother.

W: Is that so? Well, I knew about Phil. But that is where Norm is. Oh, you kind of have me. One of my great handicaps as I grow older is I am unable to remember names, Sam. We have come to the place in Florida where every newspaper is now getting more and more of its executives from this school. When I came here there were not very many.

P: Has this really been sort of the workshop for Florida journalism?

W: When I came here I knew the business of newspapering better than I knew the business of teaching. That is an understatement. So I decided if I was going to place my graduates I needed to know the newspapers. If I was going to make this school amount to anything I was going to need their support. I decided that I ought to make this a two-way street. I wanted their support; I wanted to serve them; I wanted them to help me so I could help them. So I set out to go to every meeting of any excuse or any kind I could throughout the state in an effort to meet all the editors of Florida. And I really drove a lot of miles.

We also took on the job of re-organizing the high school press association.

When I came here it was called the Southeastern something. It included Alabama, Georgia (I believe), Florida, and maybe another state. Maybe South Carolina. It was a loosely knit thing that did not do anything but meet once a year. That is all. So we set about to re-organize that into the Florida Scholastic Press Association.

We got very busy working with the two press associations in Florida, supplying them with programs. I did a study for them to show all the areas of the state and what they produced and how they ought to get advertising from these kinds of

businesses in their papers. We just spent endless efforts to cultivate them until everybody in the state of Florida knew this School of Journalism and knew Rae Weimer, journalistically. We did not go to work on radio or television then.

When this got to be a big job, Paul Jones worked with the weeklies, and I worked with the dailies. Eventually it came to a merger while Paul was acting executive secretary for the Florida Press Association. Then they took on the dailies, or they combined. Paul worked this out by giving them services. So, Sam, nobody ever hired a reporter in this state that I did not get a telephone call.

P: To find out about him.

W: That is right. Since I have moved over to the president's office I still cannot seem to get rid of it. I tell them, "Call over there," but they say, "Well, we want to know what *you* think of him." WTVJ in Miami hires an intern every year, but they still will not hire one of them . . .

P: Unless they talk to you.

W: Until they call me to find out about him. Last summer, this time last year or a little later, I sent them one.

P: What have been some of the national awards that the college has received?

W: Of course, the biggest ones are the Hearst awards. This is great, because students compete in an area in which they are studying. In other words, they are studying to be newspaper reporters, and they compete as writers with other accredited schools in America. Now there are fifty-five of them, and we have won the national championship three times. We have never been lower than sixth place. No other school in the United States has won three times, and no

other school can say they have won as many places in those first five or six as this University. That is the biggest award we have ever won. We have gone to the White House to get the award. As you know, it is named for William Randolph Hearst. Our kids compete in advertising; they go up to Atlanta and compete with advertising students from other schools. We win this kind of award. Our kids are then invited to New York in advertising because of this competition in Atlanta. We have won a number of awards in our radio and television production of films and tapes that are judged nationally, but I cannot give you the names of them. We have some plaques over there for them.

P: Is this the largest, or one of the largest, journalism schools in the country?

W: It is now. It has been for some time, at least the last three years, the largest school or college of journalism in the United States. The thing that confused people a little, which is why some consider us the second largest, is that before I left here we became the largest *undergraduate* program. Missouri will take any applicant for its graduate program if you have a bachelor's degree. No requirements whatever. That is not to say that their program is weak, because you probably will not graduate with a master's. But they will take you. They had about 175 graduate students in journalism, while we would number maybe 30 or 35. But now the total for this college this year in graduate, undergraduate, and everything is the largest--and best--in the country.

P: I must stop now.

W: Let me say on more thing, Sam. I cannot remember the names, but we must have in this college now sixty to seventy-five students who have cracked the New

York field. I came from New York, and you know New York. You just do not walk into New York and go to work. We must have at least sixty to seventy-five of them that have cracked the New York field in public relations, advertising, and broadcasting. Not in newspapers, because they do not have any newspapers very much anymore.

P: Dan Hackle was one of yours.

W: Yes, he was one. He is a Phi Beta Kappa. We also have a girl who does make-up on the *New York Times*. We have them in the newspapers up there, but not in the top executive jobs. They have gone into very important jobs in advertising and the soap companies in Cincinnati. We have them as administrative assistants to a number of congressmen and senators in Washington. I said every paper in the state has some now.

I stated a program here in which the army sent their career officers down here to get master's degrees, and some of them went back and were the top public information people in the Pentagon, and a number of them have been the top PR or public information people at the cape [Cape Canaveral]. I had one of them in Korea for a while doing this for the army, for the military services.

The college has made a great impact in journalism in the East--not much in the Middle West, but in the East in this country. These kids have fanned out of here. We have never had them go begging for jobs. We had five jobs to one generally for all graduates. I do not know, now that they are graduating 200 or so, how they are coming, but it has been a great thing for this college, for this University,

and for the kids here. They come from up in the eastern seaboard and come down here to go to school. They are not just Florida students.

P: Rae, the last thing I want to ask you about is as a journalism person, communications person, administrator, and now sitting in Tigert Hall, how do you evaluate and estimate the *Alligator*, the student newspaper, and its impact and its value?

W: I do not rate it very high. The *Alligator* is not a newspaper, number one. It has become more of one over the years. Now, technically it looks good. It does a pretty good job, I think. I think the last few years . . . This year Raul Ramaris has a good-looking paper. The news stories, I think, are handled fair for students. But the whole attitude of the *Alligator*, in my estimation, is one of . . . Well, they seem to have a philosophy or belief that it is a vehicle for student opinion, which it ought not to be, in my opinion.

P: Yes.

W: I do not think the University ought to support, financially or personnelwise, such a publication. I once thought that the college ought to take it over and run it. I have abandoned that idea long ago. I think this would be a mistake. I think the students ought to have their paper to do what they want with it. They ought to run it and have full responsibility for it, and everybody on the campus and in the state of Florida [ought to be aware that it is a paper of, by, and for students]. The *Alligator*, as a matter of fact, has been one of the University's public relations problems. The people--taxpayers, parents, downstate and upstate--read the *Alligator* and think that is University policy. They think this is what is going on at

the University, and it is not. The *Alligator* does not reflect what is going on here, really. As you look at the inches of type on certain subjects, you would think this was pretty important, where it may be [representative of the views of] 0.5 percent of the student body. So I have come to believe that the *Alligator* may serve a purpose for students, but I do not think it ought to have that aura about it of being approved of or supported by the University.

P: It should not be the official organ of the University.

W: That is right.

P: As it is.

W: Yes, it is.

P: The University does not want it to be, but it is accepted by the public as the official organ.

W: What I wanted to do, and what I had worked out with Mautz before he left, which fell between the cracks or died when I left and he left, was to [establish a paper for the College of Journalism and Communications]. The college needs a laboratory paper, just like engineering needs a laboratory and chemistry needs a laboratory. The college needs a laboratory. We have it in radio, and we have it in television. We need it in the print media. I think the college ought to have one. It think it would be a mistake (I know what I am saying is not going to be published soon) [for us not to have one]. I think this would become the spokesman for the University of Florida because it would be done by professionals. Right or wrong on what the University is doing, it would be said by professionals. I am not saying that this ought to support the administration. I

think it ought to be honest. If the administration is not doing the things it ought to be doing, then we ought to have a different administration.

I think a newspaper ought to report what is going on, but it ought not to be going out of its way with untruths, half-truths, and personal opinions like the *Alligator* does now. Calling O'Connell a racist is the furthest thing from the truth on this campus, yet the *Alligator* day after day will print that. If you ask them about it they will say: "No, we were not saying this. That is Joe Doaks writing his personal opinion." Well, that is not right. His personal opinion should not have that much space to continually . . .

P: Harass with untruth.

W: That is right. So I am no longer a strong supporter of the *Alligator* as it is now, constituted under a University-appointed board, subsidized to a degree by the University, carrying a mantle that it is the official spokesman for the University. I think it is wrong. I think the college ought to have a paper.

P: Do you think it will get a paper?

W: I do not know. I have said this to some people. To me, this would make sense. It could be a good paper. It could be a good paper. It could say the things that ought to be said in a way they ought to be said. I do not know for sure whether it would need [direction by the University administration]. I think I would have an editorial page in it, but that editorial policy and its contents would be determined by a board. I would set up this board with students and a faculty chairman only. I also think that they, as students in training for a profession, would give some

maturity to it that politicians who may now have influences at the *Alligator* do not give it.

P: Is President O'Connell understandably irritated with the *Alligator*? He must resent being called a racist.

W: But you do not sense this. O'Connell is a man of great patience, great patience. He does not outwardly let this bother him--outwardly, I say. Now, what is inside a man you never know. He could not help being bothered by it. But he does not come to me and complain, like lots of other people do when they read it. He does not. I think he dismisses it, as he has other important things to do and goes about and gets them done. He and I do talk sometimes about things that are in factual error. Now, we know calling him a racist is an error, but there is nothing that you can do about that but say, "I am not a racist."

When they make mistakes of fact, like saying the University wasted money here or that it did something else where there are facts to show they are wrong, we try to get at it and correct it as soon as possible. In this regard I have gone to the *Gainesville Sun* and to the *Alligator* with facts, not to criticize them but to say, "Here is the truth." And they have always printed it for me. I have been working on one the last couple of days on space utilization. We are never trying to be vindictive or jump on a senator or representative because he has made some statements that are damaging to us. If we are wrong, he ought to have said them. But if he is wrong, then . . .

P: You ought to straighten out the record.

W: And we ought to help him, it seems to me, as much as we can to get off the hook without being embarrassed. Maybe personally I do not feel that way sometimes about some of the things that people do, but I think in representing an institution like the University of Florida, which is beholdng to tax money and legislators and the people (we are beholdng to them because they own us, so this is only right), we ought not to try to embarrass anybody. We ought to try to get the facts out, like I said a while ago. If we could just get this University understood by the public, we would have most of our problems solged.

P: That is right. We would.

W: But I do not know how you do it.