

Interview with Wendell R. Anderson

**Interviewed by Associate Dean Ann M. Pflaum
University of Minnesota**

Interviewed on June 1, 1999

Wendell Anderson - WA
Ann Pflaum - AP

AP: Today is June 1, 1999. This is Ann Pflaum interviewing the Honorable Wendell R. Anderson who was a student at the university from 1950 to 1954. He graduated from the Law School in 1960. He was a member of the U.S. Olympic hockey team in 1956. He served as a member of both houses of the Minnesota Legislature, served as governor, and served as senator and from 1985 to 1997 served as a regent of the university.

WA: I was a student at the university beginning in the fall of 1950. When I got my B.A. in 1954, I intended to go to Law School, but I had a chance to try out and become a member of the United States National [Hockey] team and they wouldn't let me start Law School and, in effect, I missed winter quarter; so for two years, from 1954 to 1956, I was in Graduate School fall and spring quarter and I went to the World Championships in hockey in Germany in 1955, the Olympics in 1956, which were in Italy, and, then, was on the 1957 championship team while a member of the U.S. Army. I was an infantry lieutenant stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. Then, when I got out of the service in late September of 1957, I started Law School. There's a two-year gap there. During that time, I just about completed the course work on a master's degree in history. I owe Clarke Chambers a starred paper and I'm hoping that he will get me an extension, which would have to cover the last forty years.

AP: Do you remember what the paper was on?

WA: The paper will be the paper that he and I agree on. I completed, with the exception of the starred paper, forty-five graduate credits.

AP: Wonderful! So you will be a student and master of history.

WA: I intend, once I get enough [unclear] hours in—Steve would understand that—to complete my M.A. degree in history. Really, the starred paper... a language exam and orals... that's it.

AP: That would be fantastic.

WA: I might say that I have had a continuous formal relationship with the university as a student, legislator, governor, senator, Board of Regents, Foundation for close to fifty years. There might be a small gap between the time I was elected to the Board of Regents and I was defeated in a U.S. senate race in 1978. I believe that I did have some formal relationship with the university, at that time, too. I can't remember when I went on the Foundation, but it could have been the Foundation. I've come close to having an official, formal relationship... I'm still on the board of the Foundation and on the executive committee, so for most of the last fifty years. I served on the appropriations committee of the House for four years and the Senate Finance Committee, which is the appropriations committee and I served in the State Senate for eight years, including the funding committee for the university, which was interesting.

AP: Can you describe entering the university in the fall of 1950? Did you live at home? Did you live in a dorm? Were you scared?

WA: I got out of high school very early. I was barely seventeen. I, unfortunately, skipped a grade because in St. Paul, they had grades 1-A and 1-B and when they switched the system, they pushed some of us ahead. It had nothing to do with talent or ability; it was just bad luck. I attended the University of Minnesota for three reasons: (1) I wanted to go to the university; (2) they had an open admission policy—if you graduated from a high school in Minnesota, they would accept you; and (3) basically, it was tuition free. My tuition was twenty-seven dollars per quarter.

I lived at home for a bit and I used to hitchhike back and forth, but very quickly, I moved on campus. I joined a fraternity, SAE, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. The significance of it is a number of things. My room rent was sixteen dollars per month. I worked for my meals. I worked one year at the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority house, where I not only got two meals a day but I fifteen dollars per month. That's where I met Diana Murphy, Judge Diana Murphy.

AP: Diana Kuske, right? That was her name then?

WA: Diana Kuske. As she has said, she has known me longer than her husband or her children.

AP: She was an Alpha Gamma Delta?

WA: She was Alpha Gamma Delta and she used to help me do the dishes on Monday nights. That's when I recognized that she had judicial potential.

AP: [laughter]

WA: Which is true. I appointed her as a judge when she had almost no legal experience but great lifetime experience. The significance of mentioning this is you can see, if my room rent is sixteen dollars and my tuition is twenty-seven dollars per quarter and I'm working for my meals and I don't have car, it doesn't take much to work your way through the University of Minnesota in those days.

AP: True.

WA: If I wanted to go to Gustavus for example, they were charging an outrageous \$400 per year for tuition, room, and board. It was just unthinkable to consider that.

AP: Was Rod [Anderson] younger than you or older than you?

WA: Rod is older than me, but he graduated from high school four years later. [laughter]

AP: Interesting.

WA: Rod is four years younger than me, but I always tell people he's older than me. He went to Dartmouth.

AP: You both ended up playing hockey, right?

WA: Yes.

AP: Aren't there stories of playing on an ice rink in your backyard?

WA: No. When I was approximately ten years old, my mother and father moved to a house on the east side of St. Paul, which was across the street from the local municipal park and a hockey rink.

My older brother played on a state championship high school team and made All State. My younger brother played on a state championship team—in fact two—and made All State. My high school team never made it to the tournament, but I did play at the university for both Doc Romnes and John Mariucci.

AP: Before we get into the hockey at that level, I want to ask you what courses you remember taking.

WA: Sure, I remember almost all of them. I would start with Harold Deutsch's courses on the history of World War II and twentieth century Europe. To this day, I'm constantly reading books on World War II and twentieth century Europe. I remember the courses from Clarke Chambers on American history. When I first had Professor David Noble, who was also my adviser, he started a course called History of the South. I was one of seven students. I believe that was in the fall of 1951, possibly 1952. My favorite courses were history. I also took enough courses in speech to have a major. I had a minor in speech but I had enough courses for a major. My professors were Professor Don Smith, who went on to the University of Wisconsin where I believe he became a senior vice-president and also Dr. [William] Howell in Speech...Dean Howell, they called him. My freshman English teacher was John Bystrom, who died a couple years ago while a member of the staff at the University of Hawaii where he started some kind of a system dealing with computers and electronic transfer that was kind of unique in the country. I remember him well. I can remember most of my teachers. John Turner was one of my favorite teachers.

AP: Do you remember what you were studying with John Turner?

WA: I think it was a course on international relations. I remember John Turner very well. Of course, Walter Heller was on campus. Professor [Lorraine] Livingston was my Humanities teacher. Logic was taught by a black professor by the name of [Forrest] Wiggins, who died a few years ago. I remember reading about him. He was controversial. Gene Bluestein was a Humanities instructor and played the guitar and sang folk songs and had a little bit of a beard, so he was *suspect*. I think he may have gotten involved in the McCarthy hearings; I'm not sure.

AP: People have an interest in the routine on Saturdays of home football games, that the dorms or the fraternities would have served lunch early so that the students could be at the stadium by one o'clock for the one-thirty kickoff. Do you have any memories...?

WA: You must understand that, in those days, across the state if you walked into a food market, the radio was on. Everybody listened to the University of Minnesota football games. Gasoline stations, homes... if somebody was out on the lawn, they had a radio with them. It totally dominated Saturday afternoon. Today's PR [public relations] people at the university would not understand that. Every game started at one-thirty. You actually knew from week-to-week what time the game would start.

If I might digress... The decision to go to the dome was probably one of the most unfortunately decisions ever made by the Board of Regents [unclear]. I was not on the board at the time. I don't think you'll ever talk to anybody who attended the university during that era, who went to a football game on a Saturday afternoon outside, who doesn't have fond memories of the University of Minnesota band marching down University Avenue, making a turn and going in on the east side of Memorial Stadium to what was then a stadium filled, filled, with what are called students. They loved doing it whether the weather was good or bad. There's something special about attending games when the weather was bad. It demonstrated we were stronger than other people in other parts of the country. They've taken that from us. Was it a special event? Yes, it was. It had more to do with the university than it did football. It was an event. It's just like in Wisconsin. Some years ago, Wisconsin had a terrible football team. For year after year, they had a terrible football team... an outdoor facility. What would the fans do? When the game ended, they'd have a band concert. So, often, you would see the stadium might be half filled or two-thirds filled. The game ends. What happens? The stadium fills up and the band has a concert. The university administration took that away from us so they could go down town and play in that sterile place where the students don't go. It's artificial turf. It's artificial air. Everything is artificial about it.

AP: I've certainly heard comments similar to that.

One of the little details that we've discovered, for example, is that Boy Scouts would train for weeks and work their way up to work at the game to be ushers.

WA: It shocks me; I forget how young you are. That was just common. Didn't you ever go to a football game?

AP: Oh, I did.

WA: Don't you have personal memories of that?

AP: I'd forgotten the Boy Scouts. I remember the game and I remember watching Paul Giel. In 1954, when you were a student, that was his big year?

WA: Paul and I started at the university the same day. I remember his nineteenth birthday on September 29, 1951. You check that out. Paul was the original BMOC [Big Man on Campus]. I'd have to say in the four years I was at the university, I never ever heard anybody say a bad word about Paul Giel. I had never heard a bad word about Paul Giel until I became a regent and a couple of administrators started badmouthing him—but normal people didn't. People who knew him didn't. I'm still mad at the way they treated him. You can't tell that...

AP: That was a tough time, wasn't it? The thing we've written about so far is just what a glorious hero he was. He was the great hero of the...

WA: He still is.

AP: He and Sandy Stevens are probably the two most significant football heroes...Stevens for winning the Rose Bowl.

WA: Certainly, Stevens would be up there. But you have to go back to Bob Smith.

AP: Right, in 1941. I was thinking of the last fifty years.

WA: I see, the last fifty; yes, you're clearly right.

AP: If you go back to the 1930s, then you add...

WA: Giel and [Pinky] McNamara and Sandy, yes.

AP: And Bobby Bell. Sandy's life is interesting. We've written up a little bit about that life. He was one of the first blacks to play quarterback in America. Carl Rowan who was a journalism student...

WA: I know Carl.

AP: He went to work for the paper...helped recruit Sandy and told Sandy, "We'll see that you play quarterback if you're good enough. We'll give you a fair shake." That kind of fair shake wasn't possible in lots of other places.

WA: Sure.

AP: It's a remarkable story and the *cellar to the attic* is another wonderful part about those two seasons at the bottom of the Big Ten in 1958.

WA: I was here.

AP: So you remember those...?

WA: Very well.

I used to sell programs at the games. I knew about Tom Swain in the fall of 1950. I thought he was one of the most important people I'd ever heard about.

AP: Because he was the business manager of the team.

WA: Of athletics. He or somebody that worked for him assigned the places in which you sold programs. I made up to as much as twenty-five dollars selling programs. I'd sometimes get a tip. But you had to get a good spot.

AP: What was the best spot?

WA: The best spot was where you got first crack at the largest number of people.

AP: Where buses...

WA: There were all kinds of places, but you wanted to be the first program seller to offer them this wonderful opportunity to buy a program for twenty-five cents.

AP: Tell me about Romnes and Mariucci during your time as a hockey player.

WA: Doc Romnes was an absolutely perfect gentleman, soft spoken, had played on the Stanley Cup Championship team, winner of the Lady Byng [Memorial] Trophy, at the time, one of the few Americans playing on the National Hockey League. But he was not a university graduate. I think that hurt him with the administration. Plus, he was quiet. He was a fantastic coach. He actually recruited me. There were no scholarships for hockey players. He just told me he wanted me to come to the university. I struck the best bargain I could; I said, "Yes." As I say, there was no scholarship, nothing. In the spring of my freshman year, he did help me get a job. I had great respect... He's gone now. He left after my sophomore year. He was a graduate, I believe, of Mechanic Arts High School in St. Paul.

AP: I can't think of a greater contrast between Romnes and Mariucci.

WA: John Mariucci, I got to know better because he lived in Minnesota. Doc Romnes moved to Colorado. John Mariucci was also a fantastic gentleman. He was one of the brightest people I knew. John had a unique voice. For whatever reason, I think his voice and his sense of humor and his

demeanor detracted from how bright he was and how talented he was. John was a spectacular man, a fantastic coach. When you were no longer eligible, he continued to take an interest in you. After you graduated, he continued to take an interest in you. He had a marvelous sense of humor. He was a tremendously innovative public speaker, well read. You couldn't have two finer coaches than John Mariucci and Doc Romnes. John Mariucci had a great impact on my life.

AP: I think all of his players say the same thing in the books that I've read on the team and on Mariucci, that he was a remarkably impressive person.

WA: Yes.

AP: And he had some wonderful teams.

WA: Oh, yes. He team won a silver medal in the Olympics. They beat the Canadians, and the Czechs, and the Finns, and the Swedes, and the Germans, and the Poles, loosing only, in a close game, to the Russians.

AP: What year was that?

WA: In 1956 in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy.

AP: And you were on that team?

WA: Yes.

AP: How many Minnesotans were on that team?

WA: Eleven, I believe.

AP: In 1980, [unclear] about thirteen Minnesotans on [Herb] Brooks' team.

WA: I think there were eleven. We had, you must understand, only fifteen players dressed and there are only seventeen players on the team.

AP: That was a heavy Minnesota connection, yes.

WA: Three of the players were from Eveleth, Minnesota, plus the coach.

AP: I had heard the story—I couldn't find it reconfirmed—that when he died, the funeral cortege went around to neighborhood hockey arenas and that there were small boys standing out with their hockey sticks in kind of a salute. Do you think that's true?

WA: I spoke at the funeral. That is possible, but I'm not familiar with that. My recollection is the trip to the cemetery was private.

AP: Right. Who knows?

WA: Just let me tell you this, something about the hockey team.

AP: Sure.

WA: There are six players that play on a hockey team. Let me tell you, of the six players that I played with—this did not all take place in one year... The goalie was Jim Mattson. He made All American. His mother called me about a year ago in her late eighties or early nineties just to say, "Hello," and I'd never met her before.

AP: That's wonderful.

WA: I think so. The left defenseman was me. The right defenseman was Jim Yackel. They called him Ken Yackel at the university; it's really Jim Yackel. He made All American, plus played on the Olympic team. The center, John Mayasich—they retired his jersey—was All American three times, Olympic gold and Olympic silver. The right wing was Dick Duratti, Olympic silver, All American. The left wing, Gene Campbell, was captain of the Gopher team, captain of the Olympic team, silver medal. So you look at the six players and four of his players out of six made All American.

AP: That's amazing.

WA: The second line had Dick Meredith, silver and gold medal in the Olympics and Bob Johnson, the first American to coach a national hockey league, took the Stanley Cup Championship...the Pittsburgh Penguins who won the Stanley Cup about eight years ago. And then, defenseman Stan Hubbard, who you know about. That's pretty good for one little hockey team, isn't it?

AP: It sure is.

WA: Isn't that something?

AP: That is remarkable.

WA: And I was lucky enough to play with them.

AP: That was a remarkable era.

They changed the name of the new stadium to Mariucci, but the field house was remodeled into two parts: the east and the west end. I believe the hockey was in the west end and the basketball was in the east end?

WA: Basketball is still there and on this end, of course, it's now the women's [unclear]. Interestingly, I skated in a preliminary hockey game the date that rink was opened. I believe it was December 1949

or January 1950. I played there the first time it was open and I skated on the ice when the new one was opened.

AP: The new Mariucci?

WA: Right. So I skated the first time they opened the original Williams Arena, which became Mariucci, and I was able to skate on the new Mariucci across the street.

AP: For the record, you still skate?

WA: Yes.

AP: Weekly?

WA: Every Sunday with Tom and Dave Crosby and Austin Sullivan and a whole host of people. You'd probably know Dr. [Gordon] Aamoth?

AP: Yes.

WA: It's just from October to the end of March.

AP: That keeps you fit, as you obviously are.

WA: If you noticed in the Minneapolis morning paper on the front page, it said, "Eric Rasmussen scores winning goal for Buffalo." He was a former university student. Both his father and his uncle played with us...just another Minnesota connection.

AP: You then had this phenomenal experience in the Olympics and came back and entered Law School?

WA: Yes.

AP: Then you entered the legislature?

WA: I had saved \$1,000 as a lieutenant in the Army. I came back and tuition had risen dramatically. Law School tuition was \$100 a quarter, which made it \$300 a year. At the end of the first year, I was broke. That would have been the spring of 1958. In 1958, I ran for the legislature. One of the reasons that I ran—not the only reason obviously; I thought serving in the legislature would be terrific—is that the job paid \$200 a month—how about this?—twelve months a year, every year.

AP: That's good.

WA: I ran; I was elected. So in my second year of Law School—I started in the fall of 1958—I was, obviously, running for election and was elected. I stayed in Law School, but then I was gone from

January 1 until July 1 because the legislature had its longest special session in history. I was a legislator during my last two years of Law School.

AP: That must have been unusual. You must have been one of the youngest legislators.

WA: I was. I was the youngest legislator in Minnesota at the time—not the youngest in history. It's possible one other person was a month younger than me.

AP: But among the youngest.

WA: I think I was the youngest, but Ernie Beadle might have been a month younger.

AP: What committees did you end up with? Did you end up with the...?

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[Tape 1, Side 2]

WA: ... committee. I don't remember if I was on the appropriations committee my first term or if it came in the second term.

AP: Who was governor when you were elected?

WA: Orville Freeman. I think my first session, I was on the education committee, which included higher education and K-12, and I don't think I got on the appropriations until my second term. I'm refreshing my own memory. I remember President [James Lewis] Morrill testifying before the committee on which I sat and it was the education committee. I was on the judiciary. I was on the education and a number of other committees in the first term and in the second term, appropriations.

AP: We comment a little bit as we're working through the history on the legislative process and the university's relationship to the legislature.

WA: The university had a very special relationship with the legislature. First, let me say, the Minnesota State Senate was controlled by a group of independent conservative men—there were no women. They tended to be more conservative than, perhaps, many of us and it was before we had reapportionment so many of them were rural. Most of them were very, very successful in their private lives whether they be businessmen or farmers or lawyers or whatever. I might disagree with them on occasion, but this could be said about them: they didn't take poles; there were no focus groups—had there been poles and focus groups, they would not have participated—they were not afraid of editorial writers, reporters, lobbyists, labor, business. They were truly independent. Most of them had a very, very high regard for the importance of a land-grant institution. There were people like Jerry Mullin, former CEO of the Minneapolis Gas Company, and Gordon Rosenmeier, Donald Sinclair, Robert Dunlap, Charlie Root. Do these names mean anything to you?

AP: Oh, yes.

WA: [unclear] and there was Ray Ambrose. Have you heard that name?

AP: No.

WA: Am I saying it wrong? He represented the University Hospitals at the legislature.

AP: Oh, Amberg.

WA: Amberg and Stan Wenberg...those two people were tremendously effective lobbyists. What the university wanted, the university got. On the House side, there was also significant support for the university; but I'm just saying, in that era, the Senate was stronger and the membership tended to be more stable. They lasted longer.

I remember this: President Morrill would come to the Capitol in his chauffeur-driven limousine. Did you know about that?

AP: I do. I remember Bill [Anglim], who was the driver.

WA: I do, too...a fellow who ended up as the head of the University Fund, who is now on some island.

AP: Oh, yes. Sure.

WA: He used to, I think, drive.

AP: He did.

WA: He was the assistant driver. What was his name?

AP: I can see his face.

WA: In those days, I looked upon the university president as unapproachable. He wore clothes that I'd never seen before. He was just dressed to the nth degree. He came in with an entourage that would rival a rock star.

AP: Was this resented in a populist state?

WA: Mmm...I think if it had been resented, he wouldn't have done it. I think it was accepted. Eventually, it changed. We went through the goofy 1960s when the students took over. I think for safety, the presidents decided not to ride around in cars that were noticeable. I thought there was nothing wrong with the president of a university having ample staff and having nice transportation.

AP: One of the things people have observed is that when the parties changed and the Democrats versus Republicans...

WA: As opposed to conservatives and liberals?

AP: Right...that there was a difference in the relationship with the university under the Democrats than had been under the Republicans, that the Kegler/Wenberg Era may have been the borderline between the two eras...when Stan Kegler took over for Wenberg. I believe the control of the legislature in the early part of the 1950s was Republican or conservative. Then it became more Democratic.

WA: First, in the 1950s, the state Senate was controlled by the conservatives almost from 1851. The state wasn't even in existence in 1851. The state came later. Basically, when the DFL gained control of the state Senate in 1972, it had been the first time the DFL controlled the state Senate in 100 years. Going back to the 1950s, in 1954, the DFL, called liberals in the legislature, won control of the House by one vote, so from 1954 to 1960, the DFL controlled the House, plus the governor's office with Orville Freeman. So from 1954 to 1960, you had the Democrats fairly well dominating state government. But the conservatives in the Senate were also in a very strong position. You had only twenty-four Democrats out of sixty-seven. In 1960 Elmer [L.] Andersen won the race for governor and the House remained in the hands of the Democrats, but now it's margin was bigger, and the Senate was still conservative. In 1962, Karl Rolvaag was elected governor. A new group of Republicans took over the House led by Bill Frenzel and Salsbury Adams and Doug Head and a whole host of moderate Republicans who were extremely talented—many of them are still around—and the Senate remained conservative. That lasted until 1970. Of course, you had Rolvaag for just one four-year term. Harold LeVander for one four-year term. In the fall of 1970, I'm elected governor. Then on the Senate side, we go from twenty-three to thirty-three Democrats. Now, there are thirty-three Democrats and thirty-three Republicans, one independent who joins the Republicans to give them control. The House is dominated by Republicans. Out of 135 House members, I think only fifty or fifty-five are Democrats. In 1972, the Senate has to run again; all the legislative seats are up. The DFL wins everything: House and Senate. So from that day forward for some twelve years, Democrats controlled both houses, plus the governorship for most of those years, except four years of Al Quie. Basically, from that election until 1990 when Arne Carlson is elected, you had the DFL dominating the executive branch and the legislature, except for four short years when the Republicans controlled the House right after Al Quie. That was when [Loren] Jennings was speaker.

I don't remember anything dramatic in terms of, suddenly, the transition from Wenberg to Kegler. The advantage that Wenberg had was that he... In those days, there were certain strong legislative leaders. In that era in America, you had some people with great authority and power. Many of the people in power were very friendly to the university, like Jerry Mullin, like Bob Dunlap, like Donald Sinclair, like Bill Shevel, who was chairman of the House appropriations. What happened later, after the 1960s, is people apparently didn't like it that certain people had power. Everything was diffused. We kept having reform after reform and pretty soon, you didn't have leaders as you had in those earlier days. If you went to the chairman of the appropriations committee, Fred Norton, he still had significant clout, but not as much as clout as people had in the earlier days. Roger Moe does not have

as much political power as Gordon Rosenmeier. Gordon Rosenmeier is gone now. So Stan Kegler's job became more difficult. He could get the support of legislative leaders. Seniority counted less. Tradition counted less. Things were kind of out of control there for a while.

Don't you remember the story of the university president who said that...? This goes back. The president of Hamline spoke at an event when I was being inaugurated. Here's the story he told. He said, "I remember the time when, if there were a group of students in the president's waiting room, it was the students who were in trouble."

AP: [laughter]

WA: Isn't that funny? That says it all for me. The students kind of took over.

AP: That was true.

Did your perspective on the university change when you went to Washington, in your time as senator?

WA: My attitude toward it has never changed.

AP: What was it like to become a regent knowing the university as well as you did? Was it what you expected or was it different?

WA: What can I say? The university is a fantastic institution. Other than family, I think it's the most important institution in the state and I say this with great affection and respect. Maybe it's fortunate, but I have no idea how it operates. It's almost in a traditional sense... great universities are not manageable. No one manages them. You have to kind of nurture them a little bit. You have to kind of guide. Nobody ever completely gets the handle on a great institution like... I think this is the way it ought to be. It's an incredible institution. When I was elected to the board, I can't tell you how moved I was. Number one, I got to come to campus three or four times a month, which was always a thrill. I got to see professors that I had. I was one of the few who had actually been an undergraduate, a graduate student, a graduate of a professional school, had been an athlete. I had worked for the university as a laborer in many, many capacities. My view of the university has not changed since I was seventeen years old. I'm so old-fashioned that I still think that it's best to have the policy they had when I was seventeen years old, which was, basically, have a state university that's tuition-free. I think that we make it more difficult to get in and I think it's appropriate to make sure that the students are better prepared, but I think you have to be careful to make sure you still have access.

I can tell you one story that is a true story. I'm a laborer at the university golf course. I make approximately \$1.30 per hour. When I work Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, I get time and a half. This goes back to the middle 1950s. My boss at the university was Herman Senneseth, a Norwegian immigrant from the same town [Voss] as Newt Rockne, a former member of King of Norway's official guard. Again, no education, basically. A rule came down from the university

administrator that you could not pay time and a half when laborers work holidays. But I needed the money so I worked the Fourth of July anyway, as did my good friend, Dean [sounds like Gram-holz].

When my check came, I noticed that they paid me time and a half for the Fourth of July, so I went to Herman Senneseth, the grounds keeper, and I said, "Herman, there's a mistake on my check. They've paid me time and a half and I know they can only pay me straight time." Herman said, "No, Wendy, no. You worked eight hours. I turned in twelve. The university administrators are paying you straight time. I'm paying you time and a half."

AP: [laughter]

WA: When I went on the Board of Regents, one of the first things was to dedicate a facility for faculty, that fancy apartment complex. It's a lovely place.

AP: Yes, 1666 [Coffman Street], right.

WA: Where they don't want the women to participate close by.

AP: Right.

WA: I'm there for the dedication and I tell this story. This is what I say, "You know, I discovered as a regent something that I knew as a laborer on the university golf course, which is that Norwegian immigrants are smarter than the average administrators."

AP: [laughter]

WA: I don't mean to be tough on university administrators, but you've been around here long enough to know that sometimes the folks can bring something to the table that's useful. True story.

AP: As you look back on your time as regent, you had some pretty tough issues. You had the Commitment to Focus and you had the transition from [Kenneth] Keller to [Richard] Sauer to [Nils] Hasselmo. You had Access to Excellence. There was the departure of Paul Giel. Do you have anything you'd like to say for the record on any of those big public topics?

WA: You failed, first of all, to mention the [John] Najarian matter.

AP: Yes, I should mention that.

WA: The Najarian matter just to review... John Najarian is a distinguished surgeon. He has the respect of his colleagues throughout the world. I thought what the U.S. attorney tried to do to him, which, as you recall, was to indict him and bring him before a federal jury and getting the university's cooperation in that effort was, for me, one of the saddest events in my relationship with the university. I'm just pleased to say that it was a university Law School graduate, Judge [Richard H.] Kyle, who, after hearing the testimony presented by the U.S. attorney—with the help of university general counsel and millions and millions of dollars of university money—said, "What is this matter

doing to [unclear]? Why wasn't this handled administratively at the university?" He threw out every health issue, which was 99 percent of the case. The other 1 percent was an alleged charge relating to expenses on a trip to Copenhagen, as I recall—that went to the jury—involving a couple thousand dollars. You might remember the jury, after dealing with that for a couple brief moments, threw that out—so I rest my case. Thank goodness we had a graduate at the University of Minnesota who had judgment and courage to save us from further embarrassment. That's Najarian.

Rattle off some of the others.

AP: Remember there was the Madison [Wisconsin] incident in 1988—the basketball players were accused by the young woman—and, then, the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] investigations. One set ended in March 1988 and then you had Luther Darville, which was an allegation of possible misappropriation, around \$16,000, and there was the possible implication that Lou Holtz and others may have given... Some of that money may have ended up in the hands of athletes was the NCAA take on that issue. Then there was, of course, the Commitment to Focus problem. There was the issue of the closing of the Vet[erinary] School and Dentistry School. Do you remember that?

WA: Yes.

AP: That was the Campbell Committee Report. Then, apparently, the administration had everything put back together. It's interesting, if you read the headlines of the paper, in early January 1988, people are saying, "The public, at last, has come to terms with Commitment to Focus - legislators comfortable." Then what happened was that word broke about expenditures for Eastcliff and the whole thing became unglued again. Finally, you have the question of Keller realizing that he couldn't go on, submits his resignation three years to the day after [unclear] appointment.

WA: Three years to the day?

AP: Yes, ironic.

WA: I didn't think he stayed three years. Are you sure?

AP: I think so. I'll verify that.

WA: I didn't think it was that long. You realize I come on the board about a week after he gets the vote. Member Stan Sahlstrom and I are the new members of the board. Some people on the board, I think, wanted to have the vote before he and I came on the board. There seemed to be some... At any rate, the flap is that the vote was taken right before we came on the board.

AP: Interesting. That was 1985, right.

WA: I believe the problem was that Ken Keller, who was a member of the administration, had indicated that he was not a candidate.

AP: Right.

WA: Then a lot of the candidates dropped off. Let me just say in terms of Commitment to Focus that I think the problem was that... President Keller clearly had the best interests of the university in mind and those aspects of the program that were designed to make sure that students would be better prepared, that is they should have some science, a foreign language, mathematics, all of those requirements, were very much in the university's interests and the interests of the students. When I came to the university, you had access, which I believe in; but the biggest problem was that a tremendous percentage dropped out. That aspect of Commitment of Focus, which dealt with better preparation, had my strong support. I had some questions about reducing the size of the undergraduate enrollment because I felt that the university would have been better served to try get funding for more students. The students who were denied an opportunity to go to the University of Minnesota ended up in our state colleges, now called the State University System, and our community colleges and, therefore, since they had now had all the increased numbers, they got the money. That's where I had kind of a falling out with the university—as did Elmer Andersen, former governor. He wrote letters to the editor that were in the same vein, which is, after World War II, we opened up... My feeling was, make sure that they are better prepared but accept them! We had room for them on the St. Paul campus. The UM-D [University of Minnesota-Duluth] would have taken more and Morris could have taken a few more. How President Keller got in trouble is that he somehow conveyed the impression that the university was not a good place as opposed to saying, in my judgment, that it was a great place that should be better. Soon, I think, the public and key legislators became disillusioned.

His problem with Eastcliff was this—I think my numbers are correct—the president announced that Eastcliff needed repairs and the amount would be \$600,000. There's a very good story in the paper, positive, and I think a very good editorial saying that this is a good thing. It's all out in front of everybody. They need \$600,000 to fix it up. Go ahead and do it. Then, you remember what the problem was?

AP: It cost more.

WA: Like a million bucks more. Then, it opened up that whole issue. They found costs of desks and rugs and [Roger] Benjamin...trips to Pittsburgh, a secret fund. Remember the \$75 million secret fund?

AP: It's interesting that the administration calls that the Reserve and there is some debate as to whether it was a secret fund or whether it was not. That's where the debate is.

WA: How about this? You could say that legislators for a generation had no interest in it. [laughter] At any rate, the regents didn't know about it and they were a little upset about that. Maybe they should have known. Maybe they didn't ask the right questions.

AP: I heard that one of the things that David Lilly was to do was to pull together pieces and lump money...

WA: That's right.

AP: ...which turned into \$75 million.

WA: Exactly. He brought it [unclear]. I think the problem was not that you had a \$75 million fund. Just let your board know!

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

AP: ...in governance and communication and who knew what and what might have happened differently? I once did a study of it and there were probably six, seven, or eight different elements.

WA: Of the fund?

AP: No, of the whole story, that went into the story, that if two or three of them had gone slightly differently, it probably would have ended up [unclear].

WA: No question about it.

AP: We've heard people describe it as a Greek tragedy. Ken is very interesting and very eloquent looking at it from his point of view. He's been very candid with us.

WA: What does he say about it?

AP: One of his points was that he realizes now that it looked more elitist than he ever intended it to be.

WA: The Eastcliff?

AP: No, Commitment to Focus. Then his view on Eastcliff...

WA: You're absolutely right on the elitism. I said that he sent the message that the university is not a good place and it really offended legislators who'd been putting all kinds of money into it, had graduated from it, and somehow, we're told that... He didn't intend that, I don't believe. If he had said, "It's a good place. We want it to be better." The elitism...you're absolutely right.

Go ahead. What did he say about Eastcliff?

AP: On Eastcliff, it was interesting. At one point, he didn't even want to move into Eastcliff. He had just married and wasn't...

WA: Had a little baby, I think.

AP: Bonita and a young child. Bonita was not interested. She was trying to do the attorney job.

WA: Yes.

AP: He almost said, "I really don't want to do this." The other thing that people have forgotten is that the remodeling began when Peter [Magrath] was still here.

WA: Of course.

AP: Then they stopped it until they got a new president and Ken had to take it over. I think that he feels saddened that he got saddled with it. Certainly, it wasn't that important to him. He wasn't a person who cared about a house or cared about a desk.

WA: I think very, very, very bright people sometimes have a tough time accepting counsel. I said to him before any of this happened, "Ken, do you remember when Governor LeVander put in a new bathroom at the governor's residence? It was a front page story." He, the state, put in a bathroom. It cost \$7,000. It made the front page of the paper. The prior presidents, when they made improvements to the house or governors when they made improvements, generally, it was piece meal. You do the porch one year. You do the kitchen the next and so on. Ken meant very well. He said, "That's how I'll do it and make it public. It's \$600,000 and this is what we're going to do." Right? I said, "I don't like this." I remember that he said to me after he did it, "Look at this editorial. It's very positive and the story [unclear]." And he was right; the story was positive and the editorial was [unclear]. Then, as always, when overruns... and suddenly, you're beyond this number and it becomes an issue. If you hadn't brought forward the \$600,000, and you just do what is necessary on a year by year... and have other people do it... That's the benefit of hindsight. He surely intended no harm, but I think his... It didn't fly.

AP: No. It was sort of a tragedy, no question.

As you fast forward to the Hasselmo Era, of course, you and Nils had a lot in common being fond of Sweden and he being Swedish, what are your thoughts on that administration and period?

WA: I think that it was a period of retrenchment. You've already enumerated some of them. It was a very, very difficult period. The faculty didn't get the raises that I think they expected, that I think were deserved. The legislature, in my judgment, and the governors did not give the university the priority that I would hope they would have given. So his was a very, very difficult tour of duty. I think he was a godsend because, during all of these disputes, you needed somebody with great character, somebody incredibly well liked, somebody with a sense a humor, with sensitivity. I think that President Hasselmo's personality and his strengths in the areas I just mentioned were a gift to the

state and to the university. We were so lucky to have him at that time. A president with a different personality would not have been able to survive. Nils...it's just very difficult to dislike him.

AP: That certainly is true.

Had you left the board by the time [Mark] Yudof came? Did you overlap with Yudof?

WA: I was on the board when we elected Yudof. I remember the question I asked him at the last public meeting. He was involved as a lawyer in the lawsuits in Texas that were called the Rodriguez Case, dealing with the need for the state legislature in Texas to reform school aid formulas and so forth. So I don't have to ask any substantive question of somebody who has that track record and that commitment to public education. I had this question: Mr. Yudof, do you think that you can go out night after night after night eating lutefisk and still be a president that can distinguish himself?" Of course, people laughed. I did it just to kind of give him a little relief. The person that noticed was his wife. She understood what I was doing. He'd been getting one serious question after another. I was there when he came on board.

AP: He certainly seems to have a very wonderful sense of public relations.

WA: Oh, yes, yes. His sense of humor and his pattern and his strengths will be put to a great test, already are being put to a great test. Being president is a tough job. Malcolm Moos once said to me, "I wish I could have been president of the university for just four or five years when there's no war going on." Moos, [O. Meredith] Wilson, Morrill, Sauer, Peter Magrath, Hasselmo, the current president... I think I served under eight presidents, every one since Morrill, including Morrill. Isn't that eight?

AP: I think that's right.

WA: It's an incredible place.

AP: Do you have any comments on the current athletic problems?

WA: Only this—which might surprise you coming from an athlete and I believe in varsity athletics—I do not believe in athletic scholarships. I believe in scholarships. I believe in the Ivy League approach to athletics, which is scholarships are based on need, academic potential, and having a skill as a trumpet player, piano player, football player, basketball player, violin player. All these things you look at in terms of, does this person qualify and will he be an asset to the institution? I don't believe in scholarships just because they're an athlete. I don't believe that freshmen should participate in varsity athletics. There can be athletics; there can be a freshman team. There can be competition. But I think they should be a student for a year and demonstrate their commitment to the university of college before they play on the varsity. I think student athletes should, when they are recruited, commit themselves to the university for four years. I would never recruit somebody for two years. The Michigan hockey coach, for example, recruits people for four years. If they're not willing to make that commitment, he doesn't recruit them. I think, for reasons I don't understand, in hockey for

example, they run a program where the underlying assumption seems to be that every player will go on and make their living playing professional hockey or professional basketball or professional football. The fact is very, very few do.

I think that athletics should be, number one, fun. If the sport is not fun for the athlete, then I blame the coach. I blame the system. We have a new hockey coach. He said, "I want the players to have fun." It should be fun. I don't think that the students [unclear] expect championship teams on a regular basis. I think they want their teams to be respected academically, athletically. I think that that will give you teams that you can be proud of, that people enjoy watching. I think that coaches should be rated on a broad basis. It's possible to be a very, very good coach and not have championships. If student athletes get better, if they're better performers by the time they're seniors... I think that coaches should understand that if they give academics a high priority that they'll not be penalized for it. I think that coaches should be considered for tenure-like positions after a period of time. Someone like Paul Giel, for example, could have made and could continue to make a significant contribution to the University of Minnesota. I have no problem with lateral transfers. At some point, the athletic director and the coach should move on to something else. I think they should move into other areas of activity for the university.

AP: Actually, the hockey coach is doing that.

WA: Exactly.

AP: And that was done for Bernie Bierman.

WA: Yes.

This may not mean anything to anybody but you and I know I'm not saying anything... Austin Sullivan has two sons, both good hockey players. One went to St. Lawrence, a tier one school. You know Austin?

AP: Yes, oh, sure. Pat Sullivan.

WA: After a couple years, he quit. He talked to his dad, "It's not fun for me anymore." I know why it wasn't fun for him, because they'd become too mean, so he quit. Austin told me the other day that his second son had quit a tier three. Both sons are fine gentlemen, good. The son said, "It's just work for me. I don't like it. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I'm more interested in school. I don't want to monkey with the coach. It's not fun for me anymore. I want to quit." "Go ahead, [unclear]." I don't see our sons participating in a lot of sports anymore because the fun was taken out of it. I still play because I went through an era where it was fun. I think it should be fun.

AP: That's certainly true. It's sad to see parents push kids into things for parental fantasy.

WA: I know!

AP: That's very sad.

WA: That's why going downtown was just such a tragedy. It was a signal... stop and think. You're moving off the academic campus. It's no longer part of the university now. And here, it was ours. Everything about Memorial...it was ours.

AP: Right.

WA: I liked the fact the stadium was old. Today, can you imagine how nice it would be to have the Vikings playing inside, the Twins playing inside, and we're playing outside. The contrast! It's...

AP: Certainly, we've encountered a number of people who have made the same [unclear], that this was a tough decision.

Do you have any thoughts about women's athletics? That would be a major change from the time of the 1950s.

WA: First, I think it's spectacular. I'm for it. I must tell you, just as a hockey player, on Sunday when I go to the Lake Arena in Hopkins to play, most of the players I play with are talking about a recent hockey game and the game is a game of women playing because women play hockey the way it ought to be played: clean, fast, with an emphasis on teamwork, skating, and passing. The men's game has deteriorated and is dirty and boring. I think the women's athletics is wonderful.

AP: Well, thank you, Wendell. This has been a wonderful interview. Is there any question that I didn't ask that you would like to comment on?

WA: No. But if there's some question that you want to ask, call me.

AP: Okay. Thank you very, very much.

WA: Thank you for lunch.

AP: You're welcome.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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