

## Robert Cisek

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**Interview with Richard Cisek**

**Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers  
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on September 19, 1995**

Richard Cisek                   - RC  
Clarke A. Chambers         - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers. It is September 19, the really first autumn day we've had. We've had a series of hot days and now it's cold and windy. The interview is being conducted with Richard Cisek, who is a long time with the Minnesota Orchestra and had many relations with the University of Minnesota in that capacity. The interview is being conducted in his apartment in the Towers in downtown Minneapolis.

We welcome you aboard and posterity is grateful for your contributions. As I suggested, I think it's useful to start with just a few autobiographical career lines, your interest in music, where it came from, how you got to Minnesota, and lucked into this wonderful institution.

RC: Exactly that. It began with Young People's Concerts in Buffalo, New York, and the almost brand new Kleinhans Music Hall, built as a WPA [Works Project Administration] project . . .

CAC: Ah.

RC: . . . with wonderful architectural and acoustical advice from Eero Saarinen . . .

CAC: Ohhh.

RC: . . . so, it was a smashingly attractive hall that made us kids walk through it with our mouths hanging open in wonderment. Remember, this is the depths of the Depression, the 1930s. To be in so elegant a building was quite remarkable for any but the most privileged kids. At any rate, I was pretty taken by the size and sound of the symphony orchestra; and I think my interest in the entire genre had its genesis there.

CAC: Did you sing or did you play?

RC: Oh, I was a percussionist . . .

CAC: [gasp]

RC: . . . not on the level of what these orchestras produce and I did sing in the high school and the college chorus.

CAC: As a kid, I always wanted to play the kettle drums or the trombone. [laughter]

RC: I see.

CAC: I played the flute, which is a much more delicate instrument.

RC: Much easier to chuck around, too.

CAC: Yes.

RC: I went to college in Buffalo, New York, as well . . . a Jesuit school, Canisius College, C-A-N-I-S-I-U-S.

CAC: Thank you.

RC: While there, I did some volunteer work for the orchestra, which was in need of coolie labor then as much as it is now, even more so perhaps. From that experience, I began to develop a fascination for the orchestra. Shortly out of school—I had to work for three years before going from high school to college—I had the chance to join an organization called the Philharmonic Junior Committee, which is a group of young adults who did a variety of things. The women in the organization served as ushers. The rest of us tried to raise money, and mount ticket campaigns, and do the usual things that performing arts organizations need in the way of support. More menial things, too . . . we would conduct surveys, stuff envelopes, and do things like that. Then, move the tape forward to post college . . . service in the army in Korea.

CAC: Oh. Were you in combat?

RC: No, I was not. No, I was not.

CAC: That was a cruel war, not much [unclear] observed.

RC: Little did we know how much crueler they were going to get.

CAC: Yes.

RC: Following the service, I picked up an MBA at the Wharton Graduate School in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania. While there, I served as a faculty instructor, which gave me an office. An office in the university . . .

CAC: Bravo!

RC: . . . of course, is completely filled with books.

CAC: [laughter]

RC: I noticed a book written by one of the occupants of that office, I assume. The name of the author eludes me, I'm ashamed to say but it was the study of the economics of symphony orchestras; so, I used that as a theme for my own graduate thesis.

CAC: Is there a large literature on the business of managing . . . ?

RC: Certainly not now and there was a heck of a lot less then. That was the tough part of it but the interesting part was that it forced me to go to original sources.

CAC: Good.

RC: Because of my volunteer work in Buffalo, I had some connection into the management of a major symphony orchestra and through the referrals of those people was able to get a bit of a toe-hold; so, I found myself working with, and collecting information and data from them, and counseling with some of the leading orchestra managers of the orchestras of Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh.

CAC: And these folks are well networked . . . ?

RC: Oh, very much so.

CAC: . . . and still are, I would guess?

RC: Yes, exactly so. It was a little tighter group then because the major orchestra group perhaps consisted of ten orchestras while today, perhaps, twenty-six or so consider themselves major orchestras with the kind of seasons that would have gone back to the 1950s in terms of length and diversity of operation. So from that and the interest that was shown, my name began to be tossed around as people were looking for entry level, interested, and interesting people for the orchestra field.

CAC: You still aren't even thirty yet?

RC: [laughter] At that point, yes, that's true, that's true . . . pretty employable.

CAC: You're pretty precocious, yes.

RC: The Cleveland Orchestra called with a job offer but the hook there was that it was an immediate opening, and I was one semester away from completing my course work, and I didn't want to leave the university without completing the MBA.

CAC: That was good judgment.

RC: I remember saying to my friends, "This is probably the only chance I'll get to get into this unique and fascinating business." With that in mind, you can see it was a hard choice. Lo! and behold! three months or so later, an inquiry came from the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra that indicated there was a marketing opening there or would be at the end of June—would you believe?—perfect timing. I sent a résumé, as well as a letter expressing interest and I suppose in terms of many candidates for that level position, my work with the Buffalo Philharmonic, the dissertation, the Wharton degree, gave me some advantages; so, when I flew to Detroit to meet the orchestra and its management on tour, I . . .

CAC: Who was then managing the orchestra?

RC: Boris Sokoloff was the manager. He was joined by Clarence Chaney, the executive vice-president of the board of directors of the orchestra, who was the major fund raiser of the institution at that time. Since what they were looking for was a combination of marketing, ultimately taking over fund raising responsibilities, Mr. Chaney's judgement and input was going to be considered important.

CAC: Who was the conductor then?

RC: Antal Dorati. Interestingly enough, I had heard my first Minneapolis Symphony Antal Dorati recording on the earphones of a hospital bed in Korea.

CAC: Ahhh.

RC: There was one hour a day when they played classical music over the hospital station. The rest of the time, you can imagine what they played. [laughter] But during that one hour, the ballet recordings that Dorati had made of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, [unclear] . . .

CAC: With the Minneapolis . . . ?

RC: Yes . . . were all making great waves in the orchestra field, not only for the completeness of the dance scores that they were covering, but also the rather revolutionary approach that Mercury Records was using to make its recordings. At any rate, that's how it all began. Six years of apprenticeship there—at least I call it apprenticeship.

CAC: You came here in what year?

RC: I came here in the summer of 1958. I began working as director of marketing and public relations and then gradually picking up some fund raising responsibilities. Two years after that, I was named assistant manager of the orchestra with some operational responsibilities added. Remember, I came to an orchestra that operated twenty-seven weeks; so, they could load you up with various jobs because there was an intensity of effort for half the year but then you had cleanup time, and vacation time, and preparation time. We wore many more hats individually than than people do now when the fifty-two week season has a conveyor belt going at the pace that it does.

CAC: Oof! How large a managerial staff did you come into? There's a director, an assistant director . . . what else?

RC: Two ticket office people. Now the ticket office staff is about thirty.

CAC: Ahhh.

RC: Two fund raising people. Now the fund raising staff is certainly a dozen or so. Yes, it was very different. The entire staff was probably eight . . . speaking generously, maybe ten. Now, the orchestra staff is probably closer to eighty. One has to recognize the fact that we had no responsibilities for Northrop Auditorium at the time I joined the orchestra.

CAC: That was just where you played?

RC: That was just where we played. Today, the orchestra has full staffing, maintenance, a full complete line of responsibility for Orchestra Hall. But that was all taken care of by university personnel during our earlier years.

CAC: I'm going to interrupt a second. This doesn't bear directly on the university which we wish to get to on the relationships between the community and the university, but I'm kind of curious, and other listeners may be, what the relationship of the managerial staff in an institution like this is to the artistic staff.

RC: It varies. There are various models. The current Minnesota Orchestra model has the president of the orchestra, the position that I eventually grew into and occupied for thirteen years. That position holds the chief executive officership and the final responsibility for everything that goes on. That is *the* key person in choosing the conductor, in working with the conductor on an artistic philosophy and policy; although, one must realize that the conductor is still the life force, the wellspring, the energy force of the institution and, therefore, really a law unto himself. Every wise administrator makes sure that everything gravitates around that and that the conductor is not looked upon as in a reporting relationship to even the chief administrator. In those days, the general manager of the orchestra was the chief administrative position, the president being a

volunteer position. The conductor and manager occupied similar positions of importance. Both reported to the volunteer president and the board and vied, in a sense, for influence and authority when things would come to an uneasy pass between the two functions.

CAC: And the board here was, when you came into it and as you experienced it, an assertive board or a passive board?

RC: It was very much an assertive board. The board chose the conductor, didn't participate in the choice but made the choice, as would take place in organizations of less sophistication than what we have today and also smaller more easily managed institutions. The executive committee of the board actually, played a strong role in insisting upon a stamp of approval for almost every major decision that came across the institution. Today, it serves much more as a policy making and monitoring institution and, of course, a big fund raising organization aided, to be sure, by a very well experienced staff in that kind of work.

I apologize for my voice. It's not good to begin with and I can see it's going to begin wearing down. We'll do the best we can.

CAC: Well, we have a little more coffee and we can stop this machine anytime to get a drink of water.

RC: Okay, good. We'll do that.

CAC: Members of the board . . . to be on the board of the Minneapolis then, and later the Minnesota, Orchestra was real status. That's [unclear] a good visibility . . .

RC: Exactly.

CAC: . . . which meant they were community leaders, which meant that they must have been interested in the university also?

RC: Yes, yes. They were community leaders. They were major citizens of the corporate world then more than now. The board has been enlarged since then and it still has major citizens of the corporate world but it's a much more representative body today than it was then. It was a group of people that was interested in the welfare of this state in every way. Of course, the very presence of the orchestra on the university campus was an anomaly.

CAC: This goes back to the 1930s?

RC: Just about 1930 . . . I was going to say, if my memory serves correct . . . I was there that long ago. I've become quite familiar with the history of the institution; although, as you cease referring to it, the memory begins to fade a bit. But I believe it was 1930 when the orchestra lost its home at the Lyceum Theater, or decided it couldn't continue there any longer, in

downtown Minneapolis. The university, Northrop Auditorium actually, presented itself as a viable alternative because it did have an auditorium that could be turned into a concert facility it was felt and it was positioned geographically so that it would be reasonably accessible to both major components of the Twin Cities. It was politically situated in non-controversial, Minneapolis versus St. Paul, territory . . .

CAC: Ah. Midway, right.

RC: . . . and intellectually made a good fit, spiritually and intellectually, for the mission of the university.

CAC: And there were 4200 seats to fill?

RC: There were 4822.

CAC: Ah, 4800. [laughter] You couldn't possibly fill it? I'm baiting you, right?

RC: It was filled on numerous occasions.

CAC: Yes.

RC: But, again, a different life. Performances were presented one night a week, Friday night.

CAC: Ahhh.

RC: Our slogan was "Friday night is symphony night." That's where people who wanted to see or be seen would come to.

CAC: And the only chance to hear a big orchestra?

RC: Yes, in addition to the orchestras that would be brought there by the university's artist course, which also had an aggressive artist presentation series. There weren't that many first-rate concert halls in the United States; so, the deficiencies of a 4822 seat hall, acoustical and visual, etcetera, weren't quite as pressing on the artists or on the audience as they became later.

CAC: So many of you musicians had maybe on tour played in a great hall but not many of you. It was not a regular experience?

RC: That's right.

CAC: I used to come up from Carleton Fridays with a jitney to hear the symphonies when [Dimitri] Mitropoulos was there, in 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942. It was a great moment for us to come to this campus and hear that orchestra.

RC: That was a trip that many people, certainly many students, took . . . changing pattern of cultures. Again, a natural effect of the orchestra being on the university campus . . . it could reach out to students as part of their educational experience . . .

CAC: You bet.

RC: . . . not simply an entertainment venue.

[break in the interview]

RC: The orchestra took residence at the university, played a series of originally fifteen, later eighteen, concerts, eventually twenty-four concerts, on Friday nights. On Sundays, they also had a twilight concert series—hearkening back to the days of Eugene Ormandy with his great penchant for waltz music—and also carried on its aggressive series of educational programs bringing kids from all over the state, from the public and private schools all over Minnesota, to Northrop Auditorium giving them a chance to see a big campus but also to see and hear what an orchestra is all about.

CAC: Under whose auspices was that done? I didn't know about that.

RC: The Young People's Concerts? There has long been a special committee called the Young People's Symphony Concert Association which really did a lot of the administrative work but the cost of the program was part of what guarantor fund contributors provided for the community. The kids paid small, modest fees.

CAC: They were bused in from all around the state?

RC: Yes, bused in . . . around the cities and the state.

CAC: How long did that go on?

RC: It still goes on to this day.

CAC: They bused them in that case onto campus, into the Northrop?

RC: That's right, yes. I'm at a loss to tell you when the Young People's Concerts began but this orchestra has one of the oldest Young People's Concert series in the country. It's first conductor, Emil Oberhoffer, felt it was part of the mission to build a future audience as well as try to satisfy the musical needs of the current population; so, he began the practice of moving the orchestra to schools and, of course, ultimately it became much more practical to bring the students to the orchestra.

CAC: When you were managing in the 1950s and 1960s . . . this goes on into the early 1970s before we get Orchestra Hall?

RC: Yes.

CAC: That's forty years that the symphony had a presence on campus . . .

RC: Exactly.

CAC: . . . not only for your Friday night but for your more popular concerts and then the Young People's Concerts?

RC: You know, I still remember walking around the halls of Northrop and seeing students sprawled out on the floor of the lobby of Northrop Auditorium with their backs against the doors into the hall doing their studying while also listening to the music that would seep out through the cracks of the doors. It made a nice back drop.

CAC Were they ever allowed in for rehearsals?

RC: Oh, yes, that was a part of the arrangement, too. There was a day a week when Music Department students could attend regularly, on that day, to see the rehearsal in process. Then, by special arrangements, students were allowed other times as well. It wasn't a heavily policed policy. We never had problems with student visitors. Actually, they were a nice component and a nice reminder of the special relationships that we enjoyed with the academic institution.

CAC: And I'll bet not only students from the School of Music but that the attraction . . . Think of the number of young students outside of the Department of Music who were performers themselves, had gone through high school, maybe even playing [unclear] on campus . . .

RC: Oh, yes, of course.

CAC: . . . and just hungry for this kind of possibility.

RC: Very much so. The term hungry is a very good one because we didn't have all of the entertainment options that we do today.

CAC: Ah!

RC: Television was either nonexistent or in its very primitive state. We didn't have a professional football team or baseball team. There was a fainthearted effort for a short time that brought what was called the Minneapolis Lakers here but the community couldn't support them for too long a period of time. Major league sports were really University of Minnesota sports.

CAC: In that sense, for good music, the Minneapolis Symphony was a major provider? The SPCO [St. Paul Chamber Orchestra] wasn't . . .

RC: There's no question about that. No, the SPCO had not been formed until . . . oh, in my early days here, it had begun but it began under the St. Paul Council of Arts and Sciences. In the mid 1960s, if my memory serves correctly, the Council hired a conductor who then employed, on a moonlighting basis, musicians of the Minneapolis Symphony and that was the beginning of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; so, in that sense, this body of Minneapolis Symphony musicians was providing music on a sophisticated and broad scale of various kinds in both cities. Ultimately, as the SPCO's needs began to grow, it became obvious that the same musicians could not adequately serve both ensembles.

CAC: Sure.

RC: The St. Paul group, wisely, made its move toward a professional ensemble of its own, which has had a distinguished history, and is now such an important component of this community, and has such an equally strong national and international visibility.

CAC: Now, during this period of the 1950s, and 1960s, and into the 1970s when you were on campus, what was the relationship of the orchestra to the School of Music at the university?

RC: The relationship was mostly an informal one. The music director was an honorary professor of music with no responsibilities and therefore, no activity that I knew of. There was a relationship of communications between the faculty and the music director mostly in terms of the numerous composers who had works that they were eager to have the music director critique for them, read for them, and hopefully, play. Throughout the history, not only the history of the orchestra's residence at the university but to this day, there continues to be a performing relationship of university composers works.

CAC: In my time, there would be [Paul] Fetler and . . .

RC: Fetler, [Dominick] Argento, Libby Larson, [Steven] Paulus, Wayne Peterson, who was there in the early days of my tenure but is now in San Francisco. We're leaving out many, many others.

CAC: But you played their works?

RC: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

CAC: And in Northrop?

RC: Oh, yes.

CAC: Tell me something about how those arrangements . . . How would you be able to select by quality the things that you wanted to do that would fit into an over all program for the year?

RC: That was the music director's right and responsibility.

CAC: But he had to keep in touch with these composers? That's a large number of them and you say there were more beyond that but you named five or six.

RC: That's over a span of years.

CAC: Yes.

RC: It isn't as if there was a steady stream of scores going from Scott Hall to the Northrop Auditorium office.

CAC: I understand.

RC: But still, they did have to be catalogued. Some time had to be spent reading them, studying them, and then deciding on performance possibilities. Mary Ann Feldman can be a wonderful resource . . .

CAC: Does this become political in any sense? I don't mean in a nasty sense but in a . . .

RC: It certainly had the potential of becoming that but I'm not aware that it ever did. I'm not aware that there were ever people who were considered on the inside track. That's both good and bad. The conductor kept himself always rather removed from university matters so that that danger never occurred but then again, there might have been some very good advantages to a closer relationship between the conductor and the entire faculty body of the Department of Music as it then was called.

CAC: Were there any performers in the school who then performed piano, for example, or violin, or what have you?

RC: There was a Young Artist's Contest, and there still is, which gave the opportunity for outstanding students at the School of Music to vie in that competition; but also, yes, there were faculty members—Bernard Weiser is one that comes to mind—who did solo with the orchestra and all told, you would have quite a number of people who have had solo performances.

CAC: And choral groups from the university when choral music was required?

RC: Yes. The university traditionally mounted a first-rate chorus and in the days of the orchestra's residence there, many substantial major choral works with orchestra were performed. That's where the relationship, I would say, was closest . . . between the Music Department, and

the orchestra, and its conductor . . . some works even recorded . . . some works even taken on tour with the student group.

CAC: I have a sense—it may not be accurate so you can correct me—that Minnesota, as a large regional community, was better known for its choral music than for its instrumental? There's a tradition of church music and of sung music.

RC: A very strong choral tradition. Actually, it's that choral tradition which led to the formation of the Minneapolis Symphony. The choruses were so good and so active that they began to yearn for a good orchestra to accompany them. As that was put together on an ad hoc basis, out of that possibility came the ambition to, why not put forth an orchestra that will not be an accompanying instrument but can play the major orchestral pieces which you could only hear either on tour if you happened to travel, or if orchestras toured here, or the most prevalent availability would have been in piano productions or two piano?

CAC: But it was student voice that would have more performing possibilities in these years in Northrop with the Minneapolis Symphony than instrumental?

RC: Oh, in sheer numbers, yes.

CAC: Did the school ever produce good violinists and oboists, and so forth who would play with the symphony, even as backup or . . . ?

RC: Oh, certainly as what you call substitute musicians or additional musicians.

CAC: But it wasn't a feeder school?

RC: No. You know, this is one of the regrets one might have. The ingredients, the possibilities, the opportunities, the temptations for building a conservatory here, as long as you had the orchestra cheek by jowl with the major teaching institution, were so obvious. How nice it would have been if the germ had caught and the resources had been provided so that what the Curtis Institute of Music is to the Philadelphia Orchestra or major institutions in Europe to the Vienna, Berlin [unclear], could have been developed here. Somehow, it . . .

CAC: Was it discussed, that kind of a liaison, that kind of a coalition?

RC: Never truly seriously because, I think, the orchestra was always fighting for its own survival so . . .

CAC: Ahhh.

RC: . . . the vision, imagination, and therefore, philanthropy required to make that leap was impossible; and the university had its own set of priorities which was taking it more into the

direction of science where enormous sums of money had to go. The arts were never that fortunately bestowed in terms of the financial wherewithal that it takes to make something . . .

CAC: That would have taken a level of funding that the university was not prepared to seek? To make that leap into being a conservatory and being a feeder and a close relationship would have required funding on the part of the university that the university itself was not prepared to make in the 1960s and 1970s?

RC: I think first you need vision, and passion, and then the search for funding. The visions, I think, were directed in other directions.

CAC: I would guess—these are in the form of questions though they may be statements of fact—my perception is that probably Mr. and Mrs. [Meredith] Wilson were in a sense the most open to the arts and to music than Mr. [Peter] Magrath, for example, or others who might be in . . .

RC: Well, interestingly, Meredith Wilson on the scene shortly after I came here; so, he was the first university president that I knew well.

CAC: Yes, he came in 1960.

RC: His predecessor was . . .

CAC: James Morrill.

RC: . . . James Morrill whom I remember seeing on campus but I don't know anything about the personality or interests of that man. I remember Meredith Wilson. One of the first statements he made known to orchestra people when he came here to the board of the orchestra was that he was surprised that given the presence of the orchestra on this campus there was so little relationship between them outside of opening the doors for rehearsals and making special ticket arrangements possible for faculty and students to attend performances. He certainly had the vision and was encouraging that something take place but it just never did. That was also the time when orchestra musicians around the country began strongly militating for an improvement in the twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight week per year season of employment that they had. The boards that supported the orchestra had as its first priority fulfilling that not unnatural desire and need. Also, our realization that unless we did something to provide year or near year round employment for our artists, there either was not going to be an orchestra here or it was going to be a very third-rate one because other opportunities for the best players were showing themselves around the country and that's where they'd go.

CAC: So, the orchestra itself had its own priorities of necessity and so did the university . . .

RC: Exactly.

CAC: . . . so that it never came off? Did it come off in very many places in this country? You cite European examples.

RC: I don't know of any other situations where an orchestra was present on a university campus. In Indianapolis, that orchestra performed at Close Hall at Indiana University but it was still basically a downtown institution. They were even farther from the realization of that dream than we were here.

CAC: So, the potential was really here?

RC: Actually, the Indiana University went its own route and built a first-rate conservatory and a musical institution within their campus; so, it went its own way in a very major way.

CAC: And probably was relatively autonomous within the university . . . as medical schools are, for example . . . more free-standing?

RC: Yes. Yes. As I'm told—I'm not really familiar with the Indiana situation—the president of the university in that period of time looked upon the formulation of a major music school as something that would distinguish that from other Big Ten schools, and made that a major priority and, therefore, pulled away the best musicians from symphony orchestras around the country, and made them part of the faculty.

CAC: We may come back to that later but let's kind of think of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s still. Were you involved in the coming of the Metropolitan Opera to campus?

RC: No. That started the last year of World War II, interestingly enough, 1945.

CAC: But what role did the orchestra play in that spring . . . ?

RC: The orchestra as a performing institution none but the orchestra as a supporting institution very much so. I don't know who the personalities were that brought all of this together but the university with the place, Northrop Auditorium, and with a support staff of administrators who, basically, were involved in winter season activities for the university, which were over by the spring and the Minneapolis Symphony with management talent and also administrative resources that also worked the October to April season had the wherewithal to offer the administrative support that was needed, as well as the facility that was needed. The Met was looking for places where it could extend its own season and its considerable influence by bringing together those forces. The Met season began as a series of weekends.

CAC: Ahhh.

RC: In my early years here and remember, I came here in the late 1950s . . . The Met—started in 1945 so it had been going on a dozen or more years—would come here for a Friday

performance, two Saturday matinees, a Saturday evening performance, and a Sunday matinee; and then it would take off Sunday night. So, those four performance runs hooked up with other cities that had mid-week performances and tacked together the Met's tour, which was originally, I guess nine weeks. What a wonderful additional ingredient that was for one of the great opera companies of the world to come here bringing virtually everything that you would find at the Metropolitan Opera House . . .

CAC: Except less acoustics?

RC: Ah, yes, I'm afraid . . .

CAC: A big stage.

RC: But it's still remarkable that without any enhancement or no miking or anything of that sort, those great Metropolitan Opera voices could just belt it out.

CAC: [laughter]

RC: And the public responded magnificently. Those four operas were constant sellouts. They were premier tickets. Then, the Met personnel began to get aggressive, too, saying thirty weeks of their season was not enough. They wanted more and more employment and the Met finding travel increasingly complex and expensive felt that instead of making the various stops that they were making all over the country would visit only those cities that could take a full week of seven operas, six days, seven operas in six days; so, gradually we went from four performances to five, to six, to seven.

CAC: Did you play a part in that? This would be now the 1960s.

RC: The manager of the orchestra and the director of the university artist course were co-managers of those opera presentations, local co-managers; so, it was our job to deal with the Met in terms of what repertoire we would prefer. At the time, we had a choice in repertoire. Ultimately, the Met began to dictate that . . . and to the extent that we did have and in the early years we did have some choice over casts; although, ultimately that came much more under the control of the Met.

CAC: From the university's side, would this have been Jim Lombard?

RC: This certainly was Jim Lombard who had . . .

CAC: Did he know music that well that he could join in these kinds of decisions?

RC: If he didn't know it, he learned it awfully quickly.

CAC: Say more about that.

RC: Jim presented the masterpiece series and the celebrity series and there were actually two different celebrity series. The masterpiece series was a series . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

CAC: We're talking about Jim Lombard and his role in bringing the opera here but he did all kinds of other things, too; so, I want you to share a little more about Mr. Lombard.

RC: A little background as to what he did . . . I'm not sure how he came to the university; that some other historical source will have to provide for you. Jim presented a celebrity series and a masterpiece series. The celebrity series were more popular in nature . . . the master piece series being the most serious performance of classical music. He presented a high quality series. Jim knew what sold. How he either divined that . . . whether it was intuition, whether it was the result of a great deal of research was hard to tell but Jim did bring this community an outstanding array of recital artists at a time when recitals were still very popular. Today, it is difficult to bring together an audience of a couple of thousand people who want to hear one performer play all evening long, perhaps accompanied by only a pianist, showing his or her virtuosity.

CAC: I suppose it's only the Schubert Club now that does that locally?

RC: That's right.

CAC: But Jim was pulling it off here on campus?

RC: He was pulling it off on campus and he was bringing 4800 people . . .

CAC: [gasp]

RC: . . . or 4000 people regularly to that series.

CAC: What was his relationship to the Music Department, do you suppose? He honchoed this all by himself?

RC: I can only offer you suppositions. There wasn't a close relationship there either.

CAC: I would guess so.

RC: I always thought that was regrettable because there were so many ways in which the resources that he was bringing here could have been very inspirational to the student body.

CAC: Yes. Well, I'm sure many students went?

RC: Oh, yes. Oh yes.

CAC: But beyond that, the connections were not . . . ?

RC: However, there were other relationships and, perhaps, Ross Smith can give you a bit more background on this.

CAC: Ross Smith was his assistant and then took over?

RC: No, not his assistant. He was his successor. He was brought here from Purdue University to succeed Jim.

CAC: Okay.

RC: Jim did provide funds from the profits that he put together—if one can refer to them as profits—his surpluses from the department he ran to bring people to lecture at the university whom the chair of the department or the faculty felt would enhance the work of the “U”. There was a relationship, a certain funding relationship, there between them but it was always far more minor than major; and I'm not sure why but it's another one of those things that slips between the cracks, largely because I think people were so focused on their individual roles and responsibilities rather than thinking of the university as the umbrella which all of us might have served better and could have therefore served ourselves better as a result of that. I have regrets. I'm not pointing at any one party as being particularly responsible. We were all guilty of that sin. Nevertheless, when the Met—to go back to that again—opportunity first presented itself, the orchestra was managed by Arthur Gaines, G-A-I-N-E-S, who was without peer, the dean of orchestra managers in the country. It was Arthur who did the major discussions and negotiations with the Met throughout the period of time that he and Jim co-managed that festival. Once Arthur's health turned bad, and he was forced to retire, and Boris came in, Jim picked up a lot of the slack that had been there, as he was sort of the underling of the Gaines/Lombard duo, and it became much more of an equal partnership between Boris Sokoloff, who succeeded Gaines, and Jim. Again, Jim being the landlord as it were, the master of the house, he had more opportunities, and took advantage of them, to serve as the senior in that partnership, a role which he enjoyed very much, and, I must say, which he performed very well.

CAC: I'm thinking—someone can look it up and check it . . . oral history is not the end; it's the beginning—that he must have put some of that—it was called Lectures and Concerts . . .

RC: Concerts and Lectures.

CAC: Concerts and Lectures . . . I'm thinking that Arnold Toynbee was brought here to lecture at Northrup and T.S. Eliot?

RC: Yes.

CAC: That must have been from what you call the profits, the surpluses, that would be put into that kind of a program?

RC: Yes. I'm so glad you brought that up because I made allusions to his relationship with the university in bringing those but he also collaborated with other departments. The lectures part of that was that role that he did play and some very distinguished people came here.

CAC: Oh, my yes and people went to hear them.

RC: Oh, yes.

CAC: Yes, again, those 4800 seats would be filled. To listen to Arnold Toynbee was boring as sin—sin's not boring, of course.

RC: [laughter]

CAC: A better metaphor could be found. You're still at the Minneapolis Symphony . . . ?

RC: That's right, until 1968.

CAC: . . . but when you move off campus to your own hall, did that break the relationships with Concerts and Lectures and with the Metropolitan Opera? Did you play that partnership role for the coming of the opera?

RC: When I succeeded Boris, yes, I became Jim's partner, his junior partner but yet he was very gracious. We had an enjoyable partnership.

CAC: But even after the orchestra left campus?

RC: After the orchestra left campus . . . I'm trying to think where Jim fits on this picture. I think Jim retired while the orchestra was still on campus. Ross Smith and I worked here together as partners in that relationship; so, it was Ross Smith with whom I continued to work after the orchestra left campus. Yes, the university and the Orchestral Association were co-sponsors of the Metropolitan Opera tour from 1945 until the Met ceased touring and I think that was 1986. What a glorious forty-one years!

CAC: Yes!

RC: And what a loss when it stopped. Is it of any interest as to why it stopped?

CAC: Indeed, it is.

RC: The very beast that took it from the weekend of four performances to that luxurious week long orgy of seven operas every May . . .

CAC: Excuse me. You may know that friends of mine who were in the faculty would be stagehands or they'd be extras.

RC: Oh, yes.

CAC: They would be carrying spears.

RC: Exactly.

CAC: Oh! they could walk on stage and hear the music and see it right there.

RC: Supernumeraries, yes.

CAC: Yes.

RC: That was one of the, again, side benefits of having that organization here. Once they were presenting seven operas, the demand for artists to staff those operas grew enormously . . . at the same time that Europe, recovering from the terrible war, began increasing substantially its own natural, longstanding opera programs and artists began resenting the amount of time that the Met was asking them to spend here when they could be, many of them Europeans, back home working the opera circuit there and also the knocking about seven weeks on tour—that's what they had to commit to; they had to perform in every city on tour—became more and more problematic.

CAC: That must have been terribly exhausting.

RC: Well, I guess it could be . . . I guess it could be; although, they lived pretty well. It was more uprooting, I think, than exhausting. They would work maybe two operas in a week and, as a matter of fact, once the airplane replaced the train as the preferred mode of travel, an artist would fly here to do his Tuesday performance, fly out Wednesday, come back for the Saturday, if that's what they were going to do. What made it exhausting was that they would work several engagements in between; so, then it did become exhausting but not because of the tour but because of the way they happened to schedule themselves. At any rate, it was harder and harder to get the major artists to perform. It was hard to sell seven operas without major artists. You could always sell *La Bohème* or *Carmen* or *Aida* but it became obvious that the Met was less and

less representative of itself while it was on tour, and that was artistically unconscionable, and also economically more and more difficult because the public was sensing the difference. The reviews that it began to receive were terrible, justifiably in some cases. Finally, it was considered just simply impractical to continue the tours so the Met abandoned them.

CAC: To everyone's loss.

RC: Yes . . . in all the seven cities across the country that enjoyed it the most.

CAC: Let's turn then to the building of Orchestral Hall and the loss therefore of a place . . . unless you want to go on to something else?

RC: Yes, I just want to stay with Jim Lombard and the opera for one other moment.

CAC: Okay, please do.

RC: Lombard's genius and the factor that made it possible for us, this small community, to support seven operas in one week—very pricey . . . 5000 people a night—was a regional program that he put together where we travelled. Various ones of us who were part of the administration would take a certain part of the five state area. We would travel and organize Metropolitan Opera committees in Iowa . . .

CAC: [gasp]

RC: . . . and the Dakotas, and throughout all of Minnesota, and Wisconsin. We'd have bus loads of people coming in.

CAC: This put you on the road to make some of the road to make some of those arrangements?

RC: Oh, yes. Yes, we'd do our, sometimes short, in and out runs and sometimes go out for five days or so, going from town to town and speaking at luncheons in one place and a dinner meetings in another. We'd have bus loads of people or carloads of people come through so that by the time the Met hit its peak of seven operas, we were drawing 47 percent of our audiences from outside the Twin Cities area.

CAC: Which is probably more people than come in to see the Vikings or the [Timber]wolves . . . ?

RC: That's an interesting observation. Your speculation is probably true.

CAC: . . . [unclear] you know, commercial income that comes from this?

RC: Oh, yes, that was a tremendous economic impact that came about as a result of that . . . first of all, the 300 members of the opera who would come here and stay the week.

CAC: Yes! [laughter]

RC: Can you imagine that . . . three hundred people coming? The chorus, all of the stars, the stage crew . . . [unclear].

CAC: Do you suppose people went out to eat in the expectation of seeing an opera singer?

RC: Oh, of course. My heavens, yes.

CAC: They'd find out what restaurants were serving them?

RC: There were people that would take hotel rooms over the weekend just so they could . . . The Sheraton Ritz was sort of the headquarters. The Sheraton Ritz no longer exists but it was sort of the headquarters and, therefore, people would like to hobnob with them and as they got to know them individually, each year, they would be welcomed back as old friends. Sometimes, some of them would stay with private families in their homes. The friendship became that constant.

CAC: Members of the board of the Orchestral Association were excited about this opera thing?

RC: Very much. It was a very major addition to the cultural scene of the Twin Cities and considered to be an appropriate role of a major musical organization; and I guess the university looked upon it very much the same way, too. It was the only university, I guess, that could enjoy the Met on a regular basis that way year in and year out.

CAC: Chicago had its own opera?

RC: Yes. For awhile, the Met did tour Chicago but that gave way after awhile.

CAC: And they certainly weren't going to Madison, or Champagne-Urbana, or Iowa City?

RC: That's right, yes.

CAC: Then, the orchestra goes off campus. They come back in the heart Minneapolis?

RC: Downtown Minneapolis . . . the very site where the old Lyceum stood, where the orchestra had its home originally.

CAC: Ahhh.

RC: It had since been sold to a religious group called Soul's Harbor. When they had to evacuate it because they needed larger quarters, it came up for sale; so, leaders of the orchestra, coming together with very large-visioned city council members, put together a scheme to privately finance the hall but using some public assistance for borrowing.

CAC: This was a major responsibility for you?

RC: Actually, my predecessor as president, Don Engle, was involved in the construction of the hall. My job at that time as the general manager was the operational part, the booking of the season, the scheduling of the season.

[telephone rings . . . break in the interview]

CAC: I think we're leading up to how the relations begin to separate when the orchestra moves off on its own.

RC: Yes. The orchestra's departure was a sad one for both institutions in many ways, perhaps, mostly so, in the realization that some wonderful opportunities that had always been dreamed about were now not going to be fulfilled. As far as the artists of the orchestra were concerned, they were getting a first-rate concert hall . . .

CAC: You bet!

RC: . . . and one in which their needs were going to be paramount; so, it was without any qualification a major improvement in their lives and the conductor, of course, felt the same way. Skrowaczewski [Stanislav] had pioneered so much for a concert hall for the orchestra. I must say, audiences were better served because of the downtown location, the parking advantages that the Orchestra Hall ramp provided . . . all of those things spoke for the wisdom and convenience all the way around. The orchestra's been able to enjoy an enormous growth. The disappearance of the orchestra from the campus meant that it had some negatives, too. That student and faculty audience, which was such a natural resource for us, gradually diminished, not totally, of course, but at least saw a considerable reduction in number.

CAC: You could trace that from sales? You knew this?

RC: Oh, yes. Interestingly, even though it isn't that people lived on this campus and walked to the auditorium but apparently there was a feeling of, this is ours and we either support it or we go to enjoy it . . . it is one of the things we do regularly. That feeling wasn't transferred when the orchestra took on its own facility and bit by bit, we did notice a diminution of faculty and student attendance; and new faculty and the new generations of students never latched on the way that they did in the old days. That's one of the unfortunate results that I've always regretted because I always felt that a large academic presence in the audience, in the numbers that they

used to come, gave a special quality to the response to the programs, particularly the more adventurous music which an orchestra has a responsibility to play.

CAC: After this physical separation, do students, for example, still come over to rehearsals?

RC: There have been some new moves made. Yes, yes, the connection was still there and I'm not sure what caused the difference but we could tell there was a reduction in the amount of traffic between Scott Hall in those days, and now Ferguson Hall, and Orchestra Hall even though the facilities were greatly improved. There were occasions when that would change but they were special occasions. Even that modest link between music director and the university faculty that existed in the orchestra at Northrop days just . . . I wouldn't say it was severed but faded away.

CAC: Did it decrease in any degree the playing of compositions by University of Minnesota faculty or was that maintained, that [unclear]?

RC: I think that was maintained. One could very easily run a statistic on that.

CAC: From the programs.

RC: The faculty of the university continued to attract and produce a large number of composers; and they, of course, were interested in both orchestras here and in getting performances so that the collection of manuscripts continues and under different conductors with different intensity, of course. There have been other programs that have been put together . . . most recently a student conductor program undertaken between the Music Department and the orchestras—it involves both orchestras—and apparently is a successful, and exciting, and new addition for the university as well as an additional service that the orchestras provide.

CAC: For all the excitement, I'm in awe of and I appreciate how these links were there and what they meant to the faculty and the student body . . . Maybe, I'm over-interpreting but I'm hearing a tone also of some regret even in the best days that the initiative and the excitement on both sides was not sufficient to bring it finally together?

RC: Those are the days when it could have happened and should have happened. Yes, there certainly is regret. I think that it's the kind of feeling that you have for opportunities lost. As I say, all of us bear part of the burden of that responsibility.

CAC: Yes.

RC: Clarke, if I may, let me just mention one other thing though. When we were talking about the changes that did take place . . . with the performance venue of the quality of Orchestra Hall, Ross Smith quickly realized that the audiences of this community were going to quickly accustom themselves to the comfort, the convenience, the acoustics, the sight lines, offered by

a smaller, more convenient downtown location and that attempting to continue the kind of programs that had been going on at Northrop Auditorium, now that it was sort of the dowager of the performing arts venues, was going to be difficult.

CAC: There are dance groups that still come but you can't . . .

RC: I was going to say, he very ingeniously then took what was a small part of his presentation profile and expanded it into a major international dance series and created something out of his imagination, and his enterprise, and considerable energy that he put to it that has become one of the better dance presenting organizations in the country and has, at least, continued to have Northrop serve the community in that way.

CAC: But there's not much other use for Northrop, is there?

RC: Well, interestingly . . . Northrop, which was a closed facility to anybody but the university and the orchestra, as the university's sole guest, suddenly took a broader community posture and made itself available as a rental facility. It is an expensive rental facility as they go; but it's the only think of its kind of that size so it has hit and miss uses that it's put to by touring, traveling organizations.

CAC: But traveling shows would use the Ordway, as *Showboat* is, for example, now?

RC: Yes, but you've also had *Cats*.

CAC: Oh, did *Cats* play at Northrop?

RC: Oh, yes, yes.

CAC: I see.

RC: I believe *Oklahoma* played there. You've had *Nutcrackers* brought in by organizations.

CAC: Oh, I guess so. Lots of *Nutcrackers*.

RC: It still home [unclear] Broadway musical series. I don't think it's open for rental for other organizations that want to come there.

CAC: But good musicians would feel uneasy using Northrop now?

RC: There's no question about that. It was never conceived as a concert hall. It was gerrymandered into one that worked when we either didn't know any better or we knew nothing better could serve us. I do want to say, it served us well. It continued to nurture an orchestra

and a community's interest in the musical arts for a forty-year period of time. That's considerable.

CAC: Yes.

RC: Without that, we wouldn't have an audience base to have an orchestra, much less two orchestras, today. Go back to your other point then . . . I interrupted you when you were coming up with something.

CAC: The question, turning back . . . This is a project for the history of the University of Minnesota. This has been very enlightening, a lot of good useful insights. I'm wondering about the role of the Music Department, School of Music, here as the musical community generally would perceive it. I have a sense—I'll share it with you and you can bounce off that—that in the 1980s, there was a chance to take off to another level of quality . . .

RC: Yes.

CAC: . . . and I don't know whether that's just an inside amateur's point of view or whether this was perceived by person's like yourself and your colleagues?

RC: It's an outside amateur's point of view, too. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter] Can you flesh that out a little bit?

RC: For most of the time that I've been here, I would say that the greater Minneapolis/ St. Paul community knew there was a Music Department but didn't know or care too much about it. There were, and continue to be, people of an exceptional musical interest who were always tuned into what was taking place, what was needed, what could be done; but the greater community wasn't impacted by what was taking place at the university's Department of Music. Then in the 1980s, with Karen Wolff's arrival, came a burst of energy, imagination, creative enterprise; and it was obvious that things were beginning to happen and lo and behold, therefore, that things could happen and also the regretful realization that things always, perhaps, could have happened but didn't.

CAC: Ah, yes.

RC: But thank heaven! that at last something was taking place. High quality performing faculty people were brought into the organization; therefore, better students were attracted, more dialog between the two performing musical organizations, the orchestras and the university, was taking place because of the spirit and quality of what was seen at the "U". It had just reached a certain germination point when Karen's opportunity to take over the School of Music at Oberlin occurred and she departed. Then, the big question before everyone was, What will happen from here on?

CAC: Or the question that preceded that on campus was if the university really was interested in supporting this kind of an artistic enterprise.

RC: I guess so.

CAC: Then, we had to make it attractive so that she could stay and that was not done?

RC: You're putting your finger right on the major . . . I didn't want to touch upon that but you're right. I think she made every indication of the fact that with certain commitments, she would have stayed because she herself realized what she was accomplishing and she was experiencing the enjoyment of that accomplishment.

CAC: Oh, just think of the Big Ten cities . . . what a richness of music, choral, instrumental, and solo that there is here . . . oh!

RC: Yes.

CAC: There would be a temptation to stay; so, it would take a lot to attract you away. The community beyond the University of Minnesota was not able or felt it inappropriate to try to move what she had started forward?

RC: You say the community beyond the university?

CAC: I mean you, you and your colleagues. Was there anything that the musical community could do?

RC: I was retired by that time but, of course, that's no excuse for not getting into it.

CAC: Well, but you have this board or this audience base and you have everything going. I'm wondering whether that community . . . The corporate community, I'm seeing from other interviews it has had a major impact upon the university and the School of Business, the School of Engineering, the Institute of Technology and so forth. It seems to me there was a potential with your friends and associates to play somewhat the same role.

RC: Once again I guess, we must all plead guilty to looking so individually at the institutions we are serving and not seeing the bigger picture of what can exist by a collectivization of these talents and these resources and the joining together into a common vision. That just never has happened.

CAC: The university speaks of its Land-Grant mission, which is to reach out and serve the public, and many of us see that it's defined not entirely in agronomy, and agriculture, and marketing, and School of Management and Engineering but very heavily there.

RC: Yes.

CAC: Yet, I think traditionally, the Land-Grant idea involved the arts, involved letters, involved this larger output, and somehow it hasn't come off from our side either, you see. I'm making these statements in a preliminary way. If I were an historian, I'd be more cautious . . . if I were writing it.

RC: [laughter] There are other forces, of course, that were working on the community, too. Sports has become a culture for our society.

CAC: Look at the Gophers can't fill this awful, dumb Humphrey Dome . . . they'd have chopped down their own stadium, right?

RC: Yes. But the same leadership that's overlooking the university, and the orchestra, and other institutions is also saying, "We've got to keep major league sports here so that we can continue . . ." The big benefit, we're told, is all of the tax revenues that come from all the millionaires that we're making out of basketball players, and baseball players, and football players, and to some people's minds, hopefully, very soon again a hockey team, without the realization that what they're getting onto is an ever escalating conveyor belt of greed. At a time when sports were still contained to a few major cities and were profitable, but not as they are now, you operated under a very different scheme of things. Today, with radio and television resources having such a big impact, the larger market cities can profit so much more and, therefore, can pay players so much more. This forces the smaller cities to try to keep their Kirby Pucketts and others; so, the escalation of salaries is going at such a level and at such a pace that it's making it impossible to run it as a business. If we could simply say to them, let's let the Vikings go . . . let's let the Twins go . . . Well, somebody else will take them but in ten years somebody will find out they can't support them and they'll let them go. Eventually, they are going to be looking for a home in Omaha; and then the New Yorks and the Bostons are going to come to the conclusion that we have to share the big money revenues among all the teams because if there isn't a league, our teams are valueless . . . we have to preserve a league. They don't have that mentality yet. They're looking at we must preserve New York. We must preserve Boston. We must preserve the huge cities. They're not yet looking at the common responsibility that they must share in order to have the individual enterprise as successful as they wish.

CAC: I'm kind of pondering, speculating about the overlap of leadership in a community like the Twin Cities, which has had such a long reputation through its Community Chest, through the orchestra, and through the two art museums that we support—in Minneapolis at least. Do you have any sense whether members of the Board of Regents at the University of Minnesota, for example, in significant number were also on the Board of the Orchestral Association or connected with it in any major way? Has that been a connection ever? See, that's one way you establish lines?

RC: Yes. When you say ever, that's a question that stymies me a bit.

CAC: I mean within your own memory.

RC: My current observation, accurate or inaccurate, is that you have community leaders on the orchestra board who are people who are fixed and proven. They're leading the major corporate institutions of the community. You have political appointments to the Board of Regents in the university. It's a different issue.

CAC: So, there's not an overlap or a networking, in your experience, that has gone on there?

RC: It's been my observation that the definition of the Board of Regents is totally different from the definition of an orchestra board, of either orchestra for that matter, or the Guthrie Theater. There isn't much philosophical or verbal communication between the two.

CAC: Well, this may help explain in some part the drift . . .

RC: Yes.

CAC: . . . the pulling apart that we've been talking about the last hour?

RC: Yes.

CAC: It is systemic and, perhaps, beyond the power of good will to overcome?

RC: I suppose that's true . . . again, given the public nature of the University of Minnesota and, therefore, the political forces that it must be responsive to.

CAC: Do you have any comparative sense and detail of the quality and role of the Department of Music here as seen at Ann Arbor, or Madison, or Iowa City, or Champagne-Urbana, and so on? You mentioned Indiana as one major exception of a really strong musical program.

RC: Oh, yes. But Champagne-Urbana's got a good one, too. From every observation or from every bit of information that I've received, the University of Minnesota has the most modest Department or School of Music out of the Big Ten. When I say modest, I think modest in resources and, therefore, modest in terms of many other of its aspects; although, you're not without good people here.

CAC: Yes.

RC: The encouragements for those people to reach beyond a certain—I hate to use the word, status quo because that's such a pejorative word—comfortable norm have not been there; so, people have worked harder to individually craft careers, like a Dominick Argento . . .

CAC: Ah.

RC: . . . who as an individual guiding light, has moved into the national and international firmament.

CAC: He might have gone elsewhere sometime?

RC: Oh! of course, of course.

CAC: Why did he stay here?

RC: Well, he'd have to be asked that question.

CAC: Okay.

RC: He has brought so much distinction by his very being here and, also, his very being here has made possible the attraction of other things that didn't happen but could have happened. Paul Fetler is another one who, maybe, not to the distinction or to the prize winning capacity of a Dominick but certainly a recognized force in America in orchestral music. There are others whose faces pop up before me but whose names elude me. Good work is being done here but it is confined to rather narrow local parameters.

CAC: We're kind of reaching the end of our conversation, unless you have other things to talk about that you think posterity should know from your experience and your observations? I have one last question.

RC: Just an almost reminiscent one . . . What a thrill it was to come to see this university as it was in 1958, already one of the largest ones in the nation, and to see how well it could be administered with all of that high density of population in the confined area within which it had to work . . . this was even before West Bank, but even given West Bank, how well it's done. It's been interesting to read, now that I know so many of the players and have a more personal interest in seeing how the Magraths, and the Kellers, and the Hasselmos have fared, try to deal with this problem of vastness, the hugeness, at the same time that they're dealing with so many other problems of minority relations, of affirmative actions, of women's issues . . .

CAC: Yes.

RC: . . . of so many more broken down into individual micro, rather than macro, concerns and you have to handle both. It's just almost an unmanageable job and you're wondering how . . . As such, all one tends to hear about now are the problems of the university. All one heard about when I first came here was the greatness of it and the great work that it does. I long for some way of breaking this thing down into smaller segments so that the good can be exhumed again.

CAC: Right. That was going to be my last question; so, you anticipated it.

RC: Bless you.

CAC: Forget music . . . what you've told of your experience is very enriching but just to forget that connection . . . You have many friends out here and many colleagues, do people talk about the university and what its contributions are, what its role is? Do you have this conversation that you and have had with any other people? Do you see people from the university on a regular basis?

RC: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. The university still has a tremendous reach into this community. The business community is very dependent on what this university can provide this community in terms of human resources.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

CAC: I know you have to go to another appointment but you can spin out that last observation.

RC: Sure. Before the university was almost the sole, major force and therefore it's influence was everywhere to the exclusion of other influences. The state university system has come up now. The University of St. Thomas . . . it's a university.

CAC: And it's downtown Minneapolis.

RC: Yes. And Hamline is surging forward with a highly respectful growth and academic program so that, in many respects, all of this extra richness that the community benefits from diffuses, perhaps, some of the strength that the university had when it was *the* big player, similar to what the New York Yankees used to be in the 1940s versus what they're like today.

CAC: Ah! [laughter]

RC: What New Yorker would have thought in the Lou Gehrig days that a team from Minnesota would win two World Series in the 1980s?

CAC: You see this with some nostalgia and some regret?

RC: With a mixture of—I tend not to be nostalgic—realization of . . .

CAC: We're not the only show in town?

RC: . . . the good that has come to the community but as time passes, we have to realize the university can't be what it used to be before . . . perhaps, shouldn't be what it used to be before and therefore the great need for a definition for it. If only you could get those political monkeys

off your back and I don't mean politicians when I say that but I mean that political albatross off your back, I guess is a better way of putting it, that still has everybody in this community wanting their kid to go to the university and get every bit as much out of it as they did and their parents did.

CAC: But members of your board would naturally send their children east to school still?

RC: Well, this is an interesting thing and remember my key client in my business now is Stanley Hubbard who is very quick to say that he has many friends and colleagues who were educated here, and who have made their successes here, and who continue to work for the University of Minnesota but send their kids elsewhere—something Stan did not do.

CAC: I see. [laughter]

RC: His kids are university educated. He is Minnesota devoted throughout and doesn't see why everybody doesn't see it the way he does because he has such great faith in what we have here, what we can continue to build here. Part of that, again, has to stem from the ease of mobility, which wasn't there earlier. Secondly, we are a richer society; we can afford to do that. Thirdly, there is something to be said for the experience of going away to school, and being on your own, and seeing something other than the Minnesota culture as a basis of sharpening your own judgments as to what kind of individual you want to be and what kind of practice you want to involve yourself in, in whatever profession you do because there are different ways of doing it.

CAC: I was raised on the prairies in a small town in the 1920s and 1930s. The university was the only game in the state . . . athletics, art, science, medicine. It's not to fault anybody, and you certainly haven't done that along the line, but the whole structure and system becomes very different the last forty years. Whoever has to write this sequel to James Gray [*University of Minnesota: 1851-1951*] . . . You see, James Gray has got the heroic story from 1850 to 1950.

RC: Yes, sure did. [laughter]

CAC: It's not only a story of decline the last forty-five years but it certainly is a story of change and competition and whoever does this has got to somehow understand that.

RC: Yes! You have to realize that if you were to build the university from scratch today, you would not build it the same way.

CAC: Yes.

RC: It was built because it was responsive to a need in its time. You would build it today to be responsive to today's needs, which takes into consideration a different Carleton, a different St. Olaf, St. Thomas, a Hamline, and all the others.

CAC: Well, I'm really grateful for your reflections and for your experience and what you have contributed to all of this.

RC: I groped [unclear]. I wish I could have had a sharper recall of so many of the things.

CAC: No, the reflection is more important than the absolute recall. That was very useful and we're indebted to you for your career but also for sharing it.

RC: You're very kind.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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