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Interview with Joe Rigert

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

Interviewed on September 14, 1995

Joe Rigert - JR
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers. It is September 14, in the evening, and I'm interviewing Joe Rigert long of the *Star Tribune*, a reporter who had many portfolios but came to be an investigative reporter for the university, among other things. I should say, Joe, that I am not an investigative reporter.

JR: You're an investigative historian, right?

CAC: Yes. [laughter] If there are embarrassing questions . . . it's as in the dental chair, you can just raise your hand and then I'll turn to something else.

JR: Nothing is too embarrassing. I've always had the view that no question is too embarrassing to ask and none to answer.

CAC: I see. All right. As I suggested, before we turned this machine on, it's useful for listeners, whether two or three years from now or certainly twenty years from now, to kind of get a sense of who you are, where you came from. It need not be long and elaborate but I am curious to know about your formal education, how you got interested in reporting or journalism, and then how you got to the Twin Cities in 1965, and then we'll be off and running.

JR: All right. I'll try to make it real fast. I grew up on a farm with no journalism background whatsoever in my family but I went to high school where I had a teacher who thought I was fairly good in English and said, "You ought to work on the school newspaper." I did.

CAC: Where was this?

JR: This was in Beaverton, Oregon.

CAC: Ah.

JR: After the military, I went to the University of Portland and then the . . .

CAC: You say the military . . . which war was yours?

JR: The navy in Korean times.

CAC: Did you get into dangerous zones?

JR: No, I was one of the people who felt the way to avoid the war was to go in the navy and I did; so, I took the coward's way out, which was the wise way to me. After the navy, I went to the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and finished up there with a B.A. in journalism. From there, I worked for a couple of congress people . . .

CAC: Oh.

JR: . . . doing public relations. Then, I went to Georgetown in Washington, D.C., and got my master's in American government while I worked for Congressman Robert Hale of Maine, a very interesting guy, a Rhodes scholar. I went up and campaigned for him, helped to defeat him. [laughter] I decided politics was not my forte, and got my M.A., and went on to journalism, the *Oregon Journal* in Portland, and then on to the *Associated Press* in Olympia, Washington, covering state government, and then to Minneapolis and the *Minneapolis Tribune* at the time. I read an article in *Harper's* about what a great newspaper it was and decided I'd like to work here; so, I came here.

CAC: John Cowles Sr. was still editor and publisher?

JR: Yes, he was. This was 1965. I started at the bottom where they elect to start you in the newspaper.

CAC: Even though you'd had other experience?

JR: That's right, even though I'd spent five years with the *Associated Press*, I started as a basic reporter doing general assignment, and moved from that covering St. Paul, and then Minneapolis city government, and became an editorial writer for five years, became city editor for two and one-half years.

CAC: What is the definition of a city editor? What are your responsibilities?

JR: City editor is the supervisor of local news coverage.

CAC: Okay.

JR: From there, I went to . . .

CAC: Is that when [Gerry] Vizenor was reporting for you?

JR: That's when Vizenor was there, right. Gerry and I became great friends. So, from there I went to doing special, what we then called, projects. That evolved into a more glamorous title of investigative reporting—I've been doing that for almost twenty years now—so called investigative reporting, which goes beyond the routine beat reporting or the day-to-day general assignment reporting. It's doing projects and trying to get to the ultimate truth, even though there is no such thing, but at least getting as close as you can and trying to find out what really happened rather than what people tell you happened. That's what I've been doing.

CAC: I want to talk about this for just a bit more. How do reporters shape their career? Is it the chance assignments or were these conscious evolutionary developments in your career?

JR: In this newspaper, we have a great openness and opportunity to do what you want to do. At every turn, I did what I wanted to do. I applied for . . . I made a case for what I wanted to do. I wanted to be on the editorial page. I made a case for it. I wanted to be city editor. I wrote up a long memo and made a case for it. Everything I've done, that's the way I've done it. I mean, it's a great place for that.

CAC: It still is?

JR: It still is. People bitch and moan, reporters . . . I can't do what I want to do and I say, "Go for it! Don't wait for somebody to tell you what to do. Push for what you want to do."

CAC: This would not be true in many other large city newspapers?

JR: Let me give you one example . . . the *Milwaukee Journal*. I don't know how it is right now but in years past, the *Milwaukee Journal* operated on the basis of seniority and you waited for years and years to move up, and up, and up.

CAC: Oh, my.

JR: It was just ridiculous. It became a stodgy, dull newspaper with people waiting in line to move up. It's just not the way to do things. This has not been the case here.

CAC: I'm going to make a statement. I interviewed Meredith Wilson seven, eight years ago. He's not very well now. He was here in the 1960s when you came.

JR: He was also the president of the University of Oregon when I was there.

CAC: Yes. He shared with me that the person in the community upon whom most he depended was not on the Board of Regents, was not a major contributor, but knew the community and that was John Cowles Sr. Whenever he got into something really serious, he'd have a private luncheon or dinner with John Cowles Sr., which means that the newspaper, at least at that time, had a very special relationship with the university. Were you aware of that?

JR: Oh, absolutely. John Cowles Sr. was a genius. I used to go to meetings and the man was involved in so many things at every level, right on up to picking presidents. He helped get [Dwight D.] Eisenhower into the presidency and was a friend of Dean Acheson's. I remember meetings when he would upbraid his sub-editors for not doing the right thing. He was always asking questions, always pushing, pushing, pushing.

CAC: He knew the community.

JR: He was a dominating man who knew what needed to be done but not just that he knew the community, he had his vision of what ought to be done, whether it was the university . . . I'm sure he had a lot of influence in what happened if he was having those meetings with Meredith Wilson. He had influence everywhere. He had incredible influence on the internationalism of the Twin Cities at a time when it could have gone isolationist with Congressmen [Walter] Judd and that influence. John Cowles Sr. was pushing for the bigger view. He was a great owner. I remember John Cowles Jr., his son, talking about *father*. He was like this idol. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter] That was a hard act to follow.

JR: It was. It was.

CAC: Does this mean then—as you describe it and from other information, I just know it's accurate—that the world was on his agenda? But he must have had a particular relationship with the university also? I'm wondering whether you had a sense when you came here in 1965 . . . You don't start doing university reporting for fifteen years, approximately, as I read your Career. Did you know . . .

JR: No, I didn't know that John Cowles Sr. had this relationship but I did know that the people that I worked with like Otto Silha, for example, was chair of the regents. I knew that John Cowles Jr. was very much involved and also through Sage, his wife, who was involved in the Liberal Arts programs, and trying to get a dance program going, and so forth. They were big contributors to the university and this has continued from the time that I came here all the way through. Roger Parkinson was a member of the board for the University Foundation. It just continued all the way through this relationship. Now, you could say, well, okay, so there was a very close relationship among the owners, and the editors, and the publishers of the newspapers, How can you do investigative reporting that is negative and that is going to maybe embarrass the people that you work for?

CAC: But you don't know it's going to be negative until you get into it though, Joe.

JR: No, you don't.

CAC: There's always that risk. [laughter]

JR: But if it does, what's going to happen? Never, in all the reporting I've done, did I ever get one comment or even indication that they felt, because of their personal relationship, that I should hold back and not do that kind of reporting . . . never! which says something about the independence and their view, which was we've got to maintain a watchdog role on every institution in our society regardless of their personal involvements. You know, it's a great philosophy.

CAC: Particularly if they act on it.

JR: Yes, right.

CAC: I mean, one hears those words, right? But it doesn't always . . .

JR: Let me give you the most recent example. We spent two years investigating the Medical School and there had been, up to that point, a certain attitude among some editors about, don't pile it on . . . write a story that may be negative about an institution . . . move on. You don't just keep pounding, pounding if you see something going on. In this case, two years, we were pounding, pounding, pointing out problems in the Medical School. The editor, Joel Kramer, a totally different person, came from the east coast, is coming around to my desk and saying, "What's next?" It was just keep at it . . . don't hold back. If there are problems there, let's get them out in the open. Let's deal with it.

CAC: If you don't publish for awhile, that's all right, too?

JR: Absolutely.

CAC: If you're at your position of being an investigative . . .

JR: It takes time. It takes a lot of time.

CAC: So, you have to build a certain confidence, and reputation, and seniority in order to have this kind of elbow room?

JR: Yes, oh yes, you do. And you have to have a track record. You can't come in new and expect to get that kind of time. It's the old—we laugh about in journalism—What are you going to do for me tomorrow? What's your story for tomorrow?

CAC: Sure.

JR: The pressure is always on. You can't rest on your laurels. You've got to keep pushing, going, and if you're going for a long, long period of time with nothing or your stuff isn't proving out, forget it. You've got to make it. You've got to prove yourself. It's just like in any other profession.

CAC: Publish or perish.

JR: Yes. It is. It's the same deal.

CAC: You very kindly provided a lot of xerox material. The special stories you started really in 1980 and then are still at it but you start in with smaller bits. The first one that you gave to me was the influx of foreign students in colleges generally and not only the University of Minnesota. Then, you go on to the University Hospital, which you'll pick up later, then to the legislative retrenchment, then to the teaching load of teachers, then faculty salaries. These were all shorter bits.

JR: Right.

CAC: But you were finding your way at the university, I would guess, in these things that were done in the early and mid 1980s?

JR: I'd like to preface that by saying that until I started doing this, nobody was really looking at the university from a kind of watchdog role and this is not true just here.

CAC: Except Sid Hartman?

JR: [laughter] Yes, right. Sid Hartman's got his own ax to grind. I have no axes to grind. Nationally, investigative reporters very seldom look at education. It's not glamorous. It's business. It's government. Crime and corruption, the criminals . . . Articles have been written in the journalism publications about this, Why don't journalists do more with education? This is one of the most important things in our lives and we do almost nothing.

CAC: I'm guessing it's the biggest payroll in the state of Minnesota, if you take all of education, K-12, and all the private colleges, and state universities.

JR: It has to be.

CAC: It has to be the biggest business in the state.

JR: Right. I didn't get into this with any calculated plan to look at this. I like education. I'm interested in it. I have gone to the university on every project I've ever done for expert advice.

CAC: Ah.

JR: I tell people over and over, "I love the university." It helps me. The professors, all these geniuses over there, have information and they're willing to share it. They're so great. They'll give me piles of books. They'll give me all their research, everything. So, I came into this with a really great feeling about the university and plus, personally, I have a daughter and son-in-law who got great educations here. They are the ultimate yuppies. They're making hundreds of thousands . . . [laughter] Personally, and professionally, I really appreciate this university.

CAC: Now, you had lots of children, foster children, right?

JR: Eight. Seven adopted and one natural birth child; so, yes, we've got a lot of kids.

CAC: How many of these went to the university?

JR: Two to this university, and one to the University of North Dakota, and the rest of our kids have done other things. We're not a big academic family here. I've got a daughter who is a modern dancer in New Yorker and a son who is a fire fighter. I've got all kinds of wonderful diversity in the family. It's a neat family. When I came into the university . . .

CAC: I'm going to interrupt you a second . . .

JR: Yes.

CAC: . . . and just share with you. This is going to be a conversation. I always knew that a large proportion of our students, 1945-1990, were first generation college bound, not all of them, but it ran 60-70 percent at various times. Doing these interviews, I came to be made aware that our *faculty* were in many cases, not to that degree, the first in their family to be formally educated, then all the way to their Ph.D., and then they're a professor. But they are probably the only person in their family, out of a family of eight, they're the only one.

JR: Is that right?

CAC: I'm trying to think what that means for this university. That's a digression. I don't ask you to respond to it.

JR: That's interesting though. I'm sixty-four.

CAC: I'm seventy-four.

JR: Okay . . . our generation, we—I know I did—came from a farm and we tried to rise above our parents. My parents didn't get beyond high school. They didn't even get through high school. So, we have in our generation, this striving, striving to get above and now in our kids,

my kids, and a lot of the kids of our friends, they don't have that pressure. They don't feel that they have to rise above what we have done. They just do all kinds of things and I think that's great.

CAC: It would be an interesting social story, wouldn't it?

JR: Yes. I like that; they just do what they want to do.

CAC: How, in 1980, did you get interested in foreign students? Were you assigned that or did you dream it up?

JR: I'll tell you, I have a great interest in different ethnic groups, racial groups, and so forth because of my family. I've got kids . . . Japanese, East Indian, Mexican, Black, American Indian, everything. I have this incredible interest in all the diversity issues. I just thought, Minnesota is so incredible in the way of attracting refugees, foreign students, immigrants. To me, I got to know Joe . . .

CAC: Joe Mestenhauser?

JR: Mestenhauser and I just thought this would be a really interesting project. It wasn't like an investigation to dig up dirt or anything . . .

CAC: No, no.

JR: . . . just an interesting project. I got into it and I just had a ball on that. I just thought it was more fun getting to know what was being done here; and then I found there were deficiencies in some of the programs, teaching the language, dealing with the cultural shock and all of that. I had done some stuff before that. I had done some stuff on settlement of refugees. Vietnamese refugees coming in in 1975, I did a big thing on that. Then, I followed a bunch of Vietnamese refugees around Minnesota and the terrible problems they were having, suicides and just terrible adjustment problems, never learned the language, and just terrible problems. I really got interested in this whole question of, What happens to people who come from other countries trying to either learn, or live, or whatever? I really enjoyed doing that.

CAC: How does a farm kid from the Willamette Valley pick up that kind of world view?

JR: [laughter]

CAC: I assume this was Willamette Valley.

JR: Oh, yes, you're right . . . Beaverton, Oregon, right. It's a funny thing. It's kind of a combination of religion, believe it or not and I have no religious now but I did then, the Catholic religion and I got into the liberal wing of the Catholic church . . .

CAC: Ah.

JR: . . . social justice.

CAC: You bet.

JR: And got to know a lot of people . . .

CAC: Pope John set it loose.

JR: Yes, pushing, pushing for change. I got really involved in that. Then, I went to the University of Oregon and got to know there was another world and a way of thinking and became kind of a half way liberal there. It's just an evolutionary process. Then, through adoption and that came about through my involvement in the Catholic church. My wife and I got into the adoption thing. We had one child. I was not particularly interested in having a huge family. I came from a family of thirteen.

CAC: [gasp]

JR: Catholic, you know . . . have all the children you can.

CAC: Oh, boy, yes . . . in that generation.

JR: A terrible thing for my mother but, nevertheless, I came out of that and I had no desire to have a big family. My wife came from a very small family, wanted more children. We weren't having anymore. We had one. Through Catholic social action program, we became aware of these adoptions across racial lines; and so, we got into that. One child led to another. My wife was pushing, pushing to do more of this and I was going along with it ultimately.

CAC: What parish were you in?

JR: In Beaverton, we were in a small, almost semi-rural, church where we had a very liberal Irish priest who was kind of an advocate for this kind of thing.

CAC: That's remarkable.

JR: Then we came to Minneapolis and by that time, we were pretty well set in our views. Minneapolis being a very liberal city, we just continued there.

CAC: Did you go to St. Joan of Arc?

JR: Yes, we went there.

[break in the interview]

CAC: I say St. Joan of Arc because I know there was a priest there that was into liberation theology.

JR: Harvey Eagan?

CAC: Yes.

JR: Yes, we went there. We became personal friends with Harvey and got to know him very well. [laughter] It's kind of ironic. We were such gung ho social activists in the Catholic church and kind of an old line priest once said, "You know, I know what's going on here. You liberal Catholics, you're on your way out. You'll eventually leave." And I did. My wife still is involved in the church but I just more and more felt that it was so hypocritical between some of what were supposed to be the beliefs and then the actions and I just got fed up with it.

CAC: Just like real life.

JR: Yes. Now, I have no particular beliefs whatsoever. [laughter] But, it was a great thing for me at a certain stage of my life.

CAC: Yes, yes.

JR: It formed my opinions and really helped me develop and grow.

CAC: You were a practicing multiculturalist before the word was invented.

JR: True.

CAC: And that gave you an interest in different cultures, and then in different peoples, and therefore in foreign students?

JR: Yes. It has been so great for me and my wife, too. Just the excitement of all of the change and differences . . . it's really been a great experience for us.

CAC: You haven't written many stories about that though?

JR: I don't know if you're aware of it. I wrote a column for a couple of years in the newspaper about the family. I look back on it and I shudder because it was so precious and so kind of maudlin almost. It was preaching PC [Political Correctness] in an almost sophomoric way. Jan, my wife, keeps saying, "You've got to look at it from that time, not now." I wrote a couple books on our family.

CAC: Oh.

JR: I shudder to even read those books in some ways. [laughter]

CAC: You didn't get a \$4 million advance in any case?

JR: No, those books didn't go anywhere but one of them got published by Harper and Row; so, I at least got in on the big time.

CAC: All right. Your first really toe-hold into the university was with Joe Mestenhauser and I hope Forrest [Frosty] Moore?

JR: Yes.

CAC: I worked with both of them in the mid 1960s on orientation for foreign students.

JR: Did you?

CAC: It was very, very rewarding to me. Frosty was just a remarkable person.

JR: Yes. I just felt that this was a great program and they were [unclear].

CAC: Well, Macalester did a lot.

JR: Oh, Macalester was amazing. Nine percent of the student body at that time were foreign students. What a great thing for the American students . . . to be exposed to all these different people.

CAC: You bet. Then, you pick up next the hospitals. Again, you see, the newspaper is a great mystery to those of us who live in the ivory tower. Did you get that idea or . . .

JR: I got the idea because at that time there was a big issue over whether the Veterans Administration and the university should combine their plans for new hospitals and build one hospital because they were already associated in their faculty and in their treatment programs. The Citizens League, which has been a great institution in our cities here, had made an issue of, Why don't they really get together, and save money, and do a better job, and be more efficient? So, I decided, let's look at the university proposal, the plans. I had some sources who were involved in that process and were helping me with information . . .

CAC: Through the Citizens League?

JR: No, this was through some personal friends that I had.

CAC: In the university?

JR: No, outside the university . . .

CAC: Oh, I see.

JR: . . . who were involved in the university.

CAC: Okay.

JR: So, I got into it. I went into it with the idea that I want to see every document there is on the planning process.

CAC: You'd make a good historian.

JR: [laughter] Right. First of all, I spent two weeks going through all the minutes of the University Hospital Board and it was an incredible experience because all the issues were laid out in those meetings. Nobody covered those meetings. There were no reporters there ever.

CAC: These minutes were close to proceedings rather than to minutes?

JR: These minutes were giving quotes from people. They weren't just naming categories they discussed. They were very detailed minutes.

CAC: Good.

JR: They gave me a real insight . . .

CAC: [unclear] freely open?

JR: They were open, totally open, public information, and with supporting documents in the minute books. That's where I got started. It was beautiful. All the issues were laid out to me. The kingdoms in the Medical School pushing to expand their domains through the hospital and all of this, pushing for more and more and more regardless of the cost and regardless of whether they could pay for this. I finally did the first story and all hell broke loose.

CAC: Oh, really?

JR: Oh, god!

CAC: Because reading it fifteen years later, it's not . . .

JR: All hell broke loose. Bob Dickler was the head of the hospital at the time, Robert Dickler. He left later to go to Colorado, and then came back, and then left again. He decided to go on the offensive and try to discredit what I'd done. He presented a long incredibly detailed attack on my first article.

CAC: And he got it published?

JR: No, this was an effort to discredit me through the editor . . .

CAC: I see.

JR: . . . and then he filed a complaint with the press council.

CAC: Oh, good grief.

JR: So, I mean, they were all out to get me. I had done them wrong. So, then, I had to prepare a point by point rebuttal.

CAC: But not for publication?

JR: This was all for my [unclear].

CAC: This was only in house?

JR: Right. The press council rejected the complaint because they hadn't met some technical requirements before they had filed their complaint, like try to mediate and work it out ahead of time; so, we didn't have to deal with going all the way through. Then, we just continued. I just kept writing these articles about what was empire building.

CAC: I want to show you that I've done my homework but also this leads into what you're saying here. It's not a thick one—you did several—I'm just going to quote it. All right?

In addition, health care experts see future problems for the university and restrictions on tax money for low income, Medicaid patients.

JR: Hey!

CAC: I knew you'd be pleased.

In a leveling off of federal funds for research . . . it calls for a reduction in medical students and their aid programs because of a claimed over supply of physicians. Finally, some past and present university positions say heavy emphasis on research, which brings needed dollars and maintains

the university's reputation, has downgraded the status of treatment oriented doctors causing many to leave, taking their patients with them.

Now, this is thirteen years later. That's some pretty damned good reporting. That's where we are now.

JR: Clarke, I love you! [laughter] I didn't realize that I had written that.

CAC: You tick off four things and the four things are: it's patient income, it's decline of federal research funds through NIH [National Institutes of Health], it's control by the departments, and it's the concentration on research and not on practice. And they objected? That was what the objection . . .

JR: Oh! did they object . . . unfair . . . out to get the Medical School and the hospital. What are we trying to do? Otto Silha was the chair of the regents at that time and one of the doctors who was a neighbor of Otto's called my editor, Chuck Bailey, and was trying to get me through him to be neutralized or pulled off of this. Of course, Bailey just said, "Go to hell," in effect, not in those words. It had no impact but, nevertheless, they were pulling out all the stops. It was the same thing that happened when we did the Medical School thing more recently.

CAC: We'll come to that.

JR: What are you trying to do? Are you trying to hurt us, to kill us, to destroy us? Why are you doing this? You should be our allies and friends.

CAC: Were you aware of the reputation of Ray Amberg when you were doing this?

JR: No.

CAC: So, he was gone long enough?

JR: Yes, no, I didn't know about that.

CAC: As an historian, I would kind of respond to that that Ray Amberg was probably more than the president, the key person to testify before the state legislature on everything, particularly the hospitals, of course. He was just a giant, and a man of enormous integrity and skill, etcetera, etcetera. I think he created—this isn't the historian talking now and I may be wrong—a style of authority in the hospitals, apart from the Health Sciences, that would make it possible for subsequent persons of lesser stature to react as he did. No one would have attacked Ray Amberg ever.

JR: Okay. Well, that's

CAC: That's just my supposition as you talk about it.

JR: Yes. Particularly some low life reporter . . .

CAC: Yes.

JR: . . . with no particular status or standing to be taking on the giants was unacceptable.

CAC: But they went ahead and built the hospital anyhow?

JR: Well, we did get . . . in the final stages . . . We followed this story for a year.

CAC: Yes.

JR: I did. We kept writing the stories and, ultimately—the university had the hole dug for the hospital—the president stopped it, and said, "We've got to reexamine this."

CAC: This is [Peter] Magrath?

JR: Yes. We had a great picture on the page, a huge picture, of the hole . . .

CAC: [laughter]

JR: . . . and then, They Stopped the Hospital. And they cut it back. They did cut the size of it not as much as they should have but they did cut it quite a bit; so, it did have some affect. A lot of things you do, it's just down the tubes and nobody remembers it but this had some affect. They cut the size of the hospital. I feel such a feeling of vindication now because—we had an editorial—even now it's too big. We had an editorial just a few days ago on how they're suffering. They can't get enough patients. They don't have enough money. They're farming out programs.

CAC: Well, you see, that paragraph jumped out at me because it was just like 1995.

JR: Right, exactly.

CAC: Quoting one of my best articles, Joe . . . "I felt as though I'd made a paper airplane and threw it into the Grand Canyon. It just went down there and made no impression at all."

JR: Okay, you can share the feeling, right? [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

JR: That often happens.

CAC: But you were getting a feel for the university, at least that segment of it?

JR: I certainly was. Yes. I don't want to use it in a pervasive way but there's a certain arrogance on the part of some people in universities . . .

CAC: Oh, yes.

JR: . . . that they have a corner on the truth. I grew up in this attitude in the Catholic church. The Catholic church has the truth.

CAC: Ahhh.

JR: And who doesn't believe goes to hell! There's a certain similarity in the academic world, not just this university, it's all across higher education.

CAC: Oh, sure and the institution. You look at corporate and labor leaders . . . the same deal.

JR: Yes, right. In the university communities around the country, one of the problems is there has not been enough challenge because they have been accepted as having the truth. There hasn't been enough challenge; so, when they are challenged, they kind of rear up and question the challenger rather than deal with the merits of the challenge. That's kind of what I went through in a lot of their [unclear]. It was, Why are you doing this? You're out to destroy us and you shouldn't be doing this.

CAC: Even that early?

JR: The hospital was the first one where I came into that.

CAC: I would guess so. But then you turn to legislative retrenchment and we weren't retrenched as badly as we all thought we were . . . the reduction in the hours taught and so forth. Would the same thing have happened in these instances?

JR: Yes, right. Absolutely.

CAC: Except there's no single source of opposition within the university to these stories? It was just kind of the whole *kersmoosh*.

JR: In the case of retrenchment and whether it's as bad as we were told, Magrath was just ripping me up and down.

CAC: And where and what . . . ?

JR: In speeches.

CAC: I see.

JR: He was really doing everything he could to discredit what I had written. I just felt that, wait a minute here—I use this all the time and maybe it's a cheap shot . . . I don't think so—you are a university, and your goal is to search for the truth, and that's what I'm trying to do. When I look at the university, I try to get to the bottom of things and find out what the real situation is, not what you put out for political purposes, or money purposes, or anything else. What are the real facts there? How do you really compare in the Big Ten? How are the salaries really within the university? What are the disparities in salaries? which I was writing about. Is your situation really as bad as you say when you go to the legislature and cry "Wolf" year, after year, after year, not basing it on what you got the year before but what you want to get and then saying, "We didn't get all we wanted to get." It didn't go over too big but I felt it was honest. I felt it is something that ought to be said.

CAC: But you're quoting in those several articles line faculty so that you were at the grassroots here also. Did you find the same kind of resistance? I would guess with Dan Cooper [unclear] not?

JR: No! No. There again, the university being such a diverse institution, for everything you do, whenever you're critical, you're going to find the people that you're critical of, hating it but you're going to find a lot of people who love it because they are saying, "It's about time that these inequities have been exposed. It's about time that junior faculty are presented in their plight versus some of the stars who are making the big bucks. It's about time that the Medical School is brought to heel after practically running as an independent body for all these years."

CAC: Did you perceive in 1982 that a lot of the provinces, other than the Medical School—forget that for a moment—were operating on the star system? That's what we called it.

JR: Yes, definitely. We had it for awhile in our newspaper. They would hire people at huge salaries, and the people who were doing the hard work were not getting that, and there was terrible resentment. The same thing exists here as in any institution. It's like right now, it's going on in our society.

CAC: Yes.

JR: The haves and the have nots and it's growing wider, and wider, and wider and you can't keep doing that without risking terrible conflict. Yes, that's what it was all about.

CAC: I wish somebody had given you my name at that time.

JR: [laughter]

CAC: I was just coming off the chair and I had observed lots of things that confirm some of your observations.

JR: I wish I had known about you. Yes, definitely.

CAC: Again, you make up this agenda for yourself?

JR: Almost in all of my reporting, I think in all of my reporting, at the university I have come up with the ideas.

CAC: What kind of a surround of colleagues or persons whom you know in the community can you share this with and would get access to the university through?

JR: To tell you the truth, as I think about it a little bit, on all of these stories, projects, I went in cold. I really didn't know anybody as sources or people who were going to give me a head start.

CAC: How do you make the first call then?

JR: First of all, I just go to the obvious places and I want data. That's where I start.

CAC: Well, they think well of you in university archives.

JR: Oh! I love the people in the archives. [laughter]

CAC: I told them, "I'm going to talk to Joe tonight." "Oh! he's an old friend, a client of ours."

JR: I used to spend more time in that dark, dank, basement . . .

CAC: It's a terrible place.

JR: . . . that dusty place. Oh, but I love that place.

CAC: Yes.

JR: Those boxes piled on all . . . I had more fun down there and they are so great.

CAC: But where do you get your other leads then?

JR: The leads . . . in the documents.

CAC: No . . . not in the documents. You're a smart guy, you'd go to university archives but then you have to talk with people. How do you know whom to talk to?

JR: I get the leads on the people to talk to often from the documents at the university, people who are named as being critics. Let me give you an example—it is so wonderful when I think about it—on the Medical School. I was going through . . . we had gotten access to a tenure case in which a professor had been denied tenure in one of the agricultural departments. I just ran across the name of his advocate in the proceedings—he might be a good person to talk to because he's representing the faculty—so, I just called him up. Yes, let's have lunch. Maura Lerner was working with me at the time; so, we got together with him. We were talking on. He didn't have a hell of a lot to say but he struck me as being a maverick. I love mavericks because they're the people who know things and are willing to talk. Maura, my partner, mentioned a name, Fritz Bach. Do you remember that name?

CAC: Yes.

JR: Oh! my god! he just opened up. He hated Fritz Bach. Fritz Bach had done him in in the Medical School. From there, he gave us . . . We developed a relationship. It takes time. You get to know people. You build a trust level.

CAC: Trust is the word.

JR: Yes. You build that; it takes weeks sometimes, months. We developed this, we went on, and he led us to other people. He was the ultimate key source in the Medical School. He was just beautiful. He became a friend, a confidante, a source, anything you want to name.

CAC: But he's putting himself at risk?

JR: He was. We guaranteed him that he would not be identified in any way. He would have lost his position in the faculty. He was never ever identified. He was never found out. He really accomplished his goal, which was to [unclear] the people that did him in. [laughter] [unclear]

CAC: He's kind of like deep throat. [laughter]

JR: Yes. He accomplished his goals and . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

CAC: We're talking now about how one develops contacts and networks. You've had fifteen years; so, you're pretty networked by now. But just starting out, that's what I was interested in. With teaching loads, for example, that's something that you really have to do department by department.

JR: Yes. Let me tell you about the teaching loads [unclear], which I really felt was probably one of the best things I ever did. My idea for that came about—I hate to admit this—because of a friend who really had a wonderful situation at the university at that time. He was teaching and doing almost nothing else. I thought, this is a pretty cushy deal. I've got to work pretty hard and he's really got a deal here. [laughter] You know, I'm wondering how prevalent this is. And he's a friend! But I thought, there's a bigger issue here beyond friendship. So, I decided to take a look at teaching load versus research. I found that they had data cards way back to the days of the computer where they were using cards . . .

CAC: Yes, yes.

JR: . . . putting data on cards and doing these archaic printouts. I got printouts from twenty years previous on teaching loads of all the faculty. I did everything. I was doing it all by hand. I didn't have a computer program to do this.

CAC: [laughter]

JR: I took every faculty member in every school and department in the university that was involved in teaching, not certain Medical School things where they're in clinical teaching but every faculty member in the entire university. I had, my god! pages and pages of names and comparing twenty years versus now teaching loads.

CAC: I'm surprised you didn't see how hard I was working there. [laughter] It would have jumped right out at you.

JR: [laughter] Right! I wish I'd known! I would have interviewed you as the . . .

CAC: Overburdened.

JR: . . . ultimate shining star. I came up with these findings. I think it was a 30 percent decline in teaching versus research. The big argument that was given was that it's because we're doing a lot more research but I found that that wasn't really the case in comparing research load. That was a long time ago and I see now there's all kinds of stories about this and it's still an issue—not that I'm against research. I love research myself. I just feel there is something to be said about teaching, and the amount of effort that's put into it, and the rewards that are given for it. I thought that was a very valid issue and it's a student issue really.

CAC: I'm sure many faculty told you how difficult it was to evaluate teaching?

JR: Oh, yes.

CAC: I think that's true.

JR: Yes. It's not a black and white issue and I tried to avoid making it black and white.

CAC: I think you did.

JR: You can't do that. I think it's a valid issue and I felt that it's something that should have been presented and discussed. It didn't have any particular impact or anything. It didn't change anything. I just thought it was a good valid issue.

CAC: Sure.

JR: I enjoyed doing that. it was a hard job. It was a lot of work.

CAC: I suggested earlier when I became chairman, I had an associate go over to the state capitol and find the budget of the college. I had her in a second phase look at teaching loads in different departments and even within the Arts College, it was like that. I am holding my hands wide apart.

JR: Yes. You bet. Certain departments taught a lot and others taught almost nothing . . . not nothing but I mean there were just huge differences.

CAC: I'd share with you, Joe, that one of the things I've learned . . . I've done about 100 interviews now . . . about twenty of them are outside.

JR: That's great. That's a lot.

CAC: I've discovered that many of the faculty whom I talk with—because it's their life—are profoundly aware of what it was you were talking about. Now, in retrospect and reflection, they can see where those tensions developed. Particularly in a climate—you can respond to this . . . I don't want you to agree with me—in the 1970s, there was a lot of research money, which meant that people were facilitated to do research that had not been before.

JR: Yes.

CAC: They got the signal—this is my perception—from Morrill Hall that in the distribution of merit monies that research was going to count. We wanted to become, already then, if not the Harvard on the Mississippi, we wanted to move up in the rankings. It was that sense that we were not quite there, we wanted to be better. You probably saw this recent graduate school review?

JR: Yes.

CAC: We've done all of this for twenty years and some departments have held . . . Chemical Engineering; but apart from that, there's been largely an erosion of that.

JR: Because it's more competitive, I think, is the main reason.

CAC: Yes.

JR: There's just a lot more competition, more universities.

CAC: But it's foolish—I'm speaking only for myself now for a conversation—that it's unwise to set that as your goal for a state university in a state of 4¼ million people.

JR: I'll tell you, this gets to something that we never wrote. When we started this last investigation on the Medical School, that was not our original investigation. I decided it would be worthwhile to look at the Minnesota Campaign, and the \$365 million that were raised in that campaign, and see what commitments were made to big donors, particularly business people and corporations to get the money, and how this might affect academic freedom and all of the good things of a university. Maura Lerner and I had developed huge boxes of files on the endowed chairs and some of the commitments that were made to get the money for those endowed chairs because that was the big thrust of the fund raising. It was things like with Pillsbury and the marketing department . . . you'll give weekly reports to the executives on what you're doing. It was like the chair holder was an arm of Pillsbury. We had all kinds of stuff like that and we were trying to get access to all of the records on how the money was used and the university was fighting us like hell. We were threatening court action. We were meeting with attorneys week after week and having to fight to get access. It was just going on, and on, and on. While we were fighting to get at those records, we came in to the Medical School. That opened up to us and we never got back to the other thing. I have all of these files. I thought, I really ought to follow-up by doing this but I haven't wanted to spend my entire career making it look as if I'm out to get the university or something, doing negative things.

CAC: Well, maybe your partner would take it on herself?

JR: No, she's on other things now; so, it's just sitting there. We have wonderful documented evidence of ties.

CAC: What is the legal status of those documents?

JR: They're all public information.

CAC: They are? I mean, it wasn't a private contract or understanding?

JR: No. No. No. These are the actual contracts that were signed to get the money.

CAC: I see.

JR: It's really great stuff but we never did it. We never wrote about it.

CAC: Did you work through the Minnesota Foundation to get these documents?

JR: Well, the Minnesota Foundation fought us. They're non-profit and they claim they're not really a public institution.

CAC: I see.

JR: So, they wouldn't give us anything. We finally wound up getting some stuff because the university, Morrill Hall, had shipped over some documents from the president to the Foundation to keep them secret. We were able to fight that one by showing that they were doing this to avoid releasing what should be public documents; so, we got that but most of the stuff in the Foundation, we couldn't get. It didn't make that much difference because the good stuff, the really important documents were in the departments because that's where the fund raising took place really and the money went to the departments, to the endowed chairs, and for the research programs, and so forth; so, we were able to get a lot of stuff from the departments but the administration fought us and was running all this stuff through them. They were working nights and weekends censoring the documents and we were fighting that. We would get whole pages blank that they had . . .

CAC: Just like getting your report from the FBI?

JR: Right! [laughter] It was a great experience in openness and democracy. A university fighting to be secret.

CAC: You're suggesting this is from the top down, all the way through?

JR: Oh, absolutely, it was from the top down. Absolutely. No question.

CAC: But you did see a substantial number of strings attached to those chairs?

JR: Oh, it was really . . . I really should get back to this because it was pretty appalling, it really was.

CAC: An historian in three or four years writing a sequel to James Gray [*University of Minnesota: 1851-1951*] could get access to these documents?

JR: I don't know whether the newspaper would let anybody get access.

CAC: They'd have to start the research from their own? But these documents could be got?

JR: They could be got. They're all there.

CAC: Okay.

JR: They could be got.

CAC: But they aren't in university archives? You can't just go check?

JR: You'd have to go to each department and do what we did. Those documents are probably in the archives now . . . I don't know.

CAC: It would be primarily in Bio-Tech, in Engineering, and in Business?

JR: Yes, those are the big ones. Liberal Arts? Is Business going to be endowing chairs?

CAC: We've got some chairs.

JR: Some but not . . . Well, in Liberal Arts, John Cowles Jr. endowed a couple million dollars for dance programs.

CAC: There were no marionette strings attached to that.

JR: [laughter] Well, Sage Cowles, his wife, is a former dancer.

CAC: Well, they danced on Northrop naked, both of them. [laughter]

JR: Right. You know it all . . .

CAC: There, you could bare it all, right?

JR: Right. [laughter] When we were talking about it, if we were ever going to do this story, we'd have to bring that into the story. We couldn't cover up what our leader had done. [laughter]

CAC: Even before you get into the Medical School. Again, these forays really gave you a better sense of the institution and of the control of information that was a clear strategy and policy?

JR: Yes. This is an incredible irony. Maura Lerner and I won a national award, the National Press Club Award, the Freedom of the Press Award, last year for challenging an open democratic university to get information. Here we were . . . this is an open institution, supposedly anxious to let the public know what it's doing; and we had to fight so much to get information that we get a national award for this fight to get information. Now, here are the two of us here, American reporters, challenging a public university for information and the other person who got this award—there were two of us—was a journalist from Zaire . . .

CAC: Ahhh.

JR: . . . who had written articles about how the government had favored the military because this is a military government and had to bribe his way out of the country to get the award.

CAC: [gasp]

JR: So, if that isn't the ultimate of ironies . . . [laughter]

CAC: Yes. Where did you pick up your partner, Maura Lerner?

JR: Maura and I have been working on projects since 1986. It started out, we got in—this was with Fritz Bach—Endotronics. Maura was doing medical business. That was her beat. I had a source in the FBI who said, "You ought to look at Endotronics because there's something fishy going on in there." So, I got together with Maura and that was part of her beat.

CAC: Did you get any better lead than that?

JR: No. He told us about the two guys who were running it.

CAC: Oh, I see.

JR: He said, "They're weird. There's something crazy there." Maura and I started out at that time and we found out that Fritz Bach was an incredible . . . He was taking loans from the head of the company to buy a house while he's getting his research money from the company and writing up reports on his research, which were hype jobs. It was pathetic. That's where we got started. She then moved to the university beat and we got together on some stuff on the university.

CAC: One doesn't see many shared by-lines in any newspaper. Occasionally, there'll be a little at the end . . . "with the cooperation of" two or three others . . .

JR: Right.

CAC: . . . but to have a partnership authorship by-line is quite rare? Is it elsewhere or has it come to be more usual?

JR: It's rare on day-to-day reporting but on projects, you often pair up with somebody because it becomes so big. For one person to do it, it takes too long and it's just too hard. It's not unusual on projects.

CAC: This kind of does bring us down to the biggest story and that is the Medical. There's no point in going through what is in writing but there are background things. I don't even know what question to ask next. Will you kind of suggest how you find your way and what legal problems there were? The big question, Joe—as I read your other articles, and as I've lived at

this university since 1951—is what you’ve described as cover-up in one of your pieces, the unwillingness to address what many of us knew in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and was an extraordinarily serious problem. I’m going to make another statement. I’ve interviewed people who were on the judicial committee in the university and as early as the 1960s, they were beginning to find—this is on my other tapes; so, I’m not sharing anything I shouldn’t—there was a disproportionate number of cases coming from the Health Sciences. There were doctors, mostly young, who were cut out. Their laboratory door would be locked. They wouldn’t receive tenure. They wouldn’t get access to research funds and there wasn’t a due process of law. There was no way to get a procedure within the Medical School; so, they would go to the all university judicial committee. A couple of these chairs of the judicial committee then went to see then sitting presidents to say, “You’ve got a problem down the line.” They didn’t have any lead like you did. There was something goofy going on . . . but they just knew that the procedures weren’t right. By their testimony, there was never a response from Central Administration.

JR: Central Administration never challenged the Medical School. I got a real great insight into this when I got to know Bob Howard very well.

CAC: Yes.

JR: He was the former dean, an incredibly wonderful person, great integrity, fought the fight and lost.

CAC: He stayed on for a long time.

JR: You bet he did.

CAC: He lost the battle and then he stayed on.

JR: That’s right. He never gave up.

CAC: [unclear] that.

JR: If you have more time, he is a person you really ought to talk to. I got to know him really well. He gave me access to his diaries and everything. I just admire him so much for, within the system, fighting the fight and he got no support.

CAC: He shared these after he was no longer attached to the university?

JR: That’s right. He fought the fight with the presidents and lost at every turn.

CAC: Wilson, whom I perceive as one of the great presidents we’ve had, slipped away from this one and very knowingly?

JR: You bet he did. You bet he did.

CAC: And so did all the subsequent ones, including Mr. [Kenneth] Keller?

JR: Yes.

CAC: Now, why?

JR: The reason, as far as I can tell from what I learned, is that the Medical School is an incredible source of money for the university.

CAC: But it's their money. It's not our money.

JR: I know but it's money and it's research. It's status. It's ties to business and to important people in the community, everybody from legislators to business leaders to important donors, from the lowest level of having been to the hospital and benefitted from it to helping to form a company, whatever. It is from here to here. There are ties to the community that are important and presidents just simply were not willing to take that on because if they did, they would hear about it, and they would be challenged, and they just didn't do it. Let me give you just a little tiny insight into . . . You talked about people who were from the inside, complaining about this system way back in the 1960s. We got a letter the other day from a concerned faculty member. We get a lot of letters from concerned faculty members, no name. This concerned faculty member said, "You know, I wish you would look at this certain professor in the Medical School who would make [Elwin] Fraley and [John] Najarian look like small potatoes when you consider how much money he pulled out of there and how rich he became, how much he had in property in Florida," on, and on, and on. It was a lot of great detail and he said, "I felt for so many years that I should have told somebody about this. Then, I read all this stuff about Najarian, and my conscience finally got to me, and I decided I would write this letter." Well, thanks a lot! It was too late! This was in 1985 that this happened, ten years ago. We've already been all the way through all of this stuff. We're not going to go back into something in 1985. He was sitting there all this time knowing this and why didn't he say something, do something? He didn't.

CAC: Even at that time, he did it anonymously?

JR: Yes, even now, he did it anonymously. I don't know whether he's got a job at stake now, I doubt it, but he didn't give us his name. That's kind of an insight into, I think, why this never came out in the open.

CAC: But we know at Wisconsin, Iowa—I think I'm right in those. . . I had a brother-in-law who was in the faculty of the Health Sciences, University of Chicago—there was central auditing control and central control of all funds in those places. Now, do you think a comparative historian or scholar could figure out, Why in those places but not here? The pressures must have been as great at Chicago, or Wisconsin, or Iowa, right?

JR: it would make an interesting story. I did the one story on how we had the decentralized system where the kingdoms, the department heads, ran everything. There was no real central control and that was the problem. I don't know why this system developed this way. I think it's because some very, very strong and powerful people were department heads . . . [Owen] Wangenstein and others who were leading the country in some of their work.

CAC: Really the world, yes. After all, we did get organ transplants here early.

JR: Yes, right. They were department heads and that system developed that they were far more powerful than any dean could ever imagine and they . . .

CAC: Dean Howard shared that with you?

JR: Oh, yes. Look it. They chose the deans. The department heads chose the deans. They chose weak people. David Brown was a Whig person. The deans were weak. Howard was an exception but he didn't win. They made sure that the selections were people that they could dominate and they did. This continued all through that time.

CAC: It's not just the years that you were doing it, it's forty-five years.

JR: Yes.

CAC: For how long? I don't know.

JR: I don't either. I just looked at thirty years to now and it continued all through that period. It was a system that perpetuated itself because the people that were benefitting from the system were choosing the leaders who would make it possible to keep it going that way. There was never any attempt, real attempt, on the part of Central Administration to change that; so, it just continued—until it blew up!

CAC: One thinks of Law School, and of Agriculture, and of Intercollegiate Athletics, all having constituencies—you're talking about constituencies powerful outside the university—these other institutions did also but there was not the same level of abuse as you're portraying?

JR: I just don't know enough about those schools.

CAC: Okay.

JR: But I do know one little insight. I found out recently that a very prominent professor in the School of Agriculture—he's a friend of mine actually . . . I know him quite well. . . I haven't talked to him yet but I'm going to—wrote a letter to [Nils] Hasselmo way back before the ALG [Antilymphocyte Globulin] program blew up and said, "I see some problems in the way the Medical School is running a profit making business without any real controls."

CAC: Of course, the laboratory is out there on the St. Paul campus.

JR: Yes. He said, "We had the potential for those kind of problems on developing new seed varieties and so forth."

CAC: Ahhh.

JR: "We dealt with that by building in safe-guards and we never ever let this happen." And he said, "I think you ought to look at this." This was way back and Hasselmo didn't. Now, if he had picked up on that and taken that on in the beginning, the whole thing might not have happened—but he didn't! Not only did he not do it at that time . . .

CAC: You don't think it's because he's crowded by other issues?

JR: No. Look, if you're in charge, you take the issues that count and this was a dynamite issue. He was warned. He knew this was a dynamite issue and he didn't . . .

CAC: Well, so was Magrath and so was Wilson warned.

JR: Yes. [laughter] Maybe you could tell me why they didn't act. What is it? What is it about Central Administration in this university that doesn't recognize the potential problems that are going to happen if they don't grab the issues that really count, and deal with them, and hope they can kind of keep them down?

CAC: I'm going to play another scenario just for fun that would be a parallel. I know that the university is not a big deal when put against federal government, for example, but the pressures on being able to maintain control of your agenda there . . . they just get away from you, right? I'm just suggesting that great systems have a hard time maintaining a control of the agenda. It's taken away from them. I've had fifteen, twenty, twenty-five persons who have had experience passing through Morrill Hall saying, "They all work too hard. They don't ever stop to think."

JR: Is that right?

CAC: [unclear], that's why I'm saying there's another scenario that maybe they can't distinguish which are the really major things and which they have to pay attention to.

JR: They don't stop to think. That is very important. I was talking to somebody, one of the former deans, the other day who said that there were . . . how many academic vice-presidents in the period . . . ? They were changing, like, every two years or something . . .

CAC: Yes, yes, yes. Right. Like Magrath and Keller . . .

JR: . . . a succession of academic vice-presidents. Nobody was in there long enough to really take charge.

CAC: To learn the job?

JR: Right. That's part of it, because the academic vice-president, I think, is the key person in any administration. Am I wrong on that?

CAC: I think that was true until this year. Now, we'll wait to see whether these three provosts are going to change this.

JR: Yes, that's different now.

CAC: I don't know what's left for the academic affairs vice-president to do. I think the provosts have most of the policy decisions that they had, budget decisions.

JR: Yes, it's a new ball game but up to that point . . .

CAC: Up to that point, that was true.

JR: Yes.

CAC: Although, in the days of James Morrill as president of the university, it was Bill Middlebrook who was vice-president for Finance. He was the guy who ran things.

JR: Is that right? [laughter]

CAC: But there is a concentration there and a failure, as you're describing it, to respond to major problems that are looming?

JR: Yes.

CAC: So, when your first article appears, then the impulse, I should think, would be to gather the wagons, right?

JR: Let me give you an insight into that first article. The first article was about David Niton. After we wrote it, we had two reactions. One was a reaction—we got this from people who knew—the reaction of Najarian and Dean Brown in the Medical School . . . well, we sure got them, didn't we? Nothing happened. In other words, yeah, there were some problems but they took their best shot and the whole thing is pretty well dead. Nobody really cares.

CAC: Niton must have cared.

JR: Oh, he . . . well, he hated us. The other reaction was on the part of other faculty members who said to us, "God! we've known about this for so long. Are we glad you finally exposed this man. This is an embarrassment, what he was doing. It's high time that you did this." Those were the two reactions. Then we got into the [Barry] Garfinkle case and the reaction of President Hasselmo was to circle the wagons. The reaction was, look, we have developed a system of accountability. We have a few problems but we're dealing with these. We don't see any need for anymore investigation. We don't see any need for anything. Things are fine. We have a system of accountability. Sure, we've made a few mistakes but now we have this system and everything will be fine.

CAC: Now, is it your impression that he really had persuaded himself of that?

JR: I really believe so. I interviewed him. I interviewed him after those first two articles which should have been a tip-off that maybe you better treat this as a fairly serious matter. He just stonewalled. I said, "Do you see any need for any more review, investigation of these matters?" "No, I think we've got a system here that's going to take care of these things," [he said.]

CAC: And there was no way for you as a reporter of testing whether that was a devoutly held view, that he had persuaded himself to it, or whether it was, indeed, stonewalling, as you say?

JR: No, I really don't know. I kind of get the impression that an awful lot of people in positions of power . . . their reaction is not to grab a hold of a problem and run with it and deal with. The reaction is, it's a human reaction, which is, you convince yourself that it's not going to go any farther and you can control it. I happened to know at that time a guy who was—weird—the boyfriend of some . . . what became a source of ours over at the university. He works in one of the big brokerage houses. He's kind of their internal investigator for problems and dealing with them before they become big. He was giving me stuff about how executives who know how to deal with problems, how they act. You get out ahead of the problem. When it first surfaces, you grab it. It's like Tylenol where they got ahead of it.

CAC: [laughter] Right.

JR: They said, "We're solving it!" They did all kinds of things. That's what they should do at the university. They never did that. It was too late by the time they really got in to investigating and by that time, the thing was just a disaster. The FBI was raiding the university and all this.

CAC: Did the FBI get the information from you, I mean, the impulse?

JR: Yes, they did. They did it because of what we had come up with. That I do know.

CAC: You realize—so I hope you will share it with posterity and not with me—the real risk of being an investigative reporter, psychological risk or maybe even a career risk? You've got to be very careful with stories of this size, right?

JR: Careful is the ultimate word on this one.

CAC: So, how do you steel yourself? I'm trying to understand you as well as the university, you see.

JR: [laughter] You become almost like a basket case at certain points. It just dominates your life and you just can't think of anything else. You don't sleep well. You're worried about whether you're making mistakes. You're thinking of the things you've got to check out that you haven't checked out. Have you missed anything? Then, at the end, we have a process, what we call just fact checking. We'll take a story, after we write it, and we will check every word, every sentence against documents and interviews, not just for the specific fact but for the context, whether we're fairly presenting it or distorting it. We went for two years on the University Medical School and there wasn't one mistake, not one error.

CAC: How large a staff do you have helping you with that?

JR: There were two of us, Maura and I, and an editor who was advising and so forth.

CAC: Did you ever have to call in lawyers?

JR: Oh, yes. Oh, god! yes. We have a lawyer on the newspaper who is great, Randi Lebedoff, who is the wife of the former chair of the regents. [laughter]

CAC: Ahhh.

JR: There's another interesting story on independent thinking.

CAC: Okay.

JR: She was great. The lawyers—this is just not Randi because I've been working with lawyers there for a long time—have a philosophy of not trying to keep things out of the newspaper because it's risky but finding a way to get it in to the newspaper without jeopardizing yourself on a liable suit. So, we worked together on, How do we present this . . . that is liable proof? Then, we worked from there. We were never sued. We were never challenged on a fact. It worked beautifully. We have an outside lawyer who also works on these. He's an expert on liable law. We just work together and make sure that we get it right. [laughter]

CAC: I'm going to divert for a moment just to share something with you. It's a word that you may enjoy. We're trying to preserve the Valley of the Kinnickinnic River in western Wisconsin, Pierce County. Are you a trout fisherman?

JR: I was as a child with my father. I loved fly fishing.

CAC: I see. Well, this is the best trout stream [unclear].

JR: Is it? I love fly fishing, yes.

CAC: We're trying to save it; so, we have a land trust and my son is president of it. Last autumn, we got a volunteer from, I think it was, the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] in Wisconsin, who would do a botanical map of the valley. It's only about twenty-five miles . . . it's doable. You start out with air photos and at different seasons so you can see when the leaves are off, and when the leaves are on, and so forth. Then, you start plotting cultures and sub-cultures within that, white pines, and aspen, and birch, and shrub, and so forth. After they get that all mapped out, then they hike that whole damned valley to check it out from their maps of what is really there.

JR: Ahhh.

CAC: This process that you were talking about, which historians do and what you're doing as a journalist, they call ground-truthing.

JR: [laughter] I love it! It's great!

CAC: Isn't that great?!

JR: Yes.

CAC: I wish I'd known that when I was teaching the research seminars because that's exactly the process.

JR: Yes.

CAC: You've got to get down there and see if that's a damned birch tree or whether that's a grove of [unclear]. You can't know it until you do the ground-truthing.

JR: Oh, that's wonderful.

CAC: That's what you guys are up to.

JR: Yes, that's right.

CAC: Well, that's a diversion.

JR: No, it isn't. It's right on point. [laughter] Beautiful. After those first two articles, just to show you how things kind of begin to build, I'd tell you we had some opposition in the newspaper in the beginning. They were saying, "This is taking an awful long time and you really

haven't given us anything that significant. Okay, there were problems but you took six months on that Niton story." We did . . . six months.

CAC: Heavens.

JR: "I didn't think you really had anything terribly monumental out of that work." We were not given a blank check here to just work forever. Then, we got a phone call and a letter, a phone call from a faculty member in the Medical School, very respected, prominent researcher who said, "Look at the ALG program." And we got a letter, same thing . . . concerned faculty member, "Look at this, and this, and this."

CAC: One was by a person whom you knew . . . the other was anonymous?

JR: Right.

CAC: Okay.

JR: So, we had lunch with the faculty member, and he told us what he knew, and we got into that, and that's what was the ultimate story . . . out of two tips, people who were encouraged to call us because we had made the effort to find out what was going on over there. That's how it all started. If it hadn't been for that . . . I didn't know anything about ALG. I had gotten all of the university audits in the Medical School just to see what they had found and there was an audit on the ALG program. I wondered what the hell is ALG, some kind of a horse serum? I didn't know what in the hell they were talking about.

CAC: They get it out of horse blood or horse piss, don't they?

JR: [laughter] I read it and I thought, ah, put that aside. It was some petty little thing about a petty cash fund. That became a big thing because the university auditor, the big issue that he found was a petty cash fund scandal while the world is crashing down.

CAC: Yes. In big stories, is that the way it happens? One thinks of the [Bob] Woodward thing on [President Richard] Nixon, right?

JR: It is. It is.

CAC: But if you're in the business, you get anonymous tips but you also get someone who is well placed who is willing to share and that's an enormous risk for that person?

JR: It is. The faculty member who came to us, if it ever became known that he had blown the whistle, he would be in terrible trouble.

CAC: Then you have a hard time protecting it because some of your stories would lead to say, "Ah, the leak came from . . ." How do you cover for that?

JR: We go to incredible lengths to make sure that . . . we don't tell anybody. We just don't.

CAC: I know but what you write by context, people could guess that that person had access to this information and it had to be one of three people or something like that.

JR: Well, yes. Clarke, the way it works is this. Generally speaking, people who give us tips are not people we rely on for information.

CAC: I see.

JR: They're just giving us . . . this is what we need to look at. So, we don't really count on them and we don't use them in the story in any way. They could never be identified in a story because they aren't a supplier of information. There's just a tipster.

CAC: Ah ha.

JR: They're giving us leads.

CAC: But then you need people at the next level who do give you information?

JR: Yes, and those tips prompted us . . . I went to the archives and read the various *Cutting Edge* newsletters put out by the surgery department and lo! and behold, there was an article on ALG and it had a picture of the entire staff and names. I started calling people and I got some people who were very upset about it.

CAC: People whose pictures were there? Okay.

JR: See, that program was not in the university directory. It wasn't even identified.

CAC: I see.

JR: I didn't know where it was. I didn't know who worked for it. It was a totally secret deal. It wasn't in the directory; so, I found this article in the *Cutting Edge*.

CAC: But the regents had to appropriate the money to build the building?

JR: Oh, yes. They knew what was going on.

CAC: Do you ever interview regents?

JR: Oh, you bet we did.

CAC: With much luck on this one?

JR: Pffft. I frankly don't have a great feeling of admiration for regents. They're rubber stamps. In most cases, they've been rubber stamps. One of the few regents who ever came in—there have been others because I don't know all of them—Jean Keffeler was one of the few regents that I knew who really challenged what was going on.

CAC: On this one, too . . . on the ALG?

JR: You bet she did. Jean Keffeler had a lot to do with some of the cleanup and the changes in people in the Medical School and Health Sciences. I had known her because she was working as an executive with Northwestern Bell when we did a big story, or project, on Northwestern Bell, on how the Public Utilities Commission was in bed with the company. Jean Keffeler took the position of really telling the truth.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

CAC: So, you knew the reputation of Jean Keffeler?

JR: I knew the reputation of Jean Keffeler. She was a very open and honest person, in my opinion. When she became chair, she basically followed the same pattern and I felt she was a very good, strong, positive, kind of almost, like independent influence on the university, which I felt was really needed at that time.

CAC: You know well the counter observance, not alone with Jean, but with any regent who does that, whether it be trying to micromanage the university . . . You hire the president to do that and the president doesn't do a good job . . . ? But you think that Jean had another perception?

JR: She has the perception of the corporate world . . .

CAC: Ah.

JR: . . . which was that the same philosophy that had existed for decades in the corporate world, that the CEOs were running the show and the boards were merely rubber stamps, hand-picked to support the executives. Then, that changed because of some big scandals, and the boards had not kept up with what was going on, and things were falling apart; so then, you had to move to the selection of people on the boards who were starting to take control. They were actually ousting CEOs. Boards began to take control. She came in with that same philosophy . . .

CAC: I see.

JR: . . . more of an independent, we've got to have the checks and balances within the university as well as any other institution.

CAC: But her role was to respond to what you were finding out and not to help you find out?

JR: No, no, she was not a source or a person that was helping.

CAC: How many sources do you have to have for a long . . . ? That's a thick packet of articles.

JR: It just changes from project to project. You develop a whole raft of people in a project. Very seldom are sources interchangeable from one project to another. You start cold on every one of them and you're on your own. I'll give you an example of what it's all about. When I was working on salaries, I went to talk to a person who was on the administration in Morrill Hall who was in a very key job as far as knowing and keeping track of salaries and having the data. It was a woman. I went to her and I said, "I'd like to see all the various salaries and the changes and the increases, decreases, whatever." She just gave me everything. I don't know whether it was all public information or not but she just gave it to me. It was wonderful. I thought, Why was she so open about that? I found out later why she was. She felt that she had been totally discriminated against. She was not making as much money as all these males and this was her way to get even. [laughter] You know, you run into that, periodically. People feel that justice should prevail and the only way they can do it is to maybe feed a reporter or something. They're not going to get it in the system. It wasn't happening in the system; so, this was her way of doing it. You find that all the time. Ax grinders . . . you don't take what ax grinders . . .

CAC: How many reliable informants did you have within the Health Sciences?

JR: Probably, a dozen; it wasn't a big number.

CAC: You don't need a big number?

JR: No.

CAC: I'm surprised it was that many because they close ranks, too.

JR: Oh, you bet they do. Absolutely, they do. The dozen . . . it was going from one story to another. We'd have two or three for each particular story. On the ALG, we had more than two or three. We had quite a few because that had become such a big story and there were a lot of people who felt that they had been kind of screwed in that program. People who were working in the program were making very little money, and were being really exploited, and victimized

by the powerful people who running it; so, we had very good sources on that one. Just like any other program, if there are abuses, there are abused people; and they're going to talk.

CAC: Finally, you do a lot of ground-truthing with written documents? Would that be true of your colleagues on other issues? Is this the style of investigative reporting?

JR: It is totally the style of investigative reporting and it's not the style of the beat reporting and the day-to-day reporting. On investigative reporting, you've got to get all the documents you can get your hands on. It's the old story, you want to know what people do and not what they say. In order to find what they do, you've got to get the documents that were written, prepared at the time it happened so that you can see what was going on at that time, not relying on what somebody says happened later when you're trying to put a spin on it; so, documents are just crucial.

CAC: You speak here in this cover—which may have been for the prize . . . was this set forward for the prize?—that you are forced to resort to confidential sources. This is where the legal business had to come in to get them loose? You just didn't find them lying around in university archives for the most part?

JR: Oh, god! no. No. It's one person leading to another. The one person I told you about that was kind of the beginning key source, he led us to somebody else who turned out to be somebody who had been—he felt—totally victimized by the Medical School. He was out to get the entire Medical School administration but he knew incredible amounts of things because he was right in the middle of some key things. We were meeting with him every week, going to his house, and talking to him for hours . . . every week. A lot of it was wasted time but it wasn't wasted in the long run because we got to be so trusting of each other.

CAC: Is this where you get confidential . . . ? See, I don't know how you ask for a confidential source because you don't know what the document is . . . even if it exists. How do you do that, Joe?

JR: Well, usually you start out with somebody who you feel knows things because of what they've been doing. You say, "Look, will you talk to us?" "Well, I can't jeopardize my job. My name . . . if it becomes known that I've talked to you, I'm dead. My career is over." So, you say, "Okay, we know that. We'd like to talk to you on a confidential basis. We can promise you that you will not be identified." Well, they're willing to give it try but they're not going to tell you anything in the beginning. So, it's just gradually meeting . . .

CAC: Can they tell you what documents exist that then you have to get through legal action?

JR: Yes, they do.

CAC: That's the way you get your leads on that?

JR: They tell us where to look, what to look for, what to ask for, and so forth. Yes, they do that and they give you information on people, people that you ought to talk to, and so forth. It's just kind of building this and this. One of the things that really works is that you start sharing information. You tell them, "You might be interested in hearing what we know." They almost, like, become part of your reporting team. You're sharing information. You're talking all the time, trading secrets. You become together and after a period of time . . . Right now, I'm on a story I'm working on a business, [Jeno] Paulucci. I have some sources who are just like that. I have been meeting with them over and over and there's a trust. [laughter] I have a source who is still . . . He told me, "You know, I have these documents." I said, "Great." He shows me some documents, and I'm taking notes on them, and so forth. Then, okay, "Well, have you got anything else?" "No, that's about it." That was, like, two months ago; he's still giving me documents.

CAC: Sure.

JR: He has stuff that he keeps giving me as we go along. [laughter]

CAC: He probably likes your company.

JR: Yes. [laughter] This is the way it works. You can't do it . . . you couldn't even begin to do it if you were in a hurry. There's no way.

CAC: But you really like this?

JR: Oh, I love it. It's great, just great. It's stimulating.

CAC: Even though you said earlier that you lose sleep and there are real tensions and real stress?

JR: You lose perspective, everything . . . you lose your sanity almost. You have to have a spouse who is very understanding. [laughter]

CAC: Then, you had to manage all those multicultural kids?

JR: Well, my kids know me for what I am . . . kind of a nut. [laughter] I have a lot of fun with my kids.

CAC: At this point in our conversation, I'm going to say, Are there other particular things that aren't in your articles that you would like to share about these several stories? Then, the next question is, I would ask you to kind of reflect on your perception, or the perception of people that you know in the community, of the university. That's where I'm taking this.

JR: Kind of the overriding view I have of the university is that there aren't enough real checks and balances, that it has really been almost a law unto itself. It did come into existence before the state.

CAC: Yes.

JR: And it feels that it's really kind of more important than the state . . . when I say it, as an institution.

CAC: Well, [unclear] own autonomy.

JR: Yes, right. That is not good. It's almost as though what should be the most democratic and open institution in the state is one of the least democratic and open institutions in the state. That's not good and it continues. In all the years that I've been writing about the university, I see it over and over that we have to fight harder—other reporters will agree with this—harder to get information out of the University of Minnesota than we do from almost any other agency or institution in the state. To me, that's . . .

CAC: Including Dayton's or Pillsbury or . . . ?

JR: Well, private businesses . . .

CAC: That's different?

JR: There's a lot of information, SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] filings and so forth, that you can get from publicly traded corporations that you can't get from the university. The university is a non-profit institution and there are an awful lot of ways that a university can stop you from getting stuff, particularly by these arms, these non-profit arms like the Foundation and so forth, that just simply don't view themselves as public institutions. That's kind of on the negative side what I see as a problem. There aren't enough checks and balances within the institution and then there really isn't enough oversight. The legislature tends to . . . this is our university . . . we support it . . . we'll support you and whoever are the most powerful lobbyists. You get some arms of the university who have ties to specific legislators, they'll get money—others won't. There are these individual ties and then there's the kind of the overall institutional situation. Unless there's a scandal, the legislature does not really carry out an oversight function on the university the way Congress does carry out a lot of oversight on the executive branch of government. They've got a general accounting office. They've got all kinds of ways to make sure that the executive branch . . . in hearings, investigations, committees, and so forth. It doesn't happen in the legislature in my experience. There's not the oversight from the legislature and there's not the oversight overall in the press. I've done a little but overall, it's not a continuing kind of critical coverage and I don't mean just always critical but mixed with the good.

CAC: You bet.

JR: So, those are the two things on the negative side. On the positive side, hell, it's a great institution, particularly, I think, because it's not split up . . . so called Agricultural School and Liberal Arts School . . .

CAC: Like Michigan, Michigan State.

JR: Right, it's one institution, and it's big, and it's strong, and it has a lot of money, even though there's never enough for anybody. Nobody ever has enough money. I just feel that it's a very strong and good institution.

CAC: Could you estimate the relative prestige of the university . . . 1965, 1995 . . . when you came here?

JR: Well, it is not in any way as much respected as it was then.

CAC: Not alone because of these exposés?

JR: There have been a series of problems. It's two things . . . a series of problems, everything from the reserve fund problem to, what was a little nit, the mansion, but it became a big deal. It shouldn't have really been a big deal but it was because of the way Keller handled it and reacted to it. If he had stayed here and dealt with it instead of going on a trip to Hawaii and dealt with it in an executive way, I don't think he would have been driven out. It's been a series of problems that have hurt but it's far more than that. I think it's what's happened in our society. Institutions are under challenge. All institutions are under challenge. Everything is now fair game for reporting, for public knowledge whether it's the sexual peccadilloes of presidents down to the graphic descriptions of the type of sexual acts they engage in to the bigger scandals all the way across our society now. The institution is fair game for criticism. We don't have, kind of like, sacred cows anymore, or heroes, or favorite institutions.

CAC: Even baseball.

JR: Yes, everywhere you look. Now, is that good or bad? I feel it's good.

CAC: You spoke earlier, however, in your own work, and it would true of my work . . . If I work with students I have to have mutual trust. I have to trust them. They have to trust me. There's this word trust. If trust goes out, you're saying it's a good thing . . . this loss of trust. I'm not so sure. When you were talking about your own career, trust was the key to it.

JR: Yes, right, good point. I would say that you have to earn your trust. If the institution does bad things or abuses its trust, it doesn't deserve the trust. I think the openness, and the challenge, and the criticism in the long run, not in the short run—it hasn't helped the university in the short

run . . . the Medical School is in very serious trouble—in the long run, it's good. Let's carry it to the other extreme where there is no openness whatsoever in a communist society as it once existed, where you had incredible, terrible problems that were covered up and nothing was ever done about them, the whole system collapsed! Now, you go through a period of chaos, it's worse than it was; and it's worse in the Medical School right now than it was before when everything was covered up and kept under control but in the long run, it should be good. We'll see. That's the way it should work.

CAC: There was a note in one of your articles that the former CEO of Medtronic that had been with Pillsbury was going to . . . Did that work out?

JR: Win[ston] Wallin.

CAC: Yes. Did that work out?

JR: Okay, that's a very interesting situation. Win Wallin—who, by the way, was ousted in a battle at Pillsbury by William Sporre who was a total jerk and won the political battle . . . I know this from an insider who is a friend of mine . . . and ousted Win Wallin—wound up at Medtronic . . .

CAC: Was he one of the founders?

JR: No.

CAC: He came into a going concern?

JR: He came into Medtronic late in the company and did a great job of helping build up the company, was brought in by Hasselmo—good move—to try to straighten out the mess in the Medical School. Now, when he first came in, I thought it was going to be a disaster because they had hired Coopers & Lybrand to do a study of the problems; and they came out with a report recommending that they break . . . that they eliminate this system of independent kingdoms and establish some central control over that Medical School. In the beginning stages, Win Wallin, who is the consultant and adviser, went along with changes that were just meaningless. They were cosmetic. I thought, okay, he failed. It's dead. Well, then they brought in a new provost, or whoever, the vice-president for Health Sciences, William Brody—I assume Wallin had something to do with this because he's still involved—and he is doing what was recommended in that report. It looks as if . . . I don't know what influence Wallin had but if he was calling the tune on this, he did the job. He did what was necessary.

CAC: Do you have an estimate of how much money the university had to spend to protect that reorganize of the Medical School, legal costs and so on?

JR: I think it's probably around \$5 million or \$6 million at this point. It's astronomical. It's really sad when you think what could have been done with that kind of money.

CAC: Do you know how much my project is costing?

JR: [laughter] A few thousand.

CAC: [laughter]

JR: Right. Yes! This is money that never should have had to be spent. It's really something to think of paying the price for the failures that occurred.

CAC: Is Mr. Wallin still advising on this?

JR: I'm not sure. I haven't been following this personally. I just kind of pick of things here and there.

CAC: You're off the story now?

JR: Oh, totally, yes.

CAC: So, you aren't going to pick it up again?

JR: No, I'm on other things. I've been on other things for a couple of years. I just move from one thing to another. Two years was the longest I'd ever spent on one thing. It was a great two years though. It was pretty exciting in the way of the significance of it.

CAC: Well, my friend, are there other reflections you wish to share? A reporter would never ask a dumb question like that?

JR: [laughter] You've been pretty good. You have a way of just sitting back there, and just kind of making a comment now and then and little leading question, and then I go on to tirade. No, actually, anything more . . . ? I just feel that the university as an institution . . . I'm not sure whether—I know this is kind of a cliché comment—it really can be managed in an effective way. I know this is said over and over but it is so big, and there are so many almost independent arms to it, and there is so much talk of managing and setting priorities, and it's almost all talk. All this stuff about Commitment to Focus . . . I remember writing about a similar program by Hasselmo when he was vice-president for Administration and Planning, talking about setting priorities. It was baloney. Nothing happened. Keller got into office with Commitment to Focus and it didn't change anything. One of our reporters did a story, which I'd been waiting to see for so long and it was so . . . I'd read a couple of books on university reform and these were by maverick type critics. They said, "One of the things you ought to do is look at a reform when it's proposed, and then five years later see whether it really changed anything, and you'll find

almost never does it really change anything." So, Greg[or] Pinney, who is now covering higher education . . .

CAC: Yes.

JR: . . . did a story on, Did Commitment to Focus really change the number of units in the university, and slim it down, and set priorities? The answer was, "No, it didn't." I'm not sure it can be done. I don't know what it would take but I sometimes think all the effort, all the money that is spent on studies and so forth, to reform the university might be better spent on other things because nothing really changes. Maybe, some day it will but I haven't seen it.

CAC: One of my colleagues—his tape is open and on file with a transcript of it—concluded by speaking of the melancholy of the professoriate, which reflects some of the things you're saying here, that those of us who went through what was first called retrenchment and reallocation, and then becomes Commitment to Focus, then becomes University 2000, that there is a kind of melancholy that sets in internally.

JR: Yes. That's right. It's not just the university. We're going through a wrenching time . . .

CAC: Oh, oh, oh. oh.

JR: . . . in the newspaper.

CAC: Oh, I see. I thought you were going to say society.

JR: Well, yes, but I mean just on a small little business over here, kind of a quasi-public business. Right now, they're changing the whole structure of the newsroom, setting up teams, and a whole kind of flat management, getting rid of the hierarchical structure. It is just raising hell and I think it's going to fail.

CAC: The university libraries are going through flat management.

JR: Are they?

CAC: The same thing. They read the same books. I interviewed a librarian. She was just aghast at what was happening.

JR: Is that right?

CAC: It's just this leveling out and hours, and hours, and hours, and hours at committees. It's more fun than working!

JR: I've got to talk to them because it's exactly the same thing that we're going through, meetings day and night and stories aren't getting covered. It's ridiculous.

CAC: How long will this go on?

JR: Until it fails.

CAC: Ohhh, that's a hard thing to judge though.

JR: [laughter] The management will never recognize it as a failure. They'll just say, "Well, we tried that and we'll move on."

CAC: If you're really serious, you might talk with her.

JR: Great, great.

CAC: She's got a wonderful sense of humor and sense of irony. She's one of the older librarians who has a Ph.D.; so, she's still academic and that gives her a kind of . . . I have her interview, also, which would describe some of these.

JR: Do you have a list of all the public interviews?

CAC: The university archives would have them. I have transcripts on only twenty-five. I handed in ten more this morning.

JR: They are in the archives?

CAC: They're in the archives and they're all open.

JR: Okay.

CAC: Then, in addition, there are fifty or sixty tapes without transcription. Then, there are some that in this vault here that I haven't . . .

JR: And those fifty, sixty are open, too?

CAC: Yes.

JR: Wow!

CAC: Yes, everything is open except for two tapes.

JR: So, they have a list over there?

CAC: They have a list over there and if you're really interested in thinking about one thing or another, my memory is good enough that I could kind of say . . . for example, on Morrill Hall, David Berg . . .

JR: Oh, I know David Berg very well. He's been a great source for me.

CAC: His is one of the best interviews. He's just well-informed, and he's at the end of his career, and it's pretty straightforward.

JR: He's a great guy. He was so open and direct with me. He went through a cancer scare, and thought he was going to die, and came back.

CAC: Ahhh.

JR: I thought he was finished but he came back and survived.

CAC: Well, this may have been a liberating experience.

JR: Yes. Yes.

CAC: I interviewed Dick Sauer.

JR: Did you?

CAC: That was a very candid and very knowing . . .

JR: What's he doing now?

CAC: He's president and chief executive officer of the 4-H Council of America . . .

JR: Oh, for heavens sake.

CAC: . . . at Chevy Chase, Maryland. Wonderful job.

JR: God! you must have had some great interviews.

CAC: He shared with me . . . he said, "I started school in Kindergarten, and I was all the way through being interim president of the University of Minnesota, and finally, I graduated."

JR: [laughter]

CAC: He said, "I would never go back. I have now a board of directors that is committed to the mission of the 4-H and we work together."

JR: [laughter]

CAC: Oh, yes, it's a beautiful . . .

JR: I'll bet you've had a ball on these interviews.

CAC: Well, I've had a good time.

JR: What an insight.

CAC: Nils . . . he's an old personal friend from college days, and I chaired a committee to revise the undergraduate curriculum, and he was a member of the committee; so, we go way back on these affairs and I know him with enormous affection. When I retired he said, "This is coming up. Why don't you think of writing it?" Well, I can't write it. I'm too old. Now, that I've done all of these . . . what a terrible task it would be.

JR: Oh, my god!

CAC: One could write . . . the kind of history I would want written would be the kind of history that you're reporting. I don't have the energy to do it.

JR: Oh, it would be a monumental thing. Do you think somebody will pick it up?

CAC: I'm chairing a committee this fall to try to find an author or authors and ways to underwrite it and finance it; so, we'll see. I'm going up to Duluth next week to talk with them.

JR: You would think there would be somebody . . .

CAC: That's why I'm saying . . . \$5 million to \$8 million . . . I think your figure is conservative.

JR: It probably is.

CAC: Yes . . . it wouldn't cost that much to get a damned good volume on the university. Nils said that he wanted two things: he wanted it scholarly and he wanted it accessible.

JR: Right.

CAC: I think those are two goals that are really essential because if it's not accessible . . . I've read institutional histories and my god! they're just puffery.

JR: Oh, yes.

CAC: The kind of book I would want to write, I can't write anymore.

JR: It would have to be an honest book.

CAC: Not only honest, both your eyes have to work. [laughter]

JR: But you'd also have to have the longevity and the energy to follow it through.

CAC: Yes.

JR: This is not something you're going to do in a year or two.

CAC: No, no, it's a five year; so, we have to find an author this winter, I think.

JR: Yes, yes.

CAC: Do you want to write it?

JR: If I were going to retire . . . See, I'm sixty-four; I could retire anytime.

CAC: Retire next year and we'll hire you.

JR: It would be very interesting to me if I were going to but I am enjoying what I am doing so much, I have no need to retire.

CAC: Of course.

JR: I will someday. I don't know when I'll retire. We have a guy down there who is your age. He's still working down there.

CAC: I feel much better physically and mentally for having this work to do.

JR: Oh, god! yes. It keeps you involved. You've got to be involved, that's definite.

CAC: Well, maybe, we'd better go off duty.

JR: All right.

CAC: But not before I say, "Thank you very much."

JR: Oh, Clarke, I enjoyed the hell out of it.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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