

Maureen Smith

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Interview with Maureen Smith

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

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University of Minnesota Campus**

Maureen Smith - MS
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers. I'm interviewing Maureen Smith who has been in the public relations department at the university since 1967 and has been privy to a million things that have gone on. She's written many articles, interviewed thousands of people, and has otherwise been one of the most sensitive observers of the university's experience. At least, Maureen, in my experience, I could always count on the articles you wrote as being straightforward, clear, and almost always accurate. [laughter]

MS: Thank you. Nobody has ever accused me of misquoting them, which I think is . . .

CAC: Those of us who have had the experience of being interviewed by the *Minnesota Daily* run the other way when we see what's going to come out of that. As I suggested before we turned the machine on, it's kind of fun to start with a little bit of autobiography, who you were, where you came from, how you were trained, why you were attracted to public relations, your first job here . . . then, we're off and running.

MS: I grew up in New Ulm and went to Mankato State College as an English major and, then, went to the University of Illinois in English. I'm a Ph.D. dropout. I did all of the work toward a Ph.D.

CAC: Heavens. When were you there at Illinois?

MS: I graduated from Mankato in 1961; so, I went and got my master's degree in 1962 and, then, came back and taught freshman English at Mankato for two years. I went back to Illinois and worked for three years on my Ph.D. I never really wanted a Ph.D., I just liked being a student.

CAC: You weren't one of those who were discouraged from continuing because there were no jobs for women? I've heard that story often.

MS: No. English teachers wanted me to be in English; but, they discouraged me from going into something like history or political science because those would not be fields for women, they claimed. I don't know what the history and political science people would have said about that. I did sort of think myself that there was a stigma to having a Ph.D. as a woman.

CAC: It would price you off other markets?

MS: This is ironic; but, if I got a Ph.D., I'd never get married—which I didn't anyway as it turned out. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

MS: It was a social stigma that I saw for a Ph.D.; but I loved being a student. I never worked on my dissertation. I still have always thought of myself as sort of an academic. Being here, I've identified with the faculty a lot. My first thought was I might become a faculty member.

CAC: You've had no formal courses training you for journalism or public relations, except being a generally educated woman?

MS: Right. I worked on the student newspaper at Mankato State. I've taken a couple of journalism classes here after I got here, after I got my job. Basically, I'm an English major, not a journalism major.

CAC: You never had a formal training except practical work at Mankato State working on the paper?

MS: Right.

CAC: When you were all but dissertation at Illinois, how did you make up your mind to try for public relations?

MS: I decided I wanted a job in the Twin Cities and I came looking for a job. I thought the University of Minnesota would be a good place to work. I went to the Personnel Department and heard about a job in University Relations. I was interviewed by Bill Nunn. I remember he gave me something to read that had been written by somebody in that office. He said, "Take this home and decide if you can write this well." I decided I could. [laughter] I called and told him that.

CAC: He didn't decide?

MS: No.

CAC: Ah!

MS: That was just before the job market turned; so, jobs were not that hard to get in 1967. A lot of my friends, who stayed in graduate school and got their Ph.D.s, then had trouble finding academic jobs. I was still in a position where there weren't that many applicants for a job. Now, I've been here twenty-seven years working for the same department.

CAC: That's some kind of record, I'm sure. Does anyone have longer seniority than you in the University Relations?

MS: No. No. I was telling you before they gave me a party for my twenty-fifth anniversary. I think the next longest person has been there twenty-two or twenty-three years. I've been through several bosses and several presidents of the university, of course; but, I'm still there.

CAC: Four.

MS: Yes.

CAC: Did you have any on-the-job training from Bill Nunn or others when you got there? How was your job defined? Were you given a portfolio? I don't know what news was being written then.

MS: There was a magazine called *The Minnesotan* then, which went to faculty and staff of which I became the editor.

CAC: Right away?

MS: Right away.

CAC: That's jumping in.

MS: I've been doing basically *the* publication for faculty and staff as long as I've been there.

CAC: Whatever its name was?

MS: Whatever its name was. There were various other writing jobs that came along that I got assigned to write: the citation for an outstanding achievement award . . .

CAC: Oh, I see.

MS: . . . just a lot of different writing jobs also. No, I never got any training. For some reason, Bill Nunn liked me. He didn't like everybody. He liked me from the start and what I wrote, he liked.

CAC: Good. How large a staff did Bill have at that time?

MS: That's a good question and I don't know. We're about twenty-five now.

CAC: Good grief.

MS: There's the news service, the publications area, the special events that does commencements and building dedications and all of that, and then the support staff.

CAC: You never moved in any of those other areas?

MS: I was always in publications. There was a fund-raising section for awhile, when I first started. That sort of branched out to become the Foundation and Development office.

CAC: Soon thereafter . . . that's 1969 or 1970 when they really get underway for the raising of money. Did you ever do on-the-spot news on special events to feed the St. Paul and Minneapolis papers?

MS: No. We have a separate news service. I did cover the legislature for awhile and I did that for the news service. I would go to the legislature and listen to the university's testimony and that kind of thing; but, that was still for our own publications, not for the local newspapers.

CAC: Whoever is director . . . does the staff get together in weekly or monthly meetings to kind of map out strategy of what good stories there would be and how to put the best light on the university's experience?

MS: As I said, we've had several directors and they've all done it differently. We tend to have monthly staff meetings now but not so much to talk about that.

CAC: What do you talk about at staff meetings then . . . the whole staff?

MS: Often, it's updates on what my boss—my boss now is Marcia Fluer—is hearing from Central Administration, what the picture is now for the legislative request, that kind of thing. Then, different people might give reports on the work they're doing. I'm now the supervisor of the periodicals section. There are only three of us. We do *Update*, the tabloid that goes to alumni, faculty, and staff. I do *Brief*, the weekly news bulletin. We have story idea meetings to talk about . . .

CAC: Just among the three of you?

MS: Yes. We have a lot of autonomy, perhaps, surprisingly.

CAC: That's what I'm really getting at.

MS: Yes.

CAC: You have a good deal of elbow room in deciding what would be a good story for the September issue of *Update* or whatever?

MS: Yes. Once in awhile, my boss might suggest something, whoever my boss has been. Once in awhile somebody higher up might suggest something. President [Nils] Hasselmo made a point that he'd like us to always have a faculty profile in every issue of *Update* and we are doing that now; so, we listen to guidance. We have a lot of freedom, responsibility to decide.

CAC: Do you think that would be true of other institutional relations departments in the outdoor world of corporations, or churches, or other institutions? Do folks like you have that kind of elbow room generally?

MS: I think we have an unusual amount. Just talking about universities . . . when we go to meetings of our colleagues, they're often surprised how much freedom we have, not only to decide what to write but then to write it without anybody upstairs reading it.

CAC: The articles you do, and have done for twenty-seven years, are not reviewed upstairs before they go to print?

MS: Not very often . . . once in awhile, if there's a really sensitive topic.

CAC: Then, you'll ask for it?

MS: Yes. Or, once in awhile, somebody might if they're writing about something. We often do check our stories with sources just to make sure it's accurate, and that they'll stand by their quotes, and that kind of thing.

CAC: I'm sure what you're saying is the case and how do you explain that? If this university is more willing to give that kind of autonomy to its staff, how do you account for Minnesota? There must be a tradition there . . . it was there when you came?

MS: Yes. It's a good question and I don't know since this is the only place I've ever worked. The university in general is known for being astonishingly decentralized, which is in many ways a problem. Not only do we have our office where I think we do good work; but, all kinds of colleges and departments have their own operations putting out their own newsletters of varying degrees of quality.

CAC: You have nothing to do with that at all? They're all autonomous?

MS: We try to influence them. This isn't my job but when we see something that spells Northrop Auditorium wrong, a little thing or a big thing, we may call it to people's attention. We do have meetings—I was just at a meeting this morning—of the University Communications Council, which is people from the colleges where we get together and we can tell them sort of what the theme is or what the Central Administration would like them to be emphasizing.

CAC: They can fit in if they wish?

MS: Yes. People are really, I would say, eager for that guidance, mostly.

CAC: Sure.

MS: We did a communications audit where we went around and talked to people in the units about how much leadership they would like. They don't want control; but, they do want leadership.

CAC: It's a remarkable story that you're telling here. You said that you talk with colleagues from other universities and they don't enjoy this kind of freedom. I'm not deeply engaged in this field; but, you live long enough, you hear some things. I've always been amazed by this quality that you're talking of here.

MS: Especially with *Brief* . . . I think there's a perception and I think it's true that we're pretty objective. We tell both sides. Sometimes the president or the vice-presidents get angry about something that appears and they may complain; but, that's after the fact. The old line, "It's easier to ask forgiveness than permission . . . "

CAC: Ahhh. I haven't heard that old line but that's a good one.

MS: [laughter] Yes. We believe that the university is best served when there is honest reporting especially for the internal audience. We certainly are committed to telling the university story inside and outside as positively as we can.

CAC: The *Brief* itself are just little tiny news items. You can be pretty straightforward there, can't you . . . as the word brief would suggest?

MS: Yes.

CAC: For example, the last seven or eight months with the Health Sciences and [Dr. John] Najarian issue, it seems to me you've carried straight news from both sides there.

MS: Right, that's what we do. On that one, it's hard to know what the good news would be. It's bad news that this great star . . . that this has happened is a tragedy but whether the good news would be to downplay that or whether the good news would be to show that the administration is dealing with it . . . different people would disagree. President Hasselmo would have one idea and Dr. Najarian would have another idea about that. Yes, we try to tell it straight.

CAC: *Update*, and its predecessor organs, is really back grounding the news. That's more like a magazine than it is a newspaper.

MS: That's exactly right. We don't come out often enough to do current news. Those are feature stories, which just tend to be more positive just because there's so much good stuff happening here.

CAC: There are only three of you on the staff. How do the three of you decide what stories in September are going to be relevant, and interesting, and engaging for your readership?

MS: We have a meeting. I'm the editor; I have the final decision. People call and send us ideas. There are a lot of things that people would like . . .

CAC: Do you mean just coming in from the decentralized feudal provinces?

MS: Right, or individual people who think they have a good story. Usually, it's somebody talking about his own story or sometimes somebody knows about somebody else that they think is doing something really neat that they think we should write about. We can't follow up on all of them. Some of them are great ideas and some aren't so good in our opinion. We welcome hearing all of that. That's part of what we have in our pool when we look, plus we keep our ears open to both what are the big issues at the university, what needs to be written about. We don't need people upstairs to tell us that you should do a story about University 2000 . . . you should do this or that and, also, what's the big news in the country or the world that university faculty members would have something to say about?

CAC: That's another criterion?

MS: A lot of it, we're just looking for interesting stories.

CAC: That's [unclear] good journalist [unclear]. Do you have any trouble creating a kind of balance. It seems to me that we are a sprawling university . . . you said decentralized and that's true and we have coordinate campuses. Do you try to maintain a balance in that sense of different departments, different colleges, different programs, different campuses?

MS: We certainly do try. I'm not sure how well we've always done. We don't have a numerical way of saying, "We've had this many CLA [College of Liberal Arts] stories so it's time for

another kind." I'm sure the other campuses don't feel they've gotten enough and they might be right.

CAC: But, you have enough staff that you could go to Duluth, or Crookston, or Morris and do a story—which you have done.

MS: We have done that. We've also taken stories written by people on those campuses. Diane Skomars, who was formerly married to Peter Magrath, was at the meeting this morning. She's now working at Duluth as head of public relations there. She was talking about their 100th birthday coming up. I was saying to her, "For sure now, we should go to Duluth and write a big story about Duluth."

CAC: Just when that's happening, then the Arts College is 125 years.

MS: We're doing something about that, too.

CAC: In seven years, the university will have 150.

MS: Exactly right and we were talking about that, too. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter] Birthdays then can be an occasion for focusing in on something.

MS: Although, we're doing something with all of those, a lot of colleges and smaller units have birthdays that we don't always do something with. That's one time when people do tend to seek us out.

CAC: It's a faculty of 4,000, plus or minus—I have no idea how many we are—and there are that many stories. You suggested a moment ago that Mr. Hasselmo was interested in a faculty profile. How on earth do you choose one of the 4,000 for nine issues or whatever you have? It's just your experience and good judgment?

MS: It's our experience. People do make suggestions. We keep our ears open. We do keep in mind that maybe now we've had a couple of men in a row and maybe we should do a woman now . . . that kind of thing. I'm sure we miss absolutely fantastic people that would make great profiles. Obviously, there's lots of people that would never get profiled who are wonderful.

CAC: I can't think of any institution that I know of, except the federal government, that is as sprawling and as large as this university, and diverse, and cranky, and proud in its provinces—all of which I put on the plus side.

MS: Mel[vin] George, our new vice-president, was just speaking at our meeting this morning, too. He quoted Nils Hasselmo on something . . . "The university is less than the sum of its parts," which, I think, is part of our problem in public relations.

CAC: That's a good way of putting it.

MS: People keep saying, "Why don't you get more good news out?" We do get a lot of good news out. There is a lot of good news. The good news tends to be what some faculty member is doing in the classroom, what some faculty member's research is . . . great things that are happening; but, people don't necessarily think that means *the university*.

CAC: Ahhh! I see.

MS: That means this faculty member is good, but the university doesn't always get the credit for that; although, the university gets the blame for an individual problem.

CAC: That's an interesting observation. I'm sure it's true.

MS: We have to keep putting out—and we want to—the good news stories; but, how to get out the message that the university as a whole is really important and exciting and all of that is an ongoing challenge.

CAC: I'm going to ask a question along these lines, largely out of ignorance. Earlier publications, *The Minnesotan* for example, went to faculty and staff?

MS: Yes.

CAC: Then, when you get *Update*, you added an alumni constituency to that?

MS: It's not surprising that you don't know; that's very confusing. We have six issues of *Update* a year. All six go to faculty and staff. Three of them also go to alumni.

CAC: Ahhh, I see.

MS: For the alumni issues, we look for things with a broader interest.

CAC: My next question was how you separate out the constituency reader needs of these different groups because faculty would have one, support staff would have another, and certainly the alumni are quite different in what they need to know or what they want to know.

MS: Right. Some stories obviously are inside stories that are of interest to the faculty and staff. We don't separate out faculty and staff because they both get that.

CAC: I understand. They're engaged in a common enterprise.

MS: Some stories clearly belong in an issue that doesn't go to alumni. It's hard. When we have really great feature stories, in a way, you'd want them all to go to the alumni—the faculty and

staff are going to get all of them; so, we don't have to worry about that—but we want great stories in each of our issues. Sometimes, it's just what comes along at what time. Some stories, if we really think the alumni should get it, we save it until an alumni issue.

CAC: Can you give an example of that . . . of something the alumni would particularly be interested in?

MS: [sigh] I don't know if it's that as much as just stories we think are neat. The last issue had a profile cover—our profiles now are always our cover; we always have a photo of a faculty member and that usually is the center spread story—of Ron McCurdy, the Jazz professor [in Music].

CAC: That was a nice one.

MS: A nice story; but, that was only for faculty and staff. It was sort of too bad because a lot of alumni would probably like that, too. I did a story that I loved doing on the conference [here] on xenophobia in Germany, which was very interesting; but, that was also in this issue only for faculty and staff. Other people would be interested. We hope that the next alumni issue will have stories just as interesting. You can't say, "Let's take sort of a boring story and give it to . . ."

CAC: What is the difference in the circulation of the two varieties? When you add the alumni, how many extra copies . . . ?

MS: A lot! Faculty and staff and whoever else gets that one, it comes to about 25,000, which is a lot.

CAC: Good grief!

MS: Then when you add in the alumni, it's 280,000, I think.

CAC: My heavens.

MS: It's one of the biggest newspapers in the state.

CAC: I wrote an essay not long ago about K[indergarten]-12, college and university, public and private, education in the state of Minnesota. By the time I was through, I figured out that education was the biggest single business in the state, measured by payroll, or by influence, or anything else. That's just shocking. Is it the cost of doing the extra runs that would keep you from distributing all copies of *Update* to the alumni as well?

MS: Yes.

CAC: They don't pay for it? That doesn't self-sustain?

MS: No, it's free. In fact, we used to have a lot more issues than we do. I think we used to come out once a month and the alumni got half. Even before that, we used to have a separate one called *Report* that went to faculty and staff and then *Update* went to alumni. *Update* was quarterly at that time. The alumni have never gotten more than four a year.

CAC: That's all you can afford?

MS: We've taken one budget cut after another. *Update* is the high budget item in our department other than salaries; so, we've kept losing issues. Now, we're down to a real minimum.

CAC: I see.

MS: Sometimes people think we should send out more of the copies to alumni. It's the cost of paper but even more than that, the cost of postage that's prohibitive there.

CAC: Sure.

MS: Or people would like us to join forces with the Alumni Association and put out a glossy magazine.

CAC: Which they put out already themselves.

MS: They do that but they do that for members of the Alumni Association. People say, "Wouldn't it be nice if you could send a magazine to all 200,000 alumni?"

CAC: Even if they don't belong to that?

MS: Right. A magazine is much more expensive than a tabloid; so, we just haven't been able to afford that.

CAC: How do you check readership? I know you can tell by numbers. Is there a big response to articles with telephone, or letters, or notes, or anything of that sort from alumni, or from faculty, or staff?

MS: I wouldn't say a big response. We do get letters and phone calls . . . more from alumni—of course, there are more of them. It seems that the alumni generate more response. We have done readership surveys. I never know what to make of those. It seems like, typically, most people say that, yes, they read it or they read some of it or most of it. I never know what would be a really good showing there. We've generally been pleased with the results we've gotten. People

generally seem to both see us as being fair and objective and think that's what they want. They're not thinking we should be digging up more dirt or sanitizing things more.

CAC: Over the years, what proportion of this publication, the major one, has covered athletic stories?

MS: Very little.

CAC: There's been no pressure to do it more?

MS: No.

CAC: I'm asking that question because you hear it, just hanging around with your ears open, that a good winning football or basketball team is good for the university . . . that's a good story. Now, that doesn't bear on the kind of . . .

MS: It's probably true that a winning football season would do a lot for the university right now.

CAC: Now, we say that to each other; but, you're in the business . . . do you have any way of testing whether that's a sound assumption or not? I'd like to know if, when the teams are winning, the legislature is more generous.

MS: Probably not, probably not.

CAC: Do you think that the alumni generally would like better stories—I don't mean that you should write them—that they would like a winning team? Is that really a consideration?

MS: I guess I don't have any more basis for an opinion on that than you do. I tend to think, yes they'd like the Gophers to win. I don't think that's what they want to be reading about. In fact, when we have written athletic stories, it's been more talking about the issue of how important should athletics be and that kind of thing. We've never written a story about the teams, or the coaches, or anything like that.

CAC: You follow other universities publications . . . do they?

MS: Probably more. *Minnesota Magazine* does a little of that; although, I wouldn't say they do a lot of it either. One thing I do think of is that in our last readership survey, we did list topics of, What would you like to read about? I should have looked that up; but, athletics was on our list and didn't rank that high. We don't get pressure to do athletic stories. I would say we get more pressure, if that's the right word, to do fund-raising stories.

CAC: For example, around the Ted Mann Music Hall, or something like that, or Weisman Museum?

MS: We've written about those.

CAC: Those were big stories [unclear].

MS: Right. I guess our opinion is that those are good stories. The Weisman Museum is wonderful, and it's exciting, and that's what we want people to know about. What is at the bottom of the list what people want to read about is profiles of donors, the people who give the money.

CAC: Ohhh.

MS: That's what we resist typically unless there's some really interesting story. We're happy to say what the money is being used for if it's something exciting. That's a good story for us; but, we don't want to just do a story to make the donor feel good.

CAC: Everything you've been saying the last half hour doesn't surprise me because I've read these things for thirty-five or forty years; but, what does surprise me is that the university and you could have gotten away with this, so to speak, when it's not the general house organ kind of publication. So, I rephrase my question again to you, How do you account for the climate of publication that you're describing at the University of Minnesota? How does that happen here? Presidents come and go, and vice-presidents, and public relations directors.

MS: Right. That's the way it is . . . the new people just sort of go along with it, I guess.

CAC: It speaks well for history, [unclear]?

MS: I think it tends to fit the Minnesota culture over all . . . the decentralization, freedom. Again, there are down sides to it. If you look at what our goals are, for example . . . to build faculty and staff morale. You can't say that faculty and staff morale are great. [laughter] Maybe, we should have been doing it some other way and it would have worked better, I don't know. I never am willing to take responsibility for low faculty and staff morale.

CAC: You're describing something that I've always felt is apparent, that if you didn't take credit for what the children did well, you wouldn't have to take the blame.

MS: [laughter] Another attention for us is who [do we] work for? Do we work for the Central Administration or do we work for *the university*?

CAC: Good.

MS: Different people in my office would answer that in different ways. In some ways, realistically, we do work for the administration; but, I tend to think my job is to be writing for the community, which is the whole community and everybody's voice—not that you can put in

everybody's voice. The voices of the faculty are as worth reporting as the voices of the administrators when the two are saying something that might be on different sides.

CAC: That's an interesting observation because when I took on this task, Mr. Hasselmo and I had some exchange of letters and conversation and I said that was my perception as well. I wanted to understand how this university worked and that it would have to include vice-presidents, and deans, and all of that; but, I was interested in the primary missions of the university: teaching, learning, research, publication, community outreach. Those stories, as you're describing them, are in a decentralized institution.

MS: Right.

CAC: Obviously, at some point, we have to be governed; but, that's not the only story around.

MS: That's exactly right. That's not the best story . . .

CAC: You and I are on the same wave length there. *Brief* has what kind of constituency? Who does that go to?

MS: Faculty and staff. It's distributed to departments. For example, the History Department would say how many copies they want. They'd get one big bundle. That's how we get it out fast.

CAC: This is not fed to the Minneapolis and St. Paul newspapers or the outstate newspapers?

MS: No. Some of them, I think, see it.

CAC: This is internal?

MS: Yes.

CAC: Then, people reading *Brief* . . . scholars or students down the line can understand that that's the case, that many different things that you publish have different constituencies, different subscribers, so to speak?

MS: Are you going to change the subject?

CAC: I might . . . you go ahead and finish this one.

MS: I was just thinking of a couple of things . . . how my office works? Are you going away from that?

CAC: No, let's stick with that. As long as you've got things to say, we'll stick with that.

MS: I was just going to say one thing that we've always thought should be part of our job, which hasn't always been, is to advise the administration on the public relations' implications of what they do.

CAC: I see.

MS: I remember one time when we were doing a mission statement for our department, it was, "Tell the truth, make the university look good, and work as hard as we can to bring those two together so that telling the truth and making the university look good aren't in conflict with each other." So, sometimes saying, "If you do this, it will have disastrous results" is part of our job.

CAC: You do that through the director, Marcia Fluer.

MS: Marcia . . . that isn't my job.

CAC: But what you communicate with Marcia if you spot something or other members of the staff can spot something?

MS: Exactly. We also do get blamed for . . . if Ken Keller has to resign or bad things happen, it's a public relations disaster; so, the public relations department must not have been doing its job.

CAC: The disaster itself has something to do with it?

MS: Yes. One of Marcia's lines—I'm sure it's not original—is, "You don't have a public relations' problem, you have a real problem."

CAC: I see.

MS: Sometimes people think you should be able to fix everything with the right . . .

CAC: I wish the White House knew that [unclear].

MS: Yes, really.

CAC: You were out of the country when the Keller thing really broke loose?

MS: Yes, I was. The biggest news . . . that was very sad news to me. I happened to be in Morocco at the time. I'm sure it's the only time with my job that I have travelled connected with my job, which was a wonderful opportunity. The university had a program in Morocco; so, I was there writing about the university's program in Morocco. People there were in touch with people . . .

CAC: Was that an agricultural program or was this the one that Bob Holt and John Turner were engaged in?

MS: The university had an association with an agricultural and veterinary university in Morocco to build it up to a doctoral granting institution. It was a pretty big deal. It went on for twenty years. A lot of people from Morocco came here; a lot of our people went there. It was a wonderful story and it was a wonderful opportunity for me. People were in touch so I heard when I was in Morocco that Ken Keller had been forced to resign. It was building up before I left; but, I still wasn't expecting that.

CAC: You didn't fly home to put out the fire?

MS: As if that would have made any difference. I was grief stricken.

CAC: Grief stricken for the university, or for Ken, or both?

MS: Both. I came home and people had saved up two weeks worth of newspaper clippings for me; so, I read them and cried. I think that was a tragedy that the university has not yet recovered from. I don't know whether Ken Keller has or not.

CAC: I think it was pretty destructive of both [unclear]. What a wonderful chance to be in Morocco.

MS: Oh, yes, it was.

CAC: But you haven't traveled like that very often? A lot of your stories are, in fact, international stories; but, you and your staff haven't gone out to south Korea or Africa?

MS: No. We couldn't justify the budget for that. I do love to travel; I've travelled a lot but not for my job. I did travel with John Turner once—that wasn't connected to the university—in Russia. What I really like to do is travel but not be a tourist.

CAC: Good for you.

MS: I decided I would like to go to Morocco, have a reason for being there so I would write a story; but, I didn't think I could get any money so I would just spend my own money to go there. Then, I talked here to people connected with the university project there just because I needed their support. They said, "Do you want money?" "Sure!" They provided my airfare and the people there provided transportation for me. Then, my own department did end up throwing in a few hundred dollars and I did end up with most of my expenses covered. It was a wonderful experience.

CAC: As a general practitioner, you must have better access to the whole university than any other single person here for the past twenty-five years . . . agreed?

MS: I don't know about that. Certainly, the whole university is available to me as far as sources of stories; but, I also miss a lot.

CAC: Oh, of course; but, all the rest of us live somewhere in the sticks and you've had to keep your eye on the whole institution and that gives you a very unique . . . With that in mind, as kind of a leading question and observation, do you have any general sense of the way the different parts of the university have been governed/managed . . . I mean colleges? As you look at the whole university experience the last twenty-seven years, are there some outstanding places that you can always count on generally the right thing being done in a given college or a program? Or is that a dumb question?

MS: It's not a dumb question; but, I think you're actually hitting on something that I haven't followed very well. I've tended to follow governance at the all-university level and the colleges and academic departments have been sources of stories for me. As far as the governance of individual units, I haven't . . .

CAC: But, you must have a sense of what operations really go well year in and year out?

MS: I don't know if I do.

CAC: Okay. I don't want to force you to make judgments that you aren't [unclear].

MS: I know there are some departments that have really good reputations for being well-run departments as well as having distinguished faculty and there are others that have reputations as being problem departments.

CAC: And you folks in University Relations know that? You have to know so much that you kind of know by the grape vine what the case is?

MS: We know some of it. I think it might be surprising sometimes what we don't know, too. I sit there in Morrill Hall and I certainly do know a lot more than a lot of people do; but, sometimes, I'm amazed what I hear that I had no idea about.

CAC: Of course. On the plus side, what programs or departments would you think of as having a longstanding reputation for twenty-seven, thirty years, of doing a job pretty damn well, in season and out?

MS: Certainly Chemical Engineering has always been known as a well-run and a top-rated department. I think Political Science has a good reputation.

CAC: In your own work you find that confirmed? You do stories about people in Political Science and you get a sense of whether that really is working or not?

MS: I'm not sure I get that much sense of how the department is working. I have a sense that there are good people there.

CAC: Fair enough.

MS: I have no idea how the Physics Department is run; but, I've had a feeling that they've got some really good people there that I like interviewing. I think there are some departments in the College of Agriculture that are known to be very good and very well-run. That isn't what I always know.

CAC: Okay. You probably also, however—to stick at this general level just for a bit longer—have some sense, as you spoke earlier, of faculty morale and how that has changed over twenty-seven years. Could you elaborate a bit on that?

MS: I keep hearing how awful morale is.

CAC: Do you see evidence of it yourself?

MS: That seems like evidence in itself. It's sort of like a pervasive feeling that everybody knows it, that everybody is worried about it. People in Morrill Hall are worried about it; but, they don't know what to do about it.

CAC: You take that as a given that morale when you came here in 1967 was more assertive and affirming than it is now in 1993, 1994?

MS: I think that's true.

CAC: It would be a widely shared observation and other people that I've interviewed would say so; therefore, I ask the next question. If it is true and it's subjectively perceived to be true, how do you account for that? What's gone out of it for many of us?

MS: We've certainly taken a series of hits with the budget. That has to be damaging to morale. Another part of low morale is that there's a lot of cynicism about the Central Administration. I don't know whether that's well-founded or not; but, it seems to be pretty widespread. There's sort of a loss of trust. I happen to think at least President Hasselmo is good at . . . I don't necessarily think that the cynicism is necessarily well-founded but certainly there's a great lack of trust. I would say that administrators have done some pretty stupid things that have supported . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

CAC: You were speaking of a general malaise throughout the country and I think that's profoundly true . . . that it seems so many of our institutions just aren't working.

MS: Right. Nobody trusts anybody, especially anybody in any kind of power.

CAC: Yes. Then, it's earned distrust. I think of the way Congress has behaved this summer again . . . can't they do anything right?

MS: Right. Plus, all of the bad new stories that there have been about the university in the media have been very damaging to morale, I think.

CAC: Internally?

MS: Yes. That's part of what I was saying that I don't think we've recovered yet from the Keller fall. Then, there's been all of the stuff from the Medical School. I think that hurts. People don't like to pick up their newspaper and read that one more bad thing is happening at the university. I know even for myself socially . . . you work at the university, that makes you . . .

CAC: Oh, I see.

MS: . . . maybe especially if you in the public relations department but that makes you a target for people's complaints. Everybody thinks they can complain about the university and not realize that this might be painful for you to hear. The university is sort of the public's business so they have a right . . . and they do.

CAC: It's our university [unclear].

MS: It's true. I think people either love the university and find this all painful or a lot of people from within have sort of turned against the university themselves maybe, or at least against the Central Administration; so, they're quite happy to feed into the cynicism they hear from people outside the university.

CAC: You sent along a nice little letter to me, a memorandum, and among other things, you were saying that you're thinking of the many great faculty members that you've interviewed and profiled over many years and your sense is now, and from talking with your colleagues as well, that there are still outstanding classroom teachers, and laboratory teachers, and research assistants, and so forth; but, they're not known around the campus in the same way. That struck me as a new way to put a perception that has worried me as a member of this university family. How do you account for that? Is it that decentralization has become more severe or what?

MS: I forget exactly how this came up in my office that we started talking about who were the great faculty members that we remembered? A lot of people in my office—not me—went here as students or even just being around, we had in mind who were the great faculty members, who, as I said, were not only great but everybody knew they were great. They were part of the people's feeling of the whole university, a shared experience . . .

CAC: What names from ancient history would come up in that regard . . . old traditional, old heroes, right?

MS: Several names came up especially. A couple of people are still here who are sort of on the old list and the new list. I sent out an E-mail message saying, "Who are the great faculty members? Who were the great faculty members?"

CAC: Oh, I'd like to see that!

MS: Then, we have students, too; so, I said for the current students, "Who are the great faculty members today? Are there any that meet this criteria that they're not only great but everybody knows that they're great?"

CAC: Are you going to do a story on this?

MS: I might; I don't know.

CAC: You have the raw data to do it now?

MS: Yes. At least I'm going to use this as sources for faculty profiles, for example.

CAC: I see.

MS: To win in this, you only needed to get three or four votes because this was a fairly small group of people I'm asking.

CAC: I understand.

MS: Karlos Kaufmanis came up several times.

CAC: In Astronomy.

MS: Arthur Ballet in Theater. Mulford Sibley in Political Science. George Shapiro, who is still here, was one who was mentioned by several. Now, we may also in my department lean a little toward the speech communication as well as the journalism . . . Mitch Charnley.

CAC: You add Mitch Charnley and there's five people that you've mentioned . . .

MS: Toni McNaron, who is also still here, was mentioned by several.

CAC: What you're saying is these were persons who were outstanding instructors in their own right, but they were recognized as such by a university-wide community?

MS: Right, that was part of the thing about it. If you're a university student, you've taken Karlos Kaufmanis's class or . . .

CAC: Or you've heard about him?

MS: . . . you've at least heard about him or you've gone to hear his Star of Bethlehem speech. Arthur Ballet . . . somebody told me that they had assigned seats just so that other people couldn't come in who weren't in the class . . . to sit in the seats and hear the lectures.

CAC: You've named five; I knew all five of them and would agree that they were and they all had an all-university reputation. All those things are perfectly true. Now, down the other side, the last ten years, there are professors who were just as good . . .

MS: Exactly right.

CAC: . . . but they don't have the university-wide visibility?

MS: Yes. Just after I did this little poll, I was interviewing Dick Skaggs about the new coordinated curriculum and I asked him about this. He said that he thinks that it is true, that we have people who are just as good but they don't have the same kind of reputation. We do have people who are just as good; but, he said that he thinks the thing is that it isn't usually true anymore that the same faculty member teaches the same course over and over again, especially the senior top faculty members. So, when that doesn't happen, they don't get the same exposure. They're hoping that they can encourage more senior faculty members to teach introductory courses. At least, some of these were people teaching introductory courses.

CAC: I suppose, at one time, Walter Heller would be another to add to that. He taught classes of 1200 people and did it with real engaging . . . he really had them interested in national policy and macroeconomics, public policy.

MS: His name came up several times; but, he got mixed reviews.

CAC: All right.

MS: It was like some people said, "His only claim to fame was his fame."

CAC: I know that some students used to know his basic courses [unclear].

MS: Yes. I had listed him, too, when I sort of suggested. He was the only one that I got some negative reaction to as well as positive. Certainly, he was another one who was known.

CAC: Yes. The question, with other persons I've interviewed, hasn't come up in quite this way but in other ways, it has. Many of the faculty respond to a parallel kind of line of questioning that increasingly professors of all disciplines tend to identify themselves with their discipline rather than with the university.

MS: That's exactly right.

CAC: Would that play a part in your mind in this?

MS: Probably, probably. This may be not just here. I think of when I was at the University of Illinois. There were also some undergraduate faculty members who were known that as a graduate student I went to hear. I don't know if that would be true at the University of Illinois today. It may be that the great research universities in general have gone in this way and people are more committed to their disciplines than to their universities.

CAC: Or more specialized in what they have to say, which may reduce the broad audience interest that's latently there.

MS: Yes.

CAC: I'm thinking of another way of putting it. In my field of History, we're an outstanding, in my judgment, faculty now; but, we would be known from the speciality contributions that we've made. In history generally throughout the country, there are very few great historians. There are great historians of the Civil War or something; but, it's that epic kind of thing. You mentioned Kaufmanis and Sibley . . .

MS: Harold Deutsch came up some, by the way.

CAC: Yes, yes. You see there I think it's this sweep, that they really are kind of epic and heroic figures because they aren't telling a lot of very wonderful things and doing it very well about [unclear] but that's what they're doing now. Before, it was more of an epic sweep. That would be true of George Shapiro or many of the people you mentioned and the list could go on. God! that's worth thinking about. I'm going to shift the topic for a moment.

MS: Sure.

CAC: When you came in 1967, the meetings generally throughout the university were not open?

MS: Right.

CAC: For example, you have mentioned the Senate Consultative Committee [SCC] . . . that it wasn't secret but it just wasn't open, right?

MS: I don't know if it was secret; the meetings were closed.

CAC: They closed the door on you and on the press?

MS: Right.

CAC: Okay. Can you remember the year or the occasion, then, that you opened the door and went in and sat?

MS: I wish I could remember the year or I had looked it up. I remember when I came to the university, I'm pretty sure the first chair of the Senate Consultative Committee in my being here was Jack Darley in Psychology. That was when the meetings were closed. I would hear his name; but, I never went to a meeting because the meetings were closed. I think the first chair when the meetings were opened was Leon Reisman; but, somebody else was covering it at that time. I know the first chair when I was there was your History colleague, Paul Murphy. That was, I don't know how long ago.

CAC: It would have been in the early 1970s.

MS: It's twenty years ago at least. Since then, the meetings have been open. I mentioned that I've been to more meetings of the Faculty Consultative Committee [FCC] than any faculty member.

CAC: I'm sure of that.

MS: All these twenty years since, I've been to most of their meetings. I cover them. I love that committee.

CAC: Does the press generally come to it?

MS: Not typically. They can. The *Daily* does some when there's some . . . even then, not typically.

CAC: The *Strib* [*Minneapolis Star/Tribune*] doesn't come?

MS: Not very often. When there's a big issue that they know is coming up, they occasionally do.

CAC: You're really, on a continuity basis, the only person who is there on a regular basis from the press?

MS: Right. My colleague now, Rich Broderick, who is the editor of *Footnote*, the faculty newsletter, also goes now; but, he's only been here a couple of years. I might say that they still close meetings when they're going to talk about personnel issues . . . or who knows what they talk about when they decide to throw us out. I'm always very curious when they make me leave or make whatever reporters are there leave.

CAC: What was the occasion for opening it originally? Was it a sunshine law?

MS: I think so. I wasn't really involved in that.

CAC: You don't know; I don't know either. Once they were open, did it make any difference how they behaved? You didn't see any change in behavior?

MS: I never was there when they were closed.

CAC: Of course not.

MS: [laughter] I think they might not even be sure they should be open. They like having me report what they do; and, actually, I think they trust me. Sometimes, if I'm the only reporter there, they'll let me stay but they just say, "It's off the record," and I always honor that. They don't trust having *Daily* reporters there or they wouldn't trust having *Star/Tribune* reporters there. They say that they can talk more freely when no reporters are there, which is probably true . . . I don't know. At times, when I've been there and it's been off the record and also, even when it's an open discussion, a faculty member will say something and then look at me and say, "Maureen, don't use that," and then I don't. Even though some of those are the most colorful quotes, but I never betray that.

CAC: Good.

MS: I don't know what it's like when I'm not there; but, when I am there, I would say they are pretty candid discussions.

CAC: How often are Central Administration persons there to hear the candid discussions?

MS: About half of the time. The committee meets on its own about half of the time. Then, they bring in the president or Vice-President [Ettore] Infante or different people. I would say that they speak pretty candidly and sometimes pretty toughly to the central administrators in that forum.

CAC: And you think effectively?

MS: Yes.

CAC: You can see that the officers who are there take seriously the suggestions that are being made?

MS: I would say so.

CAC: Have you seen any change over the twenty-two years that you've been doing this in that regard?

MS: I don't know that I can remember that well to say what it used to be like. It seems like the administrators are spending more time with them. There's always a problem because the committee still complains that often the administration doesn't come until they have a policy and the committee wants to get in while they're still formulating the policy. Often, things have to happen fast and there might not be time to consult the committee or to give the committee as much time as they would like to consider something. That's always a tension. I certainly think the administration listens to them, takes them seriously. I think that committee has been a wonderful committee. Over the years, there have been excellent faculty members on it.

CAC: And you think the quality has maintained itself over these years?

MS: Yes. Yes. I love the committee just partly because that's how I find out what's going on a lot. I don't get into the inner circles of the administration; but, when they come to talk to the Consultative Committee, then, I find out about it and I can quote both what the administrators say and what the faculty members say in response.

CAC: The committee serves another function, that is, as you know, to relay back concerns that are coming from the administration back to the faculty. Do you feel that the committee has played that role as well?

MS: Faculty members might be in a better position to comment on that.

CAC: I'm asking them, too.

MS: Yes. They did establish *Footnote* as their newsletter, which our department does; but, the Faculty Consultative Committee is really the publisher of it. They're the boss. There, are a lot of governance issues get reported. I don't know whether that's the most effective way.

CAC: It may be that what you write reaches a large audience than the facilities that the committee itself has.

MS: A lot of *Brief* is given to the FCC discussions. The faculty members tell me that they hear from their colleagues about things that are in *Brief*. John Adams was just talking with Rich Broderick, the editor of *Footnote*, of something he's going to do this coming year for *Footnote*. He's going to have dialogues with half a dozen faculty members coming together to talk about

research issues at the university or something like that to give more of a faculty voice. I never know whether it's really the governance issues that are so important to the faculty or other issues.

CAC: Such as?

MS: They're certainly interested in things that the administration does that affect them, I assume.

CAC: What has been your contact with the student body or representative groups within the student body over these twenty-seven years? Is that a beat that you have to cover as well?

MS: I was just thinking about that . . . thinking that I was coming to talk to you. Not very much . . . maybe not as much as it should have been. My audience is the faculty and staff.

CAC: But presumably, we should be interested in . . .

MS: Exactly right. We sometimes write about students. If we're doing a story about something that affects students, we'd certainly get a few students to comment on it. The governance . . . I see the student members of the Senate Consultative Committee; but, I don't follow the students' own government, which tends to seem pretty convoluted from looking at it from afar. I just haven't gotten into it.

CAC: The students were added to the Consultative Committee approximately when, in your memory?

MS: I don't remember.

CAC: Okay. Do you have any sense of their changing, or maybe it hasn't changed . . . Did they make originally a positive or a significant contribution and is it more or less with the passage of time? Did student members play an important, crucial role in the deliberations of that body?

MS: They're certainly there representing a student point of view and probably that's good . . . I don't know. I know some faculty members are concerned about the faculty voice getting diluted by having the students there and on the Senate. One kind of technical problem . . . I don't know exactly how they resolved it but it does seem to be better than it was for awhile. As you know, there's the Faculty Consultative Committee and then all of the same faculty members are on the Senate Consultative Committee. The faculty members plus the students make the Senate Consultative Committee. Often on the same day . . .

CAC: They address the same issues?

MS: Yes, that's a problem. On the same day, the FCC meets and then the SCC meets. It's just a waste of time, for one thing, for the people who . . .

CAC: The faculty see it as spinning their wheels if they have to do same thing twice?

MS: Yes, plus, it seems like a waste of administrator's time.

CAC: Right.

MS: Often, President Hasselmo will come and talk about something, and he'll get the faculty reaction to it, and they'll spend quite a bit of time talking about it. Then, he'll come back a couple of hours later, and present the same policy, and then the students will react, and some faculty members may say some things again but they've already heard it. It's just kind of wasteful. As I say, that doesn't seem to have been happening so much lately. Gary Engstrand or somebody could tell you how they figured out how to get around that to, at least, some extent. I think it used to drive people crazy.

CAC: We spoke earlier of faculty morale and its presumed decline. Do you have any sense about student morale? Is that something that you can test or sense at all?

MS: No. Again, this is maybe just showing how out of touch I am with that, which isn't good. Another group that sometimes feels it comes not only below the faculty but also below the students and below everybody else is the staff.

CAC: Civil Service?

MS: Yes. I would say staff morale is low. I don't know how much students are affected by some of the kinds of things we're talking about.

CAC: Does what's going on in Morrill Hall influence your morale from week to week, month to month? Do you have ups and downs? Do you have a toboggan ride?

MS: I'm pretty happy. I don't know how much that comes from, to a certain extent, detaching.

CAC: You've really been able to maintain . . . you said you wept when you lost Keller.

MS: Right.

CAC: . . . but you maintain a journalist's detachment, a professional detachment from an institution that you really love?

MS: I don't know about that. I love the university. I've cared about people here. I shouldn't say that I'm detached. I try to be honest but certainly I'm committed to the university; so, it's my job to be honest but also to make the university look good. But detached . . . some of the problems, the bad news, I just can't let myself be demoralized. For some reason, I seem to do better than a lot of people do at not letting that demoralize me.

CAC: I hear what you're saying and, again, I keep wondering, as an historian or as a human being, if there's something in your character and personality that permits you that, encourages it?

MS: I don't know.

CAC: Maybe you've just got a hell of a good disposition.

MS: I think I'm temperamentally cheerful. I think there is somewhat of a cost to this. I might not be as committed. You might lose something in commitment. The university is not my whole life and I don't want it to be.

CAC: Good.

MS: It seems healthier that it isn't.

CAC: What do you do with the rest of your life?

MS: I'm very active in my church. That was one thing I was thinking. There is a spiritual . . .

CAC: What church?

MS: I go to Hennepin Avenue Methodist church.

CAC: Coming out of New Ulm . . . [laughter]. You had to find a home somewhere else, right?

MS: We went to a Congregational church in New Ulm, even though everybody else was Lutheran or Catholic.

CAC: Right.

MS: That's something that sustains me and I have a lot of friends.

CAC: Does that mean you're active in more than attending church services? You are active in that congregation?

MS: Right. For the last several years, I've taught a year-long Bible study.

CAC: Heavens.

MS: I'm in a Friday morning women's prayer group that starts at 6:45 in the morning; so, I still get here for the work day. I'm a few minutes late; I get here a little after 8:00.

CAC: What age group are you doing the Bible study with?

MS: Adults, a whole range of adults.

CAC: Okay, so it's not [unclear]?

MS: No, no, no. It will be interesting how this works. I'm starting seminary in a couple of weeks.

CAC: You will go to . . . ?

MS: UTS, United [Theological Seminary]; but I'm still keeping my job full-time and I'm doing this half-time.

CAC: How are you going to swing that?

MS: We'll see.

CAC: You'll go Saturday and nights?

MS: Nights . . . Tuesday and Thursday evening.

CAC: I see. In your mind, is this enrichment or does it mean some other kind of added career?

MS: We'll see. We'll see. Right now, I'm enrolled in two classes. I'm not enrolled in a degree program; but, the classes would go toward a degree if I decide I want to go that way. The M Div [Master of Divinity] degree is a possibility. I don't know if I can do it. I've been told that both of these classes are a book a week and a paper a week. I'm a good reader and a good writer; but, that's a lot of work. If it makes me miserable, I'm not going to . . .

CAC: You have to hold your health.

MS: Right, and I have to still do my job. Now, I've got vacation to burn, even though I travel a lot; so, I might take days off to study.

CAC: Travel is another way that you manage your private and personal life?

MS: That's very important to me. I spent three weeks in June in Israel, Egypt, and Greece, which was absolutely wonderful. Last year, I went to Prague and Budapest. I haven't taken one foreign trip every year; but, that's sort of my idea of what I try to do.

CAC: Do you travel alone?

MS: I have. I travel different ways. I've travelled with just friends. This last trip was with a group. I travelled in this group with John Turner on the trip to Siberia where we rode the Trans-Siberian Railroad. John Turner was the leader and Ina Rubenstein, Irwin Rubenstein's wife, was the travel agent. They went on the trip; so, there were a few university connections there. It was just a private trip. I love travelling. I have a lot of friends. The time I spend with friends is important to me. I'm trying to think now what I'll do when, basically, I have to give up all of my time, I figure, to go to school, either to go to class or to study. I still figure I can do some fun things on weekends.

CAC: Have you talked with Dean [Wilson] Yates at United about these possibilities for you?

MS: I haven't. He actually goes to Hennepin church; but, I don't know him. I'll get to know him.

CAC: He'd be an important person to know. He would be able to respond very sympathetically to the many demands that all of us have when we start doing these kinds of things. He's a very lovely human being.

MS: I have that impression. I've interviewed his wife [Gayle Graham Yates]; but, I don't know him. As I say, I'm looking forward to . . . all I know now is that I recognize him in church; but, he wouldn't recognize me.

CAC: How many persons do you suppose you've interviewed over twenty-seven years?

MS: Oh boy! I don't know.

CAC: Some you come back to?

MS: Yes, right. Ohhh . . . I can't even think.

CAC: Have you ever been interviewed until this afternoon?

MS: [laughter] Certainly not in this depth. The *Daily* has called me a couple of times; but, I haven't been interviewed to this extent focusing on me and my work. That was both flattering and sort of scary to imagine that.

CAC: You're extraordinarily skilled at this. Have I asked the right questions?

MS: They have seemed good to me.

CAC: [laughter]

MS: [laughter] I haven't been evaluating you. I've been concentrating on my answers; but, I'd say you've done a good job.

CAC: What questions have I not asked that I should have?

MS: Now, that is a question I always ask. When I'm interviewing, I always ask that question. I can't think of anything.

CAC: We've covered the things that you find central to your own experience at the university?

MS: One other thing I'd thought about was, thinking of the Faculty Consultative Committee—I may have even written this—that that has struck me as one of the few groups at the university, and my own department strikes me as another one, that really is looking out for the whole university.

CAC: Ah.

MS: Most people are scattered, as we've talked about.

CAC: You covered the Regents' meetings? Or does someone else have that beat?

MS: I don't always go; but, I often do.

CAC: Presumably, they are the ultimate group to care for the whole institution.

MS: Presumably . . . I guess they are.

CAC: I catch a certain [unclear]. I sometimes thought as I've done this that I should be doing it by TV instead of by just the spoken word because there is facial and body language.

MS: [laughter]

CAC: Do you have any sense of the roles Regents have played the last twenty-seven years, whether it has been largely a wise one or whether it's better at some times than at others and how do different presidents manage the Regents?

MS: I think we have had, on the whole, good Regents in my experience. Individual Regents—I'm not going to name anybody—often do seem to have rather parochial interests themselves.

CAC: They have their own agendas?

MS: Right; but as a board, I guess, they're looking out for the whole university.

CAC: Just from your own point of view . . . the members of the Consultative Committee, as they change year to year to year, represent the whole university interest with an informed way better?

MS: Yes. Of course, that's a faculty point of view; so, it's the whole university from the faculty point of view and students, if we're counting the Senate Consultative Committee. They might not think very much about the staff; but, at least they're thinking about the whole university as an academic enterprise. I have very much admired the way they've done that.

CAC: Well, I ask the question again, are there last thoughts that you have?

MS: No, I think you've covered it. This has been very enjoyable. Thanks for giving me the chance.

CAC: It's been enjoyable for me. I ask myself, as you do as a reporter . . . I have to have in mind posterity, which is a pretty big constituency.

MS: Really!

CAC: In five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, these tapes will still be there and what will somebody want to know? In the year 2005, what would they ask you? Do you have any idea? They'd have a different agenda.

MS: I don't know.

CAC: I try very hard to represent an all-university; but, I do, after all, come from a parish, and I come from a province, and from a college.

MS: Right.

CAC: I've started, as you may have guessed, with things I know best and then I've tried to widen the circle as I learn more as I go along. Down the line, I will be interviewing select Regents, and legislators, and so forth; but, I didn't want to get to them until I did my homework better.

MS: Are you going to do anything with this beyond having all of the tapes available?

CAC: I am not. The thought is that in the year 2000, somebody—I'll be eighty then and I can't do it—will have in mind a sequel volume to James Gray's history of the university [*University of Minnesota: 1851-1951*], which would be from 1951 to 2001. That would be an important book . . .

MS: Really.

CAC: . . . and a very difficult one to write. I thought that when I have completed this . . . I'm on the project until December and if it seems to have gone well, I may pick it up again in April and go until I think we've got a pretty good coverage or until the money gives out. Therefore, I just have to try to guess lots of different questions; so, I'm interviewing different kinds of people.

MS: I'm just thinking that I would think it would be a fascinating project for you . . .

CAC: Ohhh, yes.

MS: . . . and I would be fascinated myself, except listening to all of the tapes would be a hard thing to do. I didn't know if there was any way of pulling together any of your impressions after you've done all of this?

CAC: Yes, my very last interview will be of myself.

MS: Ahhh! Wonderful.

CAC: I'll try to abstract . . .

MS: That one, I'd like to listen to.

CAC: I was thinking I'd get somebody to do it, someone like yourself; but, I think probably by then, I could play both roles.

MS: Sure.

CAC: It would be kind of a game.

MS: I like it.

CAC: I am seeing some patterns. I've talked to, I suppose, twenty-five, thirty people now and there are certain patterns. Something went . . . I won't use the word sour but there was a real accumulation of problems in the early 1970s and everybody talks about this. Then it takes different manifestations; but, that development was a serious one and it relates to the morale problem we were talking about earlier and the problem of governance. It just has all kinds of implications.

MS: That's interesting. You're going back to something earlier than anything that you and I have talked about.

CAC: My first date is 1950. I've talked to some people and they came in 1946 and that's fine.

MS: It goes back to problems in the early 1970s?

CAC: Yes.

MS: That's interesting because I wasn't locating it back that far.

CAC: A good number of persons have used the word "golden age." What they mean by the golden age is the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s. It's about a fifteen-, twenty-year period, plus or minus. A lot of people think something went out—lots of things went out. One of the things has been that once I learn, once I hear that repeated, then I have to try to formulate questions that will inform that concern. It's there clearly. So, you have to ask why? Once, they say it, I don't try to press a card on them and say, "Things went wrong in 1975. Why, do you think?" You don't have to come out from our conversation . . . then, it leads into what I'm beginning to see.

MS: That is very interesting because I might still look at the early 1970s as the good old days, since I wasn't here much before that.

CAC: Sure. [unclear] the money begins to give out.

MS: Yes.

CAC: When you have a series of retrenchments, each one takes it and you get a number of years in which there's really no effective salary increase, for example, and funds external to the university from federal government and from foundations begin to tighten. Then people can't do the research they want. They can't do the travel they want. They can't get publications, inventions that they want. There was lots of money around in the 1960s and early 1970s.

MS: Yes, I have heard that before.

CAC: That makes a whale of a difference. But then, to try trace out what did it mean in the College of Education, and the Institute of Technology, or Agriculture, or what have you, is very difficult.

MS: Faculty may have, at least, job security.

CAC: Oh, yes.

MS: From my point of view, a lot of the morale problems that I see are that people don't know if they're going to have jobs.

CAC: This comes to the graduate students certainly, but to Civil Service as well.

MS: Right.

CAC: There's been a real impact there.

MS: Even for me . . . I've been here twenty-seven years. I think I'm doing a good job and people think I'm doing a good job; but, I hear what the budget picture looks like for the next couple of years and I wonder, Wow! I wonder if I'll have a job.

CAC: That is a big difference between faculty and support staff and professionals.

MS: I think there's hardly any Civil Service employee who feels very secure.

CAC: God! this place wouldn't work without them. When I came here in 1951, we had one secretary in the department. Now, we have four or five—of course, we have a larger faculty. There's more business to be done.

MS: Right. I always think if I feel this, people who have been here a shorter time . . . In the Civil Service system, I have seniority that would give me bumping rights and a lot of things; but, I still have this fear and I think that's very widespread.

CAC: This may fortify, strengthen a feeling of detachment from the university, if it is a temporary rather than a permanent place. Once I got tenure, I kind of knew this is where I wanted to be. That gave me a kind of security and freedom. If that goes, then, you don't attach so much to the university but to other things.

MS: Yes.

CAC: Well!

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[End of the Interview]

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