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# Interview with Eddie Hill, O.T. Walter Professor of Biology

Eddie Hill

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MACALESTER COLLEGE  
Macalester College Archives, DeWitt Wallace Library  
*Oral History Project*

**Interview with:** **Eddie Hill**  
O.T. Walter Professor of Biology, 1964-1999

**Date:** **Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 9:00 a.m.**

Place: Macalester College DeWitt Wallace Library, Harmon Room  
Interviewer: Laura Zeccardi, Class of 2007

Edited interview run time: 1:17:33 minutes

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## Subjects

	Background before Macalester
00:56	Educational background
01:36	Interest in biology
02:32	How came to Macalester
04:46	Prior visit to Macalester
06:13	First impression of campus and Biology Department
08:23	Impression of Mac students
10:03	Students in Biology Department
10:21	Faculty relations and collegiality
12:47	Administration's relations with faculty and students
14:44	Political climate on campus
17:41	Experimental College
18:40	Teaching experience, classes taught
21:57	Personal research and publications
23:19	Working with students on research
24:24	Distribution and graduation requirements
27:42	Sciences and liberal arts education
29:37	Students with double majors
29:58	Students going on into the sciences

30:18	Biology Department and budget pressures
32:44	Changes within the Biology Department
33:59	Interim Session
40:02	ACTC (Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities) and non-Mac students
41:06	Tenure process
44:29	Involvement with athletics
	Faculty rep for the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference
47:49	Changes within Athletics
49:41	Place of Athletics in liberal arts
52:35	Student issues in the 1980s and '90s
55:37	Changes in level of student involvement
56:55	Changes in faculty and teaching styles
1:02:53	Memories: biotech seminar and <i>Mac Weekly</i> columns
1:06:31	Change in Biology Department offerings and field in general
1:08:49	Major College policy changes
1:11:11	Change in type of students with Mac's growing national reputation
1:12:58	Relationship to Mac today
1:14:42	Favorite memory
1:15:54	Daughters attended Mac while teaching

**Interview with Eddie Hill**

**Laura Zeccardi, Interviewer**

**May 24, 2007  
Macalester College  
DeWitt Wallace Library  
Harmon Room**

LZ: My name is Laura Zeccardi and I'm a new graduate of Macalester College, conducting interviews for the Macalester Oral History Project. Today is Thursday May 24<sup>th</sup> 2007, and I'm interviewing Eddie Hill, Professor of Biology, in the Harmon Room of the DeWitt Wallace Library. Well to get started if you can just state your name, and where you were born and how old you were when you first came to Macalester.

EH: My name is Eddie Hill. I was born in Allen, Nebraska, and I came to Macalester when I was about thirty-five years old. And I am married and have two daughters. Our daughters were, I don't know, quite young—three and four years old, I think when we moved here from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[00:56]

LZ: What is your educational background, and what types of things had you been doing before coming to Macalester?

EH: I was trained in teacher's colleges in Nebraska and Colorado. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Wayne State Teacher's College, in Wayne, Nebraska, and a master's degree from

Colorado State Teacher's College in Greeley, Colorado. Then I took my Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska, with a major in, the Ph.D. in biology, with a major in botany and a minor in microbiology.

[01:36]

LZ: How had you gotten interested in the field of biology? Was that something that you had been interested in high school, or did that more develop once when you went to college?

EH: I think my interest in biology came about when I was going to college. I was interested in sports at the time. I still am, but then I got interested in, I was—you had to take a course in some kind of science. So I took a course in zoology and got interested then. And took a course in botany at Wayne State and sort of eased into it from that particular standpoint. My background was tempered by being raised in a small town in Nebraska. And it was very rural, so everybody dealt with agriculture. So you're more or less born and raised on a farm. So you knew about animals and plants and life cycles and things of that nature.

[02:32]

LZ: How did you first get to be at Macalester? Were you approached or was that a job that had been sought out?

EH: Well, when I left the University of Nebraska with my Ph.D. in January of 1962, I went to the University of Michigan as a post-doc in the Department of Botany. And I was there for two and a half years. During the second part of that, during the last six months, I began to realize

that here I am in this laboratory and I was becoming isolated from the rest of the scientific world. Don't get me wrong, I liked it, it was very enjoyable. But I didn't know much more other than what I was doing. And there's more to life, and there's more to the world than Neurospora, which was the organism that I was working on. And so I decided that well maybe I ought to leave this post-doc business. And I talked to my mentor, Professor Alfred Sussman. A good man. And we discussed it and he said, "Well, you can stay here as long as you like," but he says, "I recognize the fact that you probably ought to get on with your life." And so he started giving me—he was Chairman of the Botany Department at the time—pamphlets and flyers and so forth, that came in from schools around the country. And so I started looking at them. At that particular time in the '60s, it was a seller's market. I mean there were jobs all over the place for people with Ph.D.'s, especially if you had post-doc experience, which I did. So I could pretty much say where I wanted to go, at least I thought that at the time. That's how I ended up at Macalester. I think I interviewed at four different places. And then when I got home I think the next day I got a call from Lucius Garvin, who was the Provost here at the time, and offered me the job. And I took it, and that's how I came here.

[04:46]

LZ: Had you ever visited Macalester?

EH: No. Well, yes I had. I had visited Macalester. This was in April. I remember it very well, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1964. The reason I remembered it was eighty-nine degrees, it was hot. I was driving down Snelling in my brother's car. I have a brother that lives here. And on the Liberty Bank, which is no longer there—the bank is there but it's not called Liberty—the thermometer said

eighty nine degrees. I thought, “Boy, this is warm country here.” So, yeah I remembered. And I talked to various people on the campus. And we talked to the Provost, all members of the Biology Department, and personnel committee. And that's essentially how they recruited people. And they had people coming in here—if you think people are coming in here now to be recruited, I don't think that it was as ...great, the number of people who came in during the '60s. All these guys like me are gone now. They're retired. But, it was a great time, very interesting, very exciting, very enjoyable. What I call the halcyon days of Macalester.

[06:13]

LZ: What was your kind of first impression of the college as a whole, and then also more specifically the Biology Department?

EH: I can't really say I was impressed one way or the other, negatively or positively, with the college. I was trying to compare it with the University of Michigan's little part that I lived in, on the campus at the University of Michigan. It was kind of like that. It was in a city setting so to speak. And the department was over in Carnegie then. And I thought this department needs help, physically. The facilities were not all that good then. I was told that there would be a new building for the Biology Department in the near future, and there was. In 1970 we moved over to Rice Hall. So there was a big upgrade in facilities then. So, the people in the department, at that time there was a fellow there by the name of Dan Frenzel, who I thought at the time, and still do think, was probably one of the most knowledgeable biologists I've ever known. He knew everything. And a very capable person. And the college I think was lucky to have him at the time. He left and went over to the University. But he's a very knowledgeable biologist. So the

department, personnel-wise, was not—as far as I could tell then—was not hurting as far as being able to teach the discipline, and as far as the intellect of the people were concerned. Everybody was pretty good. I think most academicians, I suppose I'm brainwashed here, but most academicians are good people.

[08:23]

LZ: What was your impression of the students at Macalester, were they pretty typical or...?

EH: I can't really say all that much about students. I didn't really talk to very many students at the time. We didn't meet with students. We didn't have lunch with students. We didn't really do anything. The hiring process then was the faculty did the hiring. And at the recommendation of the Chairmen, recommend this person to the Provost. The Provost would get on the phone and hire. There was no such thing as internet, email, things of that nature then. And so students, I come later to realize, that they were pretty select bunch of folks. They're very smart, and I began to realize don't foul these kids up. They're smart. Just ease them through and try to help them get their degree, because they've been selected and they paid a lot of money to come here, and so they need the best instruction that you can give them. It took me a while to realize that, but I finally realized that that's how you do this job. So, students, I think they still are very capable. A very good bunch of kids. In spite of the fact that at that particular time there were protests, sit-ins, all that other kind of stuff. But perhaps it was needed at that time.

[10:03]

LZ: How many students were in the Biology Department?



EH: Well, I think we would graduate as majors from thirty to forty. In the introductory course at that time was, probably had...sixty to seventy kids in it, with several lab sections and so forth.

[10:21]

LZ: What were those first years like with other professors, given that a lot of them were new and were young, and what kind of atmosphere did that create for you?

EH: Oh, it was a very good atmosphere. Very positive atmosphere. Everybody tried to help you. Everybody was, "as lost as you were," because most of them were new here. At that time, the faculty was almost all men. I think there were about four women on the faculty. Most of the men were married and they all had kids. So there was a women's club, and there was a babysitting group, and it was a big family. I think more so then now. We used to have all college potlucks, dinners in the fall and in the spring. And then we'd have small group potlucks. I know we had a couple at our place. And we were, we'd go around various faculty members, six to eight people would come to a potluck. We'd have maybe three or four a year. And that went on for several years. So there was a sense of collegiality that I don't see here now, because things have changed. For better or worse, they're not the same as they were then. And so you're not going to get the same kind of situation now as then.

[11:48]

LZ: What types of things do you think specifically have added to that kind of decline?

EH: Well, at that time there was a women's club, Mac's Women's Club. And we had the Scottish Fair here. They were active at that particular time. They ran a thrift shop in an old house on Princeton Street. And they set up a scholarship fund for students. They would organize a variety of different kinds of events. It was a very active group of people. But no women worked except in the house. I shouldn't say that, working in the house, raising kids, is a tough job. But they didn't work outside the home as much then as they do now. So they were very instrumental, I thought, in the life of the college away from the classroom.

[12:47]

LZ: At that time what was the relationship like between the faculty and the administration and students and the administration.

EH: Well the faculty and the administration, there's always been, in my view, a sort of an adversary role. Kind of like a couple of stiff-legged dogs. They sniff around, but they don't really fight, but they are wary of each other. I think it's the same then as it is now. The students were part of this triangle of faculty, students, administration. And then the staff would mix in there someplace, somehow. The secretaries and so forth. But at that time we didn't have any secretaries. We did not have a department secretary when I came here. The students were...how should I describe the students; they were here for four years, and then they went on their way. They were not at the onset part of the governance of the college. They had the Community Council. They had their own rules and regulations by which students would live. There was a Dean of Students, there was a Dean of Men, there was a Dean of Women, which I don't think you have today, do you?

LZ: No

EH: And, they, those folks in the administration were kind of the shepherds of the students. If students had problems they would go to the Dean of Men or the Dean of Women and get their problem resolved in some manner, shape or form. There didn't seem to be hardly any problems then like there is now.

[14:44]

LZ: Could you go into a little bit about the political climate that was on campus because of events like the Vietnam War and things like that?

EH: I think most college campuses, the faculty especially, are what you would call in the current political climate as very liberal. And Macalester was no exception. Maybe more of a hotbed wild-eye, knee-jerk liberal place than most other places. You want to remember Walt Mondale was here. Hubert Humphrey came here after his stint as the Vice-President. So there was a degree of political activity on this campus. Students would get caught up in it. I think faculty members in those disciplines like political science, and maybe even history, would talk about student involvement—how the students could get involved in various kinds of activities on a local and national basis. And the Vietnam War sort of added, that was just kind of like gasoline on the fire at that particular time. It was very volatile, not only at Macalester, but elsewhere in the country. We had our protests and our sit-ins here. There was a...let's see...the sit-in in the

administration's office. And we dismissed classes around the first of May, after the Kent State incident, which was quite traumatic in academic circles at that time. So...it, it was a very volatile and tumultuous time. Kind of a tragic time I think, for academia. I sometimes think we're still harvesting the results of the Vietnam War in this country. But, that's just my opinion.

[16:58]

LZ: Did you ever see some of those outside events creep into the classroom and...

EH: In the sciences, no. Except the time when we said that any student that wants not to go to class because they want to participate in the activities surrounding the Vietnam War didn't have to. And somehow over the course of time the grades got worked out and so forth during that particular time. It was an interesting time, during the late '60s, early '70s.

[17:41]

LZ: Someone else had mentioned the Experimental College I think where students kind of basically picked their professors, were you ever familiar with that?

EH: No, no. The sciences weren't really involved in that kind of thing. I mean, science by its very nature, is sort of stand up, give the facts to the students, you get it or flunk kind of discipline. So we didn't really have a lot of joint teaching, co-teaching efforts. Occasionally they would. But the only really experimental thing that the sciences were involved in was freshman seminars, when that came about. I taught a freshman seminar, kind of liked it, actually. I think there were two or three folks down there that taught freshman seminars. But

that's the only experimental thing that the sciences, at least biology, was involved in.

[18:40]

LZ: Could you talk a little bit about your teaching experience in the first couple of years: what you taught, what it was like being a new professor.

EH: Okay, when I came here I had spent almost all my time, except as a teaching assistant at the University of Nebraska, in the laboratory as a researcher. So I had very little, in fact no contact, with students, eighteen year olds, as they came in here out of high school. And so, when I came, I was to teach microbiology and do the botanical courses because Mrs. Abbey was going to retire. So I taught microbiology, did the laboratory and the lecture. That's the only thing I did the first semester I was here. Which, in retrospect, was quite nice of the folks here to let me do that. So I could sort of get my feet wet, and the feet on the ground so to speak and figure out what was going on. Then the next semester, I started teaching plant physiology and what was called a lower plants course. Then I think the following year I started to do botany. But they let me get my feet on the ground. They didn't say, "Well you're going to do everything." They were very good about it, they being the college as a whole, the administration, and the members of the department. Or say, we had a lot of people coming in, and they might have had a minor revolt if they had said, "Hey, we're doing all the work here, what's going on?" But that didn't happen. They kind of eased us into the academic part of the world, and took the whole family into the rest of the college. It worked well.

[20:49]

LZ: Was there ever a point where you felt like you wanted to go back to lab work and teaching wasn't for you?

EH: Well, I sort of made that decision when I left Michigan. I had the decision to try to go to a research university. I did an interview at Northwestern in Evanston, Illinois. Either do that, or go to a school like Macalester, that was not research-oriented. I had about four years of pretty steady intense research stuff, so I thought maybe I should leave this. And maybe I'll go to a school that doesn't emphasize research, but lets you do it. So that's kind of why I got out of the pressure of research. You know publish or perish, kind of thing, like over at research schools like University of Minnesota, and got into a situation where that wasn't quite as intense as it is there.

[21:57]

LZ: Did you get to be involved in some of your own personal research or publication?

EH: Oh yeah. I published a couple of papers using—at that time we had an electron microscope, one of the first schools in the upper Midwest that had one. And I had done some work with that in my graduate work writing my thesis. So I had some experience with electron microscopy. Gained some more at Michigan. And when I came here, it was sitting there. And I knew kind of how to operate them. I knew how to prepare the material and so forth. So I used that instrument to generate information. I collaborated with a professor at the ag campus at the U. of Minnesota and we published a couple of papers. You were able to do your research as time would allow. You could do it, and you could get some funding for it. It wasn't as though, no

you've got to teach, you can't do any research because you have to devote all your time to that. In fact research was encouraged as much as you could do it at this level, because the idea then was to involve students in your research. And I was able to do that.

[23:19]

LZ: What was that like, working closely with students on that research?

EH: It was great. Kids are eager to learn. They want to find out all this stuff. The electron microscope was a big toy, and they wanted to learn about it and how to run it. And yeah, they'd sit there and stare in that thing like they're surrounded by a submarine. Well I always thought, here you are sitting there, looking up the periscope of a submarine. That's not quite how it is, but it looks that way. All the lights are glowing and so forth. And they learned how to run it. They got good at it. And most of the kids could do what they wanted to do. They are very capable. And if they decide they want to do something, they can learn it. They can learn it in a hurry, and they can do it just as well as the professors can. You just kind of have to guide them through and keep them so they don't fall off the edge. And most of them don't. Pretty smart kids, actually.

[24:24]

LZ: I know that distribution requirements and graduate requirements were a big issue definitely in the late '70s and '80s. How did that play out for the biology, but also in the sciences in general?

EH: Yeah, you put a statement here “Personal experiences at Macalester” it’s about the one-two-three-four-fifth one down, “How do you view the increase in distribution requirement, graduate requirement of the ‘80s?” [From the list of questions provided to EH prior to the interview.] I’m not sure there was an increase, more of a decrease.

LZ: I think there was a decrease. But then I had remembered reading that after the slack in requirements, that more people were demanding an increase in requirements and kind of making the liberal arts education a little more, I guess—in conjunction with some of the other schools that would have been compared to Macalester. I think there was a call for everyone to take two social sciences courses, and like a lab science course...

EH: There was a call for it, but I’m not so sure it ever came about.

LZ: Yeah, I guess that’s...

EH: We lost some requirements. I wrote down some things we got rid of: phys ed, we got rid of the speech requirement, we got rid of interim. We got rid of foreign language requirements as a distribution requirement. It came to a point where kids did not have to take a lab science. They could take a course in mathematics and meet the science requirements. So, you had the requirements within the departments, but as far as the overall distribution requirements, I think they were...they weren’t as tight and rigid as they were when I came.

[26:22]



LZ: Though the kind of call for science requirements didn't materialize, do you know kind of where that impulse came from, where in the college, some where someone felt that.

EH: Well there was a general attitude of getting rid of all requirements. I mean, you cannot require an eighteen year old to do anything. There's no point in requiring...you can't force people to do things, was the attitude then. So we got, kind of backed off from forcing people to do anything. They could write their own, you know, this is what I want to major in, this is what I want to do, these are the courses I want to take, and so forth. I don't think that lasted very long because if you're going to spend the amount of money that you're going to spend coming to Macalester, you'd better get some sort of a liberal education. Or an education that is at least what we think is a liberal education, at this kind of a school. Which means that you learn a little bit about sciences, and fine arts, humanities. And I guess you don't learn anything about physical education anymore. But we're spending forty million dollars for a building out there now, so you'd better get used to it.

[27:42]

LZ: Did you ever feel as though not enough students were exposed to the science department...

EH: No, I never thought that way. I used to think that the sciences were the only thing at a school that kids should take. Then I got to realizing, no that's not really the case. That you come here to get liberally educated. And at that time, you took four courses a semester. And so you could have one fourth of a student's time if he took a science course. That's all you could have. So, you back off of some of that, and say, "Hey, go find out what the people in the fine arts are

doing. How do historians do their research. Go do history, go do philosophy.” There are other things in life besides science. And so almost all my advisees, I tell them to do that. Kids wouldn't like to hear this, but they'd come in and they wanted to go to med school. Okay, good. But, suppose you don't get into med school. What do you do then. And so you have to have plan B, in case you don't get into med school. And it may be, you may be, if you're good in music you may want to end up playing the French horn or something. Or forming some sort of a rock band, or something like that. Which is, if you think that's a far cry from the sciences from going to med school, but not really. You need to do something other than what you do. You can't, I think you can't be married to your profession, and that's all you do. Of course that's what I do. You tell other people to do as I say, not as I do. [Laughter].

[29:37]

LZ: Did you ever had students who were double majors, like a biology and...

EH: Oh yeah, a lot of kids would double major. Double major in biology and music and in history and in economics. A lot of kids would do that. They could do it. Yeah, or double major in biology and chemistry. There was a lot of cross-courses there. They could do it, yeah.

[29:58]

LZ: Did a lot of your students go on to do work in the sciences, or did you find that more...

EH: Oh yeah. They would go to graduate school. And some of them would end up running laboratories in, for some pharmaceutical company. Or setting up their own labs here in...yeah

they would do that.

[30:18]

LZ: With all of the kind of budgeting crisis and just funding crisis that happened, did that ever, did you ever feel that in the Biology Department? That there was just a real lack of funding for the things that you needed?

EH: There's never enough money. We used to run...we'd teach roughly I think twenty-four courses a year. And all of them had laboratories associated with them, which took a lot of money. And we would run those twenty-four courses on about twelve thousand dollars. Which averages out about two thousand dollars a course. And at that particular time that seemed like a lot of money, but it wasn't. We had to pay for the field trips, and all the expendable supplies that you had to buy. And it, come April, we didn't have much money left. But we made it. You know, we learn to do with what you've got, and do the best you can with what you've got. We did that, I think.

[31:22]

LZ: Did that change as your time here went on and also...

EH: Yeah, budgets became a little less tight. I know when Bob Gavin came here as president, I was complaining about our budget. We need new microscopes, we haven't had any for twenty years. I think I was exaggerating a little bit. "Okay," he says, "we'll get you some money." We were able to buy twelve new, very good, light microscopes for the department. And he provided

the money, so, yeah we... If you laid out and you say, "This is what we need, and this is the reason we need it, and this is the number of students that use these things," you could usually get it. Sometime it was not as easy as walking up and saying, "Hey, I need ten dollars tonight to take my girlfriend to the movie," not that that would work. But sometime you'd get it and sometime you don't. It depends sometimes on whether or not the Provost had that money, and whether you could convince him that he also had the money that he could give me instead of somebody else. So there's never enough money. But we did what we could do. It worked.

[32:44]

LZ: Comparing when you first started teaching and when you ended, did you see a major shift or a major change within the Biology Department?

EH: Well, the curriculum's changed a little bit. They offer different kinds of courses I think now than they did then. The whole discipline has changed. I think the budget is a little higher, but I can't tell you what it is, what their operating budget is now. They've got more people doing the job. What's happened in science is, and probably elsewhere, is that you have fewer permanent faculty members and more part time people. And that's true in that department, too. I think they only have four or five permanent tenure-track people, people on tenure, and then a lot of people who teach just one or two courses. And you can do that in this area because you've got a big source of science people over at the University. Fairly big metropolitan area, there are other schools in the same boat that do the same thing, so it's sort of a pool of people that you can do that with.

[33:59]

LZ: The Interim period or program was something that a lot of people have mentioned. I'm curious of your experience with that program and how you felt when it was kind of up for either being done with or continuing with the program.

EH: In about 1959 or so—I'm bringing up these dates, this is ancient history as far as you two folks are concerned—but in 1959 or so, the college underwent a very radical curricular change. I don't think any schools ever did that before or since. When they went essentially from a vocational school to a liberal arts school. And out of that process came Interim. You know, the four-one-four system. No one knew what to do with it. They had thought about it. They had planned about it. And the idea was to get kids who were going to med school out of the sciences, out of chemistry, out of mathematics—not mathematics so much—but out of biology, and get them into music, history, or something like that. People looked around for things to do like taking students overseas, which was a novelty at that time. We had several trips to Europe, to England and to Western Europe. I know we had Professor Smail would take kids to Florida, and then he took them to Hawaii later. Then I started taking a group of kids to Arizona for thirty days. And I think I did that for about fifteen years. The thing about Interim is that it's a lot of work. I could see why they wanted to get rid of it. It's too much work. So that was probably the determining factor with getting rid of Interim, was the amount of work that was involved. So, I think it went out in '89 or '90, or something like that. But I did it for about fifteen years. Took kids down to Arizona, hiked the Grand Canyon, went to Mexico, down along the pool tides. The tide pools, where all these creatures in there, little octopuses and things you could hold in your hand, and various other kinds of creatures, that kids tend to, generally wouldn't see. Some of

them were biology majors or science majors, but some of them weren't. And the idea was not to baffle you with all kinds of scientific names of plants and animals of the deserts, which I didn't know anyway when I went down there. But I found people to help me. And it was to kind of give them an experience of the desert, because at that time people didn't travel like they do now. A trip to Europe was a big deal. And a trip to Arizona for thirty days was a big deal. More so then than it is now. That was another thing that led to the demise of it. I don't want to spend a month in Arizona. It's too hot and dry and so forth down there. I've been down there anyway. Didn't like it, or did like it, but I don't want to go down there anymore. So the novelty of the Interim sort of started to wear off and I think that's another reason that folks got rid of it.

[37:29]

LZ: Was the goal really to get students to move out of their field?

EH: Yes. That was the stated purpose of Interim, was to move out of your field. If you were a history major, take a science course. Go with Smail to Hawaii. Or go with Hill to Arizona. Or go with Dierenfield to England, or something. Get out of your field if you can, and do something different. Now, that's kind of scary for a student. To say, "Well, I'm hell bent on going to med school, and I want to do all this science and so forth." To suddenly being thrown into music appreciation. They didn't know a treble clef from a...what's the other one?

LZ: Bass clef. I'm a music major, so...

EH: Yeah, so they didn't know any of that stuff. It is a little bit scary. But I think for the most

part it worked. I mean, it's one of these things, you either liked it or you didn't like it.

[38:31]

LZ: Is that a requirement, did every student do that?

EH: Yes. The way it was then, you had to have thirty-four courses to graduate. Each course was worth essentially four hours. So you ended up with about a hundred and twenty hours, which is normal for, at that time, was normal for kids spending four years in post-secondary school. You took 31 courses, and you had to have three interims. And there was one interim you didn't have to take. You could stay home if you wanted to. But they had things on campus for kids to do, and they had these off campus interim events. We would get kids—when Macalester did the interim other schools jumped on the bandwagon too, shortly thereafter. So I would get kids from Augsburg, and Hamline, and elsewhere. I had one kid from Florida. You would get kids other than Macalester kids that wanted to go on these interims. I couldn't handle anymore than sixteen kids. I tried to break it, even it out, eight girls and eight boys. So you'd...there were times when you'd have to cut it off, you had to say, “Well I can't accept any more kids.” I don't have the facilities, where I went in Arizona, to handle any more than sixteen.

[40:02]

LZ: Do you remember when Macalester kind of joined with the other four colleges of the Twin Cities?

EH: Boy, I can't really tell you the time. The exact time line when they started to run the buses

between the various schools. Had to be in the '70s sometime, I think. I don't know that they even still do that. Do they still have the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities?

[40:27]

LZ: Did you get students from the other colleges during the regular school year?

EH: Yes. We'd get them. I'd get students in microbiology from St. Catherine's, from Hamline, and so forth in those courses. And it was pretty much more a scheduling thing. "Okay, I can take this microbiology course at Macalester because it's offered at a time I can take it," as opposed to "I could take it at Hamline, but they aren't teaching it at the time I want to take it." So that was easy. It didn't happen very often, but once in a while it did.

[41:06]

LZ: I guess I'm curious about your process towards getting tenure and what that was like for you. If it...people had very varied experiences with it, so...

EH: Well, tenure then was you had seven years, you had seven years of probation, so to speak. And I had two years of experience at Michigan that was counted towards my tenure, so I had five years. So I came here in '64 and was given tenure in '69. The process was, you had three things to deal with. You had teaching, you had service to the college, and professionalism, I think in that order. So, your teaching was first and foremost the best evaluator of a person. There was no such thing at that particular time as student evaluations. Didn't have them, although I did student evaluations. I got a hold of one from the University of Purdue through the Psychology



Department, because I wanted to see whether I was...you know, are you really doing what you think you're doing? So I would give the evaluation. It turned out that I was doing what I thought I was doing, and I was doing a reasonably good job. I would give myself a B grade if I were grading me, as far as being a professor. Probably on a good semester might get an A-. And so, tenure was pretty much, you were given tenure on the recommendation of the department Chairman. If you'd published a paper, and I had published a paper using the electron microscope. And I sat on a variety of committees—not many, I think one or two. And so I fulfilled all the criteria for meeting tenure. So I was awarded tenure based on that. Most people were awarded tenure. There was no third year review as there is now. You were notified at the end of your sixth year whether you were going to get tenure or not. And some people didn't. But it didn't happen very often. I think about ninety-five percent of all people get tenure. By the end of your third year you knew whether you're going to be awarded tenure. You are given various hints and suggestions as to maybe you should move on. But that didn't really happen as far as I know, to very many people. Some people left, but not very many. Once you got here you might have thought, “Well I'll stay here for a couple of years, then I'll move on to bigger and better things.” But that just generally didn't happen. You just stayed. It's a good place. People liked it.

[44:16]

LZ: Was that the draw then, to stay? It was just a comfortable place to work?

EH: Yeah, sure. It was a great place. Great place to be. I enjoyed it here. Still do. Glad to be able to participate in this.

[44:29]

LZ: It's nice to have you. You had mentioned your interest in sports, and in my research I had found that you had been a faculty representative for the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. And I guess I'm curious as to what exactly that was and how you got involved in it.

EH: Alright. One of the things that happened when I came here was you not only taught, but you had to do the service part, sit on committees and so forth. And so I was assigned the Athletic Committee, which was a very low-key low-level committee. They met I think four times a year. So, there were I think four people on that committee, including the Chairman, who was Professor Hastings, in the Physics Department at the time. So I sat on that committee and got to know Professor Hastings pretty well. I spent a lot of time in the Physics Department, because that's where the electron microscope was, so I would see him quite often over there. And we would exchange pleasantries and so forth. We got along pretty well. So, I was on that committee, and then when he left the committee he suggested to the Provost that I be given the chairmanship, and I would go to the MIAC meetings. And that's kind of how that worked. I would convene the committee. I would go around and find out some of the people who were willing to sit on this committee. And I'd convene it before we had faculty rep meetings. Most of the issues that we dealt with at the time were eligibility. If a student had broken his leg and wants an extra year of eligibility the faculty reps would deal with it. At that time women were not a part of the MIAC, the Title IX had not been passed. The committee job didn't really amount to much. But it was kind of fun. I enjoyed it.

[46:46]

LZ: Did you have other involvement with athletics, did you attend events?

EH: Well I would always attend the football games. That was when we had a reasonably good football team. We don't have one now, a very good one, anyway. I would also attend basketball games and the track meets. Boy that track out there during May, the third week in May, they had more track meets going on out there than they do now. They had the City Conference meet there. The MIAC would be held there—it was the best track in the state at the time. There were all kinds of meets going on. A lot of stuff going on in the spring of the year, that was centered around that stadium out there. Didn't have the baseball diamond. They played at Midway Stadium. It wasn't where it is now, but they had one out there. Or anyplace there was a diamond, the baseball team would play. Hard to play spring sports in Minnesota.

[47:49]

LZ: Given that you were involved with the athletic department, have you seen changes in that department since you've been here?

EH: Well, one of the changes I mentioned is that women are now part of the MIAC. So whoever...I don't even know who the faculty rep is—maybe they have two, one for women and one for men. It would be a much more involved duty, to be, to represent the school in the MIAC now then it was then. Well, I noticed over there now is they've got a lot of people over there who are part time people. You know, part time coaches and so forth. They've essentially doubled their staff because they get to coach the women. I would hope they would get a

representative women's basketball team. I don't think they had one last year.

LZ: I'm not for sure. They might... I think they might have. I think it was pretty close that they weren't.

EH: I know they dissolved their women's basketball team here a couple of years ago. I thought they were going to regenerate it. But I would like to see them get one. Get a women's basketball team. Get some kids that want to play, can play, start competing. But, the changes, the facilities, they were upgraded once, and I thought they were pretty good facilities. But they decided they need better ones, so they tore the whole thing down and they're starting over now. Let's hope they have something just as good as we used to have over there, it's going to take up more space. It'll be fine. It'll be good.

[49:41]

LZ: Where do you kind of see athletics fitting into a liberal arts kind of education?

EH: That's an interesting question. I think athletics is an integral part of the people who want to participate in it. It's kind of an extracurricular activity, just like it is in high school. Just like music, aside from participating in music in a band that say, plays other than during coursework, a class work band. I think that you...the school suffers if you don't have it, but it doesn't help the school that much if you do. I've just said a statement there that doesn't really make a lot of sense to even me, but I think that's the way it works. You spend a lot of money on athletics for kids who want to participate. I think you have to have the facilities for the kids who want to exercise.

You know everybody's overweight and too fat, you've got to exercise, you've got to watch your food, and what they eat, and so forth. And that's part of that. But competitive intercollegiate athletics is not a part of that. But it can be, I guess. I think what athletics does, probably more than anything, is that it sort of unites the student body. If you've got an athletic team that's going to win the championship you'll fill the gym. And if they're playing for the conference championship in football on a Saturday afternoon, you'll fill that stadium. And I think it does that. I think athletics sort of puts the school on the map. So when you say, when you mention a school like University of Michigan, you might—a lot of people say, “Well, it's Michigan football.” Funny looking helmets. It's not their academics, it's their football team. Same way with almost all the Big Ten teams, it's their football team. It's a big deal at that level. It's a lot of money involved in it. And here it's, at this level, Division III, it costs more, they don't generate a lot of income. I think you have to have it. I think that you can't, you can't dismiss it, you can't get rid of it. And we're not, apparently, based on that building they're putting up over there.

[52:35]

LZ: To kind of switch gears a little bit, we talked about events that went on in the '60s and the '70s, and I'm wondering if they're, what issues did you students kind of taking up the cause for in the '80s and the '90s?

EH: Students used to complain about food. Do they complain about food now?

LZ: Um, there's still a fair amount of issues about fair-trade and organic food.

EH: But one of the big issues was food. “Oh, the food is terrible, can't eat the slop they put out over there,” and all this and that. Well I, my last years here, students never really complained much about the food as far as I could tell. If that was an issue. One of the issues that went on, and this was probably in the ‘80s was the storage of nuclear waste at Prairie Island. I don't know whether that's an issue now or not. What else were some of the issues? It was apartheid in Africa. Prevail upon the Trustees to divest themselves of all stock that had anything to do with apartheid in South Africa. Issues of discrimination were always on the frontlines. It didn't matter what kind of discrimination it was. Everybody wanted to be treated equal, even though everybody is not equal. But, I think the student body sort of calmed down somewhat, as both what it was in the late ‘60s, early ‘70s, because there weren't issues, later on as there was then. The Vietnam War, namely. The Iraq War I don't think students, as far as I can tell, give two hoots and a holler about it, because they're not involved. No draft, so they don't care about it so much. They may and I just don't know about it. I think right now the cycle has come as far as student involvement in various issues, whatever those issues might be is fairly low. You can correct me on that if I'm wrong.

LZ: No, definitely...

EH: There's not a bunch of issues. Nobody's going to carry a picket thing, get out of Vietnam...get out of Iraq now, probably. Like they did then. So, I don't really think there's all that many issues relative to what there used to be. For the students now these issues may be very intense and very much so that they want to deal with them. But for me it's all in the late ‘60s, early ‘70s, and now I don't think they amount to anything.

[55:37]

LZ: Can you speculate as to any reasons why that could possibly be? Just a change in time period, or...

EH: I suppose it depends upon the backgrounds of the students that are coming in now. I can't imagine they're really much different than they were then. You're getting essentially the same kind of student now that you did then. They come from pretty good high schools and they're...they show the potential of being able to succeed here in this kind of a school. Maybe they're so intent on getting out of here in four years that that's what they're spending their time on instead of other activities. I think they should spend their time on other activities, get involved in something. I don't know what the something is, but I'm sure there are events, volunteer kinds of things that go on in this kind of a metropolitan area that students can do. But I, there just doesn't seem to be any big issue that students are interested in right now. As far as I can tell.

[56:55]

LZ: So to kind of lead into this last section of questions, I kind of have to do more of a comparison. We talked a little bit about how students are kind of students, but I guess I'm curious about if you've seen changes in the faculty and did you feel that, you felt that your teaching style sort of evolved as you were here.

EH: Okay, let me talk about changes in the faculty. I see the changes in the faculty in the Biology Department. Essentially, when I came here, and for twenty years, there were no women

in the department. No women faculty in biology. Now there are women faculty, and they're just as capable as men. Let's see, the second part of that was, the evolution of teaching style. One of the things that's happened in that department, and I think every department in the college, is the advent of the computer. Now, the computer was just coming in when I was going out. I had a computer... Let's see, we got computers in the mid-'80s, I think, '85, '86, maybe even a little earlier than that. But, they were vintage. They were state of the art at the time. As you know, computers in two or three years are obsolete. And so you had this evolution of computerology in the teaching endeavor. And it's used quite extensively now I guess. I think in biology it's used very extensively in genetics. You don't have to do fruit flies anymore. You know, count fruit flies. There they are on the screen. And you can look at them that way. And I think it's been a very big help to the, to certain aspects of that discipline. And probably other disciplines in the sciences, the computer has. I think it's still a stand up lecture type of presentation of the material. It's difficult to discuss, "what do you think of this fact?" You think this fact is real or not. Now you can discuss global warming all you want. As far as it's impact and effect on biology, that is...that would be one of these discussion type things. But most biologists would probably say it's not worth a credit, to discuss it, unless you can figure out and go in to get all the details and all the information that had been gleaned and researched by meteorologists and people in the past few years. You might be able to make a course out of say global warming. I don't know. So, it has changed. I mean the whole business of DNA and forensic medicine is...it came out of biology. And so, it's still there. I don't know how much emphasis they put on it. I think it's pretty much the same. You got plants and animals, you still have to deal with them, whether you want to or not, you still have to deal with them, and they're out there. I think it's shifted somewhat. We used to offer survey courses in zoology and botany. We don't teach those two



courses anymore. And most of what was taught in that has gone into genetics, and has gone into ecology. You still have to know where are all the trees growing, why aren't there trees here when there used to be? What's the effect of fires and all that stuff on the environment and... You know the environment is a big deal now. It has been for, since Earth Day back in the early '70s. Probably should be. When you're in a discipline, it's hard to see the changes within. You have to get out of it. And then look in and say "Wow, that isn't the way it was when I was doing it." Excuse me...I sometimes think that has happened to me, that as long as you're in the discipline nothing happens. But if you sit back and think about it for a few minutes, yeah there have been a lot of changes. A lot of changes especially in genetics. And in the way the computer can be used, and is used, I guess, in teaching. And I don't know whether people in that discipline have taught courses online where they don't meet them constantly. You know, three days a week, or four days a week, three days a week, but meet them say through the internet, through email and so forth. I don't know whether anybody does that over there. But if you walk by those rooms and instead of looking at a book, they're staring at a screen. And so that, to me, that's a bit of a change. Instead of looking at books, they still have their books up there collecting dust, but they, they're looking at their screen. I don't know if that answers you question or...

[1:02:53]

LZ: When you compare your first year of teaching to your last year of teaching, does that bring up any sort of reactions or memories?

EH: My last years of teaching I taught a freshmen seminar which I...I kind of enjoyed that. It

was on, what was it about? It was on biotechnology. That was when biotechnology was a hot topic. And I had twelve kids in there. And what we decided to do was to, ok, here's a topic that everybody is going to be involved in, whether they know it or not. So let's develop it. We divided it into four segments. I think we had each team, there were twelve kids, three people dealt with each segment. And so they not only had to develop that particular segment, like on how do you market a product that you think you can make money on. I didn't know anything about marketing. It's amazing what kids can do if you say "Let's try this, because I don't know." So they want to..."Oh, we'll show that old buzzard how to do this." And they did. We ended up saying, "Ok, if we're going to do this, let's see if we can get it published in the *Mac Weekly*. So we did that. So about every week for, oh, eight or ten weeks, we had a little article in the *Mac Weekly* on what was going on in biotechnology. Which I thought was kind of neat. I don't know if anybody ever read it or not. But they had to write it up so that they could present it to people who didn't know anything about what they were doing in that particular course. So that takes a bit of doing. It's one thing to talk about it in a setting where everybody knows something, and another thing to write it in such a way that people understand it. So that's one of the things we did. So, Professor Whitehead and I taught a course on symbiosis, which I thought has always been kind of an interesting topic. That's as close as we ever came, I ever came, to a joint teaching endeavor. He was a...Whitehead is a zoologist and I was a botanist, so we could kind of bring those two disciplines together there. We both got along pretty well, so it worked okay to do that. But generally speaking, the old stand up lecture, you write it on the board, you walk into class, chalk in one hand, eraser in the other, and you start going. Probably not the best way to do it. I think if I had to do it over, I'd do it in another way. I'm not sure I can tell you what it would be, but things change, and you have to change with them or you're going to get left out. So, it

changed somewhat, but not really. I don't think any professor would sit in this chair and say, "I did the same thing the first day I was here, and thirty years later I did the same thing the last day I was here." They're not going to admit it even if they did. But I don't think any of them did that. They change with the times.

[1:06:31]

LZ: To go back just a little bit, was there a reason why zoology and then botany were no longer offered as a class? It seems kind of..

EH: I don't think you could... They might teach them over at the U, but I don't think they teach them down at St. Thomas or Hamline. Uh...survey courses kind of went out. Remember biology is kind of a faddish discipline. There was...DNA and RNA and protein synthesis and so forth, boy that came in and everybody jumped on that bandwagon. Then people got tired of it and so they started...okay, I'll deal with DNA and that's all I'll do. Then something will come along like heat-shock proteins, and everybody jumps on that for a while. So it's kind of a faddish discipline. And it turns out then that in the process of finding out information about various things, about DNA and RNA, and molecular biology came about. And so we can put all this stuff in genetics in there, we can take all the stuff we taught in the introductory course on genetics and we can put it in there. And the same way with the classification, the names of plants and animals. Let's put all those in ecology. And therefore what have you got left. You don't have anything left. So, the old survey courses, I think are not there anymore. I think probably it's okay. I don't know if you need to say, I don't even know if they write textbooks on that. I shouldn't, I shouldn't sit here in front of that camera and admit that. But I'm not sure they

even write textbooks on it. If you get somebody like Hornbach over here, he can tell you whether they do or not. Or Davis or some of the people who are still active, they can tell you about that.

[1:08:49]

LZ: When you look at your years at Macalester, are there one or two college policies that majorly changed and then therefore had a major effect on the college? Is there anything that stands out?

EH: I'm sure there are, but I can't really think of any right off...what major changes have happened in the college. Probably a change that has happened is going from, say, thirty-one courses to graduate to...how many courses do you take now, how many courses does it take to graduate?

LZ: It's a hundred and twenty eight credits, so...in general that's four classes a semester.

EH: So that was a shift that was made, that was different. But, if you multiply thirty-one times four, you've got a hundred and twenty four credits in a four year period. So there's not a lot of difference. So it was just kind of rearranging the furniture. But it did seem like it was going to have a major impact. The faculty talked about that. How much, should laboratory courses get any kind of course credit, of which they never did for a long time. I don't know if they do now or not. That was a change that sort of came about. I think probably the biggest change was getting rid of courses...not courses, but getting rid of phys ed for example. The Interim. It was a

downsizing of the school probably as much as anything that had an impact. But they never came instantly or all at once. It was kind of a gradual shift and if you put them all together, it was, it was uh...it was kind of a dramatic shift to not have to take, say, a speech course. Or no foreign language in order to graduate. Or no physical education requirement. And the Interim was kind of an interesting experiment, and maybe at this time it was finished.

[1:11:11]

LZ: Has Macalester, as its reputation grows nationally both now and what it's been doing that for the last couple years, have you seen any impact that it's made on the type of students that are now drawn to Macalester? Just kind of the whole aura of the college...

EH: There was a time there in the '70s when we were trying to get African American students in here. A big concerted effort. I don't think we have all that many African American students here now, do we? You folks can tell me more about that than I can. I don't see very many over there, although I don't spend a lot of time over in that building. I don't see a lot of African American students over there. A few now and then, but no more than there ever was, as far as African American students. You see a lot of Oriental students over there, and around. Having said that that's all I can say about it. I don't know whether it has any profound impact. I look at you and I look at you, and you don't see very many blond headed blue eyed folks on this campus, do you?

LZ: No, it's definitely a lot less...

EH: A lot fewer of those students. I don't know. I don't know. You see a few now and then,

but you don't see as many. I don't know what that means except that you don't see them around much on campus as students. So...

[1:12:58]

LZ: What is your relationship with Macalester today, kind of what has been your retirement?

EH: Well, they still let me come down here. And I still have a little office over there. They haven't kicked me out. I have a refrigerator and a microwave and they give me a computer. It's an old computer, but it works. It does what I want it to do. They still let me come around. And I try to stay out of people's way, and not bother anybody. One of the things that's difficult, was difficult for me, is to let go. Is to get rid of ownership so to speak, if that's an appropriate term, to get rid of what you're used to do. I've tried to do that, I don't...if somebody asks me my opinion I'll tell them, but I'm certainly not going to say, "Here's what you need to do," because I don't think I should do that. And I'm not so sure I know what they need to do. In view of current procedures and hiring practices and so forth. There are a lot of capable people out there. They can do the job just as easily as I can, maybe better. I don't want to admit that, but...

[1:14:17]

LZ: Have you continued on with academic work in your retirement?

EH: Not really. Not really very much. I, uh, I don't even subscribe to all the journals I used to try to wade through and read. I don't do that. The department has them over there if I want to see them, I can go up there and look at them. I do occasionally but not very much.

[1:14:42]

LZ: Do you have a favorite memory or kind of time...

EH: You know, when I left here this morning my wife picked this up, and looked at that because she had seen that I'd been writing on that. And she was wondering about that. She once said, "What is your favorite memory at Macalester?" And I would have to say that I really don't have any favorite memories. I do remember both of my daughters graduating from Macalester, which was an achievement and I was happy that they were able to do that, and that they were able to graduate from Macalester. But really, a favorite hit-you-between-the-eyes memory of Macalester, I really don't have one. It's just like saying, "What's your favorite bible verse?" I don't have a favorite bible verse or favorite hymn, religious hymn. I just don't. Maybe I should have, but I don't. And I don't really have any particular really favorite memory of the school. It's just been a good school for me. A good place to be, and I really enjoyed it while I was here.

[1:15:54]

LZ: I'm curious, were your daughters in school while you were teaching?

EH: Yes.

LZ: What was that like? Did you get to see more of the student life aspect of Macalester?

EH: No. No. They lived in the dorm. One lived in Dayton. I don't know where the other one

lived, Wallace? They lived in the dorm. They'd come home on weekends once in a while. And one of them majored in math and economics, mostly math. And the other was in religious studies. And the youngest one, who majored in religious studies, went on to the University of Chicago and got her Ph.D. in religion down there. She teaches at the University of Northern Iowa. So I have to say the college did not do either of those kids irreparable damage. They were able to survive.

[1:17:01]

LZ: Well, those are all the questions that I have. Is there anything else that you kind of want to get out there?

EH: No, the only thing I would say, and I probably ought to quit harping on it. It's a great school, and I wish them well in their future endeavors. I hope they don't kick me out. Because it's a place for me to go, and I still like to come down here. And I enjoyed it. Great.

LZ: Thank you. This has been very very fun, and informative.

EH: Well I hope it's been enjoyable for you.

LZ: Very much so.

[End of Disc 1:17:33]