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## Interview with David Lanegran, Class of 1963 and John S. Holl Professor of Geography

David Lanegran  
*Macalester College*

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# MACALESTER COLLEGE

Macalester College Archives, DeWitt Wallace Library

## *Oral History Project*

**Interview with:**      **David Lanegran**  
Class of 1963 and John S. Holl Professor of Geography, 1969-current

**Date:**                      **Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

Place:                      Macalester College DeWitt Wallace Library, Harmon Room  
Interviewer:              Sara Nelson, Class of 2007

Edited interview      1:37:01 minutes      Disk 1: 1:19:57  
run time:                      Disk 2: 17:04

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Agreement:              Signed, on file, no restrictions

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**Interview with David Lanegran**

**Sara Nelson, Interviewer**

**January 11, 2007  
Macalester College  
DeWitt Wallace Library  
Harmon Room**

SN: My name is Sara Nelson and I'm a student at Macalester College conducting interviews for the Macalester Oral History Project. Today is Thursday, January 11, 2007, and I am interviewing David Lanegran, alum and Professor of Geography in the Harmon Room in the Library.

DL: Good morning.

SN: Good morning. I guess to start off, if you could state your name and how old you were when you came to Macalester.

DL: Well my name is David Lanegran. I came to Macalester as a freshman in the fall of 1959. At that time I was seventeen because I didn't turn eighteen until winter. And then I came back to teach at Macalester in June of 1969, so I was twenty-seven when I came back..

[00:50]

SN: I would like to start by talking about your experiences as a student, and a lot of these questions we'll come back to so that you can talk about your experiences as a faculty member, but I'd like to start with your time as a student. How did you find out about Macalester?

DL: Well my family had gone to Macalester for a couple generations. My uncle was here before World War I, but he didn't finish, and then my mother came here in the twenties, but she didn't finish either. But we were Presbyterians—this was the Presbyterian college—my four older sisters attended and graduated, and I had an aunt who went here. So really for me there was not a whole lot of choice. If I could get into Macalester I would come to Macalester, otherwise I would've gone to the University of Minnesota.

SN: So are you from St. Paul?

DL: I'm from a suburb called South St. Paul.

SN: Close by.

DL: Close by. And when I came in '59, I think there were about twelve people from South St. Paul from my class who came. We all commuted, none of us lived on campus. Most people commuted back then.

SN: Did you ever live on campus?

DL: I never lived on campus. Well you know I never lived on campus—I spent one night in the dorm room. Well that’s not actually true, because I was on the football team and we had practices in the fall, so I lived on campus in the preseason practice. And then we were supposed to live on campus through the spring practice, but I was working, and so when I came in to check in on Sunday night there was one bed in the dorm and I decided I wouldn’t stay. So I didn’t stay. So that was my one night in the **real**, real dorm.

[02:54]

SN: Interesting. So did you spend a lot of time on campus when you were growing up?

DL: Not really. I don’t remember being on campus until I came out to interview. I came out to interview on Veteran’s Day—I think it was Veteran’s Day—and my sister was on the faculty then, Patricia—Patricia Kane—and she had me interview the Dean, a guy named Mousolite, and he sat me down and we talked and he said, “Okay you’re in, this is your financial aid package,” and that was it. So then I came.

[03:44]

SN: What was your first impression of the campus?

DL: Um...boy. Well the first actual pieces of the campus I saw, was the gym and the field house and football field. I was quite impressed. In South St. Paul we had played with leather helmets and big heavy shoes, and out here they had plastic helmets and lightweight shoes and fancy shoulder pads and a big track. But the college then was nothing to get excited about; most

of the buildings were these temporary structures that they'd gotten somewhere. On the south end there were a whole bunch of quanset huts where the married students were living, married student housing. Well...it was, it was fine, but it wasn't anything spectacular, a lot of green space.

[04:38]

SN: How big was the student body then?

DL: You know, somehow I think it was about twenty-six hundred. But it was a very different student body then. There were all kinds of programs for business; I think there was like an office management program. Um, there was a med tech program and they also offered their lab space to the nursing school. There were three I remember, three hospital-based nursing programs here. So the nurses or student nurses would come on school buses every morning and walk across campus. I got to know them because I worked in the Biology Department and they took most of their classes there. So there was quite a lot of diversity of economic class – many of us were first time, first generation college students. And there were some who had been here a couple generations. But most of us were first generation from the suburbs and small towns and again largely Presbyterian. We had required chapel back then, once a week. And required convocations. And we had all these requirements, you know the curriculum was heavily based on requirements, so classes were pretty big.

SN: Did you major in geography?

DL: No, I did not major in geography. The college was very inferior back then because they did not have a Geography major. While I was here they finally saw the wisdom of having a Geography minor, which was a problem for me because I really thought of myself as a geographer and my friends did as well. I mean, they thought of themselves as geographers, but we had to major in other stuff, which took a lot of edge off student life because we really, really wanted to do this but you had to do this. Actually from my classmates there were three of us who became university professors. So even though it was a minor, it was a very good program. But you know I, looking back, you know we didn't really have any choices, but that heavily regulated curriculum was really a pain. I hated it—and when I came back to teach here I was very much on the side of getting rid of the requirements, and I remain that way. I've really never really gotten over the fact that you'd have to take all these courses that were pretty routine.

[07:21]

SN: What kind of requirements were they?

DL: I think you had to take seven social science courses, and you had to take two years of humanities, and two years of science—lab science so you had to be in the labs. And you had to take two years of religion, and two years of....I'm forgetting something here...two years of religion and two years of Phy. Ed. Actually two years plus of Phy Ed. Had a speech class, a speech test, so if you didn't pass the test you had to go take the speech course. They did **[didn't?]** have a swimming requirement which is probably about the only reasonable requirement you should have in this part of the state. So you're kind of locked into these courses, and the courses were year-long, so there wasn't a lot of moving around. Not all the



courses were a year long, but you know zoology, which was what I took for my science, one of my sciences, was a year long. Astronomy was a year long.

[08:27]

SN: How many did you take at one time?

DL: You know I can't remember. It seemed like I took a hundred, but I know I didn't. I think we took something like twenty credits. And the courses, you know, were varying lengths of time. I had one credit, two credit, three credit, four credit, and I think there were five credit courses too. So getting registered was pretty complicated.

SN: I saw some pictures in old yearbooks, and it looks like people just kind of lined up in the gym...very chaotic.

DL: Yeah, we did that. Actually when I came back here to teach too, the faculty would sit around the outside of the gym and the students would come in and hustle around, sign up. It was kind of fun for the faculty because we actually got to see each other. Usually we never saw each other. When I came back to teach...I was very excited about coming back to teach, because I mean, I'd gotten the job. So I went to see my old advisor in biology, Dan Frenzel. And he was in the second floor of the Carnegie Hall so I went up there and saw him in his office and said, "Doctor Frenzel, I'm going to be your colleague, I've just been hired in the Geography Department." And he says, "Well good for you Dave, I just quit." There'd been a huge turnover between the time I was a student and when I came back. And they brought in a lot of high-

powered faculty from the East, and set up a lot of new requirements for the faculty, and many of the departments crumbled under that pressure and Dan just quit. He was just so fed up with the college he quit and he got a job at the U [University of Minnesota]. And then when I went into the registration process I saw my old German teacher. And I said, "I'm glad to be here," and he looked at me, he says, "Lanegran. I am surprised to see you here," and I said, "I bet you are." I liked him—Westermeier. But I was a very indifferent student of German.

SN: So what did you actually major in?

DL: Political science.

[10:53]

SN: So you played football while you were here?

DL: Well I was on the team. We were good teams back then, but I was on the football team for a while and then, realizing that I wasn't ever going to be a great football player, and the physical cost of going to school and playing football was really tremendous. So I left the team, and lived happily ever after.

[11:26]

SN: What other activities did you do while you were here?

DL: Well, most of us who were here then worked off campus. I worked on campus and off campus. So the kinds of things we did were, you know, dating—fairly usual things. And club kind of activities. There were a couple of clubs that I participated in: the Geography Club and something called the Cosmos International Relations Club.

SN: What was that?

DL: Well...I don't know the full history of this, but we merged the International Relations Club with the Cosmo Club for some reason, I think probably because the International Relations Club was so dull [laughter]. The Cosmos Club was a party club, a social club for international students to meet American students. And I don't remember doing really anything with the International Relations Club. But we would have potlucks in the church basement across the street from Macalester—basically parties. I don't know how many international students there were then, but it was a sizeable group. And it actually turned out my best friends were international students. With the exception of Wendell Wong, who was from San Francisco and he used to get constantly irritated because people would ask him what part of China he was from. He'd just freak out. There was a program called the Canadian American Conference which...um...was a fairly contrived thing, you know looking back on it, but it was a lot of fun. We were paired up with a college called United College in Winnipeg. And so in alternating years we'd go up to Winnipeg or they'd come down to Mac, and we'd have this conference. And we would discuss, present papers. It was a lot of fun. It really was a lot of fun. It was a way to meet people at Mac who were in different grades and also the Canadian students were different and interesting. The topics were kind of the politically correct topics you would expect

from something like that—you know, Russian or Soviet foreign policy. Of course we knew nothing about Soviet foreign policy, but we pretended we did and we had a good time. I was on the debate program with Mosvick [Roger Mosvick]. I went...when was it, that activity? I went on something called the Mexican Caravan which Bob Dasset organized, the Spanish teacher. And, uh, I don't know if it was an official college event or not, because we paid our own way, drove our own cars. I don't know if we had been in an accident down there if the college would have done anything. We had to buy new insurance when we crossed the border into Mexico. But that...there wasn't a lot of...there was not a lot of international opportunities for American students. There was a program called SPAN: Student Project for Amity among Nations. I think there were four options that people could go on. But that wasn't Mac—that was all over the Minnesota college system. Then, things were going along just like this was a normal college, but then DeWitt Wallace got interested—and I don't know the precise year. But he sent out this charismatic genius named Harry Morgan who just turned the place on end. I don't think the college has ever had anybody as creative as Morgan. He didn't have an advanced degree. He'd gone over to the Netherlands. There'd been a big break in the dikes in the Netherlands, and this tremendous flooding, and he'd gone over there as a Princeton student to organize relief. He caught the eye of DeWitt Wallace, and so Wallace hired him. I don't know what the president Harvey Rice thought, but I don't think he could say anything because Wallace was, of course, putting the money into the place. So Morgan came here, and set up the International Center. Before then there was no International Center—the International House, it was called, because he lived in it. So he and his wife moved into this house, and they had this kind of familial atmosphere for the international students. And then he created something called Ambassadors for Friendship which I went on, where he talked American Motors into giving us—or loaning

us—brand new station wagons. Texaco gave us a credit card. Some donors gave us some money. I remember we had three hundred bucks for the group. And then we were supposed to get spontaneous hospitality as we drove around the country. And of course, back then the college was really well known because of the *Reader's Digest*. So there'd be an article every year on this in the *Reader's Digest*, and people would write in and say, well if you're coming through Boise, we'll put you up. It seems ludicrous now, and I can tell by the look on your face that you're not really believing this. But, in fact, between my junior and senior year I got the keys to a brand new station wagon. I had called and written around and gotten a bunch of people's names and my dear friend Dicky and I, and two guys from Germany, and a guy from Ireland and Karl Runkle, another geographer, headed out. And we drove, I think we drove eight thousand miles that summer.

[17:54]

SN: So you just drove around the US?

DL: We just drove around. We took a big circle around the US. We went down the Mississippi. We went west. Other groups went east, but we were curious and we were geographers so we wanted to see stuff. We drove and drove. So there was a car of guys and there was a car of girls. And Lydia, another geography major who is now a professor at Tennessee, was in charge of the other car. We met up a couple of times as we were traveling around, but...it was a phenomenal experience. I mean literally we would pull into a place, look around, start chatting people up and they would invite us back to their house. It was a tremendous experience. But that's the way Morgan was. He'd think up these things that people like you think would never work, but in fact

it did work. And then he came up with this notion of the World Press Institute, where he brought journalists—and that one's still going. I got very close to some of the journalists, in fact I still see one of the guys. So we had those journalists coming and again he funded all of that. And then he set up something called SWAP where American Mac students went to Europe. This whole planeload of Mac students flew to Europe, and then they worked in the summer—in sort of short term jobs—and spent time in Europe. So he was just churning ideas all the time. In the senior year all the students had to take a seminar. It would have this terrible title called 'Man and His World' and it had a reputation for being even worse than going to church. It was so politically correct and so dull but everybody had to do it, and it was just like...I can't give you an analogy. But, since I had driven around with Ambassadors for Friendship I got to go to the World Press Institute seminar instead, which was fantastic. He brought in people from all over the place so it was just great. But, you know the college kind of moved on and became more academic. So I left. I graduated in '63. And, of course the Vietnam War was on, but not in a dramatic fashion, it would come a little later. So I waited around to see if I was going to be drafted, because I had been deferred while I was in college, and so you couldn't really do anything. I graduated in August, went to work in a hospital, and just sort of waited to see what would happen. And then I didn't pass my physical, so I went to graduate school.

[20:47]

SN: At the U.

DL: At the U. And another great decision. You know I looked around and where the heck can I go to graduate school that's not going to cost me much? And that was the University, so I went

there. Turned out I went to one of the best graduate schools in the country, but I didn't know it at the time [laughter]. I mean I knew it once I got there, but when I made the decision to go it was simply a convenience.

[21:12]

SN: So while you were a student here, what did people see as significant political or social issues?

DL: Every year we had some big conference. It was either a Model UN, it was a political party nominating convention, it was a mock congress... So the politics of the time were on everybody's mind, and the students, the political science students had to participate in these events. They were pretty...they were interesting. And there was also each year a Religious Emphasis week, so then major topics of spiritual life and vocation were brought to the fore. I was on a committee that brought in speakers who had some kind of ability to mix their religion and their political or vocational life. I remember the big deal – we brought the first Communist ever to speak at Macalester. An old Trotskyite from Northeast Minneapolis. Turned out not to be very exciting. We were all worried, you know, would the alumni get excited and all that stuff, but they didn't. They probably didn't know it was going on. So...but...basically it was pretty much the same then as it is now. Students were very concerned with things. The issues were different. The Cold War was going on, there had been this kind of move toward some kind of a [unclear] and Gary Powers' U-2 plane got shot down. And then the Cuban Missile Crisis was going on. The men at the college...contained a lot of veterans. Like when I went to play football there, there was the captain of the team—Jim Gloss—had been in the Marine Corp for

four years and then he was a senior. So there were eight years between me and some of these guys that were in the... So they were serious about life, and concerned about stuff. So the topics were different, but the role of politics and the role of people wondering what their spirituality life was going to be like, were big. I don't know if that spirituality thing is still such an issue, but when everybody is taking religion and everybody's going to church, that discussion...those discussions went on pretty much all the time. They had really good religion faculty then, too. You know, there wasn't a whole lot of discussion about the environment in those early sixties. We knew about it, those of us who were in the biology part. See I worked in the Biology Department for four years even though I was a political science major. So people knew about conservation and that sort of stuff. Hildegard [Hildegard Binder Johnson, Professor of Geography] taught a conservation course. But it wasn't the way—you know when the big environmental movement broke in the late '60s. It was very different then. I think Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* must have come out in like '62? Something like that. But you weren't even alive then, were you? So that sort of thing came a little later to the college. Then when I came back in '69, a lot had happened. The war had really escalated, and the black power movement had taken off, there had been the Martin Luther King riots. So, when I was hired back, the president then—Flemming—was very interested in having an urban studies program and creating a curriculum that was really problem-oriented rather than discipline-based. There weren't many examples of that, so there was quite a struggle in '69, '70, and '70-'71 to try to figure out how the college would address this. So then they had this big revolution of the curriculum to get rid of a lot of these requirements. And then we brought in new kinds of courses like internships. It's such a part of the curriculum now, but I remember these debates about, you know, is this real? Can you give credit for people working? So there was a big—



revolution is a word that is used quite a bit—but there was a big shift in the way—some of us, anyway—were thinking about the college. So we had one group that was kind of going we want a pure liberal arts college, we want all this sort of stuff. And then there was another group of us who had been brought in to be more...applied, I guess you'd say. There was always the tension, because they had done away with all the applied courses to become this national liberal arts college and now they're bringing us back with a little different twist. And then the great collapse of the Flemming administration brought about the huge reduction in faculty. So we cut twelve tenure tracks to try to balance the budget. I was on the committee—actually I was the Chair of the committee, the so-called “ax” or cut committee—and initially we thought, oh well this is a good time. We will prune the deadwood from the faculty.

SN: So when was this?

DL: '72.

SN: '72?

[27:30]

DL: Or '71. So I was naïve, I thought, yeah we'll make the curriculum. We'll use this “financial exigency”—that was the term—if you had a financial exigency you could remove tenured faculty. And since there was a whole bunch of us who were untenured we thought, well that was a great idea. But it turned out to be politically impossible. So we had this, like a kangaroo court committee would sit there. People would come in and I'd ask them, how many

faculty can you afford to loose? And of course they would just...it was just terrible...terrible.

The best guy was a guy named Dale Hanson, who was the chairman of the Athletic Department. In those days the Athletic Department faculty were PhDs and they had tenure—they were tenure tracks...they were full members of the faculty. He had gotten a big grant from DeWitt-Wallace to open up a kinesiology lab, so there was big stuff going on over there. And the faculty were circling the Athletic Department like sharks, figuring they were going to get those tenure tracks and fire all the coaches. So he sat down and I said, “Well what do you think we can do to reduce the Athletic Department?” And he looked at me and says, “I don’t care, I just took another job.”

And he was the only person in that whole bunch of us on that were on the block back then who actually got another job offer. So it was the athletic department that was really the national group, not the rest of us. So we fired all those people—twelve of them—and then they had a...the students organized a ‘Save the Profs’ movement. It wasn’t fun to be here, in fact I left. I went to Penn State. They cut our salaries and....this is crazy, why watch this whole ship go down. So I was out at Penn State and my colleague Ernie Sandeen called me and said, “Now we’ve got a new Provost coming in, and things are getting better,” blah blah blah blah blah. So I came back. But it was a very, very hostile place. So we had this tremendous run up, you know, so from the time I was here when they started to bring in the Merit Scholars. There’s an article in *Time* magazine that was very famous, headed “Meritorious Macalester”. So there’s this run-up of wealth and academic excellence and all this stuff. The faculty are given all kinds of pressure to change, new faculty brought in. Then there was the collapse, the financial collapse...and the size of the student body after the Cambodian invasion strike. It was in the spring. I think we lost like 500 students between the spring and the fall, because people just

bailed. And the, uh, that was a fiasco. Students decided to go on strike to protest the—I told you this story, didn't I?

SN: No [laughter].

[30:54]

DL: I once in a while tell this in my class. So they decided they were going to change everybody's mind. So in order to change their mind they stopped the traffic on Grand Avenue, which caused a huge uproar. Police arrived, and you know they didn't change anybody's mind. And then they went out into the neighborhood, knocking on doors to change people's minds, and that didn't change anybody's mind. So then they went and talked to the alumni and that was sort of even worse. The result was huge cutting back of contributions. So, the classes stopped and the faculty took a vote in the faculty meeting: the faculty would go on strike as well, but we'd still get paid. After that I didn't go to faculty meetings for about fifteen years. I thought, gee guys, that's ridiculous. So we slowly worked our way back.

[31:49]

SN: So why was there all that budget trouble?

DL: Flemming came from the University of Oregon. And years—subsequent years—I talked to trustees who were on at the time and there seemed to have been a major miscommunication between the President of the Board of Trustees—a guy named Archie Jackson—and DeWitt Wallace and DeWitt Wallace's advisor, a guy named Paul Davis. The Trustees thought

Flemming was Wallace's choice. But it turns out he wasn't. He came in—like many new presidents—he came in with an agenda that was basically to use Macalester to change the world. He was particularly concerned with minority issues, the anti-war movement. And he had this vision, which required a huge amount of money—way more than the college had. So there seems to have been some kind of misunderstanding on his part of how much money was here, and how much support Wallace was actually going to give him. Well it turns out that Wallace didn't really support him at all and he was running a deficit. So Wallace would come in and pick up the deficit each year. The thing was I think a million dollars, but I'm not totally sure. Well, Wallace and his advisors realized that Flemming was not really a fiscal manager at all, and as a CEO he was kind of hopeless. So they stopped picking up the deficit, so all of a sudden the college was in the end and Flemming had been using some of the endowment principle to fund these special—he had all kinds of special add-on programs.

[33:55]

SN: Was this one the EEO—

DL: This is EEO, but there were some other ones. There was a program down at the Commodore Hotel. He had some education expert set up in a house on Summit, a bunch of programs. And EEO was hugely expensive because they not only brought in new students who had full scholarships, but they also added faculty. And they added counselors, they added houses—each group had its own house. Well, so it really just, this place just bled money... And then the mood shifted, too. It's kind of hard to explain this. But like I was a member of the American Indian Movement and then the American Indian Movement leadership expelled all the

white members. The Black Power movement got going really strongly, and it was hard to integrate EEO into the college. I don't think it ever was truly integrated into the college. Then Flemming left. They brought in Robinson. And when Robinson tried to cut the EEO budget, there was a big takeover of the Registrar's office. Robinson was not a happy guy. I remember I used to walk him from his office in Old Main home for lunch because he had to walk behind the place and he didn't want to walk alone. Then he left, of course. And John Davis came, and peace prevailed for awhile. It's like a rollercoaster. We used to talk about the times before, the days of affluence, and then the times after the days of affluence...the depression. What else is on your list?

[36:02]

SN: Can you talk a little bit about the process of how you became a faculty member here?

DL: I'm what is now called a strategic hire, meaning that it was done without a national search. So in those days, the hiring process was pretty much a network or an old boys system. I was finishing my dissertation, and I was teaching at the U. I had a part-time instructor's assignment—a lecturer I guess I was called. And then I was teaching over at River Falls, while I was finishing my dissertation. And Hildegard had hired an urban geographer. And I had no intention of coming to Macalester, none whatsoever.

SN: Why?

DL: Well I was going to be a high class PhD research number—you know, number one—I was hot stuff. The only problem was no one was hiring me [laughter]. So I sent out a bunch of letters—I can't even remember how many—to places around the country. Did not get one answer. So a friend of mine in Canada said there was a position at Scarborough Campus at the University of Toronto. And my father was quite ill so I thought, well I'm not going to go to Canada. So I thought well, I've got to get a job. I'll go to work with my Father-in-law who was in the garment business. And Hildegard called me and said that the guy that had been teaching summer school couldn't do it—was I interested? Ah, sure...delayed my decision of going to work in the garment industry. So I met with her and we talked about it and she was happy with what I was going to do. And then a little later she fired the urban geographer. This was like, probably April, she fired the guy. He had made the mistake, among others—I don't know all the mistakes he made—but he called her a fascist. And this was not the thing to call Hildegard Binder Johnson. So he was gone. So had all these courses and it was the end of the school year. So she said, "Well, why don't you come and teach in the fall?" Sure, that sounds good to me. So they trotted me through an interview process, but there were no other candidates, and I got the job. It was quite a fluke. And one of the guys who had taught here before...[laughter]...said, "You'll never last. No one can live with Hildegard for more than three years. She's just too hard to live with." I grew up with four older sisters. Hildegard wasn't difficult to live with. She has her...she was a genius, she totally was a genius. And she was kind of set in her ways, but she was easy to get along with. So all these other guys you're going to talk to, they're the products of national searches and highly competitive selection processes. Not me. I'm just—the good ole' girl's network brought me here.

[39:20]

SN: What was Hildegard like?

DL: Oh...what was she like? Well I used to think she was about eight feet tall. And then I realized lately that when I looked at pictures of her she was really small. But she was just the towering genius. She wrote and spoke several European languages. She traveled a lot. She never thought of herself as a Macalester faculty, even though she loved the college. She still thought of herself as a university faculty member, so she had this huge list of publications. And her peers were people at other institutions in Germany and in France, and around the United States. So she was exciting. She knew everybody. People were coming in to the college to visit with her. I used to say that I learned German by speaking English with Hildegard, because she never actually lost her German speech pattern or her accent. She was very, very creative. She was writing things back in the fifties that were picked up later as brand new. But she had a real heartbreak. She always talked about how difficult it was to be a woman in this profession. There weren't very many. There were women in French, there were women in the languages. My sister, you know the one over in English, and that's Dorothy Dodge. But there maybe were eight or ten women faculty. Hildegard just was constantly aware of how difficult it was to be a woman. And then she was nominated for the presidency of the AAG—the Association of American Geographers—a very prestigious thing. She's only been the second woman nominated in the whole history of the organization. And that so upset some of the old boys that they put a candidate up from the floor of the convention—which had never ever been done—and then that candidate won. So again she got slapped in the face for being a woman and being an immigrant. So she suffered indignities, but she was very smart. But you had to work to listen to

her. Those long German sentences get convoluted, especially when they go into English. She had very high standards, but also believed totally in academic freedom and never really meddled but set the bar pretty high. And I remember—one other thing and I'll move on to another topic—but when I came in that '69, with all these other young exciting people, she kind of sat me down and said, "You know, this is a hard job, and in order to get tenure you're going to have to publish. Don't let anybody tell you anything otherwise, this is what you're going to have to do." And of my whole cohort I'm the only one that survived the cut. They all went on to other careers. So she really understood the system, was beat up by it, but also enjoyed tremendous respect as a scholar. I think you could say that of all the years up to the 1970s she probably was the greatest pure scholar that Macalester ever had.

[43:09]

SN: So what was your first impression of the campus as a faculty member?

SL: Small. I had forgotten how small it was. And we were in Carnegie Hall and Carnegie Hall was a dump. They hadn't put any money in Carnegie Hall since 1904. And building the new science building—Rice Hall was going up—and so the last vestiges of the science division was leaving Carnegie. You couldn't...you wouldn't believe it. The equipment was even World War I era. The floors were rotting where the radiators leaked. I remember one night seminar John Burke [sp? Berquist?] brought his dog, and the dog starts sniffing around and went over and dug a hole in the floor, it was so rotten and smelled so bad. And the windows leaked, it was cold. It was just terrible. And the expectation was they were going to get another big grant and redo Carnegie Hall. Well. That was just a pipe dream. So all the science people left and got all this



new equipment. And then they moved the social sciences in and we were dealing with whatever was left behind by the sciences. Our cartography labs were the old physics tables—those students back there were so brilliant, they were able to learn in this stuff. But it was a pit, just a pit. And then of course the financial situation made things even worse. I used to put plastic up around my windows to keep the cold air out. Oh it was just a mess. Then I figured the only way we're going to survive here is to get...to bring money in from the outside. The college is simply not going to be able to do it. So then starting when I came back, we started to get grants from the outside. I mean, it's just... Sara, it's hard for you to envision this, but I had a summer institute. A big one, tons of money coming in, in 1985. And we had to get some air conditioning into that building. Well I had all this money—I should say, the college had earned all this indirect cost off my grant. But did they get me new air conditioners? No. They brought me over old air conditioners from Alumni House and we stuck them in the windows of, you know, 107?, where they roared like an old jet airplane. People were just killing me. And the seats were terrible. So the next year I got again money from NSF [National Science Foundation] to take out all the old seats and put in decent chairs. It was just terrible. And then, you know, *Reader's Digest* went public, and the college got all that money, and they started to redo the buildings and they did a great job. But my impression of the college in 1969 was: oh my God, this is not a nice place.

[46:14]

SN: How was the student body different than when you were a student? Because you kind of talked about that.

DL: Well people ask me that a lot, Sara. There are some major differences, of course. When I was a student it was primarily Midwestern. When I came back it had become slightly different, and now it's very different. The other big difference was, as I said before, back then the students all worked off-campus. And now the students are borrowing a lot of money, and so they spend more time on campus. It's sort of a "pay me now, pay me later" kind of deal. I'm...not able to see a tremendous intellectual difference between the students then and now. I know the test scores are a little different, but we were doing really interesting things in the early sixties. The students that I had in the late sixties and early seventies were fantastic. Geography students who have been here have always been good. I can't look back on a time when we didn't have a really good group of students in the department. We have more now. But the same kind of inquisitive mind, the same kind of enthusiasm for doing the work is still there. Students still want to do stuff, they still want to travel, they're still curious about places—I mean that's been a very consistent theme. Now they're from different places, but they have the same kind of gleam in their eye. At least I think they do. Other people have talked a lot to me about how they think the student body is changing and changing. And it may—undoubtedly it is changing in certain ways. But I think the critical kernel of the Macalester student is very consistent over the years. People just like you.

[48:20]

SN: So what was a typical day like during your first few years teaching?

DL: Well, I only lived a block away—I could see the office from my house. So I would walk to work, get here early, get everything going. I taught early, I taught the first couple of classes.

One of the things [laughter]—I like to teach. That’s why I came here, I like to teach. But the classes were four hours a week. And I thought, well that’s no fun. And they had small classes, so I said, “Well, I’ll teach a bigger class, I’ll go up to fifty-five students in the class, and then we’ll break it down into discussion classes and have these work-study students become teaching assistants.” So it was basically the kind of model that they used at the university. So I’d talk to my student assistants, who were really terrific, and basically I worked all day, same as I do now—sit there and work. Hildegard worked [laughter]. I mean, we never went out to lunch or anything like that. She came in later. But we just worked.

[49:37]

SN: Was it just the two of you in the geography department?

DL: Well, it’s sort of yes and no. There were some part-time people. First it was just Hildegard and I, and then Roger Prestwich [sp?] who was called a “graduate assistant”, who was teaching cartography. And then, with the EEO money, she got Rich Satterthwaite hired, who was a Native American. He taught a course called “American Indians and Their Land”. And then she brought in Danny Asmussen, so we kind of grew. She got three positions—three tenure tracks—and then when the crash came, Rich went over to be the director of the International Center. Um, but we always had these people kind of coming through that were graduate students that didn’t stay very long. One of the great things—the great accomplishment of those first couple years is that we bought a calculator [laughter]. You know how technology is—but this thing was a Texas Instrument about this big and it was such a big deal because now we could actually teach quantitative methods. The first computer we had...Howard Mielke made with a Heathkit...and

its memory was a cassette tape on the outside. It's just hilarious what we tried to do. Jerry Pitzl was going to teach computer cartography. We had one computer and it broke halfway through the semester [laughter]. We tried it, everybody, but we were way behind. We basically we were kind of humanistic geographers, because we had no equipment. A bunch of old stuff that was left around, but then gradually we kind of put it together. You had to really want to teach geography if you were going to be here in those years, because there wasn't really any of those amenities.

[51:38]

SN: What courses did you teach?

DL: The same ones I teach now. Human geography, urban geography, and the seminars. When I was hired here, Barbara Lukerman [sp?] arranged for me to meet with the leaders of the local planning firms. And I'd done a lot of consulting as an urban planner. And I said, "Well, one of the things I want to do here at Mac was to bring in a kind of pre-professional program in urban planning, in this urban studies bundle." And so we sat down and talked about what it was that a planning firm wanted in a new employee. And I was just stunned, because they said the most important thing is that we want somebody who can work as a...in a team, as a real efficient member of a team. They said, and typically the students coming out of these colleges are so self-centered because they're trying to get the grades. So then I brought in this notion of a senior seminar team project on the kind of consulting, working with a neighborhood, so that the students had some experience in that kind of context. And by '73 I had perfected the first Grand Avenue project. It took me a little while to get it figured out. And then I brought in the big field

project. And I did that because I had this four-hour block of urban geography, and then as now, people didn't really know a lot about the city. So I conceived of this self-directed field project. And that's worked quite well. So what I—but the courses were different. The urban geography had world cities in it, and then I had to pull that apart, make it two courses from one. And the human geography had physical geography in it—it was more like an introduction to geography. And again, that didn't work, so I pulled that out.

[53:36]

SN: Were they still year-long classes?

DL: No, we were teaching semester classes. It was the high-status departments that got the year-long courses. No, we were just a semester. So when I came the enrollments went way up. I was teaching stuff people wanted to take. So I taught urban geography twice a year, I taught human geography twice a year. The place where the department is now was all one big classroom and that's where I taught. So I had like fifty-five, sixty students, sixty-two students in those classes. And so that gave us a little leverage to get some more people.

[54:12]

SN: So how has your teaching style evolved since you've been here?

DL: [Pause.] Well I like to think it's gotten much better, but I'm not so sure it has. I never was able to finish the course as I'd planned it, so in that case I'm consistent. I've always had much more that I wanted to put into the course than I could get in. I learned—beginning in the

eighties—I began to work with high school teachers. And I learned a lot more about teaching. About the way students learn, about the way writing is linked to thinking, about the different ways to vary a class. That geography is really a visual kind of discipline. So with that knowledge, I began to change the way I taught, and make it more visual. There's also a whole big theory in education that people learn best by hearing a story or something that comes across in a story. And that's what sticks in people's minds. So I do a lot of story-telling, or case studies, or examples. I started out very theoretical, but I've learned over the years that the stories are the things that stick. I've also learned that the field experiences are the parts of the courses that people really remember. That was part of the German tradition. So I'm very much part of that German tradition. I learned it from Hildegard. I spent time in England and its part of their tradition, and so we are unusual here at Mac, in that we have such a strong field component in the way we teach. Classes have gotten smaller. But otherwise, I still use my same notes. I haven't learned anything in thirty years, but I'm still trying to do the same thing: have people understand where they are, and have them understand how they can influence the places around them. How they can make things better. That's still kind of the goal of the course. That hasn't changed too much.

[56:35]

SN: I guess logically the next thing would be to have you talk about your research on the geography of the Twin Cities, and the projects you've done, that sort of thing.

DL: Okay. I actually love the Twin Cities. I remember when I was taking a course on Indian philosophies with David White, it was meeting in his house, and I was driving from my house in

South St. Paul—it was a night class—I was driving across the High Bridge, coming into St. Paul. And it was sunset, you know sunset time. It was just gorgeous. It was like being Saul on the road to Damascus, you know, I had my vision: I'm going to be an urban geographer. The reason I say that is that there was no urban geography here when I was here as a student. You know I studied Africa, and a bunch of stuff. So, "Aw great, this is exactly what I want." So when I got to the class on Indian philosophy, "Oh, god, I don't want to do this." So I quickly dropped that class, um, even though I had a crush on one of the girls in the class. So I went off to the U. There's a great urban geographer there named John Borchert, and he studied American cities. And it was interesting, but my dissertation was on the history of cartography. I got really interested in the history of science, and did this thing. Which, believe me, Sarah, no one was interested in. I became a great, broad, "the educated geographer", because when I was in England doing this research, people would ask me, what are you doing research on? And I would tell them, and then they'd get that look in their eye...and then I'd say, well what are you doing research on? And then they would talk to me about what they were doing. But anyway that's a little digression. So I went to the U to be an urban geographer and wound up studying urban geography and the history of cartography and a whole bunch of other stuff. So when Hildegard hired me to come back to this urban studies program, Flemming was quite interested in, you know, the here and now. And that seemed really logical to me, so I started to work on what the heck was going on in the Twin Cities that caused these riots. And the year before I'd come here, I was working for the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University, and they were trying to work with the north side, the Bethune [?] grant renewal area where the big Heritage Park thing is now. So I was interested in urban planning and kind of what the heck was going to happen locally, you know Met Council was in its kind glory years. So I figured, there's

no money here, we might as well work locally. And that was pretty much Hildegard's advice too, you're not going to get any big grants to go off and study in Los Angeles. I did, when I came, get a research and travel grant from the college, which was quite generous at the time. It was one...about ten percent of my salary. But they took it away in the financial crash, so I wasn't going anywhere. So, well okay, here we are, we might as well study what's going on here. And it turned out that not many people were. And I figured if the stuff I was teaching in the classroom that was theoretical or comparative had any merit, it should work in the Twin Cities and we should see it in the Twin Cities. And then the old biblical phrase, "profits without honor in his own county," and I thought well, if I can be effective here, I will have accomplished something that's worth talking about, rather than just rehashing what other people are saying about the Detroit Riots and stuff. And here sat Macalester on Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue's future was really in the dark. So some on our team that I put together had an immediate success. It really was successful, and that sort of just nailed it down for me. I thought well, it's so logical to have the students work here. I like working with the students, and the communities need this sort of work. There was a book back then called *After the Planners* by Robert Goodman, and it talked about how planning had evolved in kind of a hierarchical power system where architecture was telling people how to live, and what really had to happen was that the people had to get involved in making their own plans. A thing called advocacy planning, which made perfect sense to me. So we became advocate planners for communities in the Twin Cities. And...I can't really tell you how much fun that was, because we would do something and people would really like it. I was told the other day down at the Historical Society [Minnesota Historical Society] that my books are the most frequently stolen in Twin Cities libraries, because they actually speak to the people around here. So, I developed kind of a life outside the campus. I went on the



planning commission of St. Paul, got involved in the Landmark Center, and I always was infuriated by this statement that “those that can, do and those that can’t, teach”. That always has really raised the hair on the back of my neck. So I thought, well, hell, I’m going to go do. So by Macalester’s perfect situation here, I was able to take my professional insights and zest off into the community and then bring the students with me. So we were able to do things that I could never have done on my own, and we basically ran graduate school type seminars. And the Twin Cities are just fascinating—I suppose every city is fascinating. Did I just say that? Every city is fascinating, **but** the Twin Cities are special. Because you have two cities so you have these things that...you can do this comparative work. And I found that...urban geography was kind of on the rise in the sixties. And what I was able to blend into it was kind of a new regional approach to urban geography, to take a look at these communities, these self-identifying communities. And the...there was another mission, too, because the community hated Macalester back then. So I thought, well, I have to go out here and show them that the Macalester faculty aren’t all pot-smoking, acid-tripping fools that are going to bring society down. So I had this kind of mission of sort of showing how useful the college was to the community around it. And then I got this tremendous opportunity—well really two—but to go down to Landmark Center and do that historic preservation project. Then when I came back I came back as the executive director of the High Winds Fund, and then I really got to put in practice what I’d been preaching, with [President] John Davis, and Paul Aslanian, working with the community around here to make the college’s environs more successful. So I was able to do both the writing of the planning and then the action with the students in the department. So it’s been just tremendous. We’ve been able to generate a literature about the Twin Cities that I think is pretty well appreciated. We’ve trained a huge number of urban planners, and urban

geographers, and non-profit directors—I mean all kinds of people. You almost don't have to be a geographer—a professional geographer—to use geography. But I have a big rival over at the University of Minnesota. There, there are also urban geographers who specialize in the Twin Cities. So having that rival in the town kind of keeps you on your toes because it sort of makes sure that you're not just falling behind the stream of conceptual research. And then I have my colleague, Judith Martin, who's the professor of urban studies at the U, and we've done some things together. So I was able to kind of link to the U and what was going on there as well. If I'd been in the Twin Cities and there'd been no University of Minnesota, I don't think that the work that we did here would have been so fresh. I think the fact that they were there kept cross-fertilizing between the two departments.

[1:06:04]

SN: What sorts of things have you researched? Well and students also.

DL: Well, I usually tell people I studied inner-city communities, and commercial strips. I've also written on other topics, sort of geographic education...did some things on South Africa and Southeast Asian cities, too. I write on Minnesota. I don't know. I suppose you'd say I'm just a dilettante. I kind of write on what I think is interesting at the time. But I explain that with the maturation and the path that a career follows. My basic premise is that where you are is very important, and it's important for individuals to know where they are. So the work that I do all tried to convey a sense of place, and discuss how people are either acting on their vision of the future or not acting on their vision for the future. And if you don't act on your vision, someone else is going to act on their vision, and you'll either wind up not achieving your goals, or in some

kind of major controversy. So they're all place-based. In general I'm interested in mid-latitude cities. I think they kind of push me into [unclear]. So I'm interested in Russian cities and Chinese cities and so on. But the opportunities to do research abroad are pretty limited, so most of my research has been here. I'm also interested in the urban fringe, and I'm interested in agriculture—I've written quite a bit on agriculture. Right now I'm writing a book for the Minnesota Historical Society on the development of Minnesota as depicted through maps. So I've got a hundred maps I'm supposed to select and write about. So I'm going back to my old interest in historical cartography. But geography is about maps, so what this really is, is sort of a historical geography of Minnesota, but heavily illustrated—beautifully and sophisticatedly illustrated. Not heavy.

[1:08:35]

SN: Can you talk a little bit about your work with geographic education? MAGE [Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education] and all that?

DL: Sure. Now you're really going to have a long interview. When I was here, Hildegard was very active in geographic education, and most of the students taking geography were going to be teachers. When I was here as a student, most people—most women—had only a few career options, and education was a major one, so geography was required. I'd come from a family of teachers, so I've always been interested in education. And Hildegard kept making this point that Americans don't know anything about geography. And when I got to the U I found out exactly why because the professors at the University didn't really care much about education. Except for John Borchert. So, and...when I went to the U there was a program from the national

government called NDEA, National Defense Education Act and they were picking up teachers and sending them back to graduate school. So while I was there I made one of my very best friends, Bob Marcott [sp?], who was a middle school teacher. And then Risa Palm [sp?] was also a middle school teacher and she had come back. So these people were talking to me and about education and how important it was. It made perfect sense to me that we should pay attention to what people are learning in K-12. But, believe me, there was no interest in the graduate faculty. But I was really interested, and I'm kind of a...selfish person—I like to do what I want to do. And I was living next to a guy who was teaching special education. And we got talking about a guy—in those years they talked about educable and trainable mentally retarded. And he was teaching trainable mentally retarded, whose IQs were supposedly thirty-five to fifty. This one guy—they taught in Crawley [?] School down on the west side and it had no gym so they'd go downtown to the Y for their gym. We lived up by the High Bridge, about a couple of miles. Well one day this guy got separated from the group, which is of course a teacher's nightmare. They went back to the school, he didn't go back. He walked to Arman's [?] house, to where I was. And I was just amazed by this, because I'd been studying exploration, and how did somebody figure out where they were? Couldn't talk very well, he had a cleft palate and hearing aids. Somehow he did that. So I got really interested in how did he learn where he was? This thing is called “way finding” now. So we set up an elaborate study of the geographic knowledge of mentally retarded students. And we published it in a paper, in a journal. And I couldn't understand why my colleagues at the University weren't interested in this. It seemed to be so fundamental to what we were doing. So then I hooked up with Marcott [sp?] and we had this great idea for a way to revolutionize the teaching of geography. At that time there was a big effort from the National Science Foundation to restructure the teaching of

everything—biology, chemistry, whatever. Truman Schwartz was involved in that chemistry deal. And there was a thing called the High School Geography Project which Hildegard was involved with. But we came up with a different one called the Conceptual Geographic Project, sort of out in Anoka. And I really liked it—I really liked Bob, and I liked the teachers I was working with, I liked the problems. So I came here to teach. And we were going to go to the federal government to get a big grant. So Fred Lukerman who was the Dean over at the U at that time, and the Provost, Lou Garvin, and I went out to lunch at the Lexington to talk about how we were going to get this big grant. Fred came and dropped us off and Garvin walks into his office and he says to me, “I hope you’re not going to get involved in any geographic education project.” Well, there went that. But I did anyway—I didn’t care what he thought. I just think it was so logical that if you’re going to teach at the college level, it’s important that students who come to the college level know something, so you don’t have to teach what they should have learned in high school. And then Pitzl was hired, who had been a teacher. And we thought the same...same ideas. And Hildegard was very interested in education, so even though we didn’t have any education program here to speak of, we were concerned about it. And then there was all this money problem, so how are we going to do this, we’re going to have to get some money. So we went to the National Science Foundation to get summer institute money. This was a chance where we were going to do well, while doing good, because they were going to pay us. We were going to get cash, we were going to get some stuff for the department, the teachers would be well trained. So it was kind of a win-win situation. And the National Science Foundation supported us big time...and then the Fund for Improvements of Post-Secondary Education supported us. And then National Geographic got in the act. And we now have an endowment that National Geographic gave for geographic education in Minnesota. But it just

became addictive. I like working with the teachers... There's no one else doing it, so it's sort of like if we don't do it here at Macalester, who are we going to blame if we're not doing it? It's kind of like—Ted Mitau [Professor of Political Science] used to use this line all the time that people get the government they deserve. So well, if I really believe in geography, I should be out here where the rubber meets the road with the geographic education. So we do the summer institutes, we do workshops during the year, we have this huge website we've developed, you know, a tremendous amount of curriculum material. We were able to get through the state legislature requirements for high school geography. So there's been a lot accomplished, but it's pretty much Hildegard's and John Borchert's legacy that they kept supporting this, and encouraging me to do it. And, even though sitting here at Macalester, I don't think there's anybody interested in it—there is, Wayne Roberts over in math is. So I have this whole extension—if you want to think of it spatially—extension out into the education community from the geography department that has almost no relation to the rest of the college. I mean, it pays for itself, and then some you know contributes into the department. But it's a very unusual thing for a liberal arts college to do something like this, particularly one that doesn't have an education program. So it's really ironic, you know we have maybe a handful of people who will eventually become a K-12 geography teacher through Macalester. But we have this huge footprint in the education community around it. But I've gained tremendously from this because it's made me a much, much better teacher. One of the first things I learned was they said to me, "Well, you teach geography, but we teach the students". And this notion of whatever you do should be student-centered rather than you—centered on you—was... I like to think I was intuitively doing that, but I'm not so sure I was. So now I think our department reflects that, too. We really try to focus on what the students wish to have, rather than what the discipline is doing

at a particular time. Because the disciplines are all so filled with fads, but we really try to figure out what people need and want to know. But it's just a stitch working with these—I'm working with six high school kids now. It's just so much fun. Basically I do what entertains me, Sara. Enjoy life as best I can.

[1:16:52]

SN: Can you talk about some of your collaboration with student researchers, and maybe how that's changed over your time here?

DL: You know, Sara, it really hasn't changed. At that seminar in '73 that did the first Grand Avenue project...and the notion was that I'd set up this seminar as a corporation. I was going to be the CEO, so I'd done the sales job; I got the contract, now you have to organize yourselves into a team that's going to deliver the goods. And if we don't deliver the goods, you all get F's. Because in the real world, if you fail your contract you don't get paid. So this is kind of a different style of grading, because it's either all A's or nobody gets an A. I mean the team goes and is successful. So that the notion of putting students in charge, making them responsible to a greater community than just me...driving them toward a research project that has utility. The word now we use is "authentic"—it is a problem that the community is interested in. From the very beginning, if an individual wanted to do an honors project I insisted that they present at a professional meeting...that that was supposed to be a step in that direction. What's happened most lately is we're doing many more honors projects in the department...which is wonderful. But the way that I worked with students in the seminars has been pretty consistent. And not every student in every seminar is the same. I've had some failed seminars. Those are

embarrassing, real embarrassing. My favorite story about this seminar is that it was very small, it was probably too small. So we're driving—this was a seminar doing some work outside the Twin Cities—and I look back and the whole damn seminar's asleep. How can you be a geographer and be out in the field and be asleep? But, you know, maybe they had math tests the night before, I don't know. Not everything works perfectly. The project we eventually did worked out fine because I...separated out some people. But I find the students here are—and we said this before—have been consistent in their enthusiasm to actually do something that has some meaning outside the classroom. It doesn't mean they're not intellectually oriented or something, but I think they like that other—they can kind of see what they're going to do in their future.

[End of Disc 1 1:19:57]

[Start of Disc 2]

[00:11]

SN: The last set of questions, some of which you've already talked about. I guess now we can kind of talk about the changes that you've seen in the college during your time here. And I guess I'd like to start with sort of how the political climate on campus changed.

DL: Well...that's a really hard question. When I was a student here, there was, we had a club called the Democrats. I think there were twelve or fifteen of us in the club, so in a sense it's reversed from the early 1960s. When we held our nominating convention we nominated Harold



Stassen for president...but...it was a long time ago. The campus to my, in my view, has always been—I shouldn't say always—from the 1960s, late 1960's on, has been left of center. Not everybody is that way, but we have a large number of people who are faculty who are quite left of center. And I think the students who are coming here now are identifying with that political bent. At least the students who talk a lot are that way. This is my great reservation about your question, because I'm not really sure what most of the students think about political issues. I think they're all concerned with justice and so on—that's sort of the touchstone of the college—service—but I don't really know exactly what they think. Probably the most...[pause]...far-reaching change in the political climate of the college has been the addition of some academic specializations. So we have the American Studies program, and we have the—what is it—Culture Studies and Humanities, and we have the Women and Gender Sexuality, I'm not exactly sure what their department is called nowadays. So we have three full-blown departments, programs...a lot of colleges like Macalester don't have. And I think I'm fair in saying this—those three disciplines, programs, departments, are to the left of center. So if you look at our curriculum there's a very clear indication of a sort of philosophical position—if you want to take it that way—that the college has. You know geography is not so easily categorized politically. But these other programs I think are quite on the edge of change in society. And that came in the late sixties because, you know, we were going to be a radical campus. Radical faculty were hired, and we were going to change things. So...it's always seemed kind of misnomer to me that a prestigious place like Macalester—a privileged place like Macalester—could be radical. You know we were living on the stock markets, how could this group run around and be really radical? So I have kind of a proviso that I don't think the college can ever truly be radical. But every year there's some kind of issue that comes up, some anti-establishment issue. So to me the

college has always seemed to be anti-establishmentarian. And I don't think that's good for the college, in my personal opinion. We need some institutional building as well as some institutional tearing down.

[04:50]

SN: So what have been some of the significant issues and events—I mean obviously there's many historical ones...

DL: Gosh. [Pause] Political, you're talking about now? Well, there hasn't been any issue that's rocked this campus that can compare with the anti-war movement. And that clearly totally permeated every part of the campus. And everything since then is kind of pale and to me kind of artificial. But everybody was forced to take an opinion on the war and act on their opinion. You were just constantly confronting these issues. The affirmative action issues that the college has embraced over the years are certainly important, but they haven't touched the campus in the same way that the anti-war movement did. And the present war...doesn't seem to impact the campus at all. I was in a conversation this morning with Chuck Green about the president's speech last night. But I don't think I've had a conversation about the war in any depth for a long time. Now it could be that everybody here is simply opposed to the war so nobody's talking about it. But it just doesn't permeate into the curriculum the way the Vietnam War did.

SN: So there was a lot more open discussion...protests and things?

DL: Oh yeah. Because there were people here who believed in the war...seriously believed in the war. We still had a connection with the St. Thomas ROTC program because we had people here in their uniforms who'd get harassed by the students. So there's really nothing that can touch that in my recollection.

[07:09]

SN: So during the Vietnam War, was the student response different than the faculty's in any way?

DL: Both were split. They had faculty marching, students marching. They had faculty supporting the war and students supporting the war. We had courses on the war. We had a course called the "Geography of War-Torn Landscapes". But we also had—you know, like my colleague Jerry Pitzl was a Major in the Marine...Colonel in the Marine Corp when he retired. And he kept that quiet because the students were so anti-military, anti-government in those days.

[07:58]

SN: In terms of the campus specifically, what have you seen as some of the most significant policy changes?

DL: Policy changes. [Pause] Well...the greatest policy change was the so-called "Steeple of Excellence" speech" that changed the college from a community—a Christian college—to a national liberal arts college. And that really, that really was a watershed in policy. So that meant you could get new students, new faculty, new staff...all that sort of stuff. So that policy to move

into this upper echelon has taken us thirty years, but we actually have done it. I can't think of a policy that compares to that. Everybody bought into the fact that this is going to be an excellent liberal arts college. Some of the things that people talk about as policy changes don't appear to be policy changes to me. So now we have this multiculturalism, internationalism. We didn't call it that but we had it. That's not really new. I don't think we...I just can't think of a policy. Give me an example of what you think of as a policy.

[09:18]

SN: I guess I just kind of picked that—just changes in general on campus. Like in terms of curriculum, and that sort of thing, I guess.

DL: Okay. The curriculum...we had a couple of curriculum evolutions. And I think there's one kind of brewing now, to go back to more requirements. But it's kind of an incremental thing, and there have been some efforts to put things into the curriculum that failed—the urban encounter phenomenon. But we've had these multicultural requirements or diversity requirements for quite a long time. And the...[pause] I don't know. You know, whether we have more or less financial aid is going to be a big policy. If we had all the money in the world we'd be giving financial aid. That's not such a policy shift to me as much as a recognition of resources. What policies do we have? It's a good thing I'm not an academic administrator because I don't see things as policy driven. The faculty run the curriculum. And there's...shifts in faculty temperaments, so there's shifts in the curriculum. I can't think of a good policy for the question.

[10:44]

SN: Okay. So what's been your favorite memory of Macalester?

DL: Sara, what kind of a question is that? [Laughter] However I answer that question it's going to be wrong. Hmm...my favorite memory. You know, Sara, I just, I can't, I really honestly can't answer that. Because for me...for me Macalester is a whole group of individuals.... You know I'm not a really great abstract thinker, so when I think of Macalester I think of the students that I've had in my classes, the students in the department, the faculty I've known. And, you know, I think they're just terrific. So sort of every day I have a good time. I consciously came back here to teach, having decided not to do other things. You know, invitations to do very different things, and I decided no, I really want to be here at Macalester. So if I didn't enjoy every day I would have been really a fool. But I really like every day. My favorite memory...God, that's a hard question. Maybe it's still in the future. That's the answer [laughter]—my favorite memory is still in the future. I just have so many fond memories. I'm going to have lunch this Sunday with one of my classmates from 1962, and you know, thinking about him again has reminded me of the fun things we did when we were young. So it's kind of a constantly changing thing.

SN: Well I think that's it for my questions. Is there anything else that you want to talk about?

DL: My God, Sara, we've been talking for hours [laughter].

SN: I know [laughter].

DL: Well...[pause] you know, I don't really...I've been thinking—after I got this invitation—I've actually been thinking more about the college than I normally do. About things in its past, and things in its future. One of the things that...that always puzzles me, Sara, is why, when you leave this campus, and you walk into a classroom or a restaurant or something and talk to somebody...business...their image of Macalester is a good, small college. And in that same category is...Gustavus, St. Thomas, St. Olaf. We think of ourselves as being quite different from these other places. I just looked through the *Minnesota Monthly's* categorization of colleges, and you know our students have higher test scores than these other colleges. But I wonder...I always wonder...what would...if we were just picked up randomly and dropped on these other campuses, and the faculty from them were dropped in with the students here—how would we react? Suppose that I'm teaching Geography at Gustavus rather than Macalester—or at St. Thomas rather than Macalester, or at St. Olaf—what would it be like? People tell me that there is a “Macalester student”. My high school friends say, oh yeah, that person, there's a Macalester student, and there's somebody who's not. How do they know? I mean, I think...I think I am who I am, and I really like Macalester. And I know why I like Macalester, but I don't know that that's why everybody likes Macalester. So this notion of “what is the school?”—when I stop to think about it, confuses me quite a bit. One thing that's clear is sports are not very important here. And they were when I came. We had really good sports, really good athletes. Everybody enjoyed it. And I think...I do think we were more of a community then, Sara. We at least saw each other more frequently than students do now and there were more spaces for people to see each other, more casual places. So I don't know that we're...better than we were in the early sixties. We've got lots of measurements that show we're better, but...we were really good back

then, too. And we had this strong sense of community. And we were real...I think we have a really strong sense of community in the various departments—particularly in the Geography Department—but I don't know how that translates to the institution. I went to the Hall of Fame Mac Club...the hall of fame dinner because my student and friend Roger Bridge was inducted into the Hall of Fame. And I was struck at that dinner by hearing people talk about the old days and the new days and how the college athletic programs have bound them together. And I think if we ever had a geography hall of fame it'd be full of people, because the geographers are so great. But I think we had the same kind of bond back through generations, but I don't know that there's any kind of cross-bonding. I don't know. These are questions that are way too abstract for me.

SN: Okay, well I think that's it.

DL: Good.

SN: [Laughter.] Thank you for your time.

DL: Good grief. Talk about an oral exam.

[End of Disc 2 17:04]