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Interview with Duncan Baird, Professor of Political Science

Duncan Baird

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Macalester College Archives, DeWitt Wallace Library
Oral History Project

Interview with: **Duncan Baird**
Professor of Political Science, 1961-1988

Date: **Tuesday, July 22nd, 2007, 2:00 P.M.**

Place: Macalester College, DeWitt Wallace Library, Harmon Room
Interviewer: Kayla Burchuk, Class of 2010

Interview run time: 58:11 minutes

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Agreement: Signed, on file, no restrictions

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Interview with Duncan Baird

Kayla Burchuk, Interviewer

**July 22, 2007
Macalester College
DeWitt Wallace Library
Harmon Room**

[00:00]

KB: Hi, my name is Kayla Burchuk, and I'm a current Macalester student, Class of 2010, conducting interviews for the Macalester Oral History Project. Today, I'm here in the DeWitt Wallace Library, Harmon Reading Room, with Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Duncan Hall Baird. Today is Tuesday, July 22, 2007, 2:00 P.M. So, Mr. Baird, just to start—oh, Dr. Baird, my mistake.

DB: Oh, no, forget it.

KB: [laughs] Just to start, if you could tell me the year you were born, where you grew up, and what year you came to Macalester.

DB: Ah. I was born in Montclair, New Jersey, because I wanted to be near my mother at the time, October 26, 1917, and everything has been downhill since. Think what happened immediately after my birth: the Russian Empire collapsed. Post hoc, propter hoc. The next question was then what happened?

KB: What year came to—what year did you come to Macalester?

DB: Well why don't I pursue what year I came to Minnesota, because I shamelessly claim to be a native when I'm really not, because Minnesota is a much lovelier state to be from than New Joisey—er, New Jersey.

KB: [laughs]

DB: Well don't laugh. During the war, there was a member of my crew who was from New Jersey, and he was the first guy from whom I learned there was something called a 'turlet' [toilet]. So, I came to Minnesota to be with my mother and my paternal grandparents right after the war started, because as soon as I was born typically male, my father joined the army. And my mother thought it would be better in Minnesota. She was from Brooklyn. So I have been in Minnesota all my life, and I came to Macalester, which was your next question, in the beginning of the school year, 1961.

[02:19]

KB: Okay, and what is your educational background, and what were you engaged in directly prior to coming to Macalester?

DB: Okay... Say that again.

KB: First, what was your educational background?

DB: Ah, my educational background.

KB: So, high school, college, graduate school...

DB: My educational background was that, of course, I went to the public schools in St. Paul, but sixth grade, I entered the St. Paul Academy, a country day school, and thence, was peristaltically extracted to Yale University. And I took my bachelors degree in American history from Yale University. There—at that point, I had conceived the brilliant idea of staying out of work by enrolling at Pembroke College, Oxford. But, of course, it was 1939, and you know what happened in the summer of 1939. So I had to resign from Pembroke College, Oxford, and, desperate for something to avoid meaningful work, I sent off to all of the law schools I could find and went to the first one which wrote me and said, “Yeah, we’ll take you,” which was Michigan. So I went to Michigan Law School.

[03:52]

In the summer of 1940, which is distinct in my memory, but perhaps not in yours, was the Battle of Britain. And during the Battle of Britain, I realized, for a lot of reasons, that we were going to be in a war, and I’d better be in it. It was something I felt was a duty that rested upon me, so I joined the Navy. And I won’t bore you with the details of my pre-experience in the Navy, but suffice it to say it was illuminating, and I was therefore able to complete law school and then was called to the colors. And eventually I—unlike most people in the service—I was able to call down what I wanted to do, which was submarine chasers. So I became the captain of a

submarine chaser in the North Atlantic. We were a hundred and ten feet long and made of wood, and we bounced.

[05:03]

Armed with my law degree, I was admitted to the bar without the bar examination, and on my return in 1946 from the Navy, I joined the law firm of Doherty Rumble, & Butler. What is now—what was now Doherty Rumble & Butler, then was Doherty Rumble Butler Sullivan & Mitchell, long resounding name. I was a junior in their office for approximately ten years, and then in sort of a midlife crisis, I quit Doherty Rumble Butler Sullivan & Mitchell and went to law school—uh, went to graduate school at the University of Minnesota in political science. I picked political science because I thought it was more dynamic and changing than history, which has been my lifelong love.

[06:17]

And so I, I was in the process of completing my Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota when an opening fell here at Macalester. And I was therefore recruited by that very, very unusual and dynamic man, whom you've undoubtedly heard of, Ted Mitau, who was one of the most remarkable men I think I've met in my lifetime. Brilliant, and not enough can be said in praise of him, I think. And so at that point, the Political Science Department was two people. One of them was Dr. Mitau himself, a formidable character, and the other one was Dr. Dorothy Dodge, who was also an extremely brilliant person, one of the first women in academia. She, I think, thought of herself as being something of a model and something of an encourager, if you will, of women in a day when women needed a lot of encouragement. They were very diffident, they were very diffident about going into professions. And so, those were the two of us, and we were a tight little department.

[08:02]

KB: What classes did you teach when you first came to the department, and what kind of curriculum was being taught in the department?

DB: Would you say the first one over again?

KB: I'm sorry. What classes did you teach when you first came to the department?

DB: I taught—I wish you hadn't asked that question. I taught, as I recall, "American Government." I think we all did, as a matter of fact. And—I really can't remember what I taught, except for one thing. At my own request, and as sort of a SOP to me—because, of course, being a low man on the totem pole, I got all the scut work, you know, RHIP: Rank Has Its Privileges—that was jurisprudence, which has been my lifelong love and my area of concentration. And it's a wonderful area of concentration because nobody knows anything about it, and even the name scares people to death, and so consequently, I was pretty free to do anything I wanted to do and call it jurisprudence. It's a lot of fun, and it opens up vistas into understanding the sociology of the law. Of course, I arrived at it through my legal training. And then, did you ask something else?

[09:43]

KB: Yeah, I'm sorry. What, what were the general, what was the general courses being taught in the department at that time?

DB: Well they were the classical courses, which probably we don't teach very much any more, because almost fifty years in a rapidly developing field, particularly on the quantitative side, there wasn't anything when I came on the quantitative side. And it wasn't until we hired somebody several years, couple years, three years later, Chuck Green, that we began to get into the quantitative stuff at all. So it was traditional stuff: American government, political parties, I think we had a European government course. I think maybe even I taught it, I don't know. So it was a battery of rather traditional studies of political institutions: constitutional law, which Ted Mitau taught until he resigned, and which I therefore taught thereafter. And that's about as much as I think I can dredge up. Oh, I will say we added some courses because of the additional horsepower that I supplied, and therefore, I worked up and taught a course on Latin American governments.

[11:17]

KB: I'm taking a course in Latin American governments from the department, um, next semester.

DB: Are you? Yeah, how about that. In which the electorate really is the military and, you know, stuff like that. I had a lot of fun with that, even got a trip to Latin America out of it.

KB: Oh wow, what did you do in Latin America?

DB: I went around and saw the sights and talked to people. And it was during kind of a troublist time, because there—a certain amount of unstable governments in Latin America, as well as the Latin Americans were all stirred up about Cuba. And therefore, you would go around and see painted on walls, “No romper con Cuba.”—“No break with Cuba.” Kind of shocking to me, who came from a thing where people were really [unclear] at Cuba.

[12:17]

KB: Yeah. What did you think of Macalester when you first came? What was your impression of the school?

DB: Well, don't forget, I've been a member of this community all of my life. My impression of it was erroneous, as you might guess. I figured it was infected with Presbyterianism, much more than it was. It had already begun to kind of break out of the mold of being the nice Presbyterian college where the minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, would send nice bright boys and girls up here to be instructed and instructed in good Presbyterianism. And it wasn't that way at all. By the time I got here, it was—and the impression that I got was, and I think it was entirely correct, that Macalester had hooked onto the DeWitt Wallace money. So they had an open checkbook there and that they were positioning themselves, as I moved into the place, to appeal to a much more universal and mondial clientele. And so we saw, during the time I was here—this took off as—I was part of it, now that I think, of the take-off of this thing. And therefore you would find that we were getting students from Washington, D.C., from Stanford, Connecticut, from Seattle, Washington, you know, stuff like this. And then that we were aiming, I think, all the time, sort of in a general way, not really in a focused way, to be

another Carleton. And I think by this time, probably, we've just about made it. I don't know. But if you compare yourself to Carleton, they've had the bulge on us for fifty or sixty years, so we're new boys on the block.

[14:56]

KB: What were the students like in the early '60s?

DB: Oh, they were delightful, as always. They were—the ones I encountered were, were very bright, they were motivated; they took themselves seriously. And it was a period when we began to kick them into graduate school. I conceived it as my function, for instance, to kind of put my foot in the back of the young ladies for law school. I thought, and I still maintain, that in my experience—and I have a step-daughter who is a senior partner in the Debevoise Firm in New York, I punched her too—that women, for the purposes of legal work, brains just as good as men's. There's no question in my mind, whatsoever. So, that was one of the things I saw as being a potential, was all of these very bright women who were floating around and wondering what they were going to do when they got out of here. And some of them yielded to my blandishments, and therefore, you will find, scattered around through this community, women who are lawyers, several of them on the bench.

[16:45]

KB: What did you think of President Harvey Rice when you came?

DB: I thought he was the right guy at the right time. He was mentally something of a lightweight, we all thought. I think he was smarter than we thought he was. But he was a guy who was, I think, a fella who knew how to do what the college president of Macalester needed to do. He wasn't really great, I think, on faculty development, for instance; that was not—his forte was in raising money, and he was just jolly good at it, because he got DeWitt Wallace on board. And he, unfortunately—I liked him, as a matter of fact, for various reasons. He and I had kind of a rather close relationship. He had a lot of tough luck, and I think that slowed him down some, and so he retired, and then...end of transmission.

[18:16]

KB: You mentioned the faculty. I understand that in those days, the faculty were close with each other? That they socialized together a lot?

DB: Well, there were fewer of us.

KB: Yeah.

DB: Yeah, and—yes, I think, and we were less professionally oriented, professionally focused, I think. And so there was a lot of, sort of bag-lunching over in the Union, you know, stuff like that. Yeah, I think that statement could be made. Whether I can support it with evidence, I don't know. It's just my impression.

KB: What do you remember about other faculty members at that time?

DB: Oh gosh. Well, I will be upfront. I want to say two things. The first one is that the faculty, when I came on board, were a much weaker faculty than the faculty you have now. There were numbers of them who held only the master's degree, and with my advent on the campus, the college began to take nothing but Ph.D.'s or ABDs, all but degree, so that it was a faculty that was not nearly as professional, and so on, as the faculty you guys have got now. The second thing is that—I should insert it here—the fact is that, of course, I had lived in St. Paul all my life, so I already had a circle of people I knew. And consequently, I didn't have the need to socialize with people of the faculty. And the third thing is that, up until the time of my departure hence, I was a Republican, and therefore was about as popular as a pig at a lawn party. Had my name written on the bathroom walls, things like that. So I did not feel a great deal of rapport. I never was appointed to a major committee, although I was a senior, full professor.

[20:57]

KB: Wow. That sounds difficult. Can you tell me anything else about being in a Republican minority on campus?

DB: Gee, it wasn't a minority, it was almost a vanishing... No. I don't think so. There were about three or four of us, most of us veterans. So, I think that's as much as I can say.

KB: All right, well thank you—

DB: So it's partly my—what I'm trying to get at here, it's partly my fault. I can't sit and point at the college and say, "You were a bunch of SOBs." I can't do that, because I'm the guy who, to a certain extent, rusticated himself.

KB: Okay.

DB: Okay?

KB: Yes.

DB: Yes.

[21:47]

KB: You mentioned earlier Rice's departure, and anyone looking at Macalester history knows at this point Arthur Flemming came in, and things began to change. Can you tell me anything about that?

DB: Yes, I can tell you enough to last all afternoon!

KB: Is there anything specific that stands out in your mind about that time?

DB: Yes. I wouldn't go through it again for anything; I'd cut my throat first. It was a dreadful time. At least three members of the faculty had to be hospitalized. Flemming—let me give you

a little background here. Flemming was head of HEW in the Eisenhower Administration. My father was undersecretary of the treasury in the Eisenhower Administration and therefore knew, or sat in cabinet meetings with, Flemming. Flemming was the guy who just didn't play ball. Eisenhower ran the cabinet, as he should, like a meeting in which you want to utilize the time and the talents of your people to the utmost. And therefore, position papers were required, which would be circulated first so that the agenda could be gotten through and everybody could say, "Well what do you think about it, Baird?" and he'd say, "Well, I think this is what blah blah blah." Flemming never got his position paper, and he wasn't ever prepared, he came late, and on the whole, was a dead bust.

[23:45]

When the Eisenhower Administration went out, of course, he had to find a job, and so he landed a job with Ohio Wesleyan, which at that point was a college about like Macalester—small liberal arts college with a decent reputation and, you know, a good place to send your kid. And within about two years, he had the whole place in a turmoil, with the faculty all upset, and the students in an uproar, and the trustees at each other's throats, and the alumni having fits, and the budget in a mess. And about that time, our friend Flemming accepted a position as president of the University of Oregon, leaving this smoking pile over here. You get the picture here. And I remember taking one of my daughters to Ohio Wesleyan to look at as a potential place for her to go, and the person, faculty person, who was talking to us, turned to me and said, "Of course, we've now begun to get things under control." I didn't understand what the reference was, because at that point I hadn't encountered Flemming. At the University of Oregon, he was there and by the end of two years...and that he emerged triumphantly at Macalester. At the end of two years... I probably should say something, shouldn't I, so that you [laughter] get it, that at

Macalester, the same result as at Ohio Wesleyan and as at Oregon, that he had the budget in an uproar, he had the faculty having a faculty meeting practically every afternoon, he had the students all in a tizzy, and it was something else.

[26:11]

KB: I understand there was also a lot of radical student activism at that time?

DB: Sure.

KB: How did those two sources—Fleming mismanaging the school and the activism...?

DB: Oh, he loved it. He thought that was great, I think. His mental processes are something of a mystery to me. Let me illustrate what was happening here. He was very high on the education of black students, a very legitimate, then as now, concern. And therefore he had a program, which was going to take a lot of money—four million dollars or something like that—and he brought up, primarily from Chicago, a whole bunch of African-American students. They moved into Kirk Hall, and began to break down the barriers between the rooms, and move their families in, and all kinds of stuff like that. And typewriters began to disappear all over the campus. And on top of that, the idea was that this money, which he was taking out of current funds, was going to be replaced, because we were on the brink of a very large gift. The fact is there never was any, we found out later. There never was any gift in anticipation.

[27:56]

It was during this time that I was friends with the financial officer, very nice guy, Republican. [laughs] And he told me the following story. He said, “I was sitting in my office,” which was over then in the—not in Old Main, but the one right next to it, which was a science building.

[Person off-camera]: Carnegie.

DB: Carnegie, yeah it was in Carnegie. And he said, “Phone rang, and it was the president, and he said, ‘I’ve got a man here my office, and I want you to cut him a check for ten thousand dollars.’” And so John, my friend, said, “Well, Mr. President, what account shall I post it to?” and he said, “Well, I don’t know, you’re the treasurer, you figure it out.” And so he prepared the check for this bird, who showed up in a few minutes and took his check. Nothing ever heard or seen of him after that. He was an African American, came in with some kind of a story, and the president just gave him ten thousand bucks. Do you want me to continue?

KB: If you would like to continue, yes.

DB: Well, I’m afraid I’m boring everybody.

KB: No, not at all.

DB: He would go around and promise all kinds of stuff—he came to the Political Science Department, and we were all sitting there like birds on a wire, and he said, “Well, what do you need?” and we said, “We need a couple of faculty members.” And he said, “Done, and done.

No, go ahead, recruit them.” We told that to everybody, and of course then the upshot, when everything hit and crashed and then, we had to fire them. Some of us got very upset about that. Every time I saw him, I’d say, “Arthur, do you have the opinion of counsel that it’s appropriate to liquidate endowment to pay for all of this experimental stuff?” He never would answer. I never researched the point legally, but I got a stinking feeling that the answer, in some cases at least, is no. You don’t spend—somebody gives money as a permanent endowment, you don’t spend it on the gold mill, you know? Well, anyway, that, that’s part of the saga of Flemming. He haunts my dreams. [laughter]

KB: I think you’re not alone in that one.

DB: Well, some of the members of the faculty loved him. They thought he was just duck soup.

KB: Really?

DB: Oh yeah.

KB: Hm.

DB: Freeget it [?].

KB: [laughs] Just to—if you’d like to talk more about this time in Macalester history, if that’s all right?

DB: Sure.

[31:23]

KB: What's your understanding—it sounds like Arthur Flemming expected there to be a gift. Was this gift supposedly from DeWitt Wallace or just coming out of thin air?

DB: No, it was supposed to be—I don't know *who* it was supposed to be from. It just was supposed to be from.

KB: Okay. Do you—I understand that DeWitt Wallace stopped funding the school.

DB: Oh, he certainly did.

KB: Do you—what's your opinion as to why?

DB: Oh, I can tell you why. First, it was stuff like this. There was a very nice, bright boy, came from my neighborhood, as a matter of fact, named Schecter [?], and he was a flaming radical. And he had painted, in art course over there, a big picture. The picture was about the size of one rack of these bookshelves up to about there. In other words, whoot, whoot, whoot. Ow! I bashed my shoulder; I stumbled and fell. Fortunately for me a marble floor broke my fall. He had painted this picture, and it was of a woman with no clothes on. She was lying, reclined, with her feet toward you and her head up there. And her feet were about this far apart and the gates of

Heaven, right there, all in kind of a screaming red color. And this came to the attention of DeWitt Wallace that this was on prominent display over there, and it was things like that that turned him off. I hope I haven't been too risqué or shocking.

KB: No.

DB: To me it was very shocking; I shock easily. I was teaching a summer seminar at that point, and in my seminar—was for high school teachers, “The Truth About Political Parties,” or some dumb thing—and we had about five or six nuns in it, and this picture was right outside the classroom. You walk out. Here it is! So that was what cooled DeWitt Wallace's jets.

[34:10]

KB: All right. And then one last, one final question about these dark times. I understand there were massive faculty cuts when the budget fell apart.

DB: Oh, sure. Yeah.

KB: What went on on the faculty when, when these massive cuts were announced?

DB: I don't think anything went on on the faculty. What are you going to do? Lie down on the railroad tracks? I don't know. No, I don't, I think we all said, “Oh gosh.” This was the backwash, you see, of the kind of thing I just told you about, DeWitt Wallace [*sic* Flemming] coming in to a departmental meeting and saying, “Oh sure, hire him.” And so we hired—at one

point, I think we had about four or five additional, in addition to the terrible three, we had four or five other people on the political science faculty. And some of them deserved to be fired, but that's another story.

[35:10]

KB: Just to go back to talking about the Political Science Department, what can you tell me about Political Emphasis Week?

DB: Oh, I can tell you a lot about Political Emphasis Week. That was the child of that genius Ted Mitau, and it was a lot of fun. The students, I think, loved it. I remember the one in 1964, when we had the struggle in the Republican Party between Rockefeller and Goldwater, and the students really threw themselves into it. And I always thought that I would like to do something of a similar kind, but I never got up the energy to do it—I didn't have the kind of energy that—to do what Ted Mitau did, where we'd have—what I've always admired and what they had at Yale when I was there, was the political union, which is a mock parliament. Organized just like Parliament with people on this side and people on this side, and you can change parties by walking across to the other side. And it is so effective that oftentimes, Parliament itself will pitch them a current hot potato and then follow closely the debates in the Oxford Union, because those are the debates that are going to take place in the regular parliament. So that Political Emphasis Week, I think the students took to it very, very well, and were—got very involved. And, as I say, I don't know what happened to it, for some reason, I think it faded out after about 1968. It may have been Ted's departure. I don't know; I can't remember. My memory is getting kind of saggy, as it were.

[37:39]

KB: You were the department chair at one point?

DB: Yeah! That enabled my successor to take up precisely where my predecessor left off.

KB: Do you remember what years or around the time?

DB: Oh, I can't remember.

KB: Was it the '70s, '80s?

DB: Oh, it would be the late '80s.

KB: Cool, all right. [laughs] Also, you received tenure in 1966?

DB: I think it was later than that.

KB: Oh, really? Okay.

DB: Yeah. There were things that, outside of sheer neglect—the whole system wasn't as tightly organized as it was later. And I came in, and a) I was a Republican, and b) I got divorced in about 19—well, separated from my wife in 1962, and she was a member of the House of Hope.

And at that point, the House of Hope was being headed by...now here's my memory going to hell. He was the guy who founded the Presbyterian Homes.

KB: Weyerhaeuser?

DB: No, Weyerhaeuser was the guy who made it possible. He wasn't a donor; it was the lead minister, Irving Adams West. And Irving Adams West didn't like me. He didn't like me because I'm a Unitarian. You know, we believe in the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, and the neighborhood of Boston. And he felt I ought to be a member of the House of Hope, being a prominent St. Paul family and all that stuff, and I refused. And so he was on the board, of course, the lead minister of the House of Hope always is, and I think that, together with other things, combined to sort of delay my—as it were—my tenure. But I think I didn't get tenure until 1967-68, you probably are correct it was 1966, but it seems to me it was much later than that.

KB: Was the tenure process different back then?

DB: Yeah, I think it was. I think it—probably the department head sloped down to the office of the president and said, “Hey, we've got George Jones here, and he's been with us for about three years, seems to be going great guns, so yeah, he needs tenure.” Done and done. [Claps hands] Well, they'd have to go, of course, before the board, I think. Incidentally, I want to throw this in. I remarried, and there is the old expression that second marriages are the triumph of hope over experience. In my case, a second marriage was absolutely remarkable. So it is possible.

[41:16]

KB: That's wonderful. To talk more about the department, there have been many well-known and beloved figures in the department—

DB: Oh, yeah.

KB: —like Hubert Humphrey, Ted Mitau—

DB: Yeah, yeah. Wonderful guy.

KB: —who you noticed, and Chuck Green. What can you tell me about these people and other people who you mentioned earlier, a female colleague of yours?

DB: Well, of course, I don't know anybody much after I retired. I don't know when I retired.

KB: According to records, it's 1988.

DB: 19—what?

KB: '88, so about twenty years ago.

DB: Yeah. I stayed on, for nothing, gratis—

KB: Wow.

DB: —because the department at that point was in a bind. So I stayed on to teach, I think, constitutional law for about three years before I woke up one morning and said, “Hey! I haven’t got a slot at Macalester anymore.” I think I was, therefore, head of the department for three or four years before that, before ’88, if that’s it.

[42:40]

KB: What was Macalester like in the 1980s?

DB: What was what like?

KB: What was Macalester like in the 1980s, as we come—as we—as John Davis joins and the Flemming era recedes into history?

DB: Well of course with John Davis—I’m very high on John Davis. He really rescued this place. He’s a genius. He’s a heck of nice guy, too, you know, and I’ve always thought the highest of him. We have been friends for a long time. So I have a feeling Macalester, by the end of his tenure here before he retired, was pretty much like it is now. That it’s, it’s going along, doing its job. That the faculty, I think, is the same kind of faculty that was on board when I retired. And that’s about as much as I can say about it, because, you realize from what I’ve said, I don’t have a heck of a lot of rapport with faculty members. I’ve seen Chuck Green, we had

seats side by side at the chamber orchestra, but I haven't been there because, of course, my wife became ill, and so we didn't go. And then died, so I haven't gone since.

[44:12]

KB: I'm sorry. Can you tell me anything about Hubert Humphrey; was he at the department when you were?

DB: Yeah.

KB: What was that like?

DB: Well, you didn't see very much of him. I thought it was simply great. He's a great guy, and although we didn't have the same political party, nevertheless I admired him tremendously. And I wish we had him around now, because he was ideally the kind of a guy who could cross the aisle and get things done. He did, of course, a number of dumb things, but he did a bunch of really terrific things. For instance, the whole GI Bill, I think, rested largely on Hubert, and it was one of the greatest things that ever happened to this country. And so, I enjoyed him very much, and I thought he was a great guy, and I wished we had more of him.

[45:12]

KB: That's great. Is there anything else about Ted Mitau you'd like to put on the record that hasn't been said?

DB: Let me think a little. I've thought about this, and I don't think there's anything more than to say that he was a heck of a remarkable guy. I think probably one of the most brilliant men I've ever seen. You know, he came to this country, didn't know a word of English, and he developed a very good English style, writing, with a vast vocabulary. Not as good as mine, but very good. And so I will never be heard to say anything negative about Ted Mitau. And he had, in addition, you see, not only the academic skills but he had managerial skills as well. When we were searching for a president of Macalester, I recommended him. You know, and then quoted the old poem about when they "wanted a man to encourage the van, / Or shout at a boy in the rear, / Storm fort or redoubt, they had but to shout / For Abdul Abulbul Amir." Have you ever heard it? "There are heroes in plenty and well known to fame / In the ranks that are led by the Czar, / The bravest of these was a gent by the name / Of Ivan Skavinsky Skavar." And it goes on. Of course they—"One day that brave Russian that shouldered his gun / And donned his most insolent sneer, / Downtown he did go where he trod on the toe / Of Abdul Abulbul Amir." So forth. I'm boring you.

[47:05]

KB: Let's see. I also understand that you served on a committee that dealt with Title IX?

DB: Yeah.

KB: What was that like?

DB: Oh that was a lot of fun, except we had on it, and she was an MA, a real feminine wowzer. She was three hundred and fifty-five percent women's rights, and it was a little tough with her on there. And I recall, we eventually came up with a report and recommendations, which I presented at a faculty meeting to the faculty, and they were adopted. And this was an attempt to do what was quite obvious, see if we could get stuff on an even keel around here, and women were recognized finally.

KB: It seems like equality for women students is an issue you feel very passionate about?

DB: Yeah, I do. I do.

KB: Were you—I understand that you advised a lot of students to go to law school, but were you ever an official legal advisor or involved with the legal studies program?

DB: No, I don't think we ever appointed an official legal advisor. But I was an efficient legal advisor, and Ted Mitau did it, and I think probably other members of the faculty did it. But I made it my business to sneak around and visit law schools and stuff like that. They change, you know. For instance, Northwestern was a good law school, and then it was a rotten law school, and then it was a good law school. And my triumph, of course, was to advise the daughter of a former student to go to Cornell. So she went to Cornell and was a tremendous—had tremendous success.

[49:10]

KB: That's great. Since you retired in 1988, how involved have you been with Macalester?

DB: Hardly at all. Hardly at all. During this time, I was involved with other things. One of them: the, um—I was mayor of Sunfish Lake for twelve years.

KB: Oh, wow.

DB: I was the only political scientist who ever held public office.

KB: Wow, well that's exciting.

DB: Silver-tongued. [laughter] And I got beaten because I was overconfident and didn't campaign, so my next-door neighbor shot me down. Pretty funny. It proves that there are no excuses in politics. If you get beaten because you haven't paid attention, you can't go around and mope.

[50:09]

KB: How do you think Macalester today is most different from when you were here last?

DB: Oh, I think there are qualitative and quantitative differences. I think the student body is a much more highly selected and able student body than it was when I was first here. I think you perhaps are more worldly than students were when I came on board. I think you've been disabused; you've been in the backwash of the Vietnam War, stuff like that, which has sensitized

you. I think you are, if I understand it, there's been a resurgence of interest in public affairs among students. And I applaud that; I think it's your duty to support your country. Also, I think, of course, that academically it's much more rigorous than it was when I started out, because your faculty is a much higher-grade faculty. So, it's higher-grade students, higher-grade—I mean, that's a, that's a bum word, but I'm getting on to it. You have a more talented student body, a more talented faculty, and of course, time has made a heck of a lot of difference, because since I came on board, we're getting on toward fifty years. And never, in the history of the world, has anything ever changed as rapidly and as profoundly as has happened in the last fifty years. The world is not the world it was, and you're responding to a world that, when I was coming on board here, it was unimaginable. We finally reached the point where, of course, we have tapped into the basic forces of the universe, and that there is no such thing anymore as national sovereignty. There ain't no such thing. And for the first time in human history, I think we're being forced, as a worldwide people, to face up to issues that only we can solve on that basis.

[52:51]

KB: Wow. How has being at Macalester for a large chunk of your career influenced you as a scholar and a teacher?

DB: Huh? Say that again, please.

KB: How has being at Macalester for most of your career influenced you as a scholar and teacher?

DB: I don't know as I can put an answer to that. ... Well, I think it at least influenced me as a teacher in learning that I'm not any smarter than most of my students, and that you better be doggone careful. And arrogance has no place. And I guess that's about it.

[53:53]

KB: Okay. If you could give any advice to future students, faculty members, or administration of the school, what would you advise?

DB: I would advise something that I think I failed to do and should have, and that is: have closer rapport between students and faculty. When I was at Yale, we lived in colleges, based upon the Oxford system, and with us, in the, actually in the quadrangle, lived a master and his wife, who lend tone to the college, and usually about three or four junior bachelor professors. And it befell, to me at least, as well as to some other men at the same time, some of whose names you would know, the Bundys, for instance, to socialize with these young professors. And I learned more, I think, from a wizened-up little guy, about this high—Robert French, who was a French teacher. I never took a course from him, but I think I derived more from—I learned to love Sibelius. And that had a profound affect on me, and it was one of the reasons perhaps I went into teaching was Bob French. The master of the house, of the college, was an English professor, an expert on Chaucer. And on Sundays, he would hold sort of an open house Sunday afternoons, and often times would have up from New York people like the drama critic of the *New York Times*. And then it would happen the way I always thought, ideally, it would happen, that us callow undergraduates would sit around and chat with this guy. And I've always held that as an ideal, and that you could duplicate the same thing around here. We've got—fortunately, we're stiff

with people you could have in as a political scientist. I've found that elected people are a lot smarter and a lot faster on their feet than the cartoons would have you believe. And there are plenty of very bright, very able people who would come around and sit around, and just spill their guts, you now? Bob French died while I was at sea, but every year I would dedicate a lecture to him.

[57:18]

KB: Wow. After all these years, do you have any specific memories about Macalester that stick out in your mind that you'd like to share?

DB: I don't think so. I've told you all the memories I have.

KB: Okay.

DB: Okay.

KB: Well, I think we've come to the end of our discussion.

DB: I think we have.

KB: So anything else you'd like to say for the record, for posterity, that will be locked in the vault before we go?

DB: I don't think so.

KB: Okay, great. Well, thank you so, so much, Dr. Duncan Baird. This was a great pleasure. Thank you so much. We really appreciate your contribution. This is a really important—

DB: —I doubt it's a contribution.

KB: Oh, it is. It's a building block in the many voices of Macalester history. So thank you so much. I really appreciate you coming in today, hearing about your life.