

7-18-2007

## Interview with Howard Huelster, Class of 1949 and Professor of English

Howard Huelster

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Macalester College Archives, DeWitt Wallace Library

*Oral History Project*

**Interview with:**        **Howard Huelster**  
Class of 1949; Professor of English, 1949-1990; Assistant Dean, 1964-1967

**Date:**                    **Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 1:00p.m.**

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

Interview run time:        1:57:16 minutes

Accession:                2007-12-21-36

Agreement:                Signed, on file, no restrictions

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**Interview with Howard Huelster**

**Laura Zeccardi, Interviewer**

**July 18, 2007  
Macalester College  
DeWitt Wallace Library  
Harmon Room**

[00:00]

LZ: My name is Laura Zeccardi, and I am a new graduate of Macalester College, conducting interviews for the Macalester Oral History Project. Today is Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007, and I am interviewing Howard Huelster, Class of 1949, and Professor of English, in the Harmon Room in the DeWitt Wallace Library. Well to start, if you'd just like to state your name, and then where you're originally from, and what year you came to Macalester.

HH: I'm Howard Huelster. I grew up in St. Paul. Uh, in the fall of 1945, I was living in the house my father lived in when he went to Macalester, from 1912 to 1916. I could walk over for a first-hour class if I got up fifteen minutes in advance. [laughter] And I wouldn't be terribly late. So when I came to Macalester in the fall of '45, enrollment was roughly four hundred women and about thirty-five men. And when I went up into the Registrar's Office, which was at the head of the stairway in Old Main, there were several young women who were clerking in the office, and as I walked in [laughter] I could see people zeroing in on me. But I had a lovely time that first term. Six of the nine sections in Kirk Hall were occupied by women students. The corner ones were larger. Section two was on the corner; it had twenty-two women living in it, plus a young woman faculty member who was in charge of things. And in that first semester I

dated ten, no, I dated twelve of the twenty-two women, and the young lady who was in charge of them all [laughter]. The next semester, something like four to five hundred ex-GIs appeared, enrolled, and my, [laughter] my Garden of Eden was ruined and wrecked. So that's how I came to Macalester.

[02:25]

LZ: Did you pretty much know that you would come to Macalester because of your father's association with the college?

HH: Actually, I went to the university for my first year, and decided this is nuts—for about the same money, I can go to Mac, and as I said, you know, you could start from your first class fifteen to twenty minutes before the class, and make it. No more streetcar to University Avenue and then over to the University of Minnesota. So it was, it was a decision based partly on the fact that my father had gone there. And my sister had had a year, I have a sister who's a year earlier—older than I am, and she had done a semester and the—then she ran out of money, and so she—that was the end of her Mac career.

[03:21]

LZ: Were you fairly familiar with the campus already? Just from...

HH: Growing up in the neighborhood, by the time I was ten and had a twenty-inch bike, I was well acquainted with the fact that Lincoln Avenue still existed and ran across in front of Old Main, but there were posts at either end to keep cars from coming in, and it had not been paved

as a city street. For many years, it was essentially cinders that had paved it. I came over one evening with a friend who said that he'd discovered that if you got over to Old Main after dusk, and you looked in the windows, and down into the basement area, this was the library. And you could see what college students looked like. And there they were! And all the men were wearing pressed slacks and dress shirts, the sleeves rolled up. And the girls were all in skirts and flats. And they seemed to be talking to one another. They weren't looking for books or anything, so we decided that maybe college was going to be a cool thing [laughter] if we ever got there. Then the south end of the campus had about a five to seven acre wooded area, the Mac Woods. And I used to ride my bike down there, and then, of course, when you came to the corner of Macalester and St. Clair, there was a path that cut across, the hypotenuse, and as you bumped your way across there, sometimes you heard thrashing in the bushes as if large animals were doing [laughter] something there. And so I, I didn't do it very often after that. I wasn't sure if they were bears, or lions, or tigers. So, yes, I was well acquainted with the campus once I got my bike.

[05:20]

LZ: Could you talk a little bit more about, I guess, the physical layout, and which—which buildings maybe were constructed when you were a student compared to I guess when you came back to campus?

HH: There were, I think, three, no, four buildings. You had the two dorms, Wallace Hall and Kirk Hall, and then you had the Carnegie Science Building, and you had Old Main, which had almost all of the classes in it. I—living in the neighborhood that I did, one of my good friends,

Bill Ehah [?], lived a block away, and his father had inherited his father's cons—plumbing construction firm, and when they put the addition on Wallace Hall—and you may not know it, but the eastern end of Wallace Hall is an addition—and Mr. Ehah [?] did the plumbing, and of course, it was down in this pit. He had been a champion heavyweight boxer in the army and was rather a rough guy, and he was down in that pit swearing and telling people what to do. “Here you are! Argh.” And so forth. I thought, “Golly! That's—that's my friend's father! Look at him doing what he's doing!” You know. And they must have done it all right, because I believe the plumbing works well in Wallace Hall. So, that essentially was it.

[06:57]

LZ: So given that you didn't live on campus, did you have much interaction with students in the dorms? Was there kind of a divide between those that were on campus and those that weren't?

HH: Well, certainly not the first semester, when I dated [laughter] that many girls. But I, I grew up an Episcopalian at St. Paul's on-the-Hill, Summit and Saratoga. And there was a Canterbury Club, which was the Episcopal students' youth group then. And I got into that. There were a couple of girls, Barbara and Lois Dodge, that I met there. They lived in Wallace Hall. There was a tennis court on the east end of Wallace Hall, and some mornings I got over there about seven in the morning, and would play tennis with one or the other of the two Dodge girls. So one way or another, I got to know people. Then I got into plays and actually, I met my wife when—we had the leads in Pygmalion, George Bernard Shaw's play that led to My Fair Lady. And I was Henry Higgins, and I bullied Eliza Doolittle. And that was good preparation for



marriage [laughter]. I tried ever since, and it doesn't really work. But she was a squashed cabbage leaf, there's no doubt about it. So that's, that's how we met.

[08:23]

LZ: Did you act in a lot of plays initially? Was that kind of...?

HH: Well, there were a couple of plays. I was in kind of a—oh, I'm blocking on the name, but I do that not only for the names of plays, but the names of people that I knew quite well five years ago. Uh, it was... It's a T.S. Eliot play, and it's about Canterbury and so forth. And as I say, I block frequently now on details. So I was in that. Of course it was in the, the—the theater was in the top floor of Old Main on the west end. It had been the chapel originally, when my father was in school here. And yes, it's true, on one occasion several boys pushed a cow up the stairs and into the chapel, and it took two to three days to get the cow down, because it wouldn't go head first, and it refused to back up, but they finally backed it down and got it out [laughter].

[09:31]

LZ: Was that... Was that DeWitt Wallace who did that or James...?

HH: Well there's a rumor it was DeWitt Wallace.

LZ: I thought it was a rumor.

HH: Yes. Now, the one tale I picked up about DeWitt Wallace was from a man who was a teacher in the International Institute English Language classes, after he had retired from St. Paul school system. But the east end of Old Main, the east wing, which was torn down to make the library, had been—the dormitory for boys was on the top floor. And DeWitt Wallace, when he was a student, he lodged there. And one night there was a most god-awful noise, and everybody sat up straight and fumbled for lights, and so he'd clamped on his roller-skates and he'd roller-skated down the wood floor to his bed, and then he popped into bed. He did that a second night, and they were ready for him. After they all got into bed, they quietly moved furniture into the center aisle. Somebody spread some marbles and so on, and when Wallace started skating through, there was a tremendous crash as he went up in the air and came down. So I got that from an old roomie of his years later. But that's, that's the only time that I had any connection with somebody who knew DeWitt Wallace. The woman across the street from us lived in, in a house her father had built. He was a housing contractor who built houses in the area. And he had been on the softball team that Robert Wallace was on. So, when she had some problem with a fence that was between her house and the next house over, which the college had bought, and she couldn't get any satisfaction. She called the head of building and grounds to mention that she had a pipeline, [laughs] and to DeWitt Wallace, because of this connection with his brother, and she was sure Mr. Wallace would not like the fact that the college didn't fix the fence, which it had neglected. And it was fixed very quickly, very quickly. So...

[12:02]

LZ: So we were talking about the theater. So were the—were the plays performed up on the top floor?

HH: They were indeed.

LZ: Okay.

HH: That's right.

LZ: Who was the director for a lot of those?

HH: Well, Mary Gwen Owen, who was head of the Theater Department. She was my wife's advisor. And she had developed something called the Drama Choros, which was a group of people who read play material, with different sections taking different parts and so forth. And it was a very good deal for young people to meet one another, and if you were all shy, you could perform because you were part of a group. Choir worked the same way. I was in the choir for that reason: that I could get to know people, and yet if I sang flat or sharp, it wouldn't stand out the way it might if we were in a church choir, which was much smaller. So...

[13:04]

LZ: Was the choir space on campus, or was...?

HH: The old original Macalester Presbyterian Church was on the corner of Summit and Cambridge. It was down the block from the president's house. And when I was a young man living in the neighborhood, it was the custom on several occasions for people to get the front

steps from this wooden building on Halloween, and slide them out into the middle of Summit Avenue, and then the college would have to get them back, and repair them if they'd been sideswiped by a car or anything like that. So there was this sort of thing going on in the neighborhood back then. Another thing that I noticed as a kid in the neighborhood was the hazing of the freshmen by the sophomore men. The freshmen all had to wear beanies, and they were abused. One of the things that I observed as a kid in the neighborhood, having been alerted that hazing was going on, come on, come up and look, a couple of freshmen men were forced to set up a wooden card table that had a layout for checkers and chess in the streetcar tracks on Snelling Avenue, and to play chess, and to refuse to move. And of course, several streetcars stopped and clanged, and nothing happened, but somebody called the police. So this motorcycle policeman with a sidecar came up to where the table was, and he went like that with the sidecar and knocked a leg off the card table, and sent the boys and all the rest of it flying, and informed them in cold terms that if they didn't get their rear ends out of the streetcar tracks, he was going to arrest them and take them to jail. And of course, they'd have to do it in a sidecar. So they got out of there. The other thing I heard about from one of the victims, was you had to scrub the floor, the first floor of Old Main, the main floor, with a toothbrush and soap and water, and a towel to wipe it. And you had to do the whole thing with your toothbrush. So when the GIs arrived in the fall of, or in the spring of '46, then some of the sophomores tried to pull this on some of these young men who had been in the service, some of whom had killed others [laughs]. There was a suggestion that if they didn't want to lose an arm or a leg themselves, they'd better not try to pull that stuff. And that was the end of beanies and hazing. So...

[16:01]

LZ: Did the return of veterans on campus really impact or change things I guess, kind of the atmosphere?

HH: Well, yeah. I think the thing was that the teachers found that they had eager students, who were able to listen and hear and so forth. When Dean Dupre arrived, he came as a teacher, as well as a dean, and taught history. But he had been teaching at the Ohio State University, and also in the graduate faculty, and he taught history then; he could teach it at a level that he wasn't sure that he'd be able to do, because of the maturity of the young men who were there. G.T. Mitau, who preached democracy in all his political science classes, found that this was a marvelous thing because these, these men had fought for democracy in Europe and in the Pacific. And they were, they were very eager to take his political science classes. The one person I remember who was far, far happier after the college stopped being a local and regional school and became a national school, and then getting lots and lots of merit finalists, and then so on, was Tom Hill in the Philosophy Department, who said he finally was able, he thought, to teach at the, at the level of colleges such as Amherst and Harvard and so forth, because of the quality of the students who came in. But this was '64, so the return of the GIs, of course, was a wonderful thing for social life, because briefly the men far outnumbered the women. And Hildegard Johnson and Paul Gustafson in sociology did this study once of what was the ideal ratio so that no girls would sit in the dorm Saturday night that wanted a date. And they found that it was two to one, men over women. And yet, forever the ratio of women to men has always been, you know, fifty-two to forty-eight, that sort of thing. So, there were girls who sat in the dormitory after the GIs came and went. But up to that point that was a very lively, social scene.

[18:42]

LZ: Could you talk about some of—were there all campus dances? I know there was, homecoming was a big, I think...?

HH: It was.

LZ: A big deal...

HH: And a parade. I photographed several. When I was married and had a family, my sons came and applauded the, the open convertibles with the various queens in the back and so forth, and then, of course, the bonfire. Now, we had moved into temporary college housing which had been for ex-servicemen, but by '52, there weren't enough of them to fill the—particularly the two buildings for single veterans. So these were made available to underpaid instructors and their families. So there were four of us who were in there. And then the one occasion they built the bonfire so close to the corner of our house, and these were wooden buildings, [laughs] that the point began to smoke! Well of course, they had—the fire department was there waiting for any problems, and they came over and they wetted the corner of our building down, so that we didn't lose everything. That was a very memorable one. And, of course, when I was an undergraduate, not only did we have bonfires, but there were those, those people from places like Hamline and St. Thomas, who tried to set the torch to ours before the night of homecoming, and I was on one group that went to Hamline and tried to do a similar thing up there. And we didn't succeed with the homecoming, but we, we had a flammable of some sort, and spelled M-A-C on the grass of the football field, and threw a match, and left for home.

[20:37]

LZ: Was Hamline the big rival kind of then?

HH: They were and St. Thomas was. They all were.

LZ: Ok. Um-hm.

HH: Yes. There—as far as social life went then, there were theaters. There was the Park Theater up at Selby and Snelling, and my father took his girlfriend up there the night he proposed to her on the walking home. That was how my mother said yes to my father. And the St. Clair Theater was up here, where there now is a—was an exercise place, it's something else now. The Uptown Theater was just past the Grand Avenue Bank there, on that side. And it's where—the building that [unclear] Drugs went into, and, and left. And then of course, you had the Grandview, which has been here forever, and then the Highland, which is still here too. So it was very easy to take a girl on a date to a movie because you could walk to where you wanted to go. That was one aspect of social life.

LZ: Was that a typical thing to do on, say, like a weekend night?

HH: Sure. Go to a movie with a girl. Bring her back home, and then of course, when the women were living in Kirk Hall, they had this little entranceway, and you know, you'd say goodbye to your girlfriend there, right before she had to be in, and the place was full of other

couples. It was a football player, Bob Stark, and his wife—his girlfriend, later his wife, Jeanie Pete—Peterson, and their ritual for parting included his singing the song to her “Bless You (For Being An Angel)”. Caused a great deal of amusement, and there were people who came over here to say goodbye to a girl who lives [laughs] several sections away, just to catch the show. So that was part of the social scene.

LZ: What was the penalty for not being back on time?

HH: You were grounded for a certain number of days. You—dorm residents were honor-bound to turn themselves in if they sinned by being late. And my wife turned herself in several times when I got her back when we were dating. And she was called in by Dean Doty after the second or third time, and said, “Miss MacDonald, I’m afraid that your, your morals and ethics are beginning to decline! You’re staying out, and you’re breaking the rules,” et cetera and so forth. And she let my poor Mary Anne have it, and it was my fault, you know. So we’ve never quite forgiven Dean Doty for this, in spite of her public reputation as some form of saint, Presbyterian saint, you know. Not so...

[23:50]

LZ: Was religious life in the ‘40s a pretty major deal?

HH: Yes. There was a Religion in Life Week, and this involved lots of seminars and so on by clergy people from around the town, and so forth. And you were cordially required to attend a certain number. Attendance would be taken as I remember it. But some of them were very



interesting. Then there was a required chapel on Tuesdays, and a required convocation on Thursdays, and attendance was taken. Now, when I got, I got to be the assistant dean of the college, in charge of academic discipline—you still had this—and it pleased me greatly when I managed finally to ring the bell on the son of, of...a woman who was from the family that founded General Mills. And her son had cut attendance at chapel and convocation so egregiously, that as assistant dean, I suspended him for a semester. And she, of course, called the president. She was, after all—had been a trustee of the college or—and so forth. And Harvey Rice, and he backed me up on that. He said, “I’m sorry, but rules are rules.” And so young Mr. Watson went to the university for a term and then was able to return to Macalester, continue his nefarious chapel [laughs] convocation cutting, I think... So, yes. We had religion. The chapel was the Mac Presbyterian Church. The Weyerhaeuser Chapel was built much later than that.

[25:49]

LZ: What were some of the other extracurricular things that you were in? I have a few down that just, that you had written for the *Mac Weekly* and a radio program. I’m not sure the extent of your involvement in either of those.

HH: Uh... I did write a little bit for the *Mac Weekly*. My father, however, started a journalism career by writing for the *Weekly*. The St. Paul Saturday evening paper had a whole page devoted to news of the colleges. Students from each college newspaper would come down, and they would edit their piece to fit into this page and so forth. And Father was hired as a reporter for the St. Paul paper after he graduated, based on this. And the fact that he had a motorcycle, he was

able to cover Fort Snelling when it opened up as a, as a, an enlistment and draft center and so forth, because the newspaper did not have cars that they could sign to reporters, it was too soon for that. Uh, Harriet McPhetres, who married Paul Siegler, had graduated from Mac in the '30s, and had gone to Northwestern and had gotten a degree in mass media, and she came back and she taught in the Speech-Theater Department. And several of the young men who had been in Armed Forces radio helped her set up a broadcasting studio in the top floor of Carnegie Hall, which broadcasted the campus essentially. But John Gallos, who had a long career at CCO TV and ended up doing a religion show on Sunday mornings, had continued his preparation there. Chris Wedes, who went to Seattle and has—is still remembered fondly for his kids show, Joe the Cook. And then Roger Awsumb, you may remember was Casey Jones, in the Twin Cities, on the WCCO. And a lot of—my kids can still sing his birthday song, that sort of thing. So I had a bit of that, but not a huge amount.

LZ: There was a radio program called the Deadline Assignment series? Was that...?

HH: No, that wasn't me.

LZ: That wasn't you? Okay, I might have it wrong... Were you—then, were you on the track team as well...?

HH: No, I was not.

LZ: I wonder...

HH: I'm not sure where that came from. I have a friend—

LZ: I researched in the Mac Weekly, and so maybe...

HH: I had a good friend who was. And unfortunately, he had a stroke about six years ago, and he's confined to a chair. So here's the guy who had the two-mile record for the MIAC for a number of years, and he's, he's just not able to move hardly. That's sort of the way life goes when you bother to get old. If I were you, I'd, you know, just say thirty-nine plus one, thirty-nine plus two, go on from there [laughter].

[29:17]

LZ: Were athletics a pretty big deal at that time? Or was attendance—

HH: Our football team was a co-champion of the MIAC on several occasions. We, we had the Bowman brothers: Earl and Hank, Earl in particular. In the single-wing days, you had a right halfback, a left halfback, a quarterback, who essentially had the ball snapped by the center over distance of seven or eight feet, and then the fullback was right behind him and the running backs in there. And the best one was Earl Bowman around left wing, and, of course, the other backs then ran ahead of him to block. And we, you know, we were co-champions, on at least one occasion. Shaw Field was the football field. And, of course, it is now—had been a softball field, and kite flying in the spring, and now it seems to be springing up concrete pillars and all sorts of things. [laughter] So that, that's where it was, and then there was a cinder track around the

outside. When my kids were growing up on campus in the, the barracks, they'd ride their bikes around the cinder track with great pleasure. They never went out for any team [laughter] when they went to Macalester.

[30:43]

LZ: Were most students at that time from the area? Was it pretty typical that most were from Minnesota?

HH: Most Minnesota, Wisconsin, some from Iowa, and then a few—a sprinkling from the Dakotas. We had one guy who was the recruiter for new students, and he would go out in spring, and then he'd have somebody be his assistant for a few months. And he'd go to high school to high school, and he thought it would be a good, a good day when he'd go to a high school, and he got somebody from the athletic teams and a flutist from the orchestra, that sort of thing. But people thought of Mac as a, almost a cow college. And there were days you could see farms around here. My father, when he was, when he moved to 1648 Portland in 1910, his father had a glass plate view camera. He took a few shots from Summit Avenue, which at that time had not been paved, and you could see the stakes for the, surveyor stakes for the, for the berms, I guess you'd call them and so forth. And off in the distance past the college buildings, you'd see a windmill or too, where there were still farms on the other side of St. Clair. So it's a—it was a cow college until the trustees made a deliberate effort to go national.

[32:24]

And we had a year of a curriculum revision study where the curriculum committee was tripled in size at least, and had a grant so it could meet weekly, and I ended up being the secretary for it.

And you'd meet with each, a department per week per, and so on, and you'd evaluate it in terms of what would it need in order to become a competitive department nationally. And then, of course, with the addition of lots of money from DeWitt Wallace, they would, the school was able to go out and recruit people to beef up departments, and so forth. I was the assistant dean of the college in '64 to '67. And Lucius Garvin was the dean, and did lot of the recruiting for this, expanding the departments and getting people with degrees to come in and so on. He had about a twenty-four-page booklet listing the goodies. That you could come if you came as a new recruit, including starting off with a year off if you wanted to study with a major figure in your field, you could be funded to be a graduate student at Columbia or Yale or what have you. And a lot of other perks, and it was sort of a golden time for the expansion of the faculty. Some of the new people liked to dance. Mary Anne and I went to a dance, a guy's household over on Laurel, where they literally rolled up the carpet, [laughs] and so on. But he had been recruited for the Economics Department, and he had a national reputation in economics. When the college ran into a little money difficulty a few years after that, he disappeared very quickly. [laughs] Because he wasn't going to take a pay cut, on the one hand, and he wasn't going to pass by a raise on the other. And he had the ability to do this, move almost anywhere he wanted to go. So that, that was when we stopped being a cow college.

[34:53]

LZ: When you were a student, was there still the time—I know there was some kind of vocational, more career-orientated programs. Like I think there was the nursing program, and I think much more business courses, does that—?

HH: Yes. And there was a secretarial studies department, and this was taught by Mary Howe. I think she was the second teacher there. And she prepared mostly young women for office careers and careers as secretaries. The Econ Department was very much oriented toward getting people into business. The Speech Department prepared people to teach. And as did all of the departments, I taught the two courses for the students in the English Department who were certifying to teach at the secondary level. They had to have a course in the history of the English language and then a course in grammar. And of course, we don't prepare teachers anymore, which is interesting. Across the street from me is a full professor of education at Carleton, who commutes from Tangletown to Carleton, and she prepares students at Carleton to go out and to teach. Now Carleton, in the peck order of things, is still one peck above Macalester. And they have regarded preparing superior teachers for the high schools. And I guess elementary schools as well, as a responsibility they will continue to do. I'm sure St. Olaf does too. So, I keep wondering do we have our nose in the clouds? Is it possible to move up so far that we reach the clouds? It's only a question, you understand.

[36:57]

LZ: What was your major when you were a student?

HH: English.

LZ: You were an English major?

HH: I was indeed. And I had a speech minor, and an education minor, which if you wanted to teach in secondary level, you had to have a minor in education. But I got on with the college in fall of '49 because freshman English was required, and when we had gone up from an enrollment of somewhere around seven hundred people right after the war to about fifteen or sixteen hundred, we had many sections of freshman English. Also, an introduction to literature was

required. The lecture course was taught by the chair of the English Department, Frank Earl Ward. And then those of us who taught freshman English also taught the discussion section of this introduction to literature. And there were about eight people that taught these sections. So I went full time in '50, and stayed until '90. Yes. It's a long time.

[38:10]

LZ: [laughs] Who were some of your professors in the English Department that kind of... Are there any that stand out in your mind?

HH: Grace Jane Lovell May came from an old St. Paul family. She would have people over. She lived at 828 Lincoln. And she served cucumber sandwiches. She also would reminisce. This was a House of Hope family. They had money behind it from wholesale grocery—the wholesale grocery business. The family would travel to the House of Hope in the winter in the cutter. And there would be numerous cutters with a horse that would be waiting for people to come out. And then there were several families who lived up near her house. And one of the guys, one of the men would pull up, level with her father and look at him and her father would look back, and they'd go flick the horse and they'd race. See who got there first. So she had these early memories. She stood about this tall, [hand gesture] and she had a car that was almost as long as this room. And this was one of the sights with Miss May's forehead and her eyes looking over, but she never had an accident that I can remember. She taught the eighteenth century, and my wife took a class from her, and then later on asked her, "Miss May, what do you do when you're teaching an eighteenth century novel, and you get to the sexy parts?" "Oh," she said, "my dear, we skip over those."

LZ: [laughs] Different time.

HH: Yes. Mr. Warren was an unusually able person. I had everything except his dissertation. In the 1920s, and he was married, and his wife became quite ill. And he had to get a job to pay for her medical expenses, and so he took a job at Macalester and he never finished his degree. But he had all the course work toward it. And so he operated probably at a, at a level that would be equal to a lot of these people who came in with their, all the dissertation in the '60s. He was a pioneer in tape-recording with these big Ampex machines with these huge piles of tape. And he would put his lectures for this Intro to Lit course on these, and he would play them. He'd—he was notorious for his illustrating poetry by reading poetry aloud. And he loved Edgar Allen Poe, “the bells, bells, bells,” and so forth. And the poor people who did the sections, then, would have to play back some of the tapes in order to discuss them. And I remember Millie Lengfeld, who had no smarts whatsoever about equipment, her arms just wrapped in tape that was coming off the machine, until some male student would say, “Oh, let me help you,” and put the whole thing back together, and play the tape for her. So, it was—it was a challenge. But those, those were interesting times.

[41:51]

LZ: Was the English Department a fairly large department in comparison to some of the other...?



HH: I think so. By the time that we became a national school, we had twelve or thirteen people in the department. And probably, it was the largest one in the school. And it still is relatively large. I think it's twelve...

LZ: I think it's one of the biggest on campus. Where were your classes held?

HH: Oh! Well, I mentioned these barracks, and then you had the thirty-two barrack units for Macville proper. We were four years in the ones that had been for single GIs, and then we moved on to a corner one, because they demolished these two units. But they—they purchased the chapel and some classroom buildings from the Sioux Falls Air Force Base in South Dakota. And the... Along the west side of the football field, then, they set up the chapel. Proper became the theater, and it became a little auditorium and then the stage. And then around it you had sort of a U-shaped building that had classes and also offices. And the office for the English Department would be in this, I think more the east end, and then you would have several classrooms for your classes. And then there'd be an office, and you know, other connecting part, where—I think Sociology was there, and some of the social science departments.

[43:47]

So it, it was, it was okay, but over the years, for example, you had windows that could only be propped up with a stick because the two pins that held it in, and so forth, had disappeared. When DeWitt Wallace's representative on campus was trying to find out what the various faculty people who were in this temporary building had in mind for the grand renovation that was going to come in '63, '64, when Wallace built the current fine arts building. And he wanted big idea—we all went to Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge for a faculty retreat, and to brainstorm ideas for

curriculum and buildings and so forth. And he came to the English Department and, “What would you like?” “Oh!” said somebody, “I’d like windows that stay up! The chalkboards are wearing out! And you know, the—we don’t have enough chairs or armchairs—” He stopped us. He said, “These are not big ideas. I want to hear what you have in mind for the curriculum!” And so we went on then and had ideas for the curriculum. They built the fine arts building and we didn’t have to worry about our facilities, except it wasn’t air-conditioned. And then we noticed that Old Main, on the administrative level, had been air-conditioned. And there was a revolt. “If you, Mr. President, and you, Mr. Vice President, can have air-conditioned quarters, and we teach summer school, we want it too.” And they did it. Just like that.

[45:56]

LZ: When you were a student, did you find classes were pretty rigorous, or were they—maybe compared to the way that you taught...?

HH: Oh, well, I...I’d gone to St. Paul Central High School, which was the only college prep school, and it still is traditionally a college prep school and a general education school. Two of my best teachers were Macalester graduates. They were women who had gotten to the master’s degree level, and they taught rigorous high school level lit courses. So when I got into the Macalester English Department, I didn’t feel it was any particular change. I never did well at science, so I suffered. But I had a lot of fun in biology; that was one science I could understand. And, at least, I did the first year introductory stuff, and it stuck with me ever since. “Introduction to Genetics” has been very useful in following the mass media on the human genome and stuff, and so on. I—we, we had a “Marriage and the Family” class in Sociology. It was taught by a

bachelor, Paul Herzog [*sic?*] who had a bushy mustache. And when he came to the sex component of this, he blushed for a week. And people were sniggering [laughter] and so forth. He somehow managed not to say a thing about the process, [laughter] other than, you know, “you better watch out if you get alone together, under certain circumstances. And maybe you got a little alcohol, why, who knows what might happen?” On the other hand, he taught the class to keep it out of the hands of a woman who had never married, who was in the Religion Department, and was very eager to teach it from a religious perspective. “Marriage and the Family.” So he worked very hard to keep the course in Sociology. And as far as I can remember, the only concept that came out of that that I can remember is propinquity. You’re far more likely to marry someone that lives near you, or works with you, or goes to school with you, or is in your church or something, than you are to marry somebody from the moon, or Australia, or anything like that. Propinquity: a major concept of that course in Sociology.

[48:46]

LZ: Did you have—were there quite a few course requirements that you needed, classes you needed to take in order to graduate?

HH: Oh, yes. Two-thirds...what you took was required. And you had one-third that would be elective, roughly. And the revision of ‘63, ‘64—that started up in ‘64, reversed that. So about a third was requirements, and the rest was this. So you had a lot more of people double-majoring, or they would use some classes for one of the majors as part of another major, and add something on to it and so forth. And I think it made for much broader education in that fashion. But I had, I had—you had two-credit classes, and Religion was in that, for example. You were

required to take four courses in Religion, but they only counted for two credits. Most of them were three, but the lab sciences were four, because you had two for the lab and two for the lecture. That sort of thing. So, yes, lots were required.

[50:07]

I enjoyed the religion classes, I was a pre-seminary, and at that time, learned a lot about the Old Testament in the three classes that we had to take, and then a certain amount of the New Testament. And the teachers were pretty good. Dr. Kagin taught the Old Testament once—he'd been a Presbyterian missionary to Korea, and was chair of the department. But he required readings and a book by a man named Denny [unclear], who was an atheist probably, because he felt that an unexamined faith was not worth having. Well when I'd been at the university for the first, my first year, a member of the graduate faculty taught the "Introduction to Philosophy" course, because so many of the young man had been drafted. His name was Herbert Feigl. He was Jewish, and had gotten out of Europe barely in time, and he taught—"Introduction to Philosophy" is the first quarter, in which he proved that it was possible to believe in a religion in a philosophically sound manner. And then he turned right around and proved that it was possible not to believe in any religion in a philosophically acceptable way. Made a great impact on me. So when they got Dr. Kagin, who was having us read Denny [?] and so forth, I think that those two teachers led me to becoming Unitarian, which I have been ever since. I'm married. My wife was sort of disaffected. My—her church—she was raised Moravian, in Chaska, Minnesota. You may have heard of Chaska, it gets in the news lately for all the wrong reasons. [laughter] And so when we married, then we—we took to going there. One of us would stay home with our new child, Hugh, Class of '73, I think. And then when two years had past, and he was old enough to go into the, into the nursery that they had down at church, and then we signed the

book in '53, and we've been members ever since. And there are a number of Mac people who have turned up down there, too. So I guess Dr. Kagin did a good thing.

[52:55]

LZ: Were there other professors that really had a pretty profound impact on your college years in terms of...?

HH: The two of—two of them in the Philosophy Department. Both of them had their Ph.D.'s, and it was unusual for anyone to have them at Macalester in those days, although some people in the sciences had had them. When I went to elementary school over here, you know Ramsey School?

LZ: Um-hm.

HH: Well the real Ramsey School was torn down. It was a three-story red sandstone and brick building, built in 1885. My mother went there, and several of my cousins, and so on. And then one girl was Anita Shifflett, whose father was the chemistry teacher there at Macalester, oh my. And then there was Ralph Walters, whose father taught me my introductory biology course. So there were—

LZ: Is that O.T. Walter?

HH: O.T. Walter. There were Ph.D.'s in the sciences, even back in the '30s. But Hugo Thompson was an ordained minister, and, I think, for the convocational church. But you never would know it from the class he taught. You know, he said, "I will not bring my religion into this class." So he taught philosophy as a—and the social impact of philosophy. I'm blacking on the exact course title. But the textbook never came, and so he did it in terms of what he did in the summer, for one thing, which was he had classes out in the community in some of the cities in Michigan that made cars, and he would have classes of students who would be working as—in order, you know, summer students, to make money for school and so forth. And then they would be taking ethics classes, and so forth, in this program that he was one of the teachers, and he would bring in this sort of thing. The Prophet Amos was very powerful in his class. And all of us liked to hear him read this section about "Ye fat [laughs] cows of Bashan, you will be dragged through the streets," you know, "with hooks if you continue to oppress the people with your rich husbands," and so forth. That, that was very impressive. Tom Hill taught the "History of Philosophy" course. He had published two books that were nationally adopted by many schools. One was in ethics and the other was in logic. And he had one going for years, until after he retired, that was going to be theology. But he said, "I dasn't publish it when I'm working here, because I would alienate so many of my good friends." And I heard tell—he died recently in his nineties—I heard tell that he had published the book, but I never remembered seeing anything. If I ever get near the college library, I'll have to look it up—

LZ: Oh, yeah. Definitely!

HH: —see, see if they, if he did and they have a copy. Those were two very important teachers for me.

[56:32]

LZ: Who would have been president when you were a student?

HH: Charles Turck, Charles Joseph Turck. And we all loved him because he was a liberal Democrat. The trustees hated him because he was a liberal Democrat. He had no luck raising money from—at all, that I could see. And it ended up that the faculty—the junior faculty had to amplify their earnings by doing something extra, and one of the things he did was to find work for them. So I taught an English class at the MacPhail College of Music in Minneapolis. I taught a freshman English class in the nursing program over at the hospitals. Ended up with a softball game with all the women in their nursing costumes, batting around and so forth. [laughter] And then I taught one at the Minneapolis College of Music, which was run by a powerful woman, with red hair that was obviously dyed, years before anybody did this. These were all jobs that he got for junior faculty. And he got us cheap housing in the barracks and so on. And then when he left, and Harvey Rice was hired, the article in the St. Paul paper introduced him as the recent president of the University—of SUNY at Buffalo, Presbyterian, and a Republican. And the money flowed in after that like crazy, just wonderful. He was asked to double the faculty salaries in ten years, from '58 to '68, and he did it. And so I've had a kindly feeling toward the old boy ever since.

[58:28]

LZ: Was the era of Charles Turck kind of when Macalester started the real, kind of, international, I guess...?

HH: Yes. He was very much an internationalist, but before him, James Wallace was also. He was well known as an internationalist, and on one occasion, my father's printing company, my grandfather's and my father's printing company, did printing for him, because he would have tracts that he would send around preaching internationalism. And I had to deliver a load to him at his little cottage on Cambridge Street, which was a copy of Anne Hathaway's cottage, that DeWitt Wallace had made for his father, and eventually was moved down to Portland Avenue, when they made the parking lot on Cambridge. And as I came up and rang the doorbell, and before the, his housekeeper arrived, and I knew he was really old, I think he was 90-ish, I could hear him declaiming about, "We've got to do something to help the British and the French stop Hitler!" He was preaching to somebody in there. So he had an internationalist perspective. Turck may have been hired as president, in part, because of this. But it was—it was a real shock when I got on the faculty and discovered that this man who was so beloved for his points of view was sort of an autocrat running the faculty. Oh yes, that, that wouldn't be kind.

[1:00:11]

LZ: That's fine.

HH: Other than say, for example, one the occasion, he asked the faculty to approve a plan for a program that he was establishing, and I can't remember what exactly it was, and the faculty, for a change, voted no. And he said, "But you can't do that, I have the brochures printed already."



And so, of course, we had to reverse our vote. Couldn't waste money. Okay. The Grille was in a basement room in the east wing of Old Main, which—the one that was torn down. And when you, when you came into it, you entered and you turned, and then the food service was north and south along here. Yeah, it would have been on your left as you turned in, and then there were tables and a long bench that went the whole length of the place. And some of the people got in early in the morning and said, "You know, you could hear the rats running back and forth in there until too many people got in there and then they, they went on underground." And then as you came around the end of the Grille, er, the end of this cafeteria line and paid your bill, you could go around and there was a room that had a number of tables, and every now and then you would find people who, teachers who would have a little class group in there, and so forth. But it was really a great thing for students and faculty to meet, and staff and so forth. And then when my wife tried to get me a few times, because the English Department originally had offices on the top floor of Old Main, on the second floor. She discovered that Agnes the telephone operator, when you called the college you got Agnes, and then she jacked you into whatever and so on, she'd say "Well I, I want to talk to Howard," you know. And Agnes would say, "Well, he's not in his office. I think he's in the Grille, because I think I saw him go by." Because her office, her door was open, and somehow she managed—she faced away from the hallway when she was doing this, but then she would probably turn, and she knew who was going.

[1:02:57]

LZ: Right.

HH: And whenever there was maybe a real emergency, why, Mary Anne would call Agnes and Agnes would say, "I can get him," and go after you. So it, it was a much earlier time. I remember we had a famous murder in St. Paul of a Macalester graduate, presumably done by a hired killer, hired by her husband. Both, both of them were Mac graduates, and living in the town, and so forth. And I well remember Norm Mastrian when he came as an ex-GI. He had an officer's trench coat that he wore, and in warmer weather it would be open and flapping, and he made quite an entrance because of his coat and so on, and he turned out to be the guy that was paid to get the hired killer for our graduate. And, of course, it was the husband who was convicted of the murder, and served time, and is back in the community, came from the same hometown as [whispers] the Mondales. So we always thought of that as an interesting coincidence—that Elmore, Minnesota would produce a vice president, and then Fritz Mondale's older brother got a Ph.D. in English, and taught in Mac English Department briefly, while he was getting it, and then had a distinguished career in Washington D.C. teaching. And the half-brother of the, the—was the first wife of the reverend, Mr. Mondale, the father, became a well-know Unitarian minister, and wrote a pamphlet that I discovered when I became a Unitarian. R. Lester Mondale, on the three kinds of Unitarianism. So Elmore produced one murderer [laughter] and three distinguished sons of the college. Now how widely are we to distribute [laughs] this data? Anyhow, that was...the Grille was a good place to meet people and so forth.

[1:05:36]

LZ: So you graduated in 1949...?

HH: I did.

LZ: ...from Macalester. Does anything stand out in your mind about the graduation ceremony, was that...?

HH: Well, several things. One is I graduated and sat with Jean Anderson-Probst, who taught math for many, many years.

LZ: Oh, yeah, I interviewed her.

HH: And we sat in the sunlight and, you know, you have the mortarboard, and that has sort of a pointed front, and when we lifted our hats at the end and saw, and she turned to me and said, "You sunburned your brow underneath there. You have a white..." [laughter] So I don't know who talked, can't remember that. And then when we took pictures, my son Hugh had been born in April, just before the June Commencement, so I have a picture of myself and my first child there, standing there, I in my cap and gown, well, gown. So that stands out.

LZ: Your wife is also a Mac grad?

HH: '47.

LZ: Okay.

HH: She just had her 50<sup>th</sup>, and I gave the invocation for the dinner. And I said, “I’m the Class of ’49, if you’ll accept an invocation from me,” and they said “Yes you may. Go ahead and do it.” So she’s ’47. Has two good friends from her former roommates, meet four times a year for lunch, and talk on the phone in-between. So...

[1:07:20]

LZ: So, I guess the question is, how did you, then, start teaching at Macalester? If I have your dates right, you pretty much—

HH: — I started as a one-third time teacher in the fall of ’49. And it was freshman English. And then the next fall, I started teaching both the freshman English classes and, in the—as a section leader in the required course, and then as F. Earl Ward gradually cut himself loose from courses that he had more or less monopolized, and he handed them around to different people. Roger Blakely and Patricia Kane did American Literature, Jack Patnode did the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and little by little, various people who were hired in ’49, ’48 and ’49, took over teaching some of these classes, and then we had a big influx of staff in the ’60s, as we went national. And so Michael Keenan and Peter Murray and Giles Gamble...various people—Ray Livingston, who had apparently become quite depressed, and had a tremendous fight with the president over the college’s inviting the American Fascist, George Lincoln Rockwell, to speak, but it turned out that he was going to talk to the journalists in their house on Summit Avenue, rather than the college.

[1:09:26]

Ray had been in a tank group that opened up one concentration camp, and he said, “How can you ask a man who believes that this was acceptable to speak at the college?” He said he must be insane to do it, and he would not go to the St. Peter hospital for the criminally insane and take someone who believed that he was God, and have him preach in the college, and so forth. And the president said, “The liberal arts tradition demands that we must allow all viewpoints to be available to our students.” And Ray had been having marital difficulties, and so on, and so on the morning of Commencement in '67, he hanged himself in the woods back of his house, down on Linwood. And that was a tremendous blow to the department, and the people in it, and to his family, of course. We all pitched in and tried to help with the family, and so forth. But since the, since the—one of the president’s two sons had committed suicide by pumping his car’s carbon monoxide into his car down at Hidden Falls Park, we thought that this was, this was a little much. Ray had said shortly before, he had gotten me into the dean’s office, and I had been informed that I was to be returned to the English Department. The dean said, “I didn’t intend that you would be in my office as long as you were.” But since this coincided with Ray’s row with the president, and since Ray had lobbied to get me appointed as assistant dean in '64, I had the strong feeling, as did others, that Ray and his people were being swept out by the president. So that—but that was a long, long time ago.

[1:12:08]

LZ: Was it common that someone who had just graduated from Macalester would then, kind of, gradually...

HH: Sure.

LZ: ...just come back to teach, I guess.

HH: Well—

LZ: Were you approached by someone who said, “Oh, would you like to come back and apply?”

HH: Well, yeah. F. Earl Ward was my advisor, and he said, “I have an opening for a part-time person, and why don’t you ask for it? You’ll get it.” But a lot of other departments did because salaries were so poor. And then the other thing was that there’s the myth about Mother Macalester. People have stayed on for years after they should have gotten out and started the battle of the world, because it was so pleasant here. Often they would go into the Admissions Department, because they could sell the college and feel good about it and be paid something, and eventually they moved on. In—you know, in all the offices you’d find Mac graduates with a degree going into an office and working with lovely people who hadn’t gone to college, because Mother Macalester had this appeal. I don’t know if it’s continued or not, but certainly up to the 1990s, there, there were people who stayed because they wanted to; there was work.

[1:13:35]

When Arthur Flemming came as president, he had taught at the University of Oregon, and then he’d been, before that, the first, the first head of the National Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which he had the federal budget behind him, and he built this department, and when he got to, when he got to Oregon, he spent money the way he had spent it, apparently, when he was in the government with tax-supported funds. And...I’m blocking on names again.

One of the guys in political science had taught at Oregon, and then had come, had been recruited in this '60s recruiting norm of people, and he said, "Just watch what he does when he gets to Macalester." Well, what he did was, he felt there had to be a compensatory program for students of color, or who were just poor. And so the Equal Education Opportunity Program developed, and he drew down two million dollars, approximately, from the endowment that DeWitt Wallace had given. And Wallace was very disaffected by this, and he stopped, he stopped his support of the college for a while. But Flemming would hire an assistant, and then when their project was done, he'd keep them on; look for something else for them to do. In about the two years or so that he was here, he had about doubled the size of the staff in relation to the faculty. It used to be somewhat less for the staff and the faculty, and he had it up to where it was about even-stein. So a lot of Mac grads stayed with Mother Macalester for a while during that era.

[1:15:35]

LZ: Did you continue your education while teaching at Macalester, or did you—

HH: Certainly. Well, I worked on my degree at Minnesota when, when—before the grand rejuvenation of the '60s. Everyone who did graduate work did it at Minnesota, and one of the reasons for the program that started in the '60s was to get Ph.D.'s from other sources. Well, our second child was born in 1951. He was a Down's syndrome child, and this was very rare, according to the, our doctors, for a young woman, because Marianne was just mid-20s, to have a Down's syndrome child. But we discovered that there were almost no facilities, except in the state hospitals, for severely retarded children, and that there were long waiting lists for admission on the part of these retarded children, and that there had been the development of a parents'

movement to help lobby for services, which in the national group was founded in Minneapolis in 1950, the year before our son was born. And we both got into that work with the St. Paul group, which was two years old, roughly, in the fall of '52. And I put 17 years in then, I was the state president, I was the St. Paul group president, I was on the state board, the St. Paul board. I was on a committee at the head of the office for the mentally retarded that the state government had organized, and I went to meetings of that sort and so on, and my graduate work kind of fell by the wayside. I ended up having the coursework for a degree, but I never went beyond that. And so I can—you know, if you'd, if you turn this around now I can say, I was the last of the old school with a teaching career based on a master's degree, plus some coursework beyond that. [laughter] So, I don't know. It was a defeat in a way. On the other hand, I was given an Alumni Award two years ago for the work that I did for the retarded. So things balance out. And now that I've been retired since 1990, who cares? [laughter]

[1:18:16]

LZ: After you, kind of, got established and were teaching—when, about, were your teaching, basically, as a full-time professor? Did that come several years after starting?

HH: Well no, that came in '50. I was full time then, right. And I taught the sophomore novel for many, many years. I taught the history of the English language, and the grammar. I started a—because I had a darkroom and an interest in photography. I moved the darkroom over to a small office in the second floor of the humanities building. And I had—it started out as a freshman English class on the “Essay in Word and Picture,” and then after freshman seminars developed, it was a freshman seminar, same title. And I taught that for a number of years, and it



apparently met a need for numbers of students who wanted to continue with an interest in photography, who didn't care to—since we had no class in photography in the Art Department, they didn't care to go to St. Thomas and take photojournalism classes, so they found this particular course rather useful. And I've, I've, you know, have met occasionally with young women in particular, who—one gal got started in the Women's Press, it's a women's...one of these giveaway newspapers, and she was a writer/photographer for that for a number of years. Don Breneman took his photo interest and that class, and became a wildlife photographer who was published in the horticultural magazine for the state, and other places. So I think it filled a need, and it was sort of fun.

[1:20:35]

LZ: Was it difficult to turn around right after graduating and start teaching at the same college that you had just graduated from?

HH: No, not really. I mean, you know. I was teaching classes that had kids in them that had been in classes that I was a student in, and so forth, and it didn't seem to, didn't seem to bother. And after a year or two, of course, the usual turnover of classes, as it goes. And the students that Macalester attracted were good people, and so forth, and had college, er—had high school diplomas, and there were a number of them...high ranking in their particular classes, and salutatorians and valedictorians. And yet when we made the leap in the '60s, you had this interesting thing develop where you'd have a...a young person who'd been a valedictorian in Marshall, Minnesota discovering that there were about ten to twelve valedictorians and they came from all over the country. And one girl in particular, in an English lit class, who

discovered that the student who was getting the best grades was a physics major, was doing this as a sideline, [laughter] “and I can’t even keep up with him!” You know, so that was a real shock for her. But no, it wasn’t that hard.

[1:22:22]

LZ: Was it kind of... I guess, maybe working with professors then, as a—now professor, that you had had as a student, was that kind of a unique relationship at the time?

HH: It was. They tended to call me by my last name and look down their noses, some of them. I think my most crestfallen moment was that Raymond Bradley, who was the registrar, you remember the Registrar’s Office was across on the first floor of Old Main, and it had a wide open door, and he would be back in there and so on. And we had our offices up on the third floor of Old Main, and taught classes in the east wing, but also in other places on campus. And everybody smoked and one of the signs of being a professor was a pipe. And I had been given a pipe by my uncle at age eighteen, who said, “You’re probably going to start smoking and cigarettes are terrible, you better smoke a pipe.” And I started then and I went until 1988. And I had a pipe in my mouth unlit, because you didn’t light up until you got into the classroom. Oh, my god. [laughter] And as I was going by, Bradley said in a severe voice, “Huelster, you are setting a very bad example for our students.” And I went glassy-eyed, you know. “But it isn’t lit.” “You are setting a very bad example for our students!” [laughter] And I took it out, put it in my pocket; went on from there. So yes, being a teacher didn’t necessarily mean that you had escaped some of your older adult models. Bradley was—my wife went to Court of Honor, which was a local thing downtown for students who had gotten into the local Honors Society, and she

rode with Dr. Bradley, and she said he stopped at every green light. And finally his wife said, “It’s green!” He said, “You never can tell.” And then one of his lectures that really wowed people was his discussion of the sewer system of Chicago. And this was—why this was necessary—he taught education—why this was necessary to have as a new preparation to teach we never did know, but that was one of his big topics. So...

[1:24:58]

LZ: So how did—we talked a little bit about your time as assistant academic dean, but how did you, kind of, come to be in that position?

HH: Well, Ray Livingston pushed to get me in there. He and some others thought that the deaning that was being done, and the discipline, was too severe. And he said, “I wanted somebody like you, who could talk with students and understand what was going on before you threw them out,” or what have you. And I very quickly became aware that there were others who were interested in how I carried out this task, and this—because I was the first and the last assistant dean of the college for disciplinary.

[1:25:46]

LZ: Oh, so you focused on disciplinary...

HH: Yes, yes. I, I—Donald Dawe taught in the Religion Department, and he was one of these newly recruited, fully qualified persons. He had been dean at Union Theological Seminary, and he wrote me a letter urging me to be severe. He said, “I think that around here students get away

with entirely too much.” And then there were others who, you know, the dean of students and I, Fred Kramer, got to be very close, and eventually, over about a three year period, Larry Young, who was the head counselor, said, “You know, Howard, you and Fred Kramer have sort of shifted responsibilities.” He said, “You spend so much time trying to help students get through troubles, that Fred has turned out to be the one who insists on severity when he gets...” and so forth. And he said, “You know, I’ve seen that.” He said the police department would get people who were trained in sociology, and the ones who’d had this background would start working on the arrested people, they’d start trying to straighten them out. [Laughs] He said the cops who hadn’t been to college would get very irate, you know. “Whap them up around the side the head with your billy club, and then drag them off to jail.” You know. “You’re a cop, you’re not supposed to be a counselor.” So you get this sort of thing, you know. But I have been thanked periodically by a young man at church, who’s now a grandfather. He said, “You got me through college, because you were able to explain to somebody why it was that I had flubbed the dub, and he gave me a second chance, and you’re the one who did that. Here I am now a grandfather, and thanks to you, I got through school.” So every now and then something like that happens.

[1:27:58]

LZ: So you were dealing with students who had either, academically-wise had not done well, is that...?

HH: Yes, but sometimes the reason they hadn’t done well was because they were in terrible mental shape. There was a girl who had a problem because her best friend had one day put her father’s hunting rifle in her mouth and blown the top of her head off. This was halfway into the

second semester, and she was shattered, she couldn't come back to classes, she could hardly do anything. We all worked hard to get her put back together again enough so that she could finish her classes, and she did. I had one young man who didn't turn up for a physics final because his girlfriend of three years standing had given him the boot the night before, and he said, "I couldn't." I slid a note under the door to Professor Hastings explaining this, and Professor Hastings was not at all interested when I called him to ask for a chance to take a make-up test. "I don't do make-up tests. This information has been out there. There's no way I could make up a test that would test you without using questions that had been out there, for all I know..." et cetera and so on, you know. I worked very hard to get Professor Hastings to understand how shattering it can be, you know, and he reluctantly, grumpily gave the kid an oral exam, and he passed and he was able to continue. So I remember things like that.

[1:29:43]

LZ: Were you teaching while you were in this position?

HH: Sure. You'd have a class, I think one class to keep your foot in, and also you would be going back after a while. This was understood, that there were a lot of teachers who were co-opted by the administration for a while, the academic vice president for three, four years and then returned to a department. Jack Rossmann's an example of that. So...yes.

LZ: So three years was a pretty typical amount of time.

HH: It would be fairly, yeah, it'd be fairly typical.

[1:30:23]

LZ: Well if—I'd like to kind of talk about how you saw the college change into the 1970s. We talked a little bit about EEO, but I know that Vietnam War protests was a big thing, and then also the financial kind of crisis era was during that time, so...

HH: I was busy during the Vietnam Era protests, the mid '60s. Early in the spring of the year, I think it was probably '65, there was an organization of students who were protesting, and they had organized a protest along Snelling Avenue. And there were too many of them to stand side by side holding placards, so the thing—we were going around like this. [gestures] We had an entering student who was probably in his late twenties. He was a Marine Corps veteran, he'd been in Vietnam, and he was just *incensed* at what these students were—you know, these “Children who know nothing about the world we live in, were doing, protesting this particular war that I fought in and saw people die in, and had friends who died,” et cetera. And so he started harassing students there, and I was there to preserve law and order. And so I kind of intercepted him, and talked to him, and he agreed to come and chat in the office and so forth. And it took a number of chattings in the office to reach the point where he accepted the fact that it was all right for him to protest their protest, but not to get in their face like a drill sergeant and harass them, and I would protect him against the ones who wanted to have him thrown out of school because he was interfering with their free speech. That was one particular episode that I remembered, and it worked out very nicely. This guy and I were friends until he graduated. Then, as a family, and also as a faculty member, we were involved in several protests where we'd have our youngest child, who was in a, still in a stroller, and we would push him in the

stroller along with these protesting groups, including one massive protest from the University of Minnesota up University Avenue to the state capitol, that literally cut off all traffic on that. The police closed the street as this big group went, and as we got close to the capitol, you could see guys in trench coats with cameras with telephoto lenses busily snapping faces and so forth. When we got home, and unloaded our little family including the kid who was in the stroller. He said, “Am I always going to have to be in a march like this?” You know, “Is this what it’s, you know, what it’s going to be like, you’re always going to be marching?” and so on. I remember when Nixon went into Cambodia and the campuses blew up, David McCurdy, who wore engineer boots because he was a motorcycle guy, came from his house across the street, and he was literally jumping up and down in my living room. And the house was vibrating, because he was a big guy, and he was jumping about a foot off the— “We’ve got to stop this madman from...!” et cetera and so forth. So it was, it was a pretty yeasty time. And, of course, there were segments of the faculty that did not protest and did not think it proper, but they tended to be fairly quiet, and they were mostly in the science departments. I don’t know about econ, I suspect econ, bus. ad. were sort of like that, too. So, so it was a time. And I was clean-shaven. I wore a suit to work and had the big, heavy glasses that were all the rage, and so forth. I got back in the English Department the next fall, I had a mustache and a beard and hair that wasn’t terribly well-trimmed. I had glasses that were different from that, you know. Thus I could be part of the faculty, the informal grouping that was protesting the war, and the students who were protesting the war could begin to regard me as a teacher, not as an administrator. And I never did get rid of the beard. [laughter] I got rid of the hair, but not the beard.

[1:35:40]

LZ: Did those protests have an impact in your, in the classroom, I guess, in terms of...

HH: Early on in the protesting of the Vietnam War, you had teach-ins all over the country, and we had teach-ins. And you had, along with the teach-ins, you had student activists who got out and did things like attacking Honeywell's corporate headquarters. And I must admit that I had smelt the whiff of hypocrisy on the part of one student in a freshman English class, who was so proud that he'd been photographed for the evening news driving a two-by-four-by-eight through one of the glass windows of the Honeywell headquarters. But he said to people in the group, "I'm organizing a commune with several friends and we're dropping out of this corrupt system and we're all going to live together in a farmhouse." Somebody asked him, "Well, hey, where are you gonna get a farmhouse?" "Well," he said, "my father's a banker in Ellsworth, Wisconsin, and they foreclosed on several farms there, and I'm sure he can get one of these farms for us to build our commune on," and that's where the whiff of hypocrisy rose. So I think he probably gave up on being a protester shortly thereafter.

[1:37:11]

LZ: Was it true that, for a short time, there was—I guess, student graded themselves and kind of picked curriculum, or was that more in certain classes and not in others...?

HH: As I remember it, it was certain classes, and you would grade yourself, but there weren't too many of them and there certainly wasn't any in the English Department that I remember. As far as the curriculum went, then I'm sure some of the social science classes there were attempts to study what was going on in Southeast Asia and that sort of history, which, you know, was not



necessarily taught extensively until the Vietnam War reached the point where it was starting to get people in. But I know during the, during the war, you know, you had a draft and young men who were not doing passing work would disappear into the Armed Services. There was grade inflation to keep this from happening in some cases, and I think the inflation continued locally and nationally. And there was a booklet that Social—Selective Service put out, and I'm blocking on the name, but they put it out to their people in the draft boards. And it suggested that one way to get people to do their duty to their country was through the ability to draft people who got into trouble academically, who might otherwise not have been drafted because they had a deferment based on their doing this. And we can get some very good people for the Armed Forces by taking advantage of this, and making sure that if the colleges and universities notify us promptly when young men flunk out or fall behind on their particular thing, and it was—and then to discover well after the war that there were so many in the draft pool, they had hundreds of thousands who never were drafted, because they didn't need them for the war. On the other hand, the young men who deferred because of going to college and getting into pre-med, pre-dent, and so on, things that the military wanted, would be whisked away and taken and ending up as a rifleman in Vietnam, because they had come to the attention of the Selective Service process by getting deferments. And this happened in World War I, er, no, II, at the Battle of the Bulge. There had been a tremendous number of young men who had been—whose service had been deferred, and then when the Germans launched an attack in which they almost succeeded in splitting the Allied Forces and turning the war around, whole batches of these deferred guys were whipped into the infantry, and their casualty rates were much higher as a group than the casualty rates for others. So it was a bad time, in many ways, for men on campus. I'm glad there isn't a draft. If we ever get it back, I'm sure women will be drafted, too.

[1:41:29]

LZ: Probably... Did the financial problems for the college then come after? Was that more the late '70s than it was during the early, the early '70s?

HH: I can't put the time on it precisely, but what happened was DeWitt Wallace had withdrawn support because of this raiding of the endowment, as far as he was concerned. And there were at least two years in a row with two hundred thousand dollar shortfalls to balance the budget. And they balanced it the first year by letting go new young faculty; I think fourteen of them were axed. And the next year, there was some faculty, and then a lot of staff. And the thing that enraged me was that no one in the business end of the college was called to task for this, because some of the money had simply disappeared, and nobody ever found out why. Now my third son, who was supposed to get the tuition benefit anywhere in the country, had signed up for the Maryland College and School of Art, and been accepted and was all set to go, and suddenly the financial support for faculty children was cancelled for a year, and nobody was getting any support other than at Macalester, where there was no real charge to the school for having kids sitting in these classes. And it changed his lifetime. He had hoped to become an art major, and he ended up not. So this enraged me, and others, that there was no attempt made to find out, because one of the persons in the business office had suddenly taken a job in Florida or something, and sort of disappeared. But after a while, then the, you know, financial things were put back together, and things eventually worked out that DeWitt Wallace, as you may remember from your reading, had given four hundred million to the college endowment. And then the value of Reader's Digest stock went down fifty percent in the next ten years or so, so the

endowment shrank by two hundred million. And now there's nothing left of the Reader's Digest stock in the endowment, according to a speech by a young lady in administration, who says, "When I'm asked how tall I am, I say I'm five-foot-twelve." Now does that clue you as to who it might be? She seems to be a vice president for student affairs [Laurie Hamre]. She talked to the Class of '47 this spring on the college and how it had changed in the sixty years since '47 had graduated. And she said, "No, there's no Reader's Digest money left in the endowment." But, you know, that doesn't mean that the money hadn't been there, and hadn't been—well, they couldn't sell it, that was part of it at the start, and then eventually they had permission to sell it, and then they proceeded to do so, I guess. So those times of troubles came, and were fairly short, and things went on from there.

[1:45:18]

LZ: So now, you retired in the 1990s?

HH: I did.

LZ: Okay. And was that just—was there anything in particular surrounding that decision, or was it just kind of you'd been at the college for forty years, and ...?

HH: Must I confess to a microphone?

LZ: We can talk about it after if you want.

HH: All right. No, that's all right. I'd always had discussion-style classes. I, for many years, taught the late afternoon class because I lived three blocks from school. I had a group discussing a novel, and I was listening to them and taking notes, and then I woke up, and I noticed people looking at me, and I noticed the discussion seemed to have gone further-than.

LZ: [laughs] Right.

HH: And that was sort of a clue, and then so I went to a faculty meeting later on that month, and coming back, I talked to the chairman of my department briefly. I said, "Em, I think I ought to retire." He went into ecstasy! An opening! [laughs] I mean he hadn't been able to hire a new person for years. And he was my good friend! [laughter] I thought, you know, it would have been nice if he expressed a little, "Oh, gosh, we're losing you." No way, we're getting an opening. So I set it out for a year, and I had a real—and it was just accident, and my last class was a fiction class. And I mentioned at the start of the class this was my last class, and we talked a little bit about the book. And somebody asked, "You know, do you have any words of wisdom that you would give us in this last class?" And I spent thirty minutes giving words of wisdom, and they kept asking for more. And as we were walking out, you know, I heard a young man ahead of me in a pair say, "If every class could be like this, wouldn't college be wonderful?" And I thought, "Okay, that's good. I like that." So that was the end.

[1:47:40]

LZ: Have you stayed pretty in close contact with Macalester, or have you...?

HH: Oh, you know, for a year or two, you come to things and so forth, but... I checked the department—English Department—three years ago, and there are, there are twelve people, there were two from my group and the rest were all new. The same is true of other classes. I use the library, and that's about it. The library is a wonderful perk. And I have a parking sticker, but so what, you know? I don't park on campus much. No, you know, I actually don't remember too much about it, and I've discovered now... Do we have time left, or is it about to end?

[1:48:31]

LZ: We can talk more; it's fine.

HH: My grandson, Peter Barker-Huelster, went through the International Baccalaureate program at Central High School. And he came out, and did—scored very, very well on various of the exams you take when you graduate, and so forth. And he was a merit mention, although not a winner, and he took a trip with his family around the country to look at schools to apply to, and he applied to a number. He was rejected at Pomona; that was his only rejection. Lewis and Clark, I think it was, accepted him, whatever it is in Spokane, and I'm blocking on the name. He was accepted by Kenyon, Lawrence, Carleton. Macalester put him on a waitlist.

LZ: Really?

HH: Yes.

LZ: I would not have guessed that.

HH: His parents, who had very little money, quit giving their pittance to the college. Many people amongst the retired faculty were incensed by this, and railed at the guy who was—and so forth and so on. Peter got almost a full ride to Kenyon, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude—he missed Summa by one half of a point. Macalester flubbed the dub as far as I'm concerned. So anyhow, that's my—and going to alumni things. I never used to, and since I have been retired, I go with regularity and have a lot of fun.

[1:50:31]

LZ: Have you—if you sit back and say, you know, when you graduated to, to now, is the college, in your opinion, a very different place, or does it still have that same kind of essence that makes it Macalester?

HH: Well, it's a different place in the sense that it's become a competitive international school with a fully credentialed faculty that's gone through several stages visibly. In the '60s, all the people that came in tended—many of them tended to have a dissertation and works pending, and were intended to write the dissertation. And then the English Department very often got involved in teaching, and came up against their deadline without having done it, and had to be fought for in order to get extensions and so forth. And after the '60s, you began getting full-qualified people. And I checked the department as I mentioned, and ten of the twelve were new. The men tended to have taught somewhere else and have had the degree for four or five years, to have published one or two books. The women tended to be in the creative end of things, and not necessarily with Ph.D.'s and so on, although not all of them intended to be in a feminist program

on this, that, or the other thing. And our people are qualified at a higher level than they were in the '60s. And I can't see where it can go past this point, particularly. I have, uh, a physician at HealthPartners, who is the one the one that I'm supposed to see, and I couldn't see him the last time because he was out for the day, and I saw Dr. Bernard Rose. And he asked me what I did, and I said I taught at Macalester in the English Department. He went into raptures! He said, "My real love in life is literature! I've taken classes at Macalester from two, two of the people in your English Department, who are fully the equivalent of people that I knew when I was taking classes at Amherst and Harvard." He said, "It's just marvelous that you have a department functioning at this level." I was glad he didn't ask me any questions about literature. [laughter]

[1:53:09]

LZ: Do you feel that Macalester attracts different students than it did...?

HH: Of course. Certainly. Again—but the one thing that I think runs through it, is the tendency to have students who are liberal, as opposed—and the reputation for the liberality, however, is much, uh, overblown. It's a mythology, and when that—we had the talk from the woman, who's the vice president for student affairs, she said the college has gone through a sea change of—when the students came in who are the millennium students. She said we picked, I think, eighty-two students who had become college age at the turning of the millennium, and then those who come after. She said they're far more interested in religion than the baby boomers, and the, the—what was the next? Generation Xers. She said they're far more socially active, et cetera, et cetera. She said they're liberal, but they're also conventional in many more ways than their predecessors. And she said, you know, some of their parents don't like this, they were flaming

liberals in the '60s, you know, and now we've got these kids and grandkids coming along who, they don't flame. So I don't know. What's your impression?

LZ: I think in, I think the activism has changed to more community service type work in that aspect, versus, I think, protesting. Not that that doesn't go on, but there's definitely a decline in, I think, visible protesting on campus.

HH: Okay.

[1:54:56]

LZ: Well, I have just made you talk forever, but do you have kind of a favorite memory, or a favorite... If you look back at Mac, do you have a favorite time of your career being here?

HH: Well, I mentioned the one that was my last class, and the fact that the people had—that the guy said what the guy said. As an undergraduate, some of my favorite pictures are Billy Davis, who left Macalester and went into medicine. Had severe allergies, so he went to Hawaii, and had a full career as a urologist in Honolulu, and was back here this last weekend, and we'd all got together, and so forth. Bill was about 5'6'' which even in those days was short, maybe even 5'5'', I guess 5'6''. Section Two was the section with a lot of gals in it. George Rogers was a former paratrooper who had kept his parachute bag where you stuffed it in and carried it, and so on. They caught Billy Davis in his underwear this one evening, they put him in the parachute bag; they zipped it up tight around his neck and arms like this. And he began rolling and bobbing, you know, like one of these cartoon characters. There were handles on either side, so



two guys got it and rushed him. I was tagging along, I mean, these were bigger, heftier guys. They barged into Section Two, and up onto the floor where no man is to tread, and they put Billy down, and he was pleading, "Don't leave me here!" And they rushed out and then they could here the gales of laughter coming from inside [laughter]. So the women figured it out to unzip the parachute bag and let him out. And we're still friends. As I say, I saw him this last weekend.

LZ: Well those are my questions, is there anything that we haven't covered that should be out there?

HH: No, I think I've talked enough.