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Interview with Charles Torrey, Professor of Psychology

Charles Torrey

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Macalester College Archives, DeWitt Wallace Library
Oral History Project

Interview with: **Chuck Torrey**
Professor of Psychology, 1966-1999

Date: **Monday, July 23rd, 2007, 1:00p.m.**

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

Interview run time: 1:17:55 minutes

Accession: 2007-12-21-37

Agreement: Signed, on file, no restrictions

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Interview with Charles Torrey

Laura Zeccardi, Interviewer

**July 23, 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 Monday, July 23, 2007, and I am interviewing Charles Torrey, Professor of Psychology, in the Harmon Room in the DeWitt Wallace Library. Well, if you'd just like to state your name, and where you're originally from, and then what year you came to Macalester.

CT: My name is Charles Torrey, and I'm originally from Connecticut, and I came to Macalester in 1966.

[00:32]

LZ: Could you talk a little bit about your educational background and, kind of, what you had been doing that led to you to come to Macalester to teach?

CT: Okay. I did my undergraduate work at Swarthmore, graduated in 1955, spent about two years in the Army, and then went on to graduate work at Cornell in Ithaca, New York, where I got my Ph.D. And from there, went to Appleton, Wisconsin, where I was for three years at

Lawrence College, as it was when I arrived, and became Lawrence University sometime within the next couple years. And after three years there, I came to Macalester. My predecessor in the Psychology Department here was Anne Pick. She and her husband Herb had been fellow graduate students with me at Cornell, and Herb was employed at the university and Anne had a job at Macalester, and she was interested in moving to the university. And when an opening turned up for her there, she resigned from Macalester and recommended that they get in touch with me as a possible replacement for her. So I was contacted and I came over for an interview, and I liked Macalester, and apparently they liked me enough to hire me, so...

LZ: What was your first impression of, I guess, Macalester? Had you had any previous kind of experience with the college, or...?

CT: Well, I'd visited the Picks sometime between '63 and '66, a couple of times, I guess. And one time they took me over here to tour around the campus by car, and at that time, all of the grounds up at the south end of the campus were dug up. They were in the process of building Olin and the Janet Wallace Center, I believe. But by the time I got here to stay in 1966, both of those buildings were finished, of course.

[03:05]

LZ: Did you start out with classes immediately in Olin, or were you still at—would you have been in Carnegie...?

CT: No, we were—Psychology Department was located in Carnegie at that time, and we were in Carnegie until...well, I don't know when Rice Hall was finished, but sometime in the early '70s.

LZ: So, it wasn't until Rice was built?

CT: Yeah, yeah. We were on the third floor of Carnegie, with some lab space up on the top floor—in the attic. [laughter]

LZ: Was it an elaborate hiring process, or was more you just came in and spoke with...?

CT: Oh, it was incredibly simple. [laughter] Yeah, I was picked up at the airport by a delegation from the Psych Department, which consisted of most of the members of the Psych Department [laughter] at that time, I guess. And I don't remember in detail who—there was a party for me one evening, and I don't think I was asked to make any sort of professional presentation. I was interviewed by the dean or the provost, or whatever he was called in those days, and I don't know whether there were any other candidates for the position. It was not as competitive as such things have become since then, by any means.

LZ: So then you would have started in the fall of 1966?

CT: Started in the fall of '66, yeah.

[04:37]

LZ: What was your first impression of Macalester students compared to, I guess, your other experiences as...?

CT: Well, I think they were comparable to the students I'd had at Lawrence, which meant that they were probably in the middle range of liberal arts college students in the country. You know, not a highly selective place, at that time anyway. But there were some very good students, and some not so good students, plenty of students that thought, at least, that they were learning something from me, I guess.

[05:19]

LZ: Was there a fair amount of diversity on campus at that point, or was Mac still kind of in the...?

CT: I don't think there was very much in the way of ethnic or racial diversity. The college had, for a long time, been dedicated to internationalism, but I don't think that there was as big a representation of international students then as there is now probably. And as far as diversity among American-born students, there was very little.

LZ: Were most students, then, Midwestern, kind of, in origin?

CT: I guess probably half of them were from the Midwest, but there were students from all over the country, as well as some foreign students.

[06:11]

LZ: So you said that you came and replaced your friend, who was a faculty member. I guess maybe, who were the other people who were then on the faculty...?

CT: Well, the head of the department at that time was Ken Goodrich, who had come here from, I believe, Indiana University. And he was a Skinnerian behaviorist, with quite the reputation as both a teacher and researcher. He was interested in getting out of university settings and into liberal arts college work, more interested in teaching than in research, I think, and before long, more interested in administration than in teaching. He became dean of the college, or provost, or whatever, a couple of years after I'd been here. The leading member of the department was probably Walt Mink then, but he was on leave at Michigan doing a postdoc at the time, and he was there for the first two years that I was here. So I didn't meet him until the third year I was here, and he was widely respected and much loved, both in the department and across the campus, and was, for the next thirty years or so, the person that really held the department together. Jerry Weiss had arrived the year before I did. Ray Johnson was also here, I don't know how long he'd been here, and kind of circling around the edges of the department were Jack Rossmann, who was at that time, the Director of Institutional Research, and Larry Young, who was the college psychiatric counselor, and who else? Well, there must have been somebody else, I think the department was five or six people in all, full-time people. I don't remember the other names; maybe they'll come back to me.

[08:46]

LZ: So was it a fairly well established department in comparison to some of the other...in terms of faculty, and...?

CT: Yeah, I think so, I think so. And the president at that time was Harvey Rice, and the great thing that he did for the Psychology Department was, when plans were being made for the construction of Rice Hall to house the remaining sciences that had not been put into Olin, those being Biology and Geology, Harvey Rice insisted that Psychology be included also. So we found ourselves among the natural scientists, where we felt we belonged, probably, although I think many on campus thought of us as social sciences. But, in any case, that's how we got our foot in the door in Rice Hall.

LZ: So, the department was pleased, then, to make that move from Carnegie and...?

CT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we had a lot of input into the design of our quarters in Rice Hall, and we occupied an entire floor of that building and designed the layout of rooms that was kind of a maze, [laughter] and had more total space, I think, than we now have in Olin.

[10:14]

LZ: Student-wise, were there a lot of students within—like majoring, I guess?

CT: Pardon?

LZ: Were there quite a few psychology majors, or at least students taking classes?

CT: Well, yeah, the thing that Ellen sent me asked me about numbers, and I'm not going to be very good at numbers. It was not the biggest department on campus, but it was right up there within the top half dozen, I would think probably.

LZ: So then what courses were you specifically, I guess, given to teach, within...?

CT: Well, my particular interest was perception, and so I was teaching that course, but I also taught introductory, and they wanted me to teach a course in cognition, which I didn't particularly want to teach, but I sort of felt I had to do it [laughter] because that was part of the contract. So, I did that for a while, and...what else? I don't, I don't really remember what else I taught, initially. We had, in those days, we had an interim term. We had a four-one-four calendar. You took four courses in the fall and four in the spring, and then in January, for the entire month, you took one course and the faculty taught one course. And that was intended, and turned out to be, an opportunity to offer courses that were sort of off the beaten track and pursued a passing interest maybe, but not something that you wanted to make a long-term commitment to. So that was kind of an interesting adventure to have for both faculty and students, I think.

[12:07]

LZ: What types of courses, I guess, for example, would you have...? If you can remember one or two?

CT: Well, at one time I had two or three students doing—trying to repeat a classic experiment in vision, the issue being, what is the minimum amount of light that the human visual system can detect. And the classic experiment seemed to indicate that we could detect a single photon. So, we set about trying to replicate that experiment; most of it was trying to build adequate equipment, and I don't think it turned out very well. I don't think we even got the equipment finished, [laughter] but it was a good chance to learn some of the difficulties of the experiment. And—well, much later on, towards the end of—when interim term was in its last gasps, I co-taught a course with Peter Murray in the English Department. We were both fans of Laurence Olivier, the great actor, and so we put together a course in which we tried to show and discuss every film that Olivier had ever made. Well, we didn't get through all of them, but we got through twenty-five of them or something like—well, no, twenty maybe. So, that was another adventure that was not really profound scholarship or anything that anybody would build on later on, but it was fun.

LZ: Were students pretty enthusiastic about that? You know, the idea of, kind of, taking a course a little less, necessarily...?

CT: I think so, yeah.

[14:00]

LZ: How did it become that it was decided that that wasn't, I guess, something the college wanted to pursue any longer?

CT: Well, you'd have to look up the records and find out exactly when it bit the dust, but in the mid '80s, early-mid '80s, with the arrival of Bob Gavin as president, suddenly there was much emphasis put on faculty doing research and publishing and being professionally engaged. And that put all sorts of pressure on the curriculum, and one of the results of that, I think, was that the faculty felt that they really couldn't afford to fool around that way in January any more. And—so that was at least a contributing factor to it.

[15:00]

LZ: Do you feel as though, overall, the professors, and even the college, has gotten more orientated—

CT: Pardon?

LZ: Do you feel that professors have gotten more orientated towards personal research and publication, and...?

CT: Well, that was certainly the case by the time I retired, five or six years ago, yeah. Yeah. And it was not a change that pleased me at all. I suppose in large part because I wasn't very good at doing research myself, [laughs] but I thought—I don't know, it seemed to me that a major part of what we should be about was educating a citizenry, rather than producing potential academics, which was what seemed to be the trend—turning out clones of ourselves, or whatever. [laughter]

[16:05]

LZ: Did you do a fair amount of personal research over, I guess...?

CT: I did quite...very little actually, in comparison to many of my colleagues, although I think in comparison to others in the Psychology Department, I was fairly productive, but... No, I published an experimental paper in the early '70s, mid '70s. I wrote a study guide to go with an introductory textbook, which under the Gavin regime would not have counted, probably; that I also did in the early '70s, and a couple years later, did a revision of it for an update on the textbook. And in the early '80s, I published a theoretical critique letter in Science Magazine, and a computer program in a psychology journal devoted to instrumentation. And that's, I think, about what I've done.

[17:25]

LZ: Did you try to include students in that research? Or were there, I guess, honors projects that students would come to you with, that you would then collaborate with them on?

CT: I had the—the first paper that I mentioned, the experiment, I had actually done the work the first year I was here, and I had a student assistant for that. His name did not appear as a co-author because I didn't think, and he didn't think, that he wanted to answer questions about the paper. [laughter] And, other than that, the only research work that I've done with students was in 1979-80, I was working on a computer program to simulate some psychophysical experiments, and I had a student, Lori Case, doing programming for me for that. But that work never got published.

[18:37]

LZ: Has technology played a large role in, I guess—this maybe is a question—more of a reflective question, but looking back, has technology impacted, I guess, maybe your teaching style or what you've chosen to focus on in research?

CT: Well, the technology that I've been involved with has certainly changed greatly since I started out teaching. When I got here, psychologists—experimental psychologists were still doing a lot of work with rats in Skinner Boxes. I don't know if you know what a Skinner Box is?

LZ: No, I don't.

CT: Well, B.F. Skinner was a leading psychologist, a behavioristic psychologist, and he devised this device, box, about this big with a little lever in it and figured out how to get rats to press the lever in order to get rewards. Well, that led to an enormous research literature about well, what if you pay off with a reward only every other lever press? Or every fourth lever press? Or sometimes on the second and sometimes on the tenth? And so forth, and schedules of reinforcement, these were called. And so, a lot of people got involved in that sort of research and there are people still doing that—Lynda LaBounty in the Psych Department, I think, still has some interest in that kind of work. Anyway, at the time I got to Macalester, that was what Ken Goodrich was doing, was that kind of stuff. And his equipment was relay driven equipment that required that you make connections on a big panel of relay devices to determine how often the payoff would be, and so forth. So, came time that I wanted to teach a course in instrumentation,

I think this was an interim term course, probably. I had to learn how to do that so I could teach that to the students in the course. And when we were designing our facilities in Rice Hall, we built the research lab rooms so that they could accommodate this kind of equipment. Well, by the time we had moved in there, all of that equipment had been replaced; relays were out, and solid-state transistor equipment was—so that was the difference between a bank of stuff that was this big to a box this big, [laughter] and we had to learn all of that stuff all over again. And then, of course, around mid '70s and early '80s, computers went through the roof with the, well, the invention of the Apple, I guess was what started the small, local computers. And pretty soon, every faculty member had a computer on his desk. All the labs were run by computers, so we had to learn all of that stuff.

LZ: So, you didn't resist, I know some people...?

CT: I didn't, well, I didn't resist it, no. And, for a while, I got kind of interested in, in the early '80s in the Apple II, I learned how to write machine code for that, initially, and to train myself by programming it to produce a Bach piece of music. [laughs]

LZ: Did then, your—did—

CT: But mainly, the computers were of interest to me as fancy typewriters.

LZ: Oh, okay.

CT: I didn't make much use of them in any way, shape, or form.

[22:44]

LZ: Did that—I guess, in the way the research techniques changed, did that then impact the types of courses you taught? I guess, I'm assuming the classes you started teaching were not classes that you taught in your last years, or maybe they were?

CT: Well, no. I taught perception off and on through the entire period, and I taught introductory pretty much once a year, at least. But other than that, the courses I taught changed considerably, I guess, and I ended up, the last ten years or so, teaching statistics, which I had never taught before. And which I enjoyed, at that point, I enjoyed more than teaching any psychology really, except possibly perception. It was fun because I wasn't that good at it myself, and I—so I had to learn it, and I could understand what some of the difficulties were that the students were having with it. I think, if you get too good at a subject, it's hard to make that connection later on.

[24:01]

LZ: If we can, I guess maybe switch a little bit and talk about—I wanted to talk about kind of the mid '60s compared to then what happened in the college's history in the 1970s, and kind of that whole time of change, and I guess, kind of, as you witnessed it. In terms of, I guess, the Vietnam War protest, and the EEO program, and then kind of the ensuing financial crisis that would have come about.

CT: Well, it was, first of all, it was an exciting time to arrive here, because the college was in the midst of a major transition from a small, community, sort of professionally oriented college with courses in nursing and heavy emphasis on education courses and so forth, to trying to become a liberal arts college with a national reputation. And I arrived towards, well, probably in the middle of an enormous hiring of essentially a new faculty. There were still faculty here who had been here before that transition began, and who were instrumental in bringing it about, but there were a lot of people coming in in my age range and with my experience, my kind of level of experience. So, it was an interesting time from that point of view because there were a lot of new people.

[25:38]

LZ: Was there any sort of tension between, I guess, new versus old, and not everyone necessarily—

CT: Not that I was aware of, no. As I said, the faculty had been very much involved in bringing about this transformation, which, as you probably know, was possible because of DeWitt Wallace's enormous financial contributions. And those contributions continued through the '60s and into the early '70s, and—I don't remember when it was that Rice retired and Arthur Flemming arrived, but it would have been '68 or '69, I think probably. And Arthur Flemming wanted to do something significant in opening educational opportunities for minorities and disadvantaged students, and so we, the faculty, voted in this so-called EEO program, or Educational—Expanded Educational Opportunity. And it was a very expensive program, both in recruiting students from inner cities and Appalachia, and generally places where we expected to

find student potential diamonds who were disadvantaged and unlikely to get a college education if somebody didn't reach out to them. And it was a, [laughs] it was a very turbulent time. And of course, simultaneous with that happening, the Vietnam War was becoming an issue, and so there were really two kinds of issues going on here simultaneously, about the EEO program and the financial drain that that was putting on the college, and how to serve these students who were unlike any college students any of us had ever met before.

[28:03]

And, in addition, what were we to do about getting out of Vietnam, which the majority of the faculty, I think, thought was a disaster. So there were protest marches, and meetings, and sit-ins, and teach-ins, and... Anyway, the trustees eventually fired Arthur Flemming because of the financial problems that had arisen. They wanted somebody to blame, and I guess he was the one that was available. [laughs] And they hired, to replace him, James Robinson, who was here for two or three years, and then left very abruptly after the contingent of the EEO students occupied the administrative offices. Robinson—Robinson's way of dealing with that was to disappear. [laughter] And he was followed then for a year by an interim president named Chuck McLarnan, and following that, we hired—well, was it...

LZ: I think it might have been John—was John B. Davis right afterwards?

CT: Who?

LZ: John B. Davis

CT: John! Yeah, was that John Davis, did he come in then? Yeah, I guess he did. Yeah, right, in the mid '70s, right. Well, he was just what we needed, he was cheerful, and optimistic, and dedicated to a balanced budget, and managed to lift our spirits and balance the budget for several years in a row, and eventually restore some kind of relationship with DeWitt Wallace who had...frowned on our activities or [laughs] on our bank balance anyway.

[30:39]

LZ: What sort of, I guess—was there a personal strain that that financial crisis caused, I guess in terms of your salary, but then also in the ability of the Psychology Department to grow and expand in that era?

CT: Oh, I suppose there must have been, but I really don't remember any specifics about it. I know—I think many of us in the Psychology Department were very disappointed by that turn of events, and we felt that perhaps Flemming had been unjustly treated. In retrospect now, I don't know whether that's true and whether it would have been good for the college to hang on to him, or whether it was best for him to leave at that point, but certainly with the arrival of John B. Davis, things picked up.

[31:39]

LZ: Did you have any personal contact with either Harvey Rice or Arthur Flemming while they were president of the college? In terms of maybe what they were like even personality wise?

CT: No, no. One time I was out at the airport about to get on a plane, and Arthur B. Flemming [*sic* middle initial is S] was about to get on the same plane and we exchanged a few words, and I think that was the extent of my contact with any Macalester president until Robinson came along. And Robinson, at some point in his brief career here, asked me to chair a committee on the freshman year, which I did, and I really don't remember what that was all about. I think it had something to do with trying to get a program of freshman seminars going. I tried to—I kept a copy of that report for a while, but I looked around this morning and I couldn't find it, and I think I threw that away and a couple of other reports that I had a hand in so...[laughs]

[32:43]

LZ: What type of relationship was there like between faculty and administration?

CT: You know, it's hard for me to make any kind of blanket statement about that because the Psychology Department tended to be very much...internally oriented. We didn't have a lot to do with the rest of the faculty. We went to faculty meetings and we got impressions of what people were concerned about, but we were mainly concerned about the psychology curriculum, and our students, and what was going on with the department. And I must have had some impressions at the time, and if I could recall them, I could answer your question, but it's, it's gone. [laughter]

[33:44]

LZ: Did you find that students, during that kind of period of difficulty, did they have kind of, I guess, a relationship full of tension, I guess, with the administration, or was it more that the students were doing their thing, and were allowing that to continue and...?

CT: Well, they were—it was, it was the normal level of student suspicion of administrative motives [laughter] and faculty motives. One of the first committees I was involved in when I came here was a committee on student rights and responsibilities, and we were supposed to produce a document which, which laid out student rights and responsibilities, which we did. And I remember there was some friction between the student members of that committee and some of the trustees who came to talk to us. This was toward the tail end of the sexual revolution, I guess, and it was about what are called parietal rules. You know, when do women have to be back in the dormitories at night, and that sort of stuff. All of that stuff, which was characteristic of my own undergraduate days, was in the process of being dissolved and disappearing in the '60s. And the Student Rights and Responsibilities Committee was supposed to look into all of that stuff and decide, and what—to what extent was the college supposed to be in loco parentis, and to what extent were students supposed to be treated as adults and able to make their own decisions and so forth. And so we produced a report, and I remember there were some who thought it was long on rights and short on responsibilities. [laughter] Anyway, that was part of the flavor of that period.

LZ: Okay. So did you see kind of a loosening, I guess, maybe, of student...?

CT: Oh, yeah, I think so. I don't—I think co-ed dormitories came later, and co-ed rooms came much later. [laughter]

LZ: Yeah, I think only recently...

CT: I think by 1970, the regulation of women's hours in the dormitories probably was history, though I don't know for sure when that disappeared.

[36:37]

LZ: Were there other changes, I guess, within students that maybe you noticed, even maybe, I guess, maybe career wise?

CT: Well, there was certainly, there was certainly an increase in student activism generally, and student interest and concern about campus life and...the situation in the world at large. A lot of interest and concern about the Vietnam War, a lot of interest and concern about civil rights and student support for the EEO program. It was a very liberal student body, certainly, and I think it has still remained that way.

LZ: So you feel as though that, kind of, momentum that built up in the '70s, then, continued on into the '80s—?

CT: It certainly, it certainly continued on through the '80s, and probably pretty much the same until I retired at the end of the century.

LZ: Can you recall what sort of, and I guess, I even mean like national issues in this sense, but what things kind of replaced the Vietnam War, in terms of what students found themselves to be politically, I guess, engaged in and...?

CT: Well, I think there was a decline of that sort of interest and commitment after we got out of Vietnam, but...well, I think, for example, volunteer service and community was growing and maintained at a high level since then.

[38:38]

LZ: Did Macalester send students to Vietnam during—was that—? I know they sent a lot of students to World War II, but was that—was it, I guess, a prominent thing that men were concerned about the draft at Macalester, or was it less of a concern since they were already in college? This might be—you might not have had any kind of personal firsthand experience with this...

CT: What I remember about—along those lines, it that one of my two sons refused to register for the draft, and for two or three years, we were worried that he might get called up, [laughter] and have to go to Canada or something like that. I don't know, I guess there were some Macalester students who actually went to Canada, although I don't remember specifically of any. But yeah, any college student, any *male* college student in those days would have been worried, and there were Mac students who did go to Vietnam. Most notably Tim O'Brien, who came back from Vietnam and wrote several novels, and is still writing novels about his Vietnam experience, I think.

[39:57]

LZ: But overall Macalester wasn't necessarily unique in its reaction, obviously, to Vietnam?

CT: No, I don't think so, although I think we may have been more visible in Minnesota than, well, in other Twin Cities colleges, maybe. And we were certainly becoming visible as a center of drug...

LZ: Ah, drug culture.

CT: [laughs] Marijuana and such, I think may—well, I don't know, I guess mostly marijuana.

LZ: Did that become a fairly widespread, I guess, common knowledge in the Twin Cities area during that time, that...?

CT: Well, there was a lot of drug use, I'm sure, but I think also that there was probably—Macalester had a bigger reputation than it deserved as the drug distribution center. [laughs]

[41:00]

LZ: I can see how that would have happened, kind of like today. Let's see. Oh, I've also heard, I guess this was a kind of time of requirements being lessened, and maybe not so much on the faculty's position, but students, I guess, kind of taking more of a role in planning curriculum. Did you find that to be true in your department?

CT: Yes, very much. Yeah, when I came here there were requirements to take a modern language course, and—two years of modern language, and I don't know what all else, but a

pretty—requirements that would occupy a student for the—certainly most of the first year, and a good part of the second probably, and a lot of that got dropped in the ‘60s and ‘70s, mostly in the ‘70s, I think probably. And at the time, I thought, this is great, this is a good thing, let them figure it out for themselves, don’t force them to take courses they don’t want to take, because they won’t learn anything. Well, I don’t know now whether that was the right position to take or not. I was in favor of dropping the language requirement at that time, and I think that was a mistake. I think, given the world we live in, learning a foreign language is really important, and preferably something other than French or German [laughter]. I’m kind of wondering when we’re going to start teaching Arabic, for example.

[42:40]

LZ: One thing I really wanted to talk to you about, was I came across that you had taught a seminar called “Psychology Goes to the Theater,” and I guess—and I also had read that you have quite the background in theater as well, and, kind of, at Macalester and in the area, and I was, I guess, wanting you to talk maybe a little bit about that course, and then, in addition to that, kind of your outside interest that—with, that is theater.

CT: Well, my outside interests began in the mid ‘70s, when I got involved at Theatre in the Round, over in Minneapolis, and have continued ever since. And I’ve done something like thirty-five roles at Theatre in the Round, and a dozen or so at other places since then. I had done quite a lot of theater through college and then hadn’t done anything at all for twenty years, but started up again in the mid ‘70s. Sometime in the ‘80s, I think, I taught a course together with Peter Murray in the English Department, who was a Shakespeare scholar, and was at that time

working on a book in which he wanted to examine Shakespeare's ideas about acting, and how they compared with other writing about acting and allied subjects. And he became interested in psychology and specifically in the psychology of B.F. Skinner, who I mentioned earlier, and he got to know Skinner's theories much better than I did. [laughter] Anyway, he wanted to—he offered a course that he called “All the World's a Stage,” and he wanted to do it again, but he wanted to do it with somebody in psychology, and he approached me because he knew I had an interest in theater. And I said, “Sure let's do it.” So we taught it again, it was a seminar with maybe ten or fifteen students in it, I think, and the second and third time around, we called it “Masks or Faces.” And we read some Shakespeare plays, specifically *As You Like It*, and *Hamlet*, and one or two others, I don't remember which ones, and we read some psychology and some writing about theater and about acting. And...I guess that was one of the bases for my interest in offering the senior seminar that I started to give in...oh, '93, '94, something in there, maybe.

[46:05]

LZ: Oh, so this interest had started with kind of team—were you team teaching with Peter Murray?

CT: We were team teaching. We were team teaching. And I learned a lot from Peter, and I admired his scholarship, but I did not greatly enjoy teaching with him, and so I did not invite him to share in the teaching of this sort of course. Which I did not—I wanted to make it more a course of interest to psychology and theater students, rather than psychology students and English majors, which were [unclear]. So anyway, the first time I gave it, I had half a dozen

majors in psychology and about the same number of theater majors. Never had any more theater majors in the subsequent offerings, and I don't know why, whether I got bad reputation, [laughter] or what. Well, they probably decided I—since I didn't have a degree in theater, I wasn't really qualified to deal with this stuff. That was another outcome of this shift in emphasis, you know, of how faculty should be spending their time. The result was, there was much less cross-disciplinary stuff, much less adventure. People sticking very close to their own little territory, and it seemed to me, it was—might have made—helped the college's reputation in academic circles, but it was, from my point of view, deaf to the college atmosphere. We just didn't talk to each other very much anymore across disciplinary boundaries. And even within disciplines, I think in the Psychology Department now, my impression is, if I was still there, there would be one or two people I might talk to occasionally. But everybody is so specialized and so busy within their specialty, that they don't have time or interest in crossing any boundaries at all.

LZ: Did you find that to be true throughout your entire time at Macalester, or was that more—?

CT: No, no. No, no. No, no.

LZ: This was more—

CT: That was, that was happening in the late '80s.

LZ: Oh, so this was more towards the end, then.

CT: Yeah, yeah. That's my tirade for the day, [laughter] now I've gotten rid of it, now I can be pleasant again. [laughter]

LZ: So, kind of prior to the '80s, was it pretty common that there would be courses that at least approached other disciplines, even if they weren't team-taught?

CT: Yeah, and there was a period in the early '90s, I guess it was, when there were six or eight faculty from widely diverse departments, who would get together once a week to talk about general problems in cognition. We had a philosopher, and we had—Bill Donovan, who was in the Classics Department, got interested in this, for some reason. Well, that just died eventually, because people got too busy advancing their careers. And...let's leave that. [laughter]

[49:53]

LZ: So, but you found the class then, to go back to kind of the specifics of the class then, that the course you were teaching was...?

CT: Yeah, I enjoyed, I enjoyed it, and I think the students did. My objective in making it a senior seminar was that I thought, we'd get students who have spent the last two years largely working within a single discipline learning psychology, various fields in psychology. Put them in a different situation, and ask them to bring to bear on some novel subject matter what they've learned as psychologists, and psychology of theater seemed to be a way to do that. And I thought it'd be even better if we could get some theater majors to come in and look at the

psychology readings from their perspective. Well, it was—again, that was counter to the campus-wide trend toward stick to your own specialty. So, I did it—did that seminar three times maybe, or four times, something like that, and then I decided that a) there was no subject matter, and b) [laughs] it wasn't gaining the kind of respect that it ought to have, so I decided not to do it anymore. I think the last time I did it was a year or two before I retired.

LZ: Did you try other courses that were kind of interdisciplinary in that regards to psychology and another field of interest?

CT: I think that course and my co-teaching with Peter Murray were the—pretty much the extent of my interdisciplinary teaching. Yeah.

[51:59]

LZ: Now you've done some acting for Macalester as well, if I'm correct in...?

CT: Yeah, I've done half a dozen shows here starting back in 1977. I was in a production of *Pygmalion* directed by Douglas Hatfield, who was, I think, the head of the department at that time, and was also one of the founders of Theatre in the Round—he was the one that got me involved there. And then I've done three shows, I think, with Sears Eldredge, who's—well, the Theater Department had a really rough time in the early '80s, late '70s and early '80s, there was an intradepartmental squabble going on there that was quite serious and damaging to the faculty and to the program. And I don't remember what year it was that Sears was hired to come in and

sort of build that program from scratch, which he did and did magnificently. So that it is now, I think, quite a good, strong program.

LZ: So you—have you had more involvement in the Theater Department since, I guess kind of, Sears's arrival into the department, since there was...?

CT: No, this business with the senior seminar, "Psychology goes to the Theater," is since he was here. And I think he was interested in the seminar and I think encouraged his students to take it, but I think he was sort of a lone voice in the department, and didn't feel that he could really push it very hard.

LZ: What was that like for you to be acting with Macalester students? I guess, were any of them students you got to know or had known in previous classes that you had taught?

CT: I think there were only one or two students, maybe, who had been in my classes, but I got to know students that I would not have known otherwise. It was fun, it was—they were generally considerably less experienced than the actors I worked with at Theatre in the Round, but that was in itself an interesting challenge, and I think we got along well together.

LZ: Did you—have you continued to act at Macalester since you retired, or has that been something that's also...?

CT: I did a show last fall.

LZ: I thought you had.

CT: *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*. Prior to that was *The Tempest*, before I retired.

LZ: Oh, okay... So then you enjoyed working with Sears as a director?

CT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. He's a very good teacher—he's not my favorite director, but I think he's very good with the students and it was a pleasure to see him working.

[55:48]

LZ: There was one thing I had wanted to talk to you about was the Cultural Pluralism Project, which I've had nobody speak to me about, about that project, and I guess I was just curious what exactly that even...?

CT: Well, I'm not sure what was the precipitation or precipitating reason for setting up that committee, but this would have been in the middle to late '80s. It was a thing set up by President Gavin, and I think the concern was to encourage diversity, both student and faculty diversity, and to make sure that our only dimension of diversity was not based on our international students. We wanted a diverse group of American students, as well as the wide range of backgrounds that our international students bring. And so we had a committee set up that I was chairing, and brought in a number of consultants about what we could do in terms of curriculum and in terms of recruiting faculty, and I think that was the principle emphasis was curricular and faculty

recruitment. I think we thought if we could manage that, that the students would follow probably. And we had a number of consultants come in, as I said, and had a faculty retreat, which we discussed all of this and wrote a report. And I don't really know what the consequences of it were, but I think there is certainly greater diversity on campus now than there was before that project started, and I would like to think that we had some share in bringing that about.

LZ: Did that kind of project come along from a need that was brought up by the students, or was it something that had been brought up by administration, faculty?

CT: I can't answer that—

LZ: Okay, yeah.

CT: I don't really know. I wouldn't be surprised if it was driven by student interest.

LZ: Okay. And was—am I correct in thinking that Peter Rachleff worked on that project?

CT: Peter Rachleff was on that committee. He was, I think, the co-chair with me.

LZ: Yeah.

CT: And my role [laughs] consisted in large part of keeping the peace between Peter Rachleff and other members in the committee. [laughter] Peter tends to be quite outspoken, as you may know.

[59:03]

LZ: Yes. So my last set of questions—well, first of all, I wanted to ask you, I guess, when you officially retired, or when, I guess, you started MSFEO? And kind of what your relationship has been to the college, and what sort of work now kind of occupies your time? [laughs]

CT: Well, one of the problems with MSFEO is you don't—it's hard to remember when exactly you retired. [laughter] I think I went on the MSFEO program in the fall of 1999. I'm not sure about that.

LZ: I have '99 down as the date here, so...

CT: Anyway, I was on it for one year, in which time I taught two students in a tutorial, and that was the extent of my contribution to the college. And at the end of that year, I felt...I didn't want to continue to be in that program and feel that I wasn't making much of a contribution, and I didn't feel like exerting myself to make more of a contribution. So I dropped out, and so I think I have been fully retired since 2000, but you can check on the dates.

LZ: Um-hm. Okay. Did you feel that Macalester just wasn't doing enough to utilize these professors that were kind of entering the ending stages of their careers?

CT: No, it was a personal decision on my part.

LZ: Okay.

CT: I just didn't—fortunately, I was well enough off financially that I didn't need the money, and I didn't need the guilt either, so I... [laughs]

LZ: No, I've heard complaints about MSFEO, but nobody that actually just kind of stopped it so—

CT: Well, I did have a conversation with Dan, what's his name in Biology, who was the provost at that, the time that I was reconsidering about it, and he said, "Well, there are some faculty who have done more under MSFEO than you have and there are few who have done less," and so I decided, regardless of what other people had done, that this was it for me.

[1:01:36]

LZ: So you were—your last two presidencies would have been Bob Gavin and then Mike McPherson; you would've—?

CT: Yeah, I think I was not actually full-time while McPherson was here, I think I was on part-time that first year of his administration, seems to me, but I have heard good things about him, certainly.

LZ: Had you had much interaction with Bob Gavin, given he was president for, I think, almost twelve years?

CT: Yeah, quite a lot, I guess. Yeah. Not— [pause] Well, I don't know how characterize it. Quite a lot, more than I had with other presidents, except possibly John Davis, but he was here for a long time.

[1:02:32]

LZ: Right, exactly. All right, so then what have—have you pursued other kind of academic interests since you've left Macalester?

CT: No.

LZ: No? Okay. [laughs]

CT: I have hardly thought about psychology since I left. [laughs] I read quite a lot, and what I find myself reading are fiction and history, mainly, but a wide range of stuff. But little or nothing that has anything to do with psychology.

LZ: Have you done more in the theater realm, would you consider, since you just acted this fall, or is that...?

CT: I don't think I've done more. I think I've probably checked the pace that I had, which is probably a pace that I should not have been trying to keep when I was teaching, but I do two or three shows a year.

[1:03:37]

LZ: I'm curious, was there ever a time that you had debated, I guess, going more the professional route of theater than the psychology? It seems like you've always kind of had a love of both, and...?

CT: Yeah. When I first graduated from college, I spent one semester in New York City at Columbia Drama School, and I was stupid enough to get myself into their design program, set design, rather than going into acting, which was what I was really interested in. But I figured, "Well, I know I'll never make a living as an actor, maybe I'll make a living as a set designer." Which was, [laughter] I don't think, much more likely, but anyway, after a semester of that, I'd had enough and I decided, since I don't know what else to do with my life, I'd better go in the Army and get that out of the way. So I went in the Army for two years.

LZ: Okay. That's nice though, you've been able to, kind of, do both interests, and kind of...

CT: Yeah, it's a better avocation than vocation for me, anyway.

[1:04:55]

LZ: Okay. All right, so I wanted to propose the question, first of all, what—I want to talk about reflections, kind of, back on the college, and we did talk about some changes, so some of this may—we may have covered, but just to throw out to you, when you sit back and think from 1966 to 1999, what are some of the biggest changes that stand out in your mind that have happened in Macalester either in the student body or faculty or, I guess, even policy, if there's any that...?

CT: Well, this place that we're sitting in is certainly one of the big changes. The first twenty years that I was here, the library facilities were really miserable. It was a good collection of books, but it was over in the, what's now the administration building.

LZ: Oh, Weyerhaeuser.

CT: Weyerhaeuser Building, yeah, and it was just inadequate space. I think that's most important building that came up while I was here, although there were many others, of course; the chapel was one, and Rice Hall, and then the reconstruction of Olin.

LZ: Oh, right. The whole...

CT: The whole Rice-Olin complex. Janet Wallace Center has been shamefully neglected during my time here, and is still being shamefully neglected in favor of phy ed facilities that look like they're going to take over the entire campus. I don't know what people were thinking. [laughter]

LZ: I have to agree with you. [laughter]

CT: I mean, exercise is great, and I'm all for keeping people healthy, but...my lord! [laughter]

[1:07:04]

LZ: Have you found that the types of students that come to Macalester are very different or that—I guess one, not necessarily complaint, but one thing that comes up is that they're less politically active, or they're, they're more...

CT: Well, certainly last I knew, they were less politically active than they were in the '60s and early '70s, but that's going to change if we don't get out of Iraq in a hurry. I think, certainly, the college's—the admissions is more selective than it was when I got here, and I expect that if you look at SAT scores, they're probably higher than they were then. I think that there is more diversity, both domestic and foreign diversity, than there was when I was here. And I think students, either by choice or because they feel the pressures, are focusing earlier. And sometimes, it seems to me, foolishly. There was a fashion that began in the '80s, and I don't know whether it's still in fashion or not, of multiple majors. Why do you want more than one major, for heaven sakes? Spend some time looking around and doing things for the hell of it! But there's this tremendous pressure on kids now to think ahead about a career, and how you're going to earn your living and get rich, and all that stuff, which really is unfortunate, I think.

LZ: When you commented that you felt that professors were kind of drawing inwards to their research, do you think that's paralleled by students, kind of, more concerned...?

CT: Yeah, yeah. And, I don't know. I suppose it's a part of modernity. There's incredible pressures on people all around in society now, I mean, there're people working eighty hours a week. That's just foreign to me. I'm glad I'm leaving the world, not just arriving! [laughter]

[1:09:36]

LZ: Did you, while you were still at Macalester—has the Psychology Department changed quite a bit from...?

CT: Yeah. Yeah, it was, at the time I arrived, it was oriented strongly towards experimental psychology, and it has become much more clinically oriented. It has, it has improved in the sense that it is now at least fifty percent women on the faculty, and maybe more, I don't know. It was all men when I got here.

LZ: Really? Okay.

CT: And that, that has changed, thankfully.

LZ: Was that typical of most departments? That they were more male dominating, or I guess probably in general there would have been...

CT: Oh, I think so. Yeah, I think that's generally true.

[1:10:44]

LZ: Have you seen any sort of policy, large—I know we talked about the dropping of interim and course requirements, but have there been, I guess, other kind of policy changes that have come down that have drastically changed kind of the workings of the college?

CT: Well, the process of faculty hiring is very different now, as I mentioned earlier. I was on a number of searches for incoming psychology faculty the last few years that I was here, because there was quite a few of us who were leaving at that point. And a) we would get a hundred to a hundred and fifty applications for one position, b) and as a result of that, the task of the reviewing committee was not to find somebody who was good, but to find reasons to drop people out of this pool. [laughs] And that means that what you end up with, is you end up looking for measures on which people can score high, and that means you look for people who have a lot of publications, who have stellar transcripts from their graduate degrees, graduate school, who have postdocs, and who are trained and published and researched into the ground. And some of them, at least, turn out to be remarkable teachers too, but that seems to be sort of the second thought.

[1:12:45]

LZ: Do you feel that Macalester—1960's Macalester compared to Macalester today—is still essentially the same college with the same kind of spirit and the same mission, or would you say that the college is changing in more than just, kind of, minor details?

CT: Well, I think it's very much the same in one sense. I think, I think the changes that I've talked about are probably characteristic of first-ranked liberal arts colleges across the country.

And I think that within that group of colleges, Macalester is somehow on the same track that it was in the '60s; that is with its strong emphasis on service, strong emphasis on international affairs and support of the United Nations, and concern about the outside world. That was certainly a big part of Macalester when I got here.

LZ: Would you agree that Macalester is able to compete, then, with—today—with kind of the top tier liberal arts colleges, or do you...?

CT: Oh, I think so. Although I'm not in admissions, you can ask those people, they know better than I do. [laughs]

LZ: Right. Right, but I mean...

CT: Yeah, yeah, I think we do all right.

[1:14:10]

LZ: In kind of my closing, I was wondering if there's any, kind of, other people or events that we've talked about that really made an impact on your career here that we haven't already touched on?

CT: Well, I think the most important single individual for me at Macalester was Walt Mink, and I expect you get that answer from a lot of people.

LZ: Okay. Within the Psychology Department, do you feel more, or just in general?

CT: In general. Certainly there were plenty of other faculty that I remember with fondness, and—in most cases with fondness, and in some cases without fondness. [laughter]

[1:15:07]

LZ: Well, I have one last question, and I stopped asking it as favorite memory, because I figure that's not very fair for some of you that have been at the college thirty plus years, but...

CT: Favorite memory?

LZ: I guess—not that you need to have it pinpointed, but, I guess, is there a time at Macalester that you enjoyed teaching more, or, I guess, a certain aspect that you enjoyed...?

CT: Yeah, yeah, I've got one. This'll go on for a bit. Sometime in the early '80s, we started a program for majors in Psychology that came to be known as the pivot. And it was a program for junior majors in which they were to take two psychology courses back-to-back in the fall, and another two back-to-back in the spring, all meeting in the same room, and, initially, with *all* the psychology faculty meeting with the students. And that was the most exciting teaching experience I had, and unfortunately, it didn't go on for very long. It began to get chipped away, and understandably, after the faculty had heard each other go through this, you know. We took turns lecturing, and the rest of them would sit in the back row and chip in and make comments and argue and so forth. It was fun, but after you've been through that once, you know, it begins

to sound kind of familiar, you don't want to do it again. So faculty would find that they had to teach other classes at the time that this group was meeting. [laughter] And then came along some new faculty in the early '90s, who thought, "Well, this is a really inefficient and expensive use of faculty time and student time, and maybe we should only do this one semester and not two." So we cut out the second semester or something like that, I don't remember the details, but it gradually got whittled away and eventually disappeared. And probably just as well, I mean, that sort of thing is fun for a while, but anything that you get too accustomed to, it takes the edge off it. But, yeah, that was the peak experience for me for teaching.

LZ: That's very neat. Well, those are all of my questions.