

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

**Interview with:**     **Bob Gavin**  
                              President, 1984-1996

**Date:**                 **Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 1:00 p.m.**

**Place:**                Macalester College DeWitt Wallace Library, Harmon Room

**Interviewer:**        Laura Zeccardi, Class of 2007

Interview run time:   1:33:19 minutes

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**Interview with Bob Gavin**

**Laura Zeccardi, Interviewer**

**July 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and I am interviewing Bob Gavin, Macalester President from 1984 to 1996, in the Harmon Room in the DeWitt Wallace Library. Just to begin, if you would like to state your name and where you're originally from and then what year you came to Macalester.

BG: My name is Bob Gavin, I was born in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. I came to Macalester in 1984—well, actually, I came to Macalester as *president* in 1984, I'd been to Macalester before that. But only as a visitor, hadn't been employed by Macalester before then.

LZ: Just to begin, it would be nice to get kind of a background of where you were coming from before you came to Macalester, so...?

BG: Well, I was born just outside of Philadelphia, but I grew up in the Twin Cities, and went to Saint John's in Collegeville. So my first contacts with Macalester were in the '50s, on the athletic fields. And then I went to graduate school in Iowa, for a Ph.D. in physical chemistry, and when I was looking for jobs one of the jobs I was offered was a faculty position in the

Chemistry Department at Macalester. Lou Garvin was the provost and Harvey Rice was the president then, and I remember meeting with them over in Old Main. Then, at that time I took a job at Haverford College outside of Philadelphia, and I was there off and on from the summer of '66 until 1984 when I came here. I taught chemistry, did research in chemistry, taught a little applied math, philosophy of science, but mostly chemistry. And then in later years I also started up computer science there, because I was involved—a lot of my research involved dealing with computers, and so I spent a lot of time teaching students about computers and computer programming to do research. They didn't have computer science, I started it up; they were pretty flexible, faculty were, in terms of what you could do. Then in, let's see...it must have been late '83—I was provost at Haverford from '80 to '84—late '83, I got a call from Emil Slowinski, who was the chairman of the Chemistry Department when I was offered a job here in '65. And he said, "Well, we're looking for a president, I've kind of followed your career and you're now in administration, would you want to be a candidate?" I said, "Well, I'll think about it." Then in early '84 I was on a trip for the alumni—well, it was a fundraising trip, but it was meeting alumni, Haverford alumni groups in different parts of the country. And the one in Chicago, the alumni group meeting in Chicago, was canceled and I was already on the tour. So I called the person who was the presidential search, sort of, coordinator and told her that I was going to be in Chicago and I could fly up over the weekend, because I knew they met on the weekends. So I met with the search committee and that got started and...the rest is history, I guess.

[03:58]

LZ: Had you been looking to move into the role of president?

BG: No, no. In fact, I was a very reluctant provost. I enjoyed being a faculty member, I enjoyed doing research and interacting with the students, and felt the administration was a place where you ended up having all your faculty friends think you're part of the [laughs] overhead of the institution instead of the productive part that actually work with students. So, I only became provost at Haverford because the president there made a plea to me to become provost. I was on the presidential search committee when he was hired, then I went off and spent a year as a visiting faculty member at Berkeley, and when I came back he said, "I'm an outsider, it's a small liberal arts college, hard for an outsider to know, you know, what to do, so you've got to be provost." I said, "Ugh, no, no, I don't want to be provost. That's a *thankless* job." And so he said, "You have to, you just have to." So... There they do it a little differently, the president doesn't just pick the provost, the faculty submits to the president three candidates that they think are—they always do it from the inside. So, really what I agreed was that at the faculty meeting, when the faculty talked about candidates, that I wouldn't withdraw, as I'd always done in the past when people would ask, "Gavin! You want to be provost?" I'd say, "No, I don't want to be provost [laughter], somebody else's turn to do it." So that's why I got into administration. But then, once I was in, I really enjoyed it. But I really wasn't—I was planning—in fact, the next year, I had already set up to return to Berkeley to do research in the field of catalysis with somebody that I'd known for years. So, I was planning to spend the next year in Berkeley, not Saint Paul.

[06:17]

LZ: Was it an extensive interview process at Macalester? Was there a meeting with students and faculty?

BG: It was fairly typical of the, you know, sort of the “meet everybody” kind of thing. The first meeting was at the Saint Paul Hotel, only with the committee. And there were probably ten or twelve people on the committee, there were faculty members, trustees, alumni representatives, student representatives, staff representatives, maybe a dozen people or something. And then, I don’t remember how many other interviews there were, but eventually I’d come to campus. There were—three finalists came to campus. Then you met with, you know, everybody. You were kind of fair game at that point.

LZ: So you accepted the job in ’84? Would it have been still ’83?

BG: ’84, it was probably about April of ’84.

[07:22]

LZ: What did you perceive Macalester’s reputation to be at that time, or the state of the college?

BG: Well, I knew Macalester mainly through my experiences when I lived in Minnesota. You didn’t hear about Macalester if you were at Haverford. Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, Amherst, Williams, and places like that, they don’t think anybody else exists. So, I really didn’t know much about Macalester. I knew of the very strong—well, when I was an undergraduate at Saint John’s, Macalester was considered to have the best student body in Minnesota. Not Carleton, Macalester. And, you know, be academically the best of all liberal arts colleges. But then, I didn’t know, I just hadn’t heard about Macalester, and I didn’t know about all the

financial problems that had come up in late '60s and through the '70s. I learned a lot more about it from the search committee [laughter], and then when I saw all the financials—my impression when I was at Saint John's was that not only did Macalester get the best academic students, but they also had the most money. And then I got the story that there were some problems, financial problems. So, you know, and I had, out east in those days, you'd hear about—from the Midwest, the only liberal arts colleges you'd hear about occasionally would be Carleton and Oberlin, and then in the early eighties you started to hear about Grinnell. But I didn't hear much about Macalester.

[09:11]

LZ: Were you concerned coming into a college that had had kind of a rocky last couple years with finances?

BG: Well, I was told it was all over [laughter] that I didn't have to worry about that. That it wasn't going to go broke. And I didn't get the *complete* picture—not that they withheld it from me but, you know, when you're looking at something you don't...I didn't get the complete picture of how *bad* financially it was in the '74, '75 era until I was actually here, and then talked to some of the people who were involved in kind of bailing the college out from real financial difficulties. No, I wasn't concerned with the financial side.

LZ: Did you meet with John Davis before you...?

BG: Oh yeah, John and I met two or three times. Great guy, great guy. In fact, we met more than that.

[10:06]

LZ: What was your first impression coming back to the Macalester campus and walking around and just seeing the state of how it was?

BG: Well, after the interview at Saint Paul Hotel, they said, “Go to campus, nobody will know who you are.” They were very concerned about confidentiality, I said, “Nobody’s going to know me.” And I can still remember the feeling when I drove up right over here and parked and got out of the Hertz or Avis car, whatever it was that I had rented, and looked around. I couldn’t believe the physical condition of the campus. Because the last time I had seen was out on that, what used to be the football field out there, in the fall of 1961. And the campus was just spectacular, it was beautiful, well-kept. That’s why, I mentioned before, I thought, when I was in college, Macalester got the best students, and Macalester got the most money. That was the impression that I had. And, you know, Saint Olaf and Carleton had fairly nice campuses when you visited there, but this place... And I looked around, and it was in pretty tough shape physically. So that was my first—*that* was my concern, actually, that was more my concern, that not only had they had financial difficulties, but the physical plant was really in bad shape.

[11:31]

LZ: Did you come on having the relationship with DeWitt Wallace having been repaired or was that something that then you...?

BG: Oh, that relationship was repaired before John Davis took the presidency. And over the years a lot of people told me they were the ones that turned around Wallace [laughter]. You know, people from... Warren Burger, Chief Justice, he was sure that his intervention had done it. George Leonard, you know, Leonard Natatorium, which I guess is gone now, from California; he was sure that he had done it. I know that John Driscoll, Ted Weyerhaeuser, Don Garretson, Carl Drake—these are all people who were trustees at that time. And I think that the key thing was that they were able to talk John Davis into coming in, and DeWitt Wallace's sort of advisor at that time said, "He's okay, he's not going to waste money and he's going to, he'll be frugal," you know. So by that time—and, in fact, Mr. Wallace died, I think, in '81. And Mrs. Wallace died a week after I was appointed. I don't know if there was any causal relationship or not [laughs], but a week later she died. So I never met either one of them. I dealt with Barnabas McHenry, who was the executor of their will, and with the people at the *Reader's Digest* over the years who had known the Wallaces, but I never met either one of them.

[13:31]

LZ: What was your first impression of Macalester students and how they compared to, I guess, maybe students that you had interacted with...?

BG: Oh, Haverford, or Berkeley, or I was at the University of Chicago for a year too. The thing that hit me from the very first was how international the student body was. It was just amazing. It...well, it surprised me. A lot of the times you get materials and sometimes you arrive and then you have to look around to try to find the people that were pictured, or whatever. That was my

first impression, how much the international aspect had been nurtured through the years. In fact, I think for my inauguration was the first time that we had the international students parade with their national flag. I think that's first—and I think they still do that. Because I asked for it for my inauguration, and then I asked for three international students to do a performance. Let's see if I can remember...probably can't, must be in the archives someplace, who the students were who performed. But there was a Bolivian, and she sang a traditional Bolivian song with a Bolivian guitar. Oh, and then a woman from Mauritius, who did an interpretative dance...who was the third? Well, in any case. And then, for Commencement, we started having the tradition of having the flags for the nations of the students coming. So I think that was the thing that really hit me hard, and how important it was for the college.

[15:32]

LZ: Did you get a sense of kind of what the faculty was like upon visiting? Or I guess maybe even the first few weeks after...?

BG: I knew very few of the faculty, just Slowinski, I knew Truman Schwartz in Chemistry, and I think that's about it. Because I was a chemist I don't think I knew anyone else there, so I didn't, you know, have any impression of the faculty.

LZ: So you took the presidency then in the fall of '84?

BG: Yeah, I think I came in summer of '84.

LZ: And then your inaugural...?

BG: Yeah, that was in October I think.

[16:12]

LZ: So I guess, coming into the college, did you highlight some things that you were going to work towards in your presidency, or things that needed immediate attention within the college and kind of...?

BG: First decision I had to make involved this library. And I had to make it just before I came. There was an east wing of Old Main, right along here; in fact there was a connector between them, this way. And I got a call from Ted Weyerhaeuser saying that the architect really needs a decision as to whether or not the new library, which would have run parallel to Old Main, whether it should be connected to the east wing or not. I said, "Well, I don't have any idea. Can I see the plans for the library?" So they sent me the plans, and then called back a little bit later, and the plans didn't hold a description of it. And I can still remember Ted Weyerhaeuser being a little bit concerned as to how I might be as a president, he said, "What's your comment about the connection?" And I said, "Well this connection's not going to make any difference, but the whole library seems dated." Because the design for it emphasized the importance of having an open design with the card catalogue right in the middle, so that you could get to the card catalogue from any place, you could see the card catalogue, and it was all about the card catalogue. And I said, "It's not going to be long and all of this is going to be online, you're not going to have the card catalogue as the central point in the library." I wondered about the whole

philosophy. So...that ended that plan for the library. Then when it started—I brought in five people from around the country during the year. One to talk about the future of libraries, and that person was at...Denison? Or one of the Ohio colleges, very good. And then the person who was doing the Stanford library planning came and... Oh, then the one from the Yale library. So we had five good people come and talk about it, and then we interviewed architects, and that's how we ended up with Shepley Bulfinch for this library. So that was the first kind of big thing. And then Peggy Harmon, she was great! Because she had already pledged the lead gift for the other library. Well, that's why I got to know her pretty well, because the president says, "Cut this out, we don't want it..." [laughs]. She was a terrific lady, and *very* devoted to the college and devoted to libraries, she just felt they were important. She came to every one of the talks when the people came in, consultants; of course, I had her have lunch with them and talk to each of them, and talk to each of the architects too. Very helpful. That's the thing that I remember most about arriving here, what needed to be emphasized. And we didn't really start—because we had to raise, I think, fifteen million dollars or something for this project, ten million for the building and five million for an endowment to support it. So that was the major activity for a while.

[20:11]

LZ: So you started immediately raising money for the library?

BG: Yeah, that was the biggest project.

LZ: Were other buildings that were kind of in disrepair, were those also...?

BG: Oh yeah. My first week—the president’s office used to be over in the corner of Old Main, on what I’d call kind of the second floor. I don’t remember if they used the German system, did it go ground floor, first floor, second floor, I don’t know... Anyways, one story up, over in the corner. And Sandy Hill came in the office and said, “You know, we’d hoped to get out the letter announcing that you’ve arrived and various things about you, but we can’t because the rainstorm that’s going on now has flooded the development office where the computer is that prints the letters.” So I went over and I looked in and here there was this big tarp that was covering the computer and the water was running down, and I looked up and there was a hole. So I went up to the next floor and then I got to the top floor where the historians were, and think it was Jim Stewart, somebody like that, who was up there. And I said, “Is there a leak here?” He said, “Come here.” He opened one of the office doors and you could see a hole about that big going out into the sky and you could see flashes of lightning and the water was running down. It was in the—whatever you call the thing where the roofs come together—the flashings were all gone out of there and it was running in and running down, so... There were a few other—so if it sounds like I spent a lot of time dealing with physical plant when I arrived, I did. [laughter]

LZ: Did you immediately start to address those concerns?

BG: Oh yeah, we had to. I mean, there were lots of things that needed repair.

[22:18]

LZ: Were there other—did you sit down and make some long range goals for the—

BG: Well, every new president has a Long Range Planning Committee, of course. And Jack Rossmann chaired the Long Range Planning Committee for me. They set various goals for things.

LZ: Did you appoint a provost or had someone already been in that position?

BG: Well, Jack Rossmann was in the position and he agreed to serve until I could be here for a while. And then we started a provost search, which for me was a different kind of thing. I was accustomed to a situation where you just chose a provost from the faculty. But many faculty members were just adamant, they didn't want that, they wanted a national search.

LZ: Did you feel that—

BG: A mistake on my part to agree to that, I think it's just much better to have—maybe it was just my experience at Haverford, but the provost needs to know the faculty, and somebody coming in from the outside, *very* difficult to get to know the faculty, so. And there were plenty of people who could have been provost.

LZ: Who was then appointed that position after Jack Rossmann? Was that several years after you had been here?

BG: No, two years. Oh, Peter Conn. Came from the University of Pennsylvania. He left after a semester, went back to the University of Pennsylvania. And then Jim Stewart. At that time, at that point I said, you know, they wanted another national—I said, “You can’t go to a national search anyways, the guy comes in and leaves after just—well, it’s in the middle of the second semester, goes back to where he was, you can’t do that. Internal search.” So then, Jim Stewart.

[24:05]

LZ: In those first few months that you were at Macalester did you feel as though you were accepted by students and faculty and start to, I guess, cultivate relationships with both the student body and the faculty?

BG: Yeah.

LZ: I guess, in what way? Did you meet a lot with students? I mean, were you kind of, I guess, visible?

BG: I don’t know, I’d see them, I’d see them around. I didn’t teach any classes for several years.

LZ: Oh, but you did eventually?

BG: Yeah, I did. I taught a couple times in the Chemistry Department. Yeah, I’d see students.

[24:43]

LZ: So, in 1985 then, almost, not even, I guess, a year after you had been here, was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Macalester, and that seemed to have been a pretty unique kind of celebration with all the past presidents and I guess...

BG: Yeah, that was a grand time, a grand time. The president that—once I saw the international strength of the college, the president that I met with several times was Dr. Turck, Charles Turck. Terrific guy. He was well in his nineties at that time. And so it was Turck, followed by Rice, followed by Flemming, followed by Robinson, followed by Davis. So all five, there were five presidents dating back to—I think Turck was appointed in '38 or something like that. So, talked to them all, they all agreed to come back. But I didn't realize that some of them never met each other, they didn't know each other. And some people told me, they didn't like each other [laughs]. But I didn't know! And so my wife and I planned the dinner at the president's house, which at that time was 1750 Summit, and we thought it would be nice to get some trustees who served at the various times, various presidents. Then I was advised that that would not be good. Because some of the trustees liked one president, didn't like the other president and back and forth, so. They said, "No, you can't have a dinner." I said, "I'm president, we're having a dinner. You invite somebody to town, they come all the way back to town, you give them a dinner. Period, that's it." And they said, "Well, what about *just* the presidents then with you? A nice quiet evening?" So I said, "Well, okay, we'll do that." So we did that, and it worked out just fine. It was Charlie Turck's ninety-sixth birthday, or something like that. So, we had a large dining room table, we'd all sit around the table. And, let's see—Turck's current wife was not his wife when he was here, she was about half his age. In fact, they were really looking forward to

celebrating a sesquicentennial birthday because her fiftieth birthday and his hundredth birthday were in the same month. Anyways, but she was here with him, and then Mrs. Rice was here. Arthur Flemming's...yes, Arthur Flemming's wife was here, but Jim Robinson's wife was not. And John Davis's was, but John Davis...let's see...John Davis' wife died of cancer his last year here, so I don't remember... Anyway, I think that he had remarried at that point, so it was three years later. But anyways, we were all sitting around the dining room table and it'd been a little bit...I don't know [raises his eyebrows, shakes his head]. And so, Dr. Turck, who I had sit at the head of the table, because we gave him his birthday cake that was there. Dr. Turck—it was really going along very smoothly—finally Dr. Turck said, in his Southern way, “Gentlemen, I owe you all an apology.” And you could have heard a pin drop; I didn't have any idea what he was going to say next. And he said, “But I'm sure I fired Wild Bill before I left.” Apparently there was a faculty member who was just notorious, and had been a pain in the neck to every single faculty member, Turck right up through John Davis. And that broke the ice, each one of them said, “You did not, he was here!” And I still remember Robinson, who was only here for about a year and a half, he said, “I never laid eyes on the guy! The guy wouldn't come in to see me, I couldn't find him any time, he locked his office door, he would never answer it, *and* I had a stack of correspondences that high from him with complaints.” [laughter]

[29:28]

So that went on and on and on. So Turck really broke the ice there, and everybody got along just fine. I don't know if they had just never met each other or if they *really* didn't care for each other; and none of them ever said anything, so, I think it was just people's perception of things. No, because there were difficult times. You know, the college almost went broke and stuff like that. *And*, Mr. Wallace's advisor, educational advisor, had been manipulating various things.

Because Mrs. Rice told me, Dorothy, that—she said, “I haven’t told this story to anybody, but just before Harvey announced his retirement, this guy,” Paul Davis, I think his name was, “came to town and stayed with us as always. And then in the morning he had breakfast with Harvey, Harvey went over to the office, and then he said to me, ‘Mr. Wallace and I have decided that this is Harvey’s last year. We’re getting a new president.’ And then left town.” And it was true that they had, because someplace—and it’s probably still in the archives someplace, there’s a letter from Mr. Wallace to Flemming, hiring him a year before—

LZ: Really?!

BG: Oh yeah, they had a Presidential Search Committee, [laughs] they had the search and things, but it was a done deal, it was already set up. Mrs. Wallace had liked Arthur Flemming, she had met him at Oregon or Oregon State or something like that, wherever she went to college. And she thought he was terrific, and so it was a done deal, it was all set. Anyway, it was a lot of fun, and we got our picture taken under the flagpole out in front of the chapel.

[31:31]

LZ: Were there other celebration activities that went along with that that involved the whole campus?

BG: Oh yeah, yeah. It was just great. And Turck, at that time, couldn’t see very far, maybe this distance would be okay, but after that it was kind of all a blur. And when he was introduced at the convocation he got a standing ovation, but he didn’t know. I mean he could hear that they

were—but he didn't know it was a standing ovation, had to tell him after that it was a standing ovation. But there were lots of events; it was kind of fun. And I think there's some publication too that came out of that.

[32:14]

LZ: I think maybe a special issue of the *Mac Today* or something. So by 1999, the DeWitt Wallace *Reader's Digest* money, had that become public by...?

BG: Yeah, sometime around then. I don't remember when they had the IPO [initial public offering], but it was late '80s, early '90s, something like that.

LZ: What impact did that have on the campus, seeing as that hadn't been...?

BG: Everybody thought we were rich, everybody thought we ought to spend the money on them, or their department, you know, or their building [laughter]. And so we had a planning process, two years worth, strategic planning, both on-campus and off, going around—I think I met with about sixty different alumni groups all around the country—well, actually, around the world, because we did it in London, we did it in Tokyo, and you know, asking them about ideas and things. And the theme came out of it that what should be emphasized is the internationalism, and multicultural aspects, and then service to community, that's where that—and I think they're still mentioned, I don't know, that was a sort of thing that got drilled into everything. And we had different consultants come around and talk to us about the potential, and then people sort of warn us about places that had gotten a large infusion of endowment funds that hadn't really done

anything with them, that they were not transforming in any sort of positive way, they were just sort of dissipated. Then we had a—I hired a financial consultant to be an outside, independent one of what we were doing with our financial planning, and we put a ten year sort of plan together. And that outside consultant was Mike McPherson, from Williams. So Mike was involved with that. And we went through and we got the strategic plan adopted, and there's a publication on that I know, there's a booklet about it and stuff. So, that's what we did.

LZ: Was the plan to put money more towards buildings or programs? I guess, how was...?

BG: Well it was all of those things, because we knew, we had made progress with physical plant but there were a lot of physical plant needs. And you know, everything from the dorms to Janet Wallace, Olin-Rice, Old Main, there were still projects to be taken care of. And then there was building the faculty, because we were on decreased student-faculty ratio. Library. I mean there were a bunch of things. And the strategic plan—there's a booklet about that thick, should be in the archives someplace, whole bunch of stuff that was planned.

[35:26]

LZ: Not to take a negative turn to the interview, but I was wondering what became some of the biggest controversial—or, I guess, not even necessarily controversial, but issues that you had to deal with that arose, I guess, either from the student body or from faculty that kind of—

BG: Well, there are always student body issues. I mean, if you don't have, you know, student body issues then you're not doing anything or you're not alive. Or the student body isn't alive.

So I really enjoyed the students, but I think some of the toughest issues that the students were bringing up were issues about the investment in South Africa, because *Reader's Digest* published an edition in South Africa. And so, we dealt with the CEO of the *Reader's Digest* on whether they were pro-apartheid. They gave us information and, you know, and examples of—editorially they were anti-apartheid, they weren't exactly out on the streets, but... And so we had many, many debates about that. Fact was, at that time, two-thirds to three-quarters of the scholarship money was coming from *Reader's Digest* dividends [laughter]. So it was quite interesting, not that—I mean, I took the position that if *Reader's Digest* was pro-apartheid that we shouldn't be taking that money, because we had taken the position with respect to the other investments in the endowment that any corporation that was doing business in South Africa had to go by the Sullivan Principles, which maybe you've never even heard of. But I mean they—Leon Sullivan, who was a Philadelphian, Opportunities Industrial Workshop or something like that [Opportunities Industrialization Centers]—anyway, a very active civil rights person, had put out these out these principles that companies should follow if they're going to do any business with South Africa. So if they signed Sullivan Principles, which *Digest* had, and everything else, then you could invest in them, but if they hadn't, you couldn't. And so I took the same position with respect to the *Digest*. And *Digest* had signed the Sullivan Principles, they continued to it, so. I think that was the hottest student issue that I can think of. Unless you know of something else, can you think of anything?

[37:59]

LZ: That was kind of the big one.

BG: Oh yeah, yeah. No, and those students were doing just exactly what they should have been doing. I don't know of, I can't think of a student issue—I mean all the issues that came up in that time I was pleased that our students were concerned about them and pressing the issue. And I can't think of what I would call an inappropriate confrontation.

LZ: Oh, so they were very...

BG: I mean nobody—yeah. I mean they may have thought I was dumb [laughter] or didn't see this, but I mean that's just—you're eighteen to twenty-two, that's what you ought to think [laughter]. No, I can't think of any—there were a couple of sit-ins and things like that, but—and pressing on diversity in the faculty, you know, administration isn't doing enough. Well, I agree. So, I thought those were good. I suppose with the faculty...biggest issues with the faculty and the president *always* have to do with tenure. Always. Every campus. So I had a few run-ins there where department recommended someone for tenure and I said no. But I think the president always, especially at a liberal arts college, has to do that. At a bigger place that falls to the provost. Because there's no long-term decision more important than tenure. For the students! Because a person might be just fine after four or five years, riding off what they learned in graduate school and so on, but if there isn't really a fire in there for their discipline, getting their students involved, and things like that; if you don't see that...it's not a very good sign. Because the person is going to be around for forty, forty-five years. So those were probably the toughest issues, and...I remember different faculty members coming in and saying, you know, "You've got the potential to be a great president, but you'll be a total failure if you don't give tenure to so-and-so." [laughs]

[40:34]

Then there were issues about, for me, about whether I was an Easterner trying to remake this place, in terms of being an eastern college. You know, those snooty eastern places, because I came from Haverford. Most of those people didn't know that even though I was born to south side Philadelphia, I went to DeLaSalle High School on Nicollet Island in Minneapolis, I went to Saint John's University, and then I went to Iowa State. Talk about "Moo-U" [laughter]; I mean, I was as Midwestern as they were. Now many of them had gotten their degrees from Harvard, Princeton, Yale, places like that out east. And I know as somebody who came from "Moo-U" into Haverford, I was the first person tenured in the Haverford Chemistry Department who was not a Yalie since 1918, when I was tenured. I was the first one. And I keep mentioning tenure—I mean, I didn't even apply for tenure at Haverford, they just tenured me. And so there were that issues, you know, "This guy trying to make us an eastern place." You know, I certainly didn't have anything against Haverford, I enjoyed the place, liked the students, enjoyed the teaching, but I know that here—I mentioned before the student body? You know, how international it was and everything. Here, I found a more exciting student body. I'm not saying they're more intelligent or whatever, because the other kids were smart and everything. And I kind of wondered, because after I left here in '96, Haverford asked me to come back and be—well, first they asked me to come back and be a candidate for president, and be interim president, be acting president and candidate for president, and I said, "No, I've done that long enough." After a couple days I agreed to be an interim president, and then I went back there, and their students are bright and everything just like here, but I really felt, "Wow. This is hardly..." You know, you can't sit down with somebody and talk about Latin America, or someplace in Asia, or someplace in Africa. You know, just here, you just walk around and you could meet students, and students

would come over to our house and things like that, so you get the feeling that you were part of the world. And Haverford didn't have that. Great students and a great place and I like it. But I think one issue was, you know, is Gavin coming here trying to make this place an eastern elite institution? And in fact, that was a—I can remember a few exchanges. I usually didn't write letters to the *Mac Weekly*, because somebody said to me, it's a big mistake to get into a contest with somebody that buys ink by the barrel [laughter]. But I did get a couple in there exchanged with faculty members who'd written about, you know, this guy from the east, if you let him get his way then we're going to give up our commitment to minority students. Well, I wrote a couple of them pointing out what the percentage of minority students was at Haverford, Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, Williams, Amherst, Wellesley. And it was over twice what it was here at that time. I mean, we kept working on it. And that's one thing that the Wallace funds were very good at, because they were committed to international students and having diversity of students. At that time of course, he was in the fifties and things, they didn't talk so much about American minority groups, but they said, "Make it socio-economically diverse." Which then moves you in a direction that's very supportive of what we were trying to do.

[44:59]

In any case, I think those were the major... Well, the other issue that lasted right up until I left, and I should have—so the big mistake on my part, I should have stuck to my guns on it, because I think after I left there were two or three years that they had some financial problems with the *Reader's Digest* stock. That is, I had said that the *Digest* stock, we were working in this—when I say we, it was Ted Weyerhaeuser and Carl Drake and John Driscoll were the three trustees working with me—to diversify, to sell that stock, because we got twelve million shares of it, out of a hundred million shares of the company. And then they gave away the whole company, so

half of the, fifty million of those shares were held by Macalester, Metropolitan Museum, Lincoln Center, you know, so you had to find some way to diversify. So we had a plan to diversify. And what we put in the financial models, if you look at the financial models, it was to sell so many of those shares each year for—or every other year, so that within twelve years—ten years. Ten years, because it was ten-year financial plan. So we'd be down to a couple million shares or something like that. So, I also said that I thought that we ought to have the discipline that we don't put into the operating budget—you know, paying salaries and things like that—the dividend from the shares we owned. That we should put that into building the infrastructure of the campus. You know, Olin-Rice; and I mean all the things that were going on, Janet Wallace and stuff like that. And so, then the dividend started to increase, because when it went public the dividend was twenty cents a share. Well, then it went to fifty cents a share, then it went to a dollar a share, a dollar fifty a share, two dollars a share. Well, by the time I left we had gotten from twelve million shares down to about six million shares, but the price of the stock had gotten up to fifty-five dollars a share and was two-dollar dividend. Well, that's twelve million dollars coming in. Well, the last two years in the budget we had sort of dipped into the *Reader's Digest* dividend to support not capital projects and building infrastructure, but to support salaries. I think within two years of me leaving the dividend was twenty cents again and the stock was fifteen dollars. Well, and I wasn't in close contact with Mike McPherson at the time, but I would get reports from people; you know, it really hurt. Because we were about to build the new—I call it new, maybe it isn't new anymore—student center. Work with the Daytonos about taking down Dayton Hall, and then building the other Dayton Hall, and we had all of the money and it was all set up. Well, that got delayed by quite a few years, because that was to be done and then the athletic complex was to be done. That was all laid out in 1995. And then we started, because

we'd already hired the architect for the thing, we spent a whole year trying to figure out what to do with—because the dining center used to be in Kagin across the street, and what do we do with the student union, and then what do we do with Dayton Hall because students didn't like Dayton Hall, and that has a lot of—you know, it would have cost a lot of money to renovate it. And then the Daytons were big donors, and how do you tear down a... Well, anyway, but. So, we worked through all of that, but then when the bottom fell out, we had an operating budget that depended on that money. So, that *really* puts a crunch to it. So I think that was—the faculty felt that I was being too stingy with the new money, which should have been spent faster.

[49:25]

LZ: Were they concerned a lot about salaries? It seemed...

BG: Um-hm.

LZ: Okay.

BG: Not really. But now that you mention it, yes [laughter].

[49:38]

LZ: Going back to how you said they felt pressure about you being from the east and bringing kind of those values, this was—my assumption is that this was the time that the phrase “the preeminent national liberal arts college” kind of got started, and so it seems odd that while—

BG: Well, that one goes back a long time. The “preeminent” term goes back to Harvey Rice. Because all I did in twelve years was to make ninety percent progress on what Harvey Rice had laid out in 1968 for the campus. I always said to Harvey—great guy—I always said to Harvey, “All I’m doing is following the Rice plan.” And I didn’t know about it—because we went through a big planning process, we had architects in here and everything, come up with this design and I thought, “Wow, isn’t this wonderful?” Well, Rice’s plan had this building in it. I didn’t know anything about that at the time. And so when I finally found—I think Sandy Hill was the one who found this file in the archives said, “You might be interested in this.” I look at it and it’s the campus plan that we had just gone through! And it was from ’67 or ’68, something like that, and it included this building in this sort of format and everything. I mean, *very* close. So, we needed to do a lot of those things and, you know, I think it worked out okay.

[51:15]

LZ: Did it seem as though that—I mean, that was quite a gap for a plan to have been made in ’68 and then not to...

BG: Yeah, well, they couldn’t do anything. And it didn’t actually, that plan didn’t actually become our campus plan until after—the first long range planning thing, which Jack Rossmann was provost when I first came in and did the long range planning thing. And Jack was the one who picked out the comparison colleges for faculty salaries and academics and things like that. And everybody thought I was the one who did it because it included so many eastern colleges. Well, all you have to do is look at—and this was before *U.S. News* started its thing, I think *U.S. News* started a year or two after that. Well, *U.S. News* had the same...you know, it’s the usual

suspects that end up on that list. And, it shouldn't be news to anybody, there was a thing in the *Chicago Tribune* in the fifties, did a series on the best liberal arts colleges in the country. And they picked the ten best women's colleges, men's colleges, and co-ed colleges. And if you take those thirty schools and you compare that to the *U.S. News* top thirty now, I think twenty-four of the thirty are the same. Macalester wasn't in fifties list, it is now, but there aren't a whole lot that have changed, and some have moved up a lot. Because if you take, like, Williams was ranked ten as a men's college, so that would put it twenty-eight, twenty-nine or thirty if you blended the lists. And it's generally in the top four or something like that, sometimes the top one. And then there are others that have disappeared; Antioch College, do you know Antioch College?

LZ: No...

BG: Never heard of it, probably. And...think of some of the others...Reed. Reed's still around but....anyway.

[53:29]

LZ: Was that a large concern for Macalester, kind of bumping up its national image and attracting more students or, I guess, more...?

BG: Well, if you look at the presidential search materials for 1984, or '83, '84, that was in there. I don't know, what college doesn't want to be good? And I think the question is, given your traditions and things you emphasize, can you be recognized as being one of the best, if you do

think that way? And I was really convinced that we had a very significant advantage over lots of other places in terms of attracting good students, because internationalism, and diversity, and the commitment to service to society—I mean, I thought those were very good. I didn't have any problem with that; I didn't think there would be any problem.

LZ: Were there faculty that had been here for many years that were hesitant to that change?

BG: Well, I think that there were a lot of them who were just delighted, and said, "Oh, you know, I think we are, we're just not recognized." But then there were others who said, "You know, they're getting the message that we aren't very good and it's our fault." For some. But that will always be the case.

[55:03]

LZ: One thing that caught my eye in researching your background at the college was you had established what was called the President's Council, I think, in the early '90s, kind of the idea behind that—

BG: Oh yeah, that was part of coming out of the planning process, the strategic planning process. There were so many moving parts. That is, there *was* a lot of additional money that came in, so we were able to do a lot of different things. And I thought that it would be a good idea to bring, you know, the people who were in charge of all of the major departments together to kind of communicate with each other. So they would know what was going on. One of the complaints I hear from other administrators was, you know, "I didn't know they were doing

that!” or “I didn’t know they were doing...” And so it was an attempt to let everybody kind of be in on what was going on. And I think it helped a lot. I don’t know if they thought it was a waste of time. It helped me too, because then I’d hear all the stuff and then you’d also see from the reaction of the other people if there was something that I needed to talk to the person about. Because if you looked around the room and everybody was like [raises an eyebrow skeptically], “*Ohhh*, what are they doing that for?” [laughter] You know, sometimes you get a good discussion going at that time, but certainly I’d have an opportunity then to sit down with the person and say, “You know, I think your colleagues have some doubts about this.” Yeah, that was...last couple years? I don’t remember when I did that. It was after the strategic plan was approved, I think.

LZ: That was ’92 wasn’t it, the strategic plan?

BG: I don’t know. I’m getting old, I can’t remember. [laughter] It was a long time ago.

[56:57]

LZ: Were there specific goals—did the goals that you outlined in ’92 or whenever, early nineties, from the long term planning, were those carry-over from things that had been discussed earlier on in your presidency?

BG: Oh yeah, a lot of them were carry-over from earlier discussions and some of them carry over from Rice’s plan in ’68 [laughter]. Yeah, there were a lot of things like—and then some you’re never finished with, you know. Trying to attract a student body with a good

socioeconomic mix. Well, you've got all sorts of pressures with, you know, are we giving too much financial aid, and then you've got the Finance Committee and the board that looks at it and says, "Wow, you're discounting your product," and, you know, "What's the matter? Can't you maintain your price in the market?" I mean, a different sort—I mean, I understand if they're a business person, they come in and they think that if you have a good product you can charge for it in the market and you don't have to discount it, and if you have a bad product you have to discount it. And so they were associating financial aid that we were giving with the weakness of the institution rather than a strength. So there were lots of issues like that.

[58:03]

LZ: Was the need-blind issue—was that something that had been brought up when you were still president?

BG: Oh yeah, that was always brought up. I mean, I'm sort of a maverick on this; I think that if you really want socioeconomic diversity you have to be need-aware, not need-blind. Because if you just leave it to saying, well, students that do well academically and are really interested in a good education and get high SAT scores and everything else. Well, if you take a look at the correlation of that and family income, you're biasing it in the direction of higher income families. So I think you need to be need-aware, and I think you need to meet the financial needs of any student you admit, but I think you need to really tailor that. And we were not need-blind in international admissions in all the years I was here, not at all. We had a certain budget amount and I would work with Bill Shain and—what's his name, maybe he's still here? He was financial aid guy for international students...Crowder, Jimm Crowder. Is Jimm Crowder still

here? Does that name sound...? Did a terrific job, but... They would work to get a real diverse international student body, and if they went without considering need, and just considering academic credentials, they'd fill them all out of IB [international baccalaureate] programs in Europe. You know, Europe and possibly Hong Kong.

[1:00:04]

LZ: Was Macalester tightening up its admissions, I guess, standards at this time? Was that...?

BG: I wouldn't call it tightening up. What was happening over this period of time, you get a lot of publicity, and people think if you have money you must be good. And so we had a lot more applicants. Bill Shane, I think he was a terrific admissions person; we worked with a great admissions staff, a lot of very good people. And so, things were tightening up—I don't know if you'd call it that. But, anyway, academic profiles for classes were getting stronger every year. So.

[1:00:48]

LZ: Going back to the Long Range Planning Committee. How far ahead was that, were you looking, in the early '90s towards the college's future?

BG: Well, one of the things that the sort of outside consultant that we were working with suggested was that with each of the groups I deal with, I ask people to write a one page essay about Macalester—this may sound not all that far out to you, but in 1990 or whenever—Macalester of 2020. Including me, I had to write one. And the thing that I remember most about

mine was that I had the president of the Alumni Association speaking at a convocation, and she was Secretary General of the UN. And she was from Latin America. And so when Kofi got in, I sent him a note saying, you know, “Sorry I didn’t anticipate you getting here much faster” [laughter]. But to think out how you would like the institution to be evolving for a time. So it was really to try to think out thirty years, or something like that. Because that’s what you’re doing when you’re hiring faculty, too. You know, had I been hired here in 1965, just think of that; same person around here for forty-two years.

[1:02:31]

LZ: Were there quite a few faculty hires while you were president, was that kind of a—

BG: Yeah, there were a lot.

LZ: I know in the early sixties there was a real hiring move and then—

BG: Oh yeah, big hiring group in the sixties, and of course when there was financial difficulty they didn’t hire very many. Yeah, there was a lot of hiring when I was...

[1:02:51]

LZ: On a lighter aspect, I noticed that you and your wife had a chance to do quite a bit of traveling abroad, meeting alumni throughout the world. And I guess what was that like and—

BG: Oh, it was great.

LZ: Did you bring back things from meeting those people then back to Macalester that were then incorporated...?

BG: Well, for one thing it was very broadening for us. I had felt, as someone—I was a physical chemist, I did physical chemistry and mathematics. The only time I had been out of the United States before coming here...well, I passed through Canada a couple of times. That's not really even out of the United States. Oh! I'd been in Poland for two weeks for a chemistry meeting, International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry meeting in Poland. Other than that I had no international experience. So one of the things that—when I was hired, David Riesman, the Harvard sociologist, was a consultant for the search committee, and he suggested that there be a policy that after four years of service that the president be given a semester to do something to improve their... So, after the first four years the thing I needed to do most was see the rest of the world. So I went around to different places. I think we started in—yeah, we started in Latin America. So we were in Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, and then came back. And all the time we were visiting with—because at that time we had students from there. So we visited the families and stuff like that, we got to know them. And then...well, then it was Asia. So we went over, spent part of the time in Japan, Korea, China and then ended up—well, at that time Hong Kong was part of China—in Hong Kong. Oh! Then we went to Singapore, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, visited around Thailand. And again, in all of these places there were families or WPI [World Press Institute] people. They were great. WPI people, I mean we had some fascinating time with them because, you know, journalists are experts on everything—whether they are or not, you know. And they just love to talk, and so you could...

Then we came back for a while, a couple weeks, and then went to Africa, to Tanzania, to Kenya. Oh! Then over to Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, through the Khyber Pass, during the time the Mujahedeen were being supplied by the CIA to invade. Sort of had a view of the seize of Jalalabad, which was the last sort of thing—so a lot of adventures there. But there were a lot of Mac current students and then alums that we saw; especially in Tanzania, and Kenya, and Pakistan. Oh! Then we went—not to leave Europe out—we went to Frankfurt, to Paris, and to London. We were able to have—the London gathering was the biggest one, but we were able to have gatherings every—oh, in Paris we had fifteen people, but London we must have had fifty. Because part of it was some current students were there too, because London School of Economics, there was an exchange, maybe they still have that. LSE program? The econ students would go and, of course, every year there would be four or five going to London for the “Let’s see Europe!”

[1:07:22]

LZ: Did that international experience have an impact when you came back—

BG: Oh yeah, it did on me, you know—

LZ: I guess, dealing with international students and just kind of...

BG: Yeah, and then all the family contacts you had out of it, things like that. So that was very good. And different places we did—because we continued this, then, over the years. I think the most fascinating one, the one that really sticks in my mind, is we were in Cyprus in...I don’t

know what year it was. And we were able, through Macalester connections, to bring together a group of students who were considering colleges in the United States from both sides of the Green Line. And we got—it was actually held on the Greek side, and we got passes approved for the students to come from the Turkish side of the Green Line over. And it was just *amazing*; of course these students had never crossed the Green Line and had never met Turkish or Greek Cypriotes at all, had no idea. And, out of that group, two Turkish Cypriotes and two Greek Cypriotes students came and then they, when they were here, it was... And in fact, one of the Greek Cypriote students is shown, I think for graduation or something, on one of the—in the alumni magazine, carrying the Greek Cypriote flag. Can't remember her name right now. But yeah, it was great, and we enjoyed doing it.

[1:09:04]

LZ: Did your wife have other involvement with the college, just being the wife of the president?

BG: Oh yeah. Yeah, well, that was... We did a lot of entertaining, and for the last three years we kind of kept track of how many people we had to dinner. And it varied, the low was three thousand, and the high was three thousand five hundred.

LZ: That's a lot of entertaining.

BG: So it was a lot, yeah, a lot of entertaining. And yeah, I couldn't have done it without her; I mean, she was just tremendous help. And she enjoys meeting people, she likes people. She's also one that doesn't—I mean, she was the one; we *couldn't* have had those five presidents back

without having them to dinner. She just doesn't tolerate that. And then sometimes with faculty, there's sometimes faculty feuds that go on, and she just wouldn't tolerate that. She'd say, "No, they're coming to dinner, they're adults." So she'd introduce them to each other [laughter]. Let's get over this thing! [laughter] So, no, she really enjoyed that and did a lot of things. And then did a lot of traveling with me, to alumni meetings and things like that. And then after you've been here for a few years then you know some of the graduates, they show up at the alumni, so that was good.

[1:10:40]

LZ: So at what point did you decide that you were going to step down as Macalester—did that decision come a few years before it happened?

BG: I remember very clearly talking to Ted Weyerhaeuser, saying, "Ted, I only agreed to become provost because, you know, I loved the place I was at and everything, and I don't see myself as a lifetime administrator. So, it's only fair to let you know that five to seven years." Because at that time the average lifetime, or I think the median, not the average, the median lifetime for college president was four years. So I said, "I'll certainly stick at it that long unless you fire me. But, you know, five to seven." Well things, they really went fast and then after seven, well, Ted was no longer the chair of the board, it was Mary Lee Dayton, I think. And she said, "Well, how long are you thinking of staying?" I said, "Oh! It's seven years." I said, "Well, ten maximum." You know, that's kind of a thing—a lot of college presidents serve ten years. That's a *long*, long time. Well, all of a sudden, I was in my eleventh year and I thought *tsk*, you know. So I met with Tim Hulquist, who'd just become the chair of the board. So we had two

meetings in New York. One, I had been told about this amazing Macalester alum, who was the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN in charge of peacekeeping operations, and I should *really* meet with him the next time I go to New York. So, next time I went to New York I had two meetings: one with Tim Hultquist, who was going to be the incoming chair of the board, and then the other with Kofi. And I was *so* impressed with Kofi; well, I still am. I think he's a wonderful man. And I had lunch with him, and then the meeting with Tim across over at Morgan Stanley's on Avenue of the Americas, Seventh Avenue in New York. And so, I was so charged up, I walked full speed across over to Tim and I said, "This guy is just terrific; we've got to get him on the board." So then the next time I was in New York we met with Kofi, invited him to be on the board, and then...about a month after that, I said to Tim, "Hate to do this to a new chair, but it will be twelve years if I go to the end of next year. So why don't you start planning for a search." And then, I was going to go back into teaching the next year, but I knew that in order to do that I had to spend a year doing research, so that was what I was going to do the following year. But then that spring, the president of Haverford resigned quickly to take a position with the Aga Khan Foundation. And so the chair of the board called me and said, "You know, I'd like you to come back and you can be acting president and a candidate and, you know, continue your career here." I said, "No, way. That's just..." [laughter]. So he called me the next day and said, "Are you sure?" And I said, "Well, it's a wonderful place, I enjoyed it, and if you asked me to be interim president with the provision that the interim president could *not* be a candidate to be president, then I might do it." So, he called back and said, "When are you next in New York?" That's where he was from. "We'll settle it." So, that's what I did. But I enjoyed it, but it's a seven day a week, most of those days are eighteen hour days; you know, you're just totally involved in it. There isn't any place you go where somebody isn't talking to you about,

you know, they see you and they think Macalester. Which is fine, but after a while you want to try something else.

[1:15:26]

LZ: What were some of the most enjoyable aspects for you of being Macalester's president?

BG: Well, I think the most enjoyable by far was watching the students come through and seeing them as alumni. I mean, it's just—but that's the same, I was a faculty member for years before that, I mean, the same sort of satisfaction you get out of—liberal arts colleges are special places. And you see students at a period of time when they've got an enormous amount of talent, they're developing it and you see how it goes. So, I think that's the most satisfying part. I suppose the other part—well, yeah, that's it.

[1:16:09]

LZ: Have there been either administrators, or faculty members, or even students that you've continued to stay in contact since having left Macalester?

BG: Yes and no. When I first got together with Dr. Turck, I found out that he'd never been back to campus after he left in '58. And I said, "Dr. Turck, why is that?" And he said, "Small college, after the president retires you should neither be seen nor heard of on campus." He said, "You just—the potential for causing trouble for your successor is too much." So about a month later I invited him back for the...[laughter]. But then after that, he would not come on campus, and I think I've broken the rule today. He would not come on campus unless he would

call me. And he had a very formal way of saying, he'd say, "President Gavin, I have a request to make of you." "What's that?" Well, some alumni class or something for its fiftieth reunion or something had invited him back to, you know, speak to them. And he said, "May I come on campus?" [laughter] And he, because of the fiftieth thing he got invited back—I mean the centennial thing. He got invited back for many of the fiftieth reunions for the classes when he was there. So they were happening in the '80s, late '80s and early '90s before he died, so he would call me each time. And then, the year he died, I called him, because he was going to have his hundredth birthday then, and I called him and I asked if he would come for commencement and give a commencement address. And he agreed to do that, but he died about a week later. So I follow Turck's advice. I don't come back to campus, but I do have dinner or lunch or something with various faculty members, administrators, at various times. But, I don't come back to campus unless the president invites me back.

[1:18:35]

LZ: Did you meet Mike McPherson before you had left Macalester?

BG: Yeah, he was the one that I hired—

LZ: Oh that's right, that's right.

BG: Yeah, I knew Mike; I'd known him for quite a few years then. Yeah, we met... I don't remember that transition. *Oh*, yeah, I do remember the transition because I was president here and Haverford for one month. Because Haverford wanted me to come and I said, "No, I can't,

I've agreed to overlap with McPherson for a month." And so we had our house in Marine, and so Mike moved into 1750 Summit, and he was finishing a book at the time too. So, I'd spend two days out at Haverford and then three days here. When I was at Haverford he would write his book. And so I lived out in Marine. So we overlapped for a month.

[1:19:40]

LZ: Was it hard to leave Macalester after having been here for twelve years or did you—?

BG: Yes and no. I mean, I miss all the positive things, but what I don't miss are the, you know, the constant, eighteen hours a day, five, six days a week. Weekends. I enjoy setting my own schedule, really...what I want.

LZ: I have to ask you, what aspects of being president did you dislike the most, if you had a...?

BG: Dislike the most... Well, no matter what people say about this, but there's nothing harder than to fire somebody. Nothing harder, no matter—and when you're denying somebody tenure you're firing too. And there's nothing harder than that. So I suppose those were the hard decisions. Other than that, I don't think of any...

[1:20:49]

LZ: As you look back at the twelve years that you were at Macalester what do you feel are some of the biggest gains? Or some of the biggest, I guess, projects that were either put in motion or completed under your presidency?

BG: Well, I think we had come full circle from the goals and aspirations of the '50s and '60s, to back to those. Because even if you go back, go back into the '20s and '30s, go back to James Wallace and read James Wallace's stuff, this emphasis on having a liberal arts college of very good quality, high academic standards—but everybody says that. Who's going to send out a publication that says, "We're a liberal arts college. We're really not very good at it, [laughter] but come here anyways, you'd kind of enjoy it!" But the international aspect, the commitment, the multicultural commitment, the commitment to bring together people from various socioeconomic backgrounds, that, you know, that comes of that, and *then* the recognition that you're not just an individual. You got here with a whole lot of other people helping you here; you've got an obligation to society. You know, society falls apart if everybody is, you know, "I'm number one and I'm going to be number one," sort of thing. That—it's not that other liberal arts colleges don't have those. I would say, you know, I spent twenty years at Haverford, Haverford thinks that it's very concerned about social issues and things. But I just felt that we went through some very troubled times and almost went out of existence because of financial matters, and that we've gotten back on track. That's what I would say. And John Davis certainly helped with that, John Davis was a tremendous positive influence on that.

[1:22:58]

LZ: Is there anything you're most proud of in your presidency, if you have to pick something?

BG: I like this library. [laughter] And I probably had more to do with it than I should have.

[laughter] I really have—no, when you think back over things, I think that it's always good to

follow your gut feeling about something. You know, and I've been in a lot of situations where there were a lot more experts around, but it just didn't feel right. I'd say, "Well, should we really do that?" And that's, I mean, this library is a good example of that; it just didn't make any sense to me. So, I think you just say... But, every once and a while you're going to be wrong, and you've got to recognize that. I don't think I was wrong here, with this.

[1:24:02]

LZ: Well, it's a great library. Do you follow the things that happen with the college today and try to—

BG: Read the alumni magazine. And I do have lunch with people occasionally, but general rule is no local stories. Because I mean, I'm...here, I got so involved in learning about the rest of the world, and I still do that in my things that I'm involved with now. And so I'm very interested in what's going on in the Horn of Africa now. And I got some of that basic knowledge here, and then some at Haverford, and then some on the corporate board that I serve on where there's an Ethiopian. But Eritreans, Somalians, the Ethiopians, and the whole interaction there, is something that I'm very interested in. So if I have dinner with [Professor Ahmed] Samatar we're talking about the Horn of Africa, we're not talking about the college—at all! I mean, it just isn't on the agenda. And that's the way it ought to be. I don't think ex-presidents ought to...you'd just cause so much trouble. Because on a college campus the president is expected to be responsive to everybody. And then off the campus you're expected to be responsive to everybody. Whether it's the local community, or the state government, federal government, the representatives, the senators, the alumni. So, you're bound to get a lot of people mad at you

unless you never make a decision, and then it just takes them longer to get mad at you because then they're mad at you because you never make a decision. [laughter] So. But I never felt that people were unreasonable that way. For a faculty member to come into a presidency I think is a little different from somebody who'd, say, been in business or something like that. Because, you know, for years I would just tell the administration, "Ugh," you know, "you're incompetent. Why don't you just listen to me? If you'd just do it the way I want it." [laughter] And here I was doing research and teaching students and everything, and I didn't have any idea about all the other consequences of financial decisions or whatever. You get a lot of people telling you what you should do.

[1:26:47]

LZ: So after Macalester you went to Haverford for a year?

BG: A year. Yep, a year.

LZ: And what have you done since?

BG: Well, then a person who I've known for several years talked me into being president of Cranbrook, Cranbrook Educational Community, which is in Bloomfield Hills just outside Detroit. And I had said to her, "I don't want to be a liberal arts college president. I've done that, I just don't want to do that anymore." And she said, "Well, this education community has everything *but* that. They have a graduate school of art, architecture and design, they've got a science institute, science museum, they've got schools pre-k through twelve, you know, it's a

whole conglomerate of things. And somebody's responsible for running all of them and they all report to you." So. And it's a great place, but I only did that for four years. Told the guy that I just can't do it anymore, I'm just not that interested in it. So then I did—then retired. We bought a house on Marine on St. Croix when we were here, and we really liked it so we just kept it. So then, after that, did consulting for various places, and I was always involved with science, undergraduate science. And did it on that, *meaning* of that, for a lot of different places, some of them here, some of them abroad. Got back to Pakistan through the Aga Khan, Aga Khan University and stuff like that. And then I've been asked to serve on a lot of different boards, so I...corporate boards, software companies, stuff like that. I'm still chairman of the board for The Hartford Mutual Funds now, so that's not a full-time job but it's a everyday kind of job. I've been on the Saint John's University board for a number of years. Oh! A former Macalester faculty member has an art park—

LZ: Oh, Anthony Caponi—yeah, we interviewed him!

BG: Oh, you interviewed him, Tony?

LZ: Yeah, we went to the park and he gave us a tour.

BG: Oh, you did? Oh, yeah, I'm on that board. In fact, Tony and Cheryl and I incorporated the thing originally. That was when I was president here. So, yeah, I serve on different things like that, so I try to keep active.

[1:29:35]

LZ: Does someone who has been kind of in these administrative roles and now board roles, does someone like you ever retire officially and just kind of...do you ever foresee there being a time where you can—

BG: Where I don't do anything?

LZ: Right.

BG: Oh well, I don't know...

LZ: [laughs] Just an active kind of person?

BG: Yeah, I like... And I've also gotten involved—I went to DeLaSalle High School in Minneapolis, and so I'm involved with the campaign for them. So yeah, I guess I do a lot of fundraising. [laughter]

[1:30:16]

LZ: I just have one final question, and I was curious when you reflect back at your years spent at Macalester, is there a favorite memory or a favorite time? A kind of special aspect of the college that really defines what it was like for you to be here?

BG: The events that I remember best and really enjoyed the most, I think—I enjoyed most of the events, but—were commencements and special convocations. The convocation, I don't know if they still do it, used to give an Outstanding Service Award every year when we'd have a convocation. And first one, I gave to John Davis. And that was quite a convocation and a dinner. And then the second one was Fritz Mondale, and Jimmy Carter came and did the presentation. Who was the next one...oh! Next one was Kofi Annan. Yeah, but those special convocations we used to have, we opened school in the fall with those. And then commencement—I really like commencement, see the students and families and everything. And a couple of them, I remember one where—the big issue was do we go inside or stay outside. And one of them we called outside. So we go in through the thing and, I forgot who was provost—I think it was Stewart who was provost then—we started hearing thunder. [laughter] And I look at Stewart, and Stewart starts reading the names faster and faster and faster [laughter]. And we get everybody through, and we hadn't started that closing blessing or whatever it's called, it was a year before that, and so we get everybody through and we cut the remarks. I just said, "Rain's coming. Let's get out of here really fast." [laughter] We started down the thing, and just as we got out of here, they had all of the cakes and treats and things like that on trays and no tents or anything out there, and then we just got a *deluge*, and I still remember the water running off these big trays of cakes and stuff like that [laughter]. Anyways, I like those events. Yeah...I suppose that's it.

LZ: Well, those are my questions. Is there anything that you feel like we should talk about that we haven't?

BG: No, you've covered everything. [laughter] There are probably some things I shouldn't have said.

LZ: Well, thank you very much.

BG: Oh, you're welcome.

LZ: It was quite fun to talk to you.

[End of Interview, 1:33:19]