MACALESTER COLLEGE

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Oral History Project

Interview with:	**Richard Dierenfield** Class of 1948, Professor of Education, 1951-1988
Date:	**Tuesday, July 10th, 2007, 1:00 p.m.**
Place:	Dierenfield Home
Interviewer:	Laura Zeccardi, Class of 2007
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Interview with Richard Dierenfield

Laura Zeccardi, Interviewer

July 10th, 2007
Richard Dierenfield's Home

[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 July 10th, 2007, and I'm interviewing Richard Dierenfield, Class of 1948 and Professor of Education, at his home. Do you just want to state your name, and where you are originally from, and when you came to Macalester? And then we can start with your…

RD: My name is Richard Dierenfield. I taught at Macalester College from 1951 to 1988, and I went there as a student from 1941 to 1948. And I was, as the young lady said, associated with the Department of Education. I did begin my work as a teacher in the Economics department. I taught two courses there, and then somehow got into the education business and found that it was very pleasant, and I enjoyed my work there very much indeed. I come from a Macalester family. My father graduated in 1916—'17. My mother attended here, until she transferred to Oberlin. But my brother graduated from here, my wife graduated from here, and I graduated from here. And we feel that there is a lot of great, good educational resources available to persons that are going to the college. We liked the atmosphere. I remember I had the idea, we went east and took the eastern college trip. I thought maybe I wanted to go to Oberlin, my mother went there, or Lafayette College, and that's east of Pennsylvania. So we went there, and Oberlin was *very* snotty, oh my goodness! Supercilious and above the common herd, and so that turned us off.

And Lafayette was kind of in not too good an area. So my Dad said, "Oh, why don't you think of Macalester?" I said, "Dad, you're joking. Macalester?!" I've heard so much about it, you know, it was very familiar. I said, well, we can go up there one time. So we did go up there, and lo and behold as we were going through the hall, here's James "Jimmy" Wallace [former President of Macalester] walking along. And my father knew Dr. Wallace, and so I was introduced. It was 1937, '38. So I shook hands with him, the great man, and he had this twinkling eye, and the little fuzzy things on the side of his face, but a very nice smile. And my Dad said don't let that fool you—he was an absolute saber tooth tiger in class. If you didn't have your lesson, may heaven rest your scrawny carcass. But he saved the college. Let's see, I get off on subjects…no, I want to go on to say a few things about the college. There are, as far as I'm concerned, there were two Macalesters: one before the war, and one after the war. And in some ways I prefer the one before the war many times over the one after the war. Of course the one after the war was a lot bigger, and more hard-nosed and so forth. Before the war, it was kind of like a big small town. You go down the walkway, you knew everybody. I remember seeing Dr. Turck coming from his house; he lived in the place which is now the Alumni House, and it was a beautiful gorgeous hall, we used it often for college events. But he would come along, and there would be a little runny-nosed girl, freshman, and he would always [say], "Good morning, ma'am." And then there would be a pimply-faced young man of seventeen, he'd say, "Good morning, sir!" [unclear] [laughter]. So he was very loved, Dr. Turck—I shouldn't get into that yet. But let's see. I'll say a few words about the curriculum. In 19…the early 30's and early 40's, you had to accumulate a hundred and twenty-six semester hours of credit to graduate. And it wasn't anything you wanted, you couldn't take anything you felt like taking. There were requirements and you had to take them, and if you didn't like them, you were invited to go

someplace else. Over half those hundred and twenty-six hours were required courses, and then you had a major and a minor. You also would have to take a couple religion courses, and if you didn't want to do that you were invited to go someplace else too. I remember we were talking earlier about the big disruptions in the late 60's and early 70's. At that time, a man named Carl Drake was the chairman of the board of trustees. Well, Carl was a Yale man, and he was head of Saint Paul Insurance Company. Very, very prestigious man. And all kinds of protests. They occupied offices, they closed down Grand Avenue for a while. They occupied 44 Mac [77 Mac?], and they shot up things and so forth. So it got to the point where Mr. Drake was quite fed up with the whole thing, and he wrote an editorial in the *Mac Weekly*, and not very complimentary. And so the students responded in a natural way; they didn't like what Mr. Drake had written. So, Mr. Drake wrote another letter, and he said, "Now as far as I know there are about eighteen hundred liberal arts colleges in this great country. And if you find that you can't stomach things here, I invite you as soon as possible to transfer to one of those places." Well, the kids were just about ready to kill, and he didn't care, because he was chair and he said the college belongs to the board of trustees, it does not belong to the students. You just pass through here. It's like a factory, we come in with very raw material, and you end up with more sophisticated material.

[07:32]

But oh, that was a wild time. I don't know how I got off on that. But my wife will probably tell you—I'll tell it anyway—but they were so strict about graduation requirements and [unclear] that she was getting ready to get her diploma, and all of a sudden they said, "You're a half a degree, half a course short in physical education. You will not graduate." Right? [*in background* Yvonne Dierenfield: "Science."] Science? Oh, all right, excuse me, science. She

had a powerful friend in the chairman of the Music department and he got her through, but they were very, very strict in those days. Oh, there was a great curricular revision that took place about 1960 or 1961. It was run by a lady named Dr. Hildegard Binder Johnson, and she was one of the most powerful figures that the college ever had. She was head of the Geography department, and she received her Ph.D. in geography from the University of Berlin, and she still had quite a German accent. But she was amazingly bright, and a very forceful woman. And usually when you talk about curricular revision, really what it is is a repackaging of what you have. This was an honest-to-goodness, from stem to stern, curriculum revision. We went back to the very beginning. What were our assumptions about life? What were our feelings, or our philosophy of life? And how did that dovetail with our philosophy of education? And then how did that philosophy of education, how was that satisfied by what courses and departments we offered? And it was really way back from the very beginning, and each department had to justify its place in the curriculum, based on the very basic ideas that the curriculum was based upon. And then each person had to justify their courses, as part of this justification by the department. Well, it was hard; a lot of moaning and groaning. And it took months. But then we went into two terms and the interim term. Well, the interim term was very experimental—we were one of the very first, I think, a lot of people think, we were the very first college in the country to do it. I don't know about that myself, but I think there is some justification for that. So we started out on that and we modified that, of course. But okay, so much for the curriculum.

[10:46]

I want to talk about the physical plant. Now there is an old—well, not an old saying—but Grover Cleveland, President Grover Cleveland was asked one time what he thought a good college was. He said, "Stephen Hopkins on one end of a log, and a student on the other." By

that, of course, he meant a good teacher made a good college. And that's what I want to emphasize a little farther on. But you cannot have a good college without good faculty, and I think over the years we have had an amazingly high level of faculty at the college. Even when things were so bad—I remember one time Dr. Turck told us, in January, "*Don't* cash your checks. Because there is no money in the bank! We have to wait until tuition comes in from the January group." So here we sat with hardly any money anyway, you know, we were so poorly paid, and we sat it out for a month. The tuition was paid and the checks didn't bounce. Okay, Old Main, good Old Main. The east wing, there was an east wing on that college, it was kind of a T. The part that is up now was the bottom of it, and the east wing was the T, the top that went across the bottom. And that's where the offices, most of the offices and the classrooms were held. It was an ancient, ancient old building and one time I was up there—there was an attic, and they stored all kinds of college memorabilia in there. It was just amazing. And I ran across a bunch of grade books, and they were at the time that my father was going to college here. So I looked through them—you know, I heard that he was a very good student and so forth. I wanted proof. Well, there his name was, on several, A's all the way through. So I had, you know, evidence that he was a good student.

[13:11]

Okay, well it was…and that's the old building, but it was really ready to fall down. One thing, in Old Main, between the east wing and the other wing, there was a passageway. And in that passageway there was a note board, and we would attach notes to that note board to each other. There was an A row, a B row, a C row, a D row and so forth. And people would—I remember going by there and seeing if I had any notes. It was such a cute thing. That was a way to communicate. We didn't have any cellular phones, you put a note up there for your beloved, and

maybe she responded and maybe she didn't. But the Old Main was a very interesting old building. Then the power plant—there was a power plant right where the Art department is. It was the most polluting possible power plant you ever saw in your life. Burned coal, and it was hot water, and it had pipes all over the campus. You could always tell where a pipe was, because even in the winter time the snow melted and the green grass grew, there was a pipe underneath there. But right near there was a skating rink. They had a kind of a community skating rink. The man who was in charge of building and grounds kept that skating rink up, and it was the best goodwill gesture the college could possibly do. People in the neighborhood thought, oh, what a wonderful college. They had a warming house, and anybody in the neighborhood could come and skate.

[15:12]

Let's see. Oh, the library. Well you probably know that the library, at one time, was in the basement of Old Main. When I first got here it was in the basement of Old Main. It was not very much of a library. It got along. You know, you had a few basic things. But then the Weyerhaeusers, bless their hearts, gave us enough money to build Weyerhaeuser Library, which is now Weyerhaeuser administrative building. But that was a great, great day when that building was built. And the big problem was how do you get the books from the basement of Old Main to the place where they should be in the new library. Well the answer to that question was get about five, six hundred kids, line them up, and they would pass the books along, person at the end, the librarian would tell them where to go. And in a matter of—oh, I say a day, a day and a half, we got the whole thing moved. Kirk Hall. Dear old Kirk Hall. Farwell, Ozmun, and Kirk was a very famous company in Saint Paul. Mr. Kirk was a believer in the British system of education and he built that—he gave money to build that dormitory based on the Oxford and

Cambridge hall system. And if you at it closely, it *is* just like that. You have the tutor who sits on the bottom, bottom floor, and has the bottom office, and then people upstairs. And there's each section, like they have in the dormitories at Oxford and Cambridge. So that was the idea of that. It worked out pretty well. I remember I was in room 625, on December 7th, 1952—41, excuse me. And my roommate and I heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and we looked at each other. We thought, there goes our lives. We were just devastated. You know, with young guys—I was, what, eighteen or nineteen, something like that. And I thought, oh. Ten years out of our lives, at least, if we live through it. And we were not sure at all if we were going to live through it. So we sat there and well, what are we going to do, what's going to happen to us. We knew we'd have to go in, there was no question at all. But we did live through, and I look over at Old Main, and there is a plaque over there telling about the young men of *my* age, who were killed during World War II. I know all those fellows. And a lot of times I wonder, why me? Here I am—a lot of those good fellows, they were dear fellows, did not make it. But there was no doubt about the need to join. This was considered one of the only good wars that we have, but even so, good wars kill young men. And I suppose a few young women at that time too. Well, okay, am I wandering too much? No, okay.

[19:00]

Now we are going to the gymnasium. Well, the old gym. Dear old gym. I have spent lots of time in that place. First of all, that gym was my first dormitory after I got back from the war, because all of a sudden, a thousand veterans were coming back to the college and they didn't have any place—somehow this kind of surprised me, they didn't have any place to put us. So I remember they got the beds and so forth from the military someplace. We had these double-decker beds, we slept just like we did in the army. So we stayed there and went down to use the

bathroom, and took showers and so forth down in the basement. We got along fine, no problem, because that's what we were used to. Finally we got into Bigelow Hall, because Bigelow Hall was built for veterans. Ha, right. As soon as six months passed—the veterans lived there for six months—we were kicked out and the girls took over, because that was going to be a girls' dormitory from the very beginning. We were just there as a necessary evil. And we performed our function pretty well. Let's see… Oh, they had convocations in the gym there. It was the only place you could get fifteen hundred kids together at one time. And we had a wonderful assortment of exceptionally good speakers. I mean they were national, international people, and we would come every Thursday. It wasn't because we wanted to come; if we missed three times, we were called into the office of the dean. "We've noticed that you've had three absences, sir. One more and you're in great danger of being kicked out." [meekly:] "Oh, yes sir, it won't happen again, sir, thank you." Of course the same thing happened at Chapel. You attended Chapel whether you liked it or not. But I remember one convocation in particular. This was, I think, after the war—I'm sure it was after because I didn't know before. It was, I remember college students were very high-minded then, just as high-minded as they are now, if not more. These kids, if you did something for humanity, you were a *hero*. Well, about this time there was lots trouble in Laos and Cambodia, and the Killing Fields and things like that. And this man Dr. [Thomas] Dooley had a very successful practice, Philadelphia or New York, some big city. He was an extremely wealthy man. He read about this terrible situation, and people dying, they had no means of getting help, service. He decided, this is my work in life. The Good Lord has called me to do this; God wants me to do this. So he closed his practice down, went over to Laos, and took his family and set up a practice. Well, he did so well that pretty soon he set up a hospital. Well, as time passed along it was revealed that he had a cancer that

was incurable. He had incurable cancer; here's this wonderful man—he happened to be very handsome too, you know. It just seems like the Lord gives too much to some people and then not enough to others [laughs]. But this man, finally, to get more money for his hospital and his procedures over there, he went around the United States. His last swing around before everybody knew that he was not going to live. Well, he came to Macalester. And the kids jammed that place, there wasn't a place to stand, a place to sit down. And Dr. Dooley—I was there, there was not a dry eye in the whole place. He was telling about his work. Here's this fellow, on the point of death, doing for others. And it was the most emotional time I think any of us had ever had. And after he got down, well, the kids stamped and yelled, and were just overwhelmed with enthusiasm. So the president of the student council said, "Are we going to let Dr. Dooley go without some contribution to his hospital?" "*No*!" And so he said, "All the members of the student council, stand by the door out there, get your hats out or whatever you can get, and we will contribute to his work." Well they did, and they raised five or six thousand dollars from those poor college students who didn't have enough to eat! And they were so impressed by that thing. I'll never forget it myself. But we had all kinds of speakers like that. [25:24]

Now I'm off a little bit on that but it reminds me of another. The kids at Macalester have always had a lot of guts. Now, in the late 40's they had this political season—oh, in college I love political seasons. And there was an election coming up, the 1948 election, and there was a man running for the presidency named Henry Wallace. Now I don't think you ever have heard of Henry Wallace. He was a senator from the state of Iowa, and he was a former vice president under somebody, I've forgotten who it was. But Henry Wallace was a very, very left-leaning gentleman. And the kids invited, student council or somebody, invited him to come and speak at

Macalester. Well this got to the board of trustees and they said, under no circumstances is he going to come and speak at Macalester College! He's a communist! Well, he wasn't a communist, but things were pretty well [unclear] at that time. So he said, you cannot use any of the college buildings for Henry Wallace. 3 Well, the kids said okay. They set up a lecture in the middle of the football field, and Henry Wallace came and gave a rousing speech. There were about fifteen thousand people there, listening to Henry Wallace, so they said, all right. Stick it [laughs]. We don't need you. Another one, speaker, was Norman Thomas. Anybody ever heard of Norman Thomas? Well, he was a perennial socialist candidate for the presidency, an extremely socially-minded man, and extremely well-educated. He spoke beautiful English. He'd come every year and give virtually the same speech. And I remember in the late 40's he came: "This is my last speech to Macalester College. I've always enjoyed coming here," and so forth and so on, and he said, "The reason I'm not coming is that all the things that I have espoused--health care, social security, unemployment—have been put into practice." He said, "My little platform is pretty well gone—for which I take great credit." He had a lovely sense of humor too, by the way. We were talking about buildings. Wallace Hall, of course, the first dormitory, built in 1912. And my dear mother, when we were here, pointed out to the second floor, corner room, which she occupied. It was the first year that that dormitory was open; she lived…remembered that room. Well, they had a big staircase in Wallace Hall, I don't know if they did away with that when they redid it or not. But we'd come over here and wait for our girls, girlfriends, or our dates to come down, be down at the bottom of the stair. Here these beautiful young ladies would sweep down this staircase and we'd all, "Oh boy, that is really something." I remember you coming down [to Yvonne]. Okay, let's see. But at that time, at least half the students were off-campus students. Half the kids lived on campus; the other half

lived at home or lived in rooming houses around. But Macalester was a community school, as well as a residential school. And there was a special room for off-campus kids, a large room, kind of a lounge, and the kids would stay there. They weren't too happy about it. Oh, the music department was housed in an old church, which was down on Grand Avenue where the Wet Paint company is. You know where that is, Wet Paint? There was an old Presbyterian church there. The music department was there. We had choir practice there, and I remember sitting—my wife was a piano and organ major. I remember sitting outside and she was working on a Brahms sonata, and there was a part she was having great trouble with. And I would sit there for an hour waiting for her as she'd go over that thing; I would just about went crazy myself! I said, how could she stand it? Well it turned out, finally, she got it. But that was where the choir practiced, they had a little organ in there, they had pianos and so forth.

[31:03]

Oh, the old president's house, that was the exact copy of a house in Williamsburg, Virginia. It was given by the Dayton Company. And it was supposed to be used as the president's house, but… Now, the Mac Church [Macalester Plymouth United Church], which is a private church, a congregational Presbyterian-domination church, but that was used as the chapel. We'd pile in there on Tuesday mornings, Tuesday or Thursday, I can't remember. [YD: Thursday, I think.] Thursday, okay. So we would [unclear], we'd sing hymns and so forth, and quite often the preacher was good but once and a while he was terrible. And kids in the back row, a lot of times, would be eating lunch. And I remember a dictum sent out by Charles Turck: there will be no lunch eating in the back rows of the chapel. But quite often we'd have some pretty spectacular preachers. One was a man who was the preacher, a pastor at the big church in Minneapolis, Hennepin Avenue Church, which gives a lot of money to the college. Dr. [Arnold] Lowe**.** And

he was a very dynamic man. He scared most of the people to *death*. [YD: Westminster Presbyterian.] Westminster Presbyterian, yeah. So he would come over once a year, kind of his duty, and preach. But he was very good. But he loved pregnant pauses, because you could say something and allow these young minds to concentrate upon the wisdom of what he'd just said. Well, at that time the choir was sitting up in the choir loft around an organ, and it was very, very crowded up there. And my wife was the college organist at that time. And one time there was a Coke bottle that was up there and somebody moved around and knocked that Coke bottle down. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. And this was during one of the pregnant pauses! And we didn't know what to do, because Lowe was a very powerful man. So nothing happened—and what was he going to say? Finally he said, "You can't imagine the occupational hazards there are in this preaching business." And everybody burst out into laughter—they laughed five minutes, because they were so relieved that, *phew*, he took it well. Okay.

[34:16]

44 Mac [?], that was an apartment house for many, many years. Then the college bought it and turned it into office space and so forth. Now there was a building called the Little Theater, which no longer exists. It was built on the site of the Humanities building, the Music building, the Art, the Speech, and all that. It was a temporary building there. Charlie Turck was a man of action, and he finally decided that he had to have another building because all these vets were in here. And so he went out to the Sioux Falls Air Base, and bought several buildings from the Sioux Falls Air Base, had them loaded on a train—freight train—and had them go from Sioux Falls to Saint Paul, unloaded from the train and built. It had a theatre section, lots of classrooms, offices, and so forth, and we used that building very extensively for many years until the new Janet Wallace Fine Arts building was built. Oh, something you may not know about, the

southern part of the campus, near St. Clair—between St. Clair and up towards the field house—was at one time a forest. The Mac Woods. And there were big, huge trees there, a hundred to a hundred and fifty-year-old trees. And we would have picnics in there, and quite a lot of fun. But after a while they had to tear everything down, and where the woods was at one time, now at that time they would put—they did put a "Macville," which was a place for the veterans to come and live with their families. So we lived three years in Macville, and it was quite a handy little thing. [37:06]

Oh, I think I would like to just say a few words about personalities. You remember, I said President Grover Cleveland said that college was a student at one end and a teacher at the other. Well, over the years we've had some amazingly strong people, teachers here, and administrators. But I wanted to say first of all, about Charles Turck: he will be always *the* president of Macalester. Whoever came after that, fine or temporary people, but President Turck was *the* president. Of course he was here almost twenty years, and he did a lot of wonderful things for the college. And he had a wife called Emmy Lou. They were both southern people—Kentucky. He was an old law school dean from the University of Kentucky. And this really—before the war, and even slightly after the war, it was like a big family. And my wife got very sick, and she was extremely ill. We had two little boys, two and four. And so boy, we were very concerned. One Saturday morning, up in the driveway drove a car. Charlie Turck drove a fairly old Plymouth; not a fancy car at all, an old Plymouth. And out of that car stepped Charlie Turck, President Turck to me, sir, and Emmy Lou. They opened up the truck and she had made five chickens, two pies, all kinds of breads and [unclear] to take care of us for a week. Now the president of the college did this for—I was just a runny-nose instructor, I didn't know, didn't make it much past that. But what a kindly thing to do. That epitomized the way the college was

at that time. I'm not saying it's worse now, but I don't see how anything could get much better. There was a relationship, among faculty and even among the administration. The president's secretary—I don't know how it is now, but during my time as a student and my time as a faculty member, the president's secretary was a very powerful woman. And I remember Helen Reinecke was very powerful, but the most powerful one was Rosalie [Kollarich] who was President Turck's secretary. You didn't get into see the president, no matter who you were, if she didn't allow you in. If she liked you she would grease the wheel, you could get in if you want. Another one, Margaret Doty—now Yvonne can tell you a lot about Margaret Doty, but I will tell you just a few things. She was the dean of women and she knew every woman on that campus. Not presently, but every woman that had gone beforehand. She knew them all by name! And she knew something about them. She was, in her younger days, an extremely beautiful woman. I always saw pictures of her; she was a student at Mac too, but she was a number one knockout. She became dean of women after some time in the Department of English. But the one story that I know for a fact is true, because I heard Dr. Turck mention this himself. He'd known she was very concerned about the welfare of her girls. And there were some men around that would not be trusted with the welfare of her girls. And she had her eye open all the time to keep things, you know, in equilibrium. Well one lovely May afternoon—her office looked right over the main quadrangle of the campus, and she was looking out this lovely afternoon. And kids in 1941, '42 were *no different at all* than the kids in 2007. They were attracted to one another! And there was a lot of kissy face going on. And this disturbed Margaret to no end, and she was so disturbed she ran in and got a hold of President Turck, whose office was right across the hall. "President Turck, President Turck, please come in here a minute, I want you to see something! Look out there, see what's happening, is there anything we

can do?!" Well, Dr. Turck said to Margaret, "I recommend two things: you can pray for rain, and pull down your shades." And he tells that on himself. So, she didn't think too much of that idea, but that's all we should do.

[43:11]

Then there was a man named John Porter Hall who was the dean of men. They had a dean of men, and a dean of women. Well, John Porter Hall was the registrar at the time. Not only was he the registrar, he was one of the professors of Greek. Also, he was the director of the men's chorus. At that time we didn't have to worry about trouble with the ladies, we were allowed to have a men's chorus. And they had a beautiful women's chorus too. But, this men's chorus, I was in it and I enjoyed singing in it very much. But John Porter Hall was an old Princeton graduate, and he sang in the Princeton Glee Club, and he ran things just about the same way as they ran them in Princeton. You could audition for this group, but there was one requirement that was ironclad: you had to sing loudly. He didn't want any small voices. Well, we made a tremendous racket. Lots of power. And he didn't know an awful lot of music, so we had the same repertory that we had, they had twenty-five, thirty, forty years ago when he started. So we would sing the same songs over and over and over again. And then we'd go out on tour, go around to small towns in Minnesota, we'd probably sing in the local church. And at the end of the concert, he would ask anybody in the audience who was former members of the men's glee club to come up and join us. They could do that because we sang the same stuff that they sang and they knew the music. We sang two songs at the end; we always did this. "Friendship" was one and the "Dartmouth Winter Song" was the second one. And these men would come up—I remember tears would be coming down their cheeks. They were so sentimental about it. It was really quite touching. And they would join us and sing these songs. Hollis Johnson, I don't

know if you… Hollis Johnson for us was almost the music department, except for Yvonne, who took music for piano and organ from two different people. One of her piano teachers was a rather strange man. His name was Gabriel Fenyves, and he was a former concert pianist, but he would always insist upon being referred to as Gabriel Fenyves, the eminent Hungarian virtuoso. That's one word. Well, Hollis Johnson was a wonderful choir director and we had really outstanding choirs. After the war a lot of fellows came back and wanted to sing! Well, before the war we had rather immature voices; they were kind of little better than high school voices. They weren't mature. After the war, twenty-five, twenty-six-year-old guys coming back, their voices had matured. And we made one heck of a lot of noise. Before the war, the girls always took great pleasure in drowning the men out. Well, the men, after the war, drowned the women out anytime we wanted to. But they had a really amazing program. We had a broadcast, over four hundred and fifty stations, on what they called the Mutual network. It was like the NBC and the CBS, but it was a radio network of four hundred and fifty stations. And every Saturday morning, Macalester College would put on a half an hour concert on the radio. I can remember the fellow, a friend of mine was the announcer, and on Saturday morning he would—he had a lovely round and resonant voice. He would say, [in a deep, slow voice], "*Our world of music*," and then after he said this, the eminent Hungarian virtuoso would play the cadenza from Grieg's piano concerto [sings]. And he would miss about half the notes, and you know we were trying to sing away only we were about ready to laugh, because he missed about as many as he made! But never mind, we got through that. And it was very well-received, we did it for several years. And then there was another lady named Mary Gwen Owen. Now, Mary Gwen Owen was a legend in her time. She was the speech teacher and she directed a lot of plays. And it was her—she had a speech choir, choral reading. And that was quite famous, it went to various places in New York

and various places in the country. At that time, there were a lot of kids that just came off the farm. And some of them knew the proper thing to do and some did not, so Mary Gwen would decide on things that they should know. And she would have a seminar on how to do things. Table manners and introductions, you know, just the very basic common courtesy things that you know. It was always said, another thing about Mary Gwen, she was a lovely person; I was very fond of her. She was an actress, she was Welsh. Right from the Mary *Gwen Owen*, you don't get any more Welsh than Gwen Owen, that's as Welsh as you get. And she knew how to handle Charlie Turck. She could go in and want something, and they said she could turn on the tears anytime she wanted. "Now, Mary Gwen, don't cry, we'll find it some way. Do not—no more crying, please!" And she knew how to press the little thing that would make Charlie come through.

[50:50]

D.C. Primrose was the athletic director for many, many years. He was an old Olympic athlete himself; he threw the javelin for the American team. He was an exceptional track coach. We had such exceptional track teams that at the conference meet, if we didn't get more points than all the other teams put together, we felt that we'd kind of lost the meet! He was in many ways a kind of a solemn man, although he was a very good man. During the time we had basketball there in the old gym, he would like to shoot off the gun. Now we didn't have buzzers at that time, we had the gun that showed the end of the half, and the end of the game. Well, D.C. was a very tall man, almost 6'7", something like that, and he was quite a dramatic man too. So at the end of the game he would rise, and had this pistol, and right at—looking at his watch, "*bang*." Well one time, two jokers of the student body, I know both these characters, fixed things up so that a little excitement happened. At the end of this game—this was the end of November, after

hunting season. And so at the end of the game, Mr. Primrose rose very dramatically, had this gun in his hand…"*Bang*!" And an old duck—they had fixed up an old duck—fell down, hit the floor, and feathers and dust flew up [laughter]. We laughed until we couldn't laugh any longer, it was the funniest thing you ever knew in your life. D.C. didn't crack a smile, acted as if nothing happened; but everybody knew what was going on. These two guys, I don't know whatever happened to them, but it was the funniest thing you can imagine.

[53:27]

Let's see, we were talking about…oh! In those days, before the war mainly, I think, each department had a department chair and those department chairs were very powerful. It was so-and-so's department. I remember Dr. Walter, O.T. Walter, was the Biology chair, and he was a very, very kind of powerful man. Lovely, lovely teacher, everybody just loved him. But he had a boast that any pre-med student that went through his pre-med program, and he recommended to the University of Minnesota, not only was *admitted* to the University of Minnesota Medical School, but *graduated* and *practiced medicine*! And he was there for maybe thirty, thirty five years—there were thousands of young men like that. Doctors all over the Midwest who'd say, "Ohhh, Dr. Walter [unclear]." But that's the way it was; see, the department chairmen were extremely powerful. And Walter's was Biology, Hugh Stuart Alexander was Geology. I remember taking a geology course from him. And at that time there was no smoking on the campus. Because it was sinful, I guess [sarcastically]. I personally smoked myself, but… Dr. Alexander was lecturing in this class on the ground floor of Carnegie, and I can remember a young man, smoking kind of a curved pipe, saucily going by. And Dr. Alexander saw this fellow, and he was not going to allow this to happen. So he said, "Just a minute," and so he went out the door, got a hold of this young man, and made him knock out his pipe! And here we are

in the classroom, saying, "Go, Rocky!" –we called him Rocky Alexander—"Go, Rocky, get him back, get him Rock!!" And he came back very calm, and ready to finish the lecture. He was a very powerful man too. Chester Shiflett ran the Chemistry department, Dr. Shiflett. Dr. Young, Forest Young, ran the Economics department. F.E. Ward ran the English department; we called him F.E. because it's F. Earl Ward.

[56:35]

Another personality that I would like to say something about was Honey. Honey was a lady, a lovely lady, well stricken in years, who would dish out food at the cafeteria. And we would always ask Honey, "Is this any good, Honey?" Oh, she would cast her eyes up: "Out of this world." Whether it was any good or not. But we never got any real idea, but we did ask this to get Honey to answer, cast her eyes up and say, "Out of this world." And there was a janitor named Ed. There was a workshop right behind part of Old Main, it's gone now. But Ed would have his headquarters there. But if you needed a haircut, Ed would give you a haircut for 35 cents. But they would always—a guard had to be posted, because this was strictly illegal. You had to have a license of some kind to do these things. But I got a lot of haircuts from Ed for 35 cents, he did a good job. It improved his meager salary. A few things about student life. Now, I think I mentioned, weekly convocations in weekend chapel. Homecoming; well, you don't do much about it, it's a pathetic homecoming now. It shouldn't be called homecoming. At one time we had a marching band at Macalester, a hundred and ten piece marching band. Our own uniforms. I knew that Dr. Grant used to—oh, and I'll tell you this. You know the lady who gave the money for the union? What was her name? Dayton is her name now, but, rats, I can't think of her name. What's the person who gave the union money?

YD: I can't think of the name now.

LZ: I think it's Ruth Stricker?

RD: Oh, what's her first name? Ruth. Yeah, Ruth Stricker. Well she was a gorgeous, gorgeous, *gorgeous* piece of fluff when she was here. And she was the twirler for the band, and she had on a very skimpy uniform, she led the band around, everybody thought she was wonderful, and she was! Well you know, we didn't happen to have this little—I shouldn't criticize, but that Scotch band is no comparison at all to the nice band we had. Well at any rate, we had a dance, big dance—oh, we had lots of dances. We had a parade. Everybody had a parade, and a lot of student organizations got in on the parade. Each group had their own little float and had a lot of fun with that. We had queens and so forth, and we had a bonfire. I think this is before the war. In those days, bonfires were almost a requirement for homecoming and we had to get the wood. It was a huge thing, it was two, three stories high. And we'd go and get old lumber, and we would go down and get some railroad ties, they burn very well. And I remember I was detailed one time to go down and talk to one of the alumni who had a lot of money, Schuneman—had a big department store, Schuneman's department store here. I had to go down and get some money from Mr. Schuneman to buy wood for the homecoming bonfire. I remember going down to his office and he asked me a lot of questions. "Well, Dierenfield, I'll give you twenty-five bucks." Well, twenty-five bucks at that time was pretty good. So we would get the bonfire all set, but then we would *guard* the bonfire. Because some people from St. Thomas, or possibly Hamline, would come and start our bonfire before we wanted it, the night before—because we had to build it two or three days beforehand. So we had eight or ten guys guarding that bonfire

all night long. And we'd go down to Hamline try to set their bonfire on fire. So it's kind of a routine that everybody did. In those days—I was just thinking of talking about dancing. We had a spectacular dance one time; I don't know who put it on, probably the student council. But they had decided to have a Viennese night, and this Viennese night was held in the old gym and they transformed that old gym into a park, a Viennese park. They did a wonderful job, I don't know how they did it. But it was very formal, and I remember I had a white tie, I was wearing full dress, not just the tuxedo. And a lot of other guys had the white ties too. But the Minneapolis Orchestra had a fund that they would play for nothing on particular events if you applied; they would come and send fifty musicians, and they would play for you. Now, they did that not only for that particular dance—they played Viennese waltzes for three hours—but occasionally when they had senior recitals for music majors, they could play sections from a concerto and have this Minneapolis Orchestra accompany them. But this Viennese thing—I'd learned to waltz and I wasn't all that good, but the girl I was taking was very much into that stuff, and I had never waltzed five minutes to a real Viennese waltz. That is murder! I was sweating like I'd just run five thousand yards. I said, "Let's sit this out." [in a female voice:] "Oh, of course not!" Every single one, we danced. I didn't know I could make it out the door.

[1:04:38]

We had societies in those days. Now, there was a certain amount of pride: [snootily] "We don't have fraternities or sororities." Well, we did, but we called them societies. You could be blackballed. We didn't have an awful lot of rush, but there was some rush. There were, I remember the Atheneans and the Hyperions; I was a Hyperion. You were a Clionian, weren't you, honey? [YD: Um-hm.] There were maybe eight or nine different societies; you could be a member of those. And I remember we had a special meeting room up at the top of the

Carnegie—Carnegie Hall, now. But you had to know how to get in. There was a special button you pressed and that would open a door, it would also turn on a small light which would shine through a little figure of an owl. Owl is supposed to signify wisdom, and we thought of ourselves as being very wise. And this thing had a green eye, and you pressed this little button, the door opened and this green eye would allow you to go in. We had a little clubroom there. Okay, well we talked about the choir, the sports. We had generally decent sports teams. The track teams were outstanding. The basketball teams were very competitive. The football team—I was a member, I was a starting end of the 1942 football team. We won six and lost three, which is a lot better than we're doing now!

[1:06:48]

Let's see. I think I will end my little portion here with kind of a funny story. I think it's funny. You know, after a while, going through graduation ceremonies gets old. But when it's your graduation ceremony, it's wonderful. And you hope for the best speaker in the world. So in 1948 we had a big class, and it was so big that we held graduation ceremonies outside. We had football stands on the side of the hill, right by the gymnasium, and a thousand or two people could sit there. There had a lectern set up, and the man who was to speak, I don't know where he was from, but he was very tall. And this was outside, and as he began to speak a terrific gust of wind came along and blew his notes all over the football field. What is going to happen? What will he do? Well, to our great good fortune this man was a raconteur of monumental proportions. For the next twenty-five minutes, he told one funny story after another. We were just dying with laughter. And at the end he made some appropriate remark, and we stood and clapped and stamped our feet. So he said, "This is probably just as good as whatever I was going to tell you beforehand." There was a lot of humor, and a lot of pathos in college life. College is

a little city, a little town, and every so often one of our members dies, or is killed. And it's just like losing a member of the family. I'll tell you another story—I could go on, believe me. The Winter Olympics was coming along and there was a fellow at Macalester who was a very fine skater. As a matter of fact, he was picked to win the silver medal in the four hundred yard event. He was very quick. I remember seeing him—well, he was in the locker room, he didn't have anything on. His thighs were bigger than his waist. And he was so good. He was a great kid. He was a great football player, too. But he was all set to win second place, he had the second best time in the world. And so everybody was huddled around the television, and they shot the gun off, and he fell down. He started so fast he fell down, he couldn't even finish. We were all just sick.

[1:10:28]

There are thousands of stories that come to my mind. I look back over the years, and I'm so thankful that I have been able to know some of these people. Because the old thing about the student on the one end and the teacher on the other? You could also say, student on the one end, a student on the other end, because you learn so much from your fellow students. You get to find out how you can get along with them, and you learn about some wonderful people and folks that go on, have gone on and have done wonderful things. This reminds me of another story—I could do this for years. In those days, we would have pictures of football players and athletes in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* or *Dispatch*. And one of my friends was captain of the football team. He was a tackle, and he was a very large man, and he was from Mantorville, Minnesota. I don't know whether you've ever heard of Mantorville, it's a small town. But we would always have these names, and he'd be called the "Mantorville Mastodon" in the paper. He would be called that under his picture: "This is a picture of the Mantorville Mastodon." Well, the Mantorville

Mastodon was so smart that he—he was a double major, math and physics. He would go to the library and try to find problems that would make him work. So after he graduated, he was also the heavyweight wrestling champion, he went to MIT, he got a Ph.D. in whatever it was, either math or physics, and went on to be the director of research for Bell Laboratories. George [Wheeler], the Mantorville Mastodon, director of research. And there are all kinds of people that you could name that have gone on from Macalester. Wonderful people, high-minded; a few of them are not so high-minded. I remember Cotton Thompson; I shouldn't mention Cotton Thompson, though. I'll let you figure that out yourself. Do you know who I am talking about? No. Well I'm not going to reveal anything.[1] Well, that's about all I have to say. My voice is giving out, as a matter of fact.

LZ: All right, thank you.

RD: Shall I say amen? [laughter]

[End of Interview, 1:13:32]

[1] Eugene "Cotton" Thompson, a Macalester graduate, was convicted in 1963 of hiring a man to murder his wife, Carol Thompson, in their home in Highland Park in Saint Paul. The trial was widely followed in Minnesota, and often referred to as the state's "crime of the century."