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AN INTERVIEW WITH SHANTI S. TANGRI

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NICHOLAS MOLNAR

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TRANSCRIPT BY

KATHRYN TRACY RIZZI

Nicholas Molnar: This begins a second interview with Dr. Shanti S. Tangri in Somerset, New Jersey. Today is December 17, 2013. Thank you, again, for having me here. I want to pick up where we left off after the first interview a few months ago. While you were going to school in the United States, did you keep in contact with your family in India?

Shanti Tangri: Yes, the contact was mainly in the form of letters. The telephone communications weren't like these days. My family did not have a telephone. Most families did not have a telephone. My neighbor in New Delhi had a telephone. He was one of the very few. As a result, their life was probably more difficult, because anybody who needed to use a telephone went over to their house. Long-distance calls were very expensive. I remember one time I checked. It was six dollars a minute. At the same time, you had to book a long-distance call in India. Then, they would tell you maybe an hour later, twenty hours later, "Yes, we've got a line for you." You had to hang around for when the telephone company called, and so it was a very difficult form of communication.

In all the years I was here during my education, which is one semester in Missouri, two semesters in Kansas, several semesters in Berkeley, California, and even after that for a couple of years, I never had telephone communication with my family, nor could I afford to go back, which is very common these days. Graduate students come, even undergraduates come, and within a year or two, they go home to visit. Part of it was that, hard it may seem to believe, airline fares haven't gone up as much as people's incomes have. The minimum wage in 1955, when I started my graduate work at Berkeley, minimum wage was eighty-five cents an hour, so you can compare.

Communication was largely with my dad. He wrote English, spoke English, good English. He was a government railways employee and auditor and well traveled and had good handwriting, unlike mine. [laughter] I wrote him a letter at least once a week. I used to keep copies of them, which were harder to make in those days. There was a process called Thermo-Faxing, where the paper became waxy and crumbly after a while. Some of that was on that machine when I had access to it. Most of it was carbon paper you stick under and keep a carbon copy. I had that correspondence for years and years until I rented this house where I was living one year to go back to Berkeley, California for my sabbatical, and somehow the tenants messed up the things. Most of the correspondence became illegible, and I had to get rid of it.

In general, I followed the principal of if I was traveling, as I was several times, especially when coming from India, I was traveling through Europe, I left a trail. Every town I left, I would send a postcard or a letter or something from there. The postage was a fair portion of my income, because international postage may be cheap to us, but given my Indian income on which I was traveling, or savings, that was as substantial part of it. Like I mentioned, the rupee, twenty-one cents. When I left India, I had been a lecturer in the university for three years. I started at a 185 rupees a month. I was up to 325 or something a month, and we had to pay a rupee for a minimum stamp. That was a substantial part of one day's income. Making photocopies of things where you took things to a camera shop, which photographed those, then printed them out, so that was expensive and slow. I guess that probably does it in terms of communication.

NM: Okay.

ST: My father wrote to me not as often, but he wrote to me. My mother had only four years of education. She could read in a couple of Indian languages, but she didn't know any English. I don't recall ever getting a letter from her.

NM: You have siblings, correct?

ST: Yes.

NM: During this time, were your siblings in India, or were they educated abroad as well?

ST: Well, my siblings, briefly, my father had seven children. The eldest, my brother, was called Ved, V-E-D. He died when I was very young. I was about six years old, and he was probably in his twenties. My next two siblings were both girls, and they died in their teens. Out of seven, four of us survived to adulthood. The oldest one, who was maybe nine years older than I am or I was, he was in India. He was married. When all of us left India or what is now Pakistan and came to New Delhi, he moved to New Delhi also. He was living in a different town, but he moved. His family was starting, so for a while, he was living with the rest of the family and then he moved out and had his own place. I never had any communication with him in writing that I can recall. He died back in 1971, when I had been in this country for a long time.

Out of the remaining three, all boys, the one older than me by three years, he had come to this country before I did and facilitated my coming by sending me some information and stuff. He was a graduate student at the University of Missouri, where he got his Ph.D. in metallurgical engineering. My first university was the University of Missouri. I went where he was. I knew something about it. He could set me up. [He] paid for my first semester's education for tuition, boarding, etcetera, though I paid him back over time, but that wasn't any kind of a part of arrangement. Simply, I felt, when I could afford it, I should pay him back. He got his Ph.D. in this country, and he worked in this country for a while.

Then, he went to England. He was in England for a year and a half or two years. He lived in Germany for a while. He lived in the Soviet Union for a while. He went back to work for the Indian Atomic Energy Commission and later on a research institute called the Tata Institute of [Fundamental] Research. He was there for a while, and then he got fed up. He didn't like to work for Indian bureaucracy, and it seemed like in India once you have some experience, you become senior, you move on to administrative jobs quickly. He wanted to continue doing research, and he found that he could become director of research in a major laboratory, but he was not happy with it. He got married and went to Canada at the University of Manitoba, where he founded a metallurgical lab and became director of it. He was director there for twenty years. He retired actually from that university. He was a visiting professor at Stanford for a year. He's still alive. He lives in Victoria, British Columbia. He sort of cleared the way for me in some ways.

Then, I came two years later. After one semester at Missouri, I moved on to the University of Kansas, largely for financial reasons, and after a year, I got admitted to Berkeley and got a teaching assistantship there, so I moved to Berkeley, California. Then, I helped bring my younger brother, who's three years younger, and he went to the University of California in Berkeley. He married a graduate student from Colorado. They're both retired. They both now live in San Francisco. He's three years younger.

NM: That is very interesting. I was curious about why you went to Missouri, and now you have explained how your brother helped you get there.

ST: Yes.

NM: I want you to talk about after your graduate studies and about how you eventually got to Livingston College at Rutgers University.

ST: Okay.

NM: Give us years and dates so we can go along with it.

ST: I was in Berkeley as a student from 1955 to '58, three years. I took longer. I may have been able to finish faster, because I was a little older than most students, most of my peers, maybe a couple of years older. On the other hand, most of these peers of mine, they had gone to better undergraduate places than I had, so they were far more prepared to do graduate work than I was. Plus, I had just too many hobbies and interests, including writing poetry, fiction, publishing some, theater, and Berkeley is a nice place to be. [laughter] Nobody's in a hurry to finish, unless they have to, so I was taking a little longer.

The main reason, again, in Berkeley, I kept getting interesting opportunities to work. For example, the first year in Berkeley, I was a teaching assistant. Then, I don't know why, it's not very Indian culturally, but one day I just felt that, "Gee, I'm a little older than most of these guys. I'm in some ways better prepared, not in every way, and do I have to go on doing this business of teaching assistantship? It just slows me down in getting my degree." I went up to a senior professor, who was a big name in a new field called economic development, and that's one reason I had gone to Berkeley, because there were not too many places in the country where economic development was being offered as a specialty. Howard Ellis was his name, but his big name was in the field of money and banking. He had a book out jointly with another Berkeley professor Norman [insert last name] something. I went to Berkeley for that reason. I found out that Norman something had left just a month before I got there to go to the East Coast and be director of the Rockefeller Foundation. Howard Ellis was supposedly the junior partner in that authorship, but he was a bright man, very conservative. I was, like many young people, especially from India, more radical, [laughter] and so I fitted in the Berkeley scene easily. He somehow took a liking to me. He knew that I and he were very different politically, but he was remarkably tolerant of my disagreements and views, even though I was not his student, although ultimately I did take a course with him, so I would see him every now and then.

One day, I told him about my feelings, that I really needed more time so I could finish my studies faster, and is there a way I could do it, some kind of a scholarship or something which would not require a commitment on my part for so many hours of work for someone else. He said, "Well, let me think me about it." He said, "That's pretty bold." [laughter] He says, "You're saying you deserve better." I said, "Yes." He said, "That's remarkable," he says, "somebody would say that, but I'll think about it." [laughter] A few days later, one of the secretaries of the department, as I walked in, she says, "Hey, congratulations, Shanti." I said, "For what?" She said, "You just won a fellowship." I said, "I did? I didn't know." I said, "I don't remember filling out any applications or applying." "No," she said, "This is a fellowship Professor Ellis nominates somebody and it's a national fellowship and there are only a few professors around the country. One is at Yale. One is at Harvard. One is at Michigan. They send in, and the best nominee from them gets it. There's one each year." I was making 1,850 dollars as a teaching assistant. She says, "That's pretty nice. It will give you three thousand dollars and it's tax free." [laughter] I said, "How did I get it?" She says, "He nominated you. He doesn't nominate [a person] every year, so when he does, we don't remember his being turned down." I sought him out, thanked him. He took it in stride. He said, "Well, you said you deserved it. I happen to agree with it, so I nominated you." I had a very cushy, nice fellowship, and I decided to make use of it by going away from Berkeley for a year because I could go anywhere.

I decided to go to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] for a year, and I had to arrange that the host institution was willing to take me and provide me for space for work or some kind of affiliation. There was a joint kind of research going on between two institutional groups at MIT and Harvard, so MIT offered me office space and a nominal affiliation. They weren't going to pay me but provide me with assistance of all kinds and gave me the title of faculty guest. I had faculty status, even though I was a graduate student, and my host was going to be the Center for International Affairs, part of which was running a project on India directed by a professor called (Melford Mannenbaum?), who was a specialist on Indian agriculture. I took that and spent my following year, '58-'59, at MIT.

I was able to attend classes and seminars at Harvard and MIT both. I got to know most of the people. It was a wonderful educational experience. I got to meet several Nobel Prize winners who became Nobel Prize winners, Robert Solow, [Franco] Modigliani, a number of big names. It was nice to be invited to their homes. They had a small department, very high quality, and many of them were important. John F. Kennedy was a candidate for the presidency [in the election of 1960]. He came and spent a whole day with us at the center for the staff. Part of the morning and lunch were at MIT. Then, we moved [in the] afternoon to the Harvard Faculty Club, and it was nice to be included [laughter] in that company with fifteen or twenty other people, not only that, but something which would not have happened in India. [laughter] I was the junior most person there, and yet when people were going around discussing things, I was encouraged to speak up my mind. Even John F. Kennedy turned to me a couple of times and said, "What do you think?" To me, to be asked by someone like this, I had met some important people in India in my younger days, including [Jawaharlal] Nehru, but nobody had asked me for my opinion. [laughter] That was a very exhilarating and educational experience and also humbling experience that no matter how important you are, if you are really smart, you ask for

whatever you can get, some other ideas, irrespective of your status. It's a lesson a lot of us forget when we are professors. [laughter]

I spent that year, which was a wonderful year. I got engaged to (Mannenbaum's?) secretary, a beautiful young woman. We were going to go back to Berkeley together and get married, but that didn't happen. We went back to Berkeley. I wasn't planning on getting back to Berkeley, because I had, more or less, finished writing the first draft of my dissertation using partly a little bit of release time and (that released?) financial pressure. Meanwhile, I also arranged for my younger brother to come, so we were students together at Berkeley for a while. My brother had meanwhile finished his Ph.D. and moved on and had become a professor at the University of Manitoba.

I went back to Berkeley, which was lucky for me, because I paid the price of one of my bad characteristics. I forget things, where I place them. Well, I took my first draft of the dissertation to my mentor, Professor Ellis. I asked him to be chair of my dissertation committee. He agreed. He was kind enough to read, even though it was all handwritten, and [he thought] I needed to rewrite it, make it much smaller and more focused. He was a man of few words. He gave me some very good advice, which I did not like at the moment. He said, "You need a lot of gray hair to write this kind of stuff. This is not a dissertation. This is more like a book, and you are entitled to start writing opinions and having strong issues or policy positions to take. Right now, you need to demonstrate that you are capable of doing original research, which means you select a specialty, this small area. It's like a plot of land. You cultivate it so well that nobody else knows that piece of land as well as you do, and you know every blade of grass that grows in it. Then, years later, if somebody wants to do the same research, they will have to refer to your research, whether they like it or not. That's how you establish your little position in the scholarly world." I thought, "Gee, this is so narrow-minded. I'm trying to change the world and dealing with problems of poverty in the world." There used to be a phrase, which I have not used for years, but when I was young I used it. I still hear it on the radio and TV, and now it makes me mad when people say, "In a country like India," until a friend of mine, a very bright professor, said, "That's a meaningless phrase. There's no country like India." You can't generalize. Like a country like China. There's no country like China. [phone rings] Excuse me.

NM: Sure.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

ST: I lost my dissertation on the way. I'm sorry.

NM: Go ahead.

ST: I traveled across country in an old car, and I did some 4,600 miles going up and down, because it was going to be my farewell journey. Part of the way, I had three travelers, an American-Indian woman, an Italian graduate student from Lehigh, and an Indian graduate student from another eastern university. We all started together, but it turned out neither of those two guys had driver's licenses. [laughter] That was one thing I needed for a long trip. There

were all kinds of other problems. This American-Indian woman, who's born and raised in this country, was pretty radical. These two guys were pretty conservative. There were all kinds of problems. We finally all ended up parting company [in] one of the western cities. I forget now which one. I drove all by myself all the way to Boston, but I saw a good bit of the country going up and down.

NM: Before you continue, was this the fellowship year that you were driving?

ST: Yes.

NM: This was the fellowship year, and you picked up these passengers on the way to Boston.

ST: Right, yes.

NM: Okay.

ST: I got to Boston. I didn't have a whole lot of stuff. I left some of my stuff in Berkeley with my brother and his wife. They were married by then. I left some of the stuff in my old office. They let me keep it there and some in their basement. I got to Boston. I got a temporary place to live for a while, then another place, not temporary, in Cambridge. Meanwhile, instead of doing my dissertation rewrite, I decided I'm going to spend four or five weeks intensively reading up on the writings of these MIT economists whom I was seeing every day. I figured they were all well known. This is part of my education, and if I have questions I don't understand, I can go and talk to them. I wanted to take advantage of them, so I didn't touch my dissertation. I kept reading that stuff, had lunches with them, and it was very educational.

Then, one day, my sponsor there, Professor (Mennenbaum?), walks up to me and he says, "I have a graduate student from India from the University of Syracuse, and he wants to pick a topic for research. I told him that you would be a good source of advice. Would you do it?" I said, "Sure." He set up an appointment for me, and this guy came the next day, Sam something. See, I remember his name. Old age, I'm beginning to forget names. [He was a] bright young man. We went out for lunch, and we came back. I said, "I have a lot of notes on different subjects which I was planning on writing on, but I haven't because my boss in Berkeley wants me to cut down, rather than expand. I'll be glad to give one of these cards to you. You're free to use this. After all, these are just simply notes on the literature. They're not my original writing. I have some ideas I'd be glad to share." He said, "Okay." I started reaching for a carton. I said, "They're with my dissertation." [laughter] I couldn't find it. It wasn't in my office. We both spent [a] half hour turning everything upside down. I said, "Well, maybe I'm forgetting. They may be at my place." We set up another appointment. [I] went home, couldn't find them. Then, I panicked. I called my brother back on the West Coast, "Go look through my boxes in your basement, and look through my boxes in my office," which he did. He couldn't find it. I said, "Well, there's a thirty or forty page abstract of my dissertation," which was voluminous. It had come out to some five or six hundred pages. [laughter] "If you can find even that abstract, I may be able to rewrite the darn thing." No luck.

I was very down in the dumps, as they say. I had been in this country for several years. I was expected home. My parents were getting old. My oldest brother was never very close to them. They were living in the house that was in my name. I had gotten [that] as a university instructor. I was a refugee, and the refugees had priority in getting housing, so [being a] refugee and being a teacher or a professor gave me enough brownie points to get a small modest house. They expected me to be back. My older brother had already left. It's out of the blue.

One day, I'm ready to go home from my MIT office, and the secretary catches me near the elevator. She says, "There's a telephone call for you from Berkeley, and I think it's Professor Papandreou." [Georgios] Papandreou was the chairman of the department and was a famous man. His father had been prime minister of Greece. He succeeded him. [He] went back to Greece and became prime minister. At that time, he was chairman of the department and an examiner, a chief examiner for me on my dissertation. I rushed back. He was offering me a job at Berkeley, and I felt grateful. [laughter] This is when I don't know where to go, what to do. My immediate decision was made, and that's before he spelled out the terms. I said, "Now, I've accepted your offer." He says, "You don't do that as an economist. You should know what the terms of the job are." I kidded him, "What are you, a socialist? You won't exploit a poor Indian." [laughter] He laughed. He said, "No, you've got to hear the terms. I cannot accept your yes until you know the terms, and I'll send those terms to you in writing within the next day or two." It was a very generous offer. It was a one-year appointment, so I went back to Berkeley at the summer.

I had gotten engaged. My fiancé was going to come out [to] Berkeley, and then we were going to get married a few months later. That's another story. I flew back. My younger brother was still in Berkeley. He wasn't married yet. I remember now. He was living separately from his fiancé. I ended up in the hospital the same night. I was there for twenty-six days. I don't know, lifting too many boxes of books or stuff, or the change of weather from Berkeley, the East Coast sweltering heat in late August to Berkeley's cool, sunny fifty degrees. I ended up with a back ache which kept me there for twenty-six days. I finally got well enough to get out.

I had the good fortune while in the hospital to meet one of the great minds of the economics world, Abba P. Lerner. He was a visiting professor at Berkeley that year. I had met him through some other people, and he came to visit me in the hospital with his wife a few times. We became good friends. I was teaching in Berkeley a very light teaching load.

I was instrumental in developing a new course along with nine other people. The Ford Foundation or some foundation was experimenting with the development of an interdisciplinary program, and Berkeley was one of the universities in which they were going to try it. There were three full professors, an economist called (Van Kennedy?) in the business school, a philosophy professor who was chairman of the Philosophy Department, (Louis Foyer?), who was an ex-Marxist and a specialist on the philosopher [Baruch] Spinoza, and a political scientist called Eugene Burdick, whose claim to fame was a novel which he co-authored I think with a man called [William] Lederer. It was called *The Ugly American* [1958]. It was one of the best sellers.

Then, nine of us were graduate students about to finish our PhDs, hoping to finish that year. Three of us were full time, and six of us were half time. I was lucky enough to be included in that full time. We were called associates. We were not assistant professors. We did not have the category of teaching assistants. We were better than teaching assistants, better paid anyway, and we were paid like instructors. I had done that for one year as an associate, before leaving Berkeley. That's right, I was a teaching assistant the first year and one year I was an associate. Now, I was invited to replace (Van Kennedy?), the full professor, and that was an honor, because, again, I was one of the junior people there, but my teaching evaluations had been very good. My professors must have spoken well of me, so I was given what was like a faculty position. That was a very enriching learning experience, because the twelve of us, we met all summer once a week for two or three hours, teaching others about our field. Most of it was done by the full professors. I was given a role like a full professor. I learned some psychology, some anthropology, some history, some political science. I had to read what they recommended. They had to read what I would recommend. I happened to meet some great people who would come through town at Berkeley and who were guests either of the Economics Department or one of these other departments. That included Harvard economist and Marxist Paul Sweezy and many others like that who were internationally known. It was a great educational experience for me. I had to live up to their expectations that they were giving me a position far above my age or status or experience, so that challenge, I hope I satisfied them.

Our class went from, the format, lecture twice a week. In the first year when I taught in that program and it was first developed, my job was not to be giving those big lectures. I had a small class. Everybody had eight or ten students, and we met them, I think, once or twice a week. When I was given the job of Professor (Kennedy's?), then I had to give those two lectures a week for five weeks, and this was a two-semester course. Then, add that one section I taught separately of eight or ten students. The students were all engineering students basically, so they were bright kids who didn't want social science. [laughter] They wanted to study physics, chemistry, engineering. Generally, they ended up liking the course after having taken it, but initially, there was a great deal of resistance. Even so, the enrollment in that kept increasing, because engineering students had to take it. They had some choice. They could take other courses or take a course in one of the constituent departments. They had to have one social science course. The others, it was opened after the first year.

We went from a beginning enrollment, I forget, it was two hundred or three hundred, and when I came back from MIT and taught, there were over nine hundred students in that course. The capacity of the auditorium was about a thousand. It was a different type of teaching experience also. If you wanted to use a blackboard, you had to turn your back to the class and write on a big screen, and a little bit of modern technology came in. Projecting to nine hundred or a thousand students where any time people are getting in and walking out, walking in, so a lot of distraction. It was a totally different experience than teaching ten students or thirty students, but that was a wonderful experience. I finished that.

My boss did offer me a job continuing that after I finished my Ph.D., but I declined. I moved on for various reasons, because it would have been an appointment in the department which was not

a department. It was called an interdisciplinary program, and I wanted to be hired by an economics department.

I was ready to go home but then got a tempting offer from Southern Methodist University. I had kept saying no to a number of job offers, including a temporary job offer from Yale, which I almost took. I figured that was the most prestigious job offer outside of Berkeley. Berkeley and Yale and Harvard, you will think are more or less the same level. An Indian economist who was visiting, V. K. R. V. Rao, a very famous one, I asked him for his advice, and he said, "Well, if you think this is the last time a good university like Yale is going to offer you a job, then take it. If you're confident that you will have other opportunities, then there's no reason to do that right now, because it's not exactly what you're looking for. You're going to be doing mostly work with the research project there on Asia. If you want that as a career, that's okay. If you want to remain in the mainstream, then with a Ph.D. from Berkeley and with the kinds of recommendations you're getting from your professors, if I was you, I wouldn't rush to take that offer." I said, "Okay." He said, "If you want to come back to India, you have to promise to see me first." I said, "Well, that's very nice." He was director of the Delhi School of Economics, which was the most prestigious Indian economics place. I didn't take the offer. I [was] getting ready to pack and go home. Then, one day a job offer came, and somebody who used to be President Truman's chief economic advisor, a professor from Cornell who had become director of graduate studies at Southern Methodist University in his retirement, Paul [T.] Homan. [Editor's Note: Paul Thomas Homan served on the staff of the Council of Economic Advisors to President Harry Truman.] He was a well-known writer, well-known economist. He offered me a tempting job in Dallas, Texas. I almost didn't take it, but he invited me to come visit. He said, "You're not under any obligation. We may not make you an offer, but if we do, it's up to you to take it or not take it." I went down, and he made it attractive enough. I decided to take the job for a short time, maybe a couple of years, and postpone my going home.

I ended up in Dallas, Texas the following fall. They paid part of my expenses in traveling to India the following semester. I was having some time off and so on. They paid for my moving. Meanwhile, I had gotten engaged to a second woman, an American from California, and she came out to India while I was in India and we got married there. I was [at] Southern Methodist for a year and a half and left Dallas just a few months before John F. Kennedy got assassinated [on November 22, 1963].

I had a good time in Dallas, but I also realized this was not the place where I wanted to be for a variety of reasons. I had a very interesting time, met some very interesting people, but it was a football culture, the university as well as the rest of the town, and very strident, right-wing politics. It was almost scary at times. You [would] turn on the radio sometimes, and you would hear [laughter] a thing which I couldn't believe. There was so much venomous talk about Jews, about Catholics, about foreigners, just about everyone.

There were a few bright islands. The university itself was a good haven of tolerance and had a good law school and a good Economics Department, but not much else. The Department of Economics was very good, and they were wonderful people. There was a business school [that was] much more conservative, but still much better than the other social science kind of groups.

By that time, I was married. My wife didn't have much of a career there. She was working in that hospital [Parkland Memorial Hospital] where John F. Kennedy was taken when he was shot, but she wasn't there at the time. She wanted to leave. I wanted to leave. We'd been to India meanwhile, as I said. I'd been to India first, and then she came out. We got married, and then she came back. We were in Dallas, Texas for one year. After that, even though they wanted me to stay, I wanted to get out and go wherever my wife could get back into [a] graduate program somewhere.

The best program in her field, social psychology, was at the University of Michigan. Generally, Berkeley and Michigan were considered equivalent. Some people ranked Michigan higher on that. She wanted to go there. I got a job offer from Wayne State University, which would have put me close to Michigan, I mean, Ann Arbor. I took the job at Wayne State. She joined the graduate program at Wayne State, got an M.A., then transferred to the University of Michigan for her Ph.D. We were living in the suburb of Dearborn for a while, and I was there for six years. I was an assistant professor.

NM: I have a few follow-up questions. You were at Wayne State for six years. Was this the late 1960s?

ST: Wayne State, I was there, let's see. I left Berkeley in '61. I left Dallas, Texas in '63. So, '63 to '69, I was at Wayne State.

NM: Okay.

ST: I also had an honorary appointment at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor at the Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies.

NM: Okay. What made you interested in studying economic development?

ST: I was, as I may have mentioned to you before, I was a student of physics and chemistry. I was interested in those subjects, but it was partly for selfish economic reasons, because the job opportunities in India would have been somewhat better. They were bad all around, but they were somewhat better if you had training in a scientific field. The humanities were the poorest. The social sciences were the next, but if you had to do something in social science, chances were better as an economics graduate rather than sociology or political science graduate, because those degrees, everybody who couldn't get into any "hard program," they would all go into the social sciences. Then, there was this sort of a ranking. You try first in economics. If you don't get admitted and you don't make it, you go into political science or history or sociology, geography. The job opportunities varied like that also, except for English, because every college taught English, so there were more jobs in English. My interests were really very varied in college, including fiction, but I never considered writing as a career, even though I started as a writer in publishing very early in my life. I didn't think you could make a living off it. I was inclined to study economics, and I read a fair amount while I was a student of physics and chemistry. As a result, I was allowed to enroll in a graduate program in economics, even though normally that's

not done. You had to have an undergraduate degree in the field in India, but a committee of three professors examined me and decided that I knew enough that I could handle a graduate program.

While I was doing that, there was no field called economic development. The closest thing to what I was looking for was one course, we had to take several courses each year, year-long courses, and one of those was called Indian economy, which was basically a very descriptive, non-theoretical kind of course, where there's some applied theory, but there may be a chapter on agriculture, a chapter on industry, a chapter on whatever exports, whatever imports, how does Indian foreign exchange work, what's its history. There was nothing I found challenging or demanding. All the theory was in the theory courses. The best-ranked professor was a young man who had gotten an M.A. in economics from Michigan and come back, and he was the star. Otherwise, my professor who taught microeconomics, he was an old man who used to read a book written by a famous British economist [Alfred] Marshall in 1918 or something, and we didn't have access to books. There was hardly any library. We were refugee students. It was very poor training. Basically, it meant that this one professor would open his notes and read from his notes, and these notes were written when he was a graduate student somewhere.

NM: Okay.

ST: Another maybe not very well-trained economist. I came out of that, but my main interest was looking for ways out of poverty. It was after I got that degree, and I had been doing some writing. I was lucky enough. It was all happenstance of what happened in life. I had a penchant for writing, and some people thought I had a funny bone. I wrote an article one day that no matter who you were talking to in India, educated people when they got together, they were all reading one newspaper called the *Tribune*. That was the only English newspaper in town. Anybody who could afford it read the *Tribune* or went to a library and read the *Tribune*.

I said no matter what you do, no matter what you talk about, no matter what the occasion, within a few minutes, the conversation would become about cricket. I just wrote up that thing. A lot of people laughed, because they thought that was the truth. I said, "What's the matter with us guys?" We borrowed this culture from the British, and you can spend hours talking about cricket and get angry and have fights and discussions. I showed it to a guy who was working in the editorial offices of the *Tribune*. I said, "I don't know what you would think of it." I was still a student. He laughed, and he said, "This is very funny. Let me show it to my editor." He did. He came back. He brought me a small check, and he said, "The *Tribune* is going to publish it tomorrow or the day after, and they're going to pay you. It'll be seven rupees." I said, "Oh, my God." Well, by the time I went to class the next day, everybody knew about my article.

My chemistry professor says, "Come to my office." I did. He said, "Hey, you write well. I want you to do some writing for me." I said, "Which is what?" He said, "There is a new product on the market. It is called *Vanaspati* (vegetable)." *Ghee* is an Indian term for clarified butter, which is a medium of cooking. It's a clear, semi-solid fat made from butter. He says, "People think butter is bad, clogs up your arteries. This stuff is really bad. It's called margarine." I said, "So." He says, "I want you to write an article about it." [laughter] He wanted me to write an

article attacking the use of margarine. He says, "It's going to spread like crazy. It's much cheaper than *ghee*. A lot of people can afford it, and they're going to flavor it in a way where it tastes like *ghee*. It's much worse than butter for your arteries." He said, "But most people don't know it." I said, "How do you know it?" He says, "Oh, I read some journals, foreign journals, and in America and in England, they're already criticizing this product." I said, "What authority do I have to write it?" [He said], "Read this stuff. I'll give you the stuff. You make up your mind, and if you agree with me, I'd like you to write this stuff. I understand you write in Indian language also, in Hindi." I said, "Yes." He says, "That would be really a contribution, because that would have a much wider audience." Lo and behold, I ended up writing an article. I agreed. I had no specialty to make that judgment, and he was giving me this stuff which was all critical of this [product] anyway. [laughter]

I can't say it was the best journalism, but I wrote this article which was saying, "So-and-So said this," and citing, learning proper citation and stuff, which most journalists didn't do in India. I published it in Hindi in a daily newspaper for which I used to write a daily column in Hindi, and they were glad to publish it. I never got paid for it, though I was supposed to. [laughter] A year later, they went actually broke, so the paper folded up owing me hundreds of rupees. I worked for them for a year or so. This English thing, I have lost track of where it is now. It was a short article. I got exposure.

As a result, the *Tribune* asked me if I would like to do book reviews for them. I didn't have qualifications. I was not a literary major. I was happy, so I got free books. Every book I reviewed, I got to keep, and they would give me a book a week. I started building a small library, which I couldn't afford. I was not smart enough to even save my own writing. I just looked at it as something to do, and every week, I'll get several rupees. [laughter] It was better than nothing, and I found somebody who was a good friend and was a good typist. I made a sort of contract with him that he would type everything I would want typed. He would take it to his office, find time to do that, and I'll pay him for that work. Much of the money that I earned went to the typist, but I got a lot of stuff out while I was still finishing my bachelor's degree.

By the time I was doing economics, I had already established myself as a beginning, lesser-known writer. Some friends of mine, a classmate of mine, his family was in publishing, and they published books in Hindi. They mentioned a new publisher, which was a publisher of this book. He said, "Those people are looking for new writers. They don't have much money. Would you be interested in writing something for them?" I said, "Sure." They asked me if I could do a book on Indian villages. I said, "I'd be glad to." Out came this thing हमारे गाँवों [*Hamare Gaone (Our Songs)*], which has, I can tell you, it's a very small book, it's ninety-six pages in Hindi. It took me several months though, because I had to invent a lot of words. There was no literature in Hindi that I knew on economics. If there was a (word?) before being one of the pioneers in this field and writing in Hindi, then somebody will find my name. Luckily for me, the book got very good reviews and some in the English press, which was good for me. I got three hundred rupees, no royalties after that. I don't know how many they printed. They were small (word?), because they had to recover their money fast.

Then, one thing led to another, a magazine called *Thought* weekly asked me to write a literary review of a poet whom I knew and I considered as a good poet. I read much of his poetry in Urdu and wrote an article. The poet became a fan of mine. [laughter] He comes, sought me out, invited me to write for his magazine, which I did, and I'll show you one of the pieces of writing from that. I didn't write too much for that magazine, but he asked me to join in the editorial board as an associate editor, which I did for some years. I didn't get paid for it, but it was a labor of love. Well, the Urdu magazine [insert name of magazine] was highly respected as a literary magazine. *Thought* was respected as a weekly English magazine, edited by a well-known journalist. The Indian news *Chronicle* was a major newspaper in the capital. They were publishing my book reviews. In that small elite circle, my name started popping up, and I started getting opportunities. I got some opportunities in theater, which I'll mention to you later.

In my writing, I ran into a very important man, through a friend, called M.N. Roy, and he invited me to write some articles for his magazine called the *Radical Humanist*. Largely because whatever little economics I knew, it led me to question him once at a conference. I was intimidated, so I kept quiet after that. My friend who had taken me up there from Delhi into another town, Dehru Dun, he encouraged me to go talk to the great man. He said, "Oh, he's very different. You won't find him intimidating. He's a very tolerant man." He was a very bright guy. Basically, he was preaching the doctrine of a cooperative economy as an alternative to capitalism and socialism. I was not a specialist in that, but I knew enough about cooperatives.

I had a one-hour session with [Roy], telling him that cooperatives have succeeded in very few places. Except for some Scandinavian countries, they generally have had a very poor record of really growing. There's a place in Berkeley, California where they do well. There are credit unions in farm areas, they do reasonably well. The farmer's cooperatives, they do well. Otherwise, Holland and Denmark and Norway and Sweden, these are the only four countries where they have had a fair amount of success. In Germany, where they started, it's not an important movement. In Britain, the same. What makes you think that India will succeed? India has had a history of cooperatives started by the British some hundred years ago, but they haven't done well. Why does he think this will be such a great alternative to capitalism? I remained a skeptic. He said, "Why don't you write up your ideas?" He published a series of my articles, which were essentially making the same point, saying I don't have a solution, but I don't think the solutions being offered are going to do it. It's an area in which we need to do much more thinking.

Along those lines, I did write an article or two with possible solutions, and one of those was, and I don't remember ever reading that term before, I said, "There may be some form of market socialism, which we may have to experiment with. That's a combination of some elements of the cooperative economy, free markets, where markets do well, and regulated markets, where markets generally don't produce good results by themselves." I used the term, "One may call it a mixed economy." Well, that term did become popular. I don't get cited, because other people may have used the same name. I said, "Many of the modern economies, what we call capitalism, are really forms of mixed economies. They're still evolving, so I don't think they have reached the final form." I was using the New Deal as an example. [Editor's Note: Consisting of laws passed by Congress and executive actions taken by President Franklin D. Roosevelt starting in

1933, the New Deal sought to address the economic crisis caused by the Great Depression by providing relief to the needy and promoting recovery through economic regulation.] I said, "There may be further changes in the American economy, just as there may be further changes in the European economies. Certainly, most people would agree that the Soviet system of planning is not likely to be repeated. It certainly is not appropriate for India. If it is for some other country, I cannot say." He gave me a platform to write on. By the time I came to this country, he had encouraged me to take on serious writing and published even in an economic journal a much more serious article, again subject to esoteric.

Most people have forgotten that, except when I retire, my chairman pointed out, thanks to the Internet, he knew. He said, "Did you know that Shanti Tangri also wrote an article on sun spot cycles and business cycles," which is true. I'm not a physicist to the extent I could write especially on this, but once upon a time, there was some very interesting speculative writing on the fact that sun spots come and go in cycles, and somebody correlated them with agricultural production in the world and that with the economies' business cycles. I said, "All right, we don't have enough data to really say if (sun spots affect?) economy and there are lots of other questions, but it's not as wild an idea as it seems." An Indian economic journal published it, so I couldn't complain. That became helpful in my getting admission to graduate schools here.

NM: You were at Wayne State in Detroit during a time when there was unrest in the United States. What was it like to live in Detroit?

ST: Say the last sentence again.

NM: What was it like to work in Detroit during the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement? What was it like on campus?

ST: Yes.

NM: Tell me about it.

ST: The least political time in my academic career here was with the University of Missouri and the University of Kansas. Back in India, I was active with refugee students, trying to do things, helping ourselves to get some government relief.

In Berkeley, I got very involved, so I have much more involvement in Berkeley's politics but that in the usual sense. I did not join any political group which was American because I figured I was not a citizen. When I became a graduate student, I met a lot of students, many of them from the East Coast, largely from New York, who tended to be radical. I probably knew more radical students than I knew conservative or liberal students, including people like Mario Savio, who was a founder of the Free Speech Movement. I didn't know him well, but I met him several times. Some of my students in that course I mentioned where I was hired, they were active in the Free Speech Movement, so through them, I was fairly in touch.

Berkeley was fairly non-political when I got there. It was in the down days of when Senator McCarthy was riding high. [Editor's Note: In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy's claims that Communists had infiltrated the State Department sparked a Second Red Scare that sought to uproot alleged Communists in government, the military, entertainment and academia.] The Economics Department had been hurt by a number of people leaving. Many others had political problems. My mentor was very conservative and would not talk to somebody else who was in the field of development. I didn't answer that question why I got interested in development, but that's what led me to development, dealing with poverty problems and village problems. I got to know a wide variety of radical students but never, as I said, joined any organization. I saw some of my students dragged down the steps of city hall when they were water hosed or they were arrested and some of them roughed up in some demonstrations mostly associated with either free speech or opposing Senator McCarthy or something like that.

I was very active promoting cultural events in Berkeley, and I was I think very successful in that. That also widened my contacts with Indian intellectuals or future intellectuals who were from very different parts of the country and very different political backgrounds. After I got there in '55, soon after I got there, I ran into an old friend of mine who was part of a group in Delhi. He was a chemist and had gotten his Ph.D. in Cornell and joined the Berkeley faculty as a research associate, Dr. Chaddha, Mohinder Singh Chaddha. He was president of a small group of Indians. He had actually revived an organization which he said had died, Indian Students Association, and he revived it and it had twenty-nine members. That's when I got on campus. He said, "You're the organizing type, so you take it over," which I was happy to do. Within two years, our membership had gone up to 179. [laughter] One of the reasons was we opened up the membership to non-Indians. We encouraged people from just about every country, but particularly Pakistan and what is now Bangladesh to join us. I wanted students to reach across and talk to each other more than people do at home. We started a very active cultural program. There was some events organized by our group practically every week. We diversified it. We had a seminar.

My younger brother and his fiancé started a group called Indus, I-N-D, dash, U-S. Last I checked a couple of years ago, it was still going. We organized theater, musical concerts, dances, films. I brought Ravi Shankar [musician] to the West Coast for the first time. I had known him in India. We got to be known. We got to be invited [and] became part of the Berkeley scene. A lot of the Indian community, there's a fair number of them in the Bay Area, they came to us because we were active and we started including them in our membership list as associate members. The result was that the Berkeley Indian students came to be known as a fairly progressive group which were also becoming the nucleus of an active cultural community in the Bay Area. When I left for MIT and came back, the organization was doing even better, much better.

Politically, I got some involvement, more so when I was living in Dearborn and my wife was going to school in Detroit and we then moved to Ann Arbor after one year. [At] the University of Michigan, the Vietnam War demonstrations were reaching a peak, and the first teach-in that I can remember, both it was in Ann Arbor and in Berkeley, I and my wife were in Ann Arbor and we were out all night. It was on campus, and there were meetings going on all over the campus.

I know we both participated, but I was not a citizen still, so I was a more passive participant than my wife. I can't pinpoint the date exactly, but I know there was a very well-known campus sit-in and teach-in, and then the teach-ins spread across the country. [Editor's Note: On March 24, 1965, faculty at the University of Michigan hosted the first of a series of teach-ins to educate students about U.S. involvement in Vietnam. (Mark Barringer, "The Anti-War Movement in the United States," from *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*)] When I was in, I moved to Ann Arbor, I probably attended more meetings, but I never really participated actively in any political organization. The first time I even attended some meetings of the Democratic Committee, and I was even elected a committee member from this area, but that was [laughter] ten years ago or so.

NM: What was it like teaching in Detroit?

ST: Teaching in Detroit was interesting, challenging and sometimes very stressful. [It was] challenging because I was young, and I was given a very senior role, both at SMU in Dallas, Southern Methodist University, where I was in a small department, quality department, but I became the senior person in development. [phone rings] Briefly, Southern Methodist was very challenging, and I was happy. Berkeley, not only did they give me the senior role, they respected it. My boss, who had hired me, who was a very distinguished scholar, because he liked me a great deal, I went back to Southern Methodist for a year from India. I wouldn't have gone, but his wife wrote to me, told me not to tell him, he was not doing well physically. He was an old man, and she said, "Come back for a year, and then you're free to go wherever you want. I know you wouldn't want to spend too many years here." I did go back. On the other hand, I was grateful to him. He wrote me some of best letters for going anywhere. The other people, the people who were local, old timers, it was somewhat of a problem, like putting pressure on you to change grades came from even the provost's office.

I had a bad reputation for being a tough grader from the beginning, maybe my inexperience, maybe the fact that I had been to the world's best universities, like Berkeley and Harvard and MIT, so I was expecting them to be students like those students, which wasn't fair. Why would someone want to go to SMU if they can go to MIT, right? You have to expect a different cut, and I was not flexible enough. My inexperience led me to have that reputation, which was justified but not good for me. My theory was with any educational [setting], you expect more and then people do better. If you expect less, then people do less well. I stuck to that. There were times I would not give a single A to a student in a class. [laughter] When I left the place, they gave me [laughter] a (lightbulb?) and all kinds of interesting things. They were affectionate but at the same time pointing out that I was tough and I shouldn't have been. They [would] say, "Happiness is when you know Tangri likes you." [laughter]

At Wayne State, the pressures were different, even though I was now their only development economist. The man who left who created the vacancy for me was a better-known economist who went to Washington University in St. Louis and became a good friend, but he was, again, more realistic in what to expect of these students. These students were okay, but they were not great. They were not any worse than the Southern Methodist students. They were probably on a

similar level. Part of my problem was the same. I kept expecting higher standards. I got into trouble for that.

Two, I got into trouble at the graduate level. My boss, who was chair, had a Harvard Ph.D. I don't know how he got it, but it was ages ago and nobody had much respect for him as an economist. He developed some grudges against me. Some of it may have been justified, but one of those was that he wanted me to be on graduate committees which he would chair but I would do all the work. He would use my name and my qualifications to have these students say, "I wrote a dissertation with," they won't say with Tangri, "with (Marcon?)," but I would be the person doing the reading. At least that's my version of the story. I don't know what's his. I didn't want to do that. If somebody's going to do a dissertation, I'm going to do all the mentoring and all the work and I should be chairman. He could be a member of the committee; that's all right. In some cases, there were dissertations like on labor economics. He was a labor economics man. I said, "I have no qualifications on that. I know something about labor. I've read a few books. It doesn't make sense for me to be doing the critical work or reviewing the student's work and saying that this is good." Well, I ran into problems with two of my senior colleagues, him and another person who actually had a Ph.D. from Berkeley but many years before me.

One of the students, I remember him today, a Lebanese student, he was very poor, and he was using time to get through mostly by finding one excuse or another, sickness, family problems, this and that. There was a committee of three to flunk him. All three of us felt, except the chair, who was a fourth or part of the three, I can't remember, that this student shouldn't even be given an undergraduate degree much less an M.A. He couldn't answer simple questions like what happens to the price of the dollar when the demand for the dollar goes down. It's a very simple answer. I said, "What happens to the price of apples? Maybe you can think that way." The guy was totally stunned, dazed, can't answer. I said, "He shouldn't really be certified. What do you do with a guy who spent a year and a half or two years, and what do you think of the professor who guided him?" [phone rings] I ran into problems like that.

NM: Do not worry.

ST: I accumulated a few people who became somewhat upset with me. To cut a long story short, it came time that my (word?) situation was there were complex factors in which I made some mistakes. These, I don't think were mistakes. I would have stayed on doing things like this or refusing to do things which I think were not right, but I could have been more diplomatic and perhaps avoided some conflicts.

After some years, I had a grant to go to India for a year from the Smithsonian and the American Institute of Indian Studies. My wife had applied and she had gotten a job offer from the University of Michigan, where she was just finishing her Ph.D., and she got a job offer from the same department as a lecturer for a year. They were willing to let her go to India and even support her for a year, so we were going to be out there for a year and a half, which means you don't have to pay any taxes. That made some people very jealous, and one of them said so. My feeling was there were some elements of xenophobia, racism, or something like that, because

there were things which they said which indicated to me that it was not just what they were saying which mattered.

We were recruiting people and a whole series of people, and a young Chinese Ph.D. from one of the southern universities came up. I had to be out of town. When I came back, I asked them, "How did Dr. (Chong's?) interview work out?" He said, "Oh, it was okay." "Are we going to make him an offer, because we have difficulty recruiting somebody in his field?" "No." "Why?" I wouldn't get a straight answer. "Was his English not good?" "No, he was born in South Carolina." "Was his economics not good or his seminar poor?" "No." This one guy, whom I had fought to get him tenure, because there were problems, he said, "Oh, hell, when are we going to get some American here?" The previous one was a Hungarian, the one before that was a German, [laughter] an Indian, and now a Chinese. [laughter] I said, "What do you think I am?" "Oh, hell, I don't think of you as a foreigner." "Thanks a lot." [laughter] Some people would slip up and say things like this. Maybe somebody was upset that my wife was Jewish and American. [laughter] I don't know what was going on.

I was called one morning to show up, and there were six senior people sitting around the table, asking me to give up my fellowship to go to India. I said, "Well, that means my wife also has to give up hers. What's the reason?" "We want you to stay here for a year." There were all kinds of demands, which [would] force me to give up something I had won in a competition. My wife and I were also going to do some joint work on the role of women in economic development, she as a psychologist and I as an economist. Well, we ended up canceling much of that under pressure. I had been put up for promotion to full professorship, and my promotion had gone through at every level. It was sitting at the desk of the president or vice president of academic affairs, and I understood that was unanimous from below. They said they will pull that back unless I cooperated. [laughter] I never experienced that kind of McCarthyism, so I said, "I thought this only happened in the movies," or I'd seen someplace about the McCarthy era. One guy said, "Why do you live in Ann Arbor? Why don't you live locally?" When a lot of people are talking about police departments, where in order to work for the police department, you had to live in town. I said, "There was some good reason for that. What's the difference if I commute forty miles? Some of you guys commute twenty-five miles. It takes me about the same time because I take the freeway, and you all know that my wife is a student there and finishing." I said, "Are you forcing me to force my wife to give up her very first job offer? This is from her alma mater, where she's getting her degree. Everybody likes to be invited to teach where you get your own education." One guy says, "When the chips are down, whose career is more important, your or your wife's?" I said, "Well, would you allow me to make my own decision on that?" [laughter]

Anyway, the net result [phone rings] of that was I ended up leaving the university, and they tried to take away my tenure, which they lost because they had no academic case. There were all kinds of reasons which were being given, some excuses like you had to be a citizen. I became a citizen on July 9th, but I had not told them, because I figured it wasn't part of my contract. I became a citizen a little late. They sent me an arbitrary deadline of July 1st. I had applied a couple of years before, but there were delays in police checkups, especially in Berkeley. I didn't care. I figured nobody else had bothered about my citizenship wherever I went. I wrote to the

president, saying that that was an unreasonable process to impose conditions retroactively. Plus, [I said], "This just wasn't true what the dean had said that I had to be a citizen and that was a requirement of the state. I know professors at the University of Michigan and professors at Michigan State who are not citizens and they have tenure. In any case, that was not a part of my contract, so it seems to me to be illegal for the university to revise the contract like that." I earned the enmity of the dean and a few others. The president said I was right, they couldn't do that, but they were under no obligation to promote me. They canceled one of my increments that had been fairly substantial. I figured while I was still young and I visited one of my professors at Harvard, who used to be a professor at Berkeley. He said, "Well, one of the nice things about this country is that there are lots of institutions, and there's competition. You're young and you're capable. Take the opportunity and go, and money lost you will forget after a while. Nobody likes to be forced out, but that's clearly what's happening to you. You're not going to be happy where you are, even if they give you back all the money." We both left.

I went to Duke for a while, Duke and North Carolina, on a temporary appointment for a year. From there, I came up to Rutgers. I had offers at that time from the University of Manitoba, McGill University in Montreal and a few others. Usually, it was difficult to find two jobs in the same area. Rutgers offered my wife a one-year job at Douglass College. I was given a full professorship with tenure here. We came here, and she was working in North Carolina at the time. We did go to North Carolina for a year, and then from there, we came here.

I got here in 1970, and that's when I started at Livingston. My wife was a lecturer or assistant professor at Douglass College for a year. She did not get the job renewed, so she taught at Staten Island City College there for a while. Then, we split up. She moved down to Washington, D.C. I bought this house with her in 1971, so [I have] been living here ever since. She died eight or nine years ago [in 2003]. She was a professor at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Ever since, I've been here.

I was chairman of the Economics Department at Livingston College for a few years. We all got centralized. I was on the executive committee where the chair of Rutgers College economics, Livingston, Douglass and Cook College, we were a small committee which ran the program, graduate program. The undergraduate programs were separate. Then, those got centralized in 1982-'83. I was still serving on the executive committee for a few years. Then, I pulled out of administration completely.

My main role was as a senior economist in development. I hired a younger man who's now in the department, Ira Gang, and a couple of other people who do some of the teaching I used to do. My fields are population, resources, poverty. I have fairly good contacts with the Department of Urban Planning and Community Development. They used to be at Livingston. Now, they are in Downtown New Brunswick. I maintained those contacts for many years. I served on some of their graduate committees. Most of those people are now retired or gone. Rutgers has been good for me. I hope I've been good for them.

NM: What year did you come to Livingston College?

ST: 1970. [Editor's Note: Dr. Tangri left Michigan in 1969, spent one year in North Carolina, came to New Jersey in 1970.]

NM: Livingston College was new at Rutgers. Can you talk about your early experiences there?

ST: It was the second year of Livingston College. [Editor's Note: In the fall of 1969, Livingston College opened as Rutgers University's first coeducational liberal arts undergraduate college.]

NM: Okay.

ST: I was living in Downtown New Brunswick near the intersection of Route 18 and Commerce Street, I think, the tall building, ten-story building [Bishop Towers]. We were living there for two years before we bought the house and moved here. Livingston was a very small operation when I came. They had the second year of enrollment. I think they took nine hundred students each year, so the second year when I came, the population had jumped from nine hundred to eighteen hundred students. The faculty increased similarly. Dean Ernest Lynton was the dean. We were in a temporary building for a while, where some of the biology labs are now and the printing press. Then, we moved to a building called Tillett Hall, which was new.

My department was very small. I was a full professor and the only one [who was] full professor and tenured. I replaced a man who had come from Rutgers College, Mati Marcus, and he was chair for one year and then he went back to Rutgers College. [Editor's Note: Matityahu Marcus is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Economics at Rutgers.] His job was partly to find a chairman to replace him, which he did in finding me. He had hired two instructors. Neither of them had their PhDs yet, two women. One was a graduate student, I think, at Northwestern University, Joyce Nussbaum, who was married to a young math professor, Roger Nussbaum. He was already on campus. She was a good choice. She was a good teacher, a bright young woman, but it was so easy to hire because her husband had gotten a job here.

The other one was (Roselyn?) Seneca, a bright young woman, British. Her father was a well-known economist, and she was married to somebody who was going to become a well-known economist in this country, Joseph Seneca, who was to become successively full professor, then chairman of the department, then executive vice president [University Vice President for Academic Affairs]. He's, I think, still working. He may not have retired yet. He's in the Mason Gross School [Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy] now. He's no longer part of the Economics Department. (Roselyn?) Seneca was doing her Ph.D. in economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Then, there was a young Indian graduate student whose name I forget. Unfortunately, my first job became to find a replacement for him, because [laughter] I couldn't understand him and maybe he didn't understand me. After a while, I asked my predecessor, "If you could find a research assistant's job for him and transfer him, it will not affect his salary and stuff." The undergraduates here were having an even harder time understanding him than I was. I said, "Fortunately, you won't be blamed for any kind of racism or stuff. We are both Indians." [laughter] Well, that didn't prevent Wayne State people criticizing me for being anti-Indian. I

said, "(Words?) (with a reputation to travel with?) because I flunked a few." [laughter] He said, "Well, you seemed to have flunked everybody." I said, "Well, you admitted people without having the courtesy of showing me their records, and you knew nothing about the universities they came from. I knew something about the universities. I could have evaluated the transcripts for you and told you, 'This is not a good bet.' Then, when they get here, then there're all kinds of stories, and I think I may have flunked two Indians, but I also flunked two or three Arab students or two African students, so what are you going to accuse me of being anti-Arab, anti-African? I probably flunked a lot more white students, but that's the way it goes." He said, "Well, maybe Tangri expects too much," which was probably true. What they considered too much, I considered reasonable. I left Wayne State, and I have not had any problems here.

On the other hand, there were hard lessons, one of which was, what got me into deeper trouble with Wayne State was that I also, as I mentioned, I was at the University of Michigan as an honorary faculty member. They provided me with an office, provided me with research assistants, duplication, typing, whatever I needed, mail privileges, and access to their hospital as a faculty member. I had everything, except my check came from Wayne State. When I got into difficulty with Wayne State, after what I called the McCarthy-type meeting, I happened to be back in my office in Ann Arbor, where I was living, and I spent most of my research time there. I ran into my senior colleague there, who was director of the program. He was a sociologist called Gayl Ness, and he was also a former Berkeley student in sociology, so we knew each other. I knew the family. Actually, they named their daughter after me, (Shanta?). Alexander Eckstein, who was a very respectable name in Soviet economics, and Alec Eckstein said he hadn't seen me for a few months and so what was going on. I was beginning to do some work, which was comparative economic performance in India and China. Alec was widely respected on that issue, a China expert more than Soviet. I told him the troubles I was running into. He got very upset. Obviously, I had high regard for him because I understand he was one of the reasons they had given me all that space. He had recommended me for that work. He, at one time, had wanted me to even go to China with him, so we could do some work together. He said, "Who's the person you think who could do something in this battle?" I said, "Well, they haven't gone to the president." He said he knows Dean (Haber?), who was dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. They're good friends, Dean (Haber?) at Michigan, and would I mind if he spoke to Dean (Haber?) about it. I said, "Well, they might ask what is your interest." He said, "My interest is similarly, I'll be frank, if we didn't offer you this space and facilities, you were going to go someplace else. Wayne State would have difficulty in replacing you. They know their self-interest, because we don't have a job in your department. So, if Wayne State can come up with a job and we can come up with these supplementary facilities, I think we are both winners. It's not good for us if you leave. I don't think it'll be good for them. I don't mind saying that to Dean (Haber?), because it took a while for them to persuade you to come and join. You had other job offers, good job offers." I said, "That's very kind of you, but I don't know how they will like it." He said, "Let me see." He called up Dean (Haber?), who didn't know me. Dean (Haber?) then talked to the vice president, because among the things they had done was unilaterally not canceling my leave but not responding to and sending me the papers which will allow me to process my papers to go to India.

Well, the vice president, whom I didn't know, I had met him once, and he had personally promised me the leave but was not now responding. They all got very upset, not because I had been mistreated, maybe they were upset, but because the University of Michigan intervened in their affairs. They took it as an outside intervention. There was a great deal of jealousy. Nobody considered Wayne State as the same status as the University of Michigan; nobody still does. Wayne State has a good medical school but not much else. It used to be a normal school once upon a time. In the rankings of universities, the University of Michigan is ranked nationally as one of the prestigious organizations and then comes Michigan State and then comes Wayne State as the third ranking within the state. Everybody was sort of conscious of that. It's like your older brother or your dad or somebody respectable calling you and sort of chastising you. They got mad at me even more so. [laughter] One of the officials said to me, "Well, we might have considered your case differently but for this outside intervention. I don't think anybody has business interfering in our affairs." I said, "I apologize for giving my agreement. I didn't know. I thought you were personally friends with each other and this is the way he asked me." He said, "Well, it will make cooperation with Michigan more difficult." At that point, I said, "Well, I think it's not my job to advise you. After all, you are the boss here, not me, but if I were in your shoes, I would think that would be not a real wise course. It may not matter much in terms of my job. You can probably find an economist good or better than me. That's not the problem, but you may not be able to do that in everything. They have a good hospital. You have a good medical school. Maybe there are limits of cooperation there which are similar, and you don't want to take this to a higher level. As for about my tenure and all that, I will follow the legal procedures." He said, "Oh, you're going to go to a lawyer." I said, "I might. I'm not interested in keeping your job, but nor am I going to be pushed out by illegal things." I wrote directly to the president. Unfortunately, I had an old handbook of the university, which they had sent me when they hired me. I pulled it out from my shelf, and under conditions of tenure, it said, "Normally, citizenship would be required of the person," etcetera. It was a short paragraph. I wrote to the president. I said, "This is page such-and-such. This is the statement. You're a professor of English. Tell me if I'm reading it wrong. It says normally [citizenship] would be required. That means it's not an absolute requirement." The dean (insisted?), "What's your judgment?" He wrote back, "You're right. I'm sending instructions down that any attempt to force you to retire would not be accepted in my office." That got back that my tenure was safe. Well, the next week I sent in a resignation. I said, "I appreciate your decision, but I don't want to work at a place where I'm not wanted. Whether the reasons are good or bad, that's beside the point." It's going to involve financial sacrifice.

I did take a hit, taking a job at Duke at [thousands of] dollars under what my pay would have been. It was substantial. It was three thousand dollars below. I was being offered nineteen. I went down there at sixteen. My Harvard professor, (name?), said, "Oh, you won't miss three thousand dollars a few years from now. Now, you will. Mostly, we use these monetary indexes as an outrage, because it's a question of fairness, and it wasn't fair what they did." He said, "You'll get over it." [laughter] That's why I ended up sending my resignation to them. I've been thankful to him.

Another professor from Wayne State, who had been away during the summer, came back, and he said, "Well, no question you are being run out of town." He says, "You should be thankful for

it." [laughter] I said, "You're considered the most respectable economist in this department. You have national recognition." (Traxor?) was his name. He said, "Well, when things come easy, which they have for you at a young age, sometimes you end up staying in places where you shouldn't." He says, "You could have the prospect of retiring like me in Detroit, and I think you're better off going somewhere else. You will appreciate it later." I said, "Well, thank you." He said, "Suppose I were to intervene, it's just more conflict, and there's no end to it, because people who have that attitude, they've already driven away some good people. You don't know that. It's hard enough to build a department from scratch." I said, "We had gotten up to the number twenty-six, and we had hired people from Berkeley, Chicago, Harvard and so on. Now, we're down to sixteen, and it's still going down." One of the reasons [laughter] somebody had against me, "You are the ring leader of the younger faculty." I said, "What gives me that honor?" "Well, there's a memo some people wrote demanding to have a voice in the departmental affairs." The tenured faculty, it was a very interesting process, the tenured faculty, which was, I forget, nine or something, those full professors, yes, there were nine full professors. They had a unitary rule. If majority voted one way, that was then considered the basis for a larger meeting of all tenured people, full and associate, but nine votes would be cast for that rather than five. With that, they were always assured of picking up a few from the associate professors, and so anything that had to be decided democratically, they could easily carry a vote.

Somebody wrote a memo and didn't sign it. They thought it was my doing. I said, "I would be glad to own that, but I didn't write it and I didn't advise anybody. I'm sorry that none of you thinks well enough of me to think that my English would be as poor as that. I think it's some of the Americans who're writing that." I circled some of the words and the phrases. I said, "You should have seen my writing. You hired me. I published a lot. You will never see something like that." I said, "But I think they are on the right track. You should really democratize the process, and you'll keep more of these." Like one of them came up, he was a Michigan Ph.D. candidate, but he was also one of our acting assistant professors, and his mentor was right there. This guy had hired him, and he would not defend him when he was being attacked. I said, "What is your basic criticism against this guy? Nobody said anything about his teaching. He seemed like a good teacher. He's making good progress on his dissertation. He's even gotten a publication out." One guy said, "Well, his mouth is in gear before his brain is." I said, "Well, that's a bad trait if he has it, but these are personality traits. Are we going to start evaluating people for tenure on that basis? If you are, okay, I'll accept it, but I thought we were simply supposed to do it on these other criteria." I turned around to his mentor. I said, "I'm not going to vote on this. We're losing people, not hiring new people. That doesn't seem like it will be very attractive for people to come join us on a sinking boat." "What do you call a sinking boat?" I said, "What do you call a department which has gone down from twenty-six to sixteen in my few years here?" Every other institution is expanding; the enrollments are expanding. I became a persona non grata. That added one more person to the list of people. Somebody doesn't want me to live in Ann Arbor. I figured it was time to get out.

It was a very sad experience, because I knew there was a lot of politics back in Indian universities. There were a lot of bureaucracies. I had stars in my eyes when I came to this country. I even wrote an article and published it of how wonderful American universities and their administration was, but I realized the real world is very different and I was very naïve and

young. I had been at Berkeley. The people were consulting me, the chairman of the department was asking me, and it went to my head. I figured out that's not what happens every place.

NM: You said to come to Rutgers in 1969.

ST: [Yes].

NM: How long did you work at Rutgers before you retired?

ST: How long did I what?

NM: How long did you work at Rutgers before you retired?

ST: I retired when I turned seventy. I'm now going to be eighty-six in February. That would be [in] 1998 I think, July 1, 1998. I would have been seventy on February 1, and that July 1, I retired. That would be '69 to '98, so that would be [twenty-nine] years I taught here.

NM: Talk about your experience teaching at Livingston College. Did you encounter some of the same politics, or was it similar to your experience at Berkeley?

ST: Well, Livingston College, I thought it was a very interesting experience. It was very different from what the normal course in my career would have been if I had simply just gone on to whatever, you get a job offer at a respectable university, which depending on what kind of salary, what kind of town and so on, but Livingston, I was anxious to leave Wayne State. I had already been away for a year to a joint appointment at the Economics Department at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina and Carolina Population Center in Chapel Hill at the University of North Carolina, which is their main campus. My wife had been promised a job at the Population Center, which never came through. Once we got there, they figured, well, I'm already here, so they don't really have to hire her. She was without a job for a year. Fortunately, she had some kind of a fellowship from the Labor Department to tide her over. I would have most likely stayed there, that would have been the normal course of things. They had, at Duke, offered me the promise of (an only?) consideration for promotion to full professorship the following year, but they couldn't make that offer until the person whom I'm replacing that year decided whether or not he's coming back. That person was a well-known economist, (Sid Eitenberg?), was away on leave to the ILO, International Labour Organization, in Geneva, I think, and if he wasn't going to come back, then they were going to offer me the job and consider offering it at the professorial level, but they would certainly offer it at the associate professor level with an (only?) prospect of promotion. When my wife never got the job offer from UNC that she expected, I'd been promised actually, so we decided not to stay and I took the job at [Livingston College]. Otherwise, Duke would have been a much more prestigious organization than [Livingston College] was for me. Coming to Michigan also helped my wife get back into the graduate program. She had started at Berkeley, then taken a year off, working in that hospital as a research associate to someone in Dallas.

At Livingston, it was a question of using many other skills than simply your scholarly skills, one of which was how to build a department, which I had no experience in. I had never been even an undergraduate director or a graduate director or a chairman. When the dean at Livingston offered me the job, I came up for an interview, it was the middle of February, very cold. I was contacted by Mati Marcus, who was chairman of Livingston College. We had a mutual friend, a Ph.D. from Berkeley, Peter Gray, who was chairman of the Douglass College Economics Department. Mati Marcus called me, saying, "I heard from Peter Gray you were looking for a job, and he told me you were going to come to these meetings, American Economic [Association] meeting, the annual meeting in December, but you haven't shown up." I said, "I had a cold, so I didn't come up." "Are you still interested in the job?" I said yes. He set up a visiting appointment, and I came in February. I figured I might take up the challenge. It was like a clean slate. I was told about how the graduate program here was expanding and what my role would be. I'd be senior development economist. There was already one, but they didn't tell me about him.

My main role over at Livingston was, I told you, it was practically half a dozen courses on the books, and they were "Introductory Microeconomics," "Introductory Macroeconomics," maybe a course in statistics and one or two other courses, I forget now which, so to build up the curriculum. We were not supposed to duplicate whatever was going on elsewhere. I had also undertaken the responsibility to try to develop some new areas. On the way up here, I stopped by Washington, D.C. for a few days and went to visit the National Science Foundation. They actually offered me a big chunk of money if I were to start a program in population studies here at Livingston. They said they have a good program at Princeton, a very good program at Columbia, and the next one would be up in the Cambridge area in Massachusetts. [In] Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania has a good program in population studies, so it's a good area. There's a fair amount of work going on in these areas, but there could still be room for one more center and somebody who combines population, environment and development, as I was, that they would be very interested in seeing such a program developed and I could probably count on several fellowships being funded by the NSF. The name of the man who told me that [was] (Jim Blackburn?), who used to be at, I think, Duke, where I met him first.

When I came, the dean was quite happy about it, and it may have been one of the reasons he wanted me to come. There was a distinguished sociologist here already in the Livingston faculty, [Irving Louis] Horowitz. Horowitz came to the luncheon. He, Horowitz and myself, I think there were only three people. There may have been a fourth person. Horowitz was very interested in doing development studies. He was a development sociologist, so he wanted me to come and offered all kinds of help. When I signed up, they were also going to try to get my wife a job in this area. They set up appointments all over the place, but that didn't work out. She got a one-year job offer at Douglass College but only to replace somebody who was on leave. Unfortunately, he had told me, he said, "Well, if I have competition, and they have a black male for the job, chances are he will get it rather than she," which is exactly what happened later on. [laughter] She went on to teach at Staten Island, and then our marriage started falling apart. She left and went to Washington, D.C., as I mentioned to you. She became director of research in Washington, D.C. for the Civil Rights Commission for a few years, and then she became a professor at Howard University.

The Livingston job sort of taught me the real-world politics a little, one of which was that a lot of students wanted to major in economics. At one point, something like thirty-six percent of the incoming class wanted to major in economics, and I had these two instructors and a T.A. [teaching assistant] and myself. There's no way in the world you can handle one-third, three hundred students majoring, to provided enough courses with such a short staff. Clearly, I needed to expand the staff very quickly, and you have the problems of experience. You don't want them all young, which makes it more difficult, because you've got to hire some people at a higher level, so that runs into budgetary problems. I learned that if you are trying to start Caribbean Studies or Puerto Rican Studies, they had more faculty, and none of them with a Ph.D. I had all these students waiting. On top of that, there was the prospect of trying to draw minorities into the field. Black kids and Puerto Rican and other Hispanics particularly avoided economics, just as they avoided math and sciences. One of the challenges was to try to bring them in. We had no problem in getting Asian students. They were probably overrepresented. They were in Busch Campus in science majors. A lot of those students would take courses at Livingston. The third challenge was we were supposed to get many more women students, who traditionally also had not gone into these fields. There was this kind of entrepreneurial work. I would spend a fair amount of time going to dormitories, eating with the kids, going to women's organizations, other meetings, trying to be friendly. Nor was the environment so friendly racially.

I remember soon after I took over the chairmanship, there were all kinds of experiences which sort of made me wonder why the hell did I come here. The first day I go there to find the key to my office, and I'm told the dean's office is up on the second floor in Tillett Hall. I went there. I stand in the window. There are two young women behind the window, and they keep ignoring me completely. One of them was dancing around and humming some song. Another was a youngish man, maybe in his thirties, wearing beads and not paying any attention. Finally, I said, "Is somebody going to talk to me?" "Yes. What do you want?" "Well, I'm So-and-So. I have an office in this building, and I was told I can get a key from this office." "Okay." This young woman goes and she finds a key, so hands it to me, points me which way to go. It was a bad taste in my mouth. This is how they're going to receive students. They don't even care. I'm a middle-aged man, and I'm a professor. I hoped the rest of the college administration is not like this, [laughter] so it was a bad impression. Then, I ran into a series of [bad incidents]. I go to the cafeteria. I sit down to have lunch, and I see some kids sitting around. They were mostly black kids, probably all of them. I ask them, "May I join you?" Nobody answered. Somebody sort of indicated like this, so I sat down. I introduced myself, "I'm So-and-So." Nobody else said what their name was, so I ate in silence, no conversation. I said, "This is supposed to promote racial integration and harmony." There were several experiences like this, and I kept doing that anyways. Some group would say at least a name or some would want to know, "What do you do here? Are you on the faculty?" Most of the time the conversation didn't go anyplace. I spent a lot of time on recruitment, a lot of time visiting student groups, then persuading committees of the new courses. Some were easy. If they were traditional, there was no problem. They couldn't say no. You want to do something new, which the dean wanted, then there was much more work.

Then, there were some problems between these different groups. To give an example, my best teacher was this young woman, Joyce Nussbaum, with one fault. She had office hours, which were required of every faculty member, I think it was two hours a week or three hours a week or something, and she was in there on time and she was out of there the minute that office hour was over. She had a little child who was the age of my son, so we got to know each other better. We didn't appreciate the fact that she didn't hang around much. The other woman was similar, and neither of them were to be found around for anything. I would ask, "Can we have lunch together sometime so we can discuss departmental affairs and what to do, what kind of curriculum?" Neither of them was available, because they would go away as soon as they could. They would teach their classes, they were regular, they were not shirkers, and they wouldn't spend extra time there. One of them said, "I'm already signed up on the Admissions Committee." I said, "Well, that's a lot of work. I would appreciate it, since you didn't ask me before joining it, my priorities are here. I have some responsibilities, so I would like you to get off that committee and maybe take on such-and-such work in the department." Well, she didn't appreciate it, but on the Admissions Committee, there were several members, you may go, you may not go, so much more flexibility. She was going to have difficulty in getting promoted, because she hadn't published anything or submitted anything for publication. She had been here a year already, so I thought it was too early. She was not very interested in research, which was bothersome. I went to the dean, saying, "Look, it's fair to tell her now if Rutgers is going to apply the same criteria to Livingston faculty as others. If not, you should start looking for another person. As far as I'm concerned, I would like to have her. She's a good teacher, and if one person doesn't publish that much but does a good job in teaching." These kids, particularly a lot of these students, minority students, required good teachers. Mediocre teachers manage with good students, but you really required first-rate teachers. The fact that she doesn't publish wouldn't bother me as much. He couldn't assure me that because of the University criteria, and the rest of the faculty has a vote. He was right on that. The time came when I wrote a recommendation accordingly, but under her publications, there was one article, which she had submitted at my urging, which later got published somewhere in a secondary journal on discrimination against women in our tax policy. I said, "If she gets reappointment, she has three more years, she's not going to do it, so appoint her, recommend her," making those statements. He wouldn't do that. He said he either had to recommend her strongly or not at all. That's the way the system works. I wouldn't change my recommendation. She was told that she's not going to get renewed after the next year or so. She left.

The second one also left. I offered her a three-year appointment once she finishes her Ph.D. Meanwhile, I was going to give her a one-year extension. She got upset. [laughter] She threatened the dean that Rutgers College would hear about this, because her husband was a rising young star in the Economics Department, Joe Seneca. [laughter] The dean got upset with her on that. To cut a long story short, she left. Fortunately, she got a job at another institution in New Jersey, another college that's about forty miles away. She got a job for one year as an instructor at Columbia, which was good. She had told people that she had been fired. [phone rings]

The situation there was that politically we were all very friendly. It was easy to introduce innovations, because unless there was some political reason for people to oppose you, you could create courses more easily there than at other colleges, especially Rutgers College. Along with

that innovation came some fluffy stuff, which we all had strong feelings about. I thought grading was too easy. We had, at one time, when I started, we had a system of pass/no pass, which I didn't like, but it was changed soon after I got there to honors, pass and no pass and no pass was changed to no credit. They would go around changing the transcripts with white out, and if a student wanted to transfer, somebody would inquire, "Why is stuff whited out on the transcript?" [laughter] With computers, that made it easier. They could just erase it.

I led a movement, it took four years to get a minor change in that grading system. I introduced a motion in the faculty chamber that students, when they sign up in each course, they should be given a choice of being graded on the traditional system or on the Livingston system, and with computers, that shouldn't be a problem. It should be fairly easy. It took me four years to get that change accepted. There was bitter fighting that I was old fashioned, and the dean was opposed to it. I said, "I see no reason, my classes are mixed. There are students from all the campuses, so I'm forced to give them the Livingston grades. It's honors, credit, no credit. In my judgement, it's leading to an inflation of grades. You don't want to give no credit to somebody who may be doing minimal work, and the traditional system allows me to give the person a 'D.'" So, you end up giving the person something like a "C," which becomes credit, but credit stands for a "C" as well as a "B." In the minds of some people, it's only a "C." In the minds of other people, maybe it's a "B." There's no uniform communication. It becomes meaningless. I read a transcript; I don't know what that grade really means. Honors to some people is an "A." To some people, it's an "A" and a "B." Give the student a chance that he or she can decide, and it shouldn't depend on whether he's at Livingston or if he's somewhere else. Others didn't want that, [saying], "Then, we are not being innovative." There were issues like that that became very strong. Then, there were, at one time, you could get thirty credits up for previous life experience. You applied to your department saying, "I have some life experience, so I know something about libraries or this and that." A professor reads it and says, "Yes, you can get thirty credits." That's out of 120; that's the equivalent of one year's education. People like me felt that that's short-changing education. You're certifying people for things they don't really know.

There was an older woman who was well connected in the governor's office. She came to me. She had already picked up thirty credits somewhere else. She had kept a travel journal. It was interesting, but I said, "Well, maybe you should find a department where it's appropriate, but there's no economics in it, so how can I give [you credits]?" Well, she wanted a degree in economics. The dean's office was fairly sympathetic. Well, it depends on who the dean was. For a while, we had a very bright dean, the first one, but I thought he was a bad administrator. [He was] a good, bright intellectual, a good human being. He was just bending backwards to make life easy for students, particularly minority students, instead of establishing them credentials. I and one of my colleagues, who was black, we were the conservatives, and I said, "No, these kids need more skills than the average student." I said, "They're going to go out, I want them to have statistics and econometrics, if they're going to major in my department," because the people coming from all the major universities are going to have those. If the Livingston College student comes and he has had ten courses in social change, it's not going to cut it. The black guy was from Stanford. I said, "We're the only two pushing." Our colleagues, who were white, they were much more interested in social change than in introducing courses

like that. I said, "I would like to have some of them, but I want to be sure they got the technical skills." That put us quite often in conflict with the avant-garde, *nouveau-riche* people.

One favorite statement against credit hours and how much time you spent in class became an issue, [when] somebody said, "Well, the amount of time you spend per week warming a seat should not be a measure of how many credits you should get." They were very liberal in giving credits. One of my students wanted sixteen credits, which was a full-term course load, for cane cutting in Cuba, and there were people willing to do that. "What do I have to do?" I said, "Okay, do that, and write me a proposal and write me a history of cane cutting. What do they do with the cut cane? What is its role in the Cuban economy? What's its relations to world markets? What's its relations to the economic units in Cuba, whether they're government units, private sector, whatever? How does it affect the life of people who work in the fields cane cutting? Who are these people? What is the system of land tenure?" Oh, that was just too much work. She had the mind of just going there and mixing with the people and do cane cutting and at most submit a twenty-page paper at the end of the semester and get sixteen credits for it, and I wouldn't give it. [laughter] There were sociologists who were all for that cane cutting, and they had that unitary rule of voting. If nine people voted one way and eight voted the other way in the faculty chamber, seventeen votes were cast one way. [laughter] (Words?) my friends, but we managed to learn to live with each other, even though we had very different and strong feelings about what education was all about.

One of my colleagues, who ultimately didn't get tenure in spite of my trying to get it for her, she was from Spain. She got her Ph.D. from Columbia, a bright woman. She had this theory which was popular among some education circles, it was called value added. I don't know if you ever heard of the value-added approach in education. The idea was don't measure a student's performance, like "A," super, was the upper ten percent by whatever criteria you're using, whether it's some test, objective test, essays, whatever, but how much he or she has learned from what they learned before they came in, the improvements. I said, "If somebody comes in and is a total ignoramus, cannot multiply or divide, and by the end of the term can multiply and divide, you consider that a full success as against somebody who already knew multiplying and dividing but didn't improve much, so that student should be rated "D" and the other student should be rated 'A.'" She said, "Yes." She was honest about it. She said, "That's what would benefit our minority students more, because they know little and they're poorly prepared." I said, "Let's say your student comes to my class and a prerequisite for the class is your class. I wouldn't really know how much they learned by looking at their grades. Even grades are a poor indicator of how much a person has learned, but then I would have really no indication, (word?) which shows how much improvement took place by your criteria." She says, "Yes," but she was honest about it. There were a number of people who believed in that, and so it became very difficult to look at a student's transcript and give them what I would consider proper advice as to what kind of courses they should take, what kind of professor they should choose. It became a very chancy game. There were many difficulties like that.

Then, on top of that, where I would feel there's some justification in students being graded but even having an input in how that grade was to be determined was felt a great deal of resistance from some of the Rutgers faculty. One of them, who was my senior, questioned me. He said, "I

understand you hand out this little curriculum vitae for a student to fill out in which they tell you what courses they are taking or have taken, what kind of grade they got, which department, which professor. What do you want all that detail?" I said, "There is also a paragraph which says, 'What is your aim in this course? What kind of grade are you hoping to get or are you working for?'" He said, "What's that student's business? You'll determine the grade." I said, "Yes, but if a student wants to take this course, [and] he's just interested in knowing something about economics, but he's not going to make a career out of it, he has the right to know how much time he needs to put in for that. If he's willing to do C work and he manages to do what I tell him, what expectation I have, there's nothing wrong with that." He said, "No, I think it's wrong. That's the faculty responsibility and nobody else's." "Okay." Fortunately, he was in a different department [laughter] at Rutgers than mine, so he had no control.

There were issues like this, educational issues, some genuine, some very good. A lot of them, as I said, we took four years to decide an issue of whether or not a student is entitled to get a regular grade. There were many others like this who were giving credits to people. One department would give credits easily; the other would not. The attitudes towards people who were regularly absent, showing up late, what kind of treatment do we expect, how to terminate students who were just not performing at all, how long a time, some people extending the four-year college to five, five to six, how many years a student may be allowed to be an undergraduate, what kind of progress he should be making. They were debatable issues. People can have different intelligent opinions, but Livingston faculty tended to be on the softer side on every issue.

NM: You mentioned that all the economics departments at Rutgers, Douglass, Livingston, University College and Cook came together.

ST: [Yes].

NM: Can you talk about the impact of that on your department at Livingston and how it was folded in when reorganization took place after 1981 and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences was created?

ST: Well, one thing that was expected and has happened, and some people were opposed to that and some people were not, I was for it, that it would strengthen graduate education, which one may say, and the economist should realize that [an] increase in one means decrease in another when a part is constant. The hope was that it would not hurt undergraduate education this amalgamation, but that probably isn't true. In many ways, undergraduate education has suffered. There is more emphasis in terms of getting promoted, not only publication, but teaching graduate school, teaching graduate courses, more prestigious, and the way we recruit people, I think there's been a significant shift. It has allowed the University to improve its faculty stature internationally and nationally, and economics, I think, has been part of that. It did not affect some departments which were unitary, they were only at one college, like computer science was only at Livingston. The area in which if you wanted to try new things became harder. Sometimes that was good; sometimes that was bad.

I'll give you one example. I introduced a course at Livingston, I introduced several. Some of them are still on the books, and some of them are still being taught. One of them is "Economics of Population," but it did not become a regular offering as it was at Livingston. Here, [at Rutgers College] it's taught once in a while. If people weren't interested, and I and Joe Seneca were both interested in environmental economics, so we taught at both colleges. It has not been emphasized as much, and I think of it as a bad thing for economics.

Nationally, anybody who's in economics and not worrying about the environment, I think are crazy. They're still emphasizing old-style economics, and finance is important. Money and banking is important. Market is important. That point of view may not be shared by a lot, and then there're people whose long careers are tied into whatever they specialized in. In that sense, I think economics at least has not moved in the direction I would have liked it to move as much or as fast, and they missed the boat, because they could really be among the first rank of departments, given their size and there are some very bright people on it if they had a somewhat different mix, because they stayed with the traditional model, which quite often happens. People want to shine in what is traditionally respected. I think that has given us some very good people, like in money and banking. They're a very strong component, but in the newer fields, we have not exploited our opportunities well. That depends on the leadership at the dean's level as to how knowledgeable the dean is, and they haven't been close to economics. They've been a historian, a philosopher, two historians actually, and so on. [Editor's Note: Deans of Rutgers College since 1974 have included historians Richard P. McCormick and James Reed and philosophy professor John Yolton.]

The other thing in which the centralization, as we used to call it, consolidation, it allows somewhat of a better opportunity to get lost if you want, you know, because you're part of a larger crowd. [laughter] One year, I was away for a whole year. I came back and one of my colleagues said, "I haven't seen you much." [laughter] I said, "Yes, I've been out of the country." At Livingston, you couldn't have done that with a department of only five or six. I shared offices near computer science and others. There was a third thing. There was much more interdisciplinary interaction at Livingston, and the dean promoted it. It was one of the good things. He promoted a social life where he would have a lot of parties, and we met each other from different departments. That doesn't happen now. People are, one, less interdepartmental and more into their own department, and with the technological change that's going on, people are more and more working out of their homes with their computers, so you don't see them much. That may have happened even at Livingston.

At Livingston, there was an active culture of promoting social interaction, and that may have happened amongst the old Rutgers faculty amongst themselves, but as they lost their identity, most of those people are dead or gone or retired. I can't remember anybody now in the Economics Department who's from that era, and I'm from Livingston. The one from Douglass, Peter Gray, retired some years ago. The ones I knew from Rutgers College faculty are dead. The younger people don't even know about what these colleges were. They have no notion of the different cultures.

The program that you create, sometimes a good program got dropped, partly because overwhelmingly it did mean the Rutgers faculty came to dominate the scene, so they may have twenty-five or thirty faculty members to two or three from Livingston, two or three from Douglass and so on. I'll give you an example. The course I created was called "Internships in Teaching Economics." Now, [it was] not a revolutionary idea, but in terms of implementation, yes. I organized selected students who would have to apply for that, and they got the same credit for that course as any other course, like Livingston courses used to be four credits. Every other college had three, which was a bone of contention. I think Livingston was wrong on that.

The course consisted of our taking the recommendation of two or three professors who would identify a good student who might be interested in doing graduate work and maybe a good potential teacher, so those are hard enough criteria. Students had to have a minimum of so many credits in economics. Most had done the core courses already. We didn't have a large student body, so some years we didn't have a single person, but some years we would get one or even two students. I don't think we ever got more than two or perhaps three even. Then, I would have whoever the instructor was who recommended this guy had to become part of a small committee which I chaired.

I ran this as a seminar once a week, where I would meet with the instructors and their interns. We had a set of meetings in which I was as much of a learner as any, how to teach, what to deal with the problems that a teacher faces, student comes in constantly late, how do you deal with it, a student who is constantly finding excuses not to do the work, missing an exam, the problems of conflict within the students sometimes. Whatever a teacher has to deal with, we had to deal with. It's fine if there's literature on it, if we can benefit from the experience of others. We took turns, all the teachers, in talking about how we determine our grading system, what is my method of teaching, why [I] do x and not y. At the end, we would jointly determine the grade of each one of these interns. The interns were also given an office temporarily, where like a professor, they would see fellow students. It was peer counseling, and we encouraged them to interact with their students, except they were not allowed to grade because we didn't want their dating [laughter] and their grading to get mixed up. Now, no other college has ever done that. They had internships, but not a teaching internship that I know. We got it through. We taught it, and the Rutgers College dean made an exception of my course. They would not allow Rutgers College students to take courses at Livingston and get credit, except this course, and that's largely because the dean made the effort to know something about the course and knew me and he knew that I had the reputation of being a hard grader. Well, every year, practically every year, we got at least one applicant from the student paper *Targum*, *Daily Targum*. I was very pleased. Number one, it was a compliment to me, that they were saying, "We'll make an exception of Tangri's course."

The other was that every student who took that course and completed it got either into some kind of fellowship program, some teaching assistantship, some national award or a job. AT&T once called me. They had one job, and they had several hundred applications. They took my student. They called me about it, and what was the distinguishing factor. They had lots of bright students. "He talked to us about this program that you mentor, and we haven't heard of anything like this. It's unique and this student may not stay with us, may go on for a Ph.D. anyway," but

right now, he needed money. It was a very good job at that time, paying ten or eleven thousand dollars.

When the colleges got centralized, the curricula also got centralized, so [it was] then in a master computer program. It's up to the Rutgers department now to activate any of those, so they activated my population course, my development course, my environmental course. They didn't do that [one], because they were generally against internships. Now, I had internships which were not so revolutionary, like I placed people in New Brunswick city government, in Newark city government. There was an economist there who was doing planning for them. There was a person here who did budgeting for them, so they would do whatever work those people teach and they had to take a course in a related field at the University so that two people work in tandem. I said it was not as revolutionary. It was a very good program, but only a few departments and they were mostly in urban planning, community development. Over at the [Edward Bloustein] School [of Planning and Public Policy], they did that. We were happy collaborating, but Rutgers College never picked it up. It was very conventional in that sense, partly because these other programs required much more work. If I'm going to be supervising that and there are eight or ten interns spread out over the state, now I've got to spend some time looking through what they're doing or meeting with these kids. If my job description doesn't require it and I'm not going to get a career advancement out of that, then I have no incentive to do it. That's one thing that Livingston tried to counter and sometimes successfully. Again, it was a program which benefitted minority students much more, because they required this hands-on experience.

I'll give you one short example. We were required to have everything approved by students at Livingston, even in matters of promotion and stuff. It was sometimes not appropriate, because they didn't have the right judgement. Well, one of the two times when I was trying to introduce the teaching of econometrics and requiring it, the students, along with most of my faculty, which meant three out of five, opposed it. They were much more into political education. There was a young black woman who was very bright but not very good in coming to class. I called her and met her, a friendly soul. I told her that she's going to flunk my course unless she starts coming regularly. She was resentful but she improved, so I let her go with a "C" or the equivalent credit. She was an articulate woman. She had a lot of initiative. Years later, she called me up, wants a lunch date, so we did. I said, "What are you doing?" She said [she worked at] one of the major financial institutions in New York and had become a personnel officer. I said, "That's great." I mean, she was good at interpersonal skills. I said, "What is the reason for our getting together? I'm happy to see you, but what brings this on?" She said, "You got any other "C" students you can recommend me? That's what I got out of your course." "You still remember," I said. "You were very opposed to [and] leading the opposition against my requiring econometrics, because you were taking statistics and not showing up and then having difficulty, so you figured you will have more problem with econometrics." She says, "Yes. Well, I hate to tell you I was wrong. I wish you had forced me to learn econometrics and maybe even more statistics, and I think it would be an absolutely wonderful thing for every economics major to have that. What you said turned out to be true. We get applications from economics kids who have gone to Penn or Harvard, MIT, Columbia. They all have econometrics." Rutgers would have been out on a limb. She said, "And Rutgers College now does." I said, "Well, you make my heart glad, and this is the kind of comment which [keeps] a teacher going. Would you be willing come and talk to the

students and tell them what you're telling me?" She said she'd be happy to. I called a meeting [and] invited her to give a talk. We got a vote afterwards, and they approved the teaching of econometrics. [laughter] The faculty had already done that with some resistance, but now that the students said so, so I had no trouble in getting the things. That was the political end of it, that you had to do things which is not what a professor normally is supposed to be doing. It was also good to know that sometimes, not always, things pay off with a long delay.

Another black student who had walked into my office, he wanted to see me immediately, and I was talking to somebody else. I said, "If you don't mind waiting, as soon as I'm done with this gentlemen." He was in a hurry. He was very impatient. He was one of the minor student leaders. He got angry at me for keeping him waiting for a few minutes. Then, he started giving me some what I thought was rough talk, that he thought I considered myself very important and that's why I kept him [waiting] and didn't respect him enough to give [him] time right away. I said, "Why should I respect you more than the person who's already in? I have no reason to differentiate. He's entitled to talk to me. He's come to see me, and he was here before you." Anyway, he left in a huff and in anger. I felt sorry. I said there's something wrong. He's not normally this way. I didn't see him for two years. I called his place. Why isn't he showing up to class? I ended up giving him a no-credit [grade]. Two years, later, he shows up. He's calling me from Washington, D.C. He wants to come see me. He said, "You may remember me. I left in anger." I said, "Yes, I do, and you were also such-and-such as a student leader." He says, "I want to see you." I said, "Sure." We talked for a while. It was a remarkable experience. He'd been on drugs, which I didn't know, and he said he was high that morning. He'd gotten up late. He'd missed an appointment early with me. He shows up late, wanting to be seen right away, but he says, "I had no reason to do what I did. I wasn't good enough to come and apologize." Then, he says, "I ran into So-and-So, who was a former student of yours. He encouraged me to call you and that you won't hold it against me." I said, "Well, that's very nice of him." We caught up on what the other person was doing. He said, "I want a favor." I said, "Yes." [He said], "I want you to give me an opportunity to complete that course somehow." I said, "If the college rules permit you, I have no problem." I got him special permission to do some work, sit in classes. He was going to take some time off from work, and all worked out well.

Then, he told me about this other student. I said, "Well, tell me, how did you meet him?" He said, "He's going to come see you one of these days," because he was going to drop out, too. The other guy was white. He said, "We were friends. We actually were in a fight once." He was an Italian American. They called each other names. "You had intervened and tried to make peace. He wanted to drop out, because his wife," he was married, and, "his wife wanted him to start making money soon. Then, you met both him and his wife and talked to them, persuading her to let him finish his education and wait. It's a good thing that life can wait a year or two. Somehow, she did that, and he not only did that, finished his college degree, but with the recommendation from you, he went to [George] Washington University and he's a law student there and as soon as he finishes he and his wife are going to come and see you," which is what they did. They showed up; we went out for lunch. He said, "I might have been all right doing what I was planning on doing, getting a job, but probably it was a dead-end job. I'm glad I got this law degree." I said, "Well, how is the marriage working out?" She said, "I'm okay." She says, "Yes, I would have liked to get some of the things early in my life, but it's been worth

waiting. He's happy. I'm happy." There were a number of such opportunities which happened at Livingston fairly frequently that didn't happen here.

One of the few American Indians who got into a graduate program in Berkeley was my student here, and his marriage was breaking up. He was married to a beautiful air hostess, Colombian I think. They were breaking up. They had a little kid who was the age of my kid. I encouraged them to bring the kid to my office a couple of times, and I took my kid to the office and let them play together and stuff. I got to know them socially, went out for lunch with them, and talked her into letting him finish his education. He was going to drop out also. I said, "From what I understand, you would be the first amongst your people," they were (Quaxeutal?) Indians, "to go to a graduate program particularly in a prestigious school like Berkeley." I say, "It's not just because I'm a student from Berkeley, but internationally, it's recognized and their law school is considered the finest in the nation, along with Harvard, Chicago and so on. They are offering you a fellowship. How many American Indians are going to have law school degrees from schools like that? What can you do for your own people?" I said, "You are married to a beautiful woman. I hope she doesn't give you up just because you're going to be a student." She had a secret; their marriage was in distress. I said, "My marriage is under stress, and I don't know if it's going to survive or not. You've got to do things which are right. If you want to share your feelings, experiences, I'm not a therapist, nor am I a psychologist, but since we do have a kid each about the same age, so feel free to come and I'll wear my other hat and we can have a beer together." He says, "No, that's one thing we won't." I said, "Why?" He said, "I'm the first person in my tribe who doesn't not have alcoholism as a problem, so I don't even want to go near it." I said, "Fair enough. I'm not a crazy beer drinker, so we'll drink whatever you drink." We saw each other over the year, and then he went to the law school, got the fellowship. I understand he graduated. I lost track of him now, but it was more than twenty years ago. [Those] are very satisfying experiences.

I had some like that at Rutgers College, but very few, partly because my focus shifted much more to graduate education and again you don't have many as situations like that. You are either very involved with the person, the graduate student of yours particularly, or you're not. One student went on to become a teacher in the Philippines, and President [Ferdinand] Marcos' niece was in my class. She was supposedly raped by one of Marcos' relatives and had no place to go. I got her help. I got her to the professional staff here at Rutgers, because she didn't have any relatives and friends she could turn to. I managed to help her finish her degree and get back. Every now and then, I would get a card from her. One woman went to teach in Taiwan. She was an American white woman. She had been divorced and was the victim of domestic violence. She lived here for some years. She was a very quiet girl. She learned English for teaching and took on the job as a teacher in Taiwan. I used to hear from her around Christmastime. All these people, there're many more, mostly through Livingston. Rutgers classes were too big. Sometimes, I'd run into people, my neighbor next door told me some years ago, he said [that] I don't know him well. One day, I was over there for something. He says, "You don't recognize me." I said, "No." He said, "I was your student in 1984." [laughter] I said, "How large was the class?" He said, "That was the reason. There were about three hundred people."

NM: In terms of class size at Livingston before the faculty was reorganized, how large were the classes you would teach?

ST: At Livingston?

NM: At Livingston.

ST: Well, we had a cap of thirty or thirty-five. Generally, with a couple of exceptions, which were for introductory courses which were mass courses of sometimes two hundred, three hundred, the other classes were all capped, and they could be as small as four or five. I think there was a lower limit of five. Sometimes, people were allowed to teach even smaller classes. If you were teaching a graduate course, then of course the regulations that applied to the graduate school were different. There, you had a minimum of five needed in a class. Most of the upper division courses generally would fill out at thirty or thirty-five. We were in demand, because a lot of people who wanted to do business had no opportunity because there was no business classes at that time.

There were attempts to start a business school. The dean had gotten me involved in that, and I traveled to Newark several times, met with their faculty, met with their dean. They had a program of their students helping small entrepreneurs in Newark, especially minority entrepreneurs, and we did something like that here at Livingston as an experiment. A business school was opposed by most of the faculty, Livingston faculty, at the time, so whatever business classes developed happened after Livingston more or less stopped its functioning. Now, of course, they have a Business School building, a much nicer building. [Editor's Note: Dr. Tangri is referring to 100 Rockafeller, the Rutgers Business School building that provides an entrance to Livingston Campus. The building opened in 2013. The Rutgers Business School is based on the Newark Campus and Livingston Campus.] The Economics Department was moved, and so it did not have any residual part in Livingston. There is no economics department in the business school. My impression is that most of the courses were full to thirty or thirty-five. There were a few which sometimes would have a smaller group or an exception like this internship course I mentioned.

There was another one which I offered and had a graduate Nigerian student teaching it. It was called "Small Unit Management." Again, we were not allowed to use the word business, [laughter] because then we had problems with the business school, how come we're teaching a course in business. We had a four-credit course in which they had to do readings, as usual in any course, but in addition, each student was supposed to run a small enterprise, develop a plan and run it. They could do that jointly or singly. We did a number of things. One of them was right next to my office, there was a small room available which had a tap in it and a sink, so we put a refrigerator and had a small shop where people could sell fresh fruit, vegetables, encouraging healthy eating, and run it as a co-op, student-run co-op. The same was also used as an office to run a small pizza place, and they developed a delivery system to the dorms and during the day to some places on campus and have a little place where they could bake pizzas and then they would show how to run it profitably and how to raise money for it. We taught them something about finance, credit, loans, small-business loans, regulations, what agencies of the government they

had to deal with to run a business, then do the usual things, exams and write a paper about their business. Some of them learned the hard way some facts of life. They were all against profits usually in the beginning. Then, they would find that it was an essential element in running it. Many of them didn't like insurance, and the pizza place didn't have insurance. Well, they got robbed twice. [laughter] They learned real life stuff, because the place where they were cooking was in the basement of one of the dorms, so their supplies got stolen. [laughter]

NM: Wow.

ST: That ended that enterprise. It was a hard way to learn, but business has failures. There were courses like that which were allowed to have four or five, six, seven students, but otherwise, they were all thirty, thirty-five. These were two unusual courses. They probably disappeared from the main master catalog. Internships in finance, the internship in teaching, I'm wondering if we had another kind of internship. I don't remember now. Maybe an internship in planning. No, those were the only exceptions for very small courses. There were independent studies, so you could sign up with a student, and an honors program.

I headed the honors program for some years. It was called the Paul Robeson Scholarship [Scholars] Program. I was director of it for three years. That ran into some interesting problems, and much of it, again, against racial lines. When I took over the program, there was not a single minority student. Each year, they were taking in five, six, seven students, so they were good students, and they would give, I forget now, six credits or twelve credits. I forget now whether it was a year-long program [year-long] or a semester-long program. I figured if you're going to name something Paul Robeson Scholarship Program, especially at Livingston, there should be some minority student. I don't know what the reasons were, all the reasons, they had good directors, but I felt not enough attention had been given to the program.

I put in a fair amount of work, and it was one of my best experiences, because each one of those students that I can remember maintained contact with me for years later, one of whom had a Japanese boyfriend, but disowned by her parents. Her father was a vice president of a bank. I ended up loaning her money for one semester, which she was going to give back but I never got it. Her boyfriend and she came to visit me. He kept saying, "You've got to give him back the money you owe him." It was not a huge amount of money, but that's what she needed to bridge the gap. Her parents wouldn't give her the money, and she would have dropped out and she was just a semester away. Another one was very similar. She was of mixed heritage, a young woman, very bright, and she may have been part Hispanic. [She had a] black boyfriend, and her boyfriend was very responsible, encouraged her to stay on. That was helpful, but she signed up for this course.

NM: Professor Tangri, can you just give me a moment? I have to pause.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

NM: You were telling a story. Can you pick up where you were?

ST: That group as a whole over the years was a very satisfying experience, because these were all bright students.

NM: The Paul Robeson Scholars.

ST: Paul Robeson [Scholars], and with one exception, I had trouble and I decided not to continue doing that. It landed me into some problems. One student, she was going to drop out of college and managed to stay in college and continue in the honors program, and her boyfriend was a help. He was also in the program, and I lost track of her afterward. She completed it, did a first-rate study, one of the best ones, which I hope that is somewhere in the library. She did a very good study on date rape. She learned the statistics that she needed, learned interviewing techniques, sampling, getting administrators to release data to her, permission to interview these people, do it like you are doing. I think she had six hundred interviews, and the results were written up. She did that amongst Douglass students. The last I heard or saw from her was when I was going to California one year. I went to the department to check my mail. It was the last thing, and there was a bottle of wine with a card from her. She said, "Have a good time in California." [laughter] Since then, I never heard from her, and now I don't remember her name.

My bad experience, there were a couple of very good experiences, but the bad experience was, let me tell you another good experience. A guy had been on drugs, white guy, all kinds of problems, very bright kid. He somehow got into my program, and he wanted to do a study on alcoholism and drugs and treatments. He had experience. He was in rehab. He had strong opinions of what has to be done in situations like his, how to deal with the problem and what is right and what is wrong. He had it all worked out. He was going to tell me and write a paper but not do anything I suggested, because he already knew the answers. One of my requirements was that he is to go to the library and produce a literary review of the literature on the subject. I said, "There is the Institute of Alcoholism, which has a very good library on the subject, and I know nothing about it, so I need to be educated. I'm not going to read ten books, but I'm going to read your paper." We had a sort of tussle on that for a while. We had that tussle most of the semester. I said, "You're not going to get a grade from me unless you do what you're supposed to do. Then, write up your own experience and tell me in the light of those other theories which works, which doesn't work." He finally did that, and it was a lot of hassle. When [the students] graduated, we used to have people reading their papers and sessions. Usually, those were well attended. Their professors were also supposed to attend. Then, he called me up. His parents were in town, and they wanted to all take me out to dinner. [laughter] He did. He went to the graduate school at the University of Chicago in social work, got a fellowship, and again, one of my very happy endings.

As compared to that, there was one bad experience. There was a young, bright black woman. She was not doing much work. Somehow the impression had gotten around, "You're bright, they're happy to have you in this program, and you walk out with so many credits and you have honors on your transcript, so why sweat?" It wasn't going to happen that way. She would not produce the outline. She wouldn't produce the abstract. She wouldn't give me any progress reports. Week after week, she was late in class or [would] not show up, and sometimes she wore some very fancy dresses, because she had to go to a dance rather than to the class. When the

time came at the end, she read the presentation. There were all kinds of problems with it. Partly, that was her mentor's fault. He was a good scholar, a black faculty member, a good friend of mine, and I thought he hadn't done his job. Her dissertation [was] showing, she thought, that the lack of Afro American-oriented education in New Jersey schools was the reason for poor performance of the Afro American kids, that the African American kids had no interest in the education going on for that reason. I had written to her early on, "In order for you to demonstrate this, here are some of the statistical controls that you need to establish, one of which was you had to find some group where there may be the kind of orientation you are recommending, or why is it that in some schools, like East Brunswick, which we're studying, be sure that you have enough population of different kinds of ethnic groups. How are other ethnic groups doing? Do they have education geared towards their needs and their perspectives? Particularly look at the Asian community as a comparison. Look at the white community. You can say they were all white oriented, but are they oriented to China or Latin America or India?" She ignored all that, didn't even attempt [it]. She said the principal threw her out. She said she didn't want to waste time with these inexperienced students running around interviewing. I wanted to know what kind of information she had given the principal to apply for the opportunity, which she hadn't done. She had just walked in, and the principal didn't have any time for [someone] who just walks in any day and says, "Hey, I want to interview" and she was going to go around and catch-as-catch-can and interview some people. The principal didn't take it seriously. She decided the principal was racist, because she was black. The principal was white. There were a whole lot of things like this. She had already made up her mind as to what the facts were.

Then, when I read the paper, it looked like a halfway decently written paper, fifty or sixty pages, long bibliography, and on the bibliography, I see references to unpublished papers, in addition to publications, some of which said mimeographed at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Library and such-and-such Berkeley library. So, I called her in. I wanted to know how did she see that. Did she travel to Ann Arbor? No. Did she travel to Berkeley? No. I said, "Where did you see this? It's in that library, but you're citing it." She said, "So, you think I cheated." I said, "That's the way it would sound unless you have a reasonable explanation. I'm not accusing you of it because I have no direct evidence, except this sounds strange, and the fact that you didn't produce anything all semester, not a rough draft, which you were supposed to. You didn't give a presentation on that basis until the very last day. Every other student made some progress report every week, so that makes me wonder if you were tempted to maybe take a few things from somebody else, maybe not the whole paper." She stomped out of my office, cried, and went to the dean's office, complaining that I was a racist, I picked on her, because she had accused other people of racism. The dean, who was a friend of mine, was black. I felt he didn't do a proper job. Another dean, who was also black, had told one student who had complained the same way, "You're barking up the wrong tree. I've known Shanti for thirty years." He walked out, and he was also black. This young girl, he didn't do anything, because he was partly responsible for having supervised her and he hadn't. We had a little exchange. I said, "We're good friends, but you're not doing a service to the black community, you're not doing a service to the black student. You're encouraging a bright young woman to get away with what she shouldn't be allowed to get away with. Yes, if she pursues this, let her file a complaint against me. Then, I will file a request that she be dismissed from the college, unless she apologizes, and she will not

get a passing grade from me. If she cannot graduate, that's tough. This is stealing. That's the last thing we professors are supposed to teach people." Well, fortunately, he's still my friend. He lives in South Africa now. She never came and apologized. She wrote to me once, and I wrote back. I said, "Well, I have nothing more to add, and I still feel you should be ashamed of yourself. You're depriving your community of a bright young mind by not learning what you should learn, and you would have been worse because you would have been a school teacher or a college teacher some day and with that kind of a background, the results can only be disastrous in my judgment." I never heard from her.

My estranged relations with my friend somehow managed to improve over the years, but I did have a fairly strong exchange of words with him. I said, "You got a Ph.D. from a decent school. Do you want people to wonder if you got through the same way?" [He said], "Are you thinking I might have?" I said, "Yes. Do you want me to be honest? Yes. That you're capable of getting a decent degree with a decent way, yes. That you did, I don't know. That depends partly on you and partly on all the liberals who bend backwards to let people go, whether they're black or white. We end up as conservative because we're demanding standards." I said, "It has nothing to do with political conservatism." I said, "My teachers were demanding. That's why I did better." I said, "One teacher even helped me, tutored me for free, because he thought I had potential, and he gave his own time and never charged me a penny. He bicycled to my place to teach me. I'm lucky and I want to pay back to the profession, but this is no way to do it." We had a number of those conflicts at Livingston, many more. At Rutgers, nobody bothered. [laughter] They weren't interested. They went on doing whatever they were doing. That's the good part, bad part.

At Livingston, there was only one person who was acting dean for a while, after the first dean left, George [Carey], I was trying to remember his last name. He was chairman of the urban planning group. He was white. He said to me once, he said, "You know, Shanti, it's unfortunate we can't say things in public." Livingston had already acquired the reputation of being poorly run administratively, and the white dean, who was very bright and friendly, stepped down. He had resigned suddenly, I don't know, under pressure or what. A meeting was called, and I was chairman of the Council of Department Chairmen. We were supposed to confirm the acting dean. George was the acting dean. [Editor's Note: In 1973, the founding dean of Livingston College, Ernest Lynton, left. Emmanuel Mesthene served as the dean of Livingston from 1974 to 1977.] We interviewed him for two hours. Our approval was sought. The administration, they didn't have to do it; they had the power to appoint anybody.

After the meeting was over, George was in my office for a short while. He said, "I will never be able to say it publically, but we are being run like a third world country. The administration is not that interested. It's like putting something out there, creating a ghetto, and then ignoring it and ignoring all the problems of the ghetto. People like you and me are going to have difficulty, and I can't run against the tide also. I can only do so much. Don't be surprised if a lot of people get hired who should not have been hired here or running things the way they shouldn't be run." I had several illustrations. We shared those. I gave an example. I said, "Look, we have internships, and black students particularly, or minority students to get them, many of them are for minorities, but do you know how many African students have gotten those? That's not the

law. The administrators here know it, and they're looking the other way. Now, I'm not saying it's morally better to support one group or the other, but we are breaking the law. If somebody tries to then haul somebody in, then we'll try to cover it up." I said, "I have evidence that the work-study student who's working for my secretary, she doesn't show up half the time. I asked my secretary, 'What should we do?' She said, 'Well, this woman said there are other work-study students, they're hardly showing up and they get their ten hours credit or whatever, pay, so why should she do it.' I said, 'Well, what do you want to do?' She says, 'I rather not have her. Have somebody who works or who doesn't.' I said, 'Okay, get rid of her.'" We did.

A few weeks later, I discover that young woman is still collecting a check, and I went to the office, which was in the same building. I knew the administrator. The top woman there was a black woman. I told her what was happening. I said, "How come she's collecting checks here?" She says, "Oh, because she's working for your department." I said, "But (Sheila?) is supposed to sign off on that, the work hours. You have seen Sheila's worksheets." She wouldn't produce those to me. [I said], "Somebody's signing for (Sheila?). There's nobody else in that office. Either I or she had to sign it." I brought the matter to the attention of the dean. The dean wouldn't do anything about it. He says, "This is no big deal. A lot of departments are doing that, so it's better that they get some work out of these kids, even if they are Africans." I said, "Now, you make me an accomplice. If this matter ever gets investigated legal[ly], I'll have to face the choice of supporting you or get into trouble." He said, "You're making too much of it. Nobody's going to notice it." [There were] number of cases like this.

My own niece, who was not a citizen, I had to certify every year that I'm financially responsible for her. She wasn't doing well. She had started playing hooky, and she should have been thrown out academically. They didn't. An associate dean was a young Jamaican, who was my student, and they appointed people like that into dean positions. I went up to him and I said, "Look, you know she's my niece. I don't want any special favors for her. If she doesn't belong in the college, then she should be terminated. You're putting me in a very difficult family situation. Her father is dead, and my brother's wife is in India. Rita is my ward, and she can't get her visa renewed without my commitment of financial support," which was around 7,200 dollars. "I'm not going to commit myself to provide money or assistance if she's not going to be in college to study." "Yes, yes, don't worry about it." Yet she stayed. They renewed her visa.

Then, I discovered several Latin students who should have been dropped, whose visas had expired. Livingston took no action to see that they either get their visas renewed or they drop out. People were willing to bend the law at every moment. A lot of people are now for these immigration rights groups. Whether they're churches, they're all good people, decent people, but I think they're doing the wrong thing. Livingston did a lot of that, and they all felt very moral about it.

NM: After the colleges merged their departments, did things like that change?

ST: I don't know, because there's no way for me to know as much about what went on at other colleges, number one.

NM: Okay.

ST: Number two, once the administration was centralized, Livingston's attitudes, to the extent they persisted like Norman's, they become less important because he's not a major part of the History Department. History had more professors from Livingston than economics did. There were differences within the faculty, [including] the extreme radical wing, which I call the bleeding heart liberals. He's [Norman Markowitz] not really a liberal, but he's a bleeding heart. He will not flunk a person easily, and he thinks they are doing things right for the minorities that way. We didn't have too many of them to begin with in economics, but the few who were left or did not get tenure. Only one person from my department got tenure besides me and that was this Spanish woman, and even in her case, I was told in no uncertain words by Monroe Berkowitz, who was the super chair, we used to have a New Brunswick chairman, he said, "I'll vote for her because you have put her up. I will not do that again for the next promotion." He was true to his word. The next one was a black professor who had not published much. He did not deserve promotion. He was a bright guy. He was a Stanford Ph.D. but couldn't get him passed that section.

I was chairman of the section for a while. The section is a group of all tenured people from all three campuses. I was the last chairman before that was dismantled. In terms of many things, it's unfortunate that this happened. The experiment in a way you can say failed. I think if they had maintained academic standards and not played hooky with some other social criteria, it was an experiment worth keeping.

See, originally, Livingston was designed, as I understand, on the model of Oakland University in Michigan, where bright white kids were dropping out or turning into flower children. There were problems of motivation and politics and so on, but they were academically good students. I considered taking a job there. I was interviewed. Soon after the riots in Newark in this state, the direction of Livingston changed, so by the time I was here, in the second year, it's already moved. [Editor's Note: The beating of an African American cab driver on July 12, 1967 sparked almost a week of riots in Newark that left twenty-six people dead and cost the city over ten million dollars in damage.]

Livingston had some of the best faculty in many departments. We had more nationally and internationally-known scholars as a proportion of the faculty. We had more people on editorial boards of academic journals. Some departments were very distinguished, like political science, computer science, sociologists like [Irving] Horowitz and some others, but it was much more political. Horowitz was a minority in his own department. He hired people very different from his own bent. In that sense, he ended up creating a department which was, to my mind, one of the sources of dysfunction at Livingston. Anthropology was quite good and was also the only department, unitary department, in anthropology. If we had pursued that and developed new programs that built on urban planning, built on community development. Community development was a mix, some very good people, some very soft. Again, one of the professors of community development, they used to teach a course in statistics. It was called "Quantitative Methods." It was a very low-level course. Many graduates from any college, if they needed a course in statistics, they could take any one of those. I didn't know whether that course was

comparable to mine. A student came to me, and he said, "I have taken this course over there, so I don't have to take the economics course." I said I needed a little note from the instructor there that these are equivalent. He was honest. He said, "No, they should take your course, because what I do, you do in the first six weeks and then you go on." He says, "My students learn nothing about multiple regression or this or that, and if they are good enough in reading means, average means, geometric means, this mean, that mean and frequency distribution, we give them a little bit of quantitative touch." Yet what that department should have been doing is upgrading. That instructor was competent to teach at a very good level, but they were catering to a student body [that was] not interested in quantitative work. The urban planning was more so, but that's because they had a graduate program. They could have done that, built on computer science.

The original dean had some intentions. He wanted me to start building a department of decision sciences. I said, "I can't do both economics and that. You need a separate program." I gave him a budget; I gave him an outline, how many minimum number of students. I went to some Midwestern universities. I went to a New England school, looking at these experimental programs and gave them a report. I says, "You can't do it on the back of a five or six-person department like economics, most of whom are juniors." He wanted to use our name as economics but transform it into something else. I said, "I'm not equipped to do that. I would be dishonest in saying that's what I can do for you," which meant my department never expanded. I didn't do what the dean wanted. I said, "You brought me here to be an economist, not a builder of another empire."

NM: You brought up some interesting points that I want to follow up with. You mentioned that Livingston College was an experiment. Before you went there, did you understand how it was meant to be different in enrollment and reaching out to minority populations?

ST: Very little of it. I knew there was something new expected of me, something innovative, but I interpreted it as an innovative academic program. The dean probably had the same in mind, but when you take a collectively of individuals, most of whom were self-selected, and they would come and say, "I came here because of" and they would cite the articulated goals of Livingston being innovative and minority-oriented and human rights-oriented and gender equality-oriented, all those were wonderful things. I found out that what I'm deal with is a world of people who in some departments, not all, fit that picture. They were great academically, and they were also innovative. Then, there were others who were disgruntled in the existing departments elsewhere, and they came.

As one would say, he was a member of the Philosophy Department, I forget his name now. He left. He was a redhead. I asked him publically in a meeting, "Are you complaining that the State of New Jersey is not financing your program which is to train people in revolution?" The dean said, "Shanti, don't be frivolous." I said, "I'm not being frivolous. Let him answer my question." He looked. He says, "Yes, you understood me." I said, "Well, this is what these people are complaining about, that we're not training people for cutting cane in Cuba and give them sixteen credits for it. They want to uproot the State of New Jersey. They want to undo the United States the way it is because they don't like the system. Let's be honest about it. No, that's innovation, but that's not the kind of innovation I came for." I said, "I like to see these people, like that

you're calling the so-called Asian minority, but what is so revolutionary about a kid going and becoming a pharmacist or a technician or a doctor or computer scientist. That's what a lot of Asian kids are doing. Black kids can do the same. They've got to have the education. I don't want to do that because simply they are black or simply because they are Latin. How is it that a department of six people and computers, my friends, they have no majors in their field, in Puerto Rican Studies, and I think it's a good thing they don't have majors. Those students have more brains than the faculty in this respect." He said, "Why Maria Canino is a very decent friend of mine." I said, "They're wrong in trying to have majors in that. There's going to be no job market for them. Do you think Harvard is going to set up a program in Puerto Rican Studies, or Berkeley or Chicago or Yale? Or maybe some podunk college in North Carolina will do it. How many job offers can you get them? What they need is you have to tell them go to economics. Go to statistics. Go to chemistry. Go to physics. That's where the world is going. Go to technology, medicine, whatever. Then, a normal number will go to maybe fine arts and music." [Editor's Note: In 1970, the Puerto Rican Studies program began at Livingston College. In 1973, the program became the Department of Puerto Rican Studies with Maria Canino as the first chairperson.]

The Music Department was, I think, a disgrace, and Livingston took pride in it. The chairman of the Music Department, a white guy, Bob something, stood up in the faculty one day proposing a whole series of new courses. I asked him to explain one of the courses. It had something to do with space. I read the description several times. I couldn't make sense of it. It was written in good English, but it was English I just couldn't understand what it meant. I said, "Well, Bob, or some member of the faculty, explain to me what that really means. What is this relationship of three-dimensional space to multi-dimensional music to this, to this and this, and how will the students be evaluated and what will the curriculum be like, some samples of the course material? All of that would be helpful." Bob stands up and says, "We artists are not very good always at articulating things orally," and people accept that as an adequate explanation. I said, "Surely, you could find one in your department who could write at least a course description, because if you're not good at articulating that to me, how are you going to articulate that to your students who are going to be signing up for that course." They passed that course anyway, the faculty. I said, "Shame on you. You guys are not being real educators."

That department would teach courses, and the dean told me publically he didn't realize how much hunger there was for art and music and beauty. That's why he'd given the Music Department so many faculty lines. They had expanded quite a bit. I said, "Do you want to know the truth? I have been talking to the students. One of the classes, I won't mention the name of the professor. What is required of that class? They go once a week, sit with him for a few minutes, he makes some comments, tells them what kind of music to listen to, they go to their musical cubicles and they listen to music of their choice for an hour. There's no one to report back as to what they heard, what they learned, and if they show up in class once in a while, sometimes they have a discussion. Who fails that course? Somebody who never shows up. Otherwise, nobody fails that course. She'll get four credits for this amount of work that I have told you. Now, why do you call it education?" Well, some of the players were famous musicians. They had no academic background, but Livingston took pride in it. Two or three of them were good friends of mine. One of the groups went to South Africa to Lesotho about jazz.

All of that's wonderful, but why is that the job of a university. Maybe they will institute Jazz Studies over at Newark. Maybe they have a good program in it, but this is no program in teaching anything about [music]. These kids don't learn anything about the history of jazz. They don't have any knowledge about the nature of music or what is music or what is music in different cultures or their own cultures, so why is this an academic program, just because they can attract a lot of minority students who can get quick, easy credits. That's what it has become, and our dean stands here calling it the hunger for beauty and hunger for art. This is self-deception.

I got a reputation for speaking my mind, not worrying about popularity. They elected me as chairman of the Council of Chairmen. Then, I became, again, by election to the faculty chamber an appointment by the dean of the Committee of the Whole, the entire faculty, which was planning. We had different subcommittees, and there were forty-two members out of 225 who were active in academic planning, physical planning, all kinds of planning. This is soon after I got here, because I spoke like that once or twice, and the chairman of the Urban Planning Department, or the director, who had come from Harvard, went back to Harvard, he said, "You've got the right man. If [there's anyone] who knows anything about planning, you've got him. He should be in my department. Let Shanti run this show." They did, and we worked hard. Unfortunately, as happens often, the faculty was more given the feeling that we were being consulted and we were participating, but we were really not [planning]. I figured the same thing was being done to students. There was a lot of sham.

One professor [laughter] he put it in a way I could never do. He spoke in the faculty meeting here. We used to have a group called (word?), (faculty of New Brunswick council?), which I was a member for many years. He said, "Well, I hate to say so but participation in these power structures that the University has created supposedly with getting faculty participation, it's like," he says, "masturbation." He says, "Intellectual masturbation. It gives you the feeling you are in, but you are not." [laughter] I reminded him of it. He's now the chairman of a department. He said, "Oh, I said that. I must have been high." I said, "No, but you were probably the only person who spoke the truth."

NM: I have a few wrap-up questions regarding things you brought up, especially since you went to Livingston in the late 1960s. This is really the height of the anti-Vietnam War Movement. How did that affect the campus?

ST: Well, again, I was living in Ann Arbor.

NM: In regards to Livingston Campus.

ST: I came here when we were past the peak in a way. I heard that President Mason Gross had students over at his place, and it was a political problem they'd created for him. I missed that. It was just before I came. There were no big events that I can remember after I got here, and certainly I was not a part of them. My peak was that participation in the teach-in at Michigan. There were all kinds of other things.

Once, students occupied Tillett Hall and brought the college to a standstill. I had a fairly active role in diffusing that situation. Indeed, it was, again, a totally new experience for me. [Editor's Note to Dr. Tangri: Was this demonstration in 1973 when Puerto Rican students were protesting federal cuts in financial aid?] The dean of the college was not on the scene and had disappeared. The associate dean, who was also the academic dean, had disappeared. Those are the only two who had any real power. The others didn't count. Even the level of power between the dean and the associate dean was a considerable drop, and I know there were several hundred students jammed in the Tillett Hall area on the second floor outside the dean's office. I was a member of the faculty, but I was not elected at that time yet in any important position. Again, I was known enough and partly because I had acquired the reputation for speaking my mind. I got up on a table. Some students helped me bring a table out in the middle, and I stood up on the table. There was police all around. There were 120 or some police. There were even faculty members from other colleges, including Dean McCormick, not this McCormick, the president, [but] his father, who was dean of Rutgers College, whom I'd gotten to know. [Editor's Note: History professor and University historian Richard P. McCormick, RC '38, GSNB '40, served as the dean of Rutgers College from 1974 to 1977. His son, Richard L. McCormick, also a professor of history, served as the President of Rutgers University from 2002 to 2012.] He and I stood side by side outside the door of Livingston College, and we had all locked arms. There were police buses standing outside, loading up kids and arresting them. We were trying to get that done peacefully, no (word?) resistance, no stone throwing. Some students had tried to turn over some buses and throw them out. We prevented that. There were good people from all over trying to prevent something terrible from happening, and they were from all the colleges. It lasted hours and hours.

At one point, in the absence of anybody else authorized, we had a very respected member, the chairman of the Philosophy Department, Al Blumberg, but he was a very gentle person. Al asked me if I would mind pleading with the students. I was thinking of doing that anyway. There was Ed Ortiz [Department of Community Development], who was very active as a Puerto Rican, and he agreed. I got up on the table, and I pleaded with the students not to go out and do anything which would be violent, what to do, what not to do and that each student who had any influence with other students should do the same and the last thing we want heard is we were going to try to get everybody who's [been] arrested released fairly quickly by providing all kinds of faculty support but what we expect in exchange the students would refrain from violence of any kind and not hurt anybody personally or a policeman or shouting obscenities or doing anything which would provoke anybody and though we will all go to nearby what is now called Blumberg Auditorium, it had a different name, [in] Lucy Stone Hall, and we will have a chance to talk about these things. We did and made a call to the president, who finally showed up at the other place.

Again, I had to get up on the stage there. All kinds of interesting things happened. Horowitz got up, he tried to speak. He was, of course, against the demonstrations, but he started telling people and I don't know if you know Horowitz, he had a sort of distorted face. He had some kind of a physical problem. What he was saying was sensible things, but people weren't in a mood to listen to him. One of the black students standing near me and so was Al Blumberg near the gate. When the black student shouted at him, he says, "Tell that motherfucker to shut up." Blumberg

started getting upset about it, so I put my hand. I reach over. He's a very gentle person. I said, "Don't get excited." I shouted, "Let him have his say. This is Livingston. We believe in freedom of speech. Let him have his say." A few people shouted in support of what I said, and Horowitz was able to finish his talk. We got the crowd out of there.

When the President [of Rutgers Edward Bloustein] came, we were able to persuade him. He was allowed to speak properly, and as we were escorting out, the dean was nowhere in sight, or the associate dean. As I walked with the president back to Lucy Stone Hall, because he wanted to know what my position was. I said, "I don't have any elected position. I have no authority, except that somebody's willing to listen." He said he was going to have a meeting with the chairmen, so I showed up. There were twenty or so. We had a more reasoned discussion. I was quiet throughout that meeting. He ended up saying, "Well, you've been quiet. You haven't said anything. Do you have nothing to say or you don't want to say it?" I said, "Well, I like to say it. I just don't know whether you would appreciate what I have to say." He said, "Well, I'm here." I said, "The short statement I could say this place has too many chiefs, not enough Indians." He laughed. I said, "That's what I want you to do. Now, you can relax. I don't mean you haven't hired enough people who look like me. I mean, there's no power below the administrative level, and when that person disappears from the scene, as has happened now, no matter how bright or how good he is, that's not a good picture. You have to make all the decisions and to make decisions about things which you don't really know that's going on. I have a point in criticism of your administration. This whole thing got started by some kind of controversy over renting rooms to students. It shouldn't have escalated to this point, except some rigidities along the line. Everybody's imposing their, 'This is our decision. This is my authority. This is how it's always been done.'" I said, "You're the president. You're like the father of our family. You're supposed to listen to the family, unless you're living in a different age and a different kind of family. Then, you may decide something which people may or may not like, but at least you have an obligation to listen. I don't like to be considered a child, but then it's a family, okay. I'm a junior member of the family. For one hour, we've been hearing you, and all you have done is defend the administration's actions. At no point have you said a single sentence that maybe the students have a point on this. Maybe we should have a committee to examine this demand of the students. Maybe I'll go home and think about it. As a result, what appears to me is either my temperament or for some reason which you've been persuaded that this is the way to run the University, I'm here to say I've never been a president of a university or a college, but this is not the way to run a modern institution, even if you are running a corporation, which tend to be more authoritarian. Don't pretend that you have participation when you don't, and we have a lot of that here. Either make up your mind, you're going to run the place with more participation and active advice, and we'll be giving you bad advice or good advice. Or if this is the way you want to run it, then be ready for more authoritarian action, then more authoritarian policies, because that's the way institutions develop. They don't go both ways." He was quiet for a while. He said, "Well, I have been told that you speak your mind, and I'm glad you did." I said, "Do you have a response?" He said, "Yes, I have to think about what you said." I said, "Well, I appreciate that."

Surprisingly, a little later, I got an invitation to his place for dinner. He invited a speaker who was actually invited by the New Brunswick chair at that time who I thought had given a lousy speech. He got paid well and he badmouthed the economics profession. He was an economist.

[laughter] He was one of the radicals who was dissatisfied with the nature of economics. I said, "Well, you have the freedom to speak," but I didn't think he did it in good taste. I wouldn't have invited him; I would've invited somebody else who was critical of the profession, critical of the department, but you don't get paid well and then say the kinds of things he said. [laughter] He was at the dinner, too. I shared my thoughts. I said, "You can be sure that if I have anything to do with an invitation wherever I am, it won't be going out to you. I will still be reading what you write, because I think there's some thoughtful material there, but you don't bite the hand that feeds you." He said, "Well, that's one philosophy." I said, "Yes, that's mine. I may say I can refuse to eat out from your hand, but you don't come to my home and get a nice big honorarium from me and to sort of blast me. That's not my culture. Maybe I'm from the wrong culture." [laughter] Bloustein said, "Well, I'm in a difficult position," and his wife was a doctor. She says, "Well, you have to be honest. Isn't that what you feel?" She turned to him. He says, "Yes, I do." She said, "Well, then take courage, somebody in your university is willing to talk to you that way." He said, "Yes, I appreciate it." One day, (he was honored?) unexpectedly at a concert at Douglass College. We were talking, so I said, "Would you and your wife want to drop in for a drink afterwards?" I figured he's the president of a university. I'm a professor who hardly knows him, and it's not planned. He must have a busy life. He said, "Ruth, are we doing anything?" She said, "No." "Oh, Shanti wants us to come over for a drink." He says, "Why not?" I said, "Well, I don't want you to be just talking to me all the time, so I'll invite a few more people here." There were some faculty members around from different colleges, so I invited them. They got here before I did. They had a driver. I had to go find my car. [laughter]

NM: This incident that you were talking about at Livingston when the dean and the associate dean were not on campus, when did that happen? Was that under Mason Gross's tenure as president, or was Edward Bloustein president?

ST: No, Mason Gross was out. Bloustein was president. [Editor's Note: Edward Bloustein served as the President of Rutgers University from 1971 until his death in 1989.]

NM: Okay.

ST: I'm trying to remember who the dean was at the time. I'm not sure.

NM: Was this in the early 1970s?

ST: My memory isn't that good now. I can't tell. I know the first dean, who, as I said, I had a good deal of respect for as a scholar and a person, human being, very decent guy, he has a building named after him, Lynton, Ernest Lynton. I went to his house several times for his parties. He was a great party giver. He also had the good nature of finding the right kind of people from Princeton and here and mixing them up. He lived in Princeton. George Carey was the one person who succeeded him temporarily. [He was] chairman of the urban planning program, or chairman of geography certainly, a very decent guy, bright guy. The (associate?) dean was Robert [Jenkins]. He was a biologist. Again, decent guy, he and his wife, but he was much more lenient. He was a better administrator than the first one, but he was much more willing to look the other way when minorities were involved. They all were, frankly, the first

dean was particularly, the second one [Emmanuel Mesthene]. [Editor's Note: W. Robert Jenkins succeeded Mesthene as Livingston College dean, holding the post from 1976 to 1990.]

There were very few people who were willing to stand up, and they were generally dubbed as conservatives or reactionaries, like my own friend Hilda Hidalgo, who was a very decent woman, a very bright woman. She was sort of unofficial leader of the Puerto Rican community, and she was in the community development program. I think she was the chair. At one of the faculty sessions, our dean said, somebody had a resolution. Everybody was trying to outsmart everybody else in how pro they were to minorities, which bugged me all the time. [laughter] I said, "I don't want special treatment." Of course, I'm not considered a minority. A person gets up and proposes that nobody be hired at Livingston until every department had one-third minority faculty. I said, "Are you serious? Nobody will be allowed to hire anybody at all, and the college is growing. It's only the second year. We're supposed to go up to 3,600 students. That means our faculty had to expand substantially and you're saying nobody should be hired. Where do you get the number one-third? What's the logic behind that?" Hilda Hidalgo entered the discussion, angry at people of accusing the University of not wanting to do enough for the minorities and so on. I said, "Well, that may be legitimate, but where does this kind of resolution [solve that]?" The dean said, "Okay, if you pass this, you're binding my hands, and I will enforce that regulation." Well, that's certainly not true that he had to. We were advisory, as anything else, but this was an easy way for him to get out from if the college didn't expand or things went wrong, "Okay, you guys passed this resolution." I said to the dean, I said, "Where's your responsibility in saying, 'Don't pass nonsensical resolutions. There's no way to implement it, not a chance in the world.'" Hilda Hidalgo got up. She says, "Shanti, shut up and sit down. Don't give me that shit. I get it from the whites all the time." I said, "Well, maybe you deserve it, Hilda. Sit down, and I'm going to speak my mind. You tell me if you can hire one-third of your faculty from minorities. I can tell you, in economics, I cannot, and I'll canvas the field." I said, "In the entire English speaking-world, there are nine graduate students who are black. Do you understand that? Nine students in Australia, New Zealand, England, Holland, America, Canada. I don't know how many are going to get their Ph.Ds. in the next three or four years, and I don't know how many of them would choose to come to Livingston. You want to tell me that that's a sensible resolution. You're telling me you're signing a death warrant for my department and for most others. Tell computer science that. That's one of our distinguished departments." There were two votes against that resolution. Mine was one and an English professor who was known to be outspoken also, (Bill Wasserman?). We were booed. So many very bright people, I loved some of them, I don't know how many of them were present that day, but all I remember is there were only two of us and it felt very lonely standing there. How can all these bright, well-educated people, most of them with Ph.Ds. from first rate universities, stand up and not act as responsible, moderately intelligent citizens? If you pass the resolution, okay, the ball is in somebody else's court now.

Well, I made the effort incidentally. I went to Puerto Rico and had a reception given to me by the department of economics [name of institution]. I traveled around, interviewed people, made an offer to one person who accepted the offer. He had taught at Rutgers once, one year as an instructor, hadn't finished his Ph.D. at Penn, and my offer would have enabled him to finish his Ph.D. and contingent on that to put him up for associate professorship or tenure. He was a

middle-aged person, bright guy, nice guy. I had dinner with him and his family. Well, the week before classes began, I get a telegram or something, he's not coming, in September. [laughter] I made an offer to a second person, a woman. The same thing happened. The third person I tried to hire, by that time, the first person had heard from somebody that the students voted against him, and they were Puerto Rican students. I had to meet with them, and they took a vote. The faculty was small, four or five or six, and none of them except the chair was tenured. I was present at that meeting. She had given a talk. She had a Ph.D. from NYU, respectable degree, had published a book just a week before, Rita Maldonado. I did not have a full position, so I split it with Douglass [and] persuaded their dean to hire her jointly. Well, they wanted to know whether this woman was for Puerto Rican independence or not. [Rita] says, "I am here as an economist to talk about economics." "Why are you dodging the question?" She says, "Because it's not relevant, and I don't want it to be relevant in your decision to hire me." "Well, if we're going to be your students and you're going to be a role model, we need to know what your politics are." I said to Rita, I said, "Feel free to speak your mind. I happen to belong to that small minority who will ignore your political opinions in making my decision, and I can assure you that I can swear to that. Even if you are a Communist or a Marxist or something else, it will not matter to me. If you are for independence or against independence, it will not matter to me." One student said, "Well, now can you speak up?" She said, "Yes." She said, "Well, I don't think it's a good idea." She said, "As an economist, it would mean losing this preferential treatment of taxes. It's going to mean the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico would have very diminished revenue. That's going to be very difficult for a poor country to handle. What are they going to do, ask for foreign aid, so what now comes their way without asking. They will have to ask for it politically and they may or may not get it, and they may not get it from an American Congress which is mad at them for having separated. It would also mean," so she went down the list. "In the long run, maybe independence would be better for Puerto Rico. Who knows? There may be good reasons. People may feel better. Maybe foreign companies will come to an independent Puerto Rico more readily. It's hard to know. What is easy to know is what the negative consequences are going to be. The standard of living would fall, and we have an immigration safety valve. A lot of Puerto Ricans, when they can't find jobs and work, they come to the mainland. That's going to be affected seriously. People on the mainland who go back and forth, they're going to find it more difficult. With all these reasons, I think personally, it's not a very good idea. Maybe we can enjoy the kind of British relationship we have and continue with that."

Well, they voted her down. The department was dominated by what they call *Independistas*. I said, "One person who was willing and able to join, your department students turned her down. You did not have the guts to say, 'I'm going to hire her anyway, because it's so difficult to find anybody who's really qualified, and over time, some of these students will come around and probably learn economics.'" I had to create a course for them, which I did help them. I didn't have to, but I did. We taught it. I said, "That's not as good as having somebody like Rita teach it." I said, "Three strikes and you are out. For Hilda and others to speak that I must hire one-third of my department which is minority, yes, I'll look for minorities, but I'm not looking for any Hispanics anymore. Three is good enough. My time is valuable. I can't afford to do this. If the dean doesn't want me as chairman, he can fire me as the chairman." I said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to hire a woman. There are a lot more bright women coming through with PhDs, and they don't have enough doors open for them. My probability of finding a good,

bright woman who's well trained are ten times better than finding a Latino who has the same qualifications, five times better for a black economist. I'm going to spend my energy as a rational person and go where my pickings are going to be better." That's what I did. I went to the meetings. I interviewed an equal number of men and equal number of women. [laughter] Out of six women, I was able to hire two. I was able to hire one black guy. It was so disheartening to feel that people would choose their politics sometimes to their own detriment. It didn't restore my faith in democracy. As [Winston] Churchill said, "It's the worst form of government except every other." [laughter] I felt, "Well, I rather have this poor democracy at Livingston than nothing at all."

The interesting thing is, as in many professors in history, I had the greatest respect for many of these people as individuals, but why collectively we produce such bad policy decisions, which in my judgement were bad, I don't know. I think if most of these other people had asserted themselves more and not bowed to what I considered extreme, for lack of a better word, these are left positions. Well, some were clearly so. Markowitz is open. Many others who were not so open about their politics, but in general they would back off when a minority member would take a position. [There were] a few exceptions, like Gerry Pomper, for whom I had the greatest respect, in political science. [Louis] Galambos in history had commanded the same respect. He was chair, but he left. He went to Johns Hopkins I think. He may have come from there and he went back. In computer science, I had good friends, many of them I had high respect. Many of them showed up at my retirement party. I thought the weak spots were sociology, some in anthropology, though that was divided, and many other departments. We didn't have any physics or chemistry or math. In general, it was one of those situations in which you can have a rational population and irrational policies, which I think happens at the national level here. Individually, I think Americans are by and large more rational than a lot of cultures produce, but collectively, we seem to have our representatives who can't function. [laughter]

NM: Before we conclude the interview, I want to give you the chance to add anything you would like to add for the record.

ST: I may also want to blank out a name or two.

NM: All of that stuff can be done after the transcript has been produced, so do not worry about that.

ST: Because I wouldn't want somebody to [feel bad], especially if they are still alive. If they are dead, I certainly wouldn't want it. They have no chance to refute. [laughter] If they're alive, I don't want to get anybody into trouble needlessly. It's all gone and a matter of archives, like George Carey's statement, which I thought was true. He did call Livingston a third world country institution, but he wasn't surprised. He said, "I don't know why people expect it to be any different." Because what he was saying was that we're hiring people who are not at the same level as the non-minority. One of the things that perhaps bothers me more now than it did then is that I always thought that maybe people talk about minorities, they only had blacks in mind. Now, it's blacks and Hispanics. It was never in the meaning of the word minorities. There were American Indians. There were Asians. There were people from all over the place. There were

East Europeans. Not all of them had the same disadvantage. I can't claim I had any disadvantages in life for which I need to be compensated, and there are people who did.

Increasingly, even now, when you hear the talk about immigration, it's now almost focused entirely on Latin Americans. You get into problems if you want a more honest discussion. I asked one of my friends, some of my close friends were very, very pro-immigration, I said, "Would you be talking the same way if our neighborhood was not Canada or Mexico but say China or India or a country in Africa or Haiti and people were coming across in large numbers who you call undocumented. Do you think the politics or political discussion on the airwaves would be the same?" He said, "Well, I think you're asking me a rhetorical question." I said, "I don't intend to, but it does sound like it's rhetorical. You wouldn't have twelve million illegal Chinese and the Americans having immigrant groups forming, waving Chinese flags and expect the American Congress to pass a resolution welcoming them. Or the same applies to Haitians or to Indians." He said, "No, I'm afraid you're right on that." "Why is that when you talk about minorities, you're really talking about my group?" I said, "You're not particularly to blame. I think all of us have that problem."

I was a member of the Committee on Asian Studies all the years I was at Rutgers. It was an inter-ethnic committee, but there was parochialism in it to the point where my Chinese colleagues, who were good friends of mine, and one of them wanted me to succeed him as chair of the group, he couldn't persuade his other colleagues. He said [that] I was the senior most member of the group. I did some work on an Asian country once in a while. I knew more about more countries than some. I had published some work on India. I had done some work on China, in addition to doing some work on Soviet economies. He said [that] I'd be a logical person to be chairing that committee, but the rest of the group would not even want to extend it. We had a Japanese professor who was very senior and retired many years ago. They just wanted to expand the Chinese program, and my friend, who's no longer here, he lives in Oakland, California, (Peter Li?), (Peter?) said, "Well, that's so short sighted. You want to broaden your base. You should try, and when you have somebody available and he's willing to do it, you should take advantage of it." They wouldn't even consider a young Japanese scholar at that time for that position. They didn't want to expand into that area. I said, "Rutgers has a long history of relations with Japan." I said, "You should capitalize on it. We have a good library. Appoint somebody there or promote somebody and then build on China and Japan and then extend it to others." I found the same thing with my friend Jan Dutta, who's Indian. His parochialism is no better than anybody else's. It's a fact of life. I live with it, but Jan is unhappy with me that I don't work with him in trying to do things to expand the India-oriented things. Well, it turned out he's not even India oriented. He's mostly interested in himself. Now that he's stopped getting interested in India, his interests have shifted to Asia in general, Asian Rim [Pacific Rim]. It's understandable. People have careers, and they want to advance them. Sometimes, that takes the form of this kind of ethnic chauvinism. Whenever he didn't get a promotion or an increment, he would always use his ethnicity and file complaints on that basis, and he managed to get two promotions on that basis to full professorship over the years. He was mad at me, because I wouldn't support his application on that basis. We all have to undergo some kind of consciousness raising that human beings are human beings, and it's not easy.

NM: I am going conclude the interview. Thank you for having me.

ST: Thank you for interviewing me. It's an honor.

NM: We are looking forward to transcribing the interview and sending it to you, as well as sending you a copy of the second interview to your son.

ST: I can't hear you.

NM: We will send a copy of the second interview to your son.

ST: Okay.

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Transcribed and reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 8/16/18

Reviewed by Neil Tangri 8/24/24