RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM R. FERNEKES

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH
and
KRISTIE THOMAS
and
DAMIEN KULIKOWSKI
and
MELINDA KINHOFER

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
OCTOBER 23, 2009

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Dr. William R. Fernekes on October 23, 2009, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and …

Kristie Thomas: … Kristie Thomas …

Damien Kulikowski: … Damien Kulikowski …

Melinda Kinhofer: … and Melinda Kinhofer.

SI: Thank you very much for coming. We have been looking forward to this for a while.

William Fernekes: My pleasure.

SI: Could you tell us when and where you were born?

WF: I was born at the Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital in Jersey City, New Jersey, [the] 17th of September, 1952.

SI: What were your parents' names?

WF: My father's name, and he's still alive, is William B. Fernekes; "B" is Bernard. My mother's name is Josephine Claire Mangnante. … When she got married, it became Josephine Fernekes. My mother passed away in 1988.

SI: Can you tell us about your father's family history?

WF: Sure. My father's side of the family, his mother is named Rita Carrick. She was born in New York City, just around the turn of the century, and her father was actually an immigrant from Great Britain, as was her mother. … I would say before she was fifteen years old, there was a rift and her father left the family. She remained and … her mother raised her and her brothers and sisters. My father's family came from Germany. … His father wasn't born in Germany, [but] his family was from Germany. We have some birth documents that trace that back to the Rhine Pfalz region, and it was probably in the nineteenth century that immigration occurred, but they have records … of my grandfather's family in New York City from around the mid-nineteenth century.

SI: Okay.

WF: … They ended up moving to Jersey City, New Jersey, between 1900 and 1920.

SI: Okay.

WF: After they were married, … my father was born, [in] February 1922, in Jersey City.

SI: Why did the family relocate to Jersey City?

WF: I don't really know. I think my father's recollection of it is very vague, but I think, you know, talking to his mother, the impression I get was that it probably was for employment.

SI: What was your grandfather's profession?

WF: He was a mechanic. He actually had his own automobile mechanic shop in Jersey City with his brother, Al. They had a garage where they would store cars--sort of an interesting issue. We don't do that today, unless you [have] got a lot of money. Maybe back then, you had to have a lot of money, but they would store cars, and they would wash them and oil them and repair them, and then, people would come and get them. They paid a storage fee, and then, he would do repairs. He had the machine shop. … I think when the Great Depression happened, that became very difficult. … So, he became an employee of the Frank Hague government of Jersey City. He worked for the park system, and he worked there until he retired in the 1950s. [Editor's Note: Frank Hague was the Democratic mayor and influential political boss of Jersey City, New Jersey, from the 1920s to the 1940s.]

SI: Did your grandfather have to campaign for Frank Hague?

WF: I don't know. I know that during the Second World War, he was an air raid warden. He served in the United States Navy in World War I.

SI: Okay.

WF: … He worked for [the] Jersey City municipal government. He was an air raid warden. Aside from that, I don't know an awful lot more about it.

SI: Do you know the name of the business?

WF: No. His brother Al and he ran it. … I think his brother Al relocated, after a point, down to Ocean County. … One of Al's sons had very bad respiratory problems and staying in Jersey City, the doctor said, "Not a good idea." So, they relocated, and I'm not sure if that was the reason the business separated or went down, but I know that, after a point, that it didn't happen anymore.

SI: What about your mother's side of the family?

WF: My mother's parents were born in Italy. My mother was born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1920. She had four brothers and sisters, only one of whom is still alive, my Aunt Jane. She was the youngest. My mother also had a sister, Angelina, and two brothers, Anthony and Michael. I've actually traced my grandfather's arrival at Ellis Island through the manifests, and he came, if I'm not mistaken, … between 1895 and 1905. I just don't recall the exact date. What happened was that when he came here, he ended up in Pennsylvania. I don't know exactly the reason why he went there, but one can suspect it may have been because some community was there that he was associated with back in Italy, or there was a connection or some type [of tie]. My grandmother married him when she was fifteen years old. He was at least ten years older, and her maiden name was Tiberia, like the Roman Emperor, Tiberius. [laughter] Anyway, they got

married and relocated to New Jersey. My grandfather was an interesting guy. He worked in a number of businesses. He worked with heavy equipment, and, if I'm not mistaken, if my mother's memory was accurate, he worked on one of the major tunnel projects that linked New York City and New Jersey. He also owned a store, and that was an interesting issue. In the 1930s, he actually opened … a grocery store in Orange and it failed. My mother quit high school the last semester of her senior year to work, because they had to work, and she never finished high school. My father actually did finish high school. He was one of the few. He … graduated from Henry Snyder High School in Jersey City. So, my … mother went to work, and this probably [was] '37, '36, '37,' 38, around there. … She worked, you know, as a single woman, … in stores in Orange. She worked in … Westinghouse during World War II, in war production, and then, my parents got married in 1950. They met in Newark. My father came back from World War II. He had served in the United States Navy. I'm still failing to get him to do an interview, Shaun. So, sometime, we'll try to get that. I'll briefly tell you what he did. My father had graduated from high school in 1939 and, of course, the United States was still coming out of the Depression. It really wasn't [over]--employment still was difficult. What happened after Pearl Harbor was that he enlisted in the Navy and he ended up being trained as a radioman and a gunner on a dive-bomber that was on the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger* CV-4. He served in the North Atlantic, on convoy duty, antisubmarine duty, the invasion of North Africa, and then, during about, I guess it was probably '42 or '43, he was invited to join the training cadre for officers. … He ended up actually going to college as part of that program at Tufts, Princeton, and then, when the war ended, he said he had enough. So, he left, got into the insurance business, and he and my mother met, sometime between 1945 and 1950, and got married. Then, I showed up in 1952. [laughter]

SI: Do you know how they met?

WF: According to my mother, they met when … my mother and some other women were in Newark and they … met at a restaurant. I don't really know, to tell you the truth about it, but the interesting thing, too, is that my father worked in New York City after World War II, and did insurance, all kinds of different types. He ended up, later on, being pretty much focused on casualty insurance, like automobile insurance, things like that. He worked for the American Insurance Company in New Jersey. Then, he got a job with Allstate, for which he had a lot of work, for a long time, and retired from there. My mother went back to work after I went to kindergarten, which was in 1957, and gradually picked up part-time work, and then, ended up in various places. Her last … full-time job was as a supermarket bakery manager down in Ocean Township.

KT: Did your mother maintain Italian traditions in your home, such as language and food?

WF: It's an interesting question. … I'm going to connect it to something that happened to my grandmother. My grandfather died in the mid-'50s. He … actually had diabetes, and had gone blind at one point, and, in the … early, mid-'50s, he wasn't doing well and he passed away in the mid-'50s. My grandmother lived in Orange, in the same home where my mother had been born, in that area on Monroe Street. … What happened was that she … had been working for a long time, because they needed the money, my grandmother. … At that point, it was unclear to me … whether they could sustain the home. So, basically, I think, she sold the house and gave money

to her children, and, at that point, she had no place to live and her children, she lived with them. So, she lived sometime with my Aunt Jane, she lived sometime with my Aunt Angelina, and I think, in some ways, that was a difficult period, because she died in the early '70s, but she really had no place to go. So, when you talk about traditions, this is connected to that. I think those traditions became very prominent when she came to your house.

SI: Okay. [laughter]

WF: Christmas dinner, Easter. She spoke fluent Italian. My mother … didn't speak hardly any Italian. … I think a lot of that relates back to the Americanization ethos, "Stamp it out, be an American." … I enjoy music and the opera and everything. I put them on, … she understood exactly what they're saying. … [She] hadn't been in Italy, ever again. She never went back. So, you know, I think that didn't get carried over very much, but my mother did have a lot of those cooking traditions and all that. … I could probably remember ten or fifteen things, like what will happen when somebody died. There would always be a certain … uniform you wore. You went to an Italian funeral, a woman wore black--there wasn't any discussion over that. When you had family and friends over, it almost became … a segregated activity, sometimes. The men were here, the women were here--certain things are talked about, certain things weren't talked about. My mother's sister's husband, who had a real drinking problem, unfortunately, [laughter] he would always make the same thing at Christmas. He'd make these Italian hard pretzels and we'd have the one. They're called taralles. You'd have that, you could expect it. That was the way it was, you know. These are the things that happen, and they tended to focus on the rituals, you know. So, I think, in that sense, there was very little of the language, very little of the culture of Italy, in the deeper sense, but those sort of common, like, everyday things were there, yes.

KT: Okay.

SI: Were there Italian-American associations or community-wide activities that they were involved in?

WF: None. I would say that, if I look at my own family, very little of that self-professed ethnicity was there. My father, actually, became self-professed German-American at some point in his life. I don't know how that happened, but he did. I could remember, in the late '60s and early '70s, him always talking about, "Be proud that you're German-American," and he would go to restaurants, he'd put on a [German] hat. … I don't know what to say about it. [laughter] … He still believes in that, and I never saw that, before that [time]. My speculation is that all came about as a result of [the] Civil Rights Movement, and that it was really, sort of, a white man's response to what changes were taking place in this country. … You know, I looked at it, I sort of listened to it and I lived in it, for a while, but I never … adopted any of the stuff or joined any associations. My father belongs to the Hibernians. He's part Irish, … because his mother was Irish and Scotch. So, now, he's in the Hibernians, but, when I was growing up, I don't think he knew who the Hibernians were. [Editor's Note: The Ancient Order of Hibernians is an Irish Catholic fraternal organization, whose members must be Catholic and of Irish ancestry.]

SI: Do you think your father did not bring up his heritage because of World War I and World War II, when the United States was at war with Germany?

WF: I don't know. I couldn't really say. I never got the sense from my parents that there was any sort of, you know, sympathy.

SI: There was no prejudice against them.

WF: Yes, and I never really got that, except that my mother did tell me this one interesting story, that when she worked in war production in Westinghouse, that a number of … women [were Italian-Americans]. … She got the very clear impression that the supervisor had bigotry against Italian-Americans and they called him on it, basically. That was an issue, but, aside from that, right now, I can't think of any real sort of … overt prejudice, or things like that.

SI: Did your mother describe what she did at Westinghouse during the war?

WF: Yes, she was on what's called "the Flying Squad." In other words, they deployed people in different parts of the building on … the production line, [wherever] they were needed. She would go to different places as needed. … She also worked in a shoe store in Orange, New Jersey, and met Thomas Edison. … When they lived up there, they would come down into the stores. That was sort of interesting. … The one thing my mother [said that] I remember about the Second World War, she said, "When Pearl Harbor, … was announced, all the people went in the middle of the street and started talking, 'What were they going to do?'" … It was a pretty, sort of, diverse neighborhood. They had African-Americans, they had Greek-Americans, they had Italian-Americans, different [people], and they were like, "Wow, what are we going to do?" and, "How [do] we deal with that?" you know. … I still have my mother's first radio.

SI: Wow.

WF: From, like, 1946. … You know, it's a small console radio, with an actual wooden outside and everything. It's an Emerson radio. Yes, you don't realize today, as much as maybe we should, the struggles that people went through to sort of just get by and survive, and they did.

SI: You were born in 1952.

WF: Correct.

SI: By elementary school, you had already moved to the Shore. Do you remember anything about Jersey City and the period in-between when you were born and when you moved to the Shore?

WF: Well, no, not about Jersey City. I do remember visiting my grandmother in their house in Jersey City. See, my … grandfather had retired. My grandmother, actually, played the piano very well, and she gave piano lessons and was a hairdresser. She actually had the hairdresser salon in her house, and gave piano lessons in her house. I mean, this was a need, right. You needed the money, okay. So, I remember going to their home. My father moved many times when he was a young man, like fifteen, sixteen times in Jersey City. … So, this was like the last place before they moved to Point Pleasant. In the 1950s, after my parents got married, they first

lived, if I'm not mistaken, in Kearny, New Jersey. Then, I think, they moved to Arlington, or vice versa. At that point, my father, one night, saw an ad in the newspaper for a very small house in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, and he drove down there with my mother. They put me in the back seat, right, and they talked to this woman. This woman--this is according to my father--wanted to sell this very small house to someone else, because she was angry with her own child, who had done something to disagree with her, and she said, "My child's not getting this house. I'm going to sell it for three thousand dollars." They didn't have three thousand dollars. My mother's mother gave them the money, so [that] they could buy this, put the down payment [on it], and they did it. So, what happened is that, … at that point, my parents moved to Union, New Jersey, to Porter Road, … Union, New Jersey. They rented an apartment, but, on weekends, would go down to Point Pleasant, see. So, my mother and I, in the summer, would be down there during the week and my father would come down on the weekend. In the late '50s, when we bought the home that I was raised in, in Ocean Township, my father and mother sold that house to my grandparents and they moved to that house. So, that's sort of the transition that took place. I don't remember very much about Arlington or Kearny. I remember the place in Union, because we used to visit it sometimes. We had the people who owned the building, [who] lived below, and they rented the apartment in the house. … Two blocks away, my Aunt Angelina and her daughter, Dianne, and her husband, Angelo, and their children, bought a house. So, we were very close to that old place, when we would go visit them on the holidays and stuff. So, the place in Union, I remember very well, and, when we moved to [the] Township of Ocean, down in Monmouth County, that was a big change, because, you know, this was like "the new frontier," suburbia. My parents were urban people, you know. They'd grown up in the city. They knew the city. This was new territory, other than that sort of small time we had in Point Pleasant. … I think one of the issues was, really, they wanted a different place to raise children, yes.

KT: Where did you grow up in Ocean Township? I am from Ocean Township.

WF: Are you?

KT: Yes.

WF: Okay. [laughter] I lived off of Cold Indian Springs Road.

KT: Okay. I am right off of Deal Road.

WF: There you go, know it well.

KT: Yes.

WF: Right off, if you go up Cold Indian Springs Road and turn into Arbor Way, that's where I lived, in there. That's an interesting social history tidbit, now. In 1957, my parents bought the house for sixteen thousand dollars. There were fifty houses in the subdivision. The developer went bankrupt. They were supposed to build more, didn't build any more. … My father had a GI mortgage, three percent, and it was still a stretch, but, if you think about it, nobody's getting a three-percent mortgage today and nobody's buying a house for sixteen thousand dollars. … The

whole street was … like the profile of the World War II Baby Boom. We're in one house, people across the street, … [father] is an Army veteran. He's still in the Army, and he's got two children, my age; go down the street, guy works for RCA, commutes to it, two children. I mean, you could see the postwar generation all up and down the street, you know, interesting.

SI: The development was left half-finished.

WF: Yes. I mean, he was supposed to build more, and then, they never were able to finish it. So, you know, people bought the homes. … That, I think, fueled the whole movement to create their own high school. See, when I went to school, first starting in [the] Township of Ocean, there was no high school and the board of education sent the high school kids to Asbury Park High School. So, by the time I was in middle school, at the Dow Avenue Elementary School, they … were building a high school. So, what happened was that I entered the high school, I think in '67 or '68, because I'm not convinced we were the first class, but I graduated in '70. We were one of the first classes to graduate from the high school, but they had no high school before that. It had been a sending relationship.

SI: Did the developer going bankrupt affect the construction of sidewalks and roads in the community?

WF: It's hard for me to remember. I really don't know, but one of the things was that, at that time--just as you see in other parts of New Jersey now, that are being heavily developed--you had a lot of open space. And behind where I lived, there were no houses. It was all woods. I mean, it was all undeveloped and, you know, lots of farms and things like that, which are all pretty much gone now. … I think what you enjoyed there was, people knew that they were going to get services, and there was probably discussion about how those services are going to be delivered, you know, from the township and all that, but it was a nice place to be, because you had sort of this almost idyllic [setup]. You had your community, but, then, you had open space … and things like that. You joined associations of friends and things like that, that you met there, you know, and, as more things were built, you got more people. … I will say one thing about it--that was very obvious--it was all white. There was not a single African-American family in that community. … I can remember a story. [laughter] It's pretty sad. There would be these little parties on the block. People were like, "Let's have a party." … People would go to one house or another and all [the] neighbors would come. Everybody would bring something. One day, … during one of the parties, … guy across the street, his name was Merle. Merle was from Missouri, and [lived with] his wife, … two daughters and a son. Well, somebody put their house for sale on the street. … So, one time, Merle comes out, and I think I'm saying this properly or accurately, he says, "Well, if somebody bothers me, then, I'll sell my house to a nigger," and I don't think that was made in jest. I think that was the notion, that we're going to make sure that certain types of people don't show up … in this neighborhood. … There was no Ku Klux Klan, there was none of that, but I think it was this sense that, "They're not us." The guy next-door to us had an African-American maid, who was not well-treated. I could hear the abuse, just, you know, language and stuff, but I remember my mother working at a place called Delicious Orchards--you may know this.

KT: Yes. [laughter]

WF: You know it. Well, Delicious Orchards was an orchard in--I think it's Colts Neck, okay. My mother was an apple packer, and then, she became as salesperson. Well, they had migrant labor, most of them African-American, and my mother used to tell me how poorly they were treated. … My mother would put old clothes [together] and they'd come to the house and get the clothes, but … [it] was pretty clear, my father didn't want them in the house.

SI: Was there any religious-based prejudice?

WF: Well, my mother would go out sometimes with women in the neighborhood, to the movies, and I remember her saying to me, once, that one of the persons, who happened to be [of] Irish background, referred to Jews as "Christ killers." Well, I think we have to remember that the Catholic Church didn't renounce the deicide of Jesus until the mid-1960s as official policy. So, you can't really say that they weren't taught that. They probably were. You know, I mean, there were Jewish families on our block, but no black families, no Latinos. It was pretty homogenous--so was Ocean Township High School, very homogenous.

KT: Ocean Township High School is very diverse now.

WF: That's good.

KT: My parents graduated from Ocean Township High School.

WF: Did they?

KT: I remember my father telling me stories about when he was in elementary school. He said there were no African-Americans or racial diversity.

WF: When did he graduate?

KT: I am not sure. He was born in 1954.

WF: '72?

KT: Yes.

WF: Okay. Yes, I'm not surprised.

SI: You were raised Roman Catholic.

WF: I was.

SI: How important was the Roman Catholic Church to your family, when you were growing up?

WF: Well, that's a good question. I think my mother was always deeply spiritual, but didn't do much in terms of the continuity of religious rituals after she was married. I think she would have

done more, but I just think it wasn't something that you made a priority, depending upon … how she and my father talked about it. I mean, my father was not raised as a Catholic. He was raised in a Protestant church. … I went through the whole set of rituals, you know, Communion, Confirmation. I went to Catechism after going to elementary school and things like that. I went to a couple of classes for the high school level, and then, didn't go anymore. My parents didn't make religion a big priority. I mean, I would go to Saint Mary's in Deal. We also went to [Our Lady of] Mount Carmel, sometimes, in Asbury, but I was never given any pressure to … become an altar boy, or to do other types of things. My mother, I think, always remained very spiritually committed. She would enjoy, you know, reading the Bible, rosary, and doing the stations of the cross when she went to … church on Christmas and Easter. … We used to go every Sunday … up until a point, and then, I didn't go after a point. My father, … that's sort of interesting, I think he's become more of a publicly religious person in his older age, versus being someone … that made it a big priority. I always felt that they didn't want to make it as sort of an imposition. … When I had broke away from going to church and that all after a point, they didn't bring it up. They didn't say, "Why aren't you going to church?" They didn't say, "You better go to church," you know. So, I think that's where I think it rests. My father goes to church every week now, every week. He doesn't miss it, and that was not the case when I was growing up.

SI: Were you involved in sports or organized activities growing up?

WF: Yes, I was involved in Little League baseball. I was involved in the band, in Ocean Township. I was in the marching band and in the symphonic band, and so forth. I took piano lessons from the time I was in fourth grade, and continued them into Rutgers, actually took them at Rutgers as a senior. I was in activities for the YMCA. The YMCA in Asbury Park was right on Main Street. Now, it's no longer there, but they had a summer camp program, Camp Zehnder, in Wall Township. You know, I would go regularly, every summer, a week or two, but I also went … on the Saturday program they had. My parents would get me involved in that. I took some judo lessons. … Aside from that, I was never involved in the Boy Scouts, I was never involved in those types of things. After a point, my father became very concerned about being in the American Legion, and he, still today, signs me up to get the … Junior American Legion newsletter, whatever it is. I don't say anything to him--that's his business. I will read it. That's what he wants, that's fine. These are some of the negotiated settlements you make when you get older, [laughter] but I can honestly say my father was never one of these people who insisted you had to, sort of, wave the flag … when I was growing up. I think he's become much more of a public patriot in his old age. … When I was younger, he never did that. He once said to me that I should serve, fulfill my military obligation, after I go to college, and I didn't respond. We left it at that.

MK: What was the reaction of your family to John F. Kennedy's assassination?

WF: … It was a terrible thing. … I can tell you exactly where I was that day, sitting in sixth grade, Dow Avenue Elementary School, Mrs. Mohn's classroom, it came over the intercom. They put on the radio. I'll never forget it. She was terribly distraught, and the guy next to me, Bob Goldstein, said, after it was announced, he said, "Good." … Then, school was closed, you stayed home and, you know, I can still see the black-and-white TV with the funeral cortege. I didn't see the actual killing of Oswald, you know, the shooting by Ruby, but it was a terrible

time. [Editor's Note: President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas. Lee Harvey Oswald, the primary suspect in the assassination, was himself killed by Jack Ruby on live television days later.] … My father is a Republican, he is a conservative. My mother was really a Democrat. My mother suppressed her political ideas a lot, under my father. My father was sort of overbearing about that stuff, and she always said, … "Voting is my business." He would pressure her, "Oh, you've got to vote for Nixon. You've got to vote for," you know, and she would say, "Leave me alone." … That's something they negotiated, but it was pretty clear that the Kennedy assassination was a terrible thing.

MK: How did your father's military service affect your family, when you were growing up?

WF: He had had enough of the military. … I'll tell you another thing he said. He said, "There's no reason to have a weapon in the house." He said he saw what weapons could do. He had a fencing epee, I guess that's what they call them, that he kept, because, in the Navy, they had fencing. He kept that. So, I once asked him, "Why don't you have a gun?" He said, "There's no reason to have a gun." He said, "If you ever saw what a gun could do, you wouldn't want one." So, he was really totally against having weapons, because he had been in the [Navy], you know. He saw what a forty-five-caliber gun could do to a human being and he saw what happened to people who were wounded and all that, and you know what I mean, "No way." … He didn't have … [any] respect for people who would … show off, that had weapons, and hunting and all that. So, he was not interested in that, whatsoever. So, that whole military piece was not a prominent part of our home. You know, he didn't bring it up, he didn't talk about it. He didn't make a public display. Like I said, I think he's more nostalgic about it now, and sort of looking back in his life. If you go to his apartment in Asbury, he's got all the stuff for … when he was in the military, and interesting stuff. I mean, his radioman's log, he's got it.

SI: Wow.

WF: He's got stuff, photographs and all this, and I try to help him preserve a lot of that, because he had them sort of in disarray, and I'd help him keep them together. … Now, he has letters from his [wife], my mother, all this stuff, which would be great for an interview.

SI: I hope we do get the chance to interview him.

WF: Yes, he would be a good interview. It's just that his hearing is not the best, but, you know, we could do it together, too.

SI: Sure.

WF: Anyway.

SI: Did you see any lasting effects of his wartime experience? Did he have nightmares?

WF: No, I really didn't see that at all. I saw that with my uncle, though. My Uncle Sam, my Aunt Jane's husband, was in the Marines, in Korea, and she said it more than once, that when he came back, he was a changed person. I think that directly contributed to his alcoholism. He was

seventeen and he's over there in, you know, combat. … I think it had a profoundly negative, terrible effect on him, and that translated into the difficulties that alcoholism creates at home. … I have seen that. … Aside from that, … when people get together, like in these old block parties, you know, people would say, "I was in the Army," "I was in the Navy," and all that stuff, you know. I mean, you're young, you don't really remember that stuff. … My father never really talked about it. He didn't talk about, you know, what happened. If I asked him, he'd answer the question, but he really didn't bring it up. I mean, I do remember one interesting conversation with him. One day, we're sitting in our kitchen and I asked my father, I said, "Did you ever have relationships, with a woman, before you got married?" He said, "Yes." My mother was sitting right there. She knew it. He and other men had seen a prostitute in London, on shore leave, and he said, "That was different. That's all different." I'm sixteen years old, so, I don't know how different it was. So, I'm sitting there, listening to this, and that's part of the war experience that was not revealed. …

SI: Yes.

WF: So, that just came out.

SI: Very few people talk about prostitution in the interviews that we conduct. Was your father actively involved in politics or were there just political discussions at home?

WF: My father was pretty Republican. When I say pretty Republican, I mean, I don't think he voted, … since Harry Truman, for a Democrat. … He would participate, I think, in discussions, but he wasn't really an activist, going out there and being … a neighborhood activist for this candidate or that. I think there were some of this, sort of, "Politicians are corrupt" [mentality], you know, "Politicians are a problem," and, "I'll … keep my distance from politicians." My mother was never really politicized. She wasn't involved in political life very much.

SI: Did your father stay with one insurance company?

WF: He changed from the American Insurance Company--this is my memory--in the '50s to Allstate in the '60s. … The office was in Neptune, and then, later, in Bricktown, and he retired from … Allstate.

SI: Your mother went back to work when you were in kindergarten.

WF: Yes. She went to work at a variety of manual labor jobs, whether it was--Delicious Orchards was one. She worked in a factory in Wanamassa, actually. It's not there anymore, Lapin Products. It's near Sunset Avenue. … She sold … Avon products, and she then got a job working at the Foodtown in Wanamassa, and she worked there for a long [time]. So, that was a very happy period for her. She enjoyed that very much. She ran the bakery and, you know, my mother was very outgoing and she was very good with people. She would get along [well]. She had her customers--they would come to her. … She enjoyed that very much, and part of that, also, was the fact that I think she wasn't being dominated by my father. Well, I think that independence--peace--is very significant.

SI: What was your father's attitude toward your mother working, was that a problem?

WF: No, I don't think so at all. … I think they needed the money. I can remember sitting in the car one time and my father; … Allstate was owned by Sears Roebuck then, Allstate Insurance, and I remember they had … a Sears card. So, we go to Sears, because you got a discount. I can remember overhearing them saying they couldn't get anything else on the card, because it was maxed out, had to … go and get loans from Beneficial Finance sometimes. I don't think it was easy, but I think then, you know, it was a necessity in some ways, but it wasn't the type of thing where my mother was seeking a career that would have taken her, let's say, away from living at home or anything like that. She enjoyed being at home, but she also enjoyed her independence. I think she enjoyed it even more when she was older, because I think she was expressing herself. [Editor's Note: Allstate was founded in 1931 as part of Sears, Roebuck and Co., and spun off into its own company in 1993.]

SI: Were either your mother or father involved in community activities or civic organizations?

WF: … My father got involved in the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, not in a leadership role, but he went to some of their … activities where they had veterans come back and go to military bases and things like that, or, you know, activities like that.

SI: Outreach.

WF: Yes, right. … My mother would go out with friends, you know, and she was involved with Avon. … On the block, they also had ceramics. People would make ceramics and she would be involved in that. She enjoyed that. She loved to cook. She enjoyed cooking and she would get involved with going to some cooking classes and stuff, like at … malls and stuff, but, aside from that, they really weren't people who joined organizations, you know, did [not do] a lot of that, that I can remember at least.

SI: Can you tell us about your early education? You mentioned the high school that was just being built. Were elementary schools also being built?

WF: No. In fact, Oakhurst School was, I think, built in the early twentieth century. I went there for elementary school. Now, it's the board of education area, where their headquarters is. Their museum is there, actually. …

SI: Was that far away from where you lived?

WF: … You had to be bussed. Route 35 sort of bisects Ocean Township and, if you go to Wayside, where I lived, Wanamassa, Wayside, Oakhurst, Elberon Park, Colonial Terrace, [they] were all part of Ocean Township, sort of, small parts of it. So, you had to be bussed there. It was an interesting [experience]. When I look back at it now, there are a couple of things that strike me. First of all, virtually every teacher was female. Many of them had been there a long time, and what's interesting about that is that, I think, being an educator myself, I look back at that and I say to myself, you know, "Wow, that was really a commitment that was made," and these people were … very good, very highly skilled people. … When you look back at it, you

know, and you think about it, in the elementary grade, they really set the foundation. I can remember that there was a teacher, … it was like second grade, third grade, who lived across the street from the school, and we had, like, a picnic on her lawn one afternoon, at the end of [the] school year, you know. Who would do that today? I mean, it's almost unheard of. You walk across the street, here's the picnic on her lawn. … [The] thing about … today that's improved from then [is special education]. I remember watching a young man named Eugene--I don't even know his last name--walking … in the building. You only saw him some times a day. He was what we call a special student.

SI: Right.

WF: Developmentally disabled student, but he was never in any of your classes, totally segregated. … When we went to Dow Avenue School … in the middle grades, you started to get some bit of departmentalization. Somebody taught you math, somebody taught this, but the same thing was there, these long-time professionals, mostly women, [who were], I thought, very good, for the most part, people who really were committed and dedicated. … There were other things that, you know, I can remember, that all phys. ed. was segregated by sex. There was boys' phys. ed. and there was girls' phys. ed. There were uniforms, and there was hell to pay if you didn't have a uniform and you better wear it. … That's the type of thing that went on. … Public school, it was a welcoming place, you know--it was the type of place you wanted to be at. … I remember, that's where I first got involved in music, too, and the band. I remember Mr. Frankel, Mr. Szostak, Joe Szostak. … You know, they had a good impact on me, and it really … was inspiring, not because they were the greatest conductors in America, but because they actually made it interesting and enjoyable and you enjoyed being in it. … You know, people were able to pursue their interests. There are things that existed back then that are just totally gone now, … like industrial arts. You can hardly find industrial arts in the school anymore, but they had it in the middle school and you had to take it. I'm not saying that was the best choice, but boys took industrial arts, girls took cooking, home ec. [economics]. That's the way it was. Maybe it wasn't the right thing to do, but that's what happened. … What I also see is that a lot of that is gone down the drain. In other words, the concept of the broader curriculum has now been put aside. It's academic preparation [for college now]. So, you know, I can remember when the education, that I had, was a little broader.

SI: Was the music program part of the curriculum or was it an extracurricular activity?

WF: Oh, no, you took music. … You didn't have to be in the band, but you took music. So, it was a little more stipulated, but, in some ways, I think it was more broadening.

SI: Did you stick with the piano or did you take up other instruments?

WF: No, I played the trombone. I started with the French horn in fifth grade. … Mr. Frankel said my mouth was too big. [laughter] So, I'd go to the trombone, because the mouthpiece was bigger. So, that was a good decision, actually, and I've played the trombone ever since then. … I wanted to quit playing the piano when I was in high school, and I stamped my feet and my parents said, "You're continuing with your piano lessons," and they were absolutely right. So, I

wanted to go out and play sports, or hang out or do something like that. They said, "No, you will continue with your piano lessons."

MK: Do you still play?

WF: I do. I took lessons from a concert pianist, Anne Rockefeller. She … lived on the top of the Santander Building in Asbury Park. … She had the penthouse. You went into her place, it was like going back fifty years. [laughter] I'm serious, it was like going back fifty years, … but she knew everything about what was happening. It's just that her place was elegant. It was like being on Park Avenue, right. You went in, you sat down, you waited. You had your lesson for half an hour, you talked with her, then, you went. You had a recital, every year, that you participated in. This was formal. She would come in her Lincoln car, with her husband driving, and she's sitting in the back seat by herself. He would open the door, she would get out, go in, and then, she was in charge. I mean, this was the way it was. … I rebelled and my parents said, "Be quiet, continue your piano lessons," [laughter] and they were right, see.

MK: Did you hold any jobs after school?

WF: I didn't get a job for money. We're talking about, not like, "Billy, go paint the fence." We're talking about money, right? Okay.

MK: Either/or.

WF: I mean, you know, there would be chores at home.

MK: Right.

WF: That's one thing, but the first job I had was working at Burger King in Neptune, New Jersey. I didn't have a car, I couldn't drive. I was like sixteen years old, and I got paid one dollar and fifty cents an hour, yup, and all the grease you couldn't handle. [laughter]

MK: That was an added benefit.

WF: … It's a side benefit of being a part of the fast food industry, and my parents were adamant that I was not to work during [the] school year. I could not work during the school year. Summers, that's it. The other [part of the year] was walled off, "No," and they were right.

SI: Did they have an encouraging attitude towards education?

WF: Absolutely. My father--this is a point of contention, I guess. I don't really have exactly the absolute memory about it, but I think my father tried to sort of run the show on my upbringing. … I've heard this from my aunt, you know, that my mother would do something and he'd say, "No, do this." … I wasn't there, I don't remember. My dad was there, but I don't remember it, but the issue, I think, was that they both were very concerned about providing a sound environment for an education. One of the first things my parents bought, in, like, 1951 or '52, was a complete set of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Now, that's pretty hefty, if you think about

it. The level of the writing in that alone was substantial. I used that for research at home. My father said, "You got the best one. Why do you need something else? Use this." … I used the school library, but, I mean, that was impressive when you think back to it. They actually spent the money, they bought that. … Somebody would come to your house, right, and try to sell you encyclopedias. … Maybe they bought it through the mail, but, I mean, they did that, and, every year, another book would show up, called *The Book of the Year*. There was a yearly update to the *Britannica*, that my parents subscribed to. Every year, it came. So, my father took me, regularly, to the Asbury Park Library. Ocean Township had no library, and Saturday morning was [for] reading. I would read, he would read. … Every day, … I'd see him read the paper. My mother would read a lot. You know, I mean, that sets an example. I think that was part of it, and I think they always encouraged me to do things that were related to, you know, sort of, [the] life of the mind. … I mean, I played baseball and I played soccer in high school, I did these other things, but, you know, they always encouraged it, and I enjoyed it. … They would take me to museums in New York City. We'd go to historic sites. … We had the classic trip, the auto trip, in the summer, … went to Florida, before I-95, on like Route 301, driving to Florida, stopping at historic sites. I can remember going to Antietam battlefield. I can remember going to Gettysburg with them, going to this, going to that, you know. … They enjoyed doing it, and they thought it was good for me, and I enjoyed it. … That was a central, sort of, part of growing up. … Homework, you never do homework after you play. You [do] homework first, play second. So, when I came home it was, "Homework--play later." There was no negotiation. It was a nice thing. I mean, they weren't hard-nosed about it, but that's the way it was.

SI: What were the subjects that interested you the most?

WF: I was always interested in history. I was always interested in English. I was never a big fan of the math department. Science was interesting, but still a little tangential to me. I enjoyed the arts, but that sort of was learned later. I mean, I remember my parents taking me to the opera in New York City, at the Metropolitan Opera, when I was in high school, my friends making fun of me, "What are you, the Phantom of the Opera, now?" I said "No," I said, "but I enjoyed it, *Madame Butterfly*," and then, there would be trips at school … [to see the] New York Philharmonic, go to other places, you know, go see *The Mikado* at City Center. My parents [would say], "Sure, you want to go? Here's the money, go." … That type of thing was, I think, very enjoyable, because it opened doors, it opened ideas to you, that you hadn't been exposed to, you know. My parents also loved to play records. … They don't sell these anymore, … console stereos, with fine furniture. My parents bought one, it was a Fisher. … Avery Fisher Hall is the same guy--it's named after [him]. Fisher had been one of the pioneers of home stereo systems. So, we bought one and I can't think of a day, basically, there … weren't records on. My mother would put records [on], my father, I put them on. … That was there, and so, you were sort of surrounded by that, you know, and that was part of it, too. So, I think that was very enjoyable, you know. You're growing up and listening to music and things like that, and then, you did other things related to it, but all these things sort of add up, I think, and have a cumulative effect.

SI: Did the schools you attended have adequate facilities, such as labs?

WF: Yes, in high school, yes. The high school was pretty much brand-new. … I can't really say how in comparison. … I happened to be in a high school this morning, before I came here, down

in South Jersey, in Cherry Hill, and it was as if I was stepping back into my elementary school or late elementary school and early high school, because that high school was built in the mid-'50s. … You saw the same style of architecture almost, but what I think I saw, at least, in Ocean Township High School, is that it was a symbol of community pride, and I think that was very significant for … Ocean to have their own high school. … They could have their own football team, their own this, their own that. They weren't part of Asbury Park anymore. They were their own.

SI: Were there a lot of community activities in Ocean Township, like Ocean Township Day?

WF: I don't remember. I know they have it today.

SI: Yes.

WF: Am I right?

KT: Yes.

WF: I think they have all that stuff today, but I didn't remember very much of it back then. … For the generation that I'm from, I think the public school was really a pathway to success. If, I think, the people I know from high school and from grade school, had they not had at least a minimally acceptable education, I think their abilities in the future would have been compromised, you know. So, I think public education, the huge expansion of public education in this country after World War II, you know, that was really part of what I was part of. … I was within it.

SI: Growing up in the 1950s and early 1960s, during the Cold War era, with the fear of Communism, was this something you were aware of?

WF: … You're very aware of that when you had to go in the hallway and kneel down and put your hands over your head, when there was an air raid drill. … My father … was going to build a bunker in our basement. I remember the plans. He ordered the plans from the government--how many things of water you had to put [in it], how thick was the wall going to be, and all this. I can remember watching the television and looking at the newspapers with the …

SI: Cuban Missile Crisis.

WF: Cuban Missile Crisis, absolutely. [Editor's Note: In October 1962, the United States demanded that the Soviet Union remove its nuclear missiles from Cuba. The United States placed a naval blockade around the island nation, creating a tense standoff between the superpowers that many feared would lead to nuclear war. The crisis was averted when the Soviet Union agreed to remove their nuclear missiles from Cuba in exchange for the United States removing its nuclear missiles from Turkey.] That was scary. … I remember Kennedy on television with the speech, and, you know, only later do you find out a lot more. … At that time, … this was no small item. This was major stuff, and the whole piece about preparedness was part of what you had to do as a ritual, you know. Those air raid drills, they happened. I was part

of it. I look back at them now, I'm saying, "What would they have done?" but you did it. … I don't know if they even thought [what] they were doing was appropriate or not, but we did it and it was there and, you know. I think you couldn't get away from it, because that was sort of a drumbeat, "They're the enemy."

SI: You were exposed to a lot of newspapers and current events in your youth. Were you aware that the United States was sending advisors to Vietnam?

WF: I can't say that I really followed it very much. … I was still about ten years old. You're talking '61, '62.

SI: Getting into the Tonkin Gulf.

WF: The big events sort of come up, you know, the big events--the Missile Crisis, the Kennedy assassination. I really didn't have a memory of how many people we were escalating the war in Vietnam for, but I do remember that it became much more prominent when I got closer to being drafted. … One of the things that I think was very clear was that the televised daily body count, that was on every night, was ominous. I mean, it was not something you could evade. My father didn't like criticism of the government's position on anti-Communism. … Let me put it this way: my father would support the government, but my father also was a sort of committed anti-Communist person. … I remember seeing these books at home, "The Report of Recognized Organizations," Communist organizations, from the House Un-American Activities Committee. He would get this. [Editor's Note: The House Un-American Activities Committee was an investigative committee in the United States House of Representatives that targeted real or suspected Communists in American society during the Cold War, and is most known for its blacklist of Hollywood figures during the height of its influence in the late 1940s and early 1950s.]

SI: Really?

WF: … He would have it, oh, yes, not that he did anything about it, not that he went out on the front lawn and said, "Let's go get them," no, but they were there. … I think he bought all that anti-Communism rhetoric, pretty much, hook, line and sinker, and I think he got sort of fed up with the … mass media. … I remember [him] yelling at the TV set. Walter Cronkite would come on and he'd give the story, and, at the end, he always said the same thing, "And that's the way it is, October 23rd." I can remember my father sitting in his chair, "That's not the way it is," yelling at Walter Cronkite.

SI: [laughter] Wow.

WF: More than once. What was I going to do, sit there and say, "He's okay?" I mean, I just sat there. My mother would, like, just phase out. … He was just sort of really anti-Communist, … and a big admirer of Mr. Nixon. "Nixon was a great man. He's a hero. He stood up to the Commies," and all this stuff. "Okay." Well, I bought all that, until I got to college. If you would ask me, in 1968, who I should vote for, I would say Republican and I had Nixon--three years later, forget it. So, the rift that developed politically between my father and myself

occurred after I came here [to Rutgers], but it was very obvious that the Cold War was a prominent aspect of American life, no question about it.

SI: Let us talk about your high school days in-depth. You said the earlier schools were full of these teachers who had been there for a very long time. Did the new high school have younger teachers with new approaches to education?

WF: I'll digress for one minute and tell you that my father was actually offered a job as a teacher. I think he was sort of questioning his vocation in the late '50s. … What had happened all across the country was that the number of students outstripped the number of available teachers. … So, he didn't even have a college degree, but he interviewed and was offered a position as a teacher. He turned it down, because I don't think they would pay enough, and I don't think he thought the advancement possibilities were that much for the money, but, when I look back at that era, there were a lot of teachers who were younger in the high school, and they had to be somewhat specialized, because they were certified to teach science or social studies or math or that. … There were teachers in the high school who actually had been in the other elementary schools and had now moved to the high school. … Yes, I think you saw commitments to the specialist type, because you needed them, because the subject fields were defined a different way in the high school. … There were younger teachers, yes. I mean, that was part of it, but I think also part of it was that the high school serves a different purpose, you know. … Then, you have all these ancillary things, coaching, sports, this, that and the other thing, and they needed people who were going to be able to do that, and you needed many more of them, because you had a bigger population. … So, I think that was evident.

SI: Was there any attempt to create traditions at the new high school?

WF: Well, the new high school was interesting. I remember, I was on the staff of the newspaper during the last few years I was there, and they had a contest to name the newspaper. So, it ended up being a very creative title, *The Ocean View*. [laughter] What can I say? and *The Ocean View* became the paper's title, but they had a contest. … They determined that we're going to have a motto. So, they [chose the] Spartans, you know. Only later did I realize how militaristic that was. [laughter] Then, they had, yes, the usual sort of stuff, pep rallies and things like that, and the football game on Thanksgiving against the bitter rival and all that.

SI: Who was the bitter rival?

WF: I'm trying to remember if it was Asbury. … At that time, the Shore Conference was small, and, I mean, it was maybe less than fifteen, sixteen teams. Now, it's enormous, but, at that time, … might have been Asbury, might have been Neptune, I don't remember. … You have the, sort of, other events, the musical, the concerts from the band and the chorus, and things of that sort. … I haven't seen [this] done in a long time--we actually took a trip to Washington when I was a sophomore, and that trip occurred the weekend after the killing of Martin Luther King. [Editor's Note: In April and May 1968, race riots erupted in 125 US cities, including Chicago, Baltimore and Washington, DC, sparked by the assassination of Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1968.]

SI: Really?

WF: That was an interesting experience, because that trip had been scheduled. … What do you do? Do you go or not? They decided to go. I can remember seeing the smoke in Washington, because of the burning, you know, Spring of '68. … I think, you know, some of the activities that we did then aren't part and parcel of public education anymore, and not to that level. … I've worked for thirty-five years in a public school and overnight trips, like that, pretty much are out. I mean, full class trips, you're talking hundreds of people. They're sort of out-of-bounds at this point. They're very difficult to organize and maintain.

SI: I forgot the question I was going to ask.

WF: That's okay.

SI: Do you want to ask a question?

KT: In 1968, you were in high school and the war in Vietnam was at its height. Did they talk about the war in school?

WF: … I think [when] I was a senior, we had a forum, with all the social studies teachers on the stage, and it was about Vietnam. Should we stay? Should we pull out? … One of the people in the department, later became vice principal, [was] James Hartnett. I remember, [laughter] my best friend, Bob Schlossberg, who tragically died about a month ago from a stroke, he remembered everything. I mean I could say one word, he would know it, and it's funny how that happens, but he said, "Hey, Billy remember what Hartnett said on the stage? 'If it wasn't for Chester Nimitz and Bull Halsey, this country wouldn't be what it is today.'" Then, the teacher I had for … political philosophy, James McDonald, said, "I think we should pull out of Vietnam right now," and the whole auditorium, with very few exceptions, stood up. I was one of the exceptions, because I was still under my father's Nixon view, see. … I think, yes, there was a real concern, you know, [with the] draft. This was not something that was theoretical, you know. It was only after Nixon came into office that they put the lottery in, but the draft lottery was something that was on your mind when you were in high school, no question about that. I think my number ended up being between 100 and 180, somewhere in there. I don't remember exactly what it was, but everybody had to register. Asbury Park, you had to go to the draft board, get your card or get it in the mail. I knew a guy who went to high school with me, Tom McAllister. He went to the University of New Hampshire for one year, couldn't afford to go back, and was immediately drafted. He had a low number. He only had a deferment because he was in college.

KT: Right.

WF: He didn't go. He applied and got conscientious objector status, on the basis of his written essay, and then, worked for two years in alternate service. He was a night watchman at a senior citizen's home in Ocean Grove, was not happy, but it was a reality. I mean, you didn't have your student deferment, you get the call. Then, what do you do? It's real. [Editor's Note: Conscientious objectors refuse, on the grounds of conscience or religious beliefs, to serve in

combat during times of war. During the Vietnam War, conscientious objectors could serve in noncombat roles or alternative stateside service.]

SI: Was that a major topic of conversation in your senior year?

WF: Sure.

SI: Ways to deal with being drafted, such as applying for conscientious objector status or going to college.

WF: No, I mean, I think the question was, "What happens when the lottery comes up? What are you going to do?" because that happens, [and they ask], "Where is your number?" You know, I mean, it was all male, and the senior males, I mean, they were looking, "What's that number going to be?" …

SI: Was going to Canada part of the discussion?

WF: It could have been, I don't recall it. I don't know anybody who went to Canada personally. … I think it's a whole different situation today, and I think that's the only way I can compare it. People today don't go in the military unless they choose to go. Then, the draft had never been terminated, you know. It stayed right on after World War II, and I think, you know, I don't know, personally, anybody from my high school who ended up in Vietnam *per se*, because I didn't follow personal histories, but I think that you couldn't avoid it. You just couldn't avoid it.

KT: When were you able to apply for a student deferment? Was it once you got to college or was it while you were still in high school?

WF: I don't know the exact process, but I know that if you were a full-time student and you were … matriculated, you had a deferment. … What a deferment meant was that you didn't have to serve at that point. You might have to serve after you finished, and, in fact, in one of the things I brought, in the car, it's actually an article about Congress passing a law, and Nixon just about to sign it, that ended the deferment system. I think in '71, '70 or '71, but, yes, I mean, you ended up going to college and, you know, it was, "Boy, if you don't stay in college, then what?" I knew people at Rutgers who joined ROTC just to make sure that they wouldn't get drafted, if they left, they … went in, and, also, to get money for college. … Then, after two years, they walked out of ROTC and had two years of college paid, or something like that.

SI: Did you have other jobs, besides the one at Burger King?

WF: No, I was a member of the fast food proletariat, [laughter] there for two years. … After I got done with that, I came here, and, at Rutgers, I worked part-time. I think it started my sophomore [year], I can't exactly remember. I worked as a monitor in McKinney Hall. … They needed people to monitor the building at night--people would come in for practice rooms--and I did a little bit of instruction in Highland Park. They had a music program there, and they asked people who were involved in the music program here [at Rutgers] if they could give instruction to small groups. I've done a little bit of that. … Aside from that, it was all in the summer, and I

worked at a factory one summer. I worked at, like, a distribution center one summer. Then, the best job I had was when I worked one summer at Monmouth Park Racetrack, as a busboy--interesting manner [how] I got this job. My mother worked at Foodtown. Foodtown was unionized. So, all the people … were in, I forget exactly which union, but she said, I think, "If you're interested, there might be a job at Monmouth Park. Show up at this place in," I think it was Long Branch or Red Bank, "show up there on this day and talk to this guy." I show up there, I'm sitting there and this guy walks in, with a suit on, and he says, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm Josephine Fernekes' son." "Okay," and then, boom, "Go to Monmouth Park on this day," there I am. So, I worked for the Harry M. Stevens Company, same company that worked at Shea Stadium, at concessions, and I worked as a busboy one summer, … which paid for the trip I took to Europe the following year by myself, where I went to eleven countries on my own. … Those are the types of jobs that I had. I didn't really work during the time I was a student, other than those various small part-time jobs, very different than today, I think.

SI: We are going to take a break.

WF: Yes.

[TAPE PAUSED]

WF: I'm here.

SI: What impact did the culture of the 1960s have on your life?

WF: Well, there are a couple of things. First of all, I think my parents were pretty conservative in all that stuff. … I remember going to a session one night with my parents, at the high school, where the administrators talked about drugs, and they asked me, "Are you involved? Have you ever done any of that stuff?" I said, "No," and, you know, they got the word, I guess, … there were a lot of people in the auditorium for this, you know, that there was a drug problem. … I don't know what else they knew about, or didn't know, but I was never involved in that. I never took an interest in it. My father smoked cigarettes, and, in 1963, when the Surgeon General issued the report about the dangers of cigarette smoking, he stopped smoking. [Editor's Note: "Smoking and Health: Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General of the United States" (1964), the landmark report released by US Surgeon General Luther Terry, concluded that smoking had harmful effects on a person's health, which eventually led to large-scale policy and public opinion changes towards cigarettes and the tobacco industry.] He hasn't smoked a cigarette since, which I enjoy, because every time he would light up in the car, you could choke to death with all the smoke in the car. My mother smoked a little bit and, periodically, would do it later, but not much, but the reason I'm bringing that up is that it was so repellent that for me to even think of taking a cigarette, a joint, or something else like that, forget it. … I had friends who were regular users, marijuana. Whether they went into LSD and cocaine and all that, I don't know, definitely marijuana, and they respected the fact that I wasn't interested in it. What happened to me was that, I think, because my parents had a pretty conservative outlook about all that stuff, I really didn't pursue much of it as like an exotic [thing] or an interest, but I think their biggest concern was, when I went here, what would happen. What happened to me was that I changed the way I thought and the way I looked, but I never got involved in narcotics or things

like that. I think they viewed the counterculture as sort of a suspicious problem, and people like Timothy Leary and people who were involved in that. … Woodstock was all silly and stupid, and, "You're not part of that, right, Billy?" … So, it really didn't impact my daily life, but I had plenty of people I knew in high school who wore the dress, participated in the activities, whether it was narcotics and/or going to concerts and different things, you know. That was just the way it was, but … I don't think we can overstate that either. I think that the counterculture becomes more prominent, late '60s, early '70s, versus, like, 1965, '64. I think you see that develop, you know. Woodstock is almost like an apogee of it, in some ways.

SI: Even if you are not dressing the part, were you listening to the music?

WF: I didn't. I enjoyed the music that, I guess, was not really part of that. I enjoyed jazz, I enjoyed classical music, I enjoyed the Beatles. … I've never really been into really hard rock, heavy metal, or things like [that]. Not that because it's bad--it's just different and it's not my taste, that's all.

SI: When you were in the band in high school, you said you would go on these trips to watch the New York Philharmonic. What about performing? Where would you perform? How far would you travel?

WF: Well, not far. I mean, you performed in high school. … The band director we had in ninth grade was a guy named Dr. Henry Melnik. He was from Long Branch. He lasted less than a year, the first year I was in the band. Then, we had a guy from--he was interesting. He was an industrial arts teacher, Charlie Schwartz, but he also played the trombone. So, they needed somebody to fill in. So, he filled in and conducted the band, I think for one concert. Then, we had this guy from Neptune named Bill Figart, and Bill became the band director my freshman year, the second half of the year, and stayed until I graduated. … Bill was a very good … jazz trumpet player. I wouldn't call him the greatest leader, and he came as a package deal with a guy named Fred Truntz, who was also the choral director at Neptune, and they came over. I don't know how it happened, but they came together and they ran the music program. So, what you did was, you had activities that you could participate in as a supplement, but we weren't the type of band in high school that did a lot of touring or anything like that. Later on, I think they engaged in exchange concerts, because I remembered going to one after I came back and, like, there was an event. … I went to hear it, but, aside from that, it wasn't really a high-powered music program that would be engaged in overseas trips or anything. Like, the band where I work goes overseas every other year, … participates in competitions. That whole issue of marching band competitions was totally foreign. We were not involved in any of that stuff. Now, today, that's a big deal.

SI: How did you first learn about Rutgers and what made you choose it for college? Did you look at other schools?

WF: Well, that's a long story.

SI: That is okay--we have plenty of space on the recorder.

WF: That's okay, you have plenty of tape. [laughter] I think it's interesting, when you think back to what choices you made. I remember going to the college night, like, as a junior, and they start talking about this and they have all these [people] in their auditorium. So, they have all these people, right, and they show up [and say], "Look at this college, look at that." So, I took some stuff, because, at the time, I was interested in English and journalism, more than I was in history, potentially, as a major. I remember getting the brochures and the catalog from the University of Kansas, [where they had] the William Allen White School of Journalism. [I remember] a college called MacMurray College in Indiana or Illinois, small college, because I talked to somebody there. [I got] stuff from Rutgers and a few other places, and I think my father, particularly, was just, like, totally focused on Rutgers. He had gone to Rutgers, but never finished. He had gone to Rutgers-Newark, … and one of the issues was that, I think, he felt it was a place where you can get a good education inexpensively, and maybe parlay [that]. Part of the fact that he went [was] as part of, like, an alumni connection, but he really wasn't an alumnus. He just had gone. … Also, I think, … part of it was, I won't be too far away. So, I continued to express interest in these other places, and I remember getting a phone call from MacMurray College. "Are you interested in coming here, applying?" and at that point, the decision had pretty much been made, because I applied to Rutgers early decision and we accepted. So, that was a done deal, and so, I actually got into college earlier than some of my friends and I accepted the early decision commitment, and I had never been here, ever. I remember going to a Rutgers-Princeton football game. The YMCA ran a trip. It was at Princeton. My father had also gone to Princeton as part of the Navy in that … junior officers' training program. He went to Tufts, Princeton, and then, later on, he got into Rutgers after he came back from the war.

SI: Perhaps that was the V-12 Program. [Editor's Note: The V-12 Navy College Training Program was initiated by the US Navy in 1943 and instituted at universities across the nation to increase the number of college-educated officers called to duty during World War II.]

WF: I don't know what it was, but it was a training program for people they had identified who … potentially could be officers. … So, at any rate, I had really never come to the campus, you know. I think we might have … come for a visit after the acceptance, or something like that, but I had really no knowledge about what Rutgers offered. … My parents sort of guided the decision, and I didn't say, "Forget it," you know, or anything like that. It was … an inexpensive school, twelve dollars a credit [in] 1970. [laughter]

KT: How times have changed.

WF: Twelve dollars a credit.

SI: We will just let that sink in. [laughter]

WF: I know, we just let the air go out after that one, right? [laughter] four hundred dollars a semester.

KT: Can you talk a little bit about your reactions when you first came here?

WF: I think I was scared, because you come on a Saturday to an orientation. … First of all, my father got lost--[we] get here late. You show up over here at College Avenue Gymnasium, and all these people are in there. They're all men, remember this, all-male. The only women who were at Rutgers College were transfer students. They're all seated in chairs in these long rows. These chairs are wooden. They're all connected. Your parents sit … above you, not with you. They're upstairs and you're sitting down there, and somebody is up on a platform telling you, "Welcome to Rutgers," and then, the old speech, … I know they used to say it, "Look to the left, look to the right--they won't be there next year," you know. I don't know how true that is or not. I don't remember it, but, to make a long story short, I couldn't tell you where half the things were at Rutgers, but now I'm here, for the orientation. They walk around, they give you lunch, your parents are impressed with one thing or another. My mother didn't know one college from another. She had never been to college. What did she know about it, you know? She was probably concerned about safety and about, "Are you going to get a good education?" and, "Are the people nice? Are they going to treat you well?" you know. The hardest thing, I think, about coming to Rutgers was not my experience, it was my parents' experience. I think it was very difficult for them. I'm an only child, I have no siblings. I can remember my mother's face the first time they came to visit. She was in the car. It was near Records Hall. I went out to meet them. She was so happy to see me, she said, "Billy, I have your favorite crackers," but I think they had to renegotiate their relationship, because I think I was sort of, and I'm not being immodest about this, I'm just saying I think, as an only child, I was … sort of the center, and now, I'm not there and they had to renegotiate what that meant, to live without their son or their daughter, whoever it was going to be, right? So, coming to Rutgers … was as much a transition for them as it was for me. [laughter] … The first place I lived was in Demarest Hall, in the bottom. If you go into Demarest Hall, … there's a big lounge in the center, right?

DK: This is my fourth year living in Demarest Hall.

WF: … If you walk in from Records Hall, turn left, there are three rooms. I lived in the center room there, and my roommate was a guy who went to high school with me. We had worked that out, that we would room together, Bob Boritz. He was the best man at our wedding, and he's still a good friend. He [now] lives in Seattle. … We roomed together for four years, but we were only in Demarest for the first year. Two guys next to me on … our left, one guy was from Long Branch, the other guy was from Pennsylvania. He had been on the football team and had left the football team because it was too much, he said. … The two people on the right, one was … an EOF student, Steve Allen from Paterson, and Larry Phyall, and they were both African-American. … That was an entirely different experience, because who did I know who was African-American in Ocean Township? Hardly anybody. I knew some people from the YMCA program. I'll tell you an interesting story. … One day, we're at the YMCA program. I'm like fourteen years old, or whatever it is. … This kid who we knew, Mike Cunningham, was like a year older, went to Asbury High School. We knew him from the summer, and so, my friend Bill and I were in this program on Saturdays. … It ends early one time, and my father would come pick us up. Mike says, "You want to come to my house?" We walk to the house. … We were playing games, and his mother makes snacks and stuff. … So, we come back to the YMCA, … where my father would pick us up, and says, "What did you do?" and I said, "Well, we went to Mike Cunningham's house." My father says, "Don't ever do that again." I don't think because it was in an unsafe area, I think it was because he was black. Well, you see, that's probably one of

the few people I knew who … was African-American. Well, now, the two guys next to me and Bob were African-Americans, … they had all their friends coming over, right. Well, "Hi, how are you?" and there's a whole different set of relationships now developing on a different plane, right, and this was totally new to me. So, you have to work it out. How do you get along? How do you understand each other, you know? … We got along, don't get me wrong, but I think you have to learn about other people, and they learn about you. That was new. You've got to learn how to get along with people in ways that you never had to before, because now you're living with them or you're associating with them and, like, being in the band, being in the club or being in a class or something like that, you know, in addition to the smell of narcotics all over the place, omnipresent. [laughter] The first semester I'm here, you're sitting in the hallway having, like, an all-night bull session, and half the people there are smoking marijuana or something else, you know. I don't mind, that's their business, but that's there, and the police aren't showing up, you know. Dean [Reginald] Bishop isn't coming down from there and saying, "Hey, guys, you're not doing the right [thing]." Nobody is doing it, okay.

SI: When you entered Rutgers as a freshman, did they still have any initiation rituals?

WF: Well, I wouldn't call it an initiation, but what they did do is that they had activities you were expected to be at. One of them was the visit to the president's house. So, the first weekend you were here--because the freshmen came in early for an orientation--there was a … formal event. You came dressed and you went to the president's home on the other side of the river and you met President Gross, and that was part of it. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross was the Sixteenth President of Rutgers University, serving from 1959 to 1971.] … Also, you know, you had to learn who your advisor was. So, each person had an academic advisor. My advisor was, I think, a political science professor. I can't remember his name--Haberer, maybe, was his name. I mean, you didn't know him. It wasn't like a guidance counselor, where you just go there. … This guy is supposed to help you with your classes. You have a brief appointment, whatever it is, and then, at that point, you're pretty much reading the *Targum* and finding out what goes on [through] official notices, where you buy your books, where you do this, and, you know, a lot of that's third party, you know, like, buy your books, well, go to the bookstore, which used to be right next to the Records Hall. My editorial comment is that it was still a real bookstore then, not an extension of some multinational corporation. It was actually a bookstore. [laughter] The books you could buy were interesting, not just--well, let's leave that alone. [laughter]

KT: Anyway.

SI: This trip that you took to Europe by yourself, was that before you entered Rutgers or while you were in Rutgers?

WF: No, it was while I was in Rutgers.

SI: Okay.

WF: It was while I was in Rutgers. I had made my mind up that it was really important for me to sort of go there and do things, and I was very interested. I was a history major. I wanted to go see these things. My father was very skeptical, and always [said], "You're never, ever going to

do it." The person who was most supportive was my grandmother--his mother--who handed me some money that summer before and said, "Here, this helps you out." … So, a friend of mine from the band had said he wanted to go with me. His name is Don Greenbaum, played the tuba. He's from Neptune, and then, he bailed. Well, I wasn't going to give up. So, I went and got a rail pass. I had also decided I was going to two countries which were Communist, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Well, I had to get visas. So, I went to Washington with Bob, my friend. We used to visit my friend Bob Schlossberg--he went to American University--like over spring break, because our spring breaks were different, and went to the Hungarian embassy, [laughter] and go inside. I'll never forget this. … I called them up and they said, "Well, you've got to come down. You have to get a visa," you know, they sent things in the mail. They sent you an application, you fill it out. We walk in, and it's like a big house in Washington, right. You go inside and they say, "Stand here," and then, this guy walks down the stairs and we tell him what we're doing. He says, [in a heavy Eastern European accent], "Go to the other room." I mean, it's like something right out of a bad Cold War movie, [in a heavy Eastern European accent], "Go to the other room." When we go to the other room, half an hour later, I got what I wanted. The Czechoslovakian embassy, I got it through the mail. Now that's all a prelude to the fact that before I went on that trip, the FBI came to my parents, and did … a background check on me and wanted to know more. So, I'm determined at some point to request my file … under the Freedom of Information Act, to find out what they were really concerned about, but they actually visited my parents. So, I went to [Europe], had a rail pass and a plane ticket, took Pan American Airways from JFK, flew to Lisbon, Portugal, and then, two months later, I was done. I went all over, and it was a fabulous experience. It was a transformative experience for me, because I learned a lot about myself. I backpacked, you know, and I lived in hostels and places like that. One night in Prague, I'm in Prague. … Now, you got to remember, this is under the Communist period, you know. Who's marching around in Prague? This is five years after the Soviet invasion--squads with submachine guns are on the streets. [Editor's Note: In 1968, the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in order to stop governmental and economic reforms (a period of liberalization known as the Prague Spring) from being implemented. The country remained militarily occupied until 1990.] It's not something you see in Ocean Township, right. So, I go into a hotel. In these countries, everything was state-controlled. So, how do you get a hotel room? You have to go to their organizing place. Like, in Hungary, I went to a place … and they directed you to a place. "Well, there's a pension, you go here," right, okay, go. Well, I get to Prague and there's no room. So, I go to this hotel, and they said, "No room." Well, there's a guy standing next to me. This guy is from Finland. He's got two female friends with him. He has no room. They had no single room. They had a double room. I looked at him, I said, "You want to take the room?" He says, "Okay." So, for two nights, we slept in the same room. I'll never see him again, he'll probably never see me again, but you did what you had to do, and then, you're walking around, and you go into lobbies and people would come up and say, "You want to change money?" "No." He could have been part of [the] secret police, and you'd never see me again, but that was common, because they wanted hard currency. You could not leave those countries with any of their money. At the border, between the Czechoslovakian border and the German border, West German border at that time, the police got on the train. They checked every seat, okay, and going from Budapest to Prague on the train, they recommended I buy a ticket to the border. … I get up to get off the train. A guy from Argentina and I get off the train to buy a ticket. We go to the train station, there's a guy who looks just like Nikita Khrushchev behind the ticket counter. I give him the money, I'm waiting for the change. He takes more then

than I'm supposed to get. What am I going to do, call the American embassy? He took his percentage, "Thank you, next." Back on the train, what are you going to do? Do what you have to do, but it was that type of experience, you know. You learned to adapt, you learned how to get along with people, you learned how to live on your own, and it was very transformative, extremely so.

SI: Did your father have any objections to your going to these Communist countries after the FBI visited?

WF: I don't know. I think he did. I don't know, I guess he did, but, you know, to me, it was part of what was going to happen and that was the end of the story, you know. He didn't stand in front of me and say, "Don't do this." I was an adult--he couldn't stop me from doing it.

KT: You entered Rutgers in the Fall of 1970.

WF: That's correct.

KT: Was adjusting to college an extreme shock when you first got here?

WF: No, I don't think so. … It was liberating, because, first of all, you're away from your parents. You're going to have to do your own thing, make your own decisions. Nobody is going to tell you what to do. I mean, I cannot tell you the significance of living on campus. It's really, I think, so much a part of the experience that defined me, because, if you commute, you're still living at home. I knew commuters, you know, and, I mean, they were still living at home and coming here. … They're living in two worlds. Look, I understand it, but I really felt that by being on my own, having to make my own decisions and all that, and doing what I wanted to do without having somebody looking over my shoulder, was really a very significant thing. So, you encounter that, you encounter alternative viewpoints to your own. You encounter demonstrations in the buildings, you encounter all that, and you have to take it in and decide. I mean, I didn't retreat into being sort of a clone of my father's political views. I actually went 180 degrees the other way, and I think that, by being here, it really was a very liberating experience in terms of opening your ideas to alternatives, to have them challenged, and part of that, also, was the daily life. So, like, when I joined the band, I didn't know any of these people, you know. When you're in high school, you know all the people.

KT: Right.

WF: I don't know anybody. So, I'm in the band. The band is totally different. The band takes you to a place for three days, and you're going to be there for training camp. "What's this?" okay. Well, you know, you've got to learn how to get along, you've got to figure out, "I don't know what I'm doing," you know, and you learn how to do all the rituals and the marching, and then, the singing bus. … There's all kinds of stuff that goes on in these subcultures, right. So, I was part of that subculture and, you know, you either like it or you don't, but, to me, I think, you become more open-minded. As long as you're willing to accept the alternatives that are presented to you, then, I think you have a more broad-minded approach to life, and the

counterculture was here, you know. I didn't have to participate in it directly to know that it was here and to be affected by it.

SI: The semester before you came, they shut down the University due to student protests. Can you talk a little bit about student attitudes and protests from the period?

WF: I don't remember very much about it.

SI: Okay.

WF: I know that it had happened, but I really wasn't attuned to it. I was just sort of, basically, "I'm graduating from high school, now, we're moving on to something else." I guess my parents were concerned. They really never brought it up. We haven't talked about it very much.

SI: Not so much that specific incident, but student activism and awareness of world events.

WF: Students for a Democratic Society. [Editor's Note: Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was a popular student activist movement during the mid to late 1960s that expanded across college campuses across the United States. They protested against racial discrimination, the Vietnam War, inequality in the United States and for women's rights, but, eventually, fractured off into various splinter groups that advocated their own interests, sometimes through violent means.]

SI: Yes.

WF: I remember sitting in … Brower Commons one day. I don't know if it was after band practice, because with the band, we'd practice three days a week, and you got back and you're coming into the Commons like at six-fifteen, because we practiced over on the other side. Where the currently opulent stadium is, [laughter] next to it was a parking lot. … This is the old stadium. Now, … I've got to paint the picture to you. This is the WPA-built Rutgers Stadium that held about thirty-five thousand seats, built into the ground, not above it very much, and on the parking lot next to it, the band practiced on this macadam. [Editor's Note: During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to help construct Rutgers Stadium in order to create jobs for the local economy.] … We had, like, a tower. So, three days a week, we're ending about six o'clock, and then, the bus would take you back here. You'd bring your instrument in, or, if it went back to McKinney Hall, went there, and then, you went to dinner. … There's hardly anything left. The people who were coming in are the crew team, you and the other athletes, if they're not eating over at Busch. Well, this had to be a different day though, because they had to have impact. We were in the Commons one day, and, all of a sudden, these people run in and splatter--it was either red paint or food dye--from the ramp, on everybody, … as if [this is] what's going on in Vietnam. Consider what you would feel like if somebody attacked you, okay. This is not a high school activity, this is happening here--people passing things out in front of the Commons about one thing or another, racism, sexism, Vietnam. One day, they attempt to burn down the ROTC building … right on College Avenue. Being in ROTC--because I know people who were in ROTC--was not … something people were dying [to do]. That's a bad way to look at. It was not

something that people were lining up to do. ROTC was losing enrollment then, because there were serious issues. I mean, the faculty here was raising questions about whether they should get credit, because it's an arm of the state, they argued. … There's no free exercise of academic responsibility. So, you saw that all the time. I attended protests in the gym over the bombing of Cambodia. You know, I can remember Michael Adas. You know Michael Adas, the professor?

SI: Yes.

WF: Standing up on the platform with his son, talking to the whole audience. I can remember other people doing the same thing, you know, talking about this serious stuff because, you know, that's part of what a college is. It should be a center of intellectual exchange and concern.

SI: Did you go to these protests out of political conviction or just out of curiosity? What motivated you to go?

WF: Probably both, but I think by the time the Cambodia thing happened, certainly I had become much more--I had turned against the whole idea of the Vietnam War and was much more concerned about, you know, … we needed to have a more progressive agenda, at that time, and I think my father and I just didn't talk about it.

SI: What were the things that really changed you mind? Was it your exposure to other students in the all-night bull sessions, or was it things your professors were saying in your classes?

WF: I think it was both. I think it was the fact that you talked about [it with] people in class and, after class, you read the newspaper, read the *Targum*. I have to say, the *Targum* was a great paper. I mean, you can disagree with somebody's point of view or not, but, I mean, when I went back and looked at them in the thirty-year reunion stuff that I prepared, I was so impressed, impressed with the level of quality of the writing, impressed with the range of viewpoints, impressed with the topics they addressed, impressed with the vitality of it. That was there every day. I mean, people read it, they would pick it up, it would be out here in a bin. They'd be all over the campus, and you'd go and pick it up, and people would be there to get it, and you'd read it, in addition to the official notice thing, which you had to read. … The point was, you read the paper. I remember taking a class--in fact, if you have my yearbook there, if I could just have it, because my transcripts are in there and I can … tell you exactly what class it was--but the class that … probably had the greatest impact on me, the first year I was at Rutgers, was "Studies in the History of Civilization." Now, this is very interesting. It was in Records Hall. You had a recitation section with a graduate student, who would do the discussion, but there were four professors teaching this course, and what they did, it wasn't "Plato to NATO." It wasn't … "Jesus to Jagger." … This was a course that dealt with key ideas and themes. John Lenaghan taught the ancient history piece. David Ringrose, who left, I guess, when I was still here--he was a historian of Spain and modern economic history--he taught the part on economic change. Peter Stearns, who was still here then, taught a little bit on modern European, and Harold Poor, who is unfortunately deceased now, taught the intellectual history piece, but you had ten or twelve books to read, each semester, and you didn't go bankrupt. Some of these books were like a buck-and-a-half, brand-new. I remember reading *The Politics of Hysteria* (1965), which just was like a punch in the nose, I mean, really raked religion over the coals in terms of its impact on human

behavior and all this stuff. I remember reading José Ortega y Gasset's *The Rebellion of the Masses* (1932), Plato, Aristotle, books on the medieval period. It was stimulating, you know. They challenged you with ideas, and this is not high school. You've got to read on your own, you've got to prepare for the exam, you've got to take the exam, write the paper. Nobody is going to remind you. No counselor is going to show up and say, "Hey, did you do your homework?" "No." First exam I take in college, I fail, economics, fail. So, what do you do? Stay in the corner, cry? no. I sucked it up, and I went to one of the guys in the band, who was the assistant director, Ralph Acquaro, economics major. I said, "Ralph," needed some help, "can you give me some help, tutoring?" "Yup." So, I did okay after that, went to see the TA more, you know what I mean? … All these you had to learn. So, in addition to the idea that you were learning alternative viewpoints, you had to learn more about yourself and how you were going to survive, because there were people who dropped out. There were people who flunked out, and, to me, college just accelerated your ability to sort of be an independent thinker, and I thought the professors were tremendous. I remember, they were approachable. You could talk to them, but there was still sort of the sense of, "They know what they're talking about," and John Lenaghan was a character. I don't know if you know John--he's retired, for a long time, I guess. I had a course with him later called "Roman Empire." He wore the same clothes, and I mean the same clothes, every time. He had the same jacket, and maybe he had ten of the same jacket, I don't know, [laughter] but you could count on him walking in with a corduroy jacket with the pads. … He rocked back and forth when he talked, red face. … One day, he's talking to us about something in the Roman Empire and we realized later that he's not talking to us from a book in English--he is simultaneously translating the Latin to us.

SI: Wow.

WF: He's reading to us this excerpt about the Roman Empire. That, to me, is pretty impressive, that here's a person who can do that and still make it comprehensible, and you're understanding this. This was in Bishop House in the basement, in the main floor of Bishop House. So, you know, the other thing about it was that I think you couldn't avoid controversy, because it was there. There was no closed mind. … The University's administration has to take credit for this. They didn't come here to say, "We're going to have one point of view. We're going to narrow the framework." I don't think that was evident at all. I think they welcomed it, I really do. I think they let it happen. Gross was a great influence on that. I mean, I think you can't underestimate his impact on having a concern for open intellectual debate.

SI: Was that in any way changed when President Edward Bloustein became president in your sophomore year?

WF: Yes. Well, Gross had cancer and left office in '71. I'll tell you an interesting story about him.

SI: Sure.

WF: Gross was a great lover of music. Gross was a big advocate of the band. In fact, he had brought Scott Whitener here. The Rutgers Band was invited to be in the hundredth anniversary of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade, leading it, because we were the birthplace of

college football. Well, according to Scott Whitener, Gross said, "Look, we can't send … the band--they're terrible. You got to bring in a real band, have a real band." Well, they brought Scott in and he turned it into a real big-time band. … Gross, the year that he had already announced his retirement, … we're playing a home game and I'm in the front row, and we're on the field, and, at the end of the halftime show, the band had just honored Gross and given him a plaque. I marched off the field. He's standing where you are and he says to me, "Did you see my plaque?" big smile on his face. Now, this guy was, like, if you think about the word intellectual, that was Mason Gross. He was a brilliant man, but he was down to Earth. He had a sense of what it meant to maintain the vitality of open debate, and he was concerned about the whole sense of what a university would be, you see. When Bloustein came here, I didn't know Ed Bloustein. What I do know, though, is that I think he was a little less open and a little more focused on Ed Bloustein. Mason Gross, I think, was more concerned about the whole picture. Now, Bloustein did some good things, I'm sure. Mason Gross, I think, was in many ways a very critical figure in the development of Rutgers, and I think, you know, I saw that. My old piano teacher, Sam Dilworth-Leslie, who I took lessons from as a senior, he said, when they would have concerts and they needed support for things, Gross would have his own piano or pay out of his own pocket to have a good piano ready. I mean, this is the type of thing he did, you know.

SI: Tell us a little bit about this separate band culture you were talking about earlier. What were the things that made it unique?

WF: [laughter] Well, that's an interesting issue. Okay, I come to Rutgers, I get invited to join the band because I put it on my activities, right, that I was interested. They contact you. They invite you to go to the band training camp at Stokes State Forest, Sussex County, okay. I don't know where that is. I show up. … I didn't own a trombone. What happened is that I came here and they had them. You got one. Get on the bus, they assign you to a rank. … High school, I had been sort of the leader of the trombone rank, whatever you want to call it, because, you know, we were doing very simple stuff. I come here and you already recognize that there are people who are leaders and you're just one of the gang. You're following, and you don't know what to do. Get on the bus, I don't know anybody. All of a sudden, these people start singing these songs--I don't know what's going on. Some of these songs are very interesting, profane, most of them are profane, actually, but you realize that what's happening is that they're developing a sense of a culture, to try to unify all these disparate people. I don't think this was sort of a master plan, I think it was part of what went on. So, you get to Stokes Forest, you go to a cabin, you're assigned a cabin. That night, you're going to have the first rehearsal. You eat, you go in, and then, the conductor comes out, and we're not playing any songs. We're tuning, unheard of. "Tuning, what's this?" We didn't tune in high school. Well, you're tuning, and then, you're playing all kinds of different music, which you've never seen before, and, now, you're going to learn it, and then, all of a sudden, … he yells out a command and all these people stand up and they start doing these things, marching or whatever. You don't know what's going on. I don't know what the hell is going on. [laughter] It's like I'm in a different world. Basically, what happened is that you became part of it or you left it. In other words, you had to learn how to march differently, you had to learn how to [follow] the commands differently, you had to learn what it meant to play the certain style they wanted. All this was new to me. I could play the trombone, but I didn't know how to play that style, and the person who was going to help you is your rank leader. My rank leader was a guy named Doug Haislip, who actually is a professional

musician today, trumpet player, and you learned this through his cajoling or yelling at you. … Sometimes, you get this right, you get that wrong, and you recognize how complex this was, because, when you got the schedule for the year, you also saw that you were going to perform at a professional football game, on television, possibly. Well, you better not screw up. There was a lot of pressure, informally and peer pressure, to do the right thing, and do it the way it was supposed to be done. … The practicing was rigorous. So, you go up there for three days, you come back and it meant, basically was, "We're not ready, got to get ready," and this sense of stepping up to higher expectations was really very significant. … I have to say, and my wife and I have talked about this a lot, because I met my wife in the band, I say the band, Scott Whitener and the expectations he set, and the standards he set, have been profoundly important, profoundly important, not only in music, but for what you did, the level of quality you expected of yourself. … I think anybody who was in the band with Scott, most people would say that. … I think the other part of it is that you had a sense of loyalty, almost, or connection to the quality and to what the band was doing, that was very powerful, because the band represented the University. The band was also a sort of a culture of its own. It had a building and they had a sense of direction, but the marching band was only one thing. You then had the symphonic band or the wind ensemble, the concert band, and all these other things. … I have to say that Scott and Sam Dilworth-Leslie and [F. Austin] "Soup" Walter--I took courses with "Soup," he was the head of the Glee Club--they have been profound influences on me, because they really, I think, broadened my education, and they had high expectations. … I was actually saying this to my wife yesterday--they had a commitment to serve us. I don't know how far that commitment extends today among the professors. I just don't know the answer to this, but I will tell you that a guy like "Soup" Walter would never get tenure today at Rutgers. "Soup" Walter was the head of the Glee Club here for over fifty years. His teacher was Howard McKinney. I had courses with him. "Soup" didn't have a doctorate. "Soup" had a master's degree from Columbia. He didn't publish anything. He was a tenured professor, right. He'd never get tenure [now], but the influence that man had on this campus was enormous, and that type of service, I think, unfortunately, has taken a much lower priority in academic rewards, but I think that's a powerful issue, because there were other professors I had who had similar ideas. I mean, they published, but maybe they didn't publish five articles a year. They didn't publish one book after another, but you know what? They were good teachers and they were committed to the type of advising and dialogue and things like that that you need when you're nineteen years old, twenty years old. Joe Laggini was another one. I don't know if you've ever talked about Joe.

SI: No.

WF: Joe Laggini was the Associate Dean of Instruction. When I came here, Arnold Grobman was Dean at Rutgers that year. He left after that year, and Reginald Bishop became Dean, but Joe Laggini was Assistant Dean of Instruction. … Joe's daughter was in the band, Marguerite, and his other sons and daughters had gone to Rutgers, too. … Joe is the type of guy, he was hands-on. He was a professor of Italian. He taught … in the Italian Department and he also was Associate Dean. When I was a senior, I had a problem, because the History Department had screwed up my teacher certification. They had gotten me into the wrong classes and I had to fix it up, and ended up having to take twenty-one credits my senior year, okay, last semester. Well, how will I get that done? Joe Laggini, he gave me the override, he gave me permission. He sat and talked to me about it. He worked it out. We solved it. That's what you needed, and that was

the type of guy they had. So, you know, getting back to the band, I think that was part of the idea, that you really were here and the band formed a really cohesive part of your life. There were people in the band who you never saw during the week, because they studied all the time. I remember one guy in the tuba section, Jeff Rothburd, he was pre-med. You never saw the guy until practice [or the] game on Saturday, maybe have a few beers on Saturday night, studying all the other time, okay. Everybody in the marching band was drawn from all over the University, because it wasn't … a music major band. It's not in Michigan, where … the marching band was all music majors. Here it was, the *lumpenproletariat* of the whole school are in the band. We wanted to be in the band. Well, you had to audition, too, and then, if you wanted to be in it, you stayed in it and stepped up.

SI: This change, with Scott Whitener whipping the band into shape, was that while you were here or was that before you came?

WF: He had come in the late '60s, I think '68, maybe, '67 or '68. He's been here at Rutgers now over forty years, because he's still at Mason Gross [School]. … Then, they went to the Tournament of Roses Parade and they led it, and they played at the East-West Shrine Game. We used to watch the movies. It was like the oral tradition. … "Let's watch the movies of the Tournament of Roses Parade," and they made a record, you know, of Rutgers songs and college songs and all that, and I still have it. … It was the type of thing where they were trying to raise the level of quality and raise the profile.

SI: During your time in band, did you participate in any parades?

WF: Yes. I was telling a colleague here that … on the schedule was a New York Giants football game, okay--Yankee Stadium, not Giants Stadium, Yankee Stadium. Now, when you're doing a half-time show at Rutgers Stadium or on the road, you're doing it in, like, eight or nine minutes, maybe. Twelve minutes … is a long show, okay. So, we go there, it's raining. You get up in the morning, it's a Sunday afternoon. You've got to get there, because you've got to practice, because CBS Television is viewing you, to see if they want to put you on the half-time [show], because they televised these things then. So, we're in there and we get the word--they're going to put us on TV. Well, now, [that] makes me even more nervous, right, because you're going to be on television. You're going to be broadcast. Now, you've got to remember how TV was then. Not everybody in the country saw the same game. They had regional games. … It was the Giants and the St. Louis Cardinals. They might be on in this part of the country, and the Detroit Lions and the Green Bay Packers might be on in the Midwest. … So, we get in there, we're getting ready, and I never thought I could understand what … professional football was like. I mean, I always thought I did when I watched it on TV, and then, I saw how big these people were by standing on the field. … We're behind the end zone. They're huge. Today, they're even bigger, I know, but these people were enormous. Fran Tarkenton threw five touchdown passes in that game for the Giants, and they're running right at you, because you're behind the end zone. There they come. … I wondered whether they're going to stop. … We don't play other than the half-time, but the half-time was nerve-wracking, because you're on TV. So, later on, they used to have the show on TV called, like, *NFL Today*, or something like that, or one of these highlight shows. I turned it on the next week, and they have like five seconds of us on TV, at the half-time show. … [They say], "And the Giants played the Cardinals," and they show that, right. …

People in the band decide to "borrow" the CBS Sports sign, behind where we were seated, as a souvenir. Okay, who got a phone call Monday morning? "Where is our sign?" … They had to send it back, but it was interesting, because the band did that, and then, we used to do away games, periodically. I remember we did Boston--it was either Boston College or Boston University--overnight trip to Boston. Typically, it might have been one overnight trip a year, not like today. Money was always an issue, because you've got to keep in mind what was different. The band was a student activity. The marching band was a student activity. They had to go to the student fee board to get money. Now, the Athletic Department picks it all up. Back then, they had to go make presentations, they had to have a budget. … Now, Scott wasn't a student activity [staffer]--he was a professor in the Music Department--but you still had this sort of hybrid. That was a sore point, because, you know, they had always felt they didn't have enough money. … I was in the pep band, too. We went to Madison Square Garden. This is when Madison Square Garden, you played double-headers. … They had these double-headers, and you would go up in a bus and we might play the first game or the second game. … They had three, four thousand people there, right, and you're sitting in Madison Square Garden. "Boy, this is great. I'm playing in Madison Square Garden. Here we are, right." … That was enjoyable, but I will tell you there was nothing like playing at "the Barn." Nothing like being in that facility, and it would literally be shaking with people, when they were doing cheers and the Rutgers Men's Basketball Team was playing in that old gym. [Editor's Note: The College Avenue Gymnasium, known as "the Barn" within the Rutgers community, still exists today, although it is no longer the home of the Rutgers Men's Basketball Team, which now plays at the Rutgers Athletic Center.] It was amazing. You were right on the court. … Where you're seated now, if I'm in the front row of the pep band, you're on the basketball court, I'm right here. … Every senior got a chance to conduct the pep band, okay. So, it comes to me, I'm a senior. So, it's St. Bonaventure, end of the season. We're vying for the NIT [National Invitation Tournament] at this point. So, this is the year Phil Sellers was on the team, right, and some of the new players they had … that eventually went to the Final Four in '76. [Editor's Note: During the 1975-1976 men's basketball season, shooting guard Phil Sellers led Rutgers to a 31-0 record before the team lost to Michigan in the semifinal of the NCAA tournament. Rutgers would finish third overall that year.] We were there, and, when the other band came, … St. Bonaventure brought their band, you had an agreement. You would meet them. If you're the home band, you'd say to them, "Okay, when your team comes out, you'll play your fight song. When our team comes out, [we will play ours]." "Yes, fine." So, St. Bonaventure's team is coming out on the floor and they're starting their fight song, and, all of a sudden, here comes the Rutgers team. Well, we had a routine, we played *The Bells Must Ring*, [the fight song of Rutgers] right off the bat. … I was supposed to wait until they were done. Sorry, our team came out, next, here we go, boom, there it goes, and then, everybody gets up. The whole place is standing up and doing the clapping, right. St. Bonaventure, they just stopped. They couldn't do anything about it. I felt bad for them--for about a second. … The point was … to illustrate this environment you were in, you know. I mean, it was really something to see, and to hear, if you were actually in there, because, if you had gone to the games three years before, we had kept losing. Well, now, you're vying for these tournaments. It was impressive, but it was interesting, because it was still sort of this small environment, and the whole campus got all wrapped up in this stuff, just like with [Rutgers running back] J.J. Jennings, you know. He led the country in touchdowns my senior year. He was in my class and, you know, everybody was watching him when he was playing on the field. … So, you had things like that that also were part of being in

the band. You were part of that, see. If you weren't there just as a spectator, you wouldn't have necessarily seen that happen all the time.

SI: Did they open the RAC while you were here, or was that just after you left? [Editor's Note: In 1977, the Rutgers Athletic Center, or the RAC, was opened, becoming the new home of the Rutgers Men's Basketball Team. In 1986, the facility was renamed the Louis Brown Athletic Center.]

WF: That was afterwards, yes. …

SI: They were building it while you were here.

WF: I think so, yes.

SI: Was there much interaction between the different colleges?

WF: You could take courses at other campuses. I actually never did that. It wasn't because I was opposed to it. It was just the courses that I wanted tended to be on Rutgers College. … You had to get course cards. That was an interesting experience. You had to go to Douglass if you wanted to be in the course listed under Douglass, and you had to go there on a day when they were issuing cards, so [that] you could get in. If you didn't get a card, you couldn't get into class. [We] had Livingston, … and then, of course, we had University College, too--which was the evening division--and the Ag School.

KT: Tell us about interaction with Douglass women. Were there dances and parties together?

WF: Yes, there were things like that. Of course, at that time, at Douglass, I think the mission of Douglass was still pretty well-defined as a woman's college, you know. I had people I knew who had girlfriends at Douglass and would visit them. … They had chaperones in the buildings. You had proctors in the buildings, you know, not chaperones for activities outside the building, but you had to register when you went in and all that stuff. I think there was still a sense of distance, in terms of … what was going on over there and what's going on over here, you know. Rutgers wasn't a unified university in the sense of having a common playing field for all those things. Warren Susman, who was one of the great professors I had at Rutgers, was really the architect of what was called the Federated Plan for Rutgers in the mid-'60s, where all the colleges had their independent focus, but you could take things at other campuses. Al Howard, who I think is still in the History Department today, came to Livingston, specifically, I think, because Livingston was an experimental, innovative college. … I remember having conversations with Al, that he was really opposed to the consolidation, because he felt it would mask those unique purposes. I knew people here, who were students like me. I didn't share these views, but I heard them, you know, "Livingston's like a second-class institution, where they're letting people in who shouldn't be here," and this, that and the other thing. I never believed that. I thought it was just sort of a lot of garbage, you know. The University should be open to all different people, but I think that there was still a sense of distance … between the colleges.

KT: Did the consolidation occur when you were here or just after you left?

WF: The consolidation, later. It was later, yes. It was under Bloustein, I think. [Editor's Note: Dr. Edward J. Bloustein served as Rutgers University President from 1971 until his death in 1989.]

SI: In the early 1980s.

WF: I think so, yes.

KT: I was referring to women entering Rutgers College.

WF: … There were women in my classes, who were Rutgers College students, who had transferred, and in this yearbook, you'll see them. … My wife … was in the first class of women. … She entered in '72. So, there were four hundred of them, if I'm not mistaken, around four hundred. [Editor's Note: Rutgers College first admitted women in 1972.]

SI: Did she enter or graduate in 1976?

WF: I'm sorry, she entered in '72 and graduated in '76, yes.

SI: Even before 1972, there were women in the classes.

WF: Yes, not a lot, but there were.

SI: Was having women in Rutgers College debated among the male students, whether it was a good or bad idea?

WF: I think the male students I knew couldn't figure out why it hadn't happened already. I couldn't understand it, either. Of course, my father thought it was a bad idea, but, you know, I think we were one of only two schools in the country, I think, at that time. We still had all males. I think one was in Virginia. VMI [Virginia Military Institute], I think, was the other one.

SI: Columbia as well.

WF: Well, but Columbia is not a public institution.

SI: Yes.

WF: So, just like Rutgers and this other school, [we] were the only two in the country that weren't coeducational. I mean, like, is there something wrong with this picture? [laughter] What's going on here, you know? In fact, on some of this stuff I was going over last night, even in 1969 or '70, the Board of Governors reversed itself. They had originally said "No" again, and they finally reversed themselves to go to coeducation. I just didn't understand it.

DK: I wanted to ask a question pertaining to Demarest Hall. Did they have the special interest sections or the group meetings that they now have every week?

WF: … There were special interest sections in the dorms. Now, whether they were in Demarest, I don't recall. We did have group meetings, though, about the affairs of the residence hall. I remember a guy that I knew from the band, lived in the building, Pete Delvecchio. He was involved with a committee with the hall. They bought a TV set, and the TV set--like within three weeks--was stolen. By the way, … security was an issue, I thought, on the campus because of various burglaries and things like that. It wasn't as high profile as happened later with, for example, violence against women and rape and things like that, but there was definitely the issue of security. I mean, it was a matter of guarding your stuff. Once something like that would happen, how do you deal with it? … Demarest Hall was a nice place, as a freshman, I thought, for one reason--you could actually get something done if you wanted to study, because, in the basement there, you actually were pretty isolated. I learned quickly, though, that I couldn't study in my room, because if somebody turned on the stereo or something like that, or there was a loud party next door or whatever, forget it. So, I learned after my first failure on the exam, go to the library. That's where I went, and it was a wake up call to me.

KT: How did security work in the building?

WF: You had a key, that's all. Key to the building, key to your room, that's it. They had a preceptor in the building, or on the floor. … They had a program for preceptors. First year, I was in Demarest. Second year, I was Hardenbergh. Third year, I was in Hegeman. Fourth year, I didn't have a room. My roommate and I … shared an apartment with two other guys in Highland Park. You know where the Dunkin Donuts is in Highland Park, across the street? There was a building, and we lived in the back.

SI: Another professor we interviewed talked about how vandalism picked up in the area after 1970. Did you find that to be the case? Was there also a lot of vandalism, in addition to theft?

WF: You're talking about vandalism of buildings and things like that?

SI: The destruction of school property.

WF: It would be hard for me to say. I couldn't really say. I do think you had to be more concerned about your property than you might want to have been, because if something like this TV was stolen within, like, two or three weeks of it being installed, okay, well, that's a wakeup call, too. … I think the other part of it was that you had to trust people that you knew. You just had to trust them. … I remember, many times, you're walking down hallways and the rooms are wide open. … That was common. You know, the whole issue that everything had to be locked up and secure at every moment of the day wasn't the truth. That wasn't happening.

SI: What types of entertainment or recreation activities were available at Rutgers?

WF: Well, we had all the concerts on campus. We had "the Ledge." [Editor's Note: The Ledge, located on George Street, was the social hub of Rutgers College, where concerts, gatherings and events were held. The building currently houses the Student Activities Center.] … There were a lot of people who came here early in their careers--Bruce Springsteen being one, George Carlin--

for free at the Student Center. … There was a band called Heavy Trucking that must have been here I don't know how many times--I lost count. They used to have things called "smokers," where you can go to events at fraternities, or at various locations, that were run by clubs. … If you wanted to join the fraternity, you know, they had the rush period and all that stuff. My father was big on joining a fraternity. "You got to join a fraternity, that's where the action is," blah, blah, blah. The first time I went to a fraternity, I realized he was absolutely wrong and I didn't want to be any part of it, because all it looked like to me was something where people hung out, got drunk, and if that's what you want to do in college, go ahead, but that's not why I'm here. … I enjoy a good time, but that was not part of it. The other thing was that you had dances, but, also, I think, you had the opportunity to explore different things that you wouldn't have expected. For example, there would be different clubs that were holding activities. There was the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group. [Editor's Note: The New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG) is a nonprofit public interest organization founded in 1972, focusing on issues regarding environmental preservation, consumer protection and open government.] There were all kinds of things you could join. … They had the … Free University. There was an entire catalog of courses that were offered entirely outside the University by people. It was fascinating. … We used to run events in the band. I used to run these trips to New York City. … We used to run trips to the Philharmonic, to Carnegie Hall, and things like that. … You just make your own event, too. … I used to be an usher, too. The band fraternity, Mu Upsilon Alpha--you want to know the story of how that happened?

SI: Yes.

WF: It's an interesting story. 1970, I joined the band. The band has an honorary fraternity, called Kappa Kappa Psi. It's a music fraternity. It's not a social fraternity--it's honorary. So, I pledged it and I was accepted. … The next year, Rutgers issues an edict … that Rutgers is going coed [and] no institution, no organization, can … receive funds unless it has total non-discrimination, right--but we're all-male, because Kappa Kappa Psi was all-male.

SI: On the national level?

WF: Yes. They had a sister … sorority. … So, the … second year we're in, the person who's elected president, Ralph Cichelli, who unfortunately has passed on, becomes president and we're confronted with this issue, because, the next year, women are coming to Rutgers and they're joining the band. Okay, so, what do we do? We all agreed, all the brotherhood said, "Accept them as equal members, that's the end of it," no discussion, that's it, done. Well, that's a problem, because the head of Kappa Kappa Psi, Robert Rubin, the national secretary, they tell us, "You can't do that, violates the charter." Well, we say, "All right, you come here and visit us and you talk to us about it." He comes to the game. We pick him up at Newark Airport, we treat him royally, take him out to dinner. He comes to our meeting that night, where the women pledges are there and the men were there. The first thing out of his mouth is, "Thank you very much. I'm now suspending your chapter because you decided to admit women as fully equal members." Okay, I was part of the gang that drove him back to the airport the next day. That was a very "pleasant" experience. What happened is that we then determined that we weren't going to play ball. So, we decided to form our own fraternity, disassociate ourselves from Kappa Kappa Psi. To make a long story short, we did that and, for over thirty years, that fraternity existed. Now, I

think Rutgers College has made an edict that … any honorary fraternity has to be affiliated with a national. So, they had to re-affiliate with somebody else. Kappa Kappa Psi apparently came back and asked them to rejoin, and they refused. … We also got involved with the Concerts and Lectures Bureau here at Rutgers. It was run by a guy named Clinton Crocker. It used to be right down … behind the Graduate School of Education. There's a wooden building there that used to be the concerts building. … Rutgers has had a concert series since the 1920s, and Howard McKinney was the reason for it. They had some of the most famous people in the world sing here. Paul Robeson, graduate of Rutgers, … opened the gym, first concert. Sergei Rachmaninoff played here. I remember [Vladimir] Horowitz played here--I mean, big names, in many fields. So, we even made a deal with Clinton Crocker. He'd give us "X" amount of dollars a year and we would usher at the concerts. So, we were ushering at concerts at the gym. So, that was another thing we did, where you actually did a service, but you had activities you could do, because, as we did that, you gained more understanding of who they are, because all these people would come from New Brunswick to these concerts. … I remember Marilyn Horne, the famous singer, whose husband, at that time, was Henry Lewis. He was the conductor of the New Jersey Symphony. She sang here a number of times, with the New Jersey Symphony. I remember standing in the aisle, upstairs, and Richard Schlatter--who was the provost at that time--came up and delivered that address, an honorary doctorate to Marilyn Horne, and gave flowers to her, in the absence of Gross, who was very sick. … There were some great events at the gym. … That was another thing we did, but it was very interesting, because it was all tied in with this whole Kappa Kappa Psi thing, and we kept up that service for many years, you know, even after I graduated. My wife was president, too. I was president, in my senior year, of the fraternity. She was president later on. … It was those types of things. … There was enough latitude--you could make your own events, which was great, you know.

SI: Did you enter Rutgers with the idea in mind that you would become a teacher some day?

WF: No.

SI: Tell us what you thought you might do and what led you to teaching.

WF: Originally, I was going to be a journalism major. I was very interested in journalism. I changed to an English major and, during the sophomore year, I changed to a history major. … I'm looking at my transcript here. I took a course, yes, it was "Teaching-Learning Process," the spring of my sophomore year, and that was the first education class I had. … I was really trying it out, to see if I would like what they're talking about. … I was intrigued by it. … What they did then, and they may still do, is they put you in schools one day a week, to see the various operations of schools with different teachers, and I did that. I interned in New Brunswick, in the middle school. I did it in Plainfield. You got a chance to learn what was going on. You also got a chance to apply some of the ideas. … You taught at least one class, and then, I just became more and more interested in it. So, I guess by the time I was a junior, that was really what I was focusing on and thinking about that, because, at that time, you got your certification as an undergraduate. Now, it's a graduate program.

SI: What led you to getting involved as a history major? Please tell us about some of the other professors that stand out in your memory.

WF: Sure. I'll never forget the first speech that Warren Susman gave in "Development of the United States." We're sitting in Scott Hall, and he was a tremendous [speaker]. He was one of the few people who would hold your interest for over an hour, and I mean hold your interest. First thing he says, the first day, and I'm paraphrasing it, in Scott Hall--there's like 150 people in there. [laughter] He says, "Welcome to the 'Development of the United States,'" it was the second half, "and I just want to let you know that at any given moment, fifty-five percent of you will be thinking about sex." He got you right there, and then, he told you what it was based on. They had done a study at Wayne State University, "What were people thinking about when they're sitting in a lecture hall?" … He was brilliant. … Richard McCormick had taught the first half of the class--the old Richard McCormick, not the current one. [Editor's Note: Richard P. McCormick and his son, Richard L. McCormick, were professors in the History Department. Richard L. McCormick went on to become President of Rutgers University in 2002.] He was totally different. He was very smooth, he was very precise. Susman was all over the place. Susman would walk up and down the aisles; McCormick never left the stage. … It was fascinating, because you had these two contrasting views. McCormick had two books, Eric Foner's *Free Labor, Free Soil, Free Men* [(1970)], Bernard Bailyn's *The Origins of American Politics* [(1968)], or maybe one or two others. Susman had ten, and movies. You had to go to the movies. You had to see *Our Daily Bread* [(1934)] from the 1930s. You had to see a lot of silent movies from the 1920s. He just blew the whole envelope about how are you going to study history. He gave you a book on the New Deal, full of photographs, Dorothea Lange, right. So, that was great, because what that really did is, it expanded your idea what you were going to really use to study history. Then, I had Traian Stoianovich. … There was no one like him. [At] Bishop House, "Nineteenth Century Europe," he walks in--we're in the bottom [of the building], right. That's where the History Department was at that time, by the way. It was in Bishop House. You walked in, you went into his place. You sat down, probably the most uncomfortable chairs, too, you know. Furniture in college classrooms is probably still nineteenth century. You go in, you sit down, the wall had these large windows, with wooden shutters. One day in class--Stoianovich … would come in and sit down and talk about things at a very high level, but a very interesting one--he says, "Open the shutters. I'm a man of light." He would make these comments, right, but the ideas he would put out there were fabulous. He was a student of Fernand Braudel in the Annales School in Paris, and he would talk about his teacher, and he said, "And this book will be published soon." Well, his book was published, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* [(1949)], seminal book, but people like that, really, I think, challenged you to rethink your ideas about history and about what life was like. Michael Adas was another one, on imperialism. I thought he was tremendous. So, I mean, those professors opened your ideas. … I think the other thing about education was that when I took courses in other departments, that contributed, too. … We had pass/fail courses then. Do you still have them?

KT: You can take one in your senior year if it does not meet a requirement.

WF: I had … ten, because you could take your whole first semester pass/fail, if you wanted to. It was interesting, because people would get acclimated to college. … I had a course in Italian literature, *Dante's Inferno*--professor was from Italy, came in with a cape. We talked about Dante, fabulous. I had a course in German literature about folklore. John Fizell, I remember, he

taught it. He's really an eccentric guy. … I mean, stuff like that, you integrated it into your concept of what an education was like. I remember taking a course with "Soup" Walter on the opera. It's hard for me to explain this, but you have to think about this in terms of the long run. "Soup" Walter [had] studied with McKinney. "Soup" Walter was present at the performance of *Don Giovanni* in Munich conducted by the composer, Richard Strauss, okay. McKinney, he used to tell these stories in class. McKinney was present in Vienna when Hitler marched in, … but he knew all these things and he could bring it to bear. He was in the first performance of *Peter Grimes,* at Tanglewood, [Benjamin] Britten's opera, in the United States. He was in the chorus. He would integrate these things and make the course really interesting. … Then, the last class he held in his house for breakfast. He made pancakes, and the last class was on modern opera, and he would do it. … What you had then--no CDs gang, okay--the record player, [he] dropped the needle for the exam, [then asked], "What's this? What year is this? Describe it. Explain it," and it was fascinating. … Really, what he was doing was linking it to the broader picture, just as he did in the symphonic music class. I mean, it was the type of thing where you really think you got a broader education in a sense. It wasn't so specialized. That was my feeling, and then, I had Sam Baily. Sam was probably the best teacher I had in the History Department. Sam, who later became my master's degree advisor, taught a course on revolution in Latin America and used the simulation called StarPower, which was a role play simulation about interest groups. It was phenomenal. It had nothing to do with the history book, nothing, but it really raised the issue of what it meant … competing for power in a revolution. … You dealt with Cuba, you dealt with Bolivia, you dealt with Mexico, and it was just tremendously well-taught, you know. … I thought back on it. … They served as a role model for you, for teaching. … You think about what they did. So, when I went to teach--my first teaching job at Hunterdon Central--I wrote a letter to John Lenaghan, I said, "Can you give me some good ideas about some books?" … He wrote me a letter back, he said, "Try this." I would talk to people. … I'd call up, get in touch with Sam, or something like that. They were really open, you know. … When you think about what happened, you took the courses where the professors had a good reputation and you had people who set good models for you. … If you were interested in teaching, you started to integrate ideas like that into what you thought teaching should be.

SI: How does the StarPower simulation work?

WF: Well, it's a very famous simulation. It's written by a guy named R. Garry Shirts. We actually have used it. … We use it at Hunterdon Central, in sociology. What it is, it's just trading of chips. … Then, you set rules, and you can change the rules to establish almost like a rigid caste system. As the people trade, they try to take it in to the upper levels, but the people in the upper levels, inevitably, try to keep everybody away, because they don't want to yield--sound familiar?

SI: Yes.

WF: Well, there you go, but it's tremendously powerful. … I've used it in many classes, and it's really very effective. Right now, here's a really innovative idea, right, thinking about how to teach effectively and using that.

DK: How did you feel about groups that were radical on campus?

WF: I didn't have any problem with what they were doing, so long as they didn't hurt people. I think you had to have a place for those viewpoints, and it certainly wasn't going to happen in my home, I can tell you that much. … I think you had to have a place where their ideas would be available, and challenged, too. To me, the college was good for that, because I think you needed open space for that, and I think the college became a place where those ideas were germinated. … The interesting thing to me, … looking back at it now, is the degree to which those people have sustained that or not. That would be an interesting longitudinal study. … The people who were in the SDS in 1972, what has happened to them? … What are they thinking today, you know? Where are the people [who were] in the environmental movement in 1970? Your first Earth Day was 1970. … When [George] McGovern ran for President, 1972, it was the first time people could vote--if you were eighteen or older--in a Presidential election. I voted in that election. I didn't think McGovern was going to win--certainly wasn't going to vote for Richard Nixon. I voted for the Socialist Labor candidate, pretty much as a protest, because it was obvious to me that McGovern had no chance, especially after the dirty tricks campaign and the loss of Eagleton and that whole situation that had emerged there. [Editor's Note: The "dirty tricks campaign" is a reference to Democratic vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton's withdrawal from the 1972 Presidential election campaign. Information pertaining to Eagleton's hospitalizations and depression were leaked to the press, resulting in McGovern seeking a new running mate and accusations that he was unfit for the Presidency.] … I was actually overseas … when Agnew resigned. I was reading about it. I was … following the Watergate scandal and the hearings in *The International Herald Tribune* in Europe. I'd go to a newsstand and I'd pick it up and follow it. So, you know, when you think about what was going on, it was … a tremendously powerful time period, and the impact it had later on, particularly. [Editor's Note: President Richard M. Nixon resigned from office on August 9, 1974, in response to the Watergate Affair. Spiro Agnew served as Vice-President under President Richard Nixon between 1969 and 1973, when he resigned from office amid a bribery and tax evasion scandal.]

SI: During that trip, did you encounter any anti-American feeling? This was the height of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal.

WF: You know, it's hard for me to remember. I mean, I didn't really pick that up. Nobody confronted me about it, or anything like that. You've got to remember, there were a lot of American students overseas, going on those types of things, you know. The interesting thing, I think, was that, when you look back at it, the whole transfer of power and the whole process was impressive. Here's the government correcting itself. Nobody is throwing fire bombs, it's doing it, it's happening, and it was impressive when you think about it, now that I look back at it. You know, when you're in the midst of it, it's hard to know that. … You think about it now, it really was [impressive], and I think the voices of the public were heard and the investigations went on and the right thing was done. … I think that actually showed that the government was functioning.

SI: Vietnam was a very active topic during your first two years at Rutgers, with people still being drafted. In 1973, when they stopped drafting people, did protests against the war stop?

WF: Yes, I think they had … toned it down a lot, because they really didn't need people at that point. … I didn't even realize at that time, but, you know, it was underway. You didn't realize how many people were still dying, overall. A huge number died in the Nixon Administration, an enormous number, in comparison.

SI: Did that make a difference for students? Was there less pressure to stay in school?

WF: I can't speak for anybody else--I can only speak for myself. … In contrast to today, when a lot of college students are taking five and six years, the expectation, I think, was clear--four years, finish. … I had ten thousand dollars in college loans. My parents could not afford to pay for the whole college education. I got student loans, and my wife got student loans, and they were the best investment we've had, because if we didn't have it, we wouldn't have been here. So, I think a lot of people were focused on getting done. … Again, I don't have the statistics in front of me, but I do know from where I work now, my perspective now, there are a lot more students who have to take a longer period of time to finish than they did then.

SI: After you graduate in 1974, you went into graduate study at Rutgers.

WF: No, I taught for a year. … I was hired at Hunterdon Central High School in the Summer of 1974. I taught the first year, and I applied to go back to graduate school. … I started … in Fall of '75. So, I went back and got my master's degree, starting in '75, and I took courses with John Gillis, Al Howard, Seth Scheiner, a fellow named Ralph Carter--who was a very interesting guy, historian of African-American history, and he was at Livingston--and I also took Jim Reed. Daniel Walkowitz was here then. He was eventually at NYU, and he and John taught the European history seminar. I took courses with Sam Baily, and I wrote my major study for my master's degree under his direction. It wasn't a thesis, but it was the major paper.

SI: How did the job at Hunterdon Central come up?

WF: Well, … there were very few jobs. All of us in the graduating class that year knew we were facing a pretty tough job market. I sent out over 110 letters of interest. I got three interviews, one offer, and that's where I've been. I got that offer and that was the only offer I had. So, I was very fortunate. … My first salary was eighty-four hundred dollars. … I lived in an apartment in Flemington. … You were paying off the student loans and teaching, and you knew the only way you were going to be able to advance yourself economically in the teaching profession was to get an advanced degree. So, it was obvious to me that not only for the pedagogical and the scholarly reasons, but also because if you wanted to be able to, you know, get married and have a family and all that, you really had to make more money. So, that was part of it, too.

SI: What was the state of the school when you first joined the faculty?

WF: Of the high school?

SI: Yes.

WF: It was a well-respected high school. It had been established in the mid-1950s. It was a regional high school. The department I joined was overwhelmingly male. I'll tell you something that doesn't exist anymore, but which was pervasive--smoking. … That doesn't sound familiar to you now, but it was then. I'll tell you, when you went to the faculty room, you needed an oxygen tent, because there was so much smoking going on, and that was one of the best laws that our elected officials have done, is pass the public restrictions on smoking, because it was awful. … The school was in a farming area, and suburban. I mean, Hunterdon Central is in Flemington. At that time, we were sending about fifty-five percent of our students on to higher-ed. Now, it's over ninety percent. So, the changes in the last thirty-five years have been more suburbanization, more economic growth, more of a middle to upper-middle class community. We were much more of a working-class community then. We had two full-time teachers of vocational agriculture. They're gone. We had a thriving 4-H program--gone. We had industrial arts, woodshop, metal shop--gone. So, you really have had changes as a result of suburbanization, but, at that time, it was … a real comprehensive high school. We had vocational programs, we had a full range of courses in all the disciplines. We still do, … but some of those other areas had been siphoned off to … a polytech. That's a separate institution now. … The college piece is really very big at this point. … I will tell you one thing, if you're interested, that we can talk about briefly--how the face of New Brunswick has changed.

SI: Please.

WF: Well, we're sitting in a place that was here then. If you walked down here, not far, you would have seen a very different landscape in New Brunswick. Where the Johnson & Johnson World Headquarters is is where Tumulty's Pub was, along with the New Brunswick Pork Store and all these little stores, the Rivoli Music Store, Reeds, which was a stationary [store], and a music store on George Street, and a lot of that, you know. People came to New Brunswick. … New Brunswick was sort of a decaying city at that time, right. You had a department store downtown, P. J. Young's Department Store, right on George Street, and it was a different place. … You could actually walk into town and find services that a standard [city would have]. You might have gone to any midsized city in the country and they were there. I think Rutgers has become a much bigger presence in New Brunswick than it ever was in the downtown area, now. … J&J, of course, has bankrolled a lot of that change, but there was a palpable sort of separation, almost, between Rutgers and New Brunswick. I think that's different today. I think, really, Rutgers has tremendously dominated New Brunswick in a lot of ways. … I remember, you would go to, like, these fraternity rushes and things, and somebody would go, "Oh, there's a townie. What are they doing here?" … the whole issue of, "You're in Rutgers and New Brunswick is over there." The interesting thing to me was, you could go downtown and you could buy things. You could sort of sustain yourself, you could go to different stuff, and that's really a little different today than it was, you know. New Brunswick has gentrified a lot. Back then, the full range of the working class and the middle class were all there. … Then, you know, the other thing about New Brunswick was that … you could walk all the way to Douglass and not be concerned about it, you know. … It was just a different place in some ways and, you know, if you look at a map of New Brunswick in the early '70s and a map today, you'd see a lot of changes. … The other thing that was very prominent, and is really not that prominent today, was that there was a real Hungarian-American community in New Brunswick. I could tell you two events about that. The Budapest Symphony Orchestra came here and the Hungarian State

Orchestra came here, to the gym. It was packed. The Hungarian-American community came out, and you could go on Easton Avenue to Hungarian bakeries and restaurants on Hamilton Street or Somerset Street, and get real Hungarian food, cuisine, and all that, without any issue. Now, … a lot of that has sort of disappeared, but that Hungarian-American community was very prominent, even in the '70s.

KT: In the pre-interview survey, you said that you taught courses here at Rutgers.

WF: When I went for my doctoral degree at the Grad School of Ed, I had a sabbatical leave in '82-'83 to write part of my dissertation. So, I taught a course in social studies methods. … I also supervised some student-teachers at that time. Then, in the … mid to late '80s, I taught a course in curriculum in the grad school, and another one, sort of, was an entry level course for Grad School of Ed students on foundations. Then, in the late '90s, when my advisor, Jack Nelson, retired, they needed somebody to pick up his "Analysis of Social Studies Curriculum" class, and I taught that. I had taught that, also, in the mid-'80s, after I finished my doctorate, but these were never as a full-time professor. These were part-time positions, and that was interesting. I enjoyed it, but I've always felt that, I guess, my calling and my strengths are in teaching in the high school.

KT: These are mostly graduate courses you were teaching at Rutgers.

WF: Yes, there was one undergraduate course I taught, that foundations course. I taught that with another fellow.

SI: How different was the GSE experience from getting your undergraduate and master's in the more traditional Rutgers College track?

WF: … When I started work at the GSE, I had to make the decision whether I was going to go for a doctorate in history or one in education. When I looked at the situation that existed in terms of employment … and what I was really interested in doing, I decided to go into social studies education. … The real important reason, in addition to that, was that the people we had here were very good--Jack Nelson, Ken Carlson, Stu Polanski and, eventually, Ron Hyman--who worked with me. I really thought they were tops, really excellent. They were thought provoking, they were open-minded, they forced you to think about alternatives or critical thinking. I mean, I really thought they presented a really good model for what it meant to be a social studies teacher. So, the GSE was a place that had a pretty vital climate. … What happened was that, … by the time I finished in '85, I think some of that climate had changed. They brought in a dean from; I can't even remember her name. … She left a few years ago, went to Syracuse, and I think the people at Syracuse figured her out pretty quick and got rid of her, but I think the climate became less appealing. So, I was glad I finished when I did and moved on, but it was a good place to be, and the type of learning you did there, a lot of it was self-directed, because you could really define your own path. You had to take required courses, but you had to define a focus. I mean, they came to me early and said, you know, "Start thinking about a dissertation topic." So, you didn't wait on that, you had to be focused on it and think about it.

SI: What was your dissertation focused on?

WF: I started out thinking I was going to do a dissertation on oral history.

SI: I know you were involved in oral history.

WF: Yes, I was actually interested in doing that, but, when I looked into it, there wasn't enough in terms of pedagogical substance, in terms of looking at the critical literature, to really develop it to the level it needed to be developed. So, I switched to something else, and I actually did a comparative study. It was a philosophical dissertation. It wasn't an experimental design. I took the prevailing models of US history in the public schools, in the secondary schools, and dominant practices, and I compared them to two non-traditional models of curriculum theory, one, a radical left, and another one, an aesthetic perspective. … My dissertation focused on looking at, "If you put those models into place, what would US history teaching look like? Would they be compatible or not? and what would be the implications of that, in terms of that?" So, that was three years of my life writing that. I enjoyed it.

SI: What did you find? Were they compatible?

WF: Well, I think the problem we ran into was that when you looked at these alternative models of curriculum theory, there wasn't very much compatibility with the existing models of teaching of US history and practice, because the ability of these alternative views to penetrate the culture of the schools has been minimal. … Therefore, in order to try to change things, you really have to have a better explication of the alternatives, and you have to provide ways for them to impact practice that would lead people to rethink why we teach history in the public schools. US history, at that time, was being mandated in forty-one states. However, the traditional models for why we were doing it really hadn't been rethought very much, in terms of alternative use, of why we have public schools or why we have curriculum design, certainly. So, when you come at it from a Marxist perspective, not a lot of people in the public schools were thinking about that, nor did the people who articulated that view make a very good effort to get it out to the public schools. So, if you are going to have change, you have to have people understand what the change would be, and they weren't doing a very good job of that. Plus, there were other factors that inhibit reform, you know. So, that's where that went.

SI: I know you have worked on some oral history publications at Central Hunterdon. How did you get involved in that and what did that entail?

WF: Well, I was interested in oral history from the time I was an undergraduate, actually. … We had read Studs Terkel's book on the Great Depression, which I still think is a tremendous book. *Hard Times*, I think it's great. I think Terkel's work is very good in many ways, and I thought about what that would mean if you would actually take that process and put it in place. So, I started doing that in the late '70s, when I started working on veterans' oral histories and bringing veterans in the classroom and … audio taping them. … Then, I started to do more work on looking at how oral history could be part of research that kids could do and things like that. When I did my master's, I actually did a number of interviews with women in Perth Amboy about generational change in the Latino community there. … I think it became a good way to engage students in the critical study of what constitutes knowledge. So, that's where I was

coming from with it, and, at various times in my career, I've [had] greater or less intensity in focusing on it. … Now, with the archives that we have at the school, we've been doing interviews pretty regularly, two or three a year, and I think it's been good, because I think we've started to build up a bank of material, and, also, it gets more kids involved in terms of adding to the actual sources that exist for their use. So, I felt it always had a lot of potential, but it has to be done in a way that's systematic and high quality. It really has to have a rationale and a method that's timeless, which you know.

SI: Did you find the district was receptive to that idea of bringing oral history into the classroom?

WF: Oh, yes. I've never had anything but really good support at the school for these ideas. I think one of the reasons that exists is because, I think, when you establish a project or a focus, if you've done your homework, it doesn't appear to be just the newest idea. … You actually have a grounded foundation for it, you might say. My boss, George Gazonas, was always very supportive of innovation, you know, and I found the school to be the same, because I think you're giving back, too, you know. What you're generating is a product that's going to be used by other people.

SI: Was this a way for Central Hunterdon to build ties with the local community?

WF: … My boss who hired me, George Gazonas, I think he always was a proponent of engaging the community. I don't think George … had thought enough about how to do it. So, when he saw somebody like me and he saw that I was interested, he sort of opened the door and said, "Let's go." … At the same time, I think, today, … there's a lot of discussion about service learning--community service and all this. However, you need to establish it in a way that is going to actually be meaningful to the student, so that they can reflect on the value of it, and not be a substitute for something, let's say, that would be a job for somebody in the community. So, when we do things like the oral history project at Hunterdon Central, it's not going to take the place of somebody's job. It's something that helps the student learn about what inquiry is, but it also makes the product and it generates [resources]. … I think when you do it that way, I think it's valuable. … I've seen a lot of that happen, and I think the school board has been supportive. I just think that you have … to have a good rationale for it. It really has to be well-grounded.

SI: You have been very active with the University Archives, particularly the Senator Clifford Case collection. Can you talk about how you became involved with your research on Case?

WF: Well, let me say two things. First of all, I think that Rutgers has always been very close to my heart as an institution, because Rutgers changed my life. There's no doubt about it. I met my wife here. I have become a better educator and a better human being as a result of being here. I can't understate it. … It doesn't take anything away from my earlier education, but Rutgers, especially the undergraduate years, laid the path and I'm always indebted to that. … Rutgers also has tremendous resources, and I think our affiliation, through Electronic New Jersey and through other projects I've done here at the University in collaboration with the people, has always brought something positive, because of the resources and the talent that Rutgers has to put on the table. So, I've worked with other universities. I worked with the College of New Jersey, you

know, and I've worked at Raritan Valley [Community College] and things like that, but Rutgers brings to the table an awful lot that contributes to the work that I'm interested in, … whether it's making curriculum available in digital form or doing oral histories or working with--in collaboration with your office--with the archives. That's just not available in many other places. So, I think those are the real reasons … it's been significant. Electronic New Jersey began as a possible curriculum project with a sponsored high school. … Tom Frusciano, in the SCILS program, at the information sciences school, [the School of Communications, Information and Library Science], had sent out a survey about the use of primary sources. They constructed this as a project. They got the information back, and I don't know if a lot of schools sent it back. Well, Spotswood sent it back, we sent it back. So, we had a meeting. Out of that meeting, we decided to try to develop a way to use resources that the archives would have for teaching, which really hadn't been done very much as a systematic project during the conversations. The Internet was just sort of happening at that point in 1997. The Rutgers Libraries was building a Scholarly Communications Center. A guy named Boyd Collins was in charge of it, and we talked about it and said, "Why don't we forget about publishing a book? Let's put it on the Internet." Well, that's where it went, and from that point on, we've had four grants. A number of various schools have been involved. We've got plenty, you know, a lot of curriculum on there, and we've just submitted another to the commission to finish off the redesign of Electronic New Jersey and to add three more modules, one on Case, one on Title IX, and one on civil rights at Rutgers, and, if that's funded, we'll hold a teacher institute here this summer. … This faculty will only be from Huntington Central, not because we're against having others, but it's just that the scale of this project is smaller. … Some of the people that we worked with in the past have retired, and I really feel we have to bring people on board that I know will bring this to closure, you might say. [A fifth grant was received and completed in 2010.] The other thing that I think is important is that Rutgers, the Libraries and the History Department, and … the GSE, they've been open about looking at alternatives, and not just recycling the same thing over and over again, you might say. … This project that we've proposed for Electronic New Jersey, Beth Rubin from the GSE would be one of the consultants, Clement Price [and] Donna Murch would be historians on the project, … the Library, the Archives/Special Collections staff would work on it, Kayo Denda from the Douglass Library would be the woman scholar on the Title IX piece--and all that can be brought to bear here. So, that brings a lot of resources in one place together that you just couldn't find necessarily anywhere else, and also the quality. To me, the quality has to be there, and I think these are all quality people. … We have limited time, we have limited resources, let's bring them to bear at the highest level of quality we can, to provide something that is a service to the people. That's my ethos, and I think at Rutgers, you know, a lot of that can happen.

SI: Can you give us an overview of your career at Central Hunterdon? I saw you also taught Spanish there.

WF: I did. I started in 1974. I taught social studies for three years. At the end of my third year, there were financial problems with the district in terms of the budget and they were making plans to cut staff. I was told I would probably be part-time. Well, that wasn't an option, because I had just gotten married in 1976 to my wife, Sheila. She was teaching part-time in Spotswood, two-fifths of a position, in elementary art. We had gotten married in '76. … My third year was starting in September of '76. … So, we faced an interesting challenge there. What happened was that a teacher in the language department, John Bucciero, retired and my history department

supervisor, and Ed Buckley, offered me a joint position, if I would get certified in Spanish. I had fourteen credits [as an] undergraduate in Spanish. So, that summer, I finished my certification with ten credits, and then, beginning in 1977, I taught for eight years, Spanish and social studies. In some cases, I taught mostly Spanish and some social studies. Then, in 1987, I was appointed as social studies supervisor when George Gazonas retired, and I've held that position since then. This is my twenty-third year as supervisor, and in '82 and '83, I had a full year sabbatical to work on my dissertation. In '95, '96, I had another full-year sabbatical, where I worked as an outreach instructor for the United States Holocaust Museum, doing Holocaust education outreach. I also took six credits here at Rutgers. … Two years ago, in the second semester of … 2007-2008, I had a half year sabbatical to work on my research on Clifford Case. I became interested in Clifford Case because I was reading a book on lynching and it was mentioned in the book that the last person to propose federal legislation to abolish lynching or make it a federal crime was Clifford Case. Well, Clifford Case is a Rutgers graduate. Clifford Case's congressional papers are held at the Rutgers Special Collections. I went down and talked to Tom Frusciano. I said, "Tom, can we take a look at [the] Clifford Case papers?" There are three hundred boxes of Clifford Case papers. "Let's look at the stuff on civil rights." I started to read it. This is impressive, this is important stuff, and then, I find out there's no book on Clifford Case. Clifford Case was the longest-serving US Senator in the State of New Jersey in the twentieth century--probably [Senator Frank R.] Lautenberg will pass him now, but he will span the twentieth and the twenty-first century--and Clifford Case had no book. In fact, many people don't even know who he was, because he died in 1982. … So, the more I got into it, the more interested I became, particularly with his role as a moderate Republican, because, as you know--and I think anybody who looks at politics today knows--the moderate wing of the Republican Party is shrinking. … One of the reasons that nothing is getting done in Washington--it has not gotten done on major issues for at least ten years--is because there are very few people left in the center. Clifford Case, John Sherman Cooper, Jacob Javits, Edward Brook, these were all moderate Republicans who were fundamental to the passage of the Great Society legislation, fundamental to Civil Rights. … We forget that the South was solidly segregationist, in many ways. So, for example, when Kennedy proposed Civil Rights legislation and when Johnson carried through after that, if you didn't have moderate Republicans, it would not have passed. Case was essential. … They were essential for this. Case was the only vote for Kennedy's national health care [legislation], the first iteration of Medicare. He's the only Republican who voted for it. People think Olympia Snowe is courageous. Clifford Case was Olympia Snowe fifteen-times magnified, but it wasn't that he was an odd man out, you see. [Editor's Note: Republican Olympia Snowe is the senior United States Senator from Maine, regarded as a political moderate. Clifford Case (NJ), John Sherman Cooper (KY), Jacob Javits (NY), and Edward Brook (MA) were all Republican members of the United States Senate who were regarded as political moderates.]

SI: Yes.

WF: There was a center of American politics, which has deteriorated. … That story is not being told. … The ideological polarization that we have today is so devastating and so negative that we forget that a lot of the fundamental changes in post-World War II America were actually forged by the moderate center. So, Case is sort of an illustration of that. On top of that, I think Case believed in certain things that are very important. He believed in ethics. He believed in social justice. He believed in human rights. He believed in environmentalism before it was

popular. Now, you can argue against Case or for him, but I think the story should be told. So, that's really where I'm coming from with the book, which is going to take a long time, but which is a very interesting project. … The fact that he's a Rutgers graduate is icing on the cake, you might say. … I have to say the other person that has inspired me from Rutgers is Paul Robeson. When I was in Rutgers, Paul Robeson was a non-entity. I found, when I did the research for the thirtieth reunion, a *Targum* that had a special edition on Paul Robeson. … One of the front page articles on the special edition was, "Where is Paul Robeson at Rutgers?" basically. Rutgers took away [all references] and basically made him invisible during the McCarthy period. [Editor's Note: Senator Joseph McCarthy's accusations of Communist infiltration in the US government led to a nationwide witch-hunt to unearth alleged Communists, particularly in academia, an era of persecution lasting from 1950 to 1957 known as McCarthyism.] It was hard for people to know who he was, because you couldn't find him. I remember in the Alexander Library, before it was renovated, going in the basement, because I used to like the big leather chairs [laughter] and study in them. There was a place where they had these … old class pictures on large, sort of hanging plates, and, if you went through those, you would find Paul Robeson, because he'd be the only black face in year after year of Rutgers graduates at Rutgers College, but nobody knew who he was. Well, it was only during the period in the '70s, after he passed away and people started to talk about him again, that you recognized the greatness of this man. … I've done a lot of study of Robeson, I've done a lot of work, I've given presentations on him, to teachers and things like that. I've taught about him in class. He is a true renaissance figure, but he believed in something. He really believed in what he did. He suffered for what it is he believed in, but, to me, … if you're going to study people in the public schools and you're going to look at role models of people who had the courage of their convictions and who served as a good case study of what that means, he's a great example. Case is another example. So, I think those two people have been tremendous role models for me when I look at what they believed in and sort of what a public life is like. … A third one I'll mention, … he was not a Rutgers graduate, but he was New Jersey's--William Brennan. In the early '90s, the New Jersey Social Studies Council, the state Social Studies Council, nominated William Brennan for the National Academic Freedom Award for the national Social Studies Council. I wrote the nomination. It was submitted on behalf of the council. He got it. Now, Brennan was very frail at that point, okay. He had retired from the court at that time. Nobody knew if he was coming to the lunch in Washington. At the last minute, they find out he's coming. I'm at the luncheon with other people. The president of the council, who's now retired, Bob Shamy, says, "Billy, you've got to go see Brennan." I was in the elevator with him. Brennan, he was frail. He was a short guy, I mean five-seven or five-eight or five-nine." I go over to him, his wife is very protective of him, but he's at the table, and Fran Haley, who was the executive director of the national council, says, "This is Justice Brennan." I go over to him, he stands up and wants to shake my hand. I just said to him, "Justice Brennan, it's such a great honor." Then, he gave a brief speech, but … it's hard to believe the impact that man had, you know, on the cases that he ruled on--some of the things, the landmark things, on academic freedom, for example. So, when you think about that--and I think about New Jersey and I think about Rutgers and I think about what we're doing--I think we have to give credit to people and we have to study people who can [be a positive example]. … I teach about the Holocaust, I study people who are the antithesis of good, but, also, we have to study the people who are good and do the right thing. You have to study why those things happen. Well, here are some great examples. So, you know, I'm not going to write the biography of Clifford Case as some sort of an apology or propaganda piece, but you can't ignore what he did.

So, I think a lot of that comes to my ethos about what constitutes what a public career should be, you know. The other thing I'll say, I'm not saying this to blow my horn, I'm just saying it because it's who I am, I think when you are in the public schools in a public role, you have a responsibility to share your expertise and what you know with other people, put it out there and let them respond to it. So, I've written a lot, I've done a lot of publications, I've done a lot of presentations. I still teach. I work with teachers. I think you have to have that responsibility, up there, right up front. … I'm going to tell you where that came from. It came from here, it came from Rutgers, because I saw it happen here. It came from probably my upbringing, because I think, in particular, my mother was very concerned about other people. My father I think is, but he's just sort of a more insular person. … I also think it came from recognizing that, if you're going to have a public life, not just a private one, you have to believe that what you can do is improve the quality of life for other people. So, that's driven me since I left Rutgers and got involved as a teacher, because I believe that should be part and parcel. It should be integral to what you do.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add to the record?

WF: I would just like to say thank you for the opportunity, and if you need … clarifications and if you needed me to come back, I'll be more than happy to come back.

SI: Thank you, we appreciate all your time. I will state, for the record, it has been a pleasure working with you over the years on the projects that we have collaborated on. I have one minor question. Could you describe the official notices in the *Targum* you mentioned before?

WF: Yes, they were interesting. In fact, I was looking at one last night. What they would do is, … they would announce hourly exams, final exams. They would tell you when you had to go and register. … All this today, I know, is electronic, but, then, it was all printed in the *Targum*. So, if you didn't pay attention, you could really miss the boat. They would announce when … this would take place, or this, that and the other thing. When you had to register for graduation, you know, where you're graduating, when you get your cap and gown, all that stuff was in the official notices and they were part of--a central part of--the *Targum*. I don't know how often they were done, but I can give you somebody who would know. I don't know if you've interviewed Bill Barrett.

SI: No.

WF: He would be a good person to interview. He was the editor. Bill worked for the Associated Press for many years. … Jim Robbins, … I don't know if Jim's still in New York City, but he wrote for the *Targum* and he was in our class. There's also a fellow--and I don't remember his name right now. Bill Harla, he would be another one to talk to. They worked for the *Targum* very heavily, and they would be good to talk to because, unless somebody has done, like, an oral history of the *Targum*, I think that would be a good project, because you'd really get people who were sort of at the center of all these things happening … at that time. Bennett Zurovsky, there's a guy you want to talk to. Bennett was the arts editor of the *Targum*. I did some writing for the *Targum*, … some concert reviews and things, but Bennett, you've got to get a hold of him, because Bennett really managed that whole thing, and it was very interesting.

They had the critiques section. … They covered all these events that happened, you know, when Bonnie Raitt was here, when this person's here, when Carlin was here. … They addressed all that stuff. They'd address movies, they'd address stuff, you know, all very interesting stuff, and I found the *Targum* to be just fascinating when I went back to look at it, particularly with the Case project. I read a lot of the *Targums* from the time Case was at Rutgers, from '21 to '25, and that's a very fascinating study, too, to see what was reported then and how it was done and what went on.

SI: While at Rutgers, did you have access to other student publications?

WF: Sure, there was the Livingston *Medium*, *The Caellian* from Douglass. [Editor's Note: *The Caellian* is the student newspaper of Douglass Residential College (formerly Douglass College), and *The Medium* is a student newspaper known for its comedic and sometimes offensive content.] There were also other publications, like literary publications. I can't remember the exact names of them. They were published. There were other sort of--I wouldn't call them underground things, but they were just sort of offbeat stuff. … The Free University, that was really interesting. You should find out that stuff over at the archives, because that was neat. … The whole concept of the university was being challenged, you know, sort of the official state knowledge versus what other people want to know. That was fascinating, I thought.

SI: Did you ever participate in that or take any classes?

WF: No, I didn't, but I mean it was interesting to see what they were doing and how it was happening and everything that was going on. … This is an editorial comment. The thing that's probably most disturbing to me about higher education today is the dominance of corporate culture. I think universities have no business having major corporations having monopolies on services. I don't think they should be outsourcing bookstores. I don't think they should be having advertisements at football stadiums. I know I'm in the minority, but I'll tell you right up front, I think that undermines the independence of the university, and I really feel that has gone too far, too. … The lengths to which it's gone is much too far for my comfort level. I would much rather have the university be an independent entity than have it compromised by a lot of that stuff. So, that was not the case then. … I remember, there was a huge outcry over a professor that we had in the Political Science Department at that time, because he had done some work on a contract with the CIA. I don't even think people think about it anymore, you know, "Is your stuff being funded by Nabisco? Why is it being funded by Nabisco?" They shouldn't even have a role, you know. … The other part of it is that the reward system for professors has changed. "How much grant money can you get?" … They don't think about where the grant money comes from. You know, maybe I'm old school, but I have a big problem with that, because I think, really, once you go down that road, it's hard to detach yourself. It's like George Ball said, you know, in the famous Vietnam film that PBS made. … It's called *Vietnam: A Television History*. He's quoted as saying, "Once on the tiger's back, you can't pick the time to dismount." Well, how far have we gone? Can you really tell the difference between the university and the corporation? I could then.

SI: Is that happening on the high school level as well, because I know you see corporate influences coming into high schools now?

WF: Well, that's an interesting issue, you know. I mean, people have talked about that where I am, not in any really substantive way, about, "Should we have … naming rights, you know, like the Continental Airlines Arena or IZOD Center?" that kind of thing. I will tell you, point blank, and you can publish this anywhere you want, the day that happens, I'm showing up at the board meeting, arguing against it, because the next thing that it will be is that we'll start censoring the curriculum, because somebody in some corporation or the government will say, "Well, that's going to conflict with this." … No thank you--it's as if the State Department wrote the textbook. I'm not going to vote for that, either. [laughter] So, to me, you really have to have … a large rein of free and open inquiry, and that is compromised by having all this corporate influence and, you know, other types of influence that are unsavory, in my opinion. Now, Rutgers did a great thing when they divested. I know a lot of people didn't like it, because we were going to lose profits, lose investment money, but what were we supporting, South Africa, Apartheid? Please, you know--Kean did the right thing. The State of New Jersey did the right thing at that time. He was unpopular when that happened, you know. The National Republican Party thought he was off the beam. No, he did the right thing. So, to me, the University should be doing the right thing. [Editor's Note: In the 1980s, Governor Thomas Kean was a proponent of New Jersey's--and therefore Rutgers--divestment from South African companies, putting financial pressure on the nation's government to eliminate racial apartheid.]

SI: Again, thank you very much.

WF: My pleasure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: This is an addendum to Dr. Fernekes' interview.

WF: During a class in symphonic music, one time, "Soup" Walter told us that Dr. McKinney, who ran a concert series, was preparing the gym for Sergei Rachmaninoff. Sergei Rachmaninoff came into the gym, and they had a platform and there was a curtain, because the gym actually was an advanced facility. It had a swimming pool, with a separated curtain, and a wall that opened up. So, they're going into the gym and Rachmaninoff is going to tune up and practice a little bit. … He looks up and he says, and I'm trying to imitate "Soup" Walter, and he says, [in a heavy Eastern European accent], "I will not play if that curtain is in place," [laughter] and McKinney says, "Well, that's just what we do." He says, [in a heavy Eastern European accent], "I will not play." I can tell you who won that argument. The curtain came down, [laughter] but that's the level of performer that we had here at Rutgers, year in, year out. So, I thought you'd find that interesting.

SI: Yes, absolutely, thank you.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 8/31/2011
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 9/1/2011

Reviewed by William Fernekes 10/5/2011