RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE R. FERREN, JR.

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins the second oral history interview with Wayne R. Ferren, Jr., on August 10, 2021, with Shaun Illingworth. If you can please tell me for the record where you are today?

Wayne Ferren: Yes, I'm in my home office. I live in Las Vegas, Nevada.

SI: All right. Thanks for meeting with me again. We want to get deeper into your activities in the pivotal year of 1970. You talked, in your book and in the last session, about how hectic that last month of your time at Rutgers was, that you were working on your thesis, your conscientious objector application. You had worked on the Earth Day preparations. That ended, I guess, in late April, so you were working on other things, like the national student strike. Then, you were looking at graduate school as well. Let's dig into one of those aspects, like Earth Day. Let's talk a little bit about how that idea came about and what your specific actions were on the Rutgers-Camden campus.

WF: Thank you, by the way. I appreciate being here. Because of my growing interest in ecology and botany, in addition to me being a geology major at Rutgers, I became aware of some of the national activities that were going on for the organization of Earth Day. I think Gaylord Nelson was important in proposing a national week and a day, April 22nd, that was partly in response to all the ecological disasters that we had experienced, with burning rivers and the Santa Barbara oil spill and post-Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Paul Ehrlich's *Population Bomb* and all the things that had been going on in the earlier part of the '60s up until then. [Editor's Note: Gaylord Nelson, who served as a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin from 1963 to 1981, advocated for the creation of Earth Day, as well as environmental legislation. On January 28, 1969, a blow-out occurred on Union Oil's offshore Platform A in the Santa Barbara Channel. Over three million gallons of crude oil spilled into the channel before the leak was stopped, making it the worst oil spill on record at the time. On June 22, 1969, a portion of the Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire due to oil pollution.]

Of course, I was interested, and the national office for the organization was in Philadelphia, right across the river. There were going to be a number of colleges involved in celebrating throughout the country, and so I thought it would be important for the Rutgers campus in Camden to have a major effort in that. Myself and a few others, Tom Olejnik and I, my brother and others, formed Save the Earth Committee. Friends of the Earth was a national organization and we didn't want to impede on that name, so we created this Save the Earth Committee, which was in response to the national efforts, that we'd get on campus. We got some funding. We worked with Sy Zacker, the u-cen [university center, called the College Center] director, the student union director there, to be able to organize an effort associated with the rooms and the grounds around the center. Then, I became kind of the unofficial director/president of the group that was formed to be able to invite people, have a program, have demonstrations of different activities. Then, I attended the meetings of the national committee in Philadelphia, so that I could know what was going on, that we could join in that national effort and have some funding from the campus to buy buttons and buy the paraphernalia that we could have on campus then to give out to participants. So, we did.

I was fortunate in preserving the program and some of the activities, so in my book I list the speakers we organized. We had several movies in some of the College Center rooms. We had a propane-run vehicle parked out front and made the effort to publish our thoughts as this grew in the campus [student newspaper] *Gleaner*. Earth Day had been [publicized in] many editorials, by myself first, just announcing and having the program and also giving my thoughts on the importance of Earth Day and ecology and the environment and environmental stewardship. Then, each of the members of the group also chose a topic and submitted something to *Gleaner*, and all of that was published in the *Gleaner*.

I thought it was really quite good, quite remarkable that we pulled it off. [laughter] The speakers were great and students attended, and so we participated in April 22nd in the national effort. I was very proud of Camden for doing that. Our program was mostly morning, early afternoon. I was busy dealing with the rest of the effort, cleanup and the like. But a number of the group went to some of the national programs over in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. Bill Gallagher, one of my close friends through my life, and others went. Bill gave me some summary of things, for the book, of what he experienced when he went to hear the speakers and participate in the national effort in Philadelphia. [Editor's Note: On April 22, 1970, Philadelphia had one of the biggest inaugural Earth Day rallies in the nation at Fairmount Park, the city's largest park. Then, the Declaration of Interdependence, a document that highlights how everything is connected on Earth, was signed in Independence Square, which is the space outside of Independence Hall.]

I was quite proud the fact that all that had happened, and that was really just two weeks before all the effort, all the calamity and other activities in May. We had just barely gotten over the Earth Day celebrations, realizing this is, for most of us who are participating, our senior year. We have classes, senior theses, in my case as a geology major and I had taken that as a credited program, so I'm wrapping up some of the things I was doing or trying to do with the thesis. The events of April then led to the invasion of Cambodia, Laos, and then the murder of students at Kent State and Jackson State. We had this cascading set of things that resulted in a major shift in activity, although anti-war activities had been going on all along on campus and in Philadelphia, when we went to demonstrations there by leading a march across the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. [Editor's Note: Following President Richard Nixon's expansion of the Vietnam War to Cambodia, a nationwide student strike commenced in the beginning of May 1970. On May 4, Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire on anti-war protesters and bystanders at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine. On May 14 and 15, 1970, students at Jackson State College protesting against racial harassment were fired upon by state and city police, resulting in two deaths and a dozen injuries.]

SI: Just sticking with Earth Day for one moment, were there people coming from off the campus to partake in the events? Was there a lot of folks from the community or elsewhere?

WF: I think it was mostly students and faculty, staff; that's my recollection. I don't recall what campaign we had beyond the campus community. I just don't remember that, but the previous announcements in the *Gleaner* and then the *Gleaner* covering the event, it was a campus paper, which had some circulation among those who lived throughout the South Jersey area, for Rutgers-Camden was mostly a commuter campus, you see. At that point in time, I had been living a block off campus, and so I was part of the student-resident area, although there were no

official residences for the students associated with the campus. We were all in private apartments and the like, or in fraternity and sorority houses. My recollection is that our Earth Day event was mostly a campus affair.

SI: Do you know if maybe either running concurrently or as a result of Earth Day it led to any further programs at Rutgers-Camden?

WF: Yes, my brother was among those who took over my role. My brother was two years behind me there. While I was a senior, he was a sophomore. He moved into the role of chair, and the annual events had celebrations. They also wanted to do something more proactive.

I think I'll back up. I may have mentioned this the last time that the courses we had were taught by faculty who were studying environmental impacts in the area. I'm pretty sure we covered that. Some of them included studying the degraded water quality in streams and in bays and estuaries, and so that influenced us of course because we were studying this in courses and seeing the impacts locally in real-life situations.

My brother and others understood that Monsanto was among the chemical corporations who had potentially violated the law by illegally dumping chemical waste, and so the students went about testing water effluent associated with the dumping and brought attention to it. That became a more active element, rather than just informative and educational, which is what we had done the first Earth Day.

Environmental activities moved then beyond that nationally into legislation. New Jersey had the first wetlands protection act and there are all sorts of [laws passed], the endangered species act in the state and the like, sometimes ahead of some of the national efforts. [Editor's Note: The two New Jersey laws being referred to are the Wetlands Act of 1970, which requires permits for activities proposed within tidal and estuarine wetlands and designated protected wetlands on regulatory maps, and the NJ Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1973, which was signed into law two weeks before the federal Endangered Species Act.]

Yes, the campus continued in the environmental effort, both in the courses we taught or attended and in the activities of what eventually, I think, became the Friends of the Earth, the name you'll see used in some of the local literature. We evolved from Save the Earth to Friends of the Earth, but it's all basically the same group. I include a picture of my brother speaking to a group, in the book, subsequent to my graduation. There was some press coverage from the investigation of Monsanto, and so I include that in the book as a way of giving it some credibility and a source beyond rumor. One has to be careful about accusing corporations of that [laughter], but on the other hand, interestingly enough, Monsanto was a producer of Agent Orange. They are being sued today by the country of Vietnam for producing Agent Orange and the impacts on their ecosystems and on their people. The story continues of corporate ethics and involvement in the effects of chemical pollution on humans and in ecosystems. The story is still moving along, and we still have these kinds of problems today.

SI: You noted last time that there was a lot of crossover between the people that organized Earth Day with you and the people that were working on the national strike.

WF: Yes.

SI: You mentioned that you were mostly involved in the political work, writing to senators, things like that.

WF: Yes.

SI: What else do you remember about that effort to organize the strike?

WF: Well, my recollection is there were a core of seventeen students, with some faculty and some staff, who responded to the call for a national strike after the invasion [of Cambodia] and particularly then after Kent State on May 4th, when the four students were killed. That, of course, was an affront to those of us who were students as well as demonstrators against the Vietnam War. I included an incredible picture in the book from the Associated Press of armed guards marching at Kent State with gas masks on and rifles drawn. I mean, it is shocking.

You have to understand that those of us who are seniors are in a slightly different position than those who were not going to lose their educational deferments. There may have been more seniors involved in some of the anti-war effort, men and women--my wife Angel was involved as well--but yet there were others, like the student body president, [Christian] Wurst, who was a junior, I believe. There was a mixture, but it was a heavily senior effort at that point.

We had this informal gathering of, "Let's join the national strike, and what are we going to do about it?" Well, the faculty who were activists were interested in also being able to participate, and so they proposed a resolution that I include in my book of voting to strike and close the campus, not teach, cancel all the classes for the rest of the year, and that passed. Rutgers-Camden joined the national effort to cancel classes, offer everybody pass/fail, or if you wanted to take an exam, you could. I had to still finish my senior thesis, so I was scrambling. [I was] finishing up Earth Day, participating in the national strike, going to the emergency march on Washington, thinking about applying for my conscientious objector status, which was due. I would be drafted as soon as I lost my educational deferment on May 31st, the day we graduated, and now I had only so much time to get it in. I turned it in by June 12th.

Working with the faculty, having the resolution formed, striking, and, in that vote, setting up an Executive Strike Committee, an inter-Rutgers campus subcommittee, a community subcommittee, and other subcommittees, which would organize activities. There was always recognition and I try to cover this and represent the Black Student Unity Movement accurately in the book, regarding their participation because we were a largely white school in a neighborhood that was predominantly people of color. There wasn't a whole lot of interaction the way there should have been or representation on campus in the student body. We wanted to set up a subcommittee for that. Then, also, those of us who were involved as time allowed participated in the "Free University."

Now, classes are going to be over soon, so we only have so much time to try to set up alternative classes, as well as then some of the political things. Because I had so much to do, I felt all I

could do really, at this point, was to write my senators, which I did. They responded probably with a form letter, but they were very powerful letters, from both [Senators Harrison Williams] and [Clifford] Case. I was very happy to receive them and I actually have them, so I included them in the book as well because I wanted to show the connection of all the folks involved, senators, faculty, students, the grand response of being appalled at yet starting basically another new war, extending this into other countries and being the invader and then also having the National Guard called out to murder students in the end. It was a horrific time. Almost every day in May, there were activities, such as marches, the emergency march on Washington, some of the women's movement and their activities, very powerful. All of this came together as, I think I mentioned, John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "Give Peace a Chance" demonstration at their bed was taped late that month. Then, we graduated on May 31st. [Editor's Note: "Give Peace a Chance" is an anti-war song written by John Lennon and released by the Plastic Ono band in 1969. The song came as a result of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's bed-in for peace demonstration at a hotel in Montreal in May 1969.]

SI: Tell me a little bit more about the Free University. You said you were not as involved with it.

WF: Well, Bill Gallagher, I think, was the chair of that committee. I was just consumed with trying to get my senior thesis done, any coursework that was leftover, pulling together the information for my application for conscientious objection, that I didn't have much time for it. I do, in my book, have the list of committees and chairs of the committees, subcommittees, and the efforts to pull together classes. The classes, in my recollection, were mostly explanations of the alternatives to what was being said about the war, informational. There are other parts of the story, such as a big focus of my book on the resource extraction in Vietnam, marketing to Southeast Asia, cheap labor, and all the efforts that the war, from my point of view, were about. That educational effort, with information from Columbia University and others, was the basis of some of the things that went on, even though I didn't directly participate because there's only so much time in the day. That's why we had different people in charge of different things, trying to spread what we could across the effort so that it wasn't in vain. We did this with serious intent. I know some of the parents were not happy with us and some of the students didn't support us, but there was a majority of us, and the faculty who voted in favor of the strike, that it became a reality. We, and many campuses across the country, participated in the national student strike.

SI: Well, let's talk about the conscientious objector application. You mentioned last time how the court cases were happening at the same time, and that affected things. Maybe you can just summarize, again because you go in great detail in the book, what went into your first application and then appealing that once it was denied.

WF: Yes, I turned my application in on June 12th, and that included letters of support and the forms. I had to fill out the form, write to get the application, so the delay between the graduation and filling it out including me thinking about all of this--how would I explain myself? [laughter] We're waiting for the form to come because it has be mailed to you. Then, you have to fill it out right away and turn it back in, so the timing is everything. My organizational thoughts were in response to questions. I was fortunate, I think I mentioned this before, that I had everything I submitted in duplicate, and in doing that, the secretary of the board stamped all my copies from

Selective Service Board Eight and the date and maybe the time, I don't remember. Nonetheless, they were authenticated, so that I had a copy of everything the board had. Those forms are then in my book, so you have exactly what I said on the form in response to questions. I thought that was important. It's a lot of detail and it may be more of a reference than a read, but it's there for young people to understand what one person did and went through in case they're challenged in their life, whether it's a military draft or whatever, that there are ways of getting through the system and participating with it. You could, of course, refuse to go, not claim conscientious objection, if you have a low lottery number and risk being found a felon and serving prison time, as my friend John Braxton did. I chose to participate with the system, having thought over this seriously with my wife, and if I didn't get my CO classification, then the alternatives in front of us were jail, leaving the country, disappearing and just ignoring the system and maybe they won't come and get me, who knows.

I had talked over--one of my mentors of my life is Dr. Ralph Good, who, I mentioned last time, was both one of my teachers and employer, when I got a job in the herbarium, and ultimately, when I went to graduate school, my major professor. His wife, Norma Good, is still a good friend today. Ralph passed away some time ago. Norma is also a Ph.D., a professional botanist, and a good friend. Ralph felt that my claim should be ethical based upon impacts of war to ecosystems and culture and the like. I felt that didn't address the Selective Service code. [Editor's Note: Dr. Ralph E. Good served as a faculty member at Rutgers-Camden for twenty-four years. He was a botany professor, director of the graduate biology program, and biology chairman. Good is well known for leading the preservation efforts to protect over one million acres of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. He died in 1991 at the age of fifty-four from throat cancer.]

The interpretation of the Military Service and Training Act, which defines Selective Service and also sets up the boards and defines conscientious objection, was based upon the Supreme Court ruling of *United States v. Seeger* at the time of my application. The case changed the definition, in '65, from something that required sincerity, a belief in God, an orthodox, traditional religious belief, against all wars and the like and much more rigorous and narrow in definition. The Supreme Court felt that Congress didn't intend it to be that way. Their interpretation in *Seeger* opened it up a little bit more regarding religious training and it didn't have to be so orthodox and the supreme being was interpreted more as God, and, well, that's broad. But, nonetheless, one still had to have training, belief in God, sincerity, against all wars. [Editor's Note: In *United States v. Seeger* (1965), the Supreme Court resolved the question about the status of conscientious objectors from non-orthodox religious backgrounds and ruled that one can have conscientious objector status based on a belief that has a similar position in that person's life to the belief in God.]

I felt, claiming my objection to war based upon the impacts on ecosystems, it wasn't addressing what had to be done and my belief. My belief, as we talked last time, being affected in my early days raised as a Christian, a Methodist, and then experiencing Buddhism and transcendentalism was more about the relatedness of all life and energy in the universe and connectivity. My claim then would be based upon the balance of energy in the universe as being representative of the importance and supremacy of God and we are all God and we are all part of this grand integrated energy of the universe. I went about describing that and getting letters of support from a minister

and from my friend Bill and from the dean and an assistant dean of Rutgers-Camden, who had been supportive of me and who I knew. It's a small college, as I had mentioned, and so you get to know everybody. Berjoohy Haigazian especially, the assistant dean, and I were good friends, and I knew Dean [Barry] Millett. They were kind enough to write a very powerful letter for me as well.

My claim came about from the study of ecosystems, and I list the publications in the application that were important to me, those of studying salt marshes, energy flow in salt marshes, and some of the new things. Ecology was still a relatively new science, you see, and there were not all of the principles we know today, but there were still some profoundly important things that were coming out. I believed in combining my transcendentalism and Buddhism and interest in energy and connectivity and the sacredness of all life and of all things, and nature and Earth as a whole in the universe. That is how I would explain my beliefs. I went about answering the questions and submitting the application.

Interestingly, three days after I submit it, the Supreme Court made a new ruling in *Welsh v. the United States.* I wasn't aware of this at the time I submitted my application, but I became aware of the ruling as I interacted with the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors in Philadelphia. I did not visit with them when I was putting together my first application. I did subsequently meet with the staff, and then they provided some advice, but I chose not to have their attorneys representing me. I wanted to do this myself in my way and see what we could do, with the team of people that I had, my friends, the people who wrote letters, my wife Angel, and the like.

There we have it; the new ruling opened up the opportunity for sincerity and religious belief or one's ethics held at the same high standards and sincerity of religious beliefs. Suddenly, in one ruling, the doors opened up for many other young men who could apply with a broader definition of being against all wars, being sincere, having training, and having strongly held religious or ethical beliefs. Personal moral code was always excluded in the other rulings and likewise with this one. [Editor's Note: In *Welsh v. United States* (1970), the Supreme Court ruled that conscientious objector status applies to "all those whose consciences, spurred by deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs, would give them no rest or peace if they allowed themselves to become a part of an instrument of war," thus expanding conscientious objector status beyond the religious-based objection.]

What I try to do in the book is show that delicate dance between one's ethics and morals and how does a twenty-year old know the difference and the traps one could fall into during a personal appearance in trying to describe this. It really is astounding. I think one of the things that benefitted me is that I'm a white male, educated, appearing before an all-white board. I hate to paint it in such terms, but I do believe it's true. I think it's true today. All the things we see with Black Lives Matter and other activities by concerned citizens, we are still in a situation of having a racist country. People of color are not always judged the same way, not only that but people of different economic groups, no matter what their race or educational backgrounds, are at a disadvantage when you're appearing before a board talking about these somewhat esoteric things. I felt privileged in that I could articulate and speak to my beliefs.

We had the first appearance, and of course, they denied me. I believe that they probably do that to everybody, "We're going to deny right off the bat." I left at the end of the questioning--and we can always go over the board questions, if you'd like to raise some of them--but I stated to the board before leaving, "Well, I understand that the Supreme Court made a ruling that should allow you to grant my application." The chair distinctly said, "Well, that's for us to decide, Mr. Ferren." That was that. I was denied, and of course then you had the opportunity to appeal and you can appeal all the way to the Supreme Court. I wasn't going to just walk away. The next thing to do was to fill out the appeal and a whole new set of forms and a whole new set of documents I put together in further explaining my beliefs in the context of traditional religion and other things.

SI: In the book, you describe the interview itself. The chair, Perrin, seems like he really went above and beyond to kind of at least make sure that your story was heard and he was not just trying to shuttle you off.

WF: No, he was genuinely interested, and I think that was great. Perhaps he expressed that for all folks who appeared before the board. I just don't know who else did and I don't know what the relationship with the board was. They're some of the things that I tried to find out when I, writing this book, approached the Selective Service System about the records for the board. I was told they were at the National Archives, and the archives said, "Oh, they were all destroyed by the Selective Service System before only the draft cards were sent here." Again, as I have mentioned before, my copy of my application documents are the only records of my case, as far as I know, that exist.

The secretary of the board called me after they had denied my application, saying that Mr. Perrin wanted to meet with me. I was just amazed and I thought, "Oh, what does this mean, like you don't stand a chance or what's going to go on?" I, of course, took the opportunity, and he explained what I had to do for the board to allow them to grant my CO. They believed my sincerity. They didn't understand my claim, but they accepted it based on the letters I had and the sincerity issue and all. What they wanted me to do was put it in the more traditional religious terms. Now, that's not required by the Supreme Court ruling, but that was required by this board following the Supreme Court ruling.

I did that then, and I made an effort to refer to the Bible, the writings of Saint Augustine, the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the proof of God, what is God? I wrote a treatise on that the best I could in the time I had. I had spoken to the pastor, Reverend Pitt, who had married Angel and I. He's the one who wrote this incredible letter. I think it was very insightful, very authoritative. Then, I spoke with Ralph Good about it. They both independently suggested to me that Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine might be the place to go. I read up on them and tried to use some of their thinking in quotes on the proof of God and in broader terms as part of my appeal package that I submitted. I tried to explain further how the words of these religious authors related to my beliefs, so I was hopeful maybe the details of my appeal would convince the board. I was, nonetheless, optimistic because the chair reached out to me and I was totally amazed and thankful.

SI: On the appeal, you had consulted also with the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors.

WF: I had done that before, after I had started my claim and submitted my application, but before I went to the initial hearing (my courtesy appearance), you see. The hearing wasn't until September. In the meantime, I applied to Temple University for a master's degree in teaching science. I was accepted, and part of the program was, in fact, to teach full time. I also wanted employment because here we are graduating and no jobs, folks, I no longer work for Rutgers. [laughter] I'm no longer a student. Ralph Good said, "Why don't you talk to Ernie Schuyler at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia?" They were friends and colleagues through the Philadelphia Botanical Club and through interest in the local flora and the local ecology. So, I did. Ernie hired me for the month between trying to finish up applying and all that, and before I started Temple and starting teaching at Cherry Hill High School West. When I was finished, Ernie said something like, "Well, if you ever want to come back, I enjoyed working with you. Contact me if the opportunity arises." That was an open door. Many times, I explain in the book, all these doors that opened--do you take that opportunity getting a work study-job in an herbarium I knew nothing about, being a geology major, or going to work for Ernie Schuyler for a month--turned out to be an important thing. They're some of the things that took place during this entire process that changed my life forever.

My association with the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors back then was simply a meeting to ask for advice about the hearing, about the first courtesy appearance. The CCCO suggested I think of questions ahead of time, and subsequently I thought of almost every question the draft board asked. So, that was exciting because the questioning wasn't new to me then. Also, as soon as the hearing was over, I was able to write down every question I could think of and an abbreviated answer to it. I then submitted the summary document to the board through the secretary and had her stamp my copy. This material became the source of information for my board appearance in the book. The CCCO staff suggested I give brief answers, because the more you talk, the more you're likely to perhaps open doors that you don't want open. [laughter] I was really happy to have carted a box of all my archival material around for decades, including three times during moves across the country, so it was pretty remarkable. Then, I was able to meet with Ernie Schuyler again, later on to discuss potential employment, after I received my CO, which, as you know, then happened subsequently at the appeal hearing.

You could appeal to the state board or you could appeal to the local board, and I thought, "Well, I've already met with the local board, so let me start there and then move on up the chain, who knows." You just don't know what lies ahead. You simply have no idea what's ahead of you. You're just working through this the best you can because it's a process that you are totally unfamiliar with and have no idea what the responses are going to be every single milestone along the way. I was fortunate enough the board approved my CO status upon my appearance during the appeal hearing. I brought witnesses that never had to testify [laughter], so that was pretty remarkable. We were all gleeful, I guess, is one word to say, in the midst of something that was still powerfully difficult, while realizing the privilege I was going to have then in performing alternative civilian service. I refused to do non-combatant service because I would still be enlisting in the military and participating in the war but not being combatant. I chose then to only apply for the civilian alternative service form of conscientious objection. I was granted that

and thankful and appreciative of the fact the board approved my explanation of conscientious objection to war.

SI: Before I read the book, I never entirely appreciated just how much of a hurdle that is, getting the alternative service. You had to go through a whole other process with the board.

WF: Yes, you have not only to file your application, but appear before your local draft board and answer their questions in person. It's December 1969, and I have just received a low draft lottery number, and the clock moves on, and suddenly I lose my educational deferment in June. I needed to decide what to do upon being drafted. If granted a CO, you have the opportunity to present what you'd like to do, among all the approved categories for serving alternative civilian service. It could be working for churches, hospitals, with Native American tribes. There are many whole categories acceptable jobs. In New Jersey, working for the agricultural department and managing pig farms was one of them, I remember. [laughter] There's a lot of breadth in that. Hospitals are common places of employment for COs, including serving as nursing aides.

I wanted to do something related to my claim and my interest in ecology and the environment. I didn't want this to be, I wouldn't say a waste of my time or the country's time, I wanted it to be impactful and active, continuing my interest in activism. It came to me that Ernie Schuyler had asked to let him know if I ever want to come back to the academy. So, I met with Ernie and said, "Ernie, how would you like to have me almost for free for a couple years? Here's an opportunity. Maybe we can work together to try to do this." The botany department had a grant, a National Science Foundation grant, I think, to help manage some of the backlog of the thousands of collections that needed to be curated. The academy submitted the job description to the Selective Service for approval. I included the correspondence in my book between me, the academy, and the general in charge of the Selective Service in Pennsylvania, [William] Halfpenny, I think it was. The job was in Pennsylvania, so it wasn't the local board that approved it, although they had, I guess, final approval. The local board is expected to have support from the state in which you were going to perform the alternative civilian service.

Well, as you know, the Pennsylvania office of the Selective Service System approved the academy, which had never been applied before for conscientious objector work. They also approved the job description, but they didn't approve it for me personally. [laughter] I was totally astounded. I thought, "How can that be?" Well, a little-known part of this application, if it's not the law itself but the practice, was that conscientious objectors had to move away at least fifty miles to be disrupted in their lives like someone entering the military would be. I lived in Camden across the river from Philadelphia, nine miles or something, and this wasn't going to fly, and although the Selective Service System could've approved the job for me anyway, they chose that an example was going to be made here and I was not going to be allowed to accept the position.

I was mortified. I was just so disappointed because then I had used all the time I had before being drafted as a CO trying to get a position at the academy. I did my physical. I was claimed to be a fit. Essentially, you are being drafted even if you perform alternative civilian service. You're participating with the Selective Service System. It's not like you're outside the system. You are in the system. You're doing a different type of service, alternative civilian service, not

military service. Now, I had like only ten days or something, before they were going to assign something for me and I would be shipped off to it, my wife and I. I'm thinking, "Oh, my God, you've got to be kidding me." So, I go, "Well, this time I'm calling Mr. Perrin," and so I called the secretary of the local board. [laughter] I said, "Can I have a meeting with Mr. Perrin about this denied request?" He said, "Yes."

So, I made an appointment and arrived at Mr. Perrin's office. You can imagine, there I am, sitting on the other side of his desk, and the two of us are looking at each other, thinking, "Okay. What's the alternative? What are we going to do?" I'm just thinking, "Oh, my God, apparently the local board didn't want to go against the wishes of the state board and the general in charge of the Selective Service System in Pennsylvania." I don't know, but somehow, I had this flash of brilliance I guess, and I thought, "Well, how about if I just move away fifty miles and then commute every day so that I meet the letter of the law." Mr. Perrin was willing to take that to back to Pennsylvania, and don't you know a letter arrived approving the arrangement! I was like, "Oh, my God, we did it." It was so exciting.

In the end then, my wife and I moved to Atlantic City. New Jersey is about fifty-five miles wide. She had gotten a job as a social worker for the City of Camden, and I then went to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. We'd drive up and then I'd get on the high-speed line, go over, and then take a bus, and then get to the academy or walk or some combination thereof, depending on the weather.

Then, as my relationship with Ernie and the academy matured, I got more into research, and that was where I wanted to be to be able to not only help manage the collection and all the history and important things I described but also contribute to something that was science and the exploration of the local river systems. I assisted Ernie in his interest, in a project of the freshwater intertidal and brackish intertidal zones, the rivers in the fifty-mile radius of Philadelphia that included all of South Jersey, including its coastal river systems, northern Delaware and up the Delaware River to Trenton, and up to the mouth of the Hudson Bay, including the Raritan River in New Jersey. We had this vast area and all these rivers and many of them had never been investigated before. Some of them, however, had hundreds of years of records, from the earliest days of the country, from visiting botanists. Philadelphia was the center of culture in the western hemisphere for a long time, so it [was] the place to be, wealthy Quakers, the biggest states, most of them with slaves and servants, people in servitude, but also botanists from Europe coming to evaluate, investigate, and describing new species. The important thing in there is that these preserved plant specimens actually gave us a record of what it was like before the Industrial Revolution and before the impacts of port development and all the things that went on. We knew what the vegetation was and what the species composition was from the early days because of the collections of early botanists and some of the very important publications from the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

My work with Ernie then brought the botanical record up to the last quarter of the twentieth century, including what was out there, and were there any newly discovered plants? Some of the rivers had never been looked at and some of them had been less impacted, and also where were the impacts? Were there extirpated or extinct species, and what was the impact of this? Then, we produced a number of publications regarding our findings.

I also worked with Ralph Good on some of these questions for my master's thesis, subsequent to [alternative service], when I went back to Rutgers for my master's degree. It is a continuing story, to this day actually, because book two that I'm writing covers the work I performed as a CO. I put the results of my work in terms of climate change and sea-level rise and ongoing impacts to the nursery grounds and the importance of freshwater intertidal zones and diversity of species and the like. It's a continuing story, but the second book upgrades it by another fifty years to today, in addition to reinterpreting some of the finding that Ernie and I and Ralph discussed back then.

I think the alternative civilian service I performed suited me fine. It was great that I could contribute in a positive way. It influenced the rest of my life and was very impactful, both for me and for the country. I think I made contributions that were important. I was very, very happy about that and privileged to be able to work at the academy. I do mention in the book that I had been there at the academy when I was a youngster with Bill Gallagher and others collecting fossils and being an early member of the Delaware Valley Amateur Paleontologists, mentored by Horace Richards at the academy's geology department. I knew the academy from back in my high school days, and it was wonderful then to have a position that lasted for seven years, because I continued to work there after I did my CO work. I think I was paid three thousand a year, I think, as a CO there. I didn't always go to Philadelphia, because if we were working in Delaware or working in parts of South Jersey or wherever, I did fieldwork, sometimes directly from Atlantic City or met Ernie somewhere or came to Philly and then he and I went off. It was a great opportunity, but I also felt it was a worthwhile use of my alternative civilian service in that some of my talents and interests were then used in a meaningful way and that's what I had wanted it to be.

SI: Was the commitment two years?

WF: Yes. It would be like being drafted for a two-year military commitment, and so I worked for two years. I continued at the academy and then applied to go back to Rutgers for a degree in biology, a master's degree in biology, which is what they offered at the time. I was enrolled, not in Camden, but in the system-wide [graduate school] out of New Brunswick. I took classes in New Brunswick as well as Camden and still worked in Philly at the academy.

Of course, I was drafted out of teaching high school at Cherry Hill High School West (fall 1970 to spring 1971), while I was enrolled in Temple University and while waiting the fate of my CO application. I contribute a whole chapter in the book about the wonderful experience in teaching, and I still hear from some of the students. I contacted one of the students recently and found them online, because I needed to obtain permission to use in the book a painting of me teaching. Also, one of the students got a hold of me because he coincidentally looked up my name and found my website about the book. [laughter] It was great to catch up fifty years later and find all of these successful professionals and realizing that you had maybe some impact when they were in ninth grade when I was teaching earth science and continental drift, plate tectonics and all the latest things. We had a wonderful experience, really. Of course, the Cherry Hill School District had to extend a job offer for me if I wanted to come back. Having been drafted, it didn't matter if I was doing alternative service or military service, I was still part of the Selective Service

System. I was then able to decide to go into academics instead, and so I never finished my degree at Temple, although I could have because I was invited back. I didn't go back to Cherry Hill High School West either. Let me-show you something on the computer monitor.

SI: Oh, sure.

WF: The Selective Service System gives you a certificate of completion for the work you did as a conscientious objector. It may appear backwards on the monitor, but nonetheless, you can see that.

SI: Yes, it comes around.

WF: It says here, "Selective Service System. This certificate of completion hereby awarded to Wayne R. Ferren, Jr. in recognition of satisfactory completion of alternative service in lieu of induction as prescribed by the Military Selective Service Act. Issued at Washington, District of Columbia, the Sixteenth Day of May, 1973" and signed by the director of the Selective Service System. They actually give you such a document, and I found it in my archives. [laughter] I have it now framed, but for all those years, it was in an envelope with all the other paperwork. I thought, "This deserves to come out for the fiftieth anniversary and be celebrated." [laughter]

SI: You mentioned that you got a little bit of pay while you were a conscientious objector. Was that from the academy?

WF: Yes, that was from the academy. They had, again, this grant from the federal government for curating the collections. The primary part of my job was in identifying, mounting, dealing with inner-institutional loans and the like. Now, interestingly, John Braxton was a student of Ernie's at Swarthmore College, and when he got out of prison, Ernie gave him a job as collections manager. That's when the two of us came together and have been friends since. I was so thankful that John contributed to the book in several meaningful ways, both as having visited North Vietnam during the war, as well as his prison time and his appearance [in court] and the dialogue he had with the judge before he was sentenced. I'm honored to have included his testimony in the book to frame the situation of several young men: Jerry Wayne Ferren, who enlisted and was killed at nineteen, the father of a child he never met; myself, the conscientious objector working in the system but doing an alternative to military service; Jim Fulbrook, a high school acquaintance and helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War; and then John Braxton, who went to jail. I think his example is powerful. He's a major hero of mine in his ongoing activism, in his work with unions and the environment in Philadelphia. John is a Quaker and would have had a conscientious objector status automatically, but he refused to show up for induction and the government decided that they would make an example of him. The picture I include of him in handcuffs was after the testimony that's there in the book and as they were about to take him then to prison. Pretty powerful consequences. The government meant business, but the punishment was not always applied consistently, and certainly not fairly. [Editor's Note: Jerry Wayne Ferren, a nineteen-year-old lance corporal in the Marine Corps, was serving as a crewman on a KC-130F Hercules that took hostile fire and crashed landed at Khe Sanh airfield on February 10, 1968. He died on March 1, 1968, at a military hospital at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.]

Again, I was never challenged to the point, you see, of knowing what would I have done if my CO application had not been approved. What would Angel and I have done? Would we have left the country? Well, we were looking at Australia. We were looking at Canada. That's probably what would have happened, but you don't really know what you would do. I knew that I wouldn't be inducted into the military, so the choices become slim. I felt that probably prison wasn't my path, so likely leaving the country would have been. I think it's hard to disappear within the country, go underground and not participate in a way that you could be found if the government was looking for you. I don't know how serious such searches might have been. John wasn't the only one who went to prison. The government was very serious about that, but we were serious too. Being against all wars is one thing, and then being confronted by a draft with a lottery and having a low lottery number, you're made to make decisions. So many had higher lottery numbers, and among all my close male friends, I was the only one who didn't have a medical deferment or research deferment or was a parent. I was healthy and a lower lottery number. It's one of those things in life, a crossroads. I think one of the reasons why I wanted to write a book was to demonstrate how one reacts to such a situation. In my case, it was reacting to a military draft. There are other crossroads in life, and I would hope that the book contributes in a way of showing an individual and his path, as well as his associates and the context at the time.

I think not everything that happened to me could happen at any point in time because of the nexus of many events, such as of the environmental movement, the civil rights movement, the other movements, the women's movement was very important in this, and the anti-war movement. For me, it was the perfect storm, as they say, of all these things coming together, and my training in science, if I didn't have the training I had in ecology, if I hadn't gotten the job with Ralph Good in the herbarium and decided to start taking ecology courses, if I hadn't been in a liberal arts college and took "American Poetry," "American Novel," "Western Civilization" and other liberal arts things, my mind would not have been in the same state, you see. We're all individuals in individual times, but for me, I was born at a time in which all of these social movements came together in the same period of a few years. One's ethics, based on the influences of society and not just one's personal moral code, are at the core of the claim of conscientious objection for many individuals, including myself. It is clear the context of the times had a major influence on my thinking.

Now, Jerry Wayne Ferren was shot down in 1968. Jerry, and myself, and John Braxton and all these people I bring into the book were almost all born in '48. We have this clade of individuals born at that time following World War II, but '48 was the year in which so many people in my book were born. Then, we came to this crossroads between the '68 period and the 1970, '71-'2 period and a very significant period of American history.

Then, Richard Nixon, shortly after my involvement with the draft, signed into law the Endangered Species Act and NEPA and OSHA and so many important [laws], Title IX for women in sports, an unbelievable legacy for a man who otherwise we might find, I don't know if villainous is the right word, but nonetheless, someone who is an antithesis of so much of what I believe in regarding war and government. Yet, he still signed into law many pieces of legislation that are important today. We can't forget that Nixon signing this legislation was all part of the times, too, which came just after my involvement with the draft board and his reelection.

Important developments with roots in the 1960s. I finished my alternative service in '73, and the war was over in '75. [Editor's Note: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is an environmental law that established the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). It was signed into law in 1970. Established in 1971, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates and enforces workplace safety and health conditions. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs that receive federal financial assistance. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 aims to protect endangered and threatened species and their habitats.]

SI: I am curious, it would not be obvious to people that you either worked with or met that you were a conscientious objector, but did you ever face any prejudice or animosity directed your way as you were doing your service?

WF: No. Now, there were people at the academy who were dead set against having John, a felon, hired. There's some clear things about that. [Radclyffe] Roberts, I think, the president of the academy at the time, wrote letters, that I include in my book, from the academy to the Selective Service System indicating the support to hire me. That was not true for John, although better minds prevailed. I guess I wasn't seen to be a threat to their fundraising. [laughter] But there at the academy in the botany department, they had a conscientious objector who performed alternative civilian service and a felon who served time in prison for refusing to participate in war, and I think that's pretty remarkable. In fact, John and I wrote a little paper published in the Philadelphia Botanical Club's journal *Bartonia* for the retirement celebration for Ernie Schuyler to honor him, and in a thankful way to acknowledge the role of the academy, but also as a way of reminding everybody of these important activities of the academy during the Vietnam War, by supporting folks like the two of us, which is pretty remarkable. I'm very proud and interested in that whole legacy, that whole period of time.

Now, I didn't really know any conscientious objectors at the time. Later in life I have met a number of COs, some of whom helped me organize various anti-war activities in the 1990s and 2000s. My efforts in the late 1960s was just trying to get through the system and then connecting with the folks at the Central Committee for support. The Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) doesn't exist anymore, but all of their archives are at Swarthmore University, where John had been a student and Ernie had been his teacher. It's quite a network of connections that one can investigate through time and see this activity all around, in Philadelphia and with the Quakers. There's this deep, peace-loving history that's part of the Philadelphia area. There was also a CCCO office in Oakland that had been opened to help young men in the West.

Peace and conscientious objection continues today. The Center on Conscience and War (CCW), of which I'm a member, actively helps conscientious objectors in today's world. Today, the only legally-defined conscientious objectors are men and women who are in the military and realize that they are conscientious objectors, and make that claim, and then have all of the legal hassles associated with it. That's where groups like CCW are involved in helping with the legal elements encountered by such young men and women and the hurdles they have to go through to get out of the military because they realize that they can't participate in war activities due to ethical or religious beliefs.

Of course, that situation has always existed, but today we don't have a draft that impacts those who refuse to participate in war or military service. We don't have a situation where young people can make a claim of conscientious objection before or as they enter register with the Selective Service System. There was, a decade or so ago, congressional hearings about Selective Service. Charlie Rangel was one of the members of the committee who was interested in having the draft and then having it be equitable for everyone, so that it wouldn't be impactful on people of color as much as also wealthy whites and other people of privilege. Well, the congressional hearings are back again, held to review and overhaul the Selective Service System. It's interesting, the ongoing issues of war, conscientious objection, and a potential military draft. Today, the situation also effects women, so the stakes are even higher for all Americans.

I would like my book to have maybe some impact regarding the issue of service. I included a section of a chapter on the national workforce idea, including having opportunities for conscientious objection, conservation corps, environmental justice, social justice work, and military service, since the Selective Service System is not going away. [laughter] There's an opportunity to provide service alternatives for folks rather than joining the military and going to war. You could join a conservation corps, an environmental justice corps, a social justice corps if there was a draft or required national service. In some way, you could be supported, get an education, have health benefits. In my case, I'm not recognized by the government as having served as a veteran. While I have my document and draft card, there's nothing that's offered as there are when you're in the military, presumably putting your life on the line and doing your service, but there are no rights extended to conscientious objectors following their service and contributions to the country. I feel I'm a veteran as well, you see. I think all conscientious objectors who provided civilian alternative service in addition to non-combatant service are, in fact, veterans too and should be respected that way, and I'd like to make sure that I point that out.

SI: Again, going back to those two years, did you have to report in regularly into anyone?

WF: No, not to my recollection. I don't know if the academy was asked, "Is he still there?" because I think there's some record of my service. There are various books I cite of people who have written about the times and all, and I think, in some cases, maybe individuals just didn't show up or disappeared or whatever. I can't claim I know anything about that. I do know that there was something like 125,000 conscientious objectors identified during the war. I think that's a number I cite in the book from a source. Subsequently, later on, decades later, I have gotten to know conscientious objectors from the Vietnam War period, and that's another whole other story. Many of us are still involved in peace and anti-war activities today. It's interesting to run into someone, and the conversation, in one way or another, comes around to the war and how I served. Now that my book's out, the things just mushroom a little bit because suddenly I have a higher profile. One enlisted individual recently reached out to me for advice regarding conscientious objection for persons on active duty. I am honored to serve as an adviser or to provide referrals for such individuals who find themselves in difficult situations.

I'm not sure we talked about this before, but during the early '90s with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and then our Gulf War, the Persian Gulf War, a lot of us demonstrated throughout the country. I was in Santa Barbara at the time, a very progressive community, and so we had a lot of demonstrations. I got together with some other COs, and on campus, we provided, through

the Multicultural Center, counseling for conscientious objection in the draft. Not knowing where all of this was going, it was important to be proactive and inform people. We got training from the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors on the current draft law and the current needs for conscientious objection, so that we were up to date. A member of the committee actually came to Santa Barbara and trained us. It's interesting.

Then, post-9/11, when we were very much against the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq--wars beget wars beget wars, and we were just like, "Enough"--a group of us got together and formed Conscientious Objectors and Supporters (COS). At the time, those who might file as conscientious objectors could only be men because if there was a draft it would include only men. That's not true now. The "supporters" in COS were various individuals who didn't have the opportunity to become legal conscientious objectors but held the same strongly held beliefs or supported those who did. We formed COS, and we got funding for that. We then provided counseling, and I was allowed to, as part of my job at UC Santa Barbara, take time off to work over at the UCSB Counseling Center to hold hours with other COs for anyone who was interested. We also joined all the demonstrations in town, and we set up a COS table outside the UCSB university center next to the Marine recruiters who had occasional appearances on campus. Here's the Marine recruiter and here's the big table with Conscientious Objectors and Supporters right next to them, so we could show balance. Some of us believe branches of the military shouldn't be recruiting on university campuses.

Anyway, I go through that discussion, because I do know conscientious objectors today, and of course John Braxton was one too, but he didn't participate with the system. It's a community of folks out there, and I wanted to expand that discussion and through my book as well. Now, book three--this is a three-part series, if I get around to finishing a book three--will of course cover all these elements regarding the Persian Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, Conscientious Objectors and Supporters, and bring the full story around to then serving as a counselor, not being the counseled. [laughter] I thought that was an important element of the story, it to bring it full circle. Books two and three are in the works. It took six-plus years to get this one out, and my goal is to have the other two done within the next decade.

SI: Well, do you mind covering some of the territory you will cover in those books?

WF: No, no, I'd like to. I had started out with one book. I actually have a copyright for a thirty-nine-chapter book that covers everything, from the beginning of my life, as book one does, to what happened after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. I had, at that time, in order to get a copyright for that, I had one-page summaries for every chapter, all of it outlined, it's all together. It was clear that I either wasn't going to finish it or no one would read it, so I decided to break it up into three approximately fifteen-chapter books. Book one covered my early life through my acquiring my conscientious objector status, and that seemed to be a package. It was like, "We did it, and here's what it took to do it." Book two is what I did in my service, and then book three, as I said, is graduate school, getting the job at UC Santa Barbara, pioneering in restoration ecology and other things, and part of my ongoing life in the environment, and anti-war activities and social justice activities, and my interracial marriage and all the issues related to my second marriage and my sons. I bring together a lot from book one through to book three, my father disowning me because I married an African American woman and I relate that

milestone in my life back to the issues of Camden and race and ongoing elements of race and social justice in my life. Book three then covers through the 2000s, as I said, to the invasions, but it is uncertain where I will end the third book given how volatile the world is.

Book two is very interesting because, as I mentioned a little bit about it before, what I did is I try to put what I performed for civilian service in the context of not only climate change but looking at the history of exploration in the context of the Revolutionary War and the discoveries that were being made and then also connect it to the Philadelphians who were behind the Lewis and Clark expedition. Of course, that expedition was in part about finding a passage out to the Pacific Ocean to go where? To Southeast Asia and elsewhere. It's all connected. Jefferson was very interested in the rice in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and whether or not it could be grown on plantations in the expanding U.S. I look into all of that in the exploration of the New World, the botanists who were coming, in the context of the politics of the time, the post-Revolution period, and then some of the environmental impacts that occurred that resulted in pandemic-like disease of the 19th century and relate it to today's situations. There are some extremely exciting examples and parallels--well, tragic examples of loss of life due to environmental change and socio-economic and environmental impacts of the times.

One of the important issues relates to, in book one, the importance of France and colonialism in Vietnam. I don't know how much we covered some of the details of the background to the war in the first conversation, but it does relate to the Bonapartes and the importance of the family, ultimately Napoleon III, in having to pay back the Jesuit Catholics in France for helping him get elected. The Catholic church in France wanted retribution in Vietnam because of the killing of some of the missionaries. The beginning of the wars in Vietnam really relate to that kind of political context, in addition to the fact that the French had been over there trying to convert people from their religious beliefs, as well as the French and general Western interest in all of the wealth of Southeast Asia, all the minerals, all of the economic opportunities.

Well, you see, when the Napoleonic Empire fell apart after Waterloo, Joseph, Napoleon's brother, was king of Spain and king of Italy and he had to clandestinely come to this country undercover to Philadelphia and then set up perhaps the most elegant mansion in the country with the biggest library in Bordentown, New Jersey, right at one of the sites I studied as part of my CO work. [laughter] There is a whole history of the biology associated with this and all the people who came through, including his nephew, Lucien, who the Bonaparte's gull is named after, among other things. There's an interesting connection of the politics of France and Southeast Asia and the United States, and ultimately the plan was for Napoleon to actually come to this country in exile to join his brother, but that didn't happen. So, Napoleon wanted his brother to have an estate between New York and Philadelphia, which he did, at the tidal headwaters of the Delaware River, part of my study area, so there would be good access to both cities for visitors, etc. Today, his mansion no longer exists, but the grounds are still present. The site is becoming a state park, and there's a lot of interest in the archaeology found to date and interest in Joseph and his estate and the impact it had. That's one little interesting tidbit in bringing this story together based on the work I did for my alternative civilian service.

This is very much part of the second book, as is the French Revolution that spread elsewhere in the French Empire, including Haiti. A lot of the Haitians exited during this period to the largest

city in North America, Philadelphia, at a time when it was a hot summer and there were still lots of wetlands. Immigrant ships brought a disease-bearing mosquito species with them and yellow fever transmitted by the mosquito. In no time, about ten percent of the population of Philadelphia was dead in three months. Thousands of people died from this disease brought by a mosquito that came from the ships that came from Haiti. We have examples, multiple examples, such as this one of hot weather conditions, that could support a southern mosquito, you see, and immigration and war and the context of would it have happened if there hadn't been the French Revolution and the war spreading to Haiti. One can never predict the many unanticipated direct and indirect impacts war will have.

Of course, the physicians at the time didn't know what was causing the deaths, and they thought it was the bad water. They decided to dam up the Schuylkill River, lose all the intertidal zone, create the waterworks, which was a wonder of the world, only to create a polluted basin that then, because people drank from it, killed a bunch of additional folks in a second wave of death caused by typhoid fever, a water-borne disease from contaminated conditions. Just showing the elements of a connectivity of globalism, war, and environmental destruction and the overall impacts from that is profoundly important. I interpret this all in the context of intertidal-zone and how you could always take out the dam there at the waterworks and restore the Schuylkill River to its tidal origins. Who knows what the future holds in this?

Part of my second book is looking into what I did as a CO but reinterpreting the discoveries and the publications we did fifty years ago, in the context of what we know now with climate change as well as the history that went on and some of the things that we may have forgotten and some of the things I didn't know until I started writing the book. I think it's an interesting contribution, trying to fit what Wayne did for two years and subsequently for his graduate work; and then on into the future and how that transitions into my professional career in Santa Barbara; and then war again returning and bringing conscientious objection back full circle to make sure students at the time knew what their opportunities were regarding military service, conscientious objection, and alternative civilian service.

I think I'll say in relationship to that full circle, during the counseling we did during the Persian Gulf War, perhaps a hundred percent but nearly a hundred percent of people that came were women. Of course, there wasn't a draft, they wouldn't have been drafted, but they were there because they were concerned about their sons, their boyfriends, their brothers. During the Conscientious Objectors and Supporters counseling during the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, they were all young men, either high school students or college students, who were interested in the concept of conscientious objection and a possible draft and what they needed to do to prepare for that. We had been retrained, as I said, to be able to represent the requirements of Selective Service System, and a possible draft, and the claims for conscientious objection. Interesting details--I have another whole box of unexplored archives to contribute to some of the third book, in addition to my personal life and the things I wanted to cover as part of the continuing story. Both the second and third books are outlined. There are one-page summaries for each chapter. About a third to a half of the second book is written, in draft form already. Again, these are all part of one story and, if I get to finish it, will be a three-book set.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit more about your research and ultimately getting your degree at Rutgers?

WF: Yes. Well, finishing my CO work in '73 then, Angel and I moved from Atlantic City. She still worked for Camden and I continued at the academy as a full-time employee, but it was clear that I wanted to go back to graduate school. Since I had moved on from my geology background, more or less, I talked with Ralph about whether or not he'd be my major professor and I come back to Rutgers and apply for getting a degree, a master's degree in biology with the thesis option. So, it took me four years, working full time, but the work was integrated with Rutgers because my coursework and my job work and my classwork and everything was all related in many ways. Ralph and Ernie were related through their interest in research and wetlands and the Pine Barrens in New Jersey. I was able to pull all that together. I was accepted, told Cherry Hill High School West I wasn't coming back, told Temple I wasn't coming back, and then spent four years working, more or less, full time and taking classes, some of which I had to make up for non-credit because the geology major and a biology major were different, you see. I had to take organic chemistry and other things for no credit and went to summer school, trying to catch up with everything.

My thesis then was looking at the adaptations of dispersal mechanisms in plants in intertidal zones. I'm very interested in the evolution of dispersal and non-dispersal in this case because in fresh[water] intertidal zones, everything upriver is non-tidal. Everything upslope is upland and everything down river is salt, and so you have an island. Plants and animals are adapted to these islands, which are dependent on sea level, you see. These areas are freshwater above the salt influence. Of course, estuaries are defined where the salinity line is. Above the estuary is freshwater, intertidal rivers and creeks and endemism, and endemism, in the case of plants, is sometimes related to how they've evolved to adapt there and stay there. I did research on greenhouse experiments looking at were these adaptations genetically controlled, or were they an adaptation that was plastic? Some of them are plastic and some are absolutely genetically controlled. The distribution of some of those plants, you see, I was able to use in what was tidal and no longer tidal, and that helps understand the ecosystem. Then, today, of course, with the increase in tides associated with climate change, the freshwater tidal zones are being forced upslope into areas that are bulk-headed, ports, airports; there's nowhere to go. There's a real threat for a lot of extinction and degradation of these ecosystems throughout the world. I'm very interested in that and how we can preserve their habitat function for nurseries for fish, for example, and others ecosystem functions and socio-economic values that are important such as for biofiltration for water quality and the like.

I finished my thesis and had gotten the job in Santa Barbara at the same time, more or less. In the spring of '78, I accepted the position of the curator of the herbarium at Santa Barbara and then eventually became the Executive Director of the Museum of Systematics and Ecology (MSE) and Director of Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve and Assistant Director of the [UCSB Natural] Reserve System, as I evolved in my corporate career at the university, all the time being interested in ecological restoration, endangered species, describing new species, and wetlands including vernal pools, salt marshes, seeps and springs. Many of the wetlands in California are related to--where's the geology? Where are the faults? Where are the folds? The wetlands in a lot of California are defined by the geology of where the water comes out or where the basins

sink, and so that's pretty exciting integrating the combination of your background in geology with your interest in wetlands and biodiversity of wetlands. That's kind of the evolution of how some of my thinking had taken place. I also started the ecological restoration program at UCSB, including some pioneering work on wetlands, teaching courses, and mitigating impacts from campus development by enhancing and storing habitats on campus lands. MSE and the restoration program are now incorporated into the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER). I then finished up my time at UCSB and became an environmental consultant but still with an interest in many aspects of the wetland environment in Mediterranean climates, and with endangered species recovery, and ecological restoration.

I worked for Maser Consulting in Jersey for eight years. My wife and I moved back after I left UC Santa Barbara, in part to take care of elderly parents and we lived in Vincentown for that time, and then we came back to Santa Barbara and then to Las Vegas. I joined, when I was in Santa Barbara, ARCADIS, where I now work. Here in the Las Vegas office, we do a lot of groundwater monitoring and remediation and improvement in the quality of groundwater. In California, I'm involved in impact analysis and restoration, endangered species recovery as a part-time consultant in all of this. I'm on the board for Channel Islands Restoration, where we're involved in education and restoration of ecosystems on the Channel Islands and the Santa Barbara mainland region of California.

It's all a continuing theme for me, and I see my books as a natural evolution of education and trying to bring together, again, the idea of conscientious objection and anti-war activities and the environment, which is more critical than ever now with all that's going on globally. I think these three books, if I finish all three of them, will be a nice integration of all these activities that recur, a kind of historical account, in addition to a personal account of one person living through turbulent times and how it all comes together.

SI: Yes, it is interesting how you give the background of the natural history as well as the history beyond just your life and tie it all together. I am curious, how did the job in Santa Barbara come about? Did you just see it and apply for it? Were you recommended?

WF: Yes. Most of the opportunities I'd had up until that point were who I knew. My first job as a stock boy at Penney's was because my close uncle, the manager of the store was his neighbor. Of course, the job I got at Rutgers, I was in the class with Ralph and then Ralph introduced me to Ernie Schuyler and that's how I wound up at the academy.

I was finishing my master's degree, and the question was, was I going to stay at the academy? I then had a new wife (Von Gray-Ferren) with two sons (Lance and Darion) and wasn't making a whole lot, and my wife had lived in Philadelphia. She's from Philly, but she had lived in California for some time and she was interested in moving back. Because of the fact that we had an interracial marriage and my father disowned me and was creating a lot of havoc, I thought, "Being three thousand miles away from him may be a good idea." There were a lot of reasons, economics, race and interest for moving back for my wife, so I thought, "Well, okay."

Well, one of my academy friends, Michael Kachure, I think it was, one of the staff at the academy, happened to see an ad for the position in the herbarium at UC Santa Barbara. I go,

"Okay, let me apply for that." Then, I got an interview and got the job. That's how it came about, but it was not a nexus of anything. It was a combination of there was a job in the herbarium and I was trained for that, as well as my wife's interest and race and a whole bunch of things, as is often the case, pooling together and then successfully getting the job. It could've been somewhere else, but it was at UCSB and then I spent twenty-six years there.

SI: How did you meet your second wife?

WF: I came into the office of the academy's president one time, and I think I was there for a meeting with some folks. She had moved back to Philly in the midst of a difficult divorce and custody battle. She was, in addition to a singer-songwriter, actress, ex-Air Force, an ace administrative assistant, great in shorthand, great typing, great everything. She worked part time for an agency. They had a position at the academy that was open for an interim [position], so she happened to be there. I walked in with my long red hair and overalls and big beard. [laughter] There she was sitting there, this gorgeous woman, and, well, you know, we were friends for a while. It was impactful.

My dog is getting anxious. This is Wawa, a rescue who came with a name.

SI: Great.

WF: I was still married. I mean, I don't regret the wonderful life I've had; I regret my behavior in having fallen in love with another woman and still in love with my wife and trying to decide what to do about that. That's another whole other part of life. I do cover a little bit of that in my third book, as I explore the issues of the interracial marriage and my wife's success and her wonderful career.

Von, unfortunately, died last August, resulting from a stroke. She was very supportive of the book, and her death was quite tragic. In fact, it was a year ago yesterday that she had the stroke and then died on August 29th. I include a picture of her and the boys in the book, which wasn't going to be there, but after her passing and all, I just felt I had to link it in there. It just so happens that the folks who formed Mighty Three Music in Philadelphia, included Leon Huff was from Camden, you see, where so much of the book takes place. The weekend in August, I believe, of '71, when so much went on regarding race and anti-war activities in Camden, they formed Philadelphia International Records, Gamble, Huff and Bell, that employed my wife, where she became a successful songwriter. So, all things are related. There was an opportunity to bring that in to book one, to at least introduce and honor her.

I could write and should write probably a biography of her life, which was pretty profound, and all that she was exposed to and involved in through her life, both in the military and also in her growing up in Philly and what that meant and then with us and her successful songwriting career. Prior to us, she had her own band, Gray Matter, she was Lady Gray, she had an album in the '70s. It's now a classic, selling for hundreds of dollars a copy. She did background singing too for a while for Cher and Engelbert Humperdinck and all these folks, when she was a globetrotter and really big in show business there. Then, she had her own group and then joined Mighty Three as a songwriter, and her biggest success was "Lady Love" that was sung by Lou Rawls.

It's one of his biggest hits, and she wrote the song and did keyboard and all that. I have dozens of her songs here that I am in the process of digitizing from the old tapes and trying to get her information together. She also had one-woman shows, and I have a lot of archival material that I'd think make a very important biography. It's one more thing in my list of things to do. It's another goal, if not, at least an extended chapter I've already written in book three.

SI: Is there anything else you want to talk about today that we missed? I am thinking I will probably come back and interview you after the other books come out, as I learn more.

WF: Yes, of course, they're going to be a couple years. There's going to be, assuming I live long enough, marketing this book and it only came out in March, and I'm trying to get back to making real progress on the second book, which will be nice to come out three years from now. It would be my guess because this book was a whole year in production, that is editing, design, and production, after the last word was written. I know that there's a year of effort after it's done just to get it packaged up. Yes, that'd be great, Shaun. I don't know; we covered a lot of ground. Are you comfortable with all we've done?

SI: Yes, absolutely. In between the end of your service in the Vietnam era and the Persian Gulf era, were you involved in environmental causes or anti-war, maybe anti-nuclear, organizations, that sort of thing?

WF: Well, a lot of environmental activism, yes. Not much in the way of war. I focused really on other parts of my life, the family and career, but it was never far from my mind. Santa Barbara has a number of peace and anti-nuclear groups. I gave donations here and there, but most of my life was environmental and political, doing some campaigning for people or trying to get the people who you think represent your views in office, and university life. I also participated in local Earth Day activities. When I left, I was on twelve committees, trying to protect my turf, protect my people, protect the money. Academics is ruthless, and so trying to keep your legacy going is a fulltime endeavor.

Now, all of that effort is organized under the management of the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration. Of course, the natural reserve system continues both at the upper level UC system-wide as well as UC Santa Barbara that I was involved in. Carpinteria Salt Marsh is still a successful functioning research and education estuarine reserve. I'm so thankful that the Cheadle Center now is growing, expanding, many programs in restoration, courses, employees, with a new director, and it's something to be proud of in seeing all of that legacy continue to the next generation.

See, it wasn't that much time, '91 or so, when George H.W. Bush was president and Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Again, you have to look at our support of him against Iran, and wars beget wars beget wars. It's just so infuriating. It became clear that I felt like I had to do something, and providing counseling and demonstrating, marching in the streets, going back to the early days, was absolutely important. Because I had an opportunity and was known on campus and knew folks and knew how to integrate with other departments and all, I was able to work with the multicultural center for that and then counseling center. My role in campus I used to be able to develop this new opportunity for counseling, and that just continued then, right on

around into George W. Bush and post-Clinton and, bam, 9/11. We can always go into 9/11 and what I think that's about, but sometimes chickens come home to roost and, in our case, 9/11 has a cause. Then, we invade Afghanistan and Iraq and create where we are today, which is no good place to be. There was activism on many fronts, so there's hardly a gap ultimately in forming Conscientious Objectors and Supporters. We gave lectures, read poetry, demonstrated, wrote letters. By the time we formed COS, I knew a number of conscientious objectors, either on campus or in Santa Barbara, and so we could act with other groups and individuals in a progressive way.

There is a gap there, but it's partly just due to being consumed with one's life [laughter] and personal, family, professional, and still the cause is there. I felt like I just couldn't ignore what was going on. The book is partly that too. One, I just felt it was important, something I wanted to do way back when friends said, "Wayne, you've got to write a book about all this." I actually have a few pages of chapter one I found; the thing got sidelined. Then, the discovery of Jerry Wayne Ferren, which I think we covered in detail last time and the haunting nature of that and wanting to bring his story together. Then, it's evolved into the story of several young men, as well as the times. I felt like I just had to do this. Six-and-a-half years or so ago, I just decided I'd start outlining it, and I had the passion and patience to finish it!

The one thing I'll always remember, two days before my wife's stroke--she was in a coma and I wasn't able to speak to her until she passed--she said, "Wayne, I'm very proud of you. You said you were going to write this book and you did," and that was two days before I never spoke to her again. I had just finished the editorial phase, you see, and we were celebrating that. We were going into design finally [laughter], into design and production; the book was going to happen. It was more or less complete, I passed all the publisher's requirements.

Von had read the manuscript many times, and she was very supportive. She had been in the Air Force and then had to leave because she became pregnant with her first child from her first husband, and back then, you couldn't be pregnant and be in the military. But she continued to work for base commanders as an assistant. Her recollection is receiving the dog tags from young men who were killed in Vietnam, because she worked for the base commander, and then having to contact the parents to come and get the dog tags. That haunted her to her dying day.

I will say that Angel and I are in touch, my first wife and I, Angela Napoliello-Ivory. She's had a wonderful successful life. I wanted to make sure she knew the book was coming out. I had seen her at one of the reunions at Rutgers, I think our 40th reunion. We're now at fifty-one. [laughter] I wanted her to see it and read it, if she would, before it came out, and she did. She's been very gracious about it and said that she thought it was "amazing." I'm happy about that.

SI: Well, it is about three o'clock now, so you have patiently sat two hours with me. I appreciate that.

WF: It's my pleasure really, because it's a great opportunity. What I'd like to do, if there's eventually a way to have a link, is to have the link to the transcript on my website.

SI: Sure, yes.

WF: I just finished the video for Archway [Publishing] that will be coming out, and I did a radio show not long ago--there's an MP3 for that--and a TV show in Chicago. There's some building interest. I have a long list of book requests for reviewers, a surprising list from the Harvard Center for Cold War Studies to *Big Sky* magazine in Bozeman, Montana. The list goes on and on, a surprising and interesting collection of folks. We'll see what becomes of it. Thank you, Shaun.

SI: Yes, I am interested to see how it develops.

WF: You did mention the possibility of a panel discussion.

SI: Yes, after we are done here, we will talk.

WF: I guess that will be another Zoom type.

SI: Yes, I will tell you more about that after we conclude here, but, again, thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

WF: Yes, you're welcome.

----------END OF TRANSCRIPT----------

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