RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD D. HEFFNER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins our second interview session with Professor Richard D. Heffner on January 28, 2010, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and …

Paul Clemens: … Paul Clemens.

SI: We will be joined mid-interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Professor Heffner, thank you very much for braving the snow and coming out today. At the end of our last interview, I had a question about the impact of McCarthyism, particularly on Sarah Lawrence, and if it had any impact on your time at Columbia or even at Rutgers?

Richard D. Heffner: Well, if you are generically talking about McCarthyism, before [Senator Joseph] McCarthy [R-WI], there was, of course, immediately after the war, I think that's true after all wars, a kind of radical conservatism. It happened to us after World War I, and it happened to us after World War II. McCarthy, later, [was] looking for "who lost China?" and it's a good thing we won the war, the Second World War, so that he couldn't ask, "Who lost [or] where is the responsibility for having lost the war?" [Editor's Note: This refers to the Chinese civil war and the takeover by Chinese Communists in 1949.] At [the University of California], Berkeley, of course, they were just beginning, when I was there in '47, '48, early '48, [as a teaching assistant], to develop what became "the year of the oath" when every academic was required to take an oath and those who refused to ran into the kinds of trouble that Joe McCarthy and the crew of others in the Senate [in the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee], the House [in the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)], in state legislatures, etcetera, were providing. I escaped that. Would I have signed the oath? Yes. I thought it was foolish of my former colleagues not to do so, but I understood that they felt it was a symbol of more than reaffirming your allegiance to the United States. When I got to Rutgers, there was, in '48, there was, I do not remember any such pressure, even though Rutgers was still in the process of turning from a private men's college into a state university. Despite that kind of chaos that was going on, I do not recall McCarthyism in the generic sense here.

PC: Did you have to sign an oath here at Rutgers?

RH: Did you?

PC: I'm asking you.

RH: No, no, no.

PC: Because I did, in 1974. I came in, and somewhere in my employment papers, there was something where I signed about, I can't remember the exact wording of it, and I'm not even sure it was to the U.S., it may have been to the New Jersey government … [Editor's Note: Paul Clemens is a Rutgers Professor of History.]

RH: My God. [laughter]

PC: But I signed something of that sort, and I was really surprised it was there for me to sign.

RH: Well, you know, that's interesting, because I sound so certain about there being no oath here. They could very well have been buried, but that it never occurred to me, because when I came here, the year of the oath had not yet arrived at Berkeley and one wasn't that conscious. That's why I thought my former colleagues were rather foolish. They were being symbolic in their activities, but what happened later on indicated that there was this great division. Where I ran into McCarthyism, let's see, let me think back to when [Richard] Dick Schlatter had problems. Dick, I believe, had been a member of the [Communist] Party when he was at Harvard. Was it Dan Boorstin, who I think was a part of that group, too, but then turned state's evidence and mentioned Dick, and I think that's when the troubles began, but you can't hold me to the years at that time. [Editor's Note: Richard Schlatter served at Rutgers as Professor of History, Chair of the History Department (1955-1960), and Provost and Vice President (1962-1971). He received his B.A. from Harvard University, 1934, Ph.D. from Oxford, 1938, and taught at Harvard until 1946].

I can say, well, two things; I think I may have mentioned it last time, the, my, not exactly entrance into broadcasting, but my first meeting with Edward R. Murrow [pioneering American broadcaster] came in his office the morning after his famous McCarthy broadcast, his attack on McCarthy. [Editor's Note: On March 9, 1954, Edward R. Murrow made what is widely considered to be his most famous broadcast on the CBS show *See It Now*. Murrow criticized Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist persecution using the senator's own speeches and rhetoric. The program showed the power of television broadcasting in swaying public opinion, as it provoked a nationwide backlash against Senator McCarthy. The controversial telecast caused friction between Murrow and CBS. The network later reduced Murrow's profile.] At Sarah Lawrence, one saw it in its most interesting; I was going to say first, ugliest, and it was its ugliest form. It was also its most interesting, because my recollection is that on, let's see, on Tuesdays, I believe, there were, maybe Thursdays, regularly scheduled faculty meetings with the president, Harold Taylor [president of Sarah Lawrence College, 1945-1959]. They were always pretty grand affairs, because Harold was a wonderful speaker, but I remember there being time after time where Harold would march in and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, something happened late yesterday afternoon that you should know about, and that is that Professor XYZ was summoned before the," one committee or another, and I believe it was, generally in those days, "Senate [Internal Security] Committee and he is accused of being a member of the Communist Party and of recruiting students," and then, Harold would make a strong, strong statement, "We have every faith in and will fight to protect Professor XYZ." I remember, since I didn't teach on Thursdays, I remember hearing often and participating sometimes. A couple days later, in a number of instances, Harold would call a special meeting of the faculty and announce that Professor XYZ, that he [Taylor] had accepted his, I don't ever remember hers, but his resignation, because, indeed, Professor XYZ had been recruiting students into the party.

So, it was a mixed bag. There were, they were hard times for anyone who had signed petitions. They were harder times for those who had gone way beyond signing petitions. It scared everybody. It scared the nation. My only direct experience with it came when my [book], [*A*] *Documentary History of the United States* [First Edition, New York: New American Library, 1952; 7th Edition, New York: Signet Classic, 2002; an anthology of American historical documents], came out in '52, and I think it was fairly early on after publication that here in New Jersey, now, I no longer was at Rutgers, but here in New Jersey, an American Legion group had

condemned a series of books, I think, three books or four books. I think two of them were by Eleanor Roosevelt, one of them by Adlai Stevenson, and my [*A*] *Documentary History of the United States*, and I do remember thinking, "My goodness, if I were teaching at Rutgers, what would they think now?" Nothing came of that. I don't think sales went down. What did happen was that the book, which was instantly used by the USIA [United States Information Agency] for its information libraries overseas, was withdrawn and didn't go back on the State Department's USIA list until Ed Murrow became the head of USIA [during the John F. Kennedy Administration], and then, it appeared again and I guess, if there are such libraries now, will be found there then. [Editor's Note: Adlai Stevenson was a Democratic Party politician, orator, two-time Democratic candidate for US presidency (1952, 1956), and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (1961-1965).]

SI: Do you remember what the specific objection was to the book?

RH: Just, they were radicals …

SI: Okay.

RH: They were [radicals], for the American Legion. Eleanor Roosevelt was a radical. Adlai Stevenson was a radical, and my, well, I told you the story of Earl Warren [Governor of California, 1943-1953, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, 1953-1969, and head of the Warren Commission, 1963-1964]. I think I told you, of [him] greeting me when I sent him a copy of, right after I had sent him a copy, the first copy of the [*A*] *Documentary History* [*of the United States*], and saying, "Thank you so much for sending me that Democratic Party document." One couldn't help, but read [*A*] *Documentary History* [*of the United States*] and think that I was unsympathetic to the Roosevelt years [1933-1945], and Thomas Jefferson, and all those other radicals. So, that the Legion's attack was, I'm sure that it was a matter that I was somewhere around the vicinity; it could've been Charles A. Beard [American historian and author]; it could even have been [Samuel Eliot] Morison and [Henry Steele] Commager [American historians]; co-authors of *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930); or other American history texts.

At any rate, I was lucky. I don't think it was wisdom, I mean, just sheer luck, that having been born in 1925, I hadn't been at a place, at the wrong time, where I was too often requested to sign this petition or that petition, and you remember, that was the, you don't remember, but, you know that that was the kind of circumstantial nonsense that did a lot of people in, [in terms of being a suspected Communist], they had signed this petition and that petition. This is not the academic situation, but to describe what things were like, and I don't think I mentioned this last time, maybe I did, and stop me if I did, please, when *The Open Mind* went on the air in '56, it won the Robert E. Sherwood Award that had been created by the Ford Foundation. [Editor's Note: Richard D. Heffner hosted *The Open Mind*, a weekly public affairs television program that airs on public broadcasting stations nationwide. His grandson Alexander Heffner has hosted *The Open Mind* since 2014. Richard Heffner founded the prize-winning show in 1956, when it first broadcast over WRCA (now WNBC) television in New York City.] I shared it with, it was a lot of money, and it was shared by Edward R. Murrow, Mike Wallace [journalist], the producer of

Camera Three on CBS, and *The Open Mind*. [Editor's Note: *Camera Three* was an arts and culture program.]

My wife knew about it ahead of time. The, not the foundation, but the people who ran the Sherwood Award had called her, because they wanted to make sure that I attended the lunch at which the award would be given. So, there were at least three wives called. The producer of *Camera Three* wasn't married. Elaine, knowing that I was going to get the award, wanted to give a party in honor of the program [receiving the award], a cocktail party for that evening, and she invited a lot of people, "a hundred of our closest friends," you know the routine. [laughter] One of the friends called back and said, "Of course, we're coming, but we have a prior date. Could we bring," the people with them, "we're going to have dinner, could we bring them to the cocktail party?" and Elaine said, "Yes." Late that afternoon, when I got home, the party started, etcetera. When these people arrived, I very innocently introduced Alger and Priscilla Hiss, who were the friends of the friends who came, they were the ones they brought, around.

SI: Wow.

RH: I remember so clearly not thinking of what the consequences were going to be. It was Alger Hiss, Priscilla Hiss. I knew I felt that Hiss was guilty, but there it was. The next morning, we received, I would say, a dozen telephone calls. I remember, in particular, a cousin of mine, who was a very good friend, a doctor, I remember his call; great anger. All of these people said that we had compromised them. Because what was happening in those days, the possibility, if you were one of the people who came to this kind of party, you were at some point going to be brought before a committee and asked, if not by Joe McCarthy, then by any of the others, "Where were you on the evening of May so-and-so?" and, "What were you doing there with Alger Hiss?" People were scared. [Even] people who had nothing to be scared about were, and that was the eye-opener for me. I hadn't quite encountered that kind of terror. Later, those our same friends of ours invited us to dinner with the Hisses, and it was always interesting to me that in our family, Elaine had always believed that Alger Hiss couldn't be guilty, not of perjury, but of treason, and/or of other activities, the "Pumpkin Papers," etcetera, and I believed that he could very well be. After that evening dinner with them, Elaine talked with Hiss most of the evening, and when we left, she said, "Okay, I think you're probably right." Because, by that time, he had become so clearly, outwardly, fanatical and single-minded about whatever he was talking about, I don't think they were talking about the Soviet Union, but she felt that in his personality, she's a psychotherapist, she's allowed to think those things, she saw that potential. [Editor's Note: In 1948, professed ex-Communist and spy Whittaker Chambers testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), identifying a number of supposed Communists from the 1930s, including Alger Hiss. A respected member of the eastern, liberal Establishment, Hiss, who was educated at Johns Hopkins University and Harvard Law School, served in the Roosevelt Administration and the State Department before becoming head of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Chambers later said that Hiss turned over secret government documents to the Soviets in the late 1930s, thus committing espionage, and offered as evidence microfilmed documents hidden in a pumpkin on Chambers' Maryland farm, dubbed the "Pumpkin Papers." Although the statute of limitations had expired for charges of espionage, Hiss was tried on two counts of perjury and convicted in 1950. Hiss served three years of a five-

year sentence. Although Hiss spent the duration of his life asserting his innocence, the question of Hiss's involvement in espionage remains highly debated and controversial.]

I just didn't run into, besides the American Legion thing and my book, and the Sarah Lawrence faculty people, I didn't have troubles, but I was aware of a troubled, troubled nation, and I was aware of the damage that McCarthyism was doing to us, and yet, when I look back at the night before I met Edward R. Murrow, his famous McCarthy broadcast, I do feel that one has to make a judgment as to the wisdom, ultimately, of his using the broadcast medium for an attack upon McCarthy. I think, ultimately, it was the death of McCarthy, and maybe of McCarthyism, as a most powerful force. It was also the death of Murrow, though it didn't occur for some years, as a broadcaster. I don't think there's any question, but that his attack upon McCarthy led to the kinds of pressures, self-imposed and imposed by giant advertisers, that led [William] Bill Paley [chief executive at CBS, a leading global communications company] to diminish the role that his very dear friend, Edward R. Murrow, had played at CBS and finally to cut him down until he was essentially out. But my great concern, as I look at and listen to "hate radio", when I go out to Palm Springs next week, I drive because you don't walk anyplace in California, you drive, I keep the car radio on, and you hear nothing but hate radio attacks upon people who don't share the ideology of the, the conservative, reactionary ideology of the speaker. I believe that there is a black line that leads from that night in 1954 and the Murrow attack, needed, on McCarthy and the use of the airwaves today for reactionary attacks. I'm a great believer in the Fairness Doctrine, which no longer exists, but I do think there's an intellectual line that one can draw. My students don't accept that from me, mostly. I show them, and again, I don't know whether we talked about this, if we did stop me … [Editor's Note: Enforced by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from 1949 to 1987, the Fairness Doctrine required licensed broadcasters to ensure reasonable presentation of opposing viewpoints on controversial issues. In 1987, during the deregulation of the Ronald Reagan Administration, the FCC abolished the Fairness Doctrine, asserting it violated the First Amendment and harmed the public interest.]

SI: Are you speaking about the Bill Cosby documentary, *Black History: Lost, Stolen or Strayed*?

RH: No, no. I show them the Murrow program on McCarthy; I insist that they see, if they haven't already seen, George Clooney's *Good Night, And Good Luck* [Warner Independent Pictures, 2005], which is about the broadcast, and leads all good-minded people to cheer what Murrow did, without being very thoughtful, as I think Clooney was not terribly thoughtful. They've seen the program, they've watched Clooney's film, then I give them a piece, an article, that appeared in the *Saturday Review* by Gilbert Seldes, who was our major arts critic of the time and a very dear friend of Edward R. Murrow's, and [who was] a very thoughtful right, or left-leaning, thinking person, who became Dean [1959-1963] of the Annenberg School [for] Communication, when it was created [at the University of Pennsylvania]. Gilbert wrote a piece that ends, his last sentence is, "I thought I saw the ghost of Hitler," and I ask my students, I give it to them, I show them the thing [Murrow program], have them see the Clooney film wherever they can, give them this article, and ask them to write a piece for me [answering], "What did Seldes mean?" Of course, they all come back with McCarthy, "I thought I saw the ghost of Hitler," and I know that isn't what he [Seldes] meant. What he meant was not his friend Murrow, as much as the beady, red eye of the television camera. He [Seldes] thought with a personal attack, there was a potential for Hitler, Hitlerism, McCarthyism perhaps, and I think that's true,

and, I think our use of the media ever since have been tainted by the most unlikely person of all, my friend Murrow. It's a sign of and I'm conflicted, despite what I say about that thin connection between Murrow and hate radio of today and hate television of today, I applauded what he did, and if, as my students do, "Well, do you wish he hadn't?" I can't say so, but I do think Murrow did more than do himself in. He did in a tradition of broadcasting untainted, except in certain special instances, Father [Charles] Coughlin [Catholic priest and reactionary radio host in the 1930s], but the Fairness Doctrine was a reaction against the kinds of things that Father Coughlin did. Of course, it was [President] Ronald Reagan [1981-1989] who instructed his FCC [Federal Communications Commission] to get rid of the Fairness Doctrine, ultimately. So, your question about McCarthyism, I haven't answered coherently, but I've told you how emotionally I was affected by it, as I looked around me, seeing how frightened people were. I don't think I remember ever "trimming my sails."

SI: Yes, that is what I was going to ask next.

RH: I didn't in the [*A*] *Documentary History* [*of the United States*] and, I mean, my politics are what my politics are. On Saturday, my grandson and I are going to go to Hyde Park, [New York], where we've been asked to do a little dog-and-pony act concerning the new edition of the [*A*] *Documentary History* [*of the United States*], to which I've added another FDR document, which should have been in there in 1952 and I'll never understand how I left out, the "[A] Rendezvous With Destiny" speech, which compared with last night [President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address] and compared with last year's inaugural, is such a wonderfully, radical document. Anyway, we'll talk about that. [Editor's Note: At the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 27, 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his acceptance speech, "There is a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is expected. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny."] They invited me a few years ago to lay a wreath on FDR's grave on January 30th, his birthday, and, then, I was so anti-[President George W.] Bush in my comments, I really got riled up, because I said, "In my little book, I have a chapter on what I call the permanent Roosevelt revolution, and I've realized there was no permanent Roosevelt revolution. Reagan began to undo it, and Bush undid it." So, the people up there invited me back. That was January, [and they] invited me back in April, on the anniversary of his death [April 12, 1945] to repeat, or to lay another wreath, which I did.

At any rate, I haven't felt since then, or I just don't remember, even that year at Sarah Lawrence, thinking, "Look what's going on around me," and offering anything different by way of an interpretation of my interpretation of events in American history. But, of course, I wasn't recruiting members to a party, and I was saying, "On the other hand, So-and-So feels this way and that way," and them getting to read documents that contradicted what I was saying, but I never felt personally threatened, and I think because of my good fortune never to have compromised myself, or seemed to have compromised myself, by signing documents. Would I have, as a kid at the time of the Franco [Spanish Civil] War in Spain [1936-1939], have signed an anti-Franco [Francisco Franco] document had one been put before me? Sure, but I guess I, I say sure, though I've not been a signer, and I don't know any such documents that I have signed. So, there it was, I saw it; the Hiss incident made it very, very clear about the fear, even among my friends, but I was never, never damaged by it.

SI: In our previous discussion about your early broadcasting career, you described how the eighth anniversary program of President Roosevelt's death was the pivotal event and how you decided to leave Sarah Lawrence and go into broadcasting. Can you discuss that?

RH: Well, I should add, I don't remember exactly the way I put it the last time, I was there for a year, taking Bert Loewenberg's [Sarah Lawrence College Professor of History] place.

SI: Yes, you did discuss that.

RH: Bert came back, and no one offered me a job, and it was at that point, right after our [Eleanor Roosevelt] broadcast together, because Elaine worked on that with me, we sort of came to this conclusion together. She was making a magnificent living as a psychotherapist. She was then working for the Jewish Board of Guardians, and I think she was making four thousand dollars a year, or something like that, and she would support me and I would take a year to see whether, I wouldn't go searching for a job any further, take a year seeing if I could get into broadcasting as a historian, and I did. [Editor's Note: The Jewish Board of Guardians is now called the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services and is a mental health and social services agency.]

The Roosevelt program, which was on WMCA a talk radio station, then, led them to offer me a fifteen-minute [program]. Well, maybe I told you that, a fifteen-minute weekly program, for which they paid me twenty-five dollars, called *History in the News*. It was something I had suggested, and they liked the FDR thing, and that was my real entry into broadcasting, and it was just what I wanted to do. I took a news event and I set it in its historical background. Occasionally, I would have a guest, as in thinking of Mrs. Roosevelt when the Bricker Amendment, an isolationist document, was threatening to hamstring [the powers of the federal government]. Let's see, it would have, I guess, I don't know why I thought it was [President Harry S.] Truman [1945-1953], but it couldn't have been because this was '53 and Truman [wasn't president anymore]; it was [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower [1953-1961]. The Bricker [Amendment], though [Senator John W.] Bricker was a Republican, he was trying to put it to the Eisenhower people, who were, after all, in Bricker's notions, interventionists, on those eastern Republicans, not that Eisenhower came from the East, but he was surrounded by the liberal, eastern Establishment. Mrs. Roosevelt came on to talk about the Bricker Amendment, but I very seldom had guests. I wanted to use that time for myself putting [forth] one or two events of the week, and I still like that idea of taking something from the news and understanding it in terms of its historical perspective. Anyway, that went on. [Editor's Note: The Bricker Amendment refers to a series of proposed amendments to the US Constitution during the 1950s that endeavored to achieve non-intervention in US foreign policy. In opposition to the United Nations in particular, the proposed amendments sought to curtail America's foreign entanglements by restricting the war and peace powers of the executive and legislative branches.]

They let me syndicate the program. It sounds big, but I would do the program. I would write, it was on Friday evenings, and I would write it on Friday; wait to see what [else], whether there was anything pressing in the news that day, and I would call my wife at work and I would read it to her and in front of the same Brush [Development Company] recorder, tape recorder, and I

would listen to it and I remember her reminding me of the fact of how concerned I was that I didn't sound very much like Edward R. Murrow or Elmer Davis [news reporter], or my other heroes, but the program was good. WWDC in Washington, a Scripps-Howard station, and another Scripps-Howard station in Cincinnati syndicated it. So, I would write it Friday; we'd go down; I'd broadcast it live; the station would make it two tapes for me; we'd go to Tad's for a steak dinner to treat ourselves, because it was a dollar-eighty-five [cents], and send off the tapes to Washington and Ohio, and I was rolling in money. They paid me, I think, eighteen dollars per syndication. Anyway, that went on until, I was constantly making the rounds of television stations, trying to get them to be interested in that formula of program.

SI: At this time, was there such thing as an agent, or did you do everything yourself?

RH: Good question, because I did everything myself until I met Edward R. Murrow, and then, he said, "You have to," no, no, no, no, Mrs. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, said, "You must have an agent," and she said, "I want you to see my agent." I think the name was W. Colston Leigh, I know that L-E-I-G-H essentially [was] a lecture agent, and when I went to see him, this must be the academic in me, I couldn't accept the idea of someone trying to sell me. I'm aggressive enough; I tried everything to sell myself. I couldn't see myself really being represented, and I realized that when I started talking to these very nice people, to Leigh and then to his assistants. Some years later, as I started to say, Murrow said, "You've got to see Stix and Gude," S-T-I-X and G-U-D-E, [Thomas] Tom [L.] Stix and [J. G.] Jack Gude, Murrow's agents, and it turned out to be the agents of most of the big broadcasters, and they were terrific guys. I've often thought that I would've gone someplace in broadcasting, because I haven't, really. I mean, I'm a, my broadcasting colleagues think of me as a professor, as I'm sure most of my academic colleagues think of me as a broadcaster, so I'm maybe fowl, but not fish.

Again, I, the first opportunity I had for a real job was with WRCA-TV, as it was then known, it's Channel 4 WNBC-TV today, and I met Steve Krantz, the program manager, god-awful person, but very bright, and we talked for maybe a half-hour. He said, "Okay," that was I think in November of '53, and he said, "January 7th, you start with *Man of the Year*," because I had talked about a program that grew out of *History in the News*, and he said, "You're going to write it, you're going to be on the camera, and you're going to produce it, and you get paid a hundred bucks a week, and you'll also have a hundred dollars for below-the-line expenses." The only time I'd ever been in a studio was as a guest when the [*A*] *Documentary History* [*of the United States*] came out, and he was taking a big chance, but I think he saw something worthwhile. He also had what was seemingly a great idea; that *Man of the Year*, of course, is the title of *Time* magazine's annual "Man of the Year" issue. He said, "So, let's go to *Time* and do it in cooperation with them and we'll get that publicity," and we did, and that went on for about three weeks, maybe four weeks, and then, I knew, though I was a beginning broadcaster only, you couldn't produce a program with all the dots that *Time* magazine insisted upon placing over every word. In other words, you couldn't go through that many editors, you couldn't go through that many approvals, and still get something on the air every week, and, finally, even Steve, who knew the publicity value of the cooperation, and, you know, we were listed as "*Man of the Year*, produced in cooperation with *Time*, the weekly news magazine," and you had to say, "the weekly news magazine." So, that lasted about three weeks, but that was a beginning, really. *Man of the Year* was a good program.

SI: How long did it last in total?

RH: I'm trying to think. It started in January. I think it went on a year-and-a-half and, of course, in those days, stations, broadcasters, didn't keep records, video records. They're too expensive. They'd have tape machines, you had to make a kinescope, a film, of what you wanted to keep, and, fortunately, every once in a while, I convinced Steve to cough up the hundred bucks that it would cost to make a kinescope. One of the times, if you look on my website now, the archive, *The Open Mind* archive, there is, even though it's not *The Open Mind*, the program with Martin Luther King [Jr.], which they did film for me [on February 10, 1957], and so, it was kept. There was a wonderful program we did it as a special, what was his name, Walter [Francis] White [writer and civil rights activist], who was the black man who looked white, who was the president [executive secretary] of the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], NAACP, [from 1931 to 1955]. He was a very interesting person. I wanted him to come on the program. I think this may have been, I may be mixing things up, it may have been by the time I was doing *The Open Mind*. Anyway, the program was always live then. Walter White agreed to come on. I think the thing was then on Fridays at six PM, and he had a heart attack on Wednesday. The program was off. He recovered within a couple of weeks, well enough to come back to his office and work, and he wanted to come on. He had been watching the program and he wanted to do it himself, and we scheduled another program, and he died before we could do it. He had made a mistake in going back to work so soon. All of that made me want to do a special program about him, dedicated to him, and to do it very quickly. I went to Steve Krantz, pitched it to him, and he said, "Okay, I'll give you Monday afternoon at one o'clock." I don't know what he took off the air to put it in its place, and I got Senator [Jacob] Javits [U.S. Senator from New York, 1957-1981] and Eleanor Roosevelt, and White's daughter, [Jane White], who was an actress, to read a chapter from his book, *A Man Called White* [1948], and I said to Steve, "We've got to make a copy of this." He said, "Okay, tell Pete (Affey?)," or one of the other people there, "to make a copy," and I did; it was the operations manager, and we did the program and it was a beauty. It was just really a beautiful tribute. Everybody was wonderful, and it went off without a hitch, a live program to do, and, you know, it just took us a couple days of preparation. After the program, I went down to the operations department and said when could they give me the kinescope? Well, they didn't make it, because they figured I was lying. [laughter] Steve Krantz never would've said [spend] a hundred bucks for a kinescope. So, there is no record of that, except an [dog]-eared, eaten script that I still treasure of what went on; lost Mrs. Roosevelt and lost all those other people.

Anyway, at WRCA-TV, they made me director of public affairs programs, and it was a very interesting time. One of the great programs from *Man of the Year*, what I'd do is pick a year, 1776, and then, say, "Well, our man of the year, obviously, Thomas Jefferson," and with Jefferson, we did the program live on July 4th, corresponded to our day on the air, and I remember, then, I would have a couple of guests. I would use a devise called Cellomatic. It was one of the first rear-projection devices, and I'd stand by the screen, and as I would talk about events, cartoons, events, something, they would come up on the screen right beyond my shoulder, and, so, I would use cartoons from the Jefferson period and all that. Then [I] turned, that day, to Carlos [P.] Romulo, president of the Philippines, and Ralph Bunche, who was then undersecretary of the UN, and Norman Cousins [editor of the *Saturday Review*, 1942-1978], and

it was that kind of thing. It was really very exciting, and it was wonderful for me to bring this kind of information and these kinds of people to the audience, and the audience was fairly substantial. When we did "1934, [Man of the Year]," we made George [W.] Norris, the famous senator who was so instrumental in the [Tennessee Valley Authority], TVA, the "man of the year," and then [I] got Kefauver, Senator [Estes] Kefauver [Democrat, Tennessee 1949-1963] from, no, it was David Lilienthal who I got, who was then the head of TVA [from 1933 to 1946], and if I must say, they were damned good programs. I wish there were more of them around. [Editor's Note: Carlos Romulo was an author, journalist, diplomat, ambassador from the Philippines to the United Nations (1946-1954), president of the United Nations General Assembly, (1949-1950), and ambassador to the U.S. Ralph Bunche was an American political scientist, diplomat, peace advocate and Nobel Laureate.]

The one I have is [Will Rogers]. I think Will Rogers died in '35 [in a plane crash in Alaska]. I was out living in Arizona at the time [that] I did a program, "1935, Man of the Year, Will Rogers" and since he was a great humorist, my guests were, wonderful to say, Steve Allen [television personality] and Fred Allen [comedian, radio humorist], and it was great to have the two of them there, and it's one of the ones I still have a live [recording].

Then, Steve Krantz asked me to produce a program called *Princeton '56*, so we know what year it was. It was a network program, but, produced by the local station. There had been *Princeton '54*, [*Princeton*] *'55* and the third year [*Princeton*] *'56*, which I played, on the air, a minor role because I really introduced it. Then, a major program, with major faculty people from Princeton, who was the famous, Carlos Baker [writer, literary critic, Princeton University Professor of Literature]; [Seymour] Bogdonoff, the aeronautical engineer; a number of very wonderful Princeton professors, Eric [F.] Goldman, [Princeton University Professor of History, 1942-1985]. I liked Eric Goldman, not as a person, but I liked what he wrote and said, and so, I, then invited him on, when *The Open Mind* went on the air, to be a guest, and then, when I left NBC to go to CBS, I suggested that Eric become the host for a period of *The Open Mind*. So, there was a period when I didn't do it, [from 1959 to 1967]. *Princeton '56* was a heavy-duty production job and then, toward the end of that run, I think it was thirteen programs, George Kennan [diplomat, historian, author of the Cold War containment policy] was a guest, a very interesting show.

Steve Krantz came to me and said, "Talk is cheap. The FCC is on our backs. We're not doing enough educational, informational programs. I want you to come up with a program idea and put it on the air," and so, I thought about what I could do. There wasn't very much conversation on television at that time, very little. My friend Max Lerner [educator, journalist, syndicated columnist] had for a while a delightful program, an after-theater program, [in] which he and a group of high-powered New Yorkers had gone to the theater, or to the opera or to some cultural event, and they went from the event to the studio, dressed formally, and talked about the event. That, I thought was gorgeous, just beautiful programming. So, I thought about what to do, and I came up with the notion of *The Open Mind*. I had an assistant on *Princeton '56*, a brilliant, young woman by the name of Barbara Davidson, who I then assigned, when I thought of what I wanted to do in the program, to give me a list of twenty-five possible titles, and she did. When I went down the list, I saw *The Open Mind*, I knew that's what it was, and I asked her to do a search on it and she found that [J. Robert] Oppenheimer [theoretical physician and director of the Manhattan Project] had a book called *The Open Mind* [1955]. I called him and introduced

myself, and told him what I wanted to do, did he have any objections, and he said, "No." I mean, I knew there was no legal reason why I had to check it through with him, but it was a courtesy, and, I tell you, one of the things that has haunted me ever since is that I didn't have the wit and the wisdom, when the program went on the air, to ask Oppenheimer to come on as a guest, and it would've been a coup. At any rate, I then asked Barbara to go the NBC library, music library, and get me a group of possible themes that she would think would be appropriate, and when I played the music, that you hear to this day, a sort of Finnegan arrangement, I knew that's what I wanted, and the interesting thing is that maybe once a year, I think a little less now, a little less often now, someone will call or write and say, "I can't stand that that goddamned music. If you don't stop using it, I'm going to stop watching," but it's unique.

Anyway, I started *The Open Mind* then [in] 1956, May 7, '56. At first, for the first couple of years, I thought it was a conversation among a group of civilized, intelligent people. It was '56; it was the second Eisenhower-Stevenson campaign, and I thought, "Let's do a program on the presidency." As a matter-of-fact, I'd start off with two programs on the presidency and who should I invite, but Allan Nevins [journalist and American historian], on the first one, Allan Nevins, [William] Bill [E.] Leuchtenburg [American historian and Professor of History Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill], and I'll be damned if I can recall at the moment who the, oh, Lawrence [H.] Chamberlain, the political scientist. Some years ago, in '96, when I marked the fiftieth anniversary, the only survivors, beside ourselves, were Bill Leuchtenburg and myself, and we did a program recalling what we did. For the first couple of years, I would have several guests, sometimes three, as with the first and second [programs], sometimes two, sometimes four, but never more than that, and then, I began to realize what was happening.

The program began in '56. Broadcasting was still not quite a novelty, but I don't think that most of the kinds of people I invited, largely academics initially, quite as yet realized how powerful an instrument for the expression and pushing of their own ideas, their own points of view, it had [become], and in those beginning times, you really could see people thinking. You could see man and woman thinking. But you could see man thinking, if the director was good, and I was generally blessed with good directors who knew how to focus their cameras, where to focus their cameras, and don't forget, these were all live programs. You'd see Leuchtenburg making a point, hear him, and the camera would show you Allan Nevins sitting there, sort of, you know, nodding his head, "Well, maybe there's something to that," even though he had just said something that would have contradicted that, but you could see people and hear them dealing with other intellects, and it was a wonderful thing, and the notion of an "open mind" was, I mean, it was just, the title was born for this sort of encounter. Then, I began to realize, as the years went on, that people had begun to push their own point of view. Never shake your head and raise your eyebrow in thinking about maybe that's right; you don't want to admit that someone else might be right. You wanted to go forth, because you knew that more and more people [were] watching, paying attention at what you had to say. After a couple of years of that, I began to realize this was a mistake. I was the only open mind, because I was the moderator, and why do that, if people were really only going to push their own conclusions? Why have three people? Why not have one person, and I'll continue my role as the open mind, and we'll have a one-on-one conversation. It will be easier to draw from people exactly what they want to say, and that's what it is now. I don't expect my guests to come on open mindedly; they're not. But I learned

that in the '50s, by the late '50s, and you watch, watch anyone on the air today, they're there to talk about their own ideas, to push them as far as they can; fine. But it made the idea, of an open-minded exchange with a number of people, foolish, and that's when I changed that. Anyway, we started in May '56, and it goes on until today.

SI: That same year, 1956, was the first year you published your abridged version of *Democracy in America* [*Democracy in America*, by Alexis de Tocqueville, edited by Richard D. Heffner (New York: New American Library, 1956)] …

RH: Tocqueville, yes.

SI: How did you become involved with that?

RH: I guess it was Lionel Trilling [literary critic and Columbia University Professor of English, 1939-1975]. I'm sure it was Lionel Trilling, who introduced me to Tocqueville when I was a freshman at Columbia and had the great glory of studying with that wonderful man, and I had always been thereafter interested in Tocqueville and realized that the difficulty of plowing through the wonderful Phillips Bradley edition, the two volumes, meant that there were fewer and fewer, not fewer and fewer meaning they were increasing numbers, there were very few people, students certainly, who were reading Tocqueville all the way through, who had it accessible to them, and I wasn't talking about the original volumes in French. I was talking about the [Henry] Reeve translation. But the Phillips Bradley wonderful edition, two-volume edition, and it was a little [daunting]. I mean, it was '56 that my Tocqueville came out; it had been '52 that my [*A*] *Documentary History* [*of the United States*] had come out, for the very simple reason that when I started to teach at Berkeley with 2,000 students in the class, wanting them all to have read the *Declaration of Independence* or the *Constitution* or [Woodrow] Wilson's first inaugural [address] or [Abraham] Lincoln, where were they going to get it? Therefore, I came back to New York and, to teach at Rutgers, determined to go to a publisher and see whether a small collection, which then cost thirty-five cents, it's now nearly ten bucks, could provide the means of, like broadcasting, not television, of bringing things to increasing numbers of people, a sort of Twitter [social networking] before its time. [laughter]

At any rate, the Tocqueville is being reprinted, as we speak, with Vartan Gregorian [writing the afterword]. The publisher now wants, they've offered me the opportunity to rewrite my introduction, if I want to, and I've come to the conclusion that I don't want to, because it would be too much of a shock to my system to admit that I've changed my mind about the basic philosophical thrust of the introduction. I was an optimist in 1956. I used to make speeches talking about reading to my little boys *The* [*Little*] *Engine That Could*, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can," and perhaps because of my age, perhaps because of what my age has had me live through, I don't have that optimistic point of view, and I know if I went to rewrite the introduction, it would have to be just such a thorough rewrite. Besides that, the introduction is a good one in terms, not of my point of view, but in terms of summarizing Tocqueville. So good, unfortunately, that many of my colleagues tell me, when they assign Tocqueville from the book [*Democracy in America*], kids read the introduction, not Tocqueville. I've often thought, someday someone will come along, and my introduction, I think, is thirty pages, thirty-eight pages, [someone will] come along and write a five page précis of mine, and that'll be it.

[laughter] Anyway, the publisher wanted to do a[n] afterward and asked me whom I would like to be associated with, so I first thought of Bill Moyers, and Bill can't. Then, I thought of Vartan Gregorian, the president of the Carnegie Corporation, an historian, and a very wonderful [man]. Man, are the publishers delighted. I had breakfast with Vartan and I asked him. He said, "Oh, I don't know enough about Tocqueville," and I said, "Sure you do." He said, "I've never written about Tocqueville," and I said, "You're forgetful. You gave a commencement address in the 1960s." I think it was [in the] '60s, no, later than that, "at Johns Hopkins University about Tocqueville," and he said, "No, I didn't." I said, "Yes, you did." [laughter] This went on for a few head shakes, one way and the other, and I said, "Vartan, you remember, my father was a bookie. I'll bet you, if you're so sure, and the bet will be that if I'm wrong, I'll give up pursuing this, and if I'm right, you'll write the introduction [afterword]." The bet's on. The next morning, I had delivered to him a copy of his commencement address. [laughter] So, he should be, at the moment, working on his brief afterward on Tocqueville. [laughter] It shows you what happens, how there are, well, how there's either stupidity among editors, or signs of the times. [Richard] Dick Hofstadter [Columbia University Professor of History, 1946-1970], who had been my teacher at Columbia, I don't know whether I told you this, about his …

SI: Yes.

RH: He wrote a blurb for my Tocqueville, and after a few years, I wasn't paying attention, they took it off, some editor took it off, and Vartan knew that it had been on there and that was one of the reasons he is willing to do it, because he had so much respect for Dick. They're putting it back on, which means a lot to me, because Dick had been my teacher. Anyway, there it is. I don't know how I got to this part of the world [laughter], but you led me there.

SI: Okay. Well, …

RH: Free association. [laughter]

SI: For the record, Sandra Holyoak has joined the interview. In regard to early television, you had a lot of wide-ranging programs, a lot of interesting guests. Was there ever any jitteriness on the part of the broadcaster, the company, "Don't have this guest on, or don't broach these topics?"

RH: Good question. Good question, because it gives me an opportunity to pay my respects to people you would think would be very jumpy, particularly with what was going on around the world, in our country, I mean, with the subject we discussed before, McCarthyism. I decided to do a program, a series, on homosexuality, a series of three programs, and I knew how I wanted to divide them, what to discuss, and, I'm trying to think, and the program was live, and the first program was with Margaret Mead [cultural anthropologist]. Now, I really don't precisely remember whether that was the first program, but one of the programs was with Margaret Mead and Max Lerner, and we went on the air. No; important to note that that wasn't the succession of events. The first program was a very academic program about the origins of … homosexuality. Robert Laidlaw, who was the president of one of the medical associations, [and] three very distinguished guests, went on the air. Jack Gould, in *The New York Times*, you may have to strike that. Again, I don't know whether it was Jack Gould or Richard Shepard wrote a review, I

think it was Gould, because he was the more powerful reviewer, called "Breaking Trail," and applauded me and the program for being so bold as to discuss homosexuality. So, you can imagine what the times were like. Okay, that program was on Saturday morning. Jack Gould's review was I think it was Monday morning. By Tuesday, there was a call that came down. It probably started with General [David] Sarnoff [Reserve Brigadier General, US Army Signal Corps; executive at RCA and NBC] at RCA. It went down to [Robert] Bobby [W.] Sarnoff, his son, who was then the president of NBC, and the call actually was from Kenneth Bilby, who was the major vice president at the time, and it went to the station, and it was, "What is *The Open Mind* and who is Richard Heffner?" They didn't know; I mean, they were too busy with many important things, and I got a call from the station manager saying, "You have a lot of explaining to do, not in apology for, but who you are, what the program is," etcetera. I guess I wrote a memorandum for Bilby, but I haven't seen it in my papers, as I've gone through my papers, although most of my papers were ruined. I think I may have called and spoken to him at some length. Bobby Sarnoff was down at Foley Square testifying before some federal commission, at the time, and Ken Bilby was handling this forum, as he would. Anyway, it went on almost all day, my getting telephone calls, so it was calls and not a memo, answering what my education was, what I had done, who my guests had been, what topics I'd used, what my plans were for the future.

In the meantime, Cardinal Spellman had called General Sarnoff. I guess that's how the whole thing began. They [Cardinal Spellman] had put a call in to General Sarnoff, yes, threatening to sue for the revocation of his friend, General Sarnoff's license to run WRCA-TV, as it was called then, if we continued with the other two programs on homosexuality. Now, the power of the church was quite considerable, much more so in New York than it is now, and when Cardinal Spellman spoke, people jumped, and you could imagine what pressure that was on Sarnoff, then the son, and everyone else. [Editor's Note: Cardinal Francis Joseph Spellman actively participated in the anti-communist purges of the McCarthy era, assisting the FBI in uncovering supposed communists in American institutions. Historian James T. Patterson calls Cardinal Spellman a sort of "chaplain of the Cold War."] I had everything to say, I mean, I spoke. I wasn't offensive. I answered with facts, and the next morning, they said, "Go ahead," and that to me you know in the '50s when we were a chicken-hearted nation, was pretty, damned tough-minded on their part. I was no Mike Wallace [CBS' *60 Minutes* correspondent since 1968], who they'd be afraid would do a program about their being chicken, or a Jay Leno [comedian and television host], or whoever these people are now. So, whatever there is that I have to say that's negative about broadcasters, and I have a lot to say, I thought that was a blow, a strike for liberty, that they made. So, have I ever come across [McCarthyism], yes, I've come across that sort of thing, but, again, it was a stand by a major broadcaster.

When I went to, let's see, it was after, no, I was still doing *The Open Mind*, there was an organization called META, M-E-T-A, the Metropolitan Educational Television Association, and they asked me to be their program director, and NBC had no objection, if I was continuing to do *The Open Mind*. I guess maybe it was before I was director of public affairs, or maybe I quit as director of public affairs at Channel 4 in order to do this. CBS was aware of META. We broadcast on the state-bought time on Channel 11, and we broadcast on Channel 11 mostly school programs, but some other programs. [At] CBS, I knew Sam Cook Digges, who was the general manager of WCBS-TV, and he called and said that CBS wanted to give, the CBS

network, wanted to give META three Sunday afternoon hours to do their thing, to be broadcast on the CBS network, those stations that would take it, they weren't obliged to do it, and, we could do it either in the CBS studio or in our own small studio at META. Yes, they gave us three hours, and then, added a fourth, because the first program I did, something that had never been on the air before, certainly a network never would've done it, I put on the Budapest String Quartet [renowned string quartet, 1917-1967] for an hour. Now, [the] CBS people went nuts, "Who's going to watch? We're giving you this opportunity to do your thing and you're taking these four guys? Who's going to watch or listen?" It was really a spectacular, spectacular, musical hour, and CBS had said we could use their studio. We decided to use their studio, because they had a director who I knew, (Ned Kramer?), who was great with musicians, and he knew music, mostly contemporary music, but we had a six-week or an eight-week period before this was to be put on the air; again, live, and CBS paid for Ned to follow the Budapest around the country, where they were performing, watch them, come to know them, come to understand what he could expect with this piece of music and that piece of music, and he directed it beautifully. So much so, that the next morning, Sam called me and said, "Could you do it again?" [laughter] I said, "Well, I've already arranged for the other two programs." He said, "We'll give you a fourth hour." I then, I went to the Budapest, and I had had to raise all of five thousand dollars for them, because they felt they couldn't do it for nothing, and five thousand was nothing, and I got that. Isaac Stern [American violinist] introduced me to a fellow by the name, I'm pretty sure it was (Katzman?), who was one of his underwriters, angels, and he gave us the five thousand dollars. But the Budapest said, "You don't need to give us more money, because we don't have the time. We're booked completely." So, I asked them where they were booked and I got their schedule and I saw that on one Sunday, they were booked at the Frick [Collection, art museum] in New York. I thought, "Okay, if the Frick permits us to, and CBS will not only let us use their cameras but use a remote unit, we've got music and art." I got Norman Dello Joio, the composer, to be the host, and we produced an hour-and-a-half, it was an hour-and-a-half, the last one was ninety minutes, of fine music and fine art, and that was just wonderful.

But to answer your question, did I ever find this McCarthyism any other place, or the impact of McCarthyism? The other programs were, one, an hour-long program that I did with my old teacher from Columbia, Charles Frankel, the philosopher, who was one of the great teachers of all time. I was lucky. He was my freshman CC, Contemporary Civilization, teacher, and he was called into the Navy to study Japanese, and Ernest Nagel [logician and philosopher of science] took his place, so I had these two magnificent men, instead of one. Charlie Frankel became a wonderfully articulate person, more than he had been as a teacher, and I got Charlie to host a program that I called *Concept*, and I used it as potentially the basis for a series, *Concept*, and as I wrote for the announcer, "The concepts by which we live, love, patriotism, honor," about nine or ten of them, and it's interesting, you can divide the way we live into these concepts. Was it patriotism? I don't remember which one, Charlie did the first one, and it was terrific, [a] great program.

Then, still coming to your basic question, there was the friend who, I guess, I've never thought of this connection; the friend who, when I won the Sherwood Award of the Ford Foundation, called Elaine and said, "Could we bring a couple with us to the party, Alger Hiss and Priscilla Hiss?" he came to me with an idea. He called it the *Faces of War*. What are the faces that mankind has put upon war since the beginning? He had written a script, and I didn't think it was a great script, but

I thought it was an interesting idea, and, again, we needed some money, five thousand dollars, and I went to the New York Public Library and said, "We'll say this is produced in cooperation with the New York Public Library, if you will provide five thousand dollars we need," and they said, "Yes." We had Cynthia Gooding, the folk singer, and Earle Hyman, the actor. These were both, this was so many years ago, these were not stars yet, and we had an excerpt from a Dwight Eisenhower speech that was wonderful, and I don't know quite what else we had.

Anyway, we were doing that from our own studio at 42nd Street, opposite the UN, the Carnegie Endowment building, and it was going on live on Sunday. Saturday night, my wife and I were sitting [at] home, playing Scrabble, and the telephone rang, and it was (Clancy Wharton?), who was the director of public affairs programs at WCBS-TV, and he said, "Dick, there's trouble. You've got to close down the program." First thing he said [was], "You've got to close down the program. There's trouble." Morris Hadley was a distinguished, old, gentleman lawyer in New York, you know, the kind who represented major corporations and was on every board in the city. [He] was the chairman of the board of the New York Public Library. He had, that afternoon, been delivered the script of what we called *Faces of War*. He read it and he said, "It's a goddamned communist, liberal document, and it's not going with our name on it," and he called his friend, Bill Paley, the chairman of CBS, and said, "Bill, get rid of that," and he said, "It's a communist document, and you can't afford to be seen on it and we'll take our names off it," and Paley called down to Sam Digges, the manager of the local station. Sam Digges called (Clancy Wharton?), the director of public affairs, who called me and said, "It's going off the air." I said, "No, it isn't. That's nonsense. This is not a pacifist [program]." That's what Hadley called it, pacifist communist document. I said, "[Not] when your major quote is from Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States." Anyway, they wanted to know the origins of the program and, they wanted to know everything, and Hadley withdrew his five thousand dollars and made them withdraw his name, and Bill Paley said, "Stay with it." So, you know, in the two instances, two of the three major broadcasters, Leonard Goldenson at ABC, I did work at ABC for a while, I was moonlighting, but never had anything to do with him, but Paley, chief honcho at CBS, Sarnoff, chief honcho at NBC/RCA, two of those men, faced by these problems, real problems, [were] sued for revocation of the license, from Cardinal Spellman of all people, [with] Morris Hadley, representing the Establishment in New York. Bill Paley stuck by our guys. We went on the air, and as I say, I never had felt the script was all that good, and I didn't think the program was that good, but, I also knew enough to alert Jack Gould, at *The Times*, of what was happening and on Monday morning, front-page story in *The New York Times*. That week, a major editorial by Norman Cousins [appeared] in the *Saturday Review*, and the story in *The New York Times* just gave it to [them]. [In the] first place, they'd reviewed the program and said it was magnificent [laughter], and I know damned well if it hadn't been for all the troubles, nobody ever would have paid any attention to it, and so, we got away with [it]; we came out ahead of the game. But, again, chicken broadcasters, I mean, you know what they did with the blacklist. There's no question, that's history we know. Still, my experience was not like that, and … [Editor's Note: During the McCarthy era, the Hollywood blacklist, or entertainment industry blacklist, featured the names of suspected Communists and subversives in the entertainment profession who were denied employment in the field because of alleged political beliefs and associations.]

PC: I have to go. I'm sorry.

SI: To finish up this session, I was wondering, what were the challenges of doing live television in that era, of having to put something live on television every week?

RH: It never occurred to me that it was a challenge. That's the way it was, because most things were live. Don't forget, that's why I laugh, when I laughingly tell you that my academic colleagues consider me a broadcaster and the broadcasters consider me an academic. [laughter] But in terms of the academic people, I haven't really been involved, much to my regret, and relief, in the nuts and bolts of producing programs, I mean, real programs, where there are real production values. I think of *Playhouse 90* [dramatic anthology television series on CBS], or one of the great programs. When I watch my son, when I see one of the films he's been involved with, and I don't mean *Saw*, because I have never seen them, but Dan is a hands-on man. He's the executive producer of the *Saw* series [American horror franchise consisting of six movies released by Lions Gate Entertainment], but he knows everything about the medium, and when I watch, I talked about the director (Ned Kramer?), who did the Budapest [String Quartet program], all the things they keep in their heads, the things you see, the pictures of a control room, I've never done anything like that. I couldn't do that for my life. I couldn't. Now, are there many things that I have learned about production? Yes, and my advice to the few people I know who have gone on to major jobs, administrative and managerial jobs, [who] have run stations, has been, "You've really got to have been a producer first. You've got to know who is handing you a line of malarkey and telling you something can't be done, because you've been there to make sure it's done and you sort of know what the limitations are."

I think I was successful for the short time I was the general manager of Channel Thirteen. I was successful, to put it this way, in putting it on the air because, although my programs had all been talk programs, except for *Princeton '56*, which did involve acting and other things to document what the Princeton people were saying, I knew. I knew enough, as the general manager, that when the engineering department said, "This can't be done," and I'd say, "It goddamned will, it can be done," or, "This is going to cost so much money." I knew from my experience, it would cost much less. I don't think you can have a position of real responsibility without dirtying your hands first and knowing what goes into the machinery. I mean, I drive a car and haven't the faintest idea of what goes into it; I do my e-mail and haven't the faintest idea of what's going on, as my sons and my grandsons know, but in broadcasting, you're responsible for the final product. You've got to know enough and when I started, when I put Channel Thirteen on the air, I knew that I couldn't have done it, if I hadn't done even the simple talk shows that I had done before then, and part of it is attitude. When you've been identified with a program, or programs, for enough years, you're willing to say to your engineer, "That's nonsense. Go back to the drawing board."

So, what it's like to be responsible for live shows? You know, one answer I could give, it's been so long since I've been involved with a live show; on the other hand, every show I do is live. It's live on tape. Now, if within the first minute of a program, I fall all over myself or my guest has a sneezing fit, we'll stop and start again, but after that, I don't have the money to use studio time, so that, in a very real sense, when the light goes on, that's it, until the end. But I'm not now talking about those wonderful, big shows, you know, what's, oh, *Chicago* [Broadway musical and movie], or any of those things, and there are wonderful things, complicated things that go on

there, like movies, but, I'll admit, mostly not live, except when you look at an Academy Awards show, it's live. Now, they've been rehearsing forever and spending huge sums of money, but that's why broadcasting is so expensive; by the time you take the union restrictions, etcetera. I don't know whether I've really answered your question.

Sandra Holyoak: Has the technology made it more difficult or easier?

RH: For me, it hasn't. Well, I use teleprompter, as I think, as the president does. [laughter] [Editor's Note: A teleprompter is a display device that prompts the speaker with visual text of the script or speech.] Most people don't think I use teleprompter. One thing that helps is I write my own words, and I'm pretty good at looking at the prompter and the screen. You remember *Omnibus* [an educational television series, 1952-1961], or I think that may be before your times? There was a great show, early in television, on CBS, and I remember my dear friend and professor Allan Nevins, I shouldn't say dear friend, my great professor, honored professor, Allan Nevins was on a program they did about the Adams dynasty, the Adams family dynasty, and obviously no one had bothered to teach Nevins about how you use a teleprompter, that you're the boss, you read as quickly as you want, or as slowly as you want, and the man will follow you. Nevins, and this was a live show, Nevins, at one point, is giving a long narration and Nevins would "hrmff" [imitating the sound] and he, I guess, "hrmffed," and the teleprompter operator slowed down to make up for the "hrmff." Nevins sees that the prompter is going more slowly, he goes more slowly, the operator goes more slowly, Nevins goes still more slowly, until they stopped. The operator has been trained, you follow your reader, and it was the most pitiful thing I've ever seen on television. I think even if it hadn't been my teacher, I would've, you know, cried or laughed or whatever, one of the two. [laughter]

So, technology, the teleprompter, is important for me, because I don't think I have, I know I don't have the memory to learn lines. I certainly feel that way, that I couldn't learn more than one line, and when I'm in a position where I have to, or do anything like that, [it could be a problem]. Facing an audience impromptu, that's great. I have no problem with that, but remembering, memorizing a script, when I watch actors and what they do, I can't believe it, I literally can't. So, that's one major thing. Sure, advances, I talked before about the Cellomatic, this wonderful visual device that you can have pictures over your shoulder, documenting what you're saying. Sure, all of that has been wonderful. Most wonderful of all has been videotape, no question about it. My heart breaks when I go over the list of programs that I did in those first years, [there's] no record. I mean, that's heartbreaking, because you'd have to pay, the studio had to make a film, and that's expensive. Now, you make tape; you erase the tape, whatever you do. I don't know what else about the mechanics, I mean …

SH: Have you been involved in the editing of the videotape now?

RH: See, we don't edit. We tape to time.

SH: Oh, okay.

RH: We can't afford to. Would we? I'd be at a disadvantage, because I'd have to say to my guests, "This is going to be edited," and what I can say to them is, "Whatever you say is going to

go on that way." [laughter] The editing, when we say to a guest, as when [Richard] Dick [L.] McCormick [President of Rutgers University, 2002-present] leaves the studio, we'll say, and I always nudge Daphne [Doelger Dwyer], my associate producer, "Don't put it that way," she says, actually says, "We have to edit." There's too many people who don't know that means just [that] we edit the front credits on and the end credits, but you just can't afford to do anything else. If something happens in the course of events, and the director knows that she, because my directors are women now mostly, she took a shot she shouldn't have, she may stop, at the end [and] say, "Could we take a shot of you just sitting there," or, "Mr. Heffner just sitting there and we're going to edit it in," because that takes a few seconds, but those are the only things. But if you get a real broadcaster, who really produces heavy stuff, boy, the answer will be, "Absolutely, all the new things that they can do." [Editor's Note: Richard Heffner's interview of Rutgers President Richard L. McCormick on *The Open Mind* premiered on September 8, 2007.]

SI: Thank you very much.

RH: All right.

SH: Thank you.

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

Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 3/31/10
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 9/29/10