

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WALTER ZEHNDER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an oral history interview with Mr. Walter Zehnder, on September 3, 2020, with Kate Rizzi. This is a part of the Class of 1970 Oral History Project. Thank you so much, Mr. Zehnder, for doing this oral history interview.

Walter Zehnder: You're welcome.

KR: To begin, where and when were you born?

WZ: I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 20, 1947.

KR: Let's start off today talking about your family history. What do you know about your family history, on your father's side of the family?

WZ: My father's father owned a dairy in Louisville, Kentucky, and the family home was in a little town called St. Matthews, just outside of Louisville, where we visited once while I was maybe ten or eleven. He had a sister and three brothers. Grandma Erb was his maternal grandmother who, I think, had fourteen kids and lived to be about ninety-eight. That was at a time when Midwestern people had big families, and his, I would guess, was considered to be a big family at that point with five kids. He served in the Navy during World War II, and he left the Navy right after the war as a lieutenant and then continued in the Naval Reserve, getting to the rank of lieutenant commander. He went to college at what then was called Rose Polytechnic Institute in Indiana, and I think it's now Rose-Hulman Institute, associated with the family that for many years owned the Indianapolis Speedway. He was a chemical engineer, who worked initially for Schenley Distilleries out in Indiana. He then got a job in New Jersey working for a small pharmaceutical company. In the mid-1960s, the company bought the rights to the formula for acetaminophen, which is the main ingredient in Tylenol. My father was tasked with designing the commercial production line for acetaminophen, which, previously, had just been made in small batches in a lab in Canada. That was a major accomplishment. I can remember him coming home, while I was in high school taking engineering-drawing classes, and showing me his plans and talking about how he might do certain things differently. That was certainly interesting for me. When I later took a summer job in the factory, I saw his plans in action. Unfortunately, he got cancer at the point where I had just graduated from Rutgers, and he died at the age of fifty-three. Anything more you want on the paternal side?

KR: Sure, I have a follow-up question. Your father, growing up on this farm outside of Louisville, how did the Great Depression affect his family?

WZ: Well, it wasn't a farm. As I remember the neighborhood, it was this nice suburban neighborhood with tree-lined streets. The house was a two-story house with an attic and a front porch and with a pretty good-sized yard around it. Milk was something that people needed during the depression, so I don't think the depression had as much effect on my father and his family as it did on other people, who lost jobs, savings or both. I never recall my father talking about any kinds of deprivations during the depression. My mother's father actually worked much

of the time during the depression, but there were times when he was not working and my mother, I think, felt the effects of the depression a lot more than my father did.

KR: What do you know about your family history, on your mother's side of the family?

WZ: My maternal grandfather was an orphan who grew up on a farm in Upstate New York. We're not sure how old he was, but just judging by when he would've entered the Army for World War I, we figure that he ultimately lived to be ninety-eight. He somehow got into the upholstery business after World War I, and he ended up working for a kind of high-end interior decorating firm in New York. At a point, after he married my grandmother, they moved to the Bronx in New York. Wealthy people made out pretty well during the depression, so he did have work designing drapery layouts and actually hanging the drapes. He also was a skilled upholsterer, rebuilding and recovering furniture and making slip covers. He talked about covering walls with silk and working in the homes of Betty Crawford and Marjorie Merriweather Post. The firm actually sent him to the Dominican Republic, to outfit the yacht of [Rafael] Trujillo, who was the dictator of the Dominican Republic. He did have times during the depression when he was out of work and that affected the family.

My grandmother grew up in Binghamton, New York, and had, I think, three sisters, at least two of whom I recall meeting while growing up. I'm not really sure how she and my grandfather met, but they ultimately had my mother in the early 1920s and then her brother probably about six years later. My mother and uncle grew up in one apartment of a little duplex in Woodhaven, Queens, and for a time, we lived in the bottom-floor apartment and my grandparents and uncle lived on the upper floor. When I think back to the size of the place, I don't know how they raised two kids in it, but they did. At that point, I guess a lot of families were in the same position. They were fortunate to even own their own half a house.

My grandmother was basically a homemaker. Once we moved out of the home in Woodhaven to West Paterson, we would, as kids, go back and stay with my grandparents for a couple of weeks out of every year. My grandmother was an avid Brooklyn Dodgers fan, so I became interested in rooting for baseball. She cursed Walter O'Malley, who was the owner of the Dodgers, who moved them to Los Angeles. She was a real homemaker. She had this tiny kitchen, but she would bake. For holidays, she would make more dishes than anyone could eat. The kitchen had an ice box and there was an ice man who would bring large blocks of ice. The home was heated by a coal furnace. There was a coal bin in the basement, and a coal truck would pull up and deliver coal through a trap door in the alley next to the house. Those were the days when people had one car. So, my grandmother would walk to the grocery store every morning, pulling her little wire basket, and as kids, we'd go with her. She'd make the rounds at the butcher shop and the bakery and the little A&P that they had nearby. She did pretty well for the conditions that they lived in. [Editor's Note: The Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants moved to Los Angeles and San Francisco, respectively, after the end of the 1957 baseball season.]

KR: What was your mother's education like?

WZ: She went to a Catholic grammar and high school and then to secretarial school, and she was a secretary in New York City at the point where she met my father.

KR: Do you know the story of how your parents met?

WZ: Yes, yes. At that point, the hotels would hold dances. A friend of hers said, "Come with me. I've been dating this Navy officer. His ship is in town, and he's bringing some friends with him," and so one of the friends was my father. That's how they connected. She died recently at ninety-eight. In the process of cleaning out her house, we found these letters that my father had written to her while he was in the Navy, most of them in the last year of the war. He didn't really write to her about any military action. He made it sound like his was a pretty cushy job. He talks about spending a lot of time on the beach, and there would be movies all the time. From what he told us, his role in the war was to command waves of landing boats onto beaches during the Pacific island-hopping campaign. They, I guess, would've met probably the year before the war ended and continued this correspondence. Then, after the war ended, they were married within a year.

KR: That is amazing that your mother saved the letters ...

WZ: Yes.

KR: ... So that you have them.

WZ: Yes. Well, my sister, who lives in Roseland, New Jersey, has them. I got to read many of them when in New Jersey for my mother's funeral.

KR: My grandmother saved my grandfather's World War II letters, and I have them now.

WZ: Oh, wow, yes. What a great historical tool they are. They told us a lot not only about the two of them and their relationship but about the times; even the stationary, one of them was on hotel stationary from San Francisco after the ship had docked just before V-J Day. [Editor's Note: Japan unconditionally surrendered on August 14, 1945, a day known as V-J Day or "Victory over Japan Day." The formal surrender ceremony took place on September 2, 1945 onboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.]

KR: What did your father do during World War II?

WZ: He was on a troopship, and he was part of that island-hopping campaign, where he would command a fleet of the landing craft going into the beaches. I asked him what he experienced, and he said, well, he really never saw anybody killed landing on the beaches because as soon as the boats got to the beach, he would issue the order to drop the ramp. Then, he'd immediately turn around and look for signals from the ship as to what they should be doing with this group of boats that had just gone in and landed the troops. In part, I think he didn't want to see what was happening. He said the only time he actually saw somebody killed was when one of the boats in

his group got blown out of the water, and he said it was there one minute and the next minute, it just disintegrated. He did say that his ship came under kamikaze attack, but the plane trying to fly into his ship was shot down before it could reach its target. Other than that, he never really told any war stories. I think he might've been reluctant to do that.

KR: I understand that you have some uncles that served in World War II.

WZ: Yes, yes. My maternal uncle, I think he turned eighteen near the end of the war, he was in the Navy and he really just served at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He never went abroad. I mean, he just talked about doing guard duty and having had a wisdom tooth removed, and they sent him right back out to guard the docks. That was about his only war story. Then, the others, we really didn't have a lot of contact with my father's side of the family growing up. I really don't know much about them and their war experiences.

KR: How old were you when your family settled in West Paterson?

WZ: I was probably five, maybe four.

KR: I am curious, do you remember the name of the company that your father worked for producing the acetaminophen?

WZ: Yes, it was S.B. Penick and Company, and shortly before he died--which was fortunate--Penick was sold out to a company called Corn Products, which is a major national corporation, and so he ended up with the Corn Products benefits, which were much better than what they were for this little family-owned company.

KR: What was your childhood like growing up in West Paterson?

WZ: I have good memories of it. We had a gulley behind the house that was wooded, and so we spent a lot of time as kids, especially in the summer, playing there, because that was in the days when people didn't have air conditioning and so it was a lot cooler. A number of families, with sons who were my age and my brother's age, bought houses in the neighborhood, so there was a ready supply of playmates. In the summer, in the evenings, when it would cool down some, we'd go out in the street and play stickball or touch football or roam around in the woods up at the top of the hill in the fields, near where our house was situated. In the winter, when there was snow on the road, we would sled down the hill, starting from where the road sloped down, just outside our driveway. In the fall and winter, there were a number of vacant pieces of land where we could play football. So, yes, it was pretty good, from that standpoint.

KR: What was the town of West Paterson like when you were growing up in the '50s and '60s?

WZ: Well, around the time when we moved there, it had been this little town with a relatively small population. There was a dairy right on Main Street, a dairy farm. The main street kind of ran along the shores essentially of the Passaic River. Then, the part of the town that I grew up in

was on the hillside that ran right off of the main street on up. At the time we moved in, the subdivision was still being built out. Some of the streets had not yet been paved. Mailboxes were in a rack about two-and-a-half blocks from our house at the bottom of the hill that we lived on. There were very few families. It was the kind of town that was separated by railroad tracks. There was a railroad trestle that went across the Passaic River. On the one side, it seemed like there was the portion of town that was more associated with the adjoining town, which was Little Falls. That's where the dairy farm was, and there were a number of small houses near the river--people said they had been resort houses for the Passaic River. People would come and vacation on the Passaic River, and there were shops. Then, you got on the other side of the trestle, and it was more the west side of the City of Paterson, much older homes, close together, and it basically blended into the commercial district along the main street that extended out from Paterson. There was no grocery store in town. My family traveled to Clifton to go grocery shopping.

I went to school on the Paterson side of the town at a Catholic grammar school. The school was actually just over the dividing line in Paterson. I had a paper route mainly on that side of town. I remember, as kids, we would go up into the woods surrounding the subdivision that brought in all of these new people, and shortly after, there was a separate subdivision that was put in about a mile down the road. We would find these abandoned shacks. There were basically these hermits who lived up in the woods. I remember there was one guy we would see, and he had a goat. So, it was pretty rural actually, even though it was called West Paterson. [Editor's Note: In 2008, West Paterson became known as Woodland Park.]

KR: How many siblings do you have?

WZ: I've got a brother and two sisters.

KR: What are their names, and when they were born?

WZ: Yes, my brother is Bob, and he was born in 1950. Then, my oldest sister is Mary Elizabeth or Beth, and she was born in 1952. Then, my youngest sister is Judy, and she was born in probably 1958, '58, yes.

KR: You said your father stayed in the Naval Reserve. Was there talk about him getting called up during the Korean War?

WZ: No, no, I don't ever remember that. Really, he would go to a meeting one night a week, and he may have been out by the time the Korean War started. I'm not really clear on how long he did that. Then, maybe one weekend a month, he would go on whatever they did. I'm trying to think when the Korean War started. Was that 1954?

KR: The Korean War was from 1950 to 1953.

WZ: 1950. Yes, so he may have still been in the Naval Reserve in 1950, yes.

KR: Once the Dodgers moved to California, did you still root for them, or did you switch allegiances?

WZ: I did but didn't let my grandmother know. As soon as the Mets came in, I was a Mets fan from 1962 on. It was interesting because growing up, the kids in my neighborhood were divided among Yankee fans and Dodgers fans, so us Dodgers fans always used to get it from the Yankees fans because the Yankees were so successful.

KR: Who were some of your favorite Mets players?

WZ: Well, I just saw Tom Seaver died. Certainly, Tom Seaver, Cleon Jones, any number of them, a guy who lives in this area now called Howard Johnson, who was a second baseman for them, Wally Backman. I think, Wally Backman lives in this area too. I'm trying to think who some of the others were. The pitching staff, Tom Seaver, Jerry Koosman. I'm trying to think of some of the other ones who were in that team that won the World Series in 1969. Yes, I've remained a Mets fan over time. I still haven't become a Tampa Bay Rays fan.

KR: What role did religion play in your life growing up?

WZ: A big role, because I was going to Catholic school, and I was an altar boy, as was my brother. I think a lot of my attitudes toward people were formed by the church and the nuns and the priests of the church. The church had been built in, I think, the 1870s, and there was a monastery attached to it, and the monks and the priests would go out and serve the poor in Paterson. We would see people lined up if we had to go up to the church. The school was about a block or two away from the church, and there'd be times during the school year when we would all go march up to the church and we would see people in line for breakfast at the monastery. It was never a real conservative church, so I kind of grew up with that kind of message that Christ stood for mercy and compassion and healing the sick and easing the burden of the poor.

KR: What was the schooling like at St. Bonaventure? Who were some teachers there that stick out in your mind?

WZ: I probably had two lay teachers, one for kindergarten and one in maybe fifth grade. Otherwise, I had nuns. There was one who I had for fourth and sixth grade who I think in modern days probably would be committed, but she was very [laughter] bizarre. These were Franciscan nuns, and they had these big wooden beads, a rosary, that was like a belt and hung down. She would walk down the aisles in the school and kind of use it as a way of smacking kids in the back of the head. I think we were all cowed by her in fourth grade, but by sixth grade, there were any number of kids who would just torment her and she would just go nuts, essentially. So, I do remember her. Then, in seventh and eighth grade, I had maybe one of the best teachers I've had ever. She was very knowledgeable. She kept discipline by--she was very good with the kids, related well to the kids, but if you stepped out of line, she would just give

you this stare and you knew you'd better get back in line. Other than that, I don't have a whole lot of recall about the teachers.

KR: Was St. Bonaventure's all boys?

WZ: No, no, it was coed, large classes. I think for one year we had like sixty-four kids in the class.

KR: Did your siblings go there as well?

WZ: Yes.

KR: When you were grammar-school age, what sports or clubs or extracurricular activities did you participate in?

WZ: Well, in the town, we had Little League baseball, which, even though I enjoyed watching baseball, I was not very good at, until probably I was eleven, and some coach that I had at that point realized that when they put me in the outfield, I could never find the ball. Once it got up in the sky, for some reason, I just could not figure out where it was. I had gotten hit in the mouth with a ball early on, so I was somewhat gun-shy, but I ended up at first base. I guess he figured if they were throwing the ball at my head, I'd catch it. So, I ended up doing pretty well there. I eventually learned how to hit. I can remember a period of time when I felt like a bunt was as good as a double. Usually, I could get the bat on the ball if I bunted and then whoever fielded it would overthrow first base and I'd end up on second. So, that was pretty much how I batted through one season. Then, just as I was getting pretty good for my age, they created what they called a Pony League, which I guess in some towns is called a Babe Ruth League, and they moved me up to that. The players who were playing were high school age, and they were on the high school team. I never really got much chance to play, and that's when I stopped playing organized baseball.

I really liked football growing up. There were a group of older kids who, I guess, needed tackling dummies when I was younger and got me involved in playing football. Eventually, I think when I was in eighth grade, we got a Pop Warner football team in the town, so I played that for a season. I was really too small to play in high school.

KR: How about other activities like Boy Scouts?

WZ: Yes, yes, I was in Cub Scouts. I never went into Boy Scouts. My father was a Scoutmaster, or whatever they called them, at that point. I was in a den made up of friends from school. The dens were smaller groups, led by den mothers. Yes, I enjoyed Cub Scouts. The troop that we had was associated with St. Bonaventure's Church. There weren't any of us in the neighborhood who decided to go on with Boy Scouts at the point when we were too old for Cub Scouts. We were doing a lot of the things that the Boy Scouts were doing, because we had the woods in the backyard. By that point, we had discovered that at the top of the hill, really the

extension of the street we lived on, if you kept going on that, you ended up at what was called Garrett Mountain Reservation. The reservation, a big park, had a pond, where we could fish and just hang out in the woods. That's what we did.

KR: You talked about the trip that your family took out to Louisville. How much travel did you do with your family when you were growing up?

WZ: We would go to the New Jersey Shore. After a point, we would go to the New Jersey Shore most summers. I remember at some point we went to Cape Cod, and for my brother and I, that was pretty boring. We liked the New Jersey Shore. Again, it's amazing that we survived, because we would have my maternal grandparents and my family of three kids and my parents--in this little two-bedroom--well, it wasn't a shack--but it just had studded plywood walls. These bungalows had been thrown up probably in the early '50s, but they were convenient to the bay, which was the side we stayed on. There was a lot to do. There was activities and a clubhouse in the evenings and we could go swimming in the bay, and after a point, there was a basketball court. So, we enjoyed that.

KR: What historical events really stick out in your mind from when you were growing up?

WZ: From when I was growing up? Probably the assassination of Kennedy. I was home from school that day, and the announcements started coming on TV. Early on, reporters weren't really sure what had happened, there was a lot of conflicting reports, and then, ultimately, the report came that Kennedy had died in the hospital. That was a real blow. My whole family were fans of JFK, at the point when he died. While I was in college, there was the Moon landing, and the astronauts landed on the Moon on my birthday. So, I always joked that I asked them to hold off so that they wouldn't hit the Moon before that day. I was actually working a construction job and had a little portable radio with me and was listening to that throughout the day. The other event that affected me deeply was the assassination of Martin Luther King. The people I knew and myself were shocked and saddened not only at his death but by where and how it had happened. [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 while traveling by motorcade in Dallas, Texas. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin landed on the Moon in the Apollo 11 mission, while Michael Collins flew the Command Module Columbia in lunar orbit. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.]

KR: Where did your parents stand politically? What were political discussions like in your household?

WZ: My father was a Republican, but he didn't really say much about it and I don't remember him ever discussing politics. My mother was a Democrat. Her father was in a union. She grew up in a union household. She was a big fan of JFK and Jackie until she found out that he had an affair with Marilyn Monroe. I remember the town was pretty much a Republican town, and so after every election, the winning side would gather a car caravan and drive through the neighborhoods. She'd look out the window and curse at the car caravan of Republicans driving

by. At one point, I remember her saying, "Well, they could run a monkey and he would win." So, that was pretty much the extent of it.

KR: Growing up in a Catholic family, what do you remember about when JFK was elected? How did your parents react?

WZ: Oh, yes, I think they were certainly pleased at that. I mean, that was a big issue in the campaign, as far as I recall. There were these people who were adamant that a Catholic president would be beholden to the pope and they didn't want a Catholic as president, and then it was seen as a breakthrough. For her to be an Irish Catholic besides, because my mother was Irish, it was really a big deal.

KR: For high school, you went to Passaic Valley Regional, and you were there from '61 to '65.

WZ: Right.

KR: What was it like for you when you were in high school?

WZ: It was kind of a shock, because I had come from this little Catholic school, where I joke that my awareness of girls was that they were the ones who wore the jumpers and the little bowties and I figured that at some point early on, they had divvied up sides and said, "Okay, this group will wear the jumpers and the bowties, and the other group will wear the white shirts and the long neckties." I kind of became aware of girls when I first entered high school. It was a bigger school. I was changing classes, whereas in grammar school, other than for lunch and recess, we were in the same classroom for the length of the school day. There were a lot of things that I wasn't prepared for, but the kids who had gone to public school were. They had had gym and shop classes and art and things like that, and we didn't have any of that. I mean, gym in St. Bon's meant going out on the playground around the city school and just playing on this concrete playground. So, a lot of what I encountered in high school took some getting used to, but gradually, I adapted and developed a circle of friends. Passaic Valley was a regional high school, so there were several towns that sent people. I developed friends from the adjoining towns, which was good. Yes, I have good memories of high school.

KR: What were your academic interests in high school?

WZ: I was mainly math and science. I was good at math. Unfortunately, we didn't have calculus, and I think that hurt me when I got into Rutgers, but I generally got "A's" in math. I liked history. English classes, I could take or leave, a lot of the materials that we were reading in them didn't interest me. I didn't appreciate the works of Shakespeare until I went on a field trip to see a performance of *Twelfth Night*. After that, I tried to envision the actors saying the lines as I read future plays. I also remember that in senior year we were given an assignment to choose from a group of authors and read one of that author's works and then report on it. I chose a novel from John Steinbeck, and over the next few years, I tried to read all of Steinbeck's works. I only took two years of a foreign language, German. I still remember some of the early dialogs. In my

freshman year, a group of my classmates and I were part of a German chorus that performed at a school Christmas pageant. In my sophomore year, the German teacher put together a field trip to a stadium in New York City to see an American team play the German National Team. That was my introduction to soccer. I remember being surprised at how large and enthusiastic the crowd was, though I gained little understanding of the game. Basically, that was it. I had a math-science curriculum after the first year and took classes in English and history each of the years.

KR: What sorts of extracurriculars or activities did you participate in?

WZ: I was on the track and cross country teams, again, not particularly good at them, but I enjoyed running. I didn't so much enjoy cross country, but it was a big sport in the school that I was in. There were some people who encouraged me to go out for the team, and I did. It could get pretty cold by the end of cross-country season in New Jersey, and we'd be out there running in our shorts and tank tops. I can remember getting to the middle of the race and saying, "What am I doing this for? My friends are up at the finish line in overcoats with their girlfriends and I'm here feeling like my lungs are getting slaughtered." I kept it up for a couple of years, and then I got interested in basketball. Once I got interested in basketball, I gave up cross country and was on the basketball team for two years. Again, we would still continue as kids playing touch football when we had a chance. I always had an interest in that.

From other extracurricular activities, there was a service group called the High Y. It was associated with the YMCA, and as a part of that, I got to go to a youth and government conference in Trenton, where we took on the role of state legislators for a weekend, and there was a prep weekend at Princeton. At one point, I thought about going to Princeton, and my father said that he knew someone that could get me a Naval Reserve ROTC scholarship. Then, I went down and spent that weekend at Princeton and thought, "No, I can't see myself spending four years here." But it was a good experience to be able to do that. At the end of my junior year and into my senior year, I was the business manager on the yearbook staff. Other than that, there was a drafting group. We would make signs and things for the school, and I participated in that. The way that the honors society worked was you had to have a number of extracurricular activities in addition to academics, so there were probably some other clubs that I was part of.

KR: What was it about Princeton that made you think that you did not want to spend four years there?

WZ: The people I saw on the campus. It was old. I don't know if you've ever been in any of the classrooms at Princeton, but there was one where we had like a breakout session and I went up these rickety stairs with no railings, wooden stairs, and sat in this small classroom in desks that looked like they dated back to the 19th century. I just remember sitting there thinking, "If there was ever a fire, I mean, I'm done, I'm like a marshmallow on a grill here." [laughter] The whole atmosphere of Princeton and the dining clubs, that just didn't appeal to me.

I went to Rutgers for a football game, and it was a beautiful fall day. The engineering campus was up where the football stadium was at that point. On the engineering campus, there were all

these modern buildings. After the game, we went to the main campus and I found it to be a beautiful campus. I had a girlfriend with me, which I think helped some, and I thought, "Wow, I really like this. I could see myself spending four years here."

KR: What colleges did you apply to?

WZ: I applied to Lafayette because I think early in my junior year, there was a Lafayette Alumni Association in the area, and they sponsored a trip to Lafayette. Lafayette was just on the other side of the Delaware--well, you know where Lafayette is--and that was a very nice campus. I liked Lafayette. The people who took us on the campus tour stressed more the social life than the academics. I applied because it was the first school I had seen, and it looked like a nice campus. Then, I also applied to the Newark College of Engineering, which was not a very nice campus, but had a good reputation as an engineering school. I applied to Worcester Polytechnic Institute up in Worcester, Massachusetts and got into it and got into each of the ones I applied to. [Editor's Note: The New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) is a public university in Newark, New Jersey that used to be known as the Newark College of Engineering.]

KR: What did you do the summer before you went to college?

WZ: The summer before I went to college, I think I worked in the chemical factory, where my father was an engineer. That was an education in and of itself. I was in the maintenance area, not only learning some skills, because we would work with the painters and with the welders and with the electricians and the plumbers, and I'd say I learned things about each of those areas, but I was also working with a whole group of blue-collar guys. There was a show on TV called *All in the Family*, and the lead character was Archie Bunker. I don't know if you're familiar with Archie Bunker, but he would be a Trump supporter at this point. So, there were a number of those people and a number of just very nice, down-to-Earth, good guys who came to work every day and worked hard and went home to their families, so I developed an appreciation for those people.

KR: You started Rutgers in fall of 1965, right?

WZ: Yes, that's right.

KR: What were your first days and weeks like at Rutgers?

WZ: The first day I remember, again, being a real shock. My brother and I grew up essentially as roommates, but I had a non-relative roommate for the first time ever and had to live with a group of guys in a dorm. In fact, I remember, I think at that point, there were these hats that we had to wear called dinks and I remember going to the bookstore and buying my dink and my Rutgers tie and just kind of getting to know people. There must have been some orientation session that we had the first day. The first few days, I think we had orientation sessions. I do remember going to a talk by Ayn Rand. I knew the name, but I had no idea what she stood for and really didn't get much out of the talk. Then, I remember going to an orientation for the

engineering students and the dean getting up and saying, "Well, look to your left ..." the typical story, "Look to your left and look to your right, and the person on either side of you will be gone by the end of the first year." So, I was thinking, "That won't be me," but it was. I remember just gradually kind of getting oriented to the dorm, dorm life, and figuring out where my classes were and how to get to them. As a freshman, I had some classes on the main campus and other classes at the Heights. I had to catch a campus bus and go up to the Heights and then I'd have a class at the main campus that there was no way I could be on time for because of the bus schedule and because of the distance between the two class times.

We had a good group on the dorm floor. I was in the Clothier Dorm, and it was a fairly new dorm at that point. So, there were nice accommodations, and I enjoyed meeting people from different backgrounds and different places in New Jersey and other states. We had a number of people from--who had all gone to high school together--Merrick, Long Island. A number of us on the floor had played high school basketball. We formed a team and competed in and won the championship in the intramural dorm league. So, living in Clothier my freshman year became a good experience.

KR: How well prepared were you for college academically?

WZ: Unfortunately, I think there were things that I missed out on in high school. I was in this experimental science education program in high school. I found out was that most of the people in my chemistry class had had the same chemistry textbook for high school chemistry, and it was different than the one that I had had. I hadn't had calculus; most of my fellow engineering students had high school calculus. So, those two classes were a struggle for me. I wasn't used to having as full a schedule. I believe I was taking 18.5 credits in the first semester. When I arrived, I found out I had ROTC on my schedule, which I didn't remember signing up for, but that was required of engineering students at that point. Rutgers was a land-grant college, and so we were signed up for ROTC. So, I had ROTC and gym, in addition to seventeen credits of academic subjects. I think I had eighteen-and-a-half credits for that first semester. I could've been better prepared in high school.

KR: In 1965, there were the famous Vietnam "teach-ins" at Scott Hall. I am wondering if you happen to recall that.

WZ: I don't. I'm trying to remember when the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was. I think that's when I finally started paying attention, but before that, no, I wasn't that much involved in anti-war activities and probably was of the mind that, "Well, patriots will support the war" and that kind of feeling. I don't remember there being much of a war at the point when I started at Rutgers. I think the U.S. just had advisors working with the Vietnamese, and so I really wasn't paying a lot of attention to it. [Editor's Note: In response to an alleged naval confrontation between American and North Vietnamese forces in the Gulf of Tonkin, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 10, 1964, which authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to wage war in Vietnam. Under Johnson, the numbers of American troops in Vietnam increased from 80,000 in July 1965 to 385,000 in 1966 and to the peak of 543,400 in 1969.]

KR: What was ROTC like?

WZ: Well, first of all, I found myself signed up for Army ROTC, and I said, "Well, if I've got to wear a uniform, I prefer to wear the blue one to the Army drab one." So, I ended up switching over to Air Force ROTC. We went to one class a week, I think it was Monday mornings, first thing in the morning. I had to dress up in the uniform and make sure my shoes were spit shined and then go to this class, and then, one afternoon a week, we had drill, where we would go out to Buccleuch Park and essentially march. I decided that that wasn't for me either, so I got involved in what they called the Colonial Color Guard and from that was able to take a number of trips, which was fun. We would go to McGuire Air Force Base and get on a C-47 and then fly to Florida or fly down to D.C. On drill days, we would march out ahead of the corps, out to Buccleuch Park, and then basically put the flags up against the gazebo there and sit around and wait for the end of drill and march them back to College Avenue.

When we traveled to Washington D.C., we marched in a parade, met our Democratic U.S. Senator, and sat through a Daughters of the American Revolution luncheon. When we went to Florida, we flew into Homestead Air Force base and took a tour of the base. The area around the base was very rural and not at all like what I had envisioned Florida to be. One of my dormmates, who was on the trip, rented a car, and we drove up to Fort Lauderdale one evening. As I recall, we were able to get into one of the nightclubs, but because we were underage, we couldn't drink. Basically, we stood around, drinking overpriced Coke and listening to the music. It was fun and interesting to fly. I hadn't really done any flying before. The C-47s were kind of barebones planes. They were old World War II cargo planes, and we just sat on essentially a hammock that ran along on either side of the fuselage of the plane. We didn't really care that much at that point about the accommodations; it was just exciting to be able to fly and see new places.

KR: For how long did you stayed involved in the Color Guard?

WZ: In ROTC?

KR: Yes.

WZ: Yes, two years. After that, it became a commitment. If you signed up for the last three years of ROTC, then you were going to whichever branch of the service you were in ROTC for.

KR: What was your thought process involving staying in and doing Advanced Air Force ROTC? Did you consider it at all?

WZ: No, at that point, I was aware of the Vietnam War, and I was not going to get involved in the military.

KR: I was wondering if you could talk about what you thought about the Vietnam War and how your beliefs developed over the time from 1964, when the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution happened, and then as your college years went on and as the war escalated. What did you think of the war?

WZ: Well, as a history major, I started looking into the history of the whole conflict in Indochina. There were actually a number of good books on the subject in the Rutgers library. I was just reading up about the whole French colonial period and how this was really a civil war that carried over from the time of the French, and I started thinking, "What are we doing there?" that this is really a conflict between South Vietnam and North Vietnam, and that there are that many people who are willing to die for the cause, both in South Vietnam as Vietcong and North Vietnam, it kind of impressed me that it was more like the American Revolution. I never really could buy into this whole idea of the Domino Theory, that this was a communist takeover, and that the Chinese would move in and it would become a colony of China and that kind of thing. I had trouble supporting it.

Gradually, on campus, there became more and more anti-war activities. I can remember during the election in 1968, Eugene McCarthy was the anti-war candidate and I was a McCarthy supporter. He came and spoke on campus and I liked what he had to say. I seem to remember that at one point probably in 1968 or 1969 [1970], there was a sit-in at the president's office in Old Queens. So, there was a lot of, I think, anti-war fervor on the Rutgers Campus at that point.

KR: Did you have any classmates at Rutgers or friends from high school or relatives that served in the Vietnam War?

WZ: I did. One of the people I had played Little League baseball with was killed in Vietnam. Then, a girl I was friendly with in high school, who was a refugee from Lithuania and very supportive of the war, had a brother who entered the Army and was killed. Then, there were fraternity members who had brothers who were in the military. I had a roommate, Bill Turnbull, who was in Air Force ROTC. He had a twin brother going to another college. He took an extra year, because he was on the track team, and he was on a team that set a NCAA record in the event that he ran, so the team was trying to keep together to be able to go to the NCAA track meet and win and set a record. But his brother graduated and ended up going to Vietnam and--I still get emotional when I think about it--he ended up missing in action, excuse me. It was difficult consoling my roommate, because, you can imagine, here is his twin brother. Yes, that was difficult. [Editor's Note: Robert Chester Turnbull, a first lieutenant in the First Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, was killed in Vietnam on February 7, 1968. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.]

KR: Let us talk about Rutgers traditions. You talked about the dinks and having to wear the dinks your freshman year.

WZ: Yes.

KR: What other Rutgers traditions do you remember?

WZ: Probably something around football games, but I don't remember exactly what. Yes, I remember the cheers and those kinds of things. The alma mater was sung after every home game. I think, as a freshman, we used to go as a dorm group to football games. After I joined a fraternity, brothers and their dates would sit as a group at football games. I remember the legend of Willie the Silent, but other than that, I don't recall. [Editor's Note: The statue of William I, Prince of Orange, nicknamed Willie the Silent, stands on Voorhees Mall on the College Avenue Campus.]

KR: How much did you follow sports at Rutgers?

WZ: Yes, I used to try to go to the football and basketball games when I had the chance. I did that pretty much for my entire time there. Even though I had a roommate who was on the baseball team, I never got to see a baseball game. It was basically football and basketball.

KR: What fraternity did you join, and what was pledging like?

WZ: I joined Phi Sigma Kappa. The fraternity had an anti-hazing policy. It had been founded by a group of Freedom Riders, so it was one of the only integrated fraternities on campus. I think there was one other. The orientation was more getting to know each other and the upper classmen trying to make the pledges feel part of the group. So, it was a good experience. [Editor's Note: The Freedom Rides of 1961 involved busloads of civil rights activists traveling to southern cities to protest segregation through nonviolent direct action. The Freedom Riders gained national notoriety, as they were attacked by violent white mobs in several cities, where local police protection was conspicuously absent. When Mr. Zehnder refers to Freedom Riders in Phi Sigma Kappa, he may be referring to a member of the fraternity, Don Harris, RC '63, who was arrested in Americus, Georgia, while working to register African American voters in the summer of 1963. Harris and two others were charged with insurrection, a capital offense in Georgia. The case stirred up support on the Rutgers Campus and across New Jersey in the fall of 1963. Harris was released in November after a federal court declared the law under which he was charged to be unconstitutional.]

KR: What was the social life like at your fraternity?

WZ: Yes, it was really pretty good. We had a number of social directors who were able to bring in some pretty good bands. We had a bar set up in the basement. We had some pretty good parties.

KR: Did you live at the fraternity house during any of your years at Rutgers?

WZ: No, I didn't.

KR: Where did you live each year that you were at Rutgers?

WZ: The first year, I was in the Clothier Dorm. The second year, I was in one of the River Dorms. I forget which one now. Then, the third year, I was in an apartment with a group of guys from my fraternity. I had three roommates. It was a two-bedroom apartment, so there were two of us in each bedroom.

KR: You started off in engineering, and then you switched to history and education. What prompted that switch?

WZ: Well, I flunked chemistry, calculus and computer programming in my first semester as an engineering student. I, at that point, wasn't in a position to switch into liberal arts, so I dropped chemistry, which then got me down to a workable schedule. During my time at Rutgers, we were on a five-point system, where a five was an "F" and a one was an "A". So, I went from a four-point-something to a one-point-something in my second semester. I took calculus over again. It was taught not as a theoretical type of math but as math that could actually be used to solve programs. So, I got an "A" in calculus and a "B" in English--and I'm trying to think what some of the other courses were--probably a "B" in physics. But then I realized that engineering wasn't for me, so I had to figure out what I was going to do in life. I took generally the typical liberal arts courses that one would take in their freshman year in my first semester of what would have been my sophomore year.

The first history paper that I had to write, I had a senior history major in my fraternity, and I just talked to him about how to structure the paper, what kinds of things history professors would be looking for in writing a paper. So, he explained to me how to structure it, but then I ended up writing it myself. I got an "F" on it, and I went to the professor and said, "What happened?" Then, he said, "Well, it was too well written. You must have plagiarized." So, I said, "No," and I ended up going to the chairman of the History Department and pleading my case. I ended up getting a "B" and I said, "Well, if I can write papers like this, then maybe history is where I want to go." Making the decision easier is that I had an interest in history in grammar and high school. So, I endured the general courses in the liberal arts program until I could get into my major.

KR: What are some history courses and professors that stick out in your mind?

WZ: You know, I don't remember names of professors. I took a British history course, and the professor was an associate dean at Rutgers College and well known as a British history scholar. I took a "Civil War and Reconstruction" course and a "Black History" course that I am sure had another title, but that is what the students called it. I took a general American history course, and I'm trying to think what some of the other ones were. Oh, yes, there was a professor, I think his name may have been Charanis, and he was a real character. He was Greek, and he always used to talk about the grick-spicking pipples. I took a Byzantine history course with him. I took a Chinese history course at Douglass and became interested in Chinese history and culture. I also took a history of religions course at Douglass. What else? I'm sure there were others, but at this point, I don't remember.

KR: Yes, that is Peter Charanis.

WZ: Peter Charanis. Was he still around when you were there? [Editor's Note: Peter Charanis served as a professor of history at Rutgers College from 1938 to 1976.]

KR: No, but he was very well liked as a professor, and a lot of your classmates in the Class of 1970 took classes with him and have talked about him.

WZ: Yes, he was well liked. I enjoyed his lectures. I'm trying to remember who the British history professor was, Susman?

KR: Do you think maybe it was Winkler?

WZ: What's his name?

KR: Do you think it was Henry Winkler?

WZ: Henry Winkler. Henry Winkler, that's right, yes.

KR: How about Richard McCormick, Lloyd Gardner or Harold Poor? Did you ever have any of those professors?

WZ: Richard McCormick was the chairman of the History Department at that point, and he's the person who I pled my case to, but I never did have a course with him. Then, the other names you mentioned, no, I don't recall having classes with them. Gardner, I may have. What did he teach? Do you know?

KR: I interviewed one of your classmates who had Gardner for a foreign policy class.

WZ: It was Lloyd Gardner, right? Is that who he was?

KR: Right, Lloyd Gardner.

WZ: Yes, that rings the bell. I may have had a course with him, yes.

KR: Pleading your case to Richard McCormick, that's a really interesting thing to happen. You ended up failing a paper, going and arguing your case, and then majoring in history.

WZ: Yes.

KR: What was that conversation like with Dr. McCormick?

WZ: He was very reasonable, and I was very impressed by him. That was part of the reason I thought, "If somebody like this could be teaching or be chairman of the History Department,

these are the kind of people I want to have as professors." I don't know why I never had a class with him. It could just be that it didn't fit my schedule, or whatever class he was teaching at that point was not something that I was interested in taking. I don't recall. Yes, I do remember being very impressed by him and him being very reasonable.

KR: In your education classes or any of the other classes that you took over your five years, are there any professors that stick out in your mind or any classes that you really enjoyed?

WZ: I was part of an experimental education program in my final two years. We never had lectures. We would get together, there'd be books, we would have a syllabus and we would read the books. I can remember one of the professors, we would meet at the Corner Tavern and we'd sit there drinking tequila and discuss teaching. Generally, we met in smaller groups and discussed what we were reading and how we might put theories into practice. We had to do a TV-taped presentation. At that point, educational television was just coming into vogue. Then, I had to actually put together and direct a TV presentation and get one of my classmates to be the instructor. That was good preparation for me. I remember one of the books that was highly touted was *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. So, the effort was to prepare us to not be the kind of formal teacher we had had experience with but use the Socratic method and involve students. I thought it was good grounding. I was able to use it well in my first teaching job. [Editor's Note: Neil Postman is the author of *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, which was published in 1969.]

KR: I am wondering if you remember anything about the Black student protest movement that was going on campus. It was especially active in the 1969-1970 time period.

WZ: I do, because there was a time when the Black fraternity brothers decided that they needed to separate from the fraternity and that was not only shock to all of us, but we were hurt by their absence. I understood where they were coming from, and a number of them, I think, went on to be leaders in that Black community on campus. We certainly supported what they were doing.

KR: I would like to ask you about the anti-Vietnam War movement on campus. What do you remember about the progression of the anti-war movement and how it grew over the years that you were at Rutgers?

WZ: Well, there would be "teach-ins" on the green [Voorhees Mall] that ran between the art building, where Willie the Silent was at the end--I don't know what that was called--but people would get together and sit and there would be speakers. I think I was still at Rutgers when my then girlfriend, now wife, and I drove down to D.C. to participate in the first Vietnam War protest on the Mall in D.C. and then followed up after graduation during the Nixon years and participated in a second one. I don't remember there being a great deal of animosity towards the ROTC students. I had fraternity brothers who were in ROTC and, as I said before, they had brothers who were in the military and that was their choice and it felt like the people who were against the war should have their choice.

KR: Tell me about that experience of going down to Washington D.C. and the anti-war protests on the Mall when you went with your then girlfriend, now wife. What was that like?

WZ: That was amazing to see just the sea of people, and everyone was peaceful. This was at a time when marijuana was flourishing, and every once in a while, we'd get a whiff in the air but mainly not. People were all single-mindedly against the war and felt that our presence helped show that. We sat, listened to speakers. I remember, at one of them, as we were returning to our car, there was an underground garage under one of the government buildings, and these people with fixed bayonets came charging out at us, but then they stopped halfway up the ramp. I don't know what they thought they were doing, but we just kind of laughed at them and went on our way. It was amazing to see so many people just gathered together in one place and being peaceful and not creating problems for anyone around them.

KR: What were the protests like that went on at Rutgers Campus?

WZ: I don't really recall anything. At some point, I think there was a fire in one of the ROTC buildings maybe. I don't know. Has anybody else related that to you?

KR: Yes.

WZ: But I don't really know. There was an SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] group on campus, but I don't know anybody who associated with them. They tended to be the more radical group, I suppose, and I don't know if they were responsible for the burning. I don't recall that, but I don't think it was a very extensive fire, from what I remember. Other than that, I don't think there was any violence or I don't remember any marches even.

One thing I do remember from probably my last year there, my wife, or then girlfriend, and her roommate and I went onto the streets of Metuchen and tried to talk to people about the Vietnam War and why we should be out of Vietnam. I expected that we would get a lot of hatred, but we didn't. A number of people were willing to stop and listen and talk, so that was all good.

KR: How did you meet your wife?

WZ: Yes, that's an interesting story. I actually had a girlfriend, who was going to Catholic University, in my third year at Rutgers, so we would only see each other maybe once a month when I would drive down there or when she would come up for the weekend. I was sitting home one Friday night and my roommates had all gone home or gone elsewhere, and so I was by myself in the apartment and studying. This fraternity brother of mine came over. He brought beer with him, and so we sat and had a couple of beers and said, "Well, there must be something to do this weekend." He said, "Oh, there's a mixer at the Douglass Campus." I said, "Mixer?" I said, "I gave up mixers back when I was a freshman. I don't want to go to a mixer." He said, "Look, just come and listen to the music. It's just something to do, a way to get out." I went along and, at one point, looked across the room. Vain as I was, I wasn't wearing my glasses, so with myopic vision, I saw this girl on the other side of the room. She looked like somebody I

was friends with in high school and I kept staring at her, because I couldn't imagine that this girl would be at a mixer either. Then, the girl I was staring at must have realized it and turned around and smiled at me, and it was like the room lit up. Before I could ask her to dance, somebody else got to her, and he was really clingy, I guess is the word. As she came by me, she mouthed the words, "Help me." So, my guy code said, "You don't cut in on anybody," but I violated it. We got to talking and decided to leave and walk around the Douglass Campus. I saw that we had a number of things in common, so I got her phone number.

I invited her out on a study date, and she was very quiet. I still had the girlfriend in D.C. and was really more interested in just having somebody who was a female friend who I could talk to, and it was very hard talking to her. At the end of the date, I decided I wasn't going to call her again. But then the following day, one of my classmates came up to me and said to me, "Boy, who was that girl that I saw you with in the library?" I said, "Oh, it's just some girl from Douglass that I had met." He said, "Oh, that can't be. She was too good-looking." So, I let my ego get the best of me, and I invited her out again. I think we went out for coffee and a donut at a Dunkin Donuts and just sat there and did talk about--she was taking French, I was taking French. She was interested in art. I had an art history minor. So, we got to know each other better. I started dating her more and ultimately fell out with the girl at Catholic U., and she and I became pretty much committed for the last two years I was at Rutgers.

KR: Your wife graduated in the Douglass Class of 1971.

WZ: Yes.

KR: What is her name, for the record?

WZ: Stephanie. Yes, she was a better student than I was. So, she was kind of an inspiration for me in my last few years while we were dating. She actually graduated in three-and-a-half years, magna cum laude besides.

KR: You talked earlier about the presidential election in 1968 and how you were a McCarthy supporter. I am curious, what do you remember about the assassinations in the spring of '68?

WZ: I was not an RFK supporter, but I certainly didn't want to see him assassinated. Yes, I think that was a shock to the nation. It was just--how could this happen, another Kennedy brother being shot like that? I think there was a lot of feeling that there was more to it than this--I forget what--the shooter was Algerian or a Lebanese immigrant bus boy--that there must've been something more behind that assassination. Yes, I think there's certainly a lot of remorse in the country at Robert Kennedy's death. [Editor's Note: Robert Kennedy was shot on June 5, 1968 at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California, where he was delivering a victory speech after winning the Democratic primary. Kennedy died the next day. Sirhan Sirhan, who was born in Jerusalem to a Christian Palestinian family, is serving a life sentence for the assassination.]

KR: How about the assassination of King and the reaction of the student body on campus?

WZ: The assassination of Martin Luther King, oh, yes, I mean, that cast a pall. Actually, that had happened, I think, on a Thursday night, and on that Friday, I drove down to D.C. to Catholic U. I knew there were protests going on in D.C., but I didn't really think much about it. So, I had this little Volkswagen convertible with the top down, and I pulled up to a light at the corner of Congress and North Capitol. I was sitting there at the light, and I notice somebody run by me with a TV under their arm. Then, I noticed that a block away, the entire block was on fire, and there were people running around and there were all sorts of alarms going off. I thought, "Hmm, I think I better run this light and keep running lights until I get up to Catholic U." It looked like there were other fires burning up in the vicinity of Catholic U, so I did want to get up there and make sure my girlfriend was safe. [Editor's Note: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, sparking civil unrest in over one hundred cities across America, including Washington, D.C.]

It was scary in a sense, but nobody was paying any attention to me. A lot of the people had very dazed looks on their faces, as you can imagine. That was a crushing blow, and I felt crushed by it. So, I can imagine what it would be like to be an African American experiencing that. The word about the D.C. protest was that there was--well, D.C. at that time and may still be this way—that there was really no middle class. There were people living there who were wealthy and people who were very poor, and the businesses that were burning, from what we were being told, were ones that had been gouging the poorer people for years. I think it was somewhat different than the protests that are going on now.

KR: The draft lottery took place your senior year. It took place December 1, 1969. What memories do you have of the draft lottery?

WZ: Being apprehensive waiting for my number to be assigned. I didn't have a very good number, but as long as I was a student, I got a student deferment. Then, that first year I was teaching, I actually did get a draft notice and I had a teaching deferment, but it looked like that might be lost. So, the headmaster and the assistant headmaster did an appeal to my draft board. I was in class one day, and the headmaster came in and said, "You know, I've got bad news for you. The appeal's been denied." One of the students in the front row said, "You know, my father's an attorney. Why don't you talk to him?" So, I did, and it turned out he knew somebody on my draft board. Lo and behold, the teaching deferment got renewed, and so I had that throughout the remaining length of the war.

KR: We could look this up if you can't recall, but do you happen to remember what your number was?

WZ: I think it was in the 160s. [Editor's Note: The first Vietnam draft lottery took place during the senior year of the Class of 1970. On December 1, 1969, the U.S. Selective Service held the draft lottery, which was broadcast live on television and radio. The lottery selected birthdays to determine the order in which men born between 1944 and 1950 were called to report for

induction in 1970 during the Vietnam War. July 20, Walter Zehnder's birthday, was drawn at position 187. The highest draft number called for physicals that year was 215.]

KR: You have talked about a couple of the speakers that you saw on campus when you were an undergraduate. I am curious, did you go to concerts? Did you see singers? Are there other speakers that you remember?

WZ: Yes, yes. I remember going to concerts on campus, and actually, at one point, one of the people who arranged those concerts was a fraternity brother and so he was able to bring in some pretty good bands into our parties. Speakers, I remember going to see Barry Goldwater when he spoke on campus. I guess I wasn't aware of how much of a fascist he was. He tried to play the macho role. Some student called him a fascist from up in the upper decks, I think it was in the gym, and somebody was in the upper level of the gym and called him out. He, Goldwater, told the student that he'd meet him outside, you know, he was this tough guy. So, I do remember him. I previously mentioned Ayn Rand. Otherwise, I don't recall who else. I remember going to see McCarthy when he spoke on campus and that some of the concerts that we went to see were really very good. I mean, they were concerts by currently popular acts, the kinds of things we might see in New York City.

KR: Did you spend much time on Douglass Campus when you were dating your wife?

WZ: I had the courses at Douglass. Then, my wife was a commuter when I first met her. So, it was really only in her second year that I would go up, and we would do things on the Douglass Campus. Mainly, I was just picking her up for a date, and we would go elsewhere. So, I didn't spend a great deal of time there, no. I think, maybe in my last year, there was a Sunday Catholic service in the chapel at Douglass, and so we would go to that on a Sunday.

KR: Livingston College opened your senior year. I am just wondering, did you ever go over to Livingston College at all? It would have been called the Kilmer Campus then.

WZ: The TV studio was on Livingston Campus, and so that's where we did the TV productions and had the educational TV class. Then, I had a friend growing up who did end up going to Vietnam, and when he got out, he became a Livingston student. The campus at Livingston was really pretty barren at that point when I graduated. It was the old Army base, and so there weren't a lot of trees around. It wasn't much of a campus.

KR: People affectionately called it the mud flats.

WZ: Oh, is that right? [laughter] Yes, yes, could be. Of course, it was up there with the engineering campus. I just remember winter classes in the engineering campus. At that time, there were no trees big enough to block the wind, and it just was this flat barren area and the wind would just blow up off the river. It would be frigid, and I'd have to be standing there waiting for the campus bus. Livingston, as I recall, had kind of bureaucratic-looking buildings but without much character to them.

KR: As you were going through your senior year, what were you thinking about for the future?

WZ: By my senior year, I had determined that I was going to go to law school, and so I figured I needed a way to pay for it. So, I decided to go into teaching and then go to law school nights. Up to that point, I had been playing intramural basketball and other sports. I pretty much stopped doing that, so that senior year was studying, trying to get my grades up, and dating my future wife.

KR: What was it like applying to law schools?

WZ: Well, I only applied to one, which was Seton Hall. Seton Hall Law School was in downtown Newark and had a night school. I saw an ad on the bulletin board at the Rutgers Employment Center for a teaching position at St. Benedict's Prep in Newark, and I thought, "Wow, this would mesh really well." So, I interviewed for that and got the job, and so that was a good mix. I could just drive down, park at the law school after class, and then walk up to Broad Street, and get a coffee and a donut. I was going five days a week to law school, so it was really convenient for me. I didn't have to really go very far from St. Benedict's down to where the law school building was.

KR: One of the focuses of the Class of 1970 Oral History Project is to get a sense of what it was like for yourself and your classmates during your senior year, 1969- 1970. What was your senior year like?

WZ: Well, I can recall, as I said, that I was really spending a lot of time studying and trying to get my grades up. Then, in the last semester of my senior year, because of the Vietnam War protests, the classes became pass/fail. So, some of the highlights, I guess, from my senior year, besides the academics, was the hundredth anniversary of football. They had the Princeton-Rutgers game in the fall of my senior year. So, that was an exciting time, finally got a game televised on ABC, and Rutgers did really well. We always would go as a fraternity group to football games, so that was exciting. [Editor's Note: The first-ever college football game was played on November 6, 1869 between Rutgers and Princeton. On September 27, 1969, the two teams faced off in the centennial game, which aired on ABC. Rutgers won 29-0.]

Then, I was an art history minor, and so the professors had a lot of contact with the art world in New York. So, we'd jump on the train and go into New York City, and at one point, we went to the gallery for Roy Lichtenstein, who was a famous artist and did comic book-themed art. So, that was kind of a highlight. We'd go into art galleries with the professors, and that was a good experience. I'm trying to think what other things I recall from that year. No, nothing's coming to mind.

KR: In May of 1970, there was the national strike, which took place on campuses across the United States, to protest the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia.

WZ: Yes.

KR: It took place at Rutgers as well. What do you remember about anti-war protests going on at the time of the national strike?

WZ: You know, other than the groups getting together on the mall and having speakers and discussions, I don't really remember much of anything from that. I think that may have been what caused the school--I think there may have been a sit-in--but that may have caused the school to make classes pass/fail.

KR: Yes, there was about five days of massive protests on the Old Queens Campus, and then the Rutgers College faculty voted to basically suspend the semester, making classes pass/fail and final exams optional.

WZ: Yes.

KR: Do you remember if you had to work things out with each of your professors in terms of what your grades would be?

WZ: No, I think I just accepted that they would be pass/fail, and it didn't hurt me in terms of admission to Seton Hall. I probably could've embellished my cumulative average had they not been pass/fail, but that was fine to me as long as that was supporting the anti-war effort.

KR: When the students were killed and injured by the National Guardsmen at Kent State, what was the reaction like at Rutgers? [Editor's Note: Amidst the student strike in the spring of 1970, on May 4 in Ohio, National Guardsmen opened fire on anti-war protesters and bystanders at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine.]

WZ: I think we felt solidarity with those students and just were angry that the governor of Ohio could allow that to happen. I think we identified with the Guardsmen in a way too; here were these people who were of our generation and they're put on this campus with guns and live ammunition and I'm sure were very nervous. That they would open fire on a group of what appeared to be peaceful protestors was just angering to any of us.

KR: With the national strike going on and the massive protests and then with the semester being suspended, how did you feel? Did you have any sort of reaction that this was your senior year, it was basically the start of your future, and there was all this turmoil going on?

WZ: No, because it had been building up to that turmoil for a couple of years, and I don't remember classes being suspended. I remember that they were going to be pass/fail and finals were optional, but I still recall taking classes. Now, by my last semester, I think I had a somewhat limited schedule. We were still meeting in the Corner Tavern or Old Queens--I forget now which--and we were still preparing for taking the teacher certification exam. I don't remember what other courses I had at that point. I think it's probably, if I had an American

history course at that point, the war would have become a big topic of discussion in class. Now, I don't remember that specifically, but I am suspecting that given the faculty at Rutgers that they opened class up to discussions of the war and the whole situation in Indochina.

KR: What was graduation like?

WZ: As a protest, I refused to wear a cap and gown. So, I showed up in a three-piece suit, and I don't remember much about who the speakers were. I remember it was hot. We were outside, and I just wanted to get it over with and get on with my life.

KR: Were there any other protests that went on at the graduation ceremony that you recall?

WZ: No, I don't. I don't. I know that the word went out to not wear caps and gowns and so there were a group of us who did not, but there was also a group that did. I don't remember anything disruptive or anything like that, no.

KR: You started Rutgers in 1965 and you graduated in 1970. How do you think the university changed over that time?

WZ: I really don't know. Yes, I think the philosophy of the faculty, at least the faculty I associated with, prevailed pretty much that entire time. I mean, Rutgers had a reputation as a liberal university, and I think that pretty much continued. Now, among the ROTC ranks and maybe the science faculty, I really don't know, but certainly among the liberal arts faculty, I think there was that sense of liberalism that prevailed, emphasis on turning us into being thinking, rational individuals, and I don't think that changed at all. Buildings changed and buildings were built and renovated and those kinds of things, but that's all cosmetic. Like I said, I was in only one of two fraternities that admitted Black brothers, and I would hope that over that time attitudes changed in regard to segregation and civil rights, but I think in the more traditional fraternities, that was not the case. I don't recall them ever becoming integrated.

KR: How do you think student life changed over the time period that you were an undergrad?

WZ: I think there was more of an awareness of the civil rights movement and of the anti-war movement, and this was the so-called hippy generation. We had gone from the preppy generation into the hippy generation, and drugs were more prevalent on campus. A number of my fraternity brothers were heavy marijuana users, and my drug of choice was beer. At one point though, I do recall one of my fraternity brothers, whose actual brother was in the Air Force in Vietnam, sending him a brick of hashish. My girlfriend and I decided to try it. Well, she decided to try it and goaded me into doing it, and that was the one and only time I smoked hashish. I think the drug culture was in part how things changed. I forget when the new Student Center was built. There was a new Student Center that, as I recall, was right next to the College Avenue Gym. I remember reading, I think at some point when I was out of Rutgers, but reading a *New York Times* article that labeled the Student Center as a clearinghouse for drugs on the East

Coast. I think marijuana use was just accepted on campus, more so than it was in society in general.

KR: We have been going for about two hours today. How does it sound if I ask one more question and then we can continue tomorrow?

WZ: Sure, yes, fine.

KR: Okay, great. What did you think of the Rutgers president, Mason Gross? [Editor's Note: Mason Welch Gross served as the president of Rutgers from 1959 to 1971.]

WZ: Well, I remember that he was kind of a media personality. I forget whether he had been like the validator of questions on some gameshow, and I think during that time, the Mason Gross School of Arts was established. I just remember him being a good spokesman for the university and somebody who I think the students and the faculty looked up to. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross was a panelist on the gameshow *Think Fast* from 1949 to 1950 and a judge on the gameshow *Two for the Money* from 1952 to 1955. The School for the Creative and Performing Arts at Rutgers was founded in 1976 and renamed in Gross's honor in 1979.]

KR: Well, let's end there for today.

WZ: Okay.

KR: I am going to stop the recording, and I just want to ask you a few things off the record, if that is okay.

WZ: Sure.

KR: Okay, great. Thank you so much, Mr. Zehnder, for doing this first oral history, and we will continue tomorrow.

WZ: Yes.

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

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