Lewis John

July 7, 2010

Interviewed by Mame Warren

Warren: This is Mame Warren, and today is July 7, 2010. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with former Dean of Students Lew John. Lew, I know that you are an alumnus of Washington and Lee. In doing my research, I was interested to see that you were a student at a transitional time under both President [Francis Pendleton] Gaines and President [Fred] Cole.

John: No, actually I was a student under President Gaines. I believe Dr. Cole came in '59, if I'm not mistaken.

Warren: He gave your commencement address.

John: Okay. I had forgotten that.

Warren: Obviously it wasn't too memorable.

John: Okay.

Warren: So, I was just curious about what your memories were of Dr. Gaines, and whether you had had any interaction with President Cole as a student.

John: I remember Dr. Gaines very fondly, although, of course, he had been at Washington and Lee since the '30s, I think, so he was in his later years, and I remember him as still—although in somewhat decline perhaps, although that's not a good term perhaps to refer to him, but as a very gifted orator. The things I remember most about him are some of the speeches that he gave at various times, and it was really—I got to know him not intimately, but I had a number of interactions with him as an undergraduate.

Warren: What kind?

John: Well, he would have some of those students in key positions as students on campus to his house for an occasional meeting, or meal.

Warren: Tell me about that.

John: Not very often, but I was president of the Interfraternity Council, which is interesting as an aside. Later on, when I was working with the Interfraternity Council and students in fraternities as Dean of Students, they could not believe that I had really been pro-fraternity as a

member of a fraternity, as a member of the Interfraternity Council, and also having to enforce some regulations which they regarded as anti-fraternity, but that's a subject that comes later.

No, I did have several encounters with him [Gaines]. I got to know him better after I graduated, frankly, and when I came back to Washington and Lee since Annette [John] and I lived in the faculty apartments for one year, and he lived right across the street, across Estill Street. So, we were invited to Dr. Gaines and Sadie Pendleton's [sic, Sadie du Vergne Gaines] house on a couple of occasions for dinner, and so I got to know him then. He was a very courtly, distinguished gentleman, who liked his whiskey—at least when I knew him. He was a very gifted orator, but as I say, in his later years, it was perhaps obvious that he was nearing the end of his tenure as president.

Warren: Let's skip on ahead to—you came back fairly soon. You came back just a few years after you graduated. Tell me about how that came to be.

John: Well, I graduated in 1958, came back accidentally, falling into a position—I'll talk about that in a minute—in 1963, having left Washington and Lee in '58. I spent a year at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, where I met my wife, by the way. She was a transfer student for her junior year from Oberlin College. The romanticized version of our meeting is that it was on the ski slopes of Norway, but that was because we had both joined the University of Edinburgh ski club to go to Norway for Christmas break, since there was a long break between terms, and neither one of us had very much money. So, that's what I like to say I got out of my year abroad, was a wife, eventually, after she graduated.

But, I came back from Edinburgh, spent two years at Princeton, ending up with a master of public affairs degree in the Woodrow Wilson School there, after spending a year in the economics department of Princeton, and having been an economics major as an undergraduate, but deciding that I did not want to go on in economics. It was too theoretical, too mathematical for my particular interest, so I switched to the Woodrow Wilson School, and got an MPA—master of public affairs degree—and, from there, went into the Army for two years.

I had been in ROTC as an undergraduate here at Washington and Lee, and had been commissioned in the air defense branch. Had six-month orders because in 1958–59, there was not a great demand for officers or young second lieutenants, anyway. So, unfortunately—or fortunately, looking back in retrospect—I took deferments from active duty until I finished my

three years, ending up with a master's degree, and declared my readiness to go in for six months, and ten days before I was to report for duty at Fort Bliss in El Paso, I got a telegram from the Department of Army, saying, "Sorry about that, but your six-moth orders have been cancelled, and you will be ordered two years. You will get your two-year orders upon arrival at Fort Bliss."

Warren: Welcome to the Army.

John: In retrospect—it certainly messed up my short-range plans, of which I really didn't have any, except probably to go to work for the government. I had done a couple of internships in the Department of Defense—or one major summer internship. But, those plans changed with the two-year orders, so when I was getting out of the Army, supposedly in August of '63—I say in retrospect it was probably a good thing, because I don't think six months would have done the Army any good, and probably would not have done me any good in terms of career and long-range plans. But, I ended up being in an air defense battery just outside Philadelphia, and had the experience of serving as the battery commander as a first lieutenant, and I think that provided more good background and experience than six months somewhere would have.

Warren: Tell me what you mean. What kind of background?

John: Mainly dealing with people. That obviously my skills in firing Nike missiles, and learning the technicalities of an air defense battery were not great, and there were a number of warrant officers in that battery who had been majors and lieutenant colonels, but in the shrinking of the Army officer corps, they were warrant officers. Obviously, they knew a lot more about the Army, the firing of a missile, the battery itself, Army tactics, and so forth, than I did. But I think I learned personnel skills in having to deal with not only the enlisted men, but also with warrant officers, for example, and the first battery commander I served under, who was a real tough son-of-a-gun. And just dealing with people, I think, was what I learned most from the Army, and from the two years, as opposed to what I would have learned, if anything, over six months dealing more with the technicalities of dealing with an Army air defense unit.

Warren: Well, that is very to interesting to find out, and you probably used those skills for years and years to come.

John: The Army, of course, is a different type of organization from a university or college setting, but I think that there are some basic people skills that are applicable to whatever type of organization.

Warren: Tell me more about that.

John: I think there are certain transferrable ideas and techniques—techniques may be the wrong word—but skills in dealing with other people. The Army is more of a command-type of situation, but on the other hand, in dealing with individuals in any setting, I think you can learn from other types of organizations. Ultimately, when I ended up back at Washington and Lee, one of the areas that I taught in the politics department here was public administration. I also taught a leadership seminar, at least one year, until Ken Ruscio came along, and that, of course, was his area of expertise. Again, I think the Army in that two-year period gave me some good background in interpersonnel, personnel relations—dealing with other people—that, although they necessarily are different in the governmental setting, a university setting, and the Army, there are still basic concepts and ideas that are transferrable, and I think it was helpful, in that regard, for me over the course of the years after that.

Warren: Well, let's get you here first.

John: Right.

Warren: How did that happen?

John: Well, as I was nearing the end of my two-year period of service, I decided that I'd better start thinking about what I wanted to do in the long-run, and I really had almost no idea of a particular direction, other than I was interested in—I thought at the time—governmental and policy areas. So, I applied for a number of types of positions. I had worked in the Department of Defense, at least for the one summer, in the office of the Secretary of Defense, at the GS9 level. A couple of other opportunities came along, also, or became possibilities in terms of economic research and policymaking in an organization called IDA: Institute for Defense Analysis. I also was applying for a position with Exxon, which would have been a job in London at the time. But, basically I needed to get some references. So, I said, Who better to provide references for jobs that I was applying for than a couple of people here at Washington and Lee, and especially two who had been more or less mentors to me—or I considered them mentors. I'm not sure they considered themselves mentors to me—one being Dean Frank Gilliam. I had gotten to know him quite well. The other being Ed Atwood— I had been in either three or four classes with him. I considered myself a major in Atwood and [John] Gunn when I was here, because I took three or four classes with each of them in the economics department as an economics major.

Warren: John Gunn, you mean.

John: John Gunn. Yes. He came in 1956, so I took courses over a course of two years, and he helped me, as an aside, very much with my Fulbright application, and so I felt that I owed him. But the two people I wrote specifically, asking them whether they would be willing to serve as references for me were Dean Gilliam, and Dean Atwood, since he was back at Washington and Lee after having gone to General Electric from the economics department here, and then returning as dean of students in, I believe, 1962. They both wrote back to me and said yes, they would be glad to serve as references. But I had an interesting telegram, followed up by a phone call, from Dean Gilliam, who said, in essence: “Glad to provide recommendation. Stop. Do not take a job until you hear from me. Stop.”

So, as it turns out, Dean Gilliam was retiring that year, the summer of ’63, as the dean of admissions. You may know he had served for many, many years as both dean of students and dean of admissions. He had retired as dean of students. He had given up the job as dean of students, and got Ed Atwood back to serve as dean of students. He was still dean of admissions, but was retiring that year. Jim [DuBois] Farrar [class of 1949], who worked for Dean Gilliam as director of financial aid and assistant dean of admissions—I’m not sure what the precise titles were—but Jim Farrar had been named to take Dean Gilliam’s place as director of admissions, leaving Jim Farrar’s former job as director of financial aid and assistant in the admissions area open, and obviously, when I was writing to ask for the letters of recommendation, that position had not been filled yet. Dean Gilliam obviously had remembered me and said, “Is your mind completely closed on the idea of a career in academics, particularly in administration, student affairs, admissions, and so forth?” I said, “No. My mind is not closed on anything, because I really don’t know what specifically I want to do with the rest of my life, but the idea of a job at Washington and Lee for a period of time until I made up my mind what I wanted to do with the rest of my life was quite appealing.

So, the Gilliams had us down. [They] insisted on Annette coming down with me, and also a young child that we had, who was born in ’62, so he was less than a year old at the time. He said, “No, you bring them down. Let’s talk about the job. You stay with us.” They lived at Bellfield at the time. We were both a little bit nervous about this man that I had up on a pedestal, and my wife had never met before, coming with a young child, and staying at Frank Gilliam and

Louise Gilliam's home. But, we did, and I remember driving down from Philadelphia, and going into Bellfield and circling around—they had a circle out in the front of their front door—and my wife says, "I'm not getting out. Let's go back." So, I had to calm her down. Of course, she had never really been south of the Mason-Dixon line before, and didn't particularly think the idea of living in Lexington was a great idea. But we came down and the first thing—was it Lulu or Louise Gilliam? Louise, I think—but the first thing she did—delightful lady—[she] picked up Andy, who was, as I say, just less than a year. And they had a nurse there for him, and so forth, so they made all the necessary arrangements. The first thing Andy did was reach up and pull on the necklace that Mrs. Gilliam had around her neck, and they weren't pearls, but [the beads] went all over the floor, became unstrung. So, all four of us got down on our hands and knees, picking up these beads, and saying, "Well, we're not off to a very good start."

Warren: I'm going to pause for just a moment.

[Begin Lew John track 02]

Warren: Well, this is a wonderful story.

John: But, anyway, I had an interview with Dr. Cole the next morning, and that was an experience, too, I must say.

Warren: Please, tell me about it. Take me in there with you.

John: Well, I walk into the outer office and then Dean Gilliam leaves me, and I'm to go into the inner sanctum of the president. I'm pretty sure this is on a Saturday morning. But, to go in and—if you ever knew Dr. Cole, he was a very, very heavy smoker. It was just like going into the smoke-filled room atmosphere, and I could hardly see him—he was sitting at his desk—for all the smoke in the room. But, anyway, and he was a very, very nice gentleman, a good scholar, a reticent personality—not a particularly outgoing personality. Anyway, I got through a ten- or fifteen-minute interview with him, and he said, in essence: "Dean Gilliam very much wants you to join us for this next year, and I hope that you will"—something like that. I went back out, and there was—it was kind of an eerie experience, having that interview.

But, we spent—I guess it was two nights here—looking around with both Dean Gilliam and Jim Farrar—thinking about my situation, and did not give them an answer, but got home and talked about it, and finally decided: Well, I don't have anything else that's really on the front burner of something that I'm just burning to do. I'd loved Washington and Lee as an

undergraduate, and it's the kind of personal environment and institution—I like the people there—so, in essence, I said, "Let's give it a two- or three-year period, and then I'll decide what I want to do for the rest of my life." So, we came down here and I took Jim Farrar's [former] position, with him as director of admissions.

Warren: Let's not go there quite yet, because Lew, you are the first person I have ever talked with who actually went into the home of Frank Gilliam and stayed there, as far as I know. Tell me about Frank Gilliam as a person. You get to know somebody when you're sharing a bathroom with them, or sharing the front porch with him.

John: I had been at Bellfield several times as an undergraduate for a meal or a Sunday morning breakfast/brunch, as I remember, because he used to have the dormitory counselors in, for example, and others in [that kind of] position. But, this was a different type of experience: being in his home overnight, and crawling around on the floor with him trying to pick up the beads that my son had pulled off. But, Dean Gilliam was one of the three or four individuals who, in my estimation, ran W&L when I was here as an undergraduate: he, as dean of students and dean of admissions; President Gaines; Dean [James G.] Leyburn, who was the academic dean at the time; and I guess Earl Mattingly, who was the treasurer, were the four who—it was my impression anyway—ran W&L, made the decisions. Of those four people I got to know, as an undergraduate, Dean Gilliam the best. It's an exaggeration—[he was] a god-like figure, frankly, because he was a very outgoing, warm, decisive—at least in my view, as I perceived him—individual who said personally who would be admitted to Washington and Lee, who would leave Washington and Lee early.

But I remember the whole style of doing business, or the whole operational mode at that time was more an individual matter. Dean Gilliam, for example, would call you into his—he never called me into his office to tell me I had to leave, but he would call a student into his office, and, in essence, say, "You've either gotten into trouble in this way, or your grades last term weren't very good. I think maybe it would be better off for you and for us if you took this semester off, and if you behave yourself, you can come back in the fall." That was the way he carried on business, and very much of a one-man operation in terms of the students at Washington and Lee then. A completely different operating style, of course, than it was twenty years later, when I was dean of students, but I also remembered him as a person who always

knew everybody's name. He had a great mind for names and faces, and putting the two together. Of course, the university was somewhat smaller then, but, on the other hand, he had a great way of personalizing in him, really, I thought, as an undergraduate, what Washington and Lee is all about. One thing he always did, as dean of students, whenever grades were sent home to parents at the end of a semester, he would put a little note on each and every grade report: "Good work. – F. G." or, "John slipped a little bit this term, but I'm sure he will do better." Just comments like that, which really personalized the education that one got here, and I remember how pleased, initially surprised, my parents were to be getting personal notes on obviously nine hundred or so grade reports twice a year that would be sent out from the university. So, that's, incidentally, one thing that influenced the way I carried out my responsibilities as dean of students. I continued, as dean of students, to put personal notes on the grade reports that were sent home at the end of each term.

Warren: Every single one?

John: There were some each term that I couldn't think of anything to say, so I'd just put a check on and my initials, but at least the parents and the students knew that I had looked at them, and had done something, even though I didn't have any substantive comment to say. But, 90 percent I put something in something inane: "Good work," "Keep up the good work," "Bad term," you know, just comments like that. But yes, I thought that was an important part of what Washington and Lee was all about. It was a real pain with the increase in size of the student body, and the change to three terms rather than just twice, but because of the impression that Dean Gilliam had made on me and on my parents as personifying what Washington and Lee was all about, I continued to do that as dean of students.

Warren: One of the things that many people remark about is how Dean Gilliam seemed to do everything, and yet, as his career was winding down, clearly there was the realization—it changed, and suddenly, it was taking three or four people to do what he had seemingly done by himself. That makes me wonder: was it changes in the way high education was done in general? Was it that he had some fabulous support staff, and nobody else got the credit but him? What happened? Why did that change happen when it did, and what was your perception of what those changes were?

John: Frankly—and others may perceive it differently—but I did not perceive that happening while I was a student here, at least the perception was that he was doing everything. Obviously, that changed somewhat between 1958 and 1963, but I think it was probably a combination of factors. He was getting older, and not able, perhaps, to do—and I'm speculating here—but not able to do everything that he did before. He also was—he did have some history of some kind of mental problems, but I never knew it from talking [to] or seeing him. So, obviously, in '62, anyway, he split the two positions that he had—dean of admissions and dean of students—before finally retiring in '63. So, I think part of it was that. Part of it was also the way that higher education was changing, too, and probably the different leadership styles of Dr. Gaines and Dr. Cole. And, also, probably there were some people behind the scenes who were doing some of the things that I, as a student, saw Dean Gilliam doing by himself. So, I think it's probably a combination of factors, but at least when I was a student, the perception was that he ran the university in terms of the students: of getting them here, of getting them graduated, and of seeing to their needs while they were here. But, of course, I think I perceived the same thing with the other three individuals that I mentioned, particularly Mr. Mattingly, who seemed to run the treasurer's office out of his bottom desk drawer, and I found that out as director of financial aid, in my years in that position, too, that that was his operating style.
Warren: That he really was operating it out of the drawer?
John: Well, I had several instances in which I went in and said, "We really need another amount of money to allow this student to come to Washington and Lee, because we've run out of financial aid funds and we'd really like to have this student there," and on at least one occasion he gave me a hard time and said, "No, we can't do that," but ended up by opening his bottom drawer, pulling out a checkbook—which was probably the university's, but it looked to me as if it was his own personal checkbook—and writing out a check for the amount that I had gone in to ask for, because—again, [he was] a gruff individual on first blush, on first meeting him, but very warm-hearted individual. But, that was the operating style, I think, at least when I was an undergraduate, and it carried over somewhat in the years after that.
Warren: So, you arrive back in 1963, no longer a student, but now you're going to interact with these people as colleagues. Tell me about what that was like, and were there tensions? What was it like to make that shift?

John: There were no tensions, at least that I perceived. It was interesting for me, especially in regard to the faculty, to interact with them and to—I was a little nervous, of course, in dealing with some of the individuals. I mean, ones that I had really put on a pedestal before: people [I had experienced] in the classroom, like Dr. Leyburn, Dr. [William] Jenks. I had never had Bill Pusey, for example, in the classroom, but when I had been back for a couple of weeks, I saw him and—I guess he was dean then, [and I said] either "Dean Pusey," or "Dr. Pusey, good to see you." He said, "Don't call me that. Call me Bill." I said, "Whoops, I'm not sure I can do that." So, it was interacting with people like that.

Another interesting one was L. K. Johnson. I don't know whether you know or have heard much about him, but I had been an econ major in the commerce school, and the first week I was back—I had never had L. K. Johnson. [I] knew his reputation, and had seen him—I knew who he was. But, I saw him on the front Colonnade; we were passing, talked a while. He said, "Yes, Mr. John, I always remember you were a very, very good student, except for one thing." I said, "What was that, Dr. Johnson?" He said, "You never took any of my courses." It was just interactions like that that I had.

And, of course, I knew Jim Farrar quite well, so he was the one I interacted with most in the administrative position.

Warren: Why did you know Jim Farrar?

John: [I] had just known him as an undergraduate, and when I was interested in, or talking about taking the job, he was the one that I talked to most, so I discussed various aspects of it. But I knew him—had interacted with him in the admissions and financial aid area as—

Warren: Tell me about Jim Farrar, as an administrator and as a person.

John: Very, very good person, outgoing. I really enjoyed working with him. He was, I think, quite effective in the admissions area, until, perhaps, the last year or two that he was in there. A great person to work with, though, and, of course a great family, too, as you well know. But, he was a very good person to work with, no directorial in terms of, you know, demanding that you do this, or demanding that you do things a certain way, but I was—particularly in working with him in his position as director of admissions, and mine as assistant or associate, and having responsibility for financial aid, which he'd had before. I mean, one temptation, I would think in his position would be to really look over my shoulder and tell me how he wanted things done,

and so forth. But, he gave me the responsibility. Ed Atwood did, too, because he was over the whole area of operations when he came back, and when Dean Gilliam retired, it was Atwood as dean of students who became responsible for the admissions and financial aid areas, so I was really working quite closely with both of them.

Warren: One of the things that Jim Farrar, I know, concentrated on, and was certainly beginning to be an undercurrent—certainly at the board of trustees level, and in the country—was the idea of integrating schools. I wondered how much—since you were in admissions—how involved you were with those conversations, and whether you were aware of the tensions within the board on those issues.

John: I was vaguely aware, let's put it that way. I never really started attending board of trustees meetings until later, until I became dean of students in 1969, but even at that period, I know there were underlying tensions. The nondiscrimination statement [made by the board of trustees on July 25, 1964] I guess was made about '63 or '64, somewhere along there, but it was a very different type of board at that time, a very small board, a board which was in for life, in essence, and it took some—and they were individuals who I think would—and I'm speculating here because I really don't know firsthand—but I think that the statement of nondiscrimination was a difficult one, probably, for them to make, and I can't imagine—and again, [I am] speculating here—that they did not encourage particularly vigorous efforts to attract black students specifically. My guess is that until the composition of the board changed, that they felt that perhaps a nondiscrimination statement was adequate and sufficient.

Warren: I just wondered whether within the office you had conversations.

John: Yes, we did have conversations. I guess one aspect of those conversations was yes, we want to and need to attract more minority students, get a more diverse student body in a number of ways, including—I guess African Americans was not the term used then—but including students of color. But I think we really didn't know how to go about it. How does a southern, all-male institution bearing General Lee's name in a small town—how is an institution like that able to attract a more diverse student body, attract black students? So, until really 1970, I believe I'm correct in saying that there were three black students who entered Washington and Lee [before 1970], but they were local, and they had the home environment to nurture and support them. Really, in our—you could call it ignorance—but in our desire to attract additional black students,

[we] really were unable to do so more from not knowing how to do it. But we did have conversations within the office, saying we really have to be able to get a more diverse student body and add some substance to the statement that the board of trustees has made on that subject.

Warren: It's very easy today in hindsight and with a sense of political correctness to say, "We all knew it was the right thing to do." But really, back in the mid-'60s in Washington and Lee, which had long traditions of being all white, all male, did it seem like a desirable thing to integrate the school?

John: Probably not to a lot of people.

Warren: I'm saying to you and Jim Farrar.

John: Oh, to us. Yes, it did. Of course, we came from different backgrounds, also, and it was always our—or at least my thought, which I think Jim and Ed Atwood shared, because the three of us were working together—that one of the significant problems of Washington and Lee was that it was such a homogeneous student body. [I thought] that in order to have a real academic intellectual college atmosphere, you need to have more than white, upper–middle class southerners, male, in your student body. So I think this was part of our thinking: that it was the right thing to do, but it was also important for Washington and Lee to be able to attract a more diverse student body, including socio-economic diversity and students who would be provided an opportunity here that they might not get elsewhere. I say that looking back on it. The problem was not that they would not get that opportunity elsewhere, but that they could get that opportunity elsewhere, according to our academic standards, and it would be difficult for them in an environment in which they were such a small minority. I think that we felt that in order to make an impact, which we really felt it was important to do, that there had to be at least a sufficient corps here at the same time, and not just have a token two or three in the student body, and how to go about getting that desirable goal, at least in my point of view. But, again, I was a northerner who had come down south to school, and I had somewhat different—differing values, perhaps, than a lot of the alumni, and probably members of the board of trustees, on that.

Warren: I'm going to pause.

John: Okay.

[Begin Lew John track 03]

Warren: Well, we're making good progress here. So, I think it's particularly interesting to hear that your role models were Frank Gilliam and Ed Atwood, because you wound up in their shoes. Tell me about how that evolution happened, and what it felt like as it was happening.

John: Well, as I say, the first stage of that was pretty much Gilliam's retirement and the position—Jim Farrar's former position—opening up. Ed Atwood I had known in the classroom and had really enjoyed him as a professor, and I knew that he had left while I was, I guess, at Princeton, and I always associated [with] that, because he was a Princeton graduate, too. But I really hadn't kept track that closely, but I was interested and kind of excited about coming back and working with him in his role as dean of students. And, again, it just was the way things worked out, because I had come back here and planned to stay for maximum of three years and then move on to something else, so I never thought coming back of my position at Washington and Lee as other than a way station, shall we say, along my career path. But having been here for three years, gone away for two, then coming back with Bob Huntley as president and resuming the same position that I had before for one year, and then having the opportunity to move into Ed Atwood's position as dean of students when he became dean of the commerce school, was just something I had never really considered before. But to have the opportunity, I think, was—although I didn't aspire to it, it was something that I really enjoyed, again, particularly knowing that that position had been occupied by two of my mentors, although keeping in mind that I never would have been in the position to do that if I hadn't admired them so as to ask them for letters of recommendation for other jobs that I was applying for.

Warren: It's a nice story. I like it. There's a very full-circle aspect to it.

John: Yes, it is.

Warren: Let's not go into being the dean of students quite yet, though. I'm interested in your impressions of Fred Cole as president and curious how much you would have interacted with him. I'm trying to understand the dynamics; that you were an assistant to Jim Farrar, and how did that work? Did you actually interact with Fred Cole, or were you reporting just simply to Jim Farrar? How does all that work?

John: And Ed Atwood, too, I might say, given the hierarchy in that office.

Warren: Well, help me to understand the day-to-day operations.

John: Day-to-day my interactions were primarily with Jim Farrar and Ed Atwood.

Warren: Were you physically in the same area then?

John: Yes. Starting out, yes. We were—well, there have been so many changes in the physical location, but the primary location was in that front of Washington Hall, on the second floor where, I guess, Ken's office [the office of the president] is now. But there were three or four—depending on the time frame—offices within that larger office, which, incidentally, had been a lecture hall during my undergraduate years. I never had the geology course [that was usually taught] there, but—anyway, you went in the main door from the hall, and depending on the particular year, Ed Atwood's office was the first on the left. Jim Farrar's was larger, and next to that because he was doing a lot of interviewing of prospective students. Then, going around, the secretaries were in the middle, and my office was on the right-hand side as director of financial aid. So, in terms of the physical arrangement, the three of us interacted within that larger Washington Hall space.

In terms of interacting with Fred Cole, it was rare, shall we say, intermittent, but I still remember the first time I was going to—well we were both going to the same meeting, as it turned out. I think it was a meeting of the College Board at the time, and I was going as financial aid director. There was a separate but attached meeting of financial aid directors in there. So we both were taking the same plane from, I assume, Roanoke to New York, maybe. I can't remember the exact details of where it was. But I remember being told that the—I guess it was Tina Ravenhorst at the time who was Dr. Cole's secretary—would get the tickets for both of us since we were both going to the same location. I had only been in the position for a year at the most. I remember being so nervous and trying to come up with conversation topics, because I knew I'd be sitting next to him. And, being very wary about the whole thing, me just a young whippersnapper out of graduate school. Finally, after travelling with him, understanding that he really didn't want to talk, he just wanted to read, or doze, so my fears of not having sufficient conversation topics to talk about went to nil. This is by way of example of saying that he was not an easy person to converse with. He was, I think, basically a shy individual whose leadership style was more of a personal one in terms of—and being academically oriented in focusing on the curriculum, the course of study. His work in dealing with perspective donors was more of a one-on-one situation. He would court—Jessie Ball duPont, I assume, who came along about that time. [Mrs. duPont also interacted with President Gaines. She served as a trustee of W&L 1960–

70.] So, his style was such that he was a difficult person to get to know on an everyday conversational basis. But [he was] a very good person to work for and with, I think. A great family, too, I might say. [I] got to know particularly his wife and Taylor Cole. Do you know Taylor? [He was] the youngest of the family, and still here in Lexington. But, we occasionally had him babysit for our two boys.

Warren: Taylor Cole?

John: Taylor Cole did. He's just a great guy, as I might say—and we may or may not get to this later—as the Ruscios occasionally babysat for our two boys, too, but that's another tale.

Warren: Let's not hire Ken quite yet.

John: Not yet, no. [Laughter]

Warren: I'm going to give you credit for that, don't worry. So at some point, you snuck out of town for a couple of years and I can imagine why, but why don't you go ahead and tell me about that and why that was important to do.

John: I was in the third year, I guess, of being back. In other words, in the '65–66 academic year saying, Well, this is what I said I would do: come here for three years and then move on to what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. But you know, this isn't such a bad life after all. I love Lexington. I love being at Washington and Lee, and I would at least consider the possibility of staying around and being in an administrative position here. But I also felt the need—if I was going to do that—to get the union card of a doctoral degree. I had a master's. I had said that if I'm going to have an administrative position here, particularly in student affairs, I want to also be able to teach at least one course a term. It was rather difficult to work out with admissions, but I was also an instructor in economics in the '64 and '65 academic years. So what I said to myself and to my wife, in essence, was that: I think I'll consider the possibility, anyway, of staying around here for a while, but if I'm going to do so, I'm going to have to take some time off and go back to school and get a doctoral, or at least work on a doctoral degree.

And, I must say the people here were very encouraging in that line, and I had applied for various fellowships. It's one thing I learned as financial aid director: how to go about applying for financial aid, whether it be at a graduate school level or not. So, I had applied and gotten a fellowship for graduate study in New York State, what was then a Herbert Lehman Fellowship, which was good for graduate work. I had already used a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship at

Princeton. So, just in looking around at the opportunities, and I was from New York State, I thought New York would be a logical place to return for graduate work. Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School at the time did not offer a doctoral program. It does now, but at the time it was a terminal master's degree in the Woodrow Wilson School, so that avenue was out, although if they had had the doctoral program, I probably would have applied there.

So, I got a Lehman Fellowship, which was good at any graduate program in public affairs or social science area in New York State. And my wife said, at the time: "Well, if you're going back to graduate school, I am too. If you're planning to stay in Lexington, I've got to find something that I can do which will help me earn some money, because all I have is an art history and English degree from Oberlin, and that does not prepare me for any real job in the marketplace." That's in essence what she said.

So, what we did for a number of Sundays that fall and early winter was to read the *New York Times* want ads or job opportunities. What kind of graduate degree would help her in finding a job in Lexington, Virginia, if we continued to be here or came back here after my leave of absence?, because she had been typing papers for students and so forth here; just kind of interim work. We finally decided: Well, a library science degree would offer some opportunities even in a small community like Lexington. So, she looked around and Syracuse had not only the Maxwell School, which would allow me to transfer a good bit of my master's credit from Princeton toward a doctoral degree, but she could also go to their—I think it was called library science school then; it's changed names now, of course. [This] would allow her to get a master's degree in library science, and open up, perhaps, more opportunities for employment here in Lexington.

So, what in essence happened, with support from the administration here—both Dr. Cole and Ed Atwood, particularly—I took a two-year leave of absence. Actually, combined with a fellowship that she got and the one I got from Syracuse, we were making more money that first year we were Syracuse than I had been here. But, anyway, we took our two young sons and moved to Syracuse for two years, and the first year we juggled babysitters and so forth and our class schedules, and both went to classes. The second year, she had finished up her master's in library science at the end of the summer, and then got a job working up in the general library area in Syracuse.

Warren: You said that being director of financial aid had been particularly helpful.
John: I said that somewhat facetiously, but yes.
Warren: Of course it was. But let's talk about the role of the director of financial aid here at Washington and Lee. Was that—help me out. I've never worked there, so help me to understand. Is the responsibility there to students who are incoming, or ongoing, or both?
John: Both. Primarily those who are incoming, however, and that's why it is a logical extension of the admissions office, because there are students, obviously, and will be—even more so now—who would like to attend Washington and Lee, but whose family resources would not allow them to do so without the benefit of financial aid. So, you could look upon the two—financial aid being an office of its own, but [also] an extension, to a point, of the admissions office—to allow the students that are admitted the financial resources to attend. And it's also for returning students, generally in the sense of whether they are able to retain the financial aid that they have been awarded as an incoming freshman. In other words, their grades are reviewed. There are certain criteria for performance in the classroom at Washington and Lee to allow them to retain the financial aid that they have gotten here.

And I say that—going back to my own personal experience [as an undergraduate] in that I was entering—or I hoped to enter—Washington and Lee from a public high school. Middle class to lower–middle class family in Olean, New York. I fell in love with Washington and Lee, but would not have been able to attend here without a scholarship—without a couple of scholarships, as it turns out. I had a newspaper boy scholarship from delivering newspapers in Olean, New York, and then Dean Gilliam and Jim Farrar offered me some scholarship aid to come to Washington and Lee. So, having that as a personal background, I was very aware of the role that the financial aid office plays in allowing students to attend here who are qualified, but who do not have the financial resources to come.
Warren: How do you train for a position like that? Did you suddenly feel like you were very wealthy and you had money to give away? What are the day-to-day responsibilities of the job within financial aid?
John: Well, you work with a—at least we did then; I assume it's the same now—you work with a budget that is set aside or allocated by the board of trustees in the annual budget, so you know you have *x* number of dollars to award in financial aid. That's both returning and incoming

students. I'm sure that the day-to-day routine when I was in that position is somewhat broader—was somewhat broader—and more diverse, probably, than I'm sure it is now.

Warren: Take me back then.

John: I was at the time director of student financial aid and placement—placement was not a big operation then—and also assistant dean of students, and assistant—or associate, depending on the year—director of admissions. So, my responsibilities included all of these areas. Being on the road, so to speak, for admissions for three, four, or five weeks in the fall during the travel season; interviewing students that came to campus applying for admission the following year; working with Ed Atwood in counseling some students, particularly those who were in academic difficulty; and after January or February, not traveling for admissions, but reading admissions applications, working with Jim Farrar and, a little bit later, the Admissions Committee, which is a faculty committee, on who should be accepted and who not accepted. And, working with the fundamentals or the techniques of financial aid determination: who shall be awarded aid and in what amount? That, of course, has varied. The federal government has gotten much more involved with standardized need forms now, and so forth.

And I was also teaching a course, too. So that, to me, said that what I really needed was on-the-job training, and learning from those who had been working in the field, but—I'm sure there is now, but there was not then the specialized educational background and training that at least I felt was necessary for that position. The philosophy of Washington and Lee at that time was also one that a liberal arts background is fine for that position. You don't need a specialized background in educational theory, or what have you. Administrators were encouraged to teach, also. So, Ed Atwood, as dean of students, taught at least one course a term.

Warren: Did Jim Farrar?

John: Jim did not. I think the admissions job was such that it would be very difficult to do that with [being] on the road so much in the fall; interviewing and making admissions decisions. So, the admissions director was not one that normally taught. Part of the job was counseling students, and I asked and was encouraged to—as long as I could work it into the schedule—to teach at the same time. Later on, I considered this particularly important, because as dean of students—I know I'm jumping ahead here, but I started teaching while in the admissions/financial aid job. As dean of students, I, number one, felt that I could better interact

with my colleagues, with faculty members, who would look upon me as a colleague, not just part of the administrative staff, and therefore look down on me simply for that reason. That's not too common, but there were some faculty that—and still do—look upon staff that way, as not being, you know, the important part of the university.

Also, it allowed me to see in my daily interactions with students a cross-section of students. When I was seeing students in admissions and financial aid, I was seeing a certain category of students: those who have financial need or those largely who have gotten into trouble academically. This was even more the case as dean of students, when I was seeing the top of the students, you might say: those with leadership positions, those who were on the E.C. and doing particularly well, [and] those at the bottom, who were in trouble for one reason or another.

But in the classroom, not only did I feel my relations with colleagues on the faculty were enhanced, but also getting a better sense of student opinion and feeling by seeing a cross-section, and also allowing students to see me in a faculty position. I might also add that the way my wife put it here—and one reason I went back to get a doctorate—was when as she put it: "What are you going to do when the dean business fails?" In other words, I felt that I didn't want to be a career, lifetime administrator, and when I got in a position of dean of students, I really felt I can only do this for so long. Twenty-one years is probably too long, but anyway. But I'm going to want to do something after being dean of students, and this gave me a fallback position if I was a member of the faculty, and also, fortunately, as it turned out, got tenure. So when I decided I had had enough, I was offered the position in the politics department. So when the dean business failed, in her words, I was able to do that. I got off the subject there.

Warren: You're on the subject.

John: But to go back to the particular office routine: when I was in admissions and financial aid and placement, it was a lot leaner staff then, of course. I had such a variety of different types of things to do that I enjoyed that position more than I would have if I was spending all of my time doing just one of them. Financial aid was then not a full-time position, but working in conjunction with admissions. Placement was a job that took maybe 10 percent of my time. Students didn't need to be placed when they get career counseling. When they left here, they'd go into daddy's business, or they'd have something all lined up. So it was, to a large extent, the variety of different things that I was doing, and the type of office routine that differed from day-

to-day and month-to-month, and not doing all the same thing that attracted me, at least in part, to that type of work.

Warren: Well, you've introduced about eighteen different subjects, and I want to follow every one of them.

John: I know.

Warren: I guess I'd like to follow—although there are probably fifteen things we should do before that, but it will lead us into those things we want to cover. I'm actually going to stop and begin a new track.

[Begin Lew John track 04]

Warren: I'm interested in what you just said about placement, and that you didn't need placement back then, that the graduates would just go into daddy's business. Well, that's far from the case today, and that hasn't been the case for a very long time. You would have lived through that transition. Is it because the nature of the student body here changed? Is it because there are so many more college graduates today than there were back then? Why has placement changed through your time as dean of students—I think that would have been within your bailiwick.

John: Right.

Warren: Let's follow that theme through. Why did that change?

John: I guess for a number of specific reasons—or several specific reasons—plus a more general reason. The nature of the student body has certainly changed. It's larger. The job market is quite a bit different now. The nature of the student body has also changed. But in a more general sense, I think the university—for a variety of reasons—feels the need to do so much more for students, and to offer greater services because the world of higher education has changed to a large extent, also, and in the career area, specifically. The whole nature of career counseling, of job placement, of having interviewers on campus, of taking testing, of trying to advise students how to go about getting a job—but this growth in services offered is also paralleled, I would suggest, in other areas of student affairs.

I compare the size of the student affairs staff now with what it was in 1963, or 1966, or '69, when I became dean of students—and it's true in admissions. The admissions staff has grown I don't know how many fold, but anyway. It's true in financial aid. It's true in personal

counseling. We never had a Jim Worth until he was hired as the first psychological counselor, and now you have a fairly good-sized staff of counselors. Actually, one position that I created was dean of freshmen, or dean of residence life, as it turned out to be, to concentrate on freshmen, and that is another area in which we've expanded considerably. And career services, or placement as it was called then, is much the same way in that parents, family, and students just expect so much more—I think, anyway—to be offered by colleges and universities than they did when I was starting. So, you'll see certainly in the area of student services—health services is another area in which there was one or two doctors, and that was it when I was in that position. But, you look at the growth of—you can call it bureaucracy, if you will—but the growth of services all across the university. How many people does it now take to do the job that Earl Mattingly did as treasurer? How many people—which is more my concern—does it take to do what Dean Gilliam supposedly did by himself in the student life and admissions area?

And I think career services, or what we called director of placement, is another example of the growth of the perceived need to offer students more in the way of counseling, placement, and it is as a result, I think, not only of the changing nature of the student body, and the growth in the student body, but the changing nature of student services generally, and expectations for anybody that's coming here and their families of what kind of help and what kind of services they will get from the university. And, certainly, placement is one good example of that. As I say, it took perhaps ten percent in my early years, but with the growth of services, initially, I guess, with Rick Heatley and then with Bev Lorig [director of placement services]. The need was seen—and probably I was among those selling those needs to the president: that we needed another position created for these reasons.

Warren: And would you be asking for those positions because you knew that other schools had them, or because you felt an internal need, or both, or some other reason?

John: Both, but primarily for internal needs, I think.

Warren: Were people asking for them, or did you sense that there was a need?

John: Depending on the particular area that we're talking about, I think in the creation of the position for the freshman year—the dean of freshmen, if you want to call him that—I think that was more my perception of the need. In career services, I would say that was more for those

asking for them, and what similar schools were doing by way of staffing career service and placement offices.

Warren: We're getting real close. I'm going to let you become dean of students very quickly, but I have one more question before that. As you know, you are one of several oral histories I've been doing. One of the things that I have learned is that [the self study] was a monstrously important thing at Washington and Lee in its evolution was that 1966 self-study. I wonder whether that happened at higher levels than you, or whether you participated in that, and what your memories of that process are?

John: If we're talking '66 self-study, specifically, I was only—

Warren: I think that was the first.

John: —tangentially involved in that because I was gone for the years '66–68. I was involved in some of the background studies, particularly in admissions and financial aid, but over the years I became very much involved in self-studies here and elsewhere, I might say. I was on eight or ten visiting committees for Southern Association Accreditation in the student affairs area, so I was involved on this level, but not to so great an extent in the '66 one as perhaps a little bit later. That was, as you say, the first one, and I think Washington and Lee was kind of feeling its way along in terms of that first one. But fortunately, we've always had somebody like Bob McAhern or Frank Parsons who can serve as whatever the title may be: coordinator of the self-study, or editor, or call them what you will. The nature of the self-studies have varied according to the particular emphases that the Southern Association emphasizes. After all, the self-study is for internal purposes, but pro forma, it is necessary for accreditation, and in the later years when the Southern Association has emphasized results, outcomes, rather than inputs, then the self-study necessarily represents that. But, I think to be specific in terms of '66, I was involved in terms of the financial aid and admissions portions of that, but not as extensively as others.

Warren: Let's talk about why or whether self-studies are helpful and how often they get done. What is the point of them, other than you *have* to do it?

John: I think they're helpful, and I think generally the Southern Association, which we, as a university have to be most concerned about because they are the accreditation agency, has been generally helpful in terms of what they require. Now, you can go the other way in terms of how often—I think it's still the same. It may be different, but it was a ten-year period, and

accreditation was granted as a result of—we hope, and has been with Washington and Lee—as a result of the self-study itself, suggestions, and recommendations from the visiting committee. Recommendations are something that have to be attended to, suggestions—and whether they still use the same terminology or not, I'm not sure—but generally, the time frame involved is a ten-year period with an interim report halfway through that as to a progress report on how it's coming. Our situation here is a little bit different, perhaps, in that we have several differing accreditation agencies. The School of Commerce, Economics, and Politics is accredited by a separate accrediting agency, as is the law school, and I think the journalism department also has a separate accrediting agency. So, there are more frequent self-studies, necessitated by the fact that we are accredited by three or four different agencies, but the only one for the university as a whole is the Southern Association.

Warren: How many people get involved?

John: In terms of here at the university? Just about everybody, frankly, depending on the level of involvement, but even the—say as a member of the politics department—a departmental self-evaluation feeds into the overall process. So, it's a fairly labor-intensive process, or it can be, particularly by the deans or the department heads who have the most responsibility for it. I think it can be a very helpful process. Sometimes it's looked at by some as just a lot of going through the motions and paperwork that's necessary for accreditation, but I think by and large, Washington and Lee takes their self-studies pretty seriously. Now, whether—and they probably would have self-studies, have long-range plans, have self-evaluation, regardless of whether it's required by the accrediting agency, but I think it's taken more seriously; it regularizes the process, which may or may not be the case without the external accreditation process. So, it also depends to a large extent on what the accreditation agency requires or emphasizes, and it sometimes forces—*forces* is a strong word—but sometimes requires Washington and Lee to emphasize some aspects of what we do here, more than we would otherwise.

I remember the first time—and I forget what year it was, but Southern Association was just getting into the outcomes business: how do you measure outcomes? This was something that, I think, Washington and Lee would not have done to that extent at that time on its own, if it wasn't required to have done so, and I know a lot of us kind of pooh-poohed that emphasis, but in the long run, I think that was helpful and important for the university to start measuring

outcomes, or trying to measure outcomes. Still, there's the argument of you can't really measure outcomes, but anyway—

So, helpful? Yes. Regularizing a process that would take place anyway? Probably so. But also, it's always important, I think, to have that external lever to get that kind of job done, and I think that's what it does.

Warren: I'm going to pause again.

[Begin Lew John track 05]

Warren: Well, you just brought something up [during the pause] that we shouldn't ignore. I know you said it was an aside, but it's not an aside.

John: Okay.

Warren: You pointed out who the person was who came to take your place when you traipsed off to Syracuse. Tell me about that person and what your impression was of that person.

John: When I left to go to Syracuse with a two-year leave of absence in 1968, the administration got Farris Hotchkiss to take my place as director of financial aid, and I believe the idea was for him to do it for the two years that I would be gone. But more important things came up for him after that first year, and he moved over to the development position. It was interesting that a classmate took my job, and so among my other accomplishments here, I can take credit for getting Farris back to Washington and Lee at that time.

Warren: Well, that's actually quite an accomplishment. That's what Farris told me. That was why he came when he did. Lots of dancing happened when our friend Fred Cole left town. This fellow named Bob Huntley was named president, and I wondered whether you had any relationship with him before that, and how much interaction you had with him before that.

John: I had some interaction with him as a student. He was class of '57 law, if I'm remembering correctly, so we overlapped as students, he being in the law school, however, and I being an undergraduate.

Warren: Did you really know him then?

John: Not well. He was on the Executive Committee, for example, and I was on the IFC [Interfraternity Council], but with the law school being in Tucker Hall then, the interaction between law students and undergraduates was more frequent, even in passing, or in going to the Co-op or something—whatever—at the time. And he was also—not particularly active—but was

a fraternity member, of course, as an undergraduate. He was Delta Tau Delta, and interacted a good bit with Jim Farrar, who was also a Delt, and so forth. But, [I'm] trying to remember if I had much—I don't think I had much interaction with him in my first three years here, and I'm not exactly sure when he came back to start teaching in the law school.

Warren: About three years he taught, then he was dean for five minutes.

John: Yes, and I remember in correspondence with Dean Gilliam when I was in Syracuse, and he kind of kept me up on what was happening at Washington and Lee: "Bob Huntley has become dean of the law school, and so glad that he has." And then, in January—well, before that he said that they're having this presidential search since Dr. Cole left, and "I don't know who it will be, but I'm sure the board will make a good decision." Then, about two weeks later, he wrote me a note saying, "The news is out. Bob Huntley has been named president and I couldn't be happier." So, I kept up only in that sense, but came back to Washington and Lee after Bob had been president for six or seven months, I guess, since I was back in the summer.

I knew him, [although] not well. But [I was] was very pleased, obviously, that it was Bob and it was somebody from Washington and Lee, too.

Warren: Why did you think that was important?

John: I guess my own feeling is that every once in a while, there ought to be a president with background and knowledge—background in and knowledge of—Washington and Lee. There had been the period there—I thought at that particular point in history it was good for Washington and Lee to have one of their own. That can be overdone, obviously, and there has been criticism of the faculty being so inbred from time to time, but again, I think—I'm showing my bias here, but I felt that at that time it would be a good thing for Washington and Lee, and I must say I felt the same way when Ken [Ruscio] became president. But, I knew of and heard the opinions of others who knew Bob better than I did and were so delighted to have him back—not back, but in that position that I was very pleased with the appointment and, of course, got to know him better once I was back here.

Warren: While we're on that, let's pursue that idea of—and I'm certainly not disagreeing with you, but I'm curious about why that makes a difference, and in particular that you say that *every once in a while* this should happen. I'd just like to pursue that theme about what kind of

difference that makes, as opposed to having somebody coming in from the outside, and, obviously there are benefits and drawbacks to both, but I'm interested in your perspective on it.

John: Well, I think that Washington and Lee is a unique institution in many, or some respects, anyway, and I think that one doesn't need to be a Washington and Lee graduate, obviously, or to have taught here in order to do a good job in the presidency. But I also think that with some presidents who have been in office, there is some losing sight of what makes Washington and Lee special and unique, and I think that there are just some periods that we need a different emphasis, perhaps, in presidential leadership, where we need somebody who is more familiar with the values and traditions of Washington and Lee, and when we need somebody who will not try to impose the characteristics and values of other institutions on Washington and Lee. Now, I'm not saying necessarily that Fred Cole did that.

More recently, I would say that perhaps, when Ken became president, and I think that was a point in our history when we needed somebody who understood what Washington and Lee was all about, and that was perhaps also the case when Bob Huntley became president. But I think it also goes beyond that, that the emphasis or the points that Bob Huntley considered important and how he would help shape this institution was somewhat different from that of Fred Cole. Fred Cole, I think, was the right person for Washington and Lee at the time he became president. His was largely an academic focus, but a development style that emphasized one-on-one fundraising, perhaps. So, I think that at the end of President Gaines's presidency, Washington and Lee's academics needed emphasis, shall we say, and I think Washington and Lee became a better institution with Fred Cole as president.

Also, though, however, I think that there were other emphases once academics were in place, or had been significantly improved, that the interest and skills that Bob Huntley brought to the position with his emphasis on fundraising, campus improvements—the buildings on campus obviously needed attention and expansion—and I think that given his background and what he had already shown in terms of his leadership—for five minutes, maybe, as you put it, as dean of the law school—but I think that what he brought to Washington and Lee was important to Washington and Lee at that point in time. And I would say the same thing with different emphases with Ken, frankly.

Warren: I certainly breathed a huge sigh of relief when I got the news about Ken.

All right. You want to be dean of students?

John: Sure. Why not?

Warren: Why did Bob Huntley pick you? I thought maybe you guys had played tennis, or been great buddies. Why did he choose you other than that you were in that office [of admissions and financial aid]? But there were a bunch of people he could have chosen to be dean of students. Why you?

John: I wish I could give you a complete answer to that question, but I can't. All I know is that toward the end of the first year I was back, I had had a number of interactions with Bob Huntley. But one day he wandered down the hall, came in my office, sat down, and said, in essence: "I've made the decision to appoint Ed Atwood dean of the commerce school. I think we need somebody younger in the dean of students office. Would you like to be dean of students?" in essence was the total sum and combination of our discussion, but as far as specific reasons, I don't know. All I can say is that he knew who I was. He knew me. He thought that I would be competent in that job, and that he needed—or he wanted—somebody younger. I was thirty-two at the time, and I think he felt that in terms of rapport with students, empathy with students, being able to work well with students, that I was the one he wanted in that position. But, you know, more specifically than that I can't say. It certainly surprised me when he told me that Atwood was moving over to the commerce school with Lou Adams's retirement, and that he wanted me to be dean of students.

Warren: Did you go and have a chat with Ed Atwood about it?

John: Yes, but not an extensive chat. I did want to talk with Ed at least briefly, and ask him, in essence: "Can you see any reason why I should not accept this job?" But Ed wasn't particularly chatty usually in this—

Warren: I've never known Ed Atwood.

John: He's a cool kind of character. Yes, I did have a brief discussion with him.

Warren: So, Ed Atwood was a cool kind of character, whereas my impression of Frank Gilliam is that everybody saw him as their very beloved grandfather figure.

John: Yeah.

Warren: Which category did you fall into, or did you dig your own…

John: I dug my own—not grave.

Warren: You notice I didn't fill in that blank. Dig your own what?

John: Yes, I noticed you didn't. [Laughter]

Warren: What was I going to say there? I'm not sure.

John: Well, I guess I tried to define the job I did within the boundaries of what *a)* I thought Bob Huntley wanted, and *b)* how my own personality [and] capabilities fit in. So, I guess, except in one or two respects, like the signing of the grade reports, I didn't want to specifically position myself in the mold of either of those two. I couldn't with Dean Gilliam, because he was a personality of his own—if anybody tried to emulate that, it would be recognized as fake. Being a good bit younger than Ed Atwood, I thought that my interaction with students would be somewhat different. Shaped by the job, but also shaped by individual personalities, and age would be somewhat different from that, so I really didn't—I did use both of those as models, but not ones to mimic my own style on. As I say, a lot was trying to provide Bob Huntley with what I thought he wanted in a dean of students.

Warren: What do you think that was?

John: His style was pretty much to give one responsibility and to leave them alone to the extent that he felt he could, and not interfere in their carrying out of the particular responsibilities that they had. So, I think he wanted somebody who would get along well with students, but could work with them in a way to necessarily carry out his wishes and faculty wishes without too much animosity, but being able to work with them on a close, personal basis. And I say that because I think that the presidential styles of Bob Huntley and John Wilson were quite different. John Wilson was one much more to get involved in the day-to-day operations and interactions than Bob Huntley was.

John Wilson—this is jumping way ahead, but John Wilson told me early on that one of my jobs as dean of students was to help to restrain him and to keep him from being too impetuous in his actions, because he was one that tended sometimes to act quickly in jumping into individual situations. He was somewhat more involved in the day-to-day operations and relations between students—and between faculty, I assume, too—than was Bob Huntley, who was more one to delegate authority and to leave the person to do it, as long as he felt things were

Warren: I'm not sure when it got started, but one thing I've known about—I knew about when I first moved here in 1976–77—but I don't know if it happened immediately. One of the hallmarks

of the Huntley administration was something called the Monday Lunch Bunch, and no doubt you were one of the very active players. What was that about and what's your memory of why those gatherings happened?

John: The Monday Lunch Bunch was a way that Bob Huntley, I think, had for sharing of information and not necessarily for making decisions, but general sharing of information among his administrative staff. In other words, it—to a certain extent—took the place of formal meetings called by the president. It was a more informal way of getting together, seeing what is going on at the university, just to broaden his knowledge as well as that of others involved. I remember—perhaps Jim Whitehead mentioned this to you, too. He was often one that would grumble: "It's kind of a waste of time, isn't it?" But it was a good way, I think, for Bob and his administrative staff to get together and to share information, to get other people's thoughts on particular issues, and to avoid having too many formal cabinet meetings, as some others might call that.

I know it was usually one of my responsibilities at Monday lunch to give the police report from the weekend. How many arrests were there of students? What did Murph—you remember Bob Murray [W&L's first security officer]—and that was one reason I always had Murph come in and report to me on Monday morning as to how bad was the weekend. What did the fraternities do now? How many students got arrested for public drunkenness? Who was doing things they should not be doing? And so forth. But that was my role on most Mondays to say, "It was a terrible weekend. Three fraternities, or five fraternities got noise violations from the police. Murph reports that somebody was doing this or that." But it was this kind of information sharing, and an informal way of not governing so much, but just getting opinions and information, and a sharing of that.

Warren: What kind of reaction would those police reports get, and what kind of discussion would follow them?

John: It depends on whether it was a good week or a bad week. No, there was just—actually, it turned out to be more of just a report rather than a discussion, but oftentimes—you know: Well, what can we do about this to lower the alcohol abuse problem, or drug problem, or noise problem, or whatever caused the concerns. But that was more often just informational rather

than. What can we do about it? I think was more discussed in the other venues: committee meetings, Student Affairs Committee, or whatever.

Warren: So, at these gatherings, it would have been Bob, and you, and I know Frank Parsons was there, and Farris, and you're saying Jim Whitehead. How many others?

John: The academic deans, too. Atwood, and whoever was—Roy Steinheimer, if this was at the time he was [dean of the School of Law]— Bill Watt, or whoever was the dean of the college at the time. That's about it, as far as I can remember now.

Warren: Did anybody ever look around the room like it was odd that there were no women at the table? Or [was it that] just because it was a men's school, that seemed to be the right thing?

John: It did not become a point of discussion, let me just put it that way. When appointments were made for female administrators, that was certainly stated, but that was—as I hazily remember now, that was not voiced as a particular concern at those sessions. I know Bob was more concerned about that on an individual basis. In other words, encouraging me to appoint assistant or associate deans, particularly with the advent of coeducation. So, that was—and with individual faculty heads or deans.

Warren: But that really came later.

John: Yes.

Warren: Well, since we're talking about it a little bit, one of the people on my list that I wanted to be sure we talked about his role in this world is our friend Murph. I found a reference that he had begun as the proctor in 1958—

John: Or 1959.

Warren: And obviously, either he wasn't needed when you were here as a student, and he took your place, or you guys had been so rowdy that they had to hire somebody, but tell me about Murph's role in the world of Washington and Lee.

John: Well, I would say that the reason for his hiring leans more to the latter reason that you said. And not entirely facetiously I like to tell people that I did such a poor job as IFC president my senior year that the university felt it necessary to go out and hire a local Lexington cop to be the security force at Washington and Lee. In fact, there is some truth to that: in that my senior year, the faculty became concerned even more than they had been before about fraternity conduct, and noise, and so forth. Town-gown relations. Up until that time, the university

evidently felt that there was no need to have a separate university police force, or security force—call it what you will—and there was a committee appointed during my senior year; I think I was a member of it. If I remember correctly, Clayborn Griffith was the head of the committee to discuss what needed to be done to help improve or—to *police* is too strong a word—but to be concerned with student and especially fraternity behavior. I graduated before that committee, I think, submitted its final report, which it did in the fall, if I'm not mistaken. But evidently, one of the recommendations of that committee was to hire someone to serve the university in a security position, but we don't want to call them police; that's too strong a term. So, we'll call them *university proctor*. So, that—either the fall of '58 or early in '59; I'm not sure of the exact date. You said the fall of '58. I think that's right.

Warren: I'm going to pause for just a moment.

[Begin Lew John track 06]

Warren: Continue, please.

John: Charles Murray, known as Murph, who had been on the Lexington police force, as I remember, for a number of years—around thirteen perhaps. That number sticks in my mind—became the university proctor or security force, and I don't know how he was initially welcomed by the students. I can imagine that [students' opinion would be that] hiring somebody from the Lexington police force to police us was a terrible thing the university does. But, anyway, by the time I had gotten back, by virtue of the way he worked with students—and his primary emphasis was to try to keep students and fraternities from getting into trouble. I sometimes called him *the lurker* when I worked with him initially, because he saw as part of his job on weekends, standing in the shadows of what was likely to be the most troublesome fraternities, and before things got out of hand, and before the police were called, to step in and try to head off any problems. So, by the time I had gotten here and was working with him, he was really seen by the students as somebody who was looking out for them, and on their side, and trying to keep them out of trouble, rather than, you know, his immediately calling the police when somebody got out of hand.

So, this was the first or the beginning of what is now a significant university security force. The university had not seen the need for one before, but after my senior year and fraternity behavior that year, they did feel the necessity for somebody who would work with the students

and not against them, and I think that was the genesis of the position, and also, of course, as the responsibilities evolved, [security officers] became parking enforcement individuals, too. So, the nature of the job has obviously changed somewhat, but that was the beginning, anyway.

Warren: Well, you've alluded to it, and certainly we've all experienced it first-hand, that one of the reputations of Washington and Lee is that it's a hard-partying school. To come in on Monday morning and say, "Well, how many arrests did we have?" It's kind of an interesting reputation, and I wondered did that idea of having somebody from within—an alumnus—both as a dean of students and as the president, so you would both have been on the other end of it, was that an asset or a liability in terms of trying to have creditability in controlling the situation, or *were* you trying to control the situation? What was your take on it? What did you see as your responsibilities?

John: Well, I think in terms of the issues that I would be dealing with as dean of students, and it seems as if it's four-year cycles, but many of the recurring problems, among those I would say student behavior, generally, fraternity misbehavior, to a certain extent, and town-gown relations would certainly be toward the top of recurring concerns and issues. I personally felt that having been a student here was an asset for me in that position—not all the time, and to varying degrees. And student behavior and fraternity actions certainly were a large part of what I was concerned with on a daily basis. And that's one reason, frankly, that I did encourage the establishment of a position of associate dean for Greek life, or fraternities, and then later fraternities and sororities so that more specific attention could be given to that aspect and reputation, to a certain extent, as you indicated, of Washington and Lee. But yes, that was one thing that students prided themselves on, to a certain extent: studying hard, partying hard.

As a university, I think we felt it was necessary to try to keep those—especially the partying aspect—within certain limits. I think one of the advantages and disadvantages of having the university in the middle of Lexington and the fraternities in the middle, by and large, of residential areas is a continuing concern. And I think it would be anyplace, but perhaps even more so because of the nature of Lexington, and the nature of the student body here, [that we should] be good neighbors, rather than bothersome, noisy, hard-drinking neighbors. So, yes, that is part of the purview of the dean of students area and, giving all due respect and acknowledgment of the strong tradition of student self governance here, another one of the

continuing concerns and issues is the relationship between student self governance and the role of the university in providing—or imposing, depending on your point of view—limits [and] rules. And this is a continuing concern; it was in 1958, and is today. So that students have always complained about the university proclaiming, in their rhetoric, student self governance but then whenever the faculty or whoever it is doesn't like what the students do, they step in and impose their own rules and regulations.

So, the balance here is a fine one, and a different one with each student generation, I think, or with each year, really. I saw it as one of the roles of the dean of students and the dean of students' office: to encourage students to behave responsibly, and therefore allow the faculty to give students the degree of self governance that they feel—that the students feel—they deserve. So, it's a fine line in terms of [the] board of trustees delegating directly to the student body responsibility for the honor system, matters of honor. But also, the board of trustees delegating responsibility for student conduct and discipline to the faculty, and the faculty then—sometimes more, sometimes less—delegating it to the students, or to the Student Affairs Committee, a joint student-faculty body, or to the University Council. But the faculty, seeing itself as having that authority and responsibility, but wanting to delegate as much as possible to the students themselves, but calling on the dean of students' office to make sure that that delegation of authority and power is exercised responsibly. So, it's a role that I think is necessarily played, not alone, but one that is highlighted or one of the greater responsibilities that the dean of students has is to exercise this in a way that provides student self governance, but within certain boundaries that will not be seen by the city, or by the faculty, or whomever as going beyond the bounds of the acceptable and responsible.

Warren: Yes, it's a tightrope, I think.

John: It is.

Warren: It's a real tightrope.

John: It is.

Warren: I'm going to pause.

John: Okay.

[Begin Lew John track 07]

Warren: All right. We had a good lunch downstairs [in Elrod Commons], and now we're back. One of the transitions that happened very early on in the Huntley administration, and when you had become dean of students, and I'm curious to know why—I can come up with about five or ten possibilities of why, but suddenly there was no more freshmen camp in 1969. What happened? Why did freshmen camp go away?

John: Well, I could say the easiest reason was the freshmen complained, but the argument was made that it really doesn't make any sense to—if you're going to orient freshmen to a university—to go away from the university and have the orientation fifteen, twenty miles down the road [at Natural Bridge]. I think—well, there are a number of reasons. The main reason, I think, for getting away from the campus to Natural Bridge was in terms of fraternity rush—to isolate the freshmen, where they would supposedly pay attention and not be bothered or pestered by upperclassmen, who were eager to begin rush. I think this made a good deal of sense when rush happened before classes even started, which was the case when I was a student and continued for a while. Then, you no longer had that same rationale when rush was moved somewhat later. It has varied all over the calendar, of course, but they got away from having rush before classes even started, so that was one reason. I think the other reasons were the general argument that it made more sense to have an orientation on campus where there was a greater availability to faculty, and to other students who then took a greater part in helping to plan the orientation, and organizations, and so forth. It was just an idea whose—you can argue—time had come and gone.

Warren: Was expense a factor?

John: Expense was a factor. I don't know whether it was the main factor or not, but it was certainly a factor. It's not cheap to put up freshmen and feed them in that environment.

Warren: Was it done previously at the Natural Bridge Hotel?

John: Yes.

Warren: Did you take over the whole hotel in the past?

John: Pretty much so, although depending on the size of the class and the time, rooms were not so much in the hotel itself as in the cabins—

Warren: That's what I thought.

John: Adjoining rooms. Of course, the meals were in the hotel itself, and it was just a—the cost was a factor, but the rationale for having it at Natural Bridge seemed to have gone.

Warren: I also wonder whether because that was right about the time that Washington and Lee finally started having some black students, whether there was any problem at Natural Bridge with having black guests.

John: I don't remember that being a cause. The first significant class that had blacks in it entered in 1970, and I think that that freshman orientation moved back to campus in '69 perhaps, so that was not a factor as far as I can remember, anyway.

Warren: So let's talk about that. It must have been a special issue bringing in a cluster of people who were quite different from most of the student body, and would have had different kinds of concerns, and I would think there might have been some tensions going on. Can you describe the differences that integration brought to the campus?

John: Well, as I say, 1970 was the first major class and there were fifteen black students in that class. Now, it was not a particularly easy process, I think, and those first few classes, anyway, of blacks did have their concerns, feeling somewhat isolated. But, at least there was a large enough corps to provide another aspect of separatism, if you wish, but they felt the need for an organization, first called SABU, which was Student Association for Black Unity. It changed to MSA: Minority Student Association later. But that first class was a strong class, not that they did not feel any degree of discrimination on the part of individual students, but it was a growing experience, I think, for the university as well as for that first group of black students. There were obviously tensions along the way, but overall the university did employ at various times a person in the dean of students' office, who would act as advisor, counselor to them, and voice, perhaps, their concerns about their situation at the university. [We] had a variety of individuals: one year a law student who did that, another year a local minister.

Warren: These were black people?

John: Yes, who served in the dean of students' office as, well, depending on the individual and the title. There was one individual who served for seven or eight years, who was a member of the class of '74 and a law student here. It was a slow process. It was one in which the black students voiced a number of concerns, either on the student level, or on university level. It was, as I say, a

learning experience for everybody involved, and took some time, I believe, to get a large enough corps of students who could feel themselves well-treated and integrated.

Warren: Can you tell me what some of their concerns were?

John: It was more a matter of treatment by individuals, I think, by what they felt was discrimination or poor treatment on the parts of other students, or on [the part of] faculty in some cases. But, the[se were] concerns that I think would be heard by any small group of individuals different from the mainstream of the university. Initially, I believe they felt they were being discriminated against in fraternity rush, just to take one example. Fraternities, in their view, were not willing to involve them in the normal rush, so for a short time that they formed an all-black fraternity, [which] didn't last that long. But [they also perceived] discrimination in student body elections, when some would run. There were a number of complaints voiced, but one joint area was when a group of black students—this was in the mid- to late '70s—staged a sit-in in the president's office because they felt that one of their members had been unjustly treated by the Executive Committee in an honor hearing.

Questions of their having their own dance. One year I remember [they] boycotted—officially by their organization, although individual black students went— Fancy Dress, because they felt it was a racist theme. It was focused around 1865 and that period of history. But there were various concerns that they felt were either not being listened to, or acted on when they felt either as a group or as individuals unjustly treated. So, it was a slow process, I believe, of getting a large enough group and getting individuals, as well as the university itself, to accept them on what they might term a level playing field, rather than being discriminated against in one form or another, or being treated differently, or not being understood by whites on campus.

Warren: And what would your role as dean of students be in these kinds of conversations?

John: Trying to make their situation on campus as livable, bearable, as possible; listening to their complaints, for example, or their concerns; and, where possible, going to the object of their concern and trying to work things out in a way that they would be more comfortable with. But in having their concerns voiced, and try to be understood by the student body generally, but, on occasion, faculty or administration. That process was eased, I think, as we later on appointed individuals to the dean of students' office, so they could feel that they had their voice on the hill.

Warren: I was looking at the *Calyx*es. Was that Curtis Hubbard?

John: He was one of early ones. There was Lutrelle Rainey, Curtis Hubbard, Johnny [John L.] White, who was the class of '74 and then [he was] a law student. When coeducation came, Anece McCloud served in that position, also. There were a number of people that, for one reason or another, didn't stay very long.

Warren: Why do you think that is?

John: Well, some just didn't work very well in the position, others moved on because of other job opportunities. Lutrelle Rainey, for example, who was the Baptist minister in town, was transferred by the church. So, there was no one reason, I think. It was just a difficult position. Not always limited to minority student concerns, though, I must say, but providing a voice and a source of counsel and advice for the students. Johnny White, I know, was only part-time because he was a law student, and then he left for occupational reasons.

Warren: Another minority who had been a presence on this campus for many, many, many, many years were the Rockbridge County students who got a free education here. Having known some of them, I've heard them say that they always felt as though they were considered lesser students by their peers. I wondered whether the administration—whether that kind of concern was voiced to the administration, and whether you all made any effort on their behalf, any special effort on their behalf.

John: I'm not certain what the current situation was—

Warren: I'm talking back then,

John: But, oftentimes they were admitted, I think, with somewhat lesser admissions credentials. This has not been true constantly through, but as a benefit to the community, they also were given tuition, but did not live in the dormitories the freshman year with other members of the class. It varies according to the situation, because as I think I told you, my son was one here, but not on a Rockbridge County grant, because we would not let him live at home during any of his years here. I never heard that voiced specifically, that they were treated in that way by other students, but I can see the roots of a complaint like that, if in case that was, because I think to a certain extent they might have been looked upon as less qualified students who came without paying tuition, and therefore [were] different from the rest of the student body.

Warren: But as far as you know, no special effort was made for the day students.

John: Not to my recollection, anyway. No.

Warren: I was just curious.

Now, another big transition that jumps out at one as you look through the *Calyx*es through the years is that you were witness to the demise of conventional dress. I would think that, as dean of students, that probably was a topic of conversation in your office.

John: Not so much in my office, but a topic of conversation on campus. With general student attitudes in the '60s and early '70s, I think it was certainly a change from an alumni point of view, because [conventional dress] was regarded never as any university regulation, but as a student tradition. The same I think is sometimes said of the speaking tradition. But the Assimilation Committee, in my day was a very strong student organization, which enforced conventional dress, for example, by having to wear a yellow beanie instead of the traditional blue beanie that freshmen wore. So, I think that with the student generations that came along in the late '60s or about that time, there was a good bit of discussion on the demise of these traditions, but more importantly, customs, I think. Faculty, of course—the occasional faculty member, Jefferson Davis Futch being the most prominent one there who went for a long time and required a tie in his classroom after the general student body did not [wear ties]. You didn't have to wear a coat and a tie; you could wear a t-shirt, but as long as you had a tie on for him. He was a traditionalist in that respect, but this was always looked upon as a student body matter, and I believe the student body changed significantly in thinking that it was important, and became much more concerned with enforcing what they considered to be a real and important tradition, the honor system being the prime example of that. It was just in line with, I think, dress trends nationally, particularly as our student body changed. [The demise of conventional dress was] lamented by alumni, but not by the student generations who no longer saw value in conventional dress and wearing a coat and tie.

Warren: Well, part of my question comes from the fact that you were one of those alumni, and so you had an interesting, at least dual, position on this, looking at it as an alumnus, but also as somebody who was on campus, saw what was happening, knew what was happening nationally, and so I'm just curious. Did *you* have any—and did you and Bob Huntley, and you and your fellow, in particular, faculty members who were alumni—was there a sadness among you, or did you just go with the flow?

John: Yes and yes. I think there was a bit of nostalgia [and] longing for the days of conventional dress, but talking about it, but not—well, it depends on the individual, but going with the flow, by and large, I think. I myself had somewhat mixed feelings. I thought it was nice in its day, but saw that there was really no way that it could be enforced by the students themselves who did not want it, and that it would no longer be an asset for the university.

Warren: And would you in your position—thinking out loud, probably not—but would you have had interactions with the alumni where they came in and said, "How dare you let this happen?!" and where you had to explain: "May I remind you it's not us who lets it happen; it's the students who decide these things."

John: Only on alumni reunion weekends, usually, did you get this, or the occasional letter to the alumni magazine.

Warren: Or the president's office. I can tell you there were plenty of letters in the president's hands.

John: I'm sure there were, yes. But, some, I would say, alumni generally, I think, lamented the passing of conventional dress, but by and large saw it in a different category or a different type of custom on campus than something more fundamental such as the honor system. But, yes, there were obviously letters and complaints, but discussions on campus, too.

Warren: Okay. I'm going to pause.

[Begin Lew John track 08]

Warren: One of the things that I have been doing a lot of in preparation for our interview was looking at board minutes, and it seems that when Dean John would be asked to give his reports, the thing that Dean John talked about most—well, there were two topics, but the thing that he consistently talked about—time, after time, after time, after time—was admissions, and that admissions—for several years early on, the conversations were about the challenge of recruiting black students. You want to talk about that some?

John: Yes. You're talking about before the Student Life Committee, or in the early years?

Warren: Talk about in the '70s, the early '70s.

John: Admissions was always a topic of interest with the board, and they would specifically ask in my report, when I had responsibility for admissions. Later on, Bill Hartog was named to succeed Jim Farrar, and eventually his operation became a separate one, reporting directly to the

president. So, admissions—when it was under the responsibility of the dean of students' office—was a concern each year, but I guess for me particularly in the early days of black students attending Washington and Lee, [it] was a real concern because I felt that by and large we were not doing the kind of job in attracting black students here that we could be, and yet how to do it was a real concern. It was not until, as I said, 1970 that we got our first significant group, and then it fell off again after that. So, I think a lot of what the board was concerned with hearing from me, and what I was interested in conveying to the board, were the difficulties, as you indicate, of attracting black students to provide the significant size or corps in order that they would not feel—those that did come—would not feel isolated and separated.

Warren: For several years—not for a long time, but for several years, there seems to have been discussion—and I don't know how many trustees were voicing this—but there was discussion where you were challenged about: Why is this so important? Why do we need to make this special effort? What was your response to that?

John: It did come from a few members of the board. I don't think the board as a whole felt that way; I may be wrong. But, I would make the argument on the need for—which many of the trustees had no recollection of because it was a homogeneous student body—but the need in any educational institution, I felt, for diversity of opinion, diversity of background, and the intellectual atmosphere that was created by a diverse and heterogeneous, rather than homogeneous, student body. Not all trustees agreed with that, but that was the general line of thinking, particularly in terms of the board's statement of the mid-'60s, and the obligation that we felt to provide an atmosphere, and to create a large enough corps [of minority students] within the student body as a whole to provide a nucleus for the kind of diversity—racial and otherwise: geographical, economic—that we felt was necessary to provide the kind of intellectual atmosphere necessary at Washington and Lee.

Warren: You kept saying, making your reports in ways that were trying to make nice about it, clearly the quality of the students was not what it used to be. Test scores were not as good. The numbers of applications weren't as good, often. I'm just interested to hear your sense of what was happening in the '70s that caused those shifts in the demographics here at Washington and Lee.

John: I'm not sure one could say that it was a significant downward shift in the quality of the student body, but there were certainly faculty members who complained about what later would become known as the *soggy bottom*. I think it was an increasingly competitive atmosphere nationally, as Washington and Lee strove to increase its SAT scores, and numbers in admission, which fluctuated, I think, over time. Went down in the mid- to late '70s, but I think there were various factors, one being the question, anyway, of an all-male student body, and of course this raises the question of coeducation, which we can come back to. But, given the nature of our student body, we did not attract the lower income, middle and lower classes, because of the nature of our student body, historically and traditionally, as economically fairly homogeneous student body. And at times, the applicant pool nationally went up and down, but it was an increasingly competitive environment. Some years the applications falling off, too, but usually SAT scores, on the average, and admissions numbers rising, I would think, but there were interludes of that.

Warren: There were clearly times it got to be a point where you were making—you were providing a lot of statistical evidence about things from year to year, and that was new. So, clearly you were being more scientific about how you—somebody was being more scientific—about the approach to admissions. It seemed that way and the nature of the reports that were being given to the trustees was changing, and I'm just curious about what inspired that, or whether that was just the way things were done everywhere else, and so we started doing it here.

John: I think it's primarily the latter, and the interest expressed by the trustees, in terms of the type of reports they wanted [me] to give. Yes, I think as we went along, we provided more analyses of what was going on, both in admissions and financial aid, and I think that the pride—when there were increased SAT scores, for example—and [we would] tout those, and our applicant pool went up. I think that's always what admissions offices—now anyway—are interested in putting before their trustees. But, it was largely a matter of becoming somewhat more analytical in admissions' approach to scores, and class rank, and so forth.

Warren: Tell me what you mean, or what the faculty meant, when they talked about the *soggy bottom*.

John: This was more in line later with discussions of coeducation, but the general feeling among the faculty was that we would never have a problem in attracting the quantity of applicants and

students that the university would desire, but that the—and we would never have any real trouble attracting the top students. In other words, the comparison of students [in] 1980, as compared with 1975, just to take a couple of years at random, the top half or the top quarter of the students—the faculty felt—were just as good or better than ever in terms of their experience in teaching at Washington and Lee.

However, the bottom of the class, whether this was due to a falling off at times of applicants, or just the applicant pool that we were able to attract, was not as good as it had been in previous years, so the faculty were using this as an argument for coeducation in that we need to increase the size of the applicant pool in terms of the quality of the students accepted last, or accepted late in the admissions process. In other words, that we were having to go to perhaps more less-qualified students from the waiting list and that was what the argument was for coeducation, that that *soggy bottom*, to use their term, would be raised by the fact that we'd be taking fewer male applicants and adding to the applicant pool with female applicants.

Warren: One of the things in these reports you were submitting to the trustees that interested me that as early as 1973 the majority of the accepted applicants said that they would prefer to go to a coed school, and some of them did decide to come here, but many of them did not come here, and that was as early as 1973. I was surprised that it was that early that the number was that high.

John: Well, Washington and Lee first began looking at coeducation in the late '60s, I think it was. I remember early on—I can't remember whether it was '68 or '69—that Bob Huntley appointed a coeducation study committee. In studying the question as more and more formerly male schools accepted women—the question came up on a fairly regular basis: How many students are we losing, or how many potential applicants are not applying to Washington and Lee, or if they apply and [are] accepted, are not coming to Washington and Lee because of the all-male status here? The opponents of coeducation always would argue that there is and always will be a market for single-sex educational institutions, and some of those questions were, again, part of a more analytical approach we used in determining statistics: why people came, and why [some] did not come. But also, [this was] in keeping with the various studies of coeducation that began as far back as, as I say I think it was '69 that the first coeducation study committee [began its work], and then [we had other studies] on a fairly regular basis after that.

Warren: And I remember that in the '70s, there were some exchange students here. Did they fall into your purview as dean of students?

John: Loosely, yes,

Warren: Tell me about having them on campus.

John: This was regarded by some as an alternative to coeducation, but also was regarded by the area schools as an opportunity to provide an opportunity for those who wanted to go off campus for a term, or a year, and so I don't know who originally formulated this. It was probably the dean of the college office. But, it was a general undertaking by, I believe, eight colleges—eight or nine—to provide another kind of opportunity for our students to go elsewhere, and for those of predominantly single-sex schools to get some mix on their campus. I may be wrong on this, but it always seemed as if the in-flow to Washington and Lee in numbers of students from exchange consortium schools was greater than the students that we sent to other schools. But, again, I think it may have been looked upon by some as an alternative to coeducation; I think it was generally an agreement by the area schools involved to broaden the educational opportunities available for their students.

Warren: Were there issues you had to deal with having women on campus? Where did they live when they were here?

John: It's a good question. They were offered—I can't honestly remember the specific living arrangements. I think most lived off campus to not live in university housing, but there may have been some that lived on campus. I really don't remember any significant problems arising from their—

Warren: So this was not a big discussion or factor in the dean of students' office?

John: Not really. An occasional problem might come up, but no, it was not a major issue.

Warren: Some of the other—I'm going to pause before we start another topic.

[Begin Lew John track 09]

Warren: Some of the other things that were going on in the world, and certainly made their way to Lexington as realities and issues: the world had started consuming drugs with great enthusiasm during your time as dean of students. Was that a factor here, and what went on here? I know that by the time—by 1974, the university felt the need to publish *The Student and the Law* handbook, so I figured some things must have been going on to inspire that.

John: Short answer: yes. It was a significant issue, although it is still true, and I think has been, that the drug of choice at Washington and Lee is alcohol. But, given the general climate of the early ’70s and the late ’60s, there was increasing drug use of various kinds on campus, and it certainly became an issue here, and along the way there were students who got into difficulty. There were those who—well, there were various university drug policies put out over the years, and, as I say, particularly in the early ’70s and then again in the early to mid-’80s, it became a significant issue when there was a so-called drug bust by the local Commonwealth’s Attorney, John Reed, who I think saw drugs as a great problem in Lexington and on the campuses there, and there was a year-long investigation, under cover. He really brought the question of use and selling of drugs to be a major issue, and there were, as a result of his investigation, a number of both Washington and Lee students, VMI, and locals who were charged, and indicted, and ultimately found guilty of distribution. He, by and large, I think, went after those who were doing some minimal selling, even if to friends. So, the university was part of this, certainly, and drugs and university drug policy did, indeed, become an ongoing issue, given higher education generally in the country, but also on a local basis, and I know there were a number of those who were students or former students who were sentenced to jail terms, largely at Bland Correctional Farm in southwest Virginia. I remember going down to visit several of those who were incarcerated as a result of the drug bust.

The board of trustees was also concerned with use, and with policy statements that would clarify the university position, if it needed clarification, but there was that. One of the things that the board of trustees got very much involved in the ’80s as a result of the Commonwealth’s Attorney drug bust was the question of the receiving of a degree by a senior who has been charged with, but not convicted of, drug distribution, and that became quite a major issue on campus for a short period of time.

Warren: What was the outcome of that?

John: It went back and forth. The faculty at one point said to be fair to everybody, if a student’s trial has not come up and he has not yet been found guilty—of a felony charge, we’re talking about, primarily—then he ought to be able to receive his degree. The board of trustees—and I’m trying to remember the chronology on this—disagreed and said that a degree should be suspended, or the awarding of a degree should be suspended until that student’s case has been

completed. And if he's been found guilty in court and served some time, then he should not be able to receive a degree. They went back and forth on it for some time. To tell you the truth, I'm not sure what the final resolution was, but I know, in at least one case, of a student who was not sentenced in a trial until after his graduation date. His degree was withheld and the board said that he would not be able to receive a degree until he completed any jail sentence and probationary period associated with his conviction. Now, how broadly that was applied, I'm not really sure, but I know that that was a real concern on the part of the faculty and the board of trustees, largely arising from this drug investigation by the Commonwealth's Attorney.

Warren: And what was your take on all of this? You're not a member of the board. What did Lew John think?

John: I thought everybody ought to be treated equally, but if charges were pending, then a student should not receive a degree until the case had been heard in court.

Warren: Well, what was your take on discovering that all these illegal activities were going on? Washington and Lee had a long tradition of accepting that drinking was going on, so what was the difference from your perspective, or was there a difference?

John: I think—well, I was a little old-fashioned, I guess, in thinking that drugs other than alcohol should probably be treated differently from alcohol. One reason on that is the drugs such as, you know, cocaine or even marijuana, have always been illegal, whereas alcohol, the minimum age for drinking has varied over the years: eighteen, and most recently, twenty-one, which makes the university position more difficult, I might add. But alcohol has always been treated separately as a legal drug with the difference being the age at which it can be consumed or purchased, whereas this other class of classified drugs are illegal generally. I guess this is kind of a wishy-washy position. Although they are both drugs and I consider alcohol to be the drug of greatest abuse at Washington and Lee, still, I think they need to be treated somewhat differently.

Warren: And speaking of alcohol, there are have been periods when the law allowed eighteen-year-olds to be drinking and there was a free flow of beer at the Cockpit, and then the law changed, and you had to oversee all of that. What was that like, to have to deal with all of that?

John: Not fun.

Warren: I'll bet.

John: The history of legal regulation of alcohol is somewhat unusual, I think, in this country, and just to put my own position on record, I am in favor of an eighteen minimum age for drinking. And, again, you know, our former member of the board of trustees, John McCardle, who was president of Middlebury [College] and is now president of the University of the South at Swanee, has headed a national organization to at least study the matter of lowering the minimum drinking age to eighteen, and Ken Ruscio was part of a group called Amethyst, I believe it was called, that signed a letter among college presidents not in favor of that position, but urging study of that position. I would say strictly from the university's point of view—and I can argue that minimum age for drinking on a more general proposition—but I found it much easier to deal with the question of alcohol when there was a lower minimum age, and it was eighteen rather than twenty-one.

Warren: Is it possible that you have answered this question—I don't know—but do you think by any chance there was less abuse when the drinking age was eighteen, or has the consumption rate remained steady around here?

John: You're speaking on the Washington and Lee campus specifically?

Warren: Yes. Was there less need for binge drinking?

John: Yes. I was going to say the one big difference that I would argue, that there is more binge drinking now, and there is really less opportunity for the university to try to educate students in the *use* rather than *abuse* of alcohol when one can drink on the campus in the GHQ or the Cockpit, and have some control over the situation, try to educate our students rather than to be put in the spot of enforcing the law, or of not enforcing a twenty-one-year-old [drinking age], turning your head in regard to the use of alcohol on campus. I think that the twenty-one-year-old age puts the university in, I would argue, a significantly more difficult position, not putting itself in as the enforcer of state law, which I find difficult, but having to have rules in compliance with state law. And I do think probably the use of alcohol by our students has not significantly changed one way or the other with the higher drinking age, but I do think that there is more binge drinking, and it puts the university in a more difficult role or, in its educational role, it puts the university in a more difficult position. So, again, that is an issue which has been with Washington and Lee ever since I've been associated with it, but the context of dealing with the issue certainly changes with the change in the drinking age.

The other aspect of it is I don't like the way the Federal Government went about imposing the twenty-one-year age. If they had simply said that there will be a national minimum drinking age of twenty-one, that would be one thing, but they didn't. They did it through—again, I'm being a little harsh here—what I like to call fiscal blackmail in that they said if states don't raise or have a twenty-one-year-old minimum drinking age by October 1, 1986, maybe, then you will have withheld 10 percent of your state highway transportation funds. So, rather than lose transportation highway money, all the states reluctantly went along, and now they're—it's state-by-state, but it is a national uniform age, and I just think that's a poor way to go about policymaking in terms of what they did to get the states to go along with a twenty-one minimum age.

Warren: All these things we're talking about, I'm sure perhaps caused letters, phone calls, whatever, with parents. Help me to understand: Who is it who has to field those calls? Is it the dean of students? Is it the president? If somebody calls the switchboard at Washington and Lee, who do they get put through to, if it's an irate parent?

John: Where possible, it depends on the nature of the complaint. A side point before I get back to that: the nature of the university—the role of the university vis-à-vis parents has changed somewhat, I think, with the demise of *in loco parentis* to the more general policy of providing assistance for students, but also having to deal along the way with what was called the Buckley Amendment [the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974], and the—I forget what the official title of the law was—student rights, privacy rights, and so forth—but generally saying that students are entitled to a large degree of privacy, and the real question is how much can you tell parents when they do call and complain, and still follow the guidelines of what was called the Buckley Amendment, and student privacy rights. At the time that this was enacted, we always as a matter of course had sent parents a copy of grades, for an example, and then all of a sudden this privacy amendment comes along, and the general interpretation is: Well, you can't send grades home without the student's approval or permission. Where is the burden of proof then? And we finally got around to an interpretation, saying that students had to take the initiative to keep parents from seeing their grades, rather than putting the burden the other way, getting specific permission from the parents, particularly where parents are paying the money for their [student's] education.

So, this has been an issue that we've been dealing with, but always we will get complaints, but oftentimes complaints would be routed to the dean of students' office. Sometimes, parents would be irate enough to call the president directly, but it didn't happen too often—not that it didn't happen. But oftentimes also they would call the student's faculty advisor, for example, if it were primarily an academic problem.

Warren: Let me be a fly on your wall, or on your shoulder, and hear the voice of an irate parent. What kind of phone calls would you have to field?

John: Anything from an unfair grade, to: "I haven't heard from my son in two days. Could you please get him to call me?" "Why can't I get a room for parents' weekend? My son hasn't been able to get me a room." "I understand my son is going before the Executive Committee tonight for an honor system violation. What can I do about this?" The entire range, I think, of concerns that parents have. I love the term now, incidentally, that they seem to be using for a lot of parents: *helicopter parents*. That is a new one for me, but—

Warren: Oh, they're out there.

John: I'm sure they are.

Warren: And the students are still tied by the umbilical cord, from what I can tell.

John: But I would get probably my greatest wave of calls from parents—not necessarily irate, but some upset—after the grades were sent home. If the student did not do particularly well, or if I had made some comment on the grade that they wanted to follow up on, or a complaint about the grade, that would seem to be peak period, two and then three times a year, after they came through.

Warren: What about the alumni parents? Were they any different than non-alumni parents?

John: I don't think so, generally. I think that alumni parents were more likely to call the admissions office if their son was not accepted, or if they were put on the waiting list, or questions of admission.

Warren: I wondered whether they would have a fuller understanding of the honor system and how it works, so you'd be less likely to hear from them.

John: Two parts to the answer on that. I think yes, that by and large, alumni parents would more fully understand the honor system, but on the other hand, I think alumni parents—not in general—but alumni parents would feel a greater sense of entitlement to call and complain, or

just to call because they had been here and felt a greater sense of, well, entitlement, to make a call like that, and to be more involved, perhaps, in their son's or now son and daughter's education. I don't remember any specific one way or the other on it, though, to tell you the truth, although I got to know alumni parents more or better because I had been to school with many of them, and I just talked more on the phone with them because of having known them before.

Warren: I'm going to pause.

[Begin Lew John track 10]

Warren: Well, what do you say? Shall we go for the fraternities and really bite into them?

John: Why not?

Warren: We've alluded to them a lot, but reading those trustee minutes—those trustees were starting to get anxious back in the '70s, and having lived here in Lexington in the late '70s, they had good reason.

John: Yes.

Warren: They had very good reason. Obviously we ultimately wound up with Fraternity Renaissance under John Wilson, but let's not go there yet. Let's talk about what was happening with the fraternities, and whether you considered that your bailiwick. But, as a citizen of Lexington of the '70s: why did you let that go on?

John: You get into questions of what was—I think it's a little clearer now, what is the role of the university vis-à-vis fraternities? But then, there was a good deal of—not uncertainty, but concern about the conduct, condition of the houses, concern about what the proper role of the university was there, and how far the university could or should go. The declining position of the fraternities, I think, was obvious, particularly in terms of noise, the physical condition of the houses, also. But until the renaissance that you mentioned, I don't think the role of the university was all that clear as the IFC argued student self governance: the university has no right to control the way we live. The university's concern, on the other hand, with the declining conditions. Also, in the early '70s, the declining interest of the students in joining fraternities, and, in fact, at one point, given the conditions and situation of the early '70s, the fraternity membership declined from about 85 percent down to the 50s at some point. So, along with this came the financial concerns: what can we do to make sure that the fraternities remain financially viable? Plus, the obvious facts that few of the—or many of the fraternities houses themselves were not owned by

the university, but by the fraternity house corporations, and therefore, how much responsibility or control should the fraternity house corporations exert?

So, little by little, I think, the condition of the fraternities was deteriorating, primarily in terms of physical condition of the houses, but also in terms of noise violations. And the financial condition of the fraternities was worsening, so that four houses went off campus in that period of the '70s. Three of the four came back, but [we] also lost other houses because of either internal problems, or problems of declining numbers. There were two Jewish fraternities, for example, and they eventually both went off campus. Why? Primarily because the other fraternities were accepting Jewish members, which had not been the case earlier. But, anyway, it was a matter of how far the university should go, or how bad the situation had to get in fraternities before the university really stepped in and clamped down. According to the IFC, the university ought to stay out of it. According to many on the faculty, the university should impose Draconian measures to shake the fraternities up.

Another aspect of this was the previous also requirement for housemothers, and that was dropped after a great deal of discussion, as the fraternities pled financial problems, and said that there was no role for housemothers anymore; they were simply ornaments, and their presence in the house did nothing to promote civil behavior, which was one of the reasons, of course, for having housemothers there in the first place. Well, rightly or wrongly then—and I regret what happened—those arguments won the day, and so increasing, I believe, this downward slide was the lifting of the requirement for housemothers.

Warren: Why do you think that argument won the day?

John: Because there were some good—there was some truth—put it that way—in what the fraternities were saying. I think they were a financial drain.

Warren: *They* the housemothers?

John: They, the housemothers, on the fraternities. And, if you believe the fraternities, they were not serving the role that they once had. When I was an undergraduate, for example. I think the presence of the housemother did, in fact, provide a degree of civility and behavior in the house that would not have been there. So, I think with the relaxing of university rules, which at one time said that women could not be above the first floor of fraternity houses—with the general

relaxation of the rules, I think the fraternities won the day through their arguments of saying that that was an outmoded requirement that should be relaxed.

But, again, the deteriorating conduct and condition of the fraternity houses was a significant problem. Not an even, steady downward trend, but the university would come in and try to impose some rules, or encourage the IFC to enact some rules on parties, for example, particularly with the changing of the drinking age and so forth. So, it was a constant—*battle* is perhaps too strong a word, but a constant issue to try to get the fraternities themselves to do a better job of self governance, and failing that, the university trying to impose certain regulations, which would help. It all came to fruition, of course, in the '80s with the renaissance, but the ten to fifteen years before that were difficult ones, and ones that caused a lot of complaints both from alumni, who would return to residents of Lexington who were naturally bothered by the noise and condition of the houses.

Warren: Yeah, as somebody who was just a very few years out of college myself, I should have been a lot more accepting, but what was going on was *woah*. It was pretty shocking to even me.

What was the sinking fund? There was a reference to that in 1976. Some outside group, the National Loss Control Associates, were hired to come in and inspect the houses for safety hazards. There was a lot going on in 1976 and '77, and the board [of trustees] was not happy.

John: I don't remember that year specifically, to tell you the truth, but a sinking fund, I think, was a fund into which there would be money put to pay for damages and to make repairs to the houses, if I remember correctly. I'm not…

Warren: Well, the board in particular seemed—probably rightly so—concerned about all the negative publicity that was going on, and there was even discussion of using suspension to get control over the situation.

John: No, there were various things being threatened, I guess is the way to put it, but there were definitely problems of maintenance of the houses, and how to finance house maintenance, as well as the conduct, excessive noise. I do know that was a significant concern. I don't remember that specific year, and why the board would have been particularly—had that brought to the board in that particular year.

Warren: Let's shift away from fraternities until we bring John Wilson into the picture. We've alluded many times to the honor system. At one point—and I can't remember exactly what the

year was—that the student body came to the conclusion that a white book needed to be published. I know that would have been something done by the students, but as dean of students, would you have been an advisor or in any way involved in that?

John: I might have been involved, but I was not—I dealt with the Executive Committee primarily, in terms of their honor system hearings, and individual involvement. In terms of their general policy, I remember the EC itself felt—or the student body felt—that there had to be more written down. Not codified, but more in the way of procedural safeguards and procedural matters that would be followed in the honor system hearings. So, I may have been involved in saying, "Yes, you probably should do something like that," or "No, you shouldn't." But, at some point—I'm not sure year the white book first came into existence, but there was a felt need on the part of the EC and the student body that rather than by having a general understanding of what the procedure would be, it should be written down, and there should be more procedural safeguards built in for those accused of an honor system violation.

Warren: And you say that you would get involved on some level with violations. Tell me about that. What was your role?

John: Basically, two general things, I guess. I usually had a good working relationship with the president of the student body, the head of the EC, and would confer on a regular basis with him, keeping in mind the EC has greater responsibilities, too, that they are the student governance body generally, not just the honor hearing board. But my major involvement in that would be when a student would be found guilty of an honor violation. Sometimes I would know that there was going to be a hearing that evening, and sometimes I would not. But whenever a student was found guilty at a private hearing—private hearing meaning only themselves, not going to the public phase of appeal—I would be called in usually at one, two, three o'clock in the morning, because their hearings would usually be scheduled in the evening, and would often drag on into the hours. Anyway, I would be called in to consult with the student—the person who had been found guilty—and, in essence, tell him what his options were in regard to withdrawing from the university now, or requesting a public hearing. Public hearing meaning a student body hearing held usually in Lee Chapel in appeal of the guilty decision that the EC had reached.

Warren: So if there was an appeal, it was always a public appeal?

John: Yes, that was the appeal procedure, unless the—for some reason—and I can remember it happened once or twice—there would be additional information brought to the attention of the EC that had not come up in the original hearing, and then they would rehear the case with the additional information. But the appeals procedure, from a guilty decision by the Executive Committee was to what they call a student body hearing in which the jurors are selected at random from the student body, and that is a trial—a hearing—which is open to members of the university community to observe. Now, the number of those found guilty requesting that appeal procedure has varied greatly from year to year. The most I can remember there were, I think, five student body appeals from guilty verdicts of the Executive Committee.

Warren: Five in one year?

John: Five in one year. And then there were other periods in which might go eight to ten years without any. It's just widely varied. But that was my primary involvement in the honor system, dealing with individual cases where the student has been found guilty: telling him his options; offering to call his parents if he wanted me to. Usually did not.

Warren: Had you served on the EC as a student?

John: No, I had not.

Warren: So you moved into this role of dean of students. Can you take yourself back to getting the first or second phone call, what that was like to have to come in and have those conversations?

John: Well, I had talked with both Ed Atwood and whoever the student body president was that first year about what would happen, and really it was more or less pro forma type of thing to make sure that the student understands what his options were, and that there be a university presence to provide assistance beyond the group of students that had just found him guilty. So, it was tough the first—well, it was tough all the way through because that's a difficult time to have to talk to a student about a situation like that, and being unfamiliar with it made it a little more difficult the first time or two, but it was nothing special. Just being there as a university official to provide support and to make sure the student knew his options.

Warren: Were you aware of what he or she had been charged with?

John: The charge only. The EC president would tell me when I first came in: John Doe has been found guilty of cheating on a physics exam, or something like that. Not the details, because they

did not want—and I did not want—to know too much about it, and put myself in the position of judging guilt or innocence, because that was not my role. But the nature of the infraction, yes. But beyond that, no.

Warren: Well, this helps to explain the stories I've heard about people waking up one day and somebody's just gone, and I always wondered, how can they just be gone? Doesn't somebody from the university know? Well, it happened in the middle of the night, and it was the dean of students. What happened if you were away?

John: There would always be somebody to fulfill that function, and usually I would touch base with the EC president just to say, "Well, I'm going to be gone for the next three days. If you have anything come up, call *x* or *y*."

Warren: Tough job.

John: Yeah. The toughest—well, maybe the toughest part, but the most stressful part of the dean of students' job, I think, is anytime—I felt—the phone rang after ten or eleven o'clock, because it would most likely be either a student found guilty, or a student death: a suicide, an automobile accident, something like that. So, it was almost never good news when the phone rang at that hour, as it, unfortunately, did from time to time. But dealing with these two types of situations: the honor system and a student death of some kind.

Warren: If it was a student death, who would place the call? Who would be on the other end of the phone?

John: It could be just about anybody. I mean, the state police if it were a traffic accident, a roommate or somebody in the general domicile where the student lived if it were a suicide. So, it just depends on—or, somebody in the hospital. It just depended on the circumstances, and where the individual was found.

Warren: So did you think about all that when they asked you to take the job?

John: I knew that was part of the job, but I really didn't think that much about it initially. It was really—well, I always say that the first year as dean of students was the most difficult for me for a variety of reasons, including the spring frivolities of [following] the Kent State [killings in May 1970] and the [subsequent] actions on campus. But even way before that, even before classes started, there was a student death on the road between Lexington and Lynchburg, and this was,

again, even before students arrived on campus. It turned out that he was the son of an alumnus from Richmond.

And [we] had several honor system withdrawal cases, and then the major one of that—well, not that one is more major than another—but there was a student and a faculty member killed in an automobile accident just north on [interstate] 81, up around Toms Brook [Virginia]. He was a faculty member: Bill Chapin, who was the debate coach, coming back from [a] Dartmouth College debate tournament, and they never did ascertain who was driving, but the faculty member and one of the two students was killed in that accident. This was on a Sunday afternoon. I remember I was just walking out of the house, and I got the phone call. I guess it was from the state police. I'm not sure who it was from. But anyway, I had to go up and deal with that.

It was a rough year, and I thought: Gee, with all of this going on, I'm never going to last at this job more than a couple of years. Ed Atwood came up to me at graduation that first year, and he said, "You know, this was a good year not to be dean of students," and I said, "Yeah, tell me about it, Ed. I can tell you a lot about that." But anyway, it is these individual situations, too—either deaths or honor system cases—that can be the most difficult. I think student death is probably the worst, as far as I was concerned, because it usually, or often, involved calling the parents or seeing that they were notified of the accident.

Warren: Hard stuff. Well, I think we should take a break after that.

John: Okay. We shall.

[Begin Lew John track 11] FIXED TO HERE

Warren: All right. You knew we had to get around to it, and you brought it up first, but you knew I was getting around to it: 1970. Spring. Kent State. But it wasn't just Kent State; it was ROTC, it was the military draft, it was all kinds of stuff. That was your first year [as dean of students].

John: Yes, it was.

Warren: Let's talk about the big national picture, and how it plunked itself down in Lexington.

John: Well, it was an unusual year in so far as Washington and Lee students [were] not being apathetic; in being activist, to the extent that Washington and Lee students are ever active.

Warren: Now wait a minute. Let's develop that theme a little bit. Tell me what you mean by that.

John: Generally speaking, I think Washington and Lee students are considered apathetic in terms of issues beyond the campus, and issues of war and peace, and issues of national policy. I think this has become less so in recent years, but I think that to a large extent, Washington and Lee students were conservative, wrapped up in their own affairs in their little cocoon of a campus, and, unlike many other colleges—I won't make any broad generalizations—but not that concerned about issues of national import, or of getting involved in issues beyond the campus. Now, this is obviously an over-generalization, and is not nearly so true today as it was then, but students at Washington and Lee became concerned, as did students across the country, about our Vietnam involvement. So there were, earlier in the year, various protests off campus—not so much on campus—but some students would go to Washington to march in a rally there.

But, beginning in the spring, of course, there were the national incidents of the Kent State shootings, following up on the invasion of Cambodia, and so forth. So, Washington and Lee students were concerned about this, and became involved, not to the extent of shutting down the school as was the case on some other campuses, but becoming involved in some protest rallies: leaving class to go to UVA, for example, to hear—I don't know whether that was [William] Kuntsler and [Jerry] Rubin, or who it was, but anyway, speakers at UVA. Generally speaking, showing concern about U.S. policy, and what had happened at Kent State, and what was happening internationally. So, [we] had a brief period of interest by students in leaving campus and going to protest. The cynical view is they just wanted the spring term off, or the spring off, and not go to classes, but regardless, there was a series of rallies on campus.

There were some potential threats against the ROTC building. You mentioned ROTC. So, there were students who were formed up to protect or guard that, as well as the president's house. It was interesting that there were six or seven students that gathered on the porch of the Huntleys' house—Lee House—to protect it and to make sure that there were not any elements that wanted to do damage to it. But there was a series, then, of student body meetings, some in front of Lee Chapel. I don't remember the exact details, but finally the request or demand—put it however you want to—that there was a corps of activist students that wanted to suspend classes and to become involved in the protests off campus.

So, there were a series of meetings. It was the change-over period between student body presidents. The outgoing president, Swede Henberg, and the incoming president, Fran Lawrence, were both involved in that. There were various threats. Jeff Gingold—I'm sure you've come across that name—was one of the more activist ones who became involved, and later in designating Washington and Lee as a Southeast Region Strike Headquarters, or something like that. But anyway, it just came down to a matter of—the students ended up voting, overwhelmingly, to shut down classes and to, in essence, suspend the remainder of the academic year, which was three weeks or less than that. The faculty response to that, and Bob Huntley's role in the university response, I think, worked quite well. In essence, the faculty and Huntley saying, No, we're not going to shut down the university. If individual students want to go off in protest, they may be given grades of incomplete so long as they make up the work by the end of September—September 30, or, in the case of seniors, that they would have to do the work before graduation day. So, the response that the university gave and the faculty gave was: We understand your concern; we share your concern, but we are not going to shut down the university, whose main function is to educate people. We will sponsor and provide a series of seminars dealing with individual issues that come up, but it would go against the fundamental nature and purpose of this institution to simply suspend classes, call off the academic year.

So, looking back upon it in retrospect, I think the students showed a genuine concern, expressed it in various ways, but the faculty, and particularly Bob Huntley as president and leader of the faculty, provided a very rational, reasonable response and statement in regard to what the university was going to do, and how they would proceed. That's a short version of it, not that there weren't some very tense moments, and threats of student—some destruction of property, which never really happened. But the way the students ultimately responded in trying to protect the campus, also, but also in accepting the faculty and president's determination of the way things would be handled, I think—this perhaps puts a rather rosy glow on what did happen, but that's pretty much my recollection.

Warren: Well, yeah. It's a wonderful summary, and that's certainly my understanding of everything, but you haven't taken me there. I want to know what it felt like to be dean of students in the middle of all that.

John: It was a little scary.

Warren: Talk about that.

John: In trying to deal with what at the time appeared to be student mobs. Now, in retrospect and putting things in proportion, there were several large rallies, student body meetings, on the front campus between Washington Hall and Lee Chapel, but at the time [we] didn't really know what they were going to do, what kind of a response would be given by the faculty and university, and what would happen if the university said, "No, you're not going to get what you want," in essence. And also the perceived threatening situation, in a way, of disruption, of possible property damage, and so forth.

Warren: Because that *was* happening elsewhere.

John: Yes. That's what I was going to say, too, that how far the students followed the models of student reaction on other campuses was a question, too. But, putting myself in the middle of it, trying to talk with students, the real—not saving grace—but the real strong point for me was Bob Huntley and the way he sort of took over the situation, tried to calm things down, met with the faculty, ended up giving a good response. So, for a novice dean of students, he was a strong, reasonable president who is largely responsible for the results and keeping the situation under control.

Warren: And he hadn't been president all that long.

John: No, he—well, a year and a half. No, it was not that long.

Warren: It wasn't as though he'd had a lot of experience in dealing with this kind of situation. Nobody had. It was new.

John: It was new. It was.

Warren: Why do you think it happened? I was one of those students on my campus in the middle of all this, and we thought this was going to go on for the rest of our lives, and of course it turns out to have been a blip, a *blip* on the screen of higher education forever.

John: Yeah.

Warren: What's your theory about why it happened when it did?

John: I think it was the nature of American involvement, and the spark that was provided by Kent State. I think you put together the concern about American involvement, and the reaction on one campus. I don't know how much that really played into the whole thing, but I've got to think that that was the spark that set off the concern and general environment, about which there

already had been significant concern, protests, rallies, but the shooting of those students, I think, really was the spark that set it all off. Well, and a lot on this campus was also a reflection of what was going on elsewhere on other campuses, but you have to put it, I think, in the context of national concern, plus the specific incident that really set the campuses off.

Warren: How much was the military draft an element on this campus? The threat of being *drafted* into the military, as opposed to choosing to go into the military?

John: There was some of that, I think. I'm not sure how great a factor. It certainly helped ROTC enrollment, but that's another question. I mean, I never would have gotten in ROTC, I think, if I hadn't been facing a draft. So, it was a concern, but not a matter of an immediate situation that required action, or so thought the students. I don't know. It was a general concern, I think, but not an immediate factor, is my thought.

Warren: Well, it was quite a time.

John: Yes, it was.

Warren: And it's quite a file in the president's papers, that includes a lot of telegrams and letters coming in from parents and alumni who were very angry with how the administration was dealing with things. Were you in the middle of those discussions at all?

John: I wasn't in the middle. I knew that there were a lot of concerns being expressed by parents, but I did not—

Warren: That was Bob's bailiwick.

John: That was Bob's bailiwick, yeah.

Warren: The other thing I'm interested in, you were describing where your office was. You had a different perspective; you were looking right down on what was going on on the front campus.

John: To a large extent, although more often, I was down on the front campus, not looking at what was going on from above. So, yes, when I saw the crowds gathering, you could say that I had a good vantage point to do it, but I felt—and I wanted to be right in the middle of it, just to try to get the feeling from the students from there, rather than from a perch above.

Warren: And just to help me feel what it was like here, did you have a sense that you were being perceived as an ally? How were the students treating you, and what was the rapport among you during those days?

John: Not really as an ally, depending on the stage of the five days in May, or seven days in May—whatever they refer to it—because I think by and large the feeling of the students was an *us against them* mentality, and to a large extent, faculty and administrators were *them*. No, I would talk with individual students and have good exchanges with them, but in a large crowd—almost mob scene—it was a sort of *us* students against the administration, who were trying to keep us from—or who did not share this concern, even though we kept telling them we did. But no, it was more of an *us against them* mentality, I would say.

Warren: Again, from my reading, there were a lot of faculty members who were leading these seminars that were set up, and apparently they were—according to some of the faculty members—some of the most stimulating experiences they ever had on this campus.

John: Now, the faculty was not of one mind about this, I think.

Warren: Tell me what you mean.

John: There were activist faculty members who were if not leading, at least supporting the students in their demands and agreeing to lead the seminars, the bulk of which came later, but were, to put it in crude terms, siding with the students. But I think the range of opinions on the faculty were pretty broad, but by and large, I think, the faculty were concerned, but had the interest of maintaining classes, not shutting down the university, and therefore [were] seen by many of the students as antagonists, not allies, on this. That's a broad-brush statement, and there were faculty, as you indicated, who were strongly supportive: leading seminars, stimulating academically, intellectually, but probably not the majority of the faculty.

Warren: All right. Let's take a pause again.

[Begin Lew John track 12]

Warren: All right. Let's go back into that dean of students' office, both before and after you became the dean. There were all kinds of new bodies that came into that office, and there was a lot of growth in the numbers of human beings. First of all, you mentioned earlier that you moved around a bunch. Where did you set up shop to accommodate the various human beings who were being added to the office? Did you stay in the front of Washington Hall for a long time?

John: For a reasonable number of time, and then moved into Payne Hall annex, making the English Department very unhappy, because they had used that as a classroom.

Warren: I see.

John: So that was one spot. Keep in mind, also, that it was not a sudden instantaneous growth, but happened over time, and it largely depended on the nature of the office and available office space in—well, first on the second floor of Washington Hall, and then down in Payne annex. But, for example, when we added the placement office, or the career services office, and the university psychologist, there was the space across Washington Street in the Student Center, over there where their offices were. Growths in financial aid and admissions came a little bit later, but they got their own house there. So, Bill Hartog, when he came, was able to have his own separate space. Normally, I tried to keep together the dean of students, the dean of freshmen—the person that held that position—and also the minority affairs person, when that was added, and then beyond that, it was just a matter of space available and slow growth, but also growth in the physical plant on campus, which allowed additional spaces for that.
Warren: Before we lose track of it, on the admissions front: for a while that was your responsibility, and then I read that Jim Farrar went off to start up something where he was using alumni to try to recruit students during that period where you were having a hard time getting applications.
John: Right.
Warren: Tell me about that. What was that about? You know, I read one sentence in the minutes, and I say, "What was that about?" Tell me the background on that.
John: Background basically was, I think, that Jim Farrar was having some health problems, some difficulties. Bob Huntley decided that he should no longer be director of admissions, and Jim was sick off and on that year, which was—I don't know the specific year. This was in conjunction, or happened simultaneously with some drop in applications. So, in January or so, I think, Jim took on this new position in working with the alumni—what was officially called, I think, the Alumni Admissions Program—and working directly with the alumni to form alumni committees in the chapters—admissions committees in the chapters—and to help stimulate applications. Bob asked me to serve as the interim director of admissions while we had a search for a new director of admissions.
Warren: This was 1978.
John: Seventy-eight. Okay. So, basically, I was acting director of admissions for the remainder of that academic year.

Warren: As if you didn't have anything else to do.

John: And which coincidentally was the—I was going to say peak—the valley or the low point for our admissions applications applicant pool. You can give all sorts of reasons why that happened. One good reason was that, I think, we sunk below one thousand applications that year. That was the first year that we, or the Admissions Committee—there's a very active faculty Admissions Committee—decided to require an essay to be written by the applicant. To some extent—I'm not sure how much this played a part—but that essay proved to be a self-selecting tool, or part of the procedure in which serious applicants applied and wrote the essay, and others, who were not particularly serious about Washington and Lee, did not bother to write the essay and submit an application. The long and short of it is that the number of applications dipped significantly that year, but the acceptance rate of those offered admission—those who came—was higher, a good bit higher than in previous years.

Admissions were really at a crossing point there, where the need was felt for some new blood, and the search realized or got Bill Hartog who came in, and since then, I think the admissions picture, aided by coeducation, of course, [improved]. But Bill was a professional in there and used some admissions techniques and tools, and a larger budget, and was able to do a very good job in turning the admissions picture around.

Warren: Where did Bill Hartog come from?

John: He was director of admissions at Rollins College, down in Orlando? No, it's Winter Park, Florida. Anyway, the Orlando area. He had been admissions director there for several years.

Warren: He's been here a long time now.

John: He's been here since.

Warren: So were you the person who hired him?

John: Basically, yeah. We had a search committee.

Warren: Well, you must have made the right choice. You don't usually see people last quite that long. I was amazed to see that he's still here.

John: Yeah. He's a real admissions professional. A couple of years—I forget the exact chronology of it—the admissions and financial aid was cut out from the dean of students' area, so that he—as he should have—

Warren: Did that happen simultaneously when Bill arrived?

John: I don't think so. I'd have to go back and check that out, but my recollection is that after a couple years we decided that that ought to be a separate operation.

Warren: I think you were still making those reports to the board right to the end of the Huntley administration, so it might have happened then.

John: Yeah.

Warren: All right. So, we've made a number of allusions to the dean of freshman. Was that "English" Bob Huntley [of the Department of English]?

John: He was not the first one, but he did serve for seven or eight years, I think.

Warren: And was Bill Noell in that position?

John: We had a couple of people: Bill Noell, Bill Schildt, and then, I guess, "English" Bob, to differentiate between the Huntleys. Yeah, I think that was…

Warren: So, let me ask you. That was my reading, because I knew *that* Bob Huntley before I knew big Bob Huntley. So, around Washington Hall, how did you distinguish between these two guys?

John: One was short and one was tall.

Warren: I heard *Big Bob* and *Little Bob*.

John: No, I referred to him as "English" Bob. I'm not quite sure how we talked to them around the office, but he expressed some—when either Bill Noell or Bill Schildt was leaving—and I can't remember the order in which they did that—I do remember that Bill Schildt was in that position in not 1982, because I took a spring term leave of absence to finish my dissertation, and Bill Schildt filled in that spring term. He said, "Never again." He was complaining about the food fights in the dining hall and how things went to hell when I was off, but anyway… What was the question?

Warren: Well, we were talking about this concept of having a freshmen dean of students, and you've alluded to it, but tell me more in context of the office why you felt that you needed to define that position.

John: I think I came to the conclusion that freshmen needed to be paid more attention to, that they should have their own advocate, or their own person to assist in the transition from high school to college. I think I felt there were more freshmen that were having some difficulty making that transition, and that I was not able to devote the amount of time or attention to this

one discrete segment of our student body, which deserved more attention than they were getting, I guess is the best way to describe it. And a big part of that, of course, is residence life, because all freshmen have to live in the freshmen dorms. So, that involved this whole system of dorm counselors, and counseling resident advisors. [We] did not initially call it dean of freshmen; it's had various terms, but—associate dean of students for freshmen, something like that, and then I think finally we changed the title to director of residence life when Ken Ruscio came. Anyway, my concern was that freshmen should get more assistance and attention than I was able to provide, and having one person focus on that first year, and the first year experience generally, was something that would be beneficial to the university. So, I made that proposal to Bob.

Warren: To big Bob Huntley?

John: Big Bob Huntley, yes.

Warren: So Bill Noell and Bill Schildt, what were their backgrounds?

John: They were both Washington and Lee undergraduates. Bill Noell had gone off to—I believe it was UVA law school. Bill Schildt had come to law school here, and both were interested in spending additional time in the university, so it just—I worked them into different positions here. I'm not sure. I'd have to go back and see whether any of them were in the dean of students' office under Ed Atwood. I think, perhaps, that one of them was. Anyway, they were good people. Just happened to be lawyers by attendance at law school, which didn't impact one way or the other, but they wanted to be here and I was looking for assistance.

Warren: And so "English" Bob was the first person from the faculty coming over to do it.

John: Yes.

Warren: So why would a faculty member be willing to do this, or interested in doing it?

John: "English" Bob, in a conversation with me one day, just happened to say, "I'm getting tired of the same old thing in the classroom. I'm getting tired of teaching the same thing. I'd really like to do something else around here." Either then, or when the person in the job left, I just [said]: "Well, Bob, would you be interested in this dean of freshmen position?" And he said yes. And I thought he would fit in well there.

Warren: Well, I didn't think it was odd at all until I came across a handwritten memo from you, and I was fascinated. You were writing it to big Bob Huntley. It was some kind of a calculation about what "English" Bob was going to be paid for this position, and it was quite clear that

administrators were paid considerably less than faculty members. So, you were trying to figure out the formula for what Bob would be paid, because he was going to continue—

John: Twelve month.

Warren: But he was also going to continue to teach one or two classes.

John: Continue to teach one—right.

Warren: So you were coming up with this formula, and I don't know what came of it. This was just a proposal you were putting out. But what I came away having learned, and thought was very interesting was that the pay scale was quite different for administrators, as opposed to faculty members. So I found myself saying, "Why did Bob Huntley want to do this, and excuse me, why did Lew John want to be an administrator when he could have been a faculty member and made more money?"

John: To go to your second question first, I didn't know at the time that I took a job here that on a pro rata basis, faculty were paid more, and secondly, I wasn't qualified because I didn't have the degree to be a faculty member full time. I fell into this position, and I didn't know what the salary scale was at Washington and Lee for either faculty or administrators, so I accepted what I was offered and went from there.

In terms of Bob, I don't know. I don't remember the specifics on that, but I remember asking him—trying to figure out what would be fair so he wouldn't have to take a pay cut, and whether—and I don't know, frankly, how it worked out and what the comparison was with what he was making before, but I guess I figured he might be paid about as much, even though it would be on a twelve-month basis, in comparison with the nine-month teaching he was doing. I don't know how important money was to him, but I know he was unhappy in the classroom, and he looked upon this as a challenge, and as doing something new, which he was ready for, I think. Beyond that, I don't remember the details.

Warren: And he got to stay at Washington and Lee, which is what everybody really wants to do anyway.

John: Exactly. No, that was part of it. He was tired of teaching, but he wanted to stay at Washington and Lee, so that's what happened.

Warren: So, then this guy graduates and you snagged onto him and decided that he should work with you in, I think, it started with admissions? His name was Ken Ruscio.

John: Ruscio, yeah.

Warren: So, what was so special about this guy, and why did you think we should hold onto him?

John: Well, let me go back for a minute in that I think the idea of what we called then a *baby dean* had been established. In other words that we would hire a recent graduate for one, or at the most, two years to work in admissions, much as we have now.

Warren: Wait a minute. You're talking about the baby dean. Who is the baby dean?

John: Well, that was Ken in the year we're talking about.

Warren: So you mean previous years you had kept a student?

John: Yes.

Warren: I see. So it was sort of a dean in training kind of—

John: Yes, or something to do for a year or two before they went off to earn their fortune, or go to graduate school, or something.

Warren: I see. So he wasn't the first.

John: That's correct.

Warren: Okay, because I know the alumni—

John: Yeah. Alumni office does the same thing, and it was established—Bill Hartog changed it a bit in that we had always said it would be a W&L graduate to serve in this position for one or two years, and Bill did that, but said after three years or so, "Well, we want somebody to serve in that position, but he doesn't necessarily have to be a W&L graduate."

I had gotten to know Ken as an undergraduate. I had him in one class, a public administration class, and also I think he took an independent study with me, writing a paper. So, I had gotten to know him as a student, and I also had gotten to know him somewhat personally, too. I don't know whether I initiated it, or whether he said, "Gee, I'd like to stay around in that position, but anyway, we had a meeting of the minds and so I hired him and he stayed here two years in what is no longer called, but just colloquially called then the baby dean position, as an assistant dean of students, and working in the admissions area.

Warren: Well, let's follow through. Did you feel like you touched gold, ultimately?

John: Now I feel that way, yes.

Warren: Could you perceive that this was a leader in the making?

John: I thought that at some point down the road, yes. He and Kim [Ruscio] babysat for us on occasion, too. They lived over on Sellars [Avenue] and we lived on Edmondson [Avenue], so close by. So, [we] got to know both of them. He was in the same general field of study, and I said, "Gee, he did an outstanding job, but it's time now for him to get out and, if he wants to end up in academia, go to graduate school." So, I encouraged him along the lines of the Maxwell School at Syracuse, where I had been. So, he disappeared for a number of years in graduate school and teaching positions.

Then he was at—well, the politics department was looking for somebody—1980? It was the year before he came here. Anyway, he was teaching at Worcester Polytechnic up in the Massachusetts area, and the politics department was looking for an additional person, and somehow Ken came to their attention, whether he applied, or whether somebody knew he was there. He interviewed for the faculty position slot in the politics department, was offered the job, but decided that the timing was wrong. This was perhaps his first year at Worcester, and he didn't feel it was fair—after long consideration—fair to leave Worcester after only one year. So, he turned the politics department down in their offer of a position.

Well, the next year, ["English"] Bob Huntley tells me he's going to retire. So, I have a position to fill there, and I guess I wrote to him. I'm not sure exactly how it came about, but anyway, I expressed interest in his considering this position in the dean of students' office. "Is the timing better now for you?" was my question. "We'd love to have you come down and talk about this position, which would also allow you to teach a course in the politics department, and get your feet wet there." So, he thought it over, and decided: well, the timing was a little better. He had an extra year at Worcester, and he really kind of wanted to get back to Washington and Lee. So, a marriage made in heaven, you might say. Yeah, he agreed to come and the rest, as they say, is history.

Warren: Indeed.

John: So, I'm very proud of being the person to hire Ken here twice. Not the third time, but the first and second times.

Warren: I think you can take plenty of credit.

John: So he came in '87, was it? Do you have the year there?

Warren: I don't. I have when he was first here.

John: Okay.

Warren: Well, it couldn't have been.

John: Eighty-seven. It was the '87–88 academic year.

Warren: Right, but that wouldn't have been related—oh, I'm sorry. You're saying "English" Bob Huntley was retiring.

John: Yes. And so Ken became the freshmen residential life dean, coming from Worcester then.

Warren: So, yeah, you got him lined up for that administration mentality, didn't you?

John: Yeah. Of course, he moved on from there to become the associate dean over in the commerce school.

Warren: He punched all the tickets, didn't he?

John: Yeah, he did. I remember the year that he went to Richmond, I was on my final sabbatical in New Zealand at the time, and we were e-mailing back and forth. He e-mailed me and said, "I don't know how you'll take this, but I've just accepted a position as the dean of the Jepson School at [the University of] Richmond." I wrote back something to the effect that: "Good for them, good for you, too bad for W&L, and hope that someday you'll be back," or some such phrase. That's not an exact quote. So, I came back to my period of phased retirement here—after a full-time faculty position—and he was over at the Jepson School. But we kept in touch as time went on.

Warren: That was the smartest move he ever made, you realize.

John: Oh, I know that now. I mean, he had to get away for some other position of responsibility. Now, whether he was thinking about that at the time or not, I don't know. Probably not.

Warren: He's a smart fellow. A couple of other people that you brought in—I assume you had some role in hiring [psychologist] Jim Worth, and this whole idea—and this was something brand new, as you said, at Washington and Lee—in 1972, you had the realization that we ought to have somebody in-house. What inspired that?

John: It seemed to me that the needs of students for psychological counseling were growing for whatever reason, and that [W&L] needed, really, to have a professional to do that kind of counseling. Otherwise, you know, it was just somebody we might refer them to in town, or we had a psychiatrist who was coming over on a monthly basis from Lynchburg. But, I just really [thought] that the counseling needs of our students required a full-time person, or greater

attention to those kinds of needs, and that there was a demand for that out there, and we needed to satisfy that demand.

Warren: And do you think there had always been a need that nobody had acknowledged, or, again, is this: the world was changing and Washington and Lee realized that this was something you should have in-house?

John: I'll vote for the latter. Yeah, I think that the world was changing. [This was] somewhat similar, perhaps, in a different area, to the placement/career counseling situation. There was a growing need there among our students, and I think, for whatever reason. The world was changing, so that the students we were getting here required or asked for more psychological assistance and help than they were getting.

Warren: Those baby boomers were pretty demanding people, weren't they?

John: They were. Yes, they were. That is true.

Warren: Did you find that there was a group that fit within that definition of baby boomer, and that they were a certain type of people, and then they went away?

John: I guess at that time, anyway, I didn't associate a generation with any particular name like that. Looking back on it in retrospect, I think you're probably right on that, but at the time, I don't think I did. I guess I just felt there were more students that were coming to me and other members of the staff with problems, or asking for—not in so many words—psychological counseling that I and the rest of those in the office were not professionally qualified or able to counsel.

Warren: Do you think when you were a student there were people like that who just—their needs were left unaddressed, or was this really something new?

John: No, I think there were a smaller number of those whose needs were not addressed. I can think of a number of cases of classmates of mine who I think might have benefitted from counseling. And, in my class, a significantly smaller percentage of those who entered ended up graduating in four years, or even in six or seven years. So, I think the fact that there were more students dropping out from the student body is indicative, perhaps, of some unmet needs among the students then.

Warren: Good point.

John: But I also think the students became more demanding, but I have to think there were unmet needs, at least when I was an undergraduate.

Warren: There also came a point where you or somebody decided there needed to be a dean in charge of fraternities. How did that happen?

John: Well, I think we've talked about the condition and plight of the fraternities, and I just came to think that these fraternities need more help and guidance and assistance than they were getting. So, I thought that because Greek life was—and fraternities specifically, at that time—were such an important part of the campus, *a*; and *b*, that there were some significant problems associated with the fraternities that needed more attention than I was giving to them. Why can't we have an assistant or associate dean in the office that can provide that kind of attention? Because fraternities—it was obvious to me—needed more attention, in a variety of ways: help, sitting on, taking care of, and so forth.

Warren: Okay, I'm going to pause.

[Begin Lew John track 13]

Warren: So, let me ask you, Lew: Did there ever come a point when you looked at this roster of people under you in the dean of students' office, and you looked in the mirror and said, "Wait a minute. Frank Gilliam used to do all this by himself." So what was that conversation you had with yourself?

John: I said, "Gee, look at the way the size of the staff has grown," yes, but we needed it. The current needs of our students and what's happening on other campuses requires staff accretion, requires additional people to do this job. I can't be a Frank Gilliam. I'm not going to try to be. I'm going to try to provide for the students the kind of staff assistance that I think they need. And, of course, I looked at other colleges and the growth of the administration in other areas here on campus, and came to the conclusion that I would make the best case for these additional positions, one by one, not all at once, and if the president—either Huntley or Wilson—saw the need for that, if I was able to make a convincing case to them, I wouldn't worry about the growth and any comparison with a one-man gang.

Warren: Well, of course the same thing was happening on other campuses. I can tell you the other one I know about is Johns Hopkins, and exactly the same thing was happening. There were

four or five people who were running the whole show back in the ’50s, and now there are hundreds of people running the show.

John: Well, I was very active, also, in both state and national student personnel organizations, and so I had a lot of interchange with colleagues on other campuses. That was also probably in the back of my mind, too: Well, look at what college *x* and college *y* are doing, and how much more they’re able to do for their students than I am. So, that was also part of the picture, I think.

Warren: One of the things that we’ve alluded to a great deal—I have—that you had to keep marching in there four times a year and have conversations with the board of trustees. What was that like? Was this something that was fun, or was a drag? Probably something very in between those two, so I’d like to hear it from your point of view what it meant for a dean of students to be interacting with the board of trustees.

John: Both, as you say. I looked upon it, though, as something I needed to do and was invited to do. A little scary at first with this small board of somewhat elderly gentlemen, but the more I did it, the more I enjoyed being with them, enjoyed their company. I enjoyed going to places that I would otherwise not get to, like Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Mount Vernon, and places like that. So, I looked upon it as something that was an important part of my job, I think, of my responsibilities, and I was glad to have the opportunity to do it, I guess.

Warren: We never forget our trips to Tuscaloosa, do we?

John: No, we don’t.

Warren: They’re memorable.

John: Yes, they are, for a variety of reasons. Anyway, it was good for me to get to know members of the board.

Warren: Tell me why.

John: Otherwise they seem remote. What are they doing in there? Why do they meet four times a year? What kind of interaction do they have among themselves? It’s just, I guess, more a matter of being in the loop than anything else, but also getting to know on a personal basis people like Gordon Leggett and Tom Touchton, particularly those who were chairs of Campus Life Committee, once they formed one.

Warren: Tell me about that. When did that get formed?

John: In the early ’80s.

Warren: So was that a development that happened with John Wilson?

John: No, it would have been with Bob Huntley, I'm pretty sure.

Warren: Because I kept watching for that development, and I didn't ever find it.

John: Yeah, I'm not really sure, to tell you the truth, the exact year, but I just have in my notes someplace that I met with the Campus Life Committee, whose chairman was Gordon Leggett, and that was in the early '80s, I think. I don't think it was before that, but I'm a little hazy.

Warren: Well, tell me about what that meant, to have a Campus Life Committee. Did that alter your relationship with the board?

John: In some ways, it was just another committee meeting, but was part of the restructuring of the way the board of the trustees did their work, and was, I guess in my view, a recognition of the importance of the student life area that I was responsible for. Before that, I think by and large that whole admissions/student affairs area got somewhat buried—perhaps not admissions—but student life got buried in the work of the Academic Affairs Committee. I think they were the committee before campus life that was looking at those things. But I guess I viewed it as perhaps a more efficient way to give attention to what I thought was an important area of university life and governance, in and of itself, without being combined with academics, I guess. I guess my immediate reaction was: oh no, not another committee. But then the more I got into it, the more I appreciated its value and the opportunity to meet with them.

Warren: So, from your perspective, what was the charge of the Campus Life Committee?

John: I really haven't seen a specific—or, I don't know now a specific charge, but as it started [it] was just to give attention to university life and governance outside the classroom to include—I think the charge included admissions, financial aid, and the various responsibilities of the dean of students area. It was chopping off what was previously part of a larger responsibility or mission for one of the board committees to its own specific area in those facets of university life and governance outside the classroom, yes.

Warren: Let's invite our friend John Wilson to the party.

John: Let's do that.

Warren: You've said that big Bob told you that he was going to be retiring, so take me through that transition.

John: You know, I don't remember that there was that great a transition, other than the fact that Huntley had decided he'd had enough, and that it was time to move on, and that I would have another president to work with as long as he decided to keep me on. I think that was the—

Warren: Well, was that a question to you? Did you immediately say to yourself, "My days may be numbered"?

John: No, not really. Pro forma, I said it's the right of any president to select the members of his staff. So, pro forma, I think I submitted my resignation to John Wilson, hoping that he would reject it.

Warren: So you liked the job?

John: At that time, I did. It was getting a bit much, not in terms of the day-to-day, but I was beginning to wrestle with myself in terms of how long I really wanted to stay on, but on the other hand felt a certain obligation, I guess would be one way of putting it, of staying on if [I was] wanted to help the new president through his transition, and through until he decided just how he wanted to do things, and who he wanted to help him.

Warren: You were in your early fifties, so you weren't necessarily wanting to make a big change in your life.

John: Yeah, I told John Wilson, I think, that I realize that you have the responsibility of choosing those who—I would like to help you through this transition if you want me to, but not too far down the road, I would probably like the opportunity to go full-time faculty, which I saw as my next step at some point. He was very good about it and said, "No, I want you to stay on." So, I adapted, and he adapted to me, I guess.

Warren: Tell me what you mean by that.

John: Well, as I alluded to before, he was a different style—he had a different style from Bob Huntley. I mean, he was a much more—perhaps proactive is not the right word, but a more detail-oriented person who reacts sometimes viscerally. He's a very, very bright, good thinker, and will—the major issues he will think through in great length and get opinions from various people, but, on the other hand, he also did tend to—if he heard something he didn't like, he was much more likely to jump in and say, "*No, we gotta do this. We can't have that happen.*" He also, in a lot of ways, was a more frank person in expressing his opinions, perhaps—and also, I

might say, his judgment of people—than Bob Huntley, who was, I think, more guarded and so forth.

Warren: Can you give me an example?

John: Referring to—well, he was also more willing to take on personalities, and say, in essence: "We need somebody else in that job, because he doesn't know what he's doing," or "He's doing a poor job. He's not facing up to the issues," or something along that line, whereas Bob Huntley was always, I think, more guarded and somewhat less prone to talking about other people and giving his view of the job they were doing, or the personality. It was just a somewhat different style. So, as I say, I had to adapt to him, and he had to adapt to me, because he had no idea, in contrast with Bob Huntley, as to what my operating style was, or how I carried out the responsibilities of the position that I had, so it was a matter of getting used to each other, I guess is one way to put it. But, he was an individual who was not afraid to take on issues or individuals if he thought they needed attention, or if they needed a change in personnel. Bob Huntley, I think, was more likely to go along with somebody, even though he might have thought that they weren't doing a particularly good job. I don't know this; I'm just inferring this from what [unclear].

Warren: You're inferring it from…?

John: From their actions, from Bob's actions, particularly. But, John Wilson was much more—if he thought that there was a problem or an issue of taking it head-on and dealing with it.

Warren: Well, he certainly did that, but let's take a pause before we get into those issues.

John: Okay.

[Begin Lew John track 14]

Warren: Okay, so John Wilson was a different kind of guy, but he wasn't shy about taking on the big things.

John: True.

Warren: Number one was coeducation, which had, I think, a bit of an impact on your life. Tell me about that, and how did the dean of students' office concern itself?

John: Well, I think John Wilson has said that he did not come to Washington and Lee with an agenda for allowing or forcing coeducation here, but there's no question that he was willing to discuss the issue, and to study the issue to see just how coeducation would—whether it would

benefit Washington and Lee. So, he took the issue on. I think there's no question about that. The issue had been discussed here since the late '60s, anyway. There had been various committees appointed by the board, appointed by the president, to study the question of coeducation. Of course, the studies differed, but the study of them I think helped prepare us for coeducation once the decision was made for it. In other words, we were not exactly in the vanguard of the coeducation movement, and we were able to learn a good bit from the mistakes and successes of other places that had gone coeducational from previous all-male status, so I was on a couple of those committees and studied. I went to Dartmouth one year, I remember, to look at their situation and fraternity situation and so forth. There was a group that went to Davidson. So, we were—over the course of fifteen years, anyway, were studying the question and the result before '84 was always: No, we don't want to or don't need to go coeducational. The various polls were taken, various surveys were taken, and I think the results were fairly predictable. In every poll I've seen, every survey, faculty was pretty strongly in favor of coeducation. Alumni were opposed; usually 55-45, or something like that.

The students, when surveyed, varied from survey to survey. One year they'd be 55 percent in favor of coeducation, the next year they'd be 55 percent opposed to coeducation. So, those were the basic constituencies, and up until the actual decision itself, the board of trustees had said, "No, we don't want coeducation."

There are various questions associated with that, of course. If we did go, would we increase the size of the student body? Would we keep the size of the student body the same? What would we need to do by way of easing the transition? What changes would we have to make in security in the dorms? You know, those sorts of associated questions.

But, the main argument, ultimately, I think, was that coeducation would improve the quality of the student body. It would be a better atmosphere, generally, both inside and outside the classroom. So, I think reluctantly, the board came to the conclusion that coeducation should be adopted.

Warren: Do you think they might have done it if Bob Huntley had championed it?

John: Possibly. I think they needed some change in the membership of the board from the early days of Bob's tenure.

Warren: Right, but by the time he had gotten a younger board, and say if he had championed it in the middle of his administration, do you think it might have gone through?

John: It might have. I think he would have had to take a very strong position that this is needed for Washington and Lee to be a better institution in quality. I don't think he was ready to take that position, frankly.

Warren: How about you? Where did you come down on the question?

John: I came down with divided thoughts on it. Emotionally, I thought we ought to remain all-male. As an alumnus, I had gotten used to the atmosphere here, I thought—no, I didn't think—I felt that we should remain all-male, but rationally, logically, I was convinced that we needed coeducation to become a better institution and that the quality of the student body was going to continue to go down. In other words, we did not need to go coeducational to fill the beds, but I think we did need coeducation to be a better place, in essence, and to have a higher-quality student body. So, that was pretty much where I came down on it.

But, I think, obviously, the arguments were on both sides. It was not a unanimous vote by the board, but I think John Wilson presented both sides, but I think it was probably fairly clear how he felt on it, and I don't know how bluntly he stated that, but from the various studies, from the experience of other schools, I think we were well-prepared for the move to coeducation, which included, as you probably know, just over one hundred women and a reduction in the size of the male student body so that overall we increased the size of the student body by—I think it was thirty or forty that first year. You would probably have those figures better than I. But, there was a coeducation study committee. Pam Simpson headed that. The year before we actually accepted women in the class, they made recommendations in various areas about housing, about security, about all different aspects of coeducation, again, having benefitted from their own study that year, and the experience of other schools, and the committees before.

Warren: Was this study done under the auspices of the dean of students' office?

John: You mean after the—

Warren: The one Pam Simpson led?

John: No, that was part of the committee, but it was an overall—really, a faculty committee, which included input from student life as well as other areas.

Warren: And at what point did you and your office become engaged?

John: Oh, I had been involved for some time, but basically they would—I can't remember who all was on that committee, but they did a pretty thorough job of asking other areas if they weren't actually represented on their committee. So, this was kind of a final touch: recommendations here and there as to how the transition can best be made, and what specific arrangements should be made. So that was Pam's committee on that, and I can't remember who all was on that, but I remember it was a pretty thorough job on bringing together what had been learned in the past and from the experiences of other schools. I think we were ready on September 1, or whatever date the freshman orientation was. And the specific decisions about the size of the class, and the dormitory arrangements, and the security, and lighting, and all of the other questions—whether the curriculum would have to be changed—all of those were made.

The first year was, I think, quite successful in anticipating needs. It was a pioneer group of women you might say, independent, that really forged the way, I think, for a successful transition, which is not to say that there weren't problems along the way, and questions. If the university were subject to any particular criticism, I think, about the way coeducation was carried out, it would probably be that we paid too much attention to the women. Males saw some special favors and treatment being given to them. I think that case is overstated, but we did put a lot of attention on the women, and perhaps a little too much. But, I think overall the university was prepared and carried it out well.

The transition took more than the one year. I think there were pockets of resistance among the student body, particularly. Among some of the fraternities, for example, in accepting women. So, I think in any transition like that, you have to get through, probably, a generation of students, particularly when you have the student body so evenly divided, or pockets of resistance to coeducation.

Warren: Yes, because the first year they were here, you had three classes of students who had thought they were coming to an all-male school.

John: Right. So, I think that overall it worked well. It was the right thing to do. The transition was well-done, but it still had its glitches along the way. Also, there was interestingly a self-study that was done during this, or after the advent of coeducation, and the faculty made the recommendation to the board of trustees that admissions be sex-blind, but the board of trustees said no, and I think what they said was: the goal should be one thousand males and six hundred

women—that way we won't lose the support of too many alumni—and gave various reasons. So, my own feeling was that we were late in coming to equal treatment in admissions, and for some period of time, the women in the class were better than the males because of the imposed ratio, but it eventually came to sex-blind admissions, and I think that's where we should have been earlier, but that's another matter.

Warren: We've alluded just a little bit to dormitory life. One of the things—I'm sure there were always issues about dorms—but one of the things that I think is worth talking about is Woods Creek, the advent of Woods Creek apartments and the need for a place for married students, and for law students to live. That was happening in the late '70s, about the same time as Lewis Hall, do I remember?

John: Yeah, I think so. One theme, going back to the '70s, I think, more or less prevalent around until Gaines Hall was built, was the shortage—not only of parking; that's another subject—but the shortage of housing for upperclass and for law students. As I remember, married student housing did not get much attention, at least on the undergraduate level. I'm not sure how it was on the law school side, but Woods Creek was not built for married student housing. It was built primarily for law students, and then a mix of undergraduate and law. But until—I think. I think that was the case.

Warren: Well, there were some references at the time they were being built for married students in the board minutes. That's the only reason I was making that connection.

John: Yeah, there were earlier some housing projects for married students, but I don't think at any time in university housing proper on the campus that there were married students. But there was also a shortage of living space until Gaines Hall was built across from the Lenfest Center. But Woods Creek was a needed addition, as was Gaines. A fairly constant theme until the mid-'80s or later was the need for additional upperclass and law school housing. You're right on that.

Warren: Well, let's get back because we're getting late in the day, and we certainly don't want to ignore the Fraternity Renaissance. We've talked a lot about fraternities, but we're also getting fairly close to the end of your time as dean, so help me to understand where Fraternity Renaissance falls into your tenure as dean, and did you see it all the way through?

John: It fell in the last part of my tenure, and it actually—consideration of fraternities in earnest, and what can be done about them, really started with John Wilson's coming here. He had been a

fraternity person as an undergraduate. He was supportive of fraternities, and yet he was—perhaps appalled is not too strong a term—about the conditions of the fraternity houses and the social intensity, let's say, of fraternities, which, perhaps in his view, encroached on the academics here. So, in agreement with alumni and alumni corporation members, some of whom owned the houses that they [members of the fraternity] lived in, there was a growing concern. There was a committee formed, made up of university and alumni, headed by Paul Murphy. I don't know whether you know that name or him, but he was a Sigma Nu who was likewise quite concerned about the condition of, and what happened to, the Sigma Nus here on campus. But, in a broader sense, the roles that the fraternities would play.

So, I think there were some students who were a little wary of this new president coming in who was perceived by some to be anti-fraternity, and who may well have the idea of following other schools and getting rid of the fraternities we have here. John Wilson, though, said in essence: "That is not true. I am a strong supporter of fraternities, but not what is going on with the fraternities here on this campus. So, I think the alternatives are two"—and he didn't put it in these words, I don't think, but: "Either we're going to have a fraternity renaissance, or we're going to get along here without fraternities." So, he said, "There is no question what position I take, but I need to have the support and promise that fraternities will change, that they will indeed undergo a renaissance, which is supported by not only the undergraduates, but also the fraternity house corporations, and alumni involved, or it's got to be get rid of fraternities." But he was very strong, I think, in supporting—understanding Washington and Lee, too, in terms of how much focus and attention is given to Greek life here.

So, his approach was: Let's do what we can, which is quite a lot, to clean up fraternities, to make them the responsible, contributing, positive part of Washington and Lee life that they can and should be. So, [we] embarked a couple of years, I guess, after he was here, but since I was dean of students for eight of his years here, I think, I was an important part of that, as was Buddy Atkins, who was my dean for fraternity affairs. Buddy is good in that he'll talk to the fraternities in a very straightforward, no nonsense way, but be kind of humorous about it, too. So, he had a good way with fraternities. So, working in conjunction with the house corporations, with the fraternities themselves, [we set] the standards for fraternity life. As I remember there were seven different standards that were approved by the university and the board, the first six

dealing with conduct and good behavior—I forget what all the separate parts were. And then the seventh [was] dealing with the physical condition of the houses. These included such things as a separate party room in the basement; house directors—we did not call them housemothers, but an adult presence in the fraternities; certain standards of maintenance and upkeep—the university would take over the maintenance, which the fraternities would pay. There were a number of standards, and then once fraternities were in compliance with these other standards, [we] moved to the physical house conditions. It was proposed, and the board agreed, to put up—I don't know how much the amount was. It was a significant amount of money for rebuilding and renovation of the fraternity houses. It was maybe something like $15 million or something.

Warren: It was a chunk.

John: Yeah.

Warren: I'm going to pause.

[Begin Lew John track 15]

John: It was a chunk of money of which part was to be paid back by the fraternities after the house corporations turned over ownership of the fraternities to the university, which would then be leased back to the house corporations. So, it was a way of ensuring that, I think you could say, or hoping to ensure, that fraternities would live up to certain standards, including behavioral conduct, maintenance, and would be able to finance the renovation, if not the new building of fraternity houses, which would be owned by the university.

Warren: After your experience, lo those many years, with fraternities, how hopeful were you that this would work?

John: I was quite hopeful, frankly, because of several factors: the support—and enthusiastic support—of both the university president and house corporations; the guarantee that the houses would be renovated and the money would be found to significantly improve the physical conditions of the houses; and the other factor—in the background, anyway—that the university, if it felt it was necessary, would have significantly greater control—that's a bad word—but significantly greater control because they would own the houses themselves. [The university] therefore had a significant lever that they did not have before in terms of university involvement, and, if necessary, control of what happens. So, I was hopeful, yes. And I thought that was the

right way, probably the only way, to improve the conditions of fraternities, and to make them the more positive factor they had the potential to be.

Warren: I remember—and I can't tell you exactly what the timing was—but I remember when I first came to [work at] Washington and Lee, back in 1995, just about the first person I interviewed was John Wilson. I went down to Blacksburg when he was [living] there. He told me a very dramatic story about just after one of the houses opened up again, a window being broken by a bottle being tossed through it. Am I remembering this correctly?

John: Probably. I don't know these—

Warren: There was a huge gathering in Lee Chapel, where he said, "We *will* get control of the situation." Is that ringing any bells? I didn't go back and reread this, but…[this incident is described in full in Mame Warren's December 8, 1995, interview with John Wilson.]

John: Not specifically, to tell you the truth. It sounds like something that probably happened, but I can't verify.

Warren: But my question is, do you think—I can remember not so much the details of the story as the sense of *this was a man who meant business*.

John: Yes.

Warren: Was the force of his personality a big factor here? I wasn't here. I'm sincerely asking these questions. You were in a very different point of view, looking at all this, and I'm curious what your experience of it was at the time, because I'm just remembering somebody else's memories.

John: I think there's no question that the force of his personality, and the way he presented the situation to the university community, including students, saying it's either one way or the other. The university is not going to put up with a continuation of the deteriorating condition and the role that fraternities play now. I think there's no question that he was the one that brought the issue to the head. To a large extent, by what he said and did, [it was] the force of his personality, that got the ball rolling and was a significant and probably necessary impetus for this to come off.

Warren: When you're looking back—let's get into a time machine and go forty or fifty years in the future, and look back at these two administrations that you were part of. Certainly one led right into the other, but how do you think history will look at these two administrations and these

two men who were the presidents during these times where a lot happened on this campus, and, in some cases, not a lot happened on this campus. Will history look back and say, Why didn't Bob Huntley do these things, and give John all the credit? Or will history realize that Bob had his own challenges that he was dealing with? What do you think? How do you think people are going to look back on this?

John: I may be putting an unusually rosy gloss on that question, but I would argue that each of the two presidents, though different in style, though different in emphases, though different issues that they took on, each was the right person for the job at the time they took the office. I say that because I think the big need when Bob Huntley became president was for physical and financial development of the university. It needed to expand its facilities, and it needed to reinvigorate or invigorate the fundraising process, and increase the endowment. There were other issues for Bob, but to me those were the needs of the time, which he met very successfully.

The same with John Wilson. I think given the accomplishments of the Huntley administration, of the Huntley presidency—and you could argue that there were some issues that he should have met head-on earlier—but I think he had the right priorities in terms of what he did. I would say that the issues that John Wilson was willing to take on and confront were the ones that needed attention. I would include both coeducation and the fraternities—and later sororities—as a couple, at least, of those needs that he faced and solved, if you want to use that term, although I wouldn't argue that the question of fraternities has been solved by any matter. But, no, again, putting perhaps too rosy a gloss on it, I would argue that they were the right people for the presidency at the times they served.

Warren: So, there came a time when Lew John moved on, or moved back, or moved over, I guess is the right preposition—

John: I'd say moved over. Yeah.

Warren: —into the faculty full time. How did that come to be? What caused that to happen?

John: I think I decided that I had done the job long enough, perhaps too long. In a position like the dean of students, I think you not out-wear your welcome, but from both a personal and an institutional point of view, a certain period of time—however you define that, and I guess I defined it in terms of twenty-one years, but it probably should have been shorter—but both institutionally, new blood is needed, new ideas, a new person to serve in this position. And for

me, personally, a change is needed because you get to doing the same routine [with] every generation of students: the same problems keep coming up, the same problems remain unresolved, or solved in some way. But for my own personal life and fulfillment, I think I needed to move on. The precise timing [had] to be determined— I probably would have enjoyed doing it a little earlier—but I decided that the life of a faculty member who only had to teach for nine months a year, and who was eligible for sabbaticals and other goodies that I was not eligible for as an administrator [were desirable.] If the politics department would have me—and I had tenure, so they had to—that [it] was time to move on. So, no precise time in office, I think, can be determined, but just as Bob Huntley [had] decided that sixteen years or whatever—

Warren: It was fourteen—

John: —fourteen years was the right period of time and John Wilson decided that whatever he was in office for, I just decided that both for the good of the institution and for my own good, twenty-one years was long enough.

Warren: Well, I'm hearing your voice from several hours ago, or actually I guess it was your voice saying what Bob Huntley said to you that the dean of students should be a younger man, or a younger person, and I'm interested in whether at some point that—you said in your Bob Huntley's voice, "Woah. Look at that guy in the mirror. He's not a young whippersnapper anymore."

John: Yes, but probably not in those terms. I think that my feeling was not a matter of chronological age as much as it was—although it was partly that, I think relating to students, I was better at it at thirty-two than I was at fifty-three or whatever.

Warren: Do you think there came a point where you hit your prime, that there is an ideal age for a dean of students?

John: No, I don't think there is one ideal age. I think it is a matter of the individual, how fresh an approach he can take to the position. Generally speaking, I would say younger rather than older without defining a specific point. But I found myself, I guess, wearing down in terms of doing over and over those same responsibilities, and not having fresh ideas and approaches to the challenges that were there. And also worn down in terms of the day-to-day routine of talking with students, of calling parents, of dealing with honor system cases. You know, it's just a matter of: yes, you learn from experience, but it wears you down after a period of time, I think.

Warren: Looking back now, do you think you would have been wiser for you to step down as dean earlier?

John: Perhaps.

Warren: I don't want to put words in your mouth. Do you look back at yourself—I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but I'm saying when you think about it now, do you say, Oh my god. I should have done that four years before, or three years before, or—

John: No. I kid a lot in terms of serving twenty-one years longer than anybody in his right mind would ever be in that position, but I guess my answer is no. I enjoyed the position and it was only in the last couple of years that I thought: I need to get out of here and do something else.

Warren: Well, I'm glad to hear there weren't regrets. That's good.

John: So, I really don't regret it by more than a year or two, put it that way.

Warren: Because I thought I was hearing that, and I just wanted to clarify whether or not that was true.

John: No, I would say no to that. I don't really have regrets on that.

Warren: Well, we have talked about a lot of things, we've put in a long day. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you would like to bring up?

John: Oh, I had a list of things that I thought we should cover, but I think we've pretty much covered it. I mentioned only in passing to you the other day being dean of students when my son was here at Washington and Lee. It still was an interesting experience.

Warren: Well, let's wind up by talking about that, because I think that is interesting, and I'd be curious to hear his point of view on it, too. But tell me from the dean/father's point of view what that was like.

John: Both Ann and I tried to discourage him from coming, because I felt that having us both here [Annette, or Ann John, was a librarian at Washington and Lee], and his being looked upon perhaps as a tool of the administration, would not be good for him. But he was very firm in wanting to come here, looking at other schools and being accepted other places only because we insisted. He came here and my hope was that he would not become known as Dean John's son. And in fact, his personality and character are so independent that, in fact, after a year or two years here, I became known as Chris John's father, rather than the other way around. We both acted respectably, I think, even though I had him in class one time. His major complaint was that

I gave him a lower grade than he deserved, which in retrospect is probably true, but I bent over backwards not to show any favoritism. Also, there were one or two unfortunate aspects of his time here in that he came specifically, I think, to play lacrosse for Jack Emmer, and that only lasted one year as Jack Emmer left to go to the military academy after Chris's freshman year, so his overall lacrosse experience was not as good a one as he could have had. But on the other hand, he did make, I think, a name for himself on campus.

One of the ironic aspects of it is that I was part of the group—the Student Affairs Committee—that kicked Sigma Nu off campus, and he was recruited as a high school senior lacrosse player to help restart Sigma Nu on campus, because of course the national office is in Lexington and one of the lacrosse officials was a Sigma Nu national secretary. But he went through rush and got several bids for other fraternities, but decided to take the challenge—I think it was a challenge—of restarting, reestablishing Sigma Nu on the campus. He says, half-facetiously, he joined Sigma Nu because it was the only fraternity that he could pledge as a freshman and be president of during his freshman year—or commander, as they call them. So, he was very involved in that, and made a name for himself both in helping to reestablish Sigma Nu and to be a good lacrosse player: captain his senior year, played in the North-South game, and so forth. So, overall, despite apprehensions by both of his parents, I think, and even though there are some regrets in terms—not of his education here, but of his lacrosse experience—it worked out well.

We laid down certain rules for him: that he was to live in the dorms his freshman year; he was not to come home before Thanksgiving; he had to do his own laundry. So, it worked well, I think, and I think Washington and Lee was good for him, and he was good for Washington and Lee, despite my presence as dean of students.

Warren: Well, he was following in a long line of faculty/administration sons, and now probably daughters. Yes, definitely daughters—

John: Definitely daughters.

Warren: —who are coming back.

John: It was interesting because he has an older brother who is two years older, and he is not the same personality as Chris. I think he recognized that he would be better off away from Lexington, and so in his looking at colleges, he pretty much laid down about three criteria: he

wanted a school like Washington and Lee; he wanted a school that was at least five hours away from Lexington; and he wanted a coed school, because Washington and Lee was not coed at that time. And I think he found the right school for him in Dennison. He went to Dennison out in Ohio. So, I think they each made a good decision for them, and he did very well at Dennison. Chris did reasonably well here.

Warren: Well, I think that's a lovely conclusion to our day.

John: All right.

Warren: I want to thank you, Lew.

John: Well, thank you. I didn't think I would really enjoy this, but I did.

[End of interview]