

# GERRY LENFEST

October 8, 1996

—  
Mame Warren,  
Interviewer

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the 8th of October, 1996. I'm with Gerry Lenfest, and where are we exactly?

**Lenfest:** In Huntingdon Valley.

**Warren:** That's what I thought.

**Lenfest:** H-U-N-T-I-N-G-D-O-N, Valley.

**Warren:** Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania.

**Lenfest:** Pennsylvania. Outside of Philadelphia.

**Warren:** So I'm going to go all the way back to the beginnings of your association with Washington and Lee. Why did you go to Washington and Lee in the first place?

**Lenfest:** Dean Gilliam had come to Mercersberg Academy and interviewed students, and I was one of the students he interviewed, and I applied to Washington and Lee really on the basis of Dean Gilliam. He was a man that was very warm, very likable, and you couldn't be around him very long without being attracted to him, and you thought if the institution is anything like Dean Gilliam, that it would be a place you would like to go.

My father was an engineer. His education was naval architecture and marine engineering, but he was an engineering type of person and he said, "Gerry, you're a senior at Mercersberg. What would you like to do in college?" I said I didn't know. And

he said, "Well, I'll be damned if I'm going to spend all that money and send you to college if you don't know what you want to be."

So actually I went to sea upon graduation from Mercersberg, not expecting to go to college. But I had been accepted to Washington and Lee before I left to go to sea, and my father relented in my absence. We had pulled into Philadelphia on the ship, and he came aboard and rather sheepishly said, "Do you still want to go to college?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Well, I've enrolled you at Washington and Lee." Evidently, he called Dean Gilliam and had me enrolled without my knowledge. So I arrived in Lexington a month late, school had already started, and I could not join in the freshmen indoctrination, but I was overjoyed just to be going to college. And that's how I went to Washington and Lee.

**Warren:** So you arrived sort of sight unseen, you'd never been to Lexington before?

**Lenfest:** I'd never been there and I actually arrived a month late.

**Warren:** Do you remember what your first impressions are when you arrived?

**Lenfest:** W&L is a small school now, but it seemed even smaller then. There was a certainty camaraderie because you had a very small incoming class, and I think the first impression coming into W&L was your classmates. The first impression and interest you had is the people you would be going through four years together. The other was the nature of the campus and the other students on campus. It had a certain smallness and intimacy that was attractive to me. When you first go to college, you're on the way to find out, I guess, primarily about yourself and what you're going to be, and W&L was the kind of school that let you find yourself.

**Warren:** Was it any kind of problem that you arrived a month late?

**Lenfest:** No, it wasn't that hard to catch up.

**Warren:** And you missed all of Freshmen Camp, too, then?

**Lenfest:** Yeah, I missed meeting a lot of the incoming class during the freshmen camp, but I've always liked people, and it wasn't hard to catch up.

**Warren:** I bet they got a beanie out for you anyway.

**Lenfest:** As I recall, yes.

**Warren:** Did you expect that?

**Lenfest:** No, but you easily adapt, because the customs are the ones you have to adhere to, you don't make them, they're made for you.

**Warren:** And there are a lot of customs at Washington and Lee.

**Lenfest:** There are. You've interviewed a lot of people?

**Warren:** Well, it's interesting, through the years the customs change, but it seems as though people assume that whatever they had was what the customs were. So what do you remember about the customs when you arrived?

**Lenfest:** I remember the strong fraternity orientation and the excitement of Rush Week and going to all the different fraternities and meeting the members of each fraternity, those you had good chemistry and those that you didn't. To me that was very different because I hadn't really had any experience or knowledge through older brothers or otherwise with fraternities, so that was very interesting and very different.

**Warren:** So did you pledge?

**Lenfest:** I pledged Sigma Chi fraternity, where I had good chemistry with the people that interviewed me.

**Warren:** Was your fraternity important to you?

**Lenfest:** I could care less about being a member of a national fraternity, but the experience of going through college and the intimacy of being in a smaller group, even though Washington and Lee is a relatively small college, I think there's a richness in going through the college experience in a small group of people. You had an affinity of shared meals together and were fraternity brothers, and I think that was a very important part of the experience at Washington and Lee, not because of the national

fraternity, but being in a smaller group within the university. I think that was part of the richness of the W&L experience.

**Warren:** Did you live at the fraternity house?

**Lenfest:** No, I never lived there.

**Warren:** Where did you live?

**Lenfest:** We got three different apartments during my years at W&L. One was very close to the Sigma Chi House and the other two were more remote.

**Warren:** Where is the Sigma Chi House? Now we're talking in 1949 here?

**Lenfest:** It's the closest fraternity to the campus, actually. It's right across from the church. I think it's Lee Avenue.

**Warren:** Oh, okay. But that building is no longer a fraternity.

**Lenfest:** It's no longer a fraternity. There is now a new Sigma Chi House which is in the other part of town, other side of town.

**Warren:** I know that building well. Well, that was a very convenient location.

**Lenfest:** It was too convenient.

**Warren:** You chose well.

**Lenfest:** We were under the eye of the university more than the others were.

**Warren:** Tell me what you mean by that.

**Lenfest:** Well, we were closer geographically. Physically we were right there. It was hard to raise too much hell without everybody knowing it.

**Warren:** How would you raise hell? I can't imagine Washington and Lee boys raising hell.

**Lenfest:** We were always gentlemen.

**Warren:** What does that mean, Washington and Lee students to raise hell in your day?

**Lenfest:** Well, I guess probably the inherent problem we all have is that sometimes we drank too much and would raise a little hell, but I don't recall anything that was really

destructive or truly mean in that sense. In other words, if we raised hell, it was really just having a good time.

**Warren:** Now, one thing I'm curious about. I'm real interested that you arrived a month late. You're the first person I've talked to that has had that experience.

**Lenfest:** I came down by train. My mother died when I was thirteen, so my father ran his own business and had remarried in 1948, but they did not come down, I came down by myself.

**Warren:** So you arrived all the way into Lexington on the train? The train was still coming in?

**Lenfest:** As I recall, it came down to Buena Vista and then you had to – I've forgotten how I got over to Lexington. I don't recall. But as I recall it was – oh, I forget, they had a name for it, but I came down to Buena Vista.

**Warren:** So you arrived a month late. How did you find out about the Honor System? That's normally explained during Freshmen Camp.

**Lenfest:** It's so much a part of life of the campus that it was easy to adapt to it anyway. I don't recall ever having any formal lecture about the Honor System, but it was something that you easily learned about and followed.

**Warren:** Did it have a strong impression on you? Were there any instances where you saw it being challenged?

**Lenfest:** No. I was fortunate in that I never had to turn anybody in that I saw cheating, and I think really the instances of any cheating had to have been extremely rare. I think that would have been the biggest problem for me if I had found anybody that actually cheated and I had to turn them in, although I recognized that that's a very strong part of the Honor System.

But I remember I took my last year in law school and I had stayed up studying the night before so late that I was feeling a little dizzy, so I took off, went down to my apartment and took a swig of whiskey and then came and finished the exam. I mean,

where else could you do that? And by the way, it was in property with Dean Williams; I got an A on the exam. But there's an example, it's a very prideful experience. I mean, you feel that people trust you and you want to honor their trust.

**Warren:** Were there particular members of the faculty who made a difference to you?

**Lenfest:** There were two. I recall both taught history. I'm terrible with names. He was physically handicapped, was one, and the other – do you live in Lexington?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Lenfest:** He was a wonderful gentleman that just died a year or two years ago.

**Warren:** Bill Pusey?

**Lenfest:** No, it was another – he was just a wonderful, wonderful person. He came from something Neck, Northern Neck of Virginia, very remote area down towards the Chesapeake northern neck. Griffith.

**Warren:** Didn't know him. And he taught history?

**Lenfest:** As I recall, he taught history and he was a wonderful, wonderful man.

**Warren:** What made him such a good teacher?

**Lenfest:** He was a man of great personal integrity who had very good judgment, logic in the way he taught. Sometimes we find people that share our own feelings, that's why we think they're good teachers, and he was particularly good. He had a wonderful humility, he was not a braggart or ego-driven, he was just a very simple man and very intelligent to be simple. In other words, a lot of people that lack intelligence can be very complex. He was a man that thought through who he was and what he was, and he had a wonderful sense of judgment and integrity. I liked him very much.

Anybody else?

**Warren:** Would you socialize with your teachers?

**Lenfest:** No, no. No, it was sort of a "familiarity breeds contempt," so I didn't find myself too close to the professors.

**Warren:** What was your major? Were you economics?

**Lenfest:** Economics.

**Warren:** That's what I thought, economics.

**Lenfest:** Griffith taught economics.

**Warren:** He taught economics.

**Lenfest:** Yeah. He just died a year or two ago, two years ago, I think, maybe three.

Wonderful man.

**Warren:** Was it a good department at that time?

**Lenfest:** I thought it was excellent. You learn that nobody really knows about economics. It's sort of a Socratic method and you take one side or the other. I found the comparative economic systems was very interesting, the difference between communism, socialism, and capitalism, and many times the same principles can blend. If you look at our depression, there were socialism aspects to the recovery measures that were taken.

**Warren:** So I understand you played soccer.

**Lenfest:** I did.

**Warren:** I have not talked to anybody who played soccer. They just had the fiftieth reunion at the beginning of soccer.

**Lenfest:** I know, I was very tempted to go.

**Warren:** Well, you should have. You should have. It looked like it was a great weekend. There was all kinds of stuff going on on campus.

**Lenfest:** Mame, we met a lot of friends. Cal Rumpp, who was a classmate and played, was a great goalie, he was All-Southern. He was my roommate at Washington and Lee. We were going to go down together, but things got caught up and we couldn't make it.

**Warren:** Tell me about playing soccer.

**Lenfest:** Well, before I went to Mercersberg Academy, we lived on a farm. My father was away traveling and my mother was dead, and I lived there with a Pennsylvania Dutch housekeeper, very serious, read her Bible every night. She wore a little cap in the

back of her head like a yarmulke, and she wasn't Mennonite, she was what they called Plain People.

So anyway, I had to walk a mile to the bus on this dirt road, and sometimes I'd miss the bus or I wouldn't try to make it, so my father figured he would send me to Mercersberg. But because we were so far away from high school, I never played any sport, and at Mercersberg I learned to play soccer. It was the first real sport that I had played at the high school level. As a kid, I grew up playing baseball and football and other things, but in high school I couldn't take any of those sports, because if I missed the bus I had no way of getting home.

So I started playing at Mercersberg, and when we went to Washington and Lee I continued playing. It was a great amount of fun and excitement to me to play. We had a great group of guys, we'd go to different campuses like University of Virginia and Duke and University of North Carolina, and play, and it was just great fun, so I enjoyed very much. We had a great group.

**Warren:** And you had one particularly good season I think, right?

**Lenfest:** I'm not sure we were the best team around. We had our share of wins and certainly our share of losses. But the main thing is we had a good time playing. I remember people like Dick Basitz from Atlanta and Cal Rumpp, my roommate, and many others that were, I'm sure, at that fiftieth reunion that we missed, that I would have enjoyed seeing.

**Warren:** Who was your coach?

**Lenfest:** Norm Lord, I started with.

**Warren:** I talked to Norm.

**Lenfest:** He's still around.

**Warren:** In fact, he lives in Newark, Delaware, now, and as I drove by Newark, I said, "Hi, Norm, how you doing?"

**Lenfest:** Another great coach came after Norm Lord and whose name I've forgotten, but he was after Norm and just really a nice guy. Fister [phonetic], as I recall, but I'm not sure.

**Warren:** Do you have any memories of Norm in particular?

**Lenfest:** Norm hasn't changed. Norm is exciting and physical and robust and optimistic as he ever was. He'll never change.

**Warren:** I hope not.

**Lenfest:** No, he's wonderful.

**Warren:** At one point in my interview with him, I asked him something about the *Washington and Lee Swing*, and he immediately burst into song. And you know how booming his voice is. I thought my ear was going to fall off. [Laughter]

**Lenfest:** Yeah, wonderful man.

**Warren:** Oh, he is. He is just charming, just charming.

So you played soccer, and what other things were you involved in?

**Lenfest:** Really not very much. By the way, you mentioned teachers. Dean Leyburn was important to me in one aspect. You know, we all loved him as a man, but during his philosophy course, he said, "I want you to pick a philosopher that you like and write a paper on that philosopher." I don't think I ever really appreciated philosophy as much as trying to figure out which philosopher I liked, because you dabble in this one and dabble in that one, and finally I found one that I liked, that was not really that popular. He was different. So I enjoyed that course also.

What else did I do? I don't recall of any great achievement or interest other than just the general experience of going four years at W&L.

**Warren:** Leyburn seems to have been an extraordinary human being. He seems to have touched so many lives.

**Lenfest:** Yes. Another great teacher who was very different, yet wonderful, is Dean Williams of the law school. As I mentioned, I spent the last year there. He was a man,

again, of great humility and yet great intelligence. He was almost deceptively intelligent. You didn't realize how intelligent he was until after you had left his lecture and you began to think about what he was talking about and how well he had analyzed the principles of law that he was teaching.

**Warren:** So you just did one year of law school at Washington and Lee?

**Lenfest:** Yes. In those days, you could take a combination course, instead of four years of college and three years of law school, you could spend the last year of college in law school, so it was six instead of seven. But when I graduated, I went in the Navy and got married while I was in the Navy. Marguerite had a job teaching in New York, out on Long Island. So I'd been accepted at W&L, UVA, and Columbia, and I picked Columbia because Marguerite had a job and I didn't have any money. So between the GI Bill and Marguerite, I went through law school.

**Warren:** I read in one of the magazine articles about you that you used to hitchhike back and forth to visit Marguerite.

**Lenfest:** Yeah, that's right.

**Warren:** I love that. That's great.

**Lenfest:** Up Route 11 in those days. The dean of Wilson College, Dean Lyser [phonetic], she'd been in the WACS, I think, in the Second World War, whenever I'd hitchhike out of town, she'd give me a ride out of town. I'm not sure what her motivation was, but she certainly helped me get out of Chambersburg.

**Warren:** But now would Marguerite come and visit you?

**Lenfest:** Yes.

**Warren:** So does that mean you all went to Fancy Dress and the other dances?

**Lenfest:** We didn't go to Fancy Dress. I had sort of an economic problem, but we went to some other parties. There was an event that was between the — I think it was Phi Delt and Beta and Sigma Chi were all formed on the same campus of a college in Ohio, and I think they were called it the Miami Triad. It was Miami University in Ohio. And that's

when I had my first date with Marguerite. I invited her down for that party and series of parties and that weekend dance.

**Warren:** So they would have been parties at the fraternity house?

**Lenfest:** Actually, this one was held in Staunton. There were parties in the fraternity houses, but the big event was in a hotel in Staunton.

**Warren:** Really? I've never heard of that —

**Lenfest:** Miami Triad.

**Warren:** — a Washington and Lee event up in Staunton.

**Lenfest:** Yeah. Well, sometimes they'd hold it down in Natural Bridge, but this was held in Staunton.

**Warren:** You're full of all kinds of firsts here.

**Lenfest:** You learn something —

**Warren:** Really. That's part of the fun of this job, I learn something every day. I learn a lot of things every day.

So you say you didn't go to Fancy Dress?

**Lenfest:** No, no. I didn't have a car and I didn't go to Fancy Dress. My father, again, was a strict engineer that didn't believe in too much frivolity.

**Warren:** Yet it seems like you were surrounded by a bunch of frivolity at Washington and Lee. Was that an interesting contrast for you?

**Lenfest:** It was, but the contrast from my father was sort of the name of the game. He didn't like the Navy, he loved the Coast Guard. I went in the Navy. He couldn't stand lawyers, I became a lawyer. You know, it's one of those father/son, where you have to carve out your own direction in life. But a wonderful man. Before he died, we came very close together.

**Warren:** We're going to make a big shift here. I understand that you and I have something really important in common, that Frank Parsons changed both of our lives.

**Lenfest:** Really?

**Warren:** Yes. Frank Parsons is an old and dear friend of mine, and he helped me get this position doing the book.

**Lenfest:** He is a wonderful man.

**Warren:** He is a wonderful man.

**Lenfest:** I had an ancestor on the Mayflower named Warren, Richard Warren, so we may be related, have something else in common.

**Warren:** We may indeed. We may indeed. I haven't gone that far back.

So tell me how Frank Parsons changed your life.

**Lenfest:** Frank and I, number one, were classmates at Washington and Lee, same class. We had a reunion, I forget which one it was, Mame, you'll have to look it up. I think fortieth, whatever. Oh, Dr. Turner was the one that had a physical disability.

**Warren:** You've got a good memory after all.

**Lenfest:** But anyway, Dr. Turner spoke and then Frank spoke and he brought us up to date in what was happening at Washington and Lee, and he mentioned the performing arts center, that they were hoping to raise enough money and they'd raised most of the money for, but not completed the amount needed, to build it. I mentioned to him after he'd spoken that Marguerite and I would like to learn more about the performing arts center. So President Wilson and Farris Hotchkiss made their way to Philadelphia, and we had a meeting at our law firm in Center City, [unclear] Morris & Kerne [phonetic]. [Tape recorder turned off.]

**Warren:** So John Wilson and Farris came to see you.

**Lenfest:** Yeah, we were at the law firm, and I said to John that we sold part of our company and most of the money from the sale had gone into the company, but we had some of our own and that we would consider making gift to Washington and Lee, but we thought perhaps the most important would be not bricks and mortar, but to expand the journalism curriculum at Washington and Lee into a full communications

curriculum, and we'd add some professorships in the field of radio or television or cable and expand the curriculum.

The reason that we did that goes back to a wonderful man who lived in Virginia and he had worked for duPont when DuPont controlled General Motors, and he was sent by DuPont out to Detroit, and he formed the Frigidaire Division for General Motors. And when he died he gave, I've forgotten, fifteen to twenty million to Washington and Lee and similar amounts, maybe not as much, to other schools in Virginia. He said, "I want no bricks and mortar named after me." He said, "My hope is that you will spend this money," as I recall, "in not more than ten years and I hope that you will keep faculty compensation in mind in spending it, but it is entirely up to you how you spend it."

Now, there was a man – in fact, there was an article in the W&L alumni magazine about him when he died and gave this gift to W&L, and I kept it for a long time. So I had that in mind, and I mentioned to Wilson I didn't want my name on any building, I really wanted to help expand their curriculum in the communications area, which is where our business is. He said no. By this time we were at the Gardener Restaurant, just about sitting down for lunch, and he said he'd thought about it and he really wanted to complete the performing arts center, and if I didn't mind, that that's where our gift should go, and that the building would be named in our honor, which violated all the principles that I had going into the discussion.

So I said, "John, why don't we just say yes to your request, and let's sit down and enjoy our lunch." So John almost fell off his chair, but we had a lovely lunch and we didn't discuss it again, and the building was named for Marguerite and myself, for which we're deeply grateful, even though it was not consistent with what our principles were. We can't say that we haven't enjoyed being part of what that building has done for the community, as well as the university.

**Warren:** It's made a big difference.

**Lenfest:** That's what I hear.

**Warren:** I was at a performance last spring and I was sitting next to a woman, a total stranger, and we started chatting, and she said that she had just moved to Lexington fairly recently, I said, "What brought you here?" She said, "This building."

**Lenfest:** Really.

**Warren:** She said, "The things that happen in this building, there is no other small town that has this kind of quality of performing arts."

**Lenfest:** Yeah.

**Warren:** She's right. We're very grateful to you.

**Lenfest:** The students like it and participate.

**Warren:** It's wonderful.

**Lenfest:** No matter what your major field of study is, I mean, it's part of a true liberal arts education to be able to appreciate the arts.

**Warren:** It really touches everyone.

**Lenfest:** We really have to pay our respects to John Wilson for his leadership in doing it.

**Warren:** Did you get involved with the constructions? Did you go down and watch the building going up?

**Lenfest:** We saw it on several occasions, but we were smart enough not to get involved in its design. They did a fantastic job, and the people that did it are far more qualified to do it than we are.

**Warren:** What'd you think as you watched it going up, knowing it was the Lenfest Center?

**Lenfest:** A lot of pride, really. To be part of that great project made us feel wonderful. Everybody was so kind during the course of construction in showing us around, explaining the experimental theater and all the other parts of it. They did a great job designing it and building it. In looking back, there's hardly anything that people create

that you can't say we couldn't improve on if we had to do it a second time. I'm not as close to it as Al Gordon and others, but to my mind it is something that if you recreated would be very close, if not exactly the same.

**Warren:** Who was showing you around? Who were those people?

**Lenfest:** Al Gordon showed us around. Who is the present head of maintaining the university, recently named? Big, tall – Scott.

**Warren:** Scott Beebe.

**Lenfest:** Scott Beebe showed us around. Scott was wonderful. And the construction superintendent that was there, whose name I don't recall.

**Warren:** I particularly like the way the two buildings mirror each other, Gaines Hall and the Lenfest.

**Lenfest:** Yes.

**Warren:** It's just a lovely balance. It's like standing on both corners and looking –

**Lenfest:** And it fits so well and the way they took that old railroad bridge and made the entrance, I mean, it's just so beautifully done. It's not like it's separate and apart from the main campus; it transcends, it's like an extension of the campus. You're right, the Gaines Hall fits into it so nicely.

**Warren:** That's a whole part of the campus that probably when you were there, you never thought of it being part of the campus.

**Lenfest:** No way. No, even Gaines Hall wasn't there. In fact, there's a lot that wasn't there.

**Warren:** So did you come back to a lot of reunions before this happened?

**Lenfest:** No, no. I believe only one before that.

**Warren:** And had you thought about making a major gift to Washington and Lee?

**Lenfest:** Well, I never had the money to make a major gift, so when you don't have the ability to do so, it's hardly in your mind. So, no, we don't have the philosophy of

accumulation of wealth. We're very happy to make gifts like this in our lifetime, where you can see the benefit of what you've done. It gives you a very good feeling.

**Warren:** So when do you think about Washington and Lee as we're heading on to the next century and we're about to celebrate our 250th anniversary, I think that's interesting. You arrived at Washington and Lee in the bicentennial year. Were you aware of that when you got there, that it was the bicentennial year?

**Lenfest:** '49?

**Warren:** Yes. I think the celebrations had pretty much happened in the spring before you got there.

**Lenfest:** Yeah. No, it doesn't register in my memory.

**Warren:** I think that's going to happen to the people who come in in 1999, too, that they won't realize that all these events have happened beforehand.

**Lenfest:** Yeah.

**Warren:** But you did. You came in the bicentennial year and now we're coming up on the 250th in 1999.

**Lenfest:** It will be exciting. Jim Ballengee, I'm sure, will do a fantastic job. The man has boundless energy.

**Warren:** He is really impressive. I've really enjoyed the time I've spent with him.

**Lenfest:** He's a very impressive man.

**Warren:** So what would you like to see for the future in Washington and Lee?

**Lenfest:** You're never through. The needs of the University are never completely satisfied, and I would like to see it continue in its high academic stature. I'd like to see it continue its principals of integrity as manifested by the Honor System. I'd like to see it continue relatively small, although I think it's probably economically more viable in the future for it to grow somewhat, but still maintain its relative small size in relation to other peer universities.

I think you could find more diversity in the student body, but I don't consider that a compelling directive, although I do think that it would help prepare the student body for their life to have more diversity in the student body, and, I think, perhaps an expansion of international representation within the student body. That would also require an expansion in the teaching staff and to broaden the curriculum, and it's a question of whether economically the school can afford it, but it would be nice if they could and did those things. The diversity of student body would require more financial aid, also, and more endowment for that. So I fully recognize that the things I'd like to see happen will depend on economic support.

**Warren:** It's interesting, the black graduates I've talked to, they say that they really could have gone anywhere, and they came to Washington and Lee because it was a challenge to come to Washington and Lee, but that anybody who's bright enough to get into Washington and Lee is bright enough to go anywhere if you're black. You have an open door.

**Lenfest:** From what I've seen of the black students at Washington and Lee, we should be proud of all of them, I think. I am proud of Washington and Lee and how they've accepted the black students and made them part of the university.

**Warren:** A major part of diversity happened ten years ago. How did you feel about coeducation?

**Lenfest:** Oh, I am totally in favor of it. Years ago I was head of a teenage girls' magazine called *Seventeen*, and we completed probably the largest survey that has ever been done with teenagers, both male and female, and it became apparent that the trend was that male and female students – I'm not talking about all, but the growing trend and it became the majority – wanted to go to a coed university. Washington and Lee, by going coed, has raised the economic standards of the school, it has reflected the desires of most young people, teenagers, and it did the right thing. Those opposed to it, I think, are just plain wrong. Didn't need to add that, but it's true.

**Warren:** When you come on campus and you see all these young ladies walking around, does it feel at all odd, considering what it was like when you were there?

**Lenfest:** Well, based on this background that I had, it's not odd at all. The same thing happened at Mercersburg, where I went to school, it went co-ed. It's just the changing mores and feeling of life are now challenging the females with the same challenge that the men have, and I think this reflects the idea that we work together. If we work together out in the business world, we have to work together at the college level also, and it's completely natural to me.

**Warren:** Do you have any business interaction with the graduates from Washington and Lee?

**Lenfest:** Not on a regular basis. Every now and then I come across a W&L graduate. The head of the Book Division at Time Warner is a W&L graduate. Richie [phonetic], who was very heavy in the field of communications I'm in, is a W&L graduate. I run across W&L graduates now and then, but I don't make a point of seeking them out. Fraternity ties have to end somewhere and you go on with your life.

**Warren:** It's interesting to talk to various people and some people just seem to be surrounded by nothing but Washington and Lee people. It's interesting to me. I wonder about the rest of the world.

Is there anything more you would like to say about Washington and Lee?

**Lenfest:** Everything I say would just be mirrored by everybody else. To me it was one of the most gratifying experiences that I had in life. My mother was Scotch-Irish background, and the history of the school is Scotch-Irish roots. There's a simplicity and a plainness that is still very rich about the school. We're not a tidewater school. And it reflects my philosophy of what people should be. So it's had a good influence in my own life.

When I went to Columbia Law School, the only election I ever ran for in my life, I wanted to put an Honor System at Columbia Law School, and I ran for election on that

platform. I got 80 percent of the vote, and I was class president for two years, and even though they elected me with that overwhelming majority, they turned down flat the Honor System. A graduate of CCNY or City College of New York said, "I'm going to let that guy take the test without anybody looking over his shoulder to make sure he doesn't cheat?" He said, "No way." So I got elected, but they turned down my platform. But perhaps that at least illustrates that I believe in the system.

**Warren:** Thank you.

**Lenfest:** Mame, thank you.

**Warren:** This has been really wonderful. It's a treat for me to meet you.

**Lenfest:** This school has also helped me in life. I think the element of achievement is to have respect for yourself, and I think that training at W&L follows you through, and people respect the person that learns the qualities that Washington and Lee taught. It does help in business.

Thanks.

[End of interview]