

ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

November 8, 1996

Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the eighth of November, 1996. I'm in Arlington, Virginia, with Elizabeth Campbell, and we've been spending some wonderful time together talking about your husband's family, but now I want to talk about you, because you had an interesting career before you got married and I'd like to talk about that. You were dean of students at Mary Baldwin College.

Campbell: I was dean of the college. I came to Mary Baldwin to help them move from a junior college into a senior college.

Warren: What year would that have been?

Campbell: That was in 1929, and I was twenty-seven years old. The first year that I was there was quite unhappy for me, because Dean Higgins, who had been the dean of the seminary, stayed on for a year. She was very imposing, and she was not very happy to see me. She thought I was too young, and she was going to leave at the end of the year, but I was going to be taking her place. So that was unfortunate for the first year, but the faculty were young and I made many friends and enjoyed it.

The president of the college was very anxious that we improve the academic standing, and so the second year we employed Martha Stackhouse [phonetic] who had just graduated from Agnes Scott, to come and help to work on the academic standing of the school. I came to know the girls very well because we had a small student body, and they felt that I was young, and they would talk to me, and when they had their dates they would often come back and sit on the floor and tell me about the evening. In those days you could not date except on Friday and Saturday

and Sunday nights, and all of the dates had to be in the college parlors except the dates for the seniors, who could have a special privilege to go out, provided we knew where they were going.

The young men who called, many of them came from Washington and Lee. When they came into my office, which was just to the right of the front door of the main building, they would come in, give me their names and then the name of the date that they had. Well, the dormitories at Mary Baldwin were all at the top of the hill. We had an intercom system, so I could telephone up to the girls, or if I were not on duty that night, my assistant could. We would call and tell the girl that her date was waiting. Well, often it would take them a long time to get themselves together and come down the hill, so the dates would sit in the office and talk to me. In the wintertime, I kept apples there and a fire burning in the fireplace, and I got quite well acquainted with some of these young men. When they had to leave, they had to say goodbye at the front door. Occasionally they would wander across the porch to the top of the steps, but that was as far as they were allowed to go.

After I married and came to live with my husband, who was a Washington attorney in the Washington metropolitan area, when I would go to him to some of the parties in Washington, a young man would come up to me and say, "Do you remember me? I used to come to Mary Baldwin." And I would say, "If you will tell me whom you were dating, I might remember you." So I carried the Washington and Lee tribute over to my early married life.

Warren: Well, Washington and Lee seems to follow people everywhere all through their lives.

Campbell: Right, and, of course, Ed had been born on the campus of Washington and Lee, had gone to college at a very early date, year, had graduated and then had gone to Harvard to get a master's degree in economics. Then he came back to Washington and Lee to go to law school and graduate in law. Then he came to

Washington D.C., and became a member of a prestigious law firm in Washington, and remained a member of that firm until he transferred after the senior members died, he transferred his partnership to another firm and they made up the Jackson & Campbell firm, and that was his firm up until the end of his life. He loved the law and he was really a great lawyer and was known because of the cases that he won. First of all, he broke the integration law with the case in Norfolk that he won and opened the schools there. Then he won the case before the Supreme Court, and I was so proud to be there with him to see him argue that when that was one man/one vote, which, of course, has made all the difference in the world in our representation.

Warren: Did he ever talk to you about the importance of having gone to school at Washington and Lee? Did he see that as being very important in his life?

Campbell: Oh, yes, it was very important. In fact, he felt the same way about Washington and Lee that I felt about Salem College. What he learned there, he learned very well, and it gave him a background for everything else that he learned the rest of his life. When I told him that I would marry him, I told him that he would have to announce it to the girls at Mary Baldwin. So he made the announcement one night and said he was going to take me away and that he knew they loved me and he would try to make it up to them by serving the college, and Mary Baldwin took him literally. He was a member of the Board of Trustees for many years, chairman for quite a while. During some of the very difficult days between interim presidents, he and Martha Stackhouse-Grafton were the ones who were really in charge of the college. So we have kept very close to Martha and Tom, and they are still living in a retirement home in Harrisonburg now, but they go over to special events at the college.

Warren: Let's go back to those days when you were dean. Were there ever any episodes, any amusing things that went on with Washington and Lee students? Did they always keep to the rules, or did they ever try to stretch them?

Campbell: Well, all of the students who came tried to stretch them, Washington and Lee and University of Virginia. It was a little harder to get to the University of Virginia, particularly over the mountains if the weather was bad. So Washington and Lee and SMA, the seniors at SMA were just about the age of freshmen at Mary Baldwin. So many of the freshmen dated SMA.

Warren: That's Staunton Military Academy.

Campbell: Staunton Military Academy, which is no longer in existence. But the older girls, the juniors and seniors, dated Washington and Lee. If they were invited over to some of the dances and were going to spend the night, I would go over and meet with their hostesses and find out what time they were to be in and asked them to see that they got in or let me know if they didn't. Now, that was a very common thing at that time. The dean at Sweet Briar would also come over to Lexington to inspect the homes where the Sweet Briar girls were going to stay. Of course, there was a good bit of competition between Sweet Briar and Mary Baldwin for dates.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Campbell: Well, in those days, if you went to the dance, you usually had a car and you knew with whom you were going to be dancing, so it was question as to how many dates a Mary Baldwin girl could get with a Washington and Lee man, who was preferred, at that time, over Virginia. I don't know why, but he was. They would come back—in fact, I owned a car which I didn't like to drive. If they had to get back for an early morning class on Monday, I would drive over or get somebody to drive me over to pick them up so I could get them back in time for their class.

Warren: Ah, aren't you a good dean.

Campbell: Well, I loved the girls and they loved me. Even now when I meet them, they talk about how much fun it was to be there. We had a good student government association. I'll never forget the first real discussion we had as to whether Coca-Colas could be used on the campus. Of course, we had our own honor system, which is still there at Mary Baldwin.

So I was there from 1929 to 1936. It was a wonderful period in my life. I loved it. I loved the girls. I loved being there. I loved working with the faculty. I grew in it myself, of course. I always taught at least one course, because I never wanted to stop being a teacher. So I had one section of freshmen English. Then I inaugurated a course in comparative literature. I went out to the University of Michigan one summer just to get the background that I needed for that. So I never thought of leaving there, and I wouldn't have if I hadn't fallen in love with Ed Campbell.

Warren: Well, if you've got to have a reason, that's a good reason.

Campbell: Right, a very good one.

Warren: Now, when you were there, this was the Depression.

Campbell: Right.

Warren: Did that have an impact? Did students have cars? Were they able to come back and forth between Lexington and Staunton?

Campbell: Well, they had to make very careful arrangements. They were pretty clever at finding somebody, you know, who could drive them.

Warren: The girls or the guys?

Campbell: The girls. Yes. They were the ones who really set up the riding. It all had to be approved in my office. We would not allow anybody who had—well, they used to say that my assistant, Mrs. Stollenwerck, who took on a lot of the evening chaperone chores because I got to be so busy with the other, as the enrollment increased, I found more and more that I had to deal with the academic side and meeting the people who came and that kind of thing. They said Mrs. Stollenwerck

would smell the breath of the boys who came to date, and if she smelled any alcohol, they were not allowed in. So we didn't have very much trouble with that, because Mary Baldwin had a reputation not allowing them in, and that got around, you know. So that was one of the funny things.

Warren: So when you went to Lexington to check things out, what was your impression of Washington and Lee?

Campbell: I thought it was beautiful. The campus was beautiful. I thought that the boys had very good manners, at least to me they had. I remember being there on the campus in the daytime and being impressed by the fact that they spoke to you in a very pleasant way. Now, I was not happy with the fraternities, and I didn't like the girls being in the fraternity houses too late, and that was one of the reasons why I talked to their hostesses to see that they got back in their places where they were supposed to spend the night at the time that had been set. I didn't set the time, I left that up to the hostess, but it was really around midnight, mostly.

Warren: Were there problems? Did you ever encounter problems?

Campbell: Well, not really serious problems. In those days, it seemed to me the girls really enjoyed any privilege that they got and made the most of it. But when I say made the most of it, they didn't go beyond the rules.

Warren: I've heard from the male point of view about the idea of late dating, that sometimes the girls would come down and have dates with VMI people and then go back to their houses and then go out with Washington and Lee students?

Campbell: Well, of course, I'm sure that happened, but actually my responsibility as to what happened on the campus, I considered I fulfilled when I talked to their hostess, and after that, I just didn't bother. It's better not to know. I don't think many of them abused the privilege, I really don't. It was expensive to spend the weekend there, so they couldn't do it too often. There were some girls who just couldn't do it at all because they didn't have the money. You had to have a special permission at

home in order to be able to do it at all, either in a letter or I would accept a phone call if they couldn't get a letter in, in time. Some of them would get a late invitation and they wouldn't have the letter, so I would talk to their parents on the phone. But they never spent a night out away from Mary Baldwin without special permission from their parents.

Warren: That's interesting. How about Fancy Dress, the Fancy Dress Ball?

Campbell: That, of course, was very exciting, and, again, the girls who went to that, there were not very many. Again, it was a matter of money, and the boys didn't have any money, so the girls had to take care of their own expenses, and that meant overnight and special clothes.

We had the two daughters of Mr. Hunt, the very wealthy Texas man, and Margaret, the older of two, was not a very attractive girl and she didn't get too many invitations. When she would get one, she'd come in to me and want to accept it right away, and I wouldn't have the letter. So I would have to call Mr. Hunt and ask his permission for her to be away overnight. Well, having done that two or three times he said, "Now, Dean Pfohl, I'm paying Mary Baldwin to take care of my girls, and I expect you to do that. You have my permission, but it's your responsibility," and so I accepted it. Margaret is the alumna who was there when they planted the tree in Ed's memory, and she came up and she said, "I was in the dining room the night that Mr. Campbell made the announcement and said he was going to marry you." And said, "We were all in tears, we thought he was so handsome and you were so beautiful."

Warren: That's a wonderful story, and what an interesting person to have telling the story.

Campbell: Well, my life has been made up of chapters, and the Mary Baldwin chapter was a very happy chapter.

Warren: Did you ever get to go to Fancy Dress?

Campbell: I went once.

Warren: Did you?

Campbell: Right, right, with one of the professors at Mary Baldwin.

Warren: Really. Wow.

Campbell: So that was fun.

Warren: Do you remember it? Can you tell me about it?

Campbell: Well, I think I was so anxious, because the girls knew I was there, which kind of spoiled it for me and made it a little less fun than it would have been if I had been where nobody knew me. My date was Dr. Kenneth Smoke, who was head of the Psychology Department at Mary Baldwin. The girls used to kid me about him. He played the piano and he would go into the red parlor, which was across the hall from my office at that time and play "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes," and the girls would come by and say, "Do you hear it, Dean Pfohl? Do you hear it?" So that was fun.

Warren: That's charming. Now, was that unusual to have a faculty member of one of the women's college going to Fancy Dress?

Campbell: It was unusual. It was unusual, but I was young, and I didn't know it was unusual. [Laughter]

Warren: Well, I love going to Fancy Dress. I think it's great. One of the other things you mentioned that I wanted to hear a little more about is, was there competition among the various women's colleges?

Campbell: Yes, there was, because at that time we were all looking for students. Sweet Briar was older as a college than we, than Mary Baldwin. We got our accreditation on my birthday, December the fourth, I think it was 1932, and that was just very exciting. They always celebrated my birthday, because the dietitian had been with me when I was a dean at R_____ College for Women in B_____, and she was so good that I got her to come to Mary Baldwin as the dietitian. So on my birthday, they always had a special celebration. The girls enjoyed it because it meant

special food and the cake and candles and so forth. But I think because I was young and because I loved the girls and they loved me, we had really a special relationship. I treasure it still.

Warren: I think that's marvelous. Was there competition among the girls from the various women's colleges? Were they all competing to get dates?

Campbell: Not really. Hollins, of course, was also one of those, but the real competition was between Sweet Briar and Mary Baldwin. Sweet Briar was always holding up its head. Dr. M___ Glass was the dean at the time. Well, the girls at Mary Baldwin thought that Sweet Briar girls were a little bit, you know, hoity-toity, and they would laugh about it.

Warren: Did they encounter that, say, when they went to Lexington and they would see girls from the other schools?

Campbell: I don't think so. They went with their dates, and the dates pretty well took care of them. In those days, I think, and I don't know how it is now, but I think the date felt responsible for his date, and I think Washington and Lee men wanted to give their dates a good time but didn't want to get them in trouble. So I suppose compared with what happens today, it would seem very tame.

Warren: You mentioned being concerned about the fraternities. What were you worried about?

Campbell: Well, I was worried because they had drinks there. The girls were absolutely told that they could not have a drink. We felt that it put them under a real strain to be going in there, where their date might not be drinking, but the others around, there was a good bit of drinking at the time. It was frowned upon at Mary Baldwin, absolutely. That was our problem. So we didn't welcome the fraternity houses.

Warren: Was it frowned upon by Washington and Lee? [Telephone interruption.] We need to stop.

[End of interview]