Dan Wooldridge

—

July 28, 1996

Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the 28th of July, 1996. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with Dan Wooldridge, who has fabulous stories about fraternities. Go for it.

Wooldridge: No fabulous stories.

Warren: Oh, yes, you do.

Wooldridge: Just a few things that happened over the years. I do recall one particular time, a fraternity brother of mine had a Model A Ford and, of course, at our fraternity, you parked your car around back behind the house. We had a rather large parking lot back there. Several of us decided that we wanted to play an appropriate trick on this fellow. So a number of us got together, and we waited until we were sure that he was sound asleep. Then we went out into the back yard. A Model A Ford was not difficult to get into at all in those days. We took that Model A Ford, and we rolled it around to the front of the fraternity house.

The house had a very wide front step, probably about twelve, thirteen feet wide, and had double front doors. So we managed to carry the car up the steps, and opened both of the front doors, and fit it into the front hall at the base of the stairs, and closed the doors. Of course, we all went to sleep.

The next morning, our fraternity brother came downstairs and found his Model A Ford sitting in the middle of the hall on the first floor, and having, of

course, no idea how it got there, but even worse, I think it took him quite some time to enlist the aid of various and sundry people to figure out how to get it out of there.

Warren: What was his reaction?

Wooldridge: Well, of course, he was astounded at first. He was a very good sport about the whole thing. He laughed uproariously, and thought it must have taken us several months to figure how to pull that on him, when, in fact, it didn't take us very long at all.

Warren: Is he somebody who would have pulled the same kind of trick on somebody else?

Wooldridge: Oh, easily.

Warren: Did this kind of thing go on all the time?

Wooldridge: No, this is the only time that we had anything at our fraternity house. I'm not conversant perhaps with what went on in some of the others. But that was all that happened at our house.

Warren: What time period are we talking about?

Wooldridge: This would have been about 1949, I would think. There were a lot of veterans back at school, which was a very good thing, '47, '48, '49, in that period. Tempered some of the younger people and had them act a little more like adults than they might have done under other circumstances.

However, on another occasion, one of those particular veterans had a little too much to drink, and we gathered him up and put him in the living room on a couch, put a blanket over him, and folded his hands across his chest. We went down in the basement and got a six-candle candelabra, very tall, and we put that at the foot of the couch, and we got an equally tall one and put it at the head of the couch. Then we all sat around drinking beer, waiting for him to wake up. Of course, from time to time we would make a little noise in order to make sure that he wasn't going to sleep peacefully all night long.

And he finally did wake up, and when he did, and he opened his eyes and saw his hands were folded and looked down at his feet and saw the candelabra down there—of course, all the other lights in the room were out—then he looked up above his forehead and when he saw the candelabra up there, he immediately said, "If I'm alive, why am I here? And if I'm dead, why do I have to ago to the bathroom?" which sent us all into uproarious laughter. One wonders perhaps at that remark if maybe he were not significantly awake when we put him on the couch, but who knows.

We had a regional fraternity meeting. Our fraternity was, of course, in what was called District Two, so we had colleges and universities represented from Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky, I think. We had a regional meeting, which is held periodically, and was moved around annually to various and sundry participating fraternities in what was known in those days as Region Two, in our particular fraternity. Having these boys come from other universities which were coed, this put a little bit of a burden on us, because we, being at that time an all-male institution, we didn't have any way to get these fellows dates. It was traditional that on the first night you had what was called the smoker, which was just a gathering of everybody to have a few drinks and sit around and talk and whatnot, the business of the fraternity being done in the daytime. The second evening, or the closing evening of these festivities was to be sort of a dance and that sort of a thing. We did not, as I say, have access to any girls on the campus at that time.

So I was appointed the chairman of the Entertainment Committee to take care of this. I went to a neighboring institution seven miles away, in Buena Vista, and inquired of a lady who was in charge over there, if there was any possibility at all that sixty or seventy, I really didn't know how many would be required, of her girls could come over on, I believe, a Thursday night, on a week night, and could

perhaps get dispensation to stay out a little later than normal on a week night, and be participants in this activity. I really didn't know how this request would be received, but much to my surprise, she thought it was a very fine thing, and said that she would be very happy to cooperate, and she would permit her girls to stay out, as I recall, until 11:30 or midnight, which was very unusual in those days for an all-girls institution of the particular type, since they were basically an institution that was not a full college. It was two years of high school and two years of college. It was a junior college.

So having gotten her approval, it then occurred to me that there had to be some way that we should select these girls, and I asked her how could we select these girls, and she reached down and handed me the yearbook and said, "Take this back to Washington and Lee with you and submit to me the list of the names of the girls that you would like, and I'll ask them whether they would like to come over."

Well, I thought this was a marvelous thing, one of the more latter-day additions of the rogues gallery, I suppose, you might say. So I did that and we sent her a list. We sent her a list, I think of something like eighty-five girls and said that we really needed sixty-six or something like that, because we figured that some of them would not want to come.

The girls came. We had a marvelous party. We had a chaperone there who was from that seminary, and she was quite small, about five-foot-two or three, or so. She came in with the girls. The girls all arrived in taxicabs.

I had a punch bowl in one room that had nothing in it but grapefruit juice, and I had a punch bowl in the other room that had a few other things in it. We, of course, assured the chaperone that the punch bowl with the grapefruit juice in it was the only thing that anybody was going to be drinking that evening. And the party went off very, very well. I did not take a drink the whole evening, because I was concerned to make sure that everything went well.

When the party was over with and the girls were headed back to their cabs which had lined up in front of the fraternity house, I finally broke down and was drinking a beer when this little chaperone came running up the walk, and came running up the stairs, and came running up to me, and sort of stomped her foot, and looked up and me and says, "Young man, you're in charge of this. It's your fault."

I said, "What is my fault?"

She said, "I've lost seven girls."

I assured her that I was sure that she had not lost seven girls. I told her I was sure that they would turn up certainly that evening. I didn't want her to think they would turn up the next morning. But it was true, she was short seven girls. I looked all over the place and couldn't find them. It finally occurred to me that perhaps they would much rather ride back seven or eight miles with a Washington and Lee student, or some student from Pennsylvania, than to take a cab back along with five other girls. As it turned out, that's exactly what happened. I inquired the next day, and all of the girls did get back safely, and they all did get back on time, and everything worked out very well. It was a very happy occasion for everybody.

Warren: What do you mean the business of the fraternity was done in the day? What kind of meeting was this?

Wooldridge: This is a regional fraternity meeting. At that particular point in time, I was not one of the officers. You had several, as I recall, three delegates from each chapter who were attending this meeting. It had to do with general fraternity matters, a scholarship, participation in the athletics, or various endeavors that were important to each university, and attempt to get perhaps those fraternities who were perhaps not top drawer at their university, to instill them with some of the desires and some of the recommendations that the more successful fraternities had to assist them in becoming campus leaders and that sort of thing.

Warren: I want to know what brought you to Washington and Lee in the first place.

Wooldridge: Well, it's kind of an unusual story. My father worked for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, and in those days we had passenger service all over the place, which we don't have today. I told him, and he agreed, and so did my mother, that I wanted to go away to college. I was from Cleveland, Ohio. There were obviously a number of colleges in the state of Ohio that I could have attended. Many of my high school friends were going to Oberlin, Ohio Wesleyan, and Kenyon, and whatnot, in Ohio. My father said, "If you're going to go away to school, it would be very helpful to me, financially, if you would pick someplace that is on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway route." So I looked up and I found up that, in general, Washington and Lee, and William & Mary, and the University of Virginia, and perhaps with a little stretching, Duke, were all in that particular category.

I guess it was probably February or January, I graduated from high school in January. I was a mid-year graduate. You didn't really have to have your names in with colleges until March or April, so immediately after graduation, I took my little railroad pass and I started out on a trip. I visited Washington and Lee, and William & Mary, and the University of Virginia, and Duke, spent approximately two days at each. When I came back, I told my parents that there was no school that I wanted to go to other than Washington and Lee, that that's where I wanted to go—period. Fortunately, I did manage to get in.

Warren: But why Washington and Lee? What appealed to you?

Wooldridge: Well, I was born in Richmond, Virginia. My parents were from Richmond, even though I was never raised there. Washington and Lee, to my parents, was sort of the Harvard of the South, and they liked the idea of me going back to school in Virginia, in the state in which I was born. That really was their reason for coming.

My reason for coming was, frankly, because on the two days I spent at the campus, every student spoke to me and it felt like I was home, and that suited me just fine.

Warren: Tell me what the speaking tradition was like then.

Wooldridge: Well, basically you spoke to everyone on the campus. It didn't make any difference if he was, for example, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who did visit the campus. His name was Fred Vinson. His son, Fred Vinson, Jr., was in school here at the time. And it didn't make any difference whether it was the local janitor or some gas station attendant, or a truck driver, or a fellow student, or which. If they were on the campus, you spoke. You said, "Hi there," or "Good morning," or "How you doing?" or "Hey, you."

One particular fellow who I enjoyed over the years and who later turned up to be for about six sessions a congressman of the United States, I'll never forget him, because Jack Marsh is his name. His favorite greeting to anybody was, "How you making it?" That's what he always said, and that's how I remember him.

I had occasion one time to impress a friend of mine who was in Washington, D.C. from Chicago, and he had never been in the Capitol before. I took him around, and we were driving up to what is the front entrance of the Capitol Building on the east side. Every thinks the front entrance is really the west side. It's not. We were driving up there and the policeman stopped us and said we were not allowed to do that. It just happened then I saw Jack walking down the steps of the Capitol. I asked the policeman, "May I get out of my car for one moment?"

He said, "Yes."

I got out and I said, "May I yell at that man?"

He said, "Yes."

So I let out a whistle and said, "Hey Jack, how you making it?"

He turned around and came over and shook hands, and I introduced him to my friend from Chicago, and he told the policeman, he said, "This is a friend of mine." He said, "Let him drive around back here if he wants to do this."

Of course, the officer said, "Yes, sir, Congressman."

So it was a nice reunion. He and I had not seen each other for perhaps, at that point, maybe twenty years, that sort of thing.

Warren: So the speaking tradition does pay off.

Wooldridge: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Warren: That's a great story.

Wooldridge: Jack was a delightful man, and still is. Later he became Secretary of the Army, after he decided he didn't want to be a politician anymore. He's one of the real dear people that went to school here.

Warren: You mentioned Fred Vinson. That reminds me that you were here during the Bicentennial.

Wooldridge: Right.

Warren: Tell me about what went on then.

Wooldridge: Well, that was a huge event. Of course, Dr. Gaines was president of Washington and Lee at the time, and gained the distinction of being known as the silver-tongued orator of the South, which he was without question. He could speak for hours on end without a note, on virtually any subject that you could think of.

But the Bicentennial was very special. We felt that starting with Liberty Hall Academy, we had been here a long, long time, and we were going to be here for a lot longer. I think probably at that point in time we had our attention drawn to the fact that each one of us does, in fact, owe some gratitude to George Washington. At that Bicentennial, more than the previous time, a couple of years that I was here, I think his part in donating $50,000 to the school was more emphasized than it had been previous to that. You'll find it now in most of the university publications, but I

don't recall that it was pushed real hard, not until the Bicentennial, but I could be wrong about that.

Warren: So what kind of events happened?

Wooldridge: Oh, gosh. I really can't recall everything that went on. There was a number of ceremonies and that sort of thing. After I got out of here, I think one of the things that I was most impressed with is I came back when the front campus was declared a national historical landmark. I don't remember exactly what year that was. Linwood Holton, I think, was governor of Virginia at that time. Of course, he was a graduate of Washington and Lee. I don't remember just exactly when that was.

Warren: That was a big event?

Wooldridge: Very much so. Very much so.

Warren: Have you come back a lot as an alum?

Wooldridge: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I've come back a lot before they started the Alumni College, and I've come back a lot after it was started. I served on the Alumni College Board, and it's been a very, very great experience.

Warren: We were talking a little bit before about the devotion of the alumni. Can you tell me something about that?

Wooldridge: I think it's a very special thing. I hope that under the new—it isn't new anymore—but under the arrangement of being a coed institution now, I hope that that will survive. There's an awful lot of loyalty here. We had a meeting here three weeks ago, and a gentleman came down from Washington, D.C., to speak to us, from the Smithsonian. He has spoken at a lot of colleges and universities across the country. He made the comment to me that he had never seen or been at an institution where there seemed to be as much loyalty on the part of the alumni as there is at Washington and Lee. It's just a real warm feeling. Everybody kind of hangs together.

I think part of it in my time frame was the fact that I was here with a lot of veterans. It wasn't all seriousness. They all had a lot of fun, but they were interested in getting through school. They had given years to the war effort, and they were behind in their feeling. They were here to study, and they were here to get out in the world and make their mark. I think that did a lot for those who were not veterans at that particular time. I think it did more for them than it actually did for the veterans when you come right down to it.

Warren: So having the veterans here enhanced your experience?

Wooldridge: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Warren: In the classroom?

Wooldridge: Yes.

Warren: How would that manifest itself then? Why did they make a difference?

Wooldridge: Well, they were interested in studying, they participated in athletics, they participated in all phases of the university life, but they did not waste their time. They were not interested in wasting their time. I think they felt that they had given up several years, some of them many years, of their lives, and they were interested in getting on to the purpose of raising a family, doing their job, and getting their career going. They did not want to be interrupted in that effort.

Warren: So tell me about your academic experience here. You were thrown in a classroom, and you had not only people your own age, but a lot of considerably older people?

Wooldridge: Oh, yes. Well, I was fortunate in that I came from a very fine high school. I went to school in Lakewood, Ohio, and it was an outstanding institution. We had even calculus and analytical geometry taught to us in high school, which was rare. When I came here to Washington and Lee, I don't know how it is today, but in those days, the first four or five days you did nothing but take tests. Then they called you in, and they permitted me to elect out of a number of freshman

subjects. So I started out in a lot of sophomore courses rather than freshman, which made it a little bit tougher for me, and it meant that I was unable to attain some of the goals that I really thought that I should have attained, but it was good experience for me.

I really enjoyed the good lecturers, and we had some really fine, outstanding lecturers. L. K. Johnson, in particular, comes to mind, who was a tremendous lecturer in the business school. Of course, we had some that weren't so fine, but they didn't last.

Warren: What faculty members made a difference to you?

Wooldridge: L. K. Johnson. Lewis Adams, who had been formerly a broker on Wall Street. He was almost entire bald and, of course, we naturally called him "Curly Lew." He was dean of the commerce school, and a very, very, very, tough professor, unquestionably. We had a professor in taxation accounting, whose name escapes me at the moment, but I really enjoyed his courses. I really feel that I think as most of our graduates do, is any success that we have had in our lives has been to a great extent owed to Washington and Lee, the Honor System, the way the school conducted themselves, and the way we conducted ourselves.

Warren: How has the Honor System made a difference, then and now?

Wooldridge: I can't speak to it now, other than I'm a little concerned, if what I hear is correct, there seems to be now some gradation of the Honor System that there seems to be a feeling that some violations of honor are not as bad as others. When I was in school here, you either violated the Honor System or you did not, and if you violated the Honor System, you had twenty-four hours to get out of town.

I had one particularly dear friend of mine who was expelled. He turned in a paper—it was not a term paper, it was just a monthly-type paper, and he quoted directly from a book that was not the textbook. It was a book that was in the library.

He did not put quotation marks around that quote, nor did he down at the bottom put a footnote, nor did he say, "As So-and-so says in their book thus and such."

The professor recognized the quote, found the book, handed the book and the paper over to Honor Court. They called him up and said, "Is this your work?"

He said, "Yes."

They said, "This is an obvious direct quote."

He said, "I should have put quotation marks around it. I neglected to do that. It was an error on my part."

They said, "You have twenty-four hours to get out of town."

Now, I don't think today, from what I hear anyway, that the Honor System is quite as stringent as that, but it was definitely stringent in my day, and I was proud of the fact that the professor would hand out his test, and then say to the students, "If any of you have any question, I will be in my office," and he would leave the classroom. You were on your honor. So far as I know, I never cheated, and I never saw anybody that cheated. It just became a way of life.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: Maybe I didn't word my question right, but that's sort of what I was aiming at in my question, the idea of it becoming a way of life, about what does the Honor System mean to you today, to you personally.

Wooldridge: Oh, no question about that. You deal with people fairly and honestly, and one of the sad parts and, of course, it's the system under which we live, and it bothers me a great deal. I've had a few brushes with attorneys. In the legal arena, it doesn't make any difference whether it's right or wrong, or it's fair or it's unfair, or it's ethical or it's unethical. It's either legal or it's illegal, and that is the sole judge. I think that in the legal system the United States is hurting because of that. I think

you've got to give the judges some leeway and let them apply some justice rather than just some laws to what they do.

Warren: Do you remember how the Honor System was introduced to you when you arrived here?

Wooldridge: Yes. At that point in time, we had what was then called Freshman Camp, which is a very, very marvelous thing, or was—I don't know whether they still do it or not—we went out to Boy Scout camp about fourteen, fifteen miles from here, up Goshen Pass. Maybe it's a little farther than that. We were there for about five days, as I recall, and you got to know your freshmen real well, early on, before you ever got into class. At that time they had, of course, a number of seniors out there who acted as sort of counselors, and would talk to us about the history of the university and what went on here, and among those, of course, was the Honor System.

It was presented to us that when you have a paper to hand in, you fold the paper lengthwise, and you put up at the top, you put your signature, and you put the word "pledge," and you signed it. This meant, "I pledge on my honor as a Washington and Lee gentleman that I have neither given nor received any information in regard to this paper." That was the way you conducted yourself, and that was the way it was presented to us in Freshman Camp, that if we didn't want to comport ourselves in that fashion, then we probably shouldn't be there. So it put everybody on the same basis early, before you ever got to class.

Warren: You mentioned the idea of a Washington and Lee gentleman. What does that mean to you?

Wooldridge: To me it means that you conduct yourself at all times as a gentleman, and that you respect other people and their rights, and you have a responsibility to do that.

Warren: This permeated all aspects of life here?

Wooldridge: Pretty much, yes.

Warren: Yes, it sure seems to have.

Wooldridge: I don't recall being mistreated by anybody at any time under any circumstances.

Warren: Getting back to where we started, even in the pranks, even in the tricks.

Wooldridge: I don't think there was anything nasty about that. It was fun, what was done. It managed to all work out in the end. I don't think anybody got hurt.

Warren: Well, it seems like there was just a great sense of humor.

Wooldridge: Yes.

Warren: The whole concept of fraternities, do you think that it's stronger here than at other places?

Wooldridge: I think that it was at that time. Whether it is now or not, I really don't know. At that particular time, about 75 or 80 percent of the student body was in a fraternity. In general, if you really wanted to be in a fraternity, you could be in a fraternity.

Warren: How did you pick your fraternity?

Wooldridge: I really picked it by one man. He happened to be a senior at Freshman Camp. I got to know him rather well there, and he seemed to be the type of individual that I admired. He was a veteran. When Rush Week came and, of course, under the rules that we had operating in those days, you'd have Rush Week and you go out to all these fraternities for lunch or dinner or cocktails or whatever, and you are supposedly rushed. I met his fraternity brothers and became impressed with them, and decided that that's where I would like to be, and so I put them down as my first choice. As I recall, I don't even think I put down any other choices. I don't think I had a second or third. It happened that my roommate, who was from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, whom I had never met before, also put down the same

fraternity. Whether he had any second or third choices, I have no idea. But we both ended up there.

Warren: Where was your house located?

Wooldridge: It was at 301 East Washington Street. Phi Kappa Psi House.

Warren: That's over by what's now City Hall?

Wooldridge: I don't know if that's City Hall or not.

Warren: There was a school back then, I think.

Wooldridge: It was a school at that time. Is that City Hall?

Warren: Yes, that's City Hall now.

Wooldridge: Yes.

Warren: What was the house like? Take me in the house. Describe the house to me.

Wooldridge: Starting at the street, you'd walk up four or five steps, and walk along a winding concrete path, and up about ten steps the house sat up on a hill. It was a white frame building at that time. It's brick now. You walked in through these huge double doors, into a front hall. On the left side was a small library, perhaps twelve by fifteen, that sort of thing. On the right-hand side was quite a large living room about 35-by-15. In the back on the left was a dining room which would seat about seventy-five—no, probably maybe eighth-five or ninety in the dining room. The kitchen was behind the living room.

We had a rule there in the fraternity house which was, as far as I was concerned, delightful, since I was not one of the wealthy boys that went to school here. The rule was that if you had a date on the weekend, you were expected to bring her out to the house for your meals, and there was no charge for that. Our monthly dues took care of that. So that was a marvelous thing. It also tended on weekends to fill up the dining room with some nice young ladies. The rule had two reasons for being a rule: it was helpful and it was also nice.

Warren: Eighty-five or ninety people. That must have been a huge dining room.

Wooldridge: Well, it was pretty big. We had tables for eight, and I suspect that we had about ten tables in there. It was pretty big.

Warren: The kitchen could accommodate that many people?

Wooldridge: Sure.

Warren: Then there were houses like this all over town?

Wooldridge: I can't speak for houses like this, but there were large fraternity houses all around town. I think we had seventeen fraternities, or something like that, at that time.

Warren: Was this the period where things were still pretty formal? Did you have formal dinners?

Wooldridge: Oh, no. The only time you had any formal attire was on formal dance weekends. There was openings and Fancy Dress and then spring and then finals. That's the only time that you ever got dressed up into formal attire. But you had coats and ties. You wore coats and ties to class every day. If you earned a letter in any sport, you were permitted to wear a letter sweater instead of a sport coat, or a suit coat, or that sort of thing. But you wore a tie and a coat or a letter sweater to every class. As a result, one of my aphorisms that my kids have heard so much, "If you're dressed like a gentleman, you're more likely to act like one."

Warren: Do your kids go along with that?

Wooldridge: Yes.

Warren: You mentioned all these formal events. Were you a big one for going to formal events?

Wooldridge: Oh, sometimes. It depended on my financial standing at that particular point in time. If I had the money, I would go, and if I didn't, I wouldn't. Just all depends.

Warren: Did you go to Fancy Dress?

Wooldridge: I went to Fancy Dress, I think three of my four years here. One year I did not go.

Warren: Any particular big events? Anything you remember?

Wooldridge: No, not particularly.

Warren: Were you involved in planning it?

Wooldridge: No, I was not involved in planning it.

Warren: How about Mock Convention? Did you get involved with that?

Wooldridge: No, I didn't get involved with planning that either. I was involved in it, because everybody participated, but I didn't get involved in that. A lot of the time I spent when I was here, was working. I had several jobs.

Warren: What kind of jobs did you have?

Wooldridge: Well, I drove a laundry truck, and had a room in the basement of the freshmen dorm where I had laundry and dry cleaning that the boys would bring in, and I would take down to the Rockbridge Laundry, at that time, which I don't think is any long there, and they would do the shirts and the suits and the sports coats and so on, and I would bring them back. Then I enlarged that and went out to some of the fraternity houses around town and took care of their needs for that.

Then I ran the scoreboard at the home football games for a couple of years. Then I used to sell corsages. I had a florist up in Staunton that would make corsages and I would distribute those around to the fraternity houses. For a couple of years there, I was in charge of the coat check at some of the dances. The funny part of it was, it got along pretty well. It came to the point when I got out of school and went to work in a full-time job, I had to take a cut in pay. [Laughter]

Warren: Tell me what you mean by that.

Wooldridge: Well, I was making more money at Washington and Lee while I was going to school than the job that I got when I graduated from Washington and Lee.

Warren: That's pretty impressive.

Wooldridge: Yes. I had a fellow working for me who, when we branched out to the laundry and dry cleaning business, I hired one of my fraternity brothers and he worked for me.

Warren: So was this something you started up?

Wooldridge: No, it was already here. I went to the dean and told him, when I was a freshman, I told him that I needed some additional income, and that I understand that a position of some sort might be available to students. So he got me in with the young man who was running the laundry and dry cleaning at that point in time, and I became his assistant. When he graduated, I thought I was going to get the job, but it didn't occur. Another fellow got that job. But he was a senior at that point, and I was just a sophomore, so when he graduated, then I did get that job. It wasn't terribly time-consuming. We only kept the laundry and dry cleaning office open certain hours a day. It did not stay open all day long.

I also earned a little extra money at that time. The laundry was here in Lexington, but they had a number of employees who were from Buena Vista. I don't know how the laundry got into this, but somehow or other they got into supplying transportation for these people who worked in Buena Vista. The laundry manager asked me one day, would I want to earn a little extra money. I said, "Sure."

He said, "Well, if you'll come in at six o'clock in the morning, we'll have one of our large trucks fitted with benches. You drive to Buena Vista and pick up the people that work here in Buena Vista and they will sit on those benches in the back of the truck, and you drive them back here. As long as you get them here before ten minutes to seven, that'll be fine, and we'll pay you so much money for doing that. You do that five days a week." So I thought that was pretty good. I did that, too. It was good experience.

Warren: Were you a C School major?

Wooldridge: Yes.

Warren: So you were putting your education to work right away.

Wooldridge: I was trying pretty hard to do that, yes. That was kind of funny. I was in the college. I was in the academic school. I decided that I wanted to switch and get a B.S. in commerce. I don't know exactly why I decided that, but at that age I don't think you really know what you want to do, but I decided that I wanted to do that. Well, I was pretty far along in the academic end of things, and I had a couple of semesters there, I had to take six courses instead of five, in order to catch up on some of the prerequisites that had been left behind.

I remember one of my fellow fraternity brothers kidding me and saying, "Boy, you're so dumb. You went over there and transferred into the school of commerce." He said, "You're going to have to write a dissertation, and you don't have to do that over in the A.B. school."

I said, "Well, I'm sure I'll think of something to write about, maybe the laundry business or something, by the time it happens."

Well, by the time I became a senior, the dissertation for your degree became optional. It was no longer mandatory, which caused him to scream, because he said, "If I had known they were going to do that, I would have switched over to the commerce school, too."

I said, "Well, I had no inner knowledge. It just happened that way."

Warren: You did not write?

Wooldridge: I didn't have any knowledge about it.

Warren: No, you didn't write a dissertation?

Wooldridge: Oh, I did not write a dissertation. No, I did not. I did not. I debated about it for a while, but I decided that I would not. I didn't see that there was any advantage to me in doing that.

Warren: How about teachers outside the commerce school? Was there anybody who was really important?

Wooldridge: There was Fitzgerald Flournoy, who was an English professor, who was excellent.

Warren: Why?

Wooldridge: Oh, he knew his English literature and he was just a great teacher.

Then there was a Dr. Barritt in Spanish. I was rather impressed that he was a self-admitted *persona non grata* with the Franco government in Spain. He'd been over there during the revolution. He was an excellent teacher, very fluent in Spanish.

Then we had a Dr. Welch, who was a fine mathematics professor. These three gentlemen, they were sophomore courses, but I took them while I was freshman, so that may be why I was impressed with them. And, of course, Bill Jenks in history was excellent.

But probably the rest of my time that I was really happiest was over at commerce school. I thoroughly enjoyed these courses. We had a professor, M. Ogden Phillips. He taught industrial geography of the North America and South America foreign trade theory and practice, and was a very, very memorable lecturer. I remember him very clearly.

But L. K.. Johnson stood out above everyone else. I particularly enjoyed L. K.. from the standpoint that on weekends we were encouraged to bring our dates to class. Whenever I had a date, I always brought her to class. Of course, we had class on Saturdays.

L. K.. had the habit of coming into the room and not looking at the students. He would come into the room, he would turn around, he would start to close the door and begin speaking, and he would begin speaking in the other direction. He would go up to the desk, speaking as he did, and he would turn around and he would look around the class. If he happened to see any one or more young ladies in the class, he would keep on talking for another sentence or two, and then he would

say, "Gentlemen, skip about eight or ten pages in your notes, and in view of the fact that we have some guests here this morning," he said, "I think this might be a more interesting subject to them." He said, "What we will discuss now is—" and he would pick some subject that was integral to his course, but he would pick an area that would interest the young ladies who were present, such as, oh, display windows in retail stores, and this sort of thing.

Monday, he would come back into class and he would close the door and be facing the opposite direction and begin talking, and he would continue right where he was on Saturday, and he would finish that subject, and it would take him a sentence or two. Then he would say, "Now, if you'll turn back twelve or fifteen pages in your notes, as I told you before, we will go on where we started before we had our visitors in the classroom." And he would go right back exactly where he was before. It was just a marvelous thing to listen to a man that had that capability.

Warren: Wow. That's a great performer, isn't it?

Wooldridge: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Warren: How about Jim Leyburn? He was dean when you were here.

Wooldridge: He was dean when I was here. Most impressive man. I did not know him well when he was here. I did not have any particular reason to spend time in the dean's office for whatever, one way or the other. I got to know him better, I would say—I got to know him rather well ten or twelve years ago, when I came up for various functions and Alumni College experiences. He spoke to us on the Scots. The whole area around Rockbridge County was originally settled by Scots and some Scotch-Irish people. He wrote a book on that subject and was an outstanding authority. I think he did wonderful things for the university, raised our sights, and was an example for the future. He was a great man. We had a lot of great men here. We were very fortunate in that respect.

Warren: Yes, it sure seems like it.

Wooldridge: Have you ever talked to Charley McDowell?

Warren: Yes.

Wooldridge: Did Charley tell you of his great disillusionment?

Warren: Tell me.

Wooldridge: I'd rather you get it from Charley.

Warren: Well, tell me so what I know what to ask him. I'm going to be seeing him again.

Wooldridge: Are you? Okay. Well, Charley was a bat boy. This is not while I was here at Washington and Lee. This is a story Charley tells himself. He was a bat boy for the Washington and Lee Generals, at the age of perhaps seven or eight years old, eight or nine. Of course, he was seated over on the Washington and Lee side. During this particular game, Washington and Lee was at bat, and there was a man on first base. Somebody said to Charley, "Go get us some Cokes, kid."

He said, "Okay."

He started around the backstop, because he had to go around the backstop in order to get to where the Cokes were, and the Cokes being quite a ways beyond the third base line. As he was walking around there, there was a crack of the bat. He looked and the Washington and Lee runner on first took off, and the batter had hit a line drive out to right center field, and the runner ran around third base, and Charley kept walking along and watching. The center fielder threw the ball in, and it came in and it got past the third baseman of the opposing team, and landed at Charley's feet. Charley picked up the ball and threw it to the third baseman, and the third baseman threw it to home plate. The Washington and Lee man had gotten up from his side and gone for home. He slid into home plate and the umpire ruled safe.

The opposing manager coach came out of his bench, and he had this movement in his hand, and he objected to the umpire. Quite a hullabaloo arose

over this. Charley was standing there and looking at the umpire, and looking at this manager. They called over Captain Dick Smith, who was our coach and manager at the time, also our athletic director. Captain Dick was known sometimes as a very guttural straight-faced fellow. Very nice man, but he could be a little strong.

The other coach waving this book said, "It says right here in the book, I quote, 'Shall a member of the opposing team's men touch the ball while it is in play, the runner shall be sent back to their previously attained bases.'" So he said, "Your two players have to go back. The man that scored has to go back to third, the man that is on second has to go back to first."

The umpire looked at that and he turned to Captain Dick and said, "Is this young man a member of your bench?"

Captain Dick looked at him and said, "I never saw the little bastard before in my life."

Now, you get that from Charley, because that's his story, not mine.

Warren: I will. But you told it pretty well.

Wooldridge: But that's his story, that's not my story.

Warren: Frank Price has told me this story, too. I didn't get it from Charley. Charley told me some good stories, though.

Wooldridge: You get it from Charley. Did Charley tell you—

Warren: Hold on. Let me pop in another tape.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

Warren: This is tape two with Dan Wooldridge on July 28, 1996.

Wooldridge: I'll tell you why I never went back to a certain institution for a date. My first date that I had at Washington and Lee, I believe it was a Sunday afternoon. I had been pledged to the fraternity that day, and they had arranged for all of us pledges to have blind dates. I ended up in a car going over to Sweet Briar. They had, as I said, arranged blind dates for us. Here it is maybe the ninth of September or the

twelfth of September, something like this. My date comes down the stairs, and she has on what is apparently a full-length mink coat. I mean, it's hotter than blue blazes out, but she's got this coat on. It turns out that she was the daughter of a senator, as I recall. Anyway, we all went to the movie, which I thought was very nice, and we had a very nice time. I think that she had decided it was too warm for a coat and took it back. But anyway, we went to the movie.

After we went to the movie, it was decided that we would all go to the White House restaurant for dinner. Having very little money in my pocket, I was appalled at this, but nevertheless had really no choice but to go. So we went out to the White House restaurant. As I recall, there were four couples there, and the young lady on my left started, and she ordered a hot dog or whatever. Anyway, all the dates ordered either a hot dog or a hamburger. It came around to my date who was on my right, and she ordered the New York strip steak. So the waitress turned to me and said, "What will you have, sir?"

I asked her, I said, "What kind of soup do you have?" And she told me. I said, "How much is that?" She told me. I figured, I can make it. I said, "Do crackers come with that?"

She said, "Yes."

I said, "Fine, bring me a bowl of that soup and all the crackers that you can spare, because my date just did me out of most of my money, but I have—"

Well, I did that deliberately figuring that the young lady would say, "Oh, for goodness sakes, why didn't you tell me? I'll have hamburger like everybody else."

But she did not. She had her sirloin steak, and I did not go back to Sweet Briar ever again.

Later on, two years later, I had the good fortune to have a little automobile of my own that lasted for about a little over one semester. But I was going down for a date at Randolph-Macon one time when a fraternity brother of mine asked me

could I would drop him off at Sweet Briar and pick him up on the way back. I believe it was a Saturday night. I said, "Sure."

So we went over to Amherst and turned right and went out toward Lynchburg. We pulled up in front of Sweet Briar, and I said, "Here you are."

He said, "Well, the school is like a half a mile back in there."

I said, "I know very well where the school is."

He said, "Well, take me back there."

I said, "No." I said, "I don't set foot on that place." I said, "I'll let you out here and this is where I will pick you up." I would not go in there again.

Warren: Boy, she really made an impression.

Wooldridge: And never did to this day.

Warren: Can I ask what happened to your car?

Wooldridge: It finally gave out. It was a 1935 Plymouth, and I have no idea how many miles it had on it. It was just a one-seat in the front with a regular trunk back, and I reversed the trunk door and made a rumble seat out of that back there, which made it kind of fun. That lasted almost a year, as I recall. I think I ended up selling it for about as much money as I bought it for, as I recall. I didn't really have a need for an automobile. There were plenty of other people that I could get rides with, and I did so.

Warren: So that must have been a real challenge to get dates.

Wooldridge: It wasn't too bad. I think at one time, at least I always felt that I held the record. I had twenty-six straight nights at Hollins College.

Warren: You've got to tell me about that.

Wooldridge: And I didn't have an automobile.

Warren: You've got to tell me about that.

Wooldridge: Well, there was no story to it. There was a girl at Hollins College that I was very fond of. In fact, there were several, but there was one in particular. I

wasn't bent on setting any record or anything like that, but it just ended up that I managed to be able to be down there twenty-six evenings in a row, which is quite some doing without an automobile.

Warren: I dare say. And you managed to keep your grades up?

Wooldridge: Yes.

Warren: How exactly did that work? I mean, it takes a while to get down there.

Wooldridge: Yes, it does. It takes a while.

Warren: So how could you keep your studies up and spend all this time on the road?

Wooldridge: Well, I can't explain that. I just know that I got it done.

Warren: So what would you do when you went to Hollins? Not to get too personal, but I would love to have a description of the various women's colleges and what it was like going there.

Wooldridge: Well, a lot of times we'd just sit around and talk. They had lounges, and you could go for a walk, or you could go out to a movie theater. Some of their seniors had cars. In fact, one of the girls down there lent me her Oldsmobile convertible, and I used to drive back and forth in her car, which wasn't all bad. It was kind of fun. I don't remember it being anything fantastic or anything like that. We just had a nice time. We would go for walks and we would sit in the lounge and talk. Occasionally, if I felt like it, I might even bring a book down there and study a little bit.

Warren: What were the roads like then?

Wooldridge: Route 11, three lanes, and 81 was not in existence at that time. There was a cutoff around Buchanan, so that you didn't go down through the main street of Buchanan. It was doable in a reasonable length of time. You could make it down there in forty-five minutes.

Warren: What was the difference between a Hollins girl and a Randolph-Macon girl?

Wooldridge: That's hard to say. I think at that point in time, Randolph-Macon had a better scholastic standing when compared to Hollins. I don't believe that's necessarily true anymore, but at that time it was.

I remember one particular girl. I was down there at Randolph-Macon. I had a date. An absolutely gorgeous girl came walking into the lounge down there and greeted her, via my cadet date, and said, "Oh, I've forgotten something. I've got to run back up to the room. I'll be right back down again."

I had a fraternity brother with me who was very sharp mentally. So I immediately told him, I said, "You're absolutely wrong. I know I'm right, and I will bet you fifty cents."

He said, "Well, you're on, I'll bet you fifty cents."

"Okay," I said, "there's only one way to get it settled."

So I turned to the VMI cadet and said, "We're having an argument." I said, "We both think we have seen your date before." I said, "I think she's from Mississippi, and he says she's from Alabama."

He said, "You're right. She's from Mississippi."

I said, "Pay up," which he did. So that let me figure out where she was from. So then I could look her up, which I did, and find out her name. I called her on the phone and identified myself and told her how I got her name. She thought that was rather clever. I said, "I'd like to come back down to Randolph-Macon and perhaps we could go out for dinner or something." We made a date for the next night.

So I went down there and we had a marvelous time. When I saw her to the door of her dormitory, she said that she had had an absolutely marvelous time, and had one of the best evenings she had ever had. I said, "Fine." I said, "We should do this again." She said, "Let me run up and get my date book."

I said, "Fine."

So she went up and got her date book and she came back down, and she said, "Oh," she said, "I have an opening on Friday night, nine weeks from today."

I said, "Nine weeks? I might be dead in nine weeks." I said, "I don't really want to make arrangements that far in advance." I said, "Why don't you do this. Why don't you see if you can get that date book down to about three or four weeks. Deny dates for a while and I'll call you in about three weeks."

She said, "Oh, that would be great." I gave her a goodnight kiss and off I went.

Well, I waited three of four weeks, very patiently, and I called her on the phone. I said, "How does your date book look?"

She said, "Well, I'm getting it down."

I said, "That's marvelous."

She said, "Yes, it's down to eight weeks."

I said, "That's not the agreement that we had." I said, "I'll tell you what I will do. I will let you call me." I said, "When you get it down to three or four weeks, you call me and we'll see if we can't make it out for dinner another day."

She never called. She ended up to be, oh, I don't know, Native Cotton and Miss Southern Hospitality, and three or four other things like that. It was a very beautiful girl. I'm sure that she deserved all of that accolade that she was getting from the various cadets at VMI, or the guys from the University of Virginia. I never saw her at a Washington and Lee party. I never saw her over here. I have no idea what she was doing with her social life.

Warren: She was doing something with it.

Wooldridge: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Warren: Did you go up to Staunton?

Wooldridge: A couple of times. Not very much. Two or three times, I think. More than anything, I suppose, I enjoyed going up there because I discovered that I had an economics professor who was dating a teacher from Mary Baldwin. We ran across each other up there, and he was very easy to kid. So I proceeded to kid him about that on a number of occasions, before class and after class, but never during class, never in front of anybody else. But I teased him about it. The teacher he was dating was quite attractive, and I offered to switch dates with him and that sort of thing. I didn't go up there very much. Most of my dates were predominantly at Hollins, a few at Randolph-Macon, but not very many, mostly at Hollins, and a few at Southern Seminary.

Warren: So you wound up settling.

Wooldridge: And a few at Greenbriar College for Women, which was up at Lewisburg, West Virginia.

Warren: That's the first I've heard of that.

Wooldridge: Greenbriar College for Women. It was a junior college up there, far away from anybody and, therefore, when the girls at Greenbriar College for Women heard that there were some Washington and Lee men coming over, they would generally line the windows up there and wave. It was quite an event for them. Greenbriar Military Academy was nearby, but that was strictly a high school, and these girls were last two years of high school, first two years of college, so many of them felt that the Greenbriar Military Academy boys were beneath them. So they liked to date Washington and Lee students.

Warren: So how would you decide who to invite for something like Fancy Dress or finals?

Wooldridge: Well, whoever you happened to be going with at that particular time, if you were going steady with someone. Generally speaking, you obviously never

took a blind date to one of those, or at least, I certainly never did. It was a significant amount of money.

Warren: What kind of money?

Wooldridge: I believe Fancy Dress was probably, oh, I don't remember. My guesstimate is it would probably be around $100 or $110, something like—see, in those days, you had a Thursday night dance, Friday afternoon tea dance, Friday night dance, Saturday afternoon, Saturday night dance.

Warren: Good grief.

Wooldridge: This was quite a social event.

Warren: Would the same band play for all?

Wooldridge: Sometimes you would have two bands.

Warren: Do you remember who performed?

Wooldridge: Glenn Miller was one.

Warren: Really?

Wooldridge: Yes. I believe at that point, of course, Glenn Miller had died, I believe it was Tex Beneke and the Glenn Miller Orchestra. I don't remember all the bands that we had. It was first-class, no question about it.

Warren: Would you rent your tux?

Wooldridge: Oh, yes. Fancy Dress, of course, was always a theme, and it was quite often, in fact, most of the time, it wasn't a tux, it was costume, and the costumes came down from New York City. We sent them the sizes and they came in.

Warren: Do you remember what you went as?

Wooldridge: I really don't. I honestly don't.

Warren: I wonder if your date would.

Wooldridge: I'll tell you a story. I don't know what went on other places, but when I was a freshmen, a fraternity brother, one day relatively early in the year, like maybe the tenth or twelfth, fifteenth of October, said to me, "Go down to the ABC store and

sipping on our Seagrams Seven. They were talking and I was just sitting there saying nothing. Finally, Red says, "Well, Ma, what do you think? What does it look like?"

She said, "Oh, I think eleven is about right."

He said, "Eleven. Okay." He said, "You think that's for sure?"

She said, "I wouldn't swear to it, but I think it's about right."

So he said, "Okay. We'll be here shortly after midnight."

She said, "Fine."

So I reached for the bottle and Red promptly restrained my hand and said, "Come on, we're leaving, the bottle's for Ma Gehring."

She thanked me profusely for that. So we left.

We were walking down the steps and out to the street, and I said, "Red, what is going on?"

He said, "Don't you realize this weekend is the big VMI weekend? Ma has girls staying at her place. Sometimes she has fifteen, eighteen girls. But when they come in, Ma decides which ones might want to go out after the VMI cadets have to be in." He said, "She's got eleven that will want to go out tonight, so you and I have got to find nine other guys."

I said, "Oh, okay. I think we can do that." I said, "But wait a minute. Who picks and chooses who for who?"

He said, "Well, Ma will line up you date and mine because she's got our names, but she doesn't have the names of the other nine." He said, "We'll just go across the street and we'll have some drinks and have some dancing and some music, and whenever the girls want to go home, we'll take them home."

I got mine in at 8:15 the next morning. [Laughter] Her VMI cadet, I believe, was coming up the walk as I was going down, as I recall.

Warren: Was Ma supposedly a chaperone to these girls?

Wooldridge: I don't really think so. I think she let various and sundry colleges in the area know that she had room at her place for girls. I think as far as the other women's colleges that were concerned, I think they knew if their girls were at Ma Gehring's, they were safe while they were at Ma Gehring's, you know. I mean, they weren't at the local hotel.

In those days, see, we didn't have a lot of motels and hotels and that sort of thing around. There weren't a great number of places for these young ladies to stay. If it hadn't been for people like Ma Gehring, we would have had a little more difficult time getting dates into town. There was the Mayflower Hotel and, I think, the Robert E. Lee. It was advantageous for the girls from the standpoint that Ma Gehring didn't charge them a lot of money. I mean, she put ten cots in one room or something like that. She had them sleeping all over the place, upstairs, down in the basement, all over.

Warren: No wonder the girls didn't want to go home that night. [Laughter]

Wooldridge: It was a lot of fun.

Warren: So in Annapolis where I come from, that was called late dating.

Wooldridge: That's what we called it. That's what we called it.

Warren: Was it the only time you participated in that, or did it become a regular thing?

Wooldridge: Oh, that was not the only time. No. No, that was not the only time.

Warren: That's just when you learned how to do it.

Wooldridge: That's right. I was at the foot of the master, you know. He knew exactly how to get them.

Warren: So when your time came around to be a junior or a senior, did you do the same kind of thing for freshmen? Did you break them in? Do you remember doing that?

Wooldridge: I don't remember doing that. It's entirely possible that I did, but I don't remember doing that. I do remember one of my fraternity brothers, I got very upset with him. He came to me and he said, "I'm having a tough time in economics," in Economics 201, I think elementary economics.

I said, "What seems to be your problem?"

He said, "Well, I wonder if you would tutor me."

I said, "I haven't got the time to tutor you. I'll tell you, you read the course chapters that are assigned to you, and I know that professor, because I had him, and he will not test you on outside reading. He will perhaps expect you to do some, but he will not test you on the outside reading. He will test you on the textbook. So when you get ready to have a test, you come in and tell me what sections, what chapters the test is on, and I will go over them with you." I said, "There are certain things that you just have to be able to pick out of the book to know that these are important and other things are not important. As long as you know the important things, because that's the only thing he's going to ask you, he's not going to ask you some of the obscure things."

So he did. Two days before the exam, he came in and he brought me his book. We went over it and I had a red pencil, and I underlined the things that were important, and I said, "Now, this is all you have to study. Don't study anything else, just what's underlined. Forget about the rest of it."

He took the test. He came back when he got his test results back, and I said, "What was your test result?"

He said, "I flunked."

I said, "Okay. Let me ask you another question."

He said, "Sure."

I said, "Was anything on the test that was not underlined?"

He said, "No, you had it exactly right."

I said, "Then it's not my fault."

He said, "No, it's not your fault."

I said, "I can't help you anymore. I'm sorry. That's the best I can do." But he was a nice young fellow who eventually, I think, flunked out. But he just wouldn't apply himself, and suffered.

Warren: I hear we have had some pretty remarkable C students who have gone on to make real stars of themselves in the world. Do you know of any examples of that?

Wooldridge: I don't think so. Most of the students that I know that have gone on to what I would consider great things, were really good students—outstanding.

Warren: You were here at a pretty remarkable time. You had some pretty interesting classmates.

Wooldridge: Yep.

Warren: Were you buddies with any of them?

Wooldridge: Not particularly. Probably Jack Marsh. I was probably as close to Jack as anybody. I knew Roger Mudd pretty well and, of course, Charley McDowell. There were others that did marvelous things that perhaps didn't make the newspapers or that sort of thing.

Warren: What was Roger Mudd like as a student?

Wooldridge: Roger was a good student. He was a serious student. Roger was on the crew. In fact, he was one of the—at that point in time, originally when I got here, we really didn't have a coach for crew. The boys got together and did it themselves. Roger, as I recall, was number-six oar, which is a very important oar on the crew. The year after that, after that first year, we did have a coach, but at that particular time we did not.

Roger was a history major, as I recall, so I didn't get to see him much over at commerce school. But a very, very nice, serious guy, but also a fellow with a good sense of humor. Quite unquestionably a leader on the campus.

Warren: I'm going to flip the tape over.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

Warren: What do you mean a good sense of humor? Do you have any examples?

Wooldridge: Well, not really, but just a delightful guy.

Warren: I'm going to be interviewing him this fall. Any stories you know that I ought to probe from him?

Wooldridge: Sure. Ask him about his first news broadcast.

Warren: That happened here?

Wooldridge: No, it happened—well, it might have happened here. I believe we did have a radio station then, but he tells me a story that on his first news broad—he left here and went with, I believe, the *Richmond News Leader* newspaper. They had a radio station, and I believe the news broadcaster for the evening news left town, got a promotion and went to New York or Washington or something, and they needed somebody to go over there, so they said to Roger, "We're going to send you over to the railroad station. You're going to do the evening news."

So as Roger tells the story, and you get it from him, but as he tells the story, because I was not there, he said imagine his feelings when the station announcer said, "And now here's Roger News with the mud."

I'll tell you one little story that did not happen here, but it has done me well in the years after that. When I was about ready to graduate, it was in 1951, I did not know what I was going to do for a living, and I noticed on the bulletin board that the FBI had changed their requirements. You no longer had to have a legal degree or be a CPA. If you had a bachelor's degree from a credited institution, you could become an FBI candidate.

So I wrote a letter down to the FBI office in Richmond, Virginia, and said to them that I saw this notice of revision, and I also said that prior to this, I had looked into it and the FBI required a person to be twenty-four years of age before they would accept you as a possible candidate for their employment. I said, "I'm only twenty-two, so if that still exists, I will not come down for your examination, but if that has been waived also, then I would like to be considered."

I got back a postcard. I got back a form postcard that said, "Report to such and such an office on Saturday to so and so at such and such a time for examination."

Well, I went in, and this examination was dealing predominantly with entrapment, as I recall. It was a written exam. While the exam was going on, they called you into a separate office one at a time for a private interview with the agent in charge. Well, my name beginning with "W," I was the last one called. I had finished the exam when they called me. And they called me, and the agent in charge started talking to me and I was answering his questions and everything. He inquired as to my date of birth, or he looked down on the sheet of paper, and he said, "You were born in 1929."

I said, "That's correct."

He said, "You're only twenty-two years old."

I said, "That's correct."

He said, "Well, we can't take you." He said, "Twenty-four is our minimum age."

I said, "Well, sir," and I reached in and I got out the letter. I said, "I wrote this letter to you and stated my age."

He called his secretary in and asked her to bring the file in. She brought the file in and there it was. He said, "What did you get from us?"

I said, "This is the postcard I got from you." And he proceeded to chew his secretary out thoroughly in front of me, and that made an impression upon me. I

resolved never to chew anybody out in front of anybody else again. I think it was uncalled for and not good management. That was maybe not something that happened at Washington and Lee, but it taught me a lesson which I have never forgotten, obviously.

Warren: Wow. That's a good lesson to learn.

Wooldridge: I really do have to move along.

Warren: I really do want to thank you.

Wooldridge: Sure.

Warren: I'm delighted my voice lasted as long as it did, and I just delighted that we got together.

Wooldridge: Well, if I think of anything else, there are a few other things, I'm sure, somewhere in the background.

Warren: I'll be around all week.

Wooldridge: I remember in particular, I won't mention his name, but you can probably figure it out, I was a freshmen and I went across the hall and asked one of my fellow freshmen if he wanted to go down to the corner to get a Coke or something. I wanted to take a break from studying. He said, "I can't."

I said, "Why not."

He said, "It's Thursday night."

I said, "What's that got to do with it?"

He said, "I've got to fill out these reports." He had papers on his desk.

I said, "Well, you can take a break."

"No, I can't," he said, "I've got to do this."

I said, "Okay. What kind of reports have you got?"

He said, "Well, my father has turned over to me the management of these oil wells." He said, "I must have the report in his hand every Monday morning, and in order to do that, I have to fill them out on Thursday night and mail it on Friday.

Otherwise, they will not be in his hands by Monday morning." That was kind of an eye-opener for me.

Warren: Were there many people like that here?

Wooldridge: Oh, I don't know. I didn't pay much attention to that. I was sure that I was among the less advantaged of the kids that were here, but that never really entered into it.

I'll never forget one of my fraternity brothers who was probably equally as poor as I was. He had a stutter habit, and how they ever put him with this fellow, I don't know, but they roomed him with one of the richest boys in the school. So we were sitting around one evening talking, and somebody said something. I was starting to work in the laundry. I guess I'd said something about shirts. He said, "Boy, y-y-you should s-s-ssee m-m-m-my-my roommate." He said, "Every d-d-d-day he puts on a n-n-n-new shirt. Not a c-c-c-clean one, but a new one."

We'd been in school at that time three or four weeks, and this fellow had a new shirt every day.

Warren: Oh, my gosh.

Wooldridge: How do I get rid of this?

Warren: Well, you say good night. Say "Good night, Gracie."

Wooldridge: All right.

Warren: Thanks.

[End of interview]