Kimberly Stokes Pak: The following is an interview by Kimberly Stokes Pak of Columbus State University with Dr. Lindsey Mock on February 24, 2007. Dr. Mock was employed by Columbus State University from 1961 to 1992. He was vice president of student affairs. There is one tape to this interview. Done for the CSU Oral History Project. Tape recorder over there closer to you. I certainly have enjoyed researching you and your career. First question I have is where were you born?

Lindsey Mock: I was born in Miller County, Georgia, which has a small town of Colquitt.

KSP: Okay.

LM: In 1931.

KSP: 1931. Can you tell me a little bit about your family, your parents?

LM: Well, I was the oldest child, had two younger brothers. My father was a farmer, my mother was a homemaker, but back in those days everybody worked together as a family though, especially if you worked on a farm. We grew up on a farm, so everybody worked together. In fact, my father was a sharecropper in the beginning.

KSP: Really? That was interesting. Do you remember him being a sharecropper?

LM: Oh yes, I worked on the farm. And I left to go to college right after high school, at that time, Georgia only had eleven grades and I entered the University of Georgia when I was sixteen and a half because there was not a twelfth grade.

KSP: Right. So you were pretty smart in high school?

LM: Well, I don’t know about that. (laughs) (overlap) Yes, I did alright, I got a scholarship to go to college.

KSP: That’s, that’s very impressive. What kind of scholarship did you–?

LM: Well actually, this just paid tuition and fees, it was from, I forgot what group it was– see right back then, you could go to college for forty-five dollars a quarter. So, it wasn’t all that much.

KSP: Certainly not like that now. So you mentioned that you had two younger brothers?

LM: Right.

KSP: Okay. And you have a spouse?

LM: Yes, Betty.
KSP: Betty is your spouse?
LM: Yes.
KSP: What year were you married?
LM: 1959. It was after I came back out of the service.
KSP: Okay.
LM: We were not very– were not young like some people. 1959.
KSP: So, you went to University of Georgia on a scholarship?
LM: Right, 1950. 1948 until '52, and then went into the Korean War, got into that.
KSP: You went into the Army?
LM: Right. Came back out, went to the University of Georgia graduate school and finished the Master’s and Doctorate there.
KSP: At the University of Georgia?
LM: Right.
KSP: Okay, and you finished your Master’s and Doctorate at the University of Georgia in education, or?
LM: Yes, it was in education for– my major was in– I had taught math in high school one year prior to that, before I went into the Army, but when I came back, I decided I wanted to go into higher education instead of secondary. So, I finished my Master's Degree in the– I thought I was going to teach mathematics and I did teach some in the college level when I came back out of service in the math department. Of course each quarter when I was working on my graduate degree–
KSP: And you taught that at what college?
LM: University of Georgia.
KSP: The University of Georgia (overlap)
LM: And in fact, I would say that I came back from the service at a time when graduate school students were scarce and I had all kinds of opportunities. I taught the courses each quarter there, I worked in the college of education some, and I ended up working in the university counseling center for two years. I was working on my Doctorate.
KSP: At the University of Georgia?

LM: Right, right. So, opportunities came along and just seemed to fall in place [inaudible] very fortunate really to be able to do that.

KSP: Yes.

LM: But there was a shortage of graduate students. There were not many people in my age group at that time. Because see, in the late twenties, early thirties, when I was born, the birth rate went down because of the depression. I was born in the aftermath of the depression.

KSP: So, you were at the right place at the right time.

LM: That’s about what it amounted to.

KSP: Really?

LM: Right.

KSP: Okay. And what brought you to Columbus College?

LM: Well, just before I graduated, I interviewed a number of places. And I’m not, don’t mean to be boasting or bragging, but like again, the shortage of graduate students, all kinds of jobs started turning up. And I guess the main reason I came to Columbus is that my supervisor and major professor, director of the counseling center at the University of Georgia, President Whitley and him were good friend.

KSP: That’s interesting.

LM: And, I think probably that has as much to do with it as anything else because I knew both of them and, when I knew him as a professor, he knew Dr. Whitley and they talked some on the phone, I’m sure.

KSP: So, you moved, you came to Columbus College, with your wife, Betty. Did you have any children?

LM: No.

KSP: At that time?


LM: July 1, 1961, we came over here.
KSP: And you came to Columbus College to do what?

LM: Well, my title was Director of the Counseling Services and Chair of the Education Psychology Division. See, we were a small place, we wore, all of us wore three or four hats.

KSP: Columbus College was very small at the time.

LM: Only about seven hundred people when I came.

KSP: Total, seven hundred people, students, faculty, staff.

LM: No, just students.

KSP: Just students.

LM: About seven hundred of them.

KSP: Okay. And, where was the college located?

LM: The Shannon Hosiery Mill. They re-did a, they took a hosiery mill that was not used; the Muscogee County school district did that. I could go into a lot of details here, but at that time, Columbus College was the first junior college established under what they call the junior college law that was passed in 1956 in the legislature. And what that basically said was if a community would furnish the land and the original buildings, the Board of Regents would start operating a junior college in that community, and provide so much money. We would start it and then they would operate it.

KSP: So, Muscogee County School District?

LM: Well, they built the buildings, but they had to deed it to the University System to operate from then on. That’s how the college got started. I was not here when that happened, but that was in 1958 when they started.

KSP: Okay.

LM: I came three years later.

KSP: And how did the community respond to a junior college?

LM: They were hungry for it. In fact, there was some pressure put on, on the state level to start a college that year, but at that time, the law was passed in 1956, Marvin Griffin I believe was governor, until that law was passed, there was no way the Board of Regents could just establish a junior college. A system was not set up. When that law was passed, it opened the doors. Columbus was the first one and I think maybe Brunswick maybe the second. They started popping up all over the state then, the junior colleges.
KSP: Small junior colleges. What kind of students came to that junior college?

LM: Well, of course I came three years later and they had a, I don’t know what happened when they first opened because they had graduated their first class the year before I came. But it’s my understanding when it first opened, they had to get out and do a lot of publicity on an individual basis, talking to high school counselors and principals and business people and that kind of thing. When I came in ’61, they had set a pattern and with Dr. Whitley the president, one of the first jobs he gave me was to visit every high school in the area, meet the principal, and become on a first-name basis with them. And the whole college, not just me, we all did that for a while. Then the community just welcomed us. The only, I wouldn’t say the only, it wasn’t a problem, but the thing we had to be careful about though, is that, be sure that our courses were quality courses, because they had to transfer to some other senior college to get their degree. And one of the first questions parents always ask was, will the credits transfer? And they would. Some people, this is not funny, but some of the students that did not want to stay here, that wanted to go off to school would say oh, I don’t want to go over there because my credits won’t transfer. So, we had to answer that question over and over and over. What they found out was though, some of them did, is that when they left us, I’m bragging a little bit now, but we were quality education-wise. Sometimes when they left here, they had more trouble here than they had when they transferred to the four-year institutions because our faculty were pretty tough.

KSP: Really? So–

LM: And a lot of them just had Master’s degrees, but they were really good teachers.

KSP: So, the students felt like they had a harder time in junior college than they had at their four-year institution.

LM: Some of them would come back and tell us that.

KSP: That’s great. What did the administrators expect the students to do with their degrees? Did they expect the students to move on to a four-year college or could they get a two-year degree and do something with that here in Columbus?

LM: Well, to start with it was mostly a transfer program…. They did not have enough time to start terminal degree programs. So, when I first came, it was mostly the emphasis was upon transferring to a four-year institution. Although you could get jobs, you know, shortly after, I may be jumping ahead on you, but shortly after that, they started the nursing program, started the dental hygiene program a little bit later on, and so after a while and we added some other programs too, let’s see, I remember, but especially those two programs, we were fine in nursing and dental hygiene.

KSP: And that was a two-year program that a student could come and get a degree and move on and get a job in Columbus?
LM: Right, right. And now, of course they’re gone because Columbus Technical College has taken those over. And you can get a B.S. in nursing and stuff like that now. So, that was the phase or transition from starting already from a two-year to a four-year college.

KSP: Oh, okay. So, what would you say was, at that time, in 1961, when you came to the college, what was the vision of the college? What were the planners and the founding fathers of the college, what was their vision for the college?

LM: At that time, Dr. Whitley, the president, and by the way, he gave me an opportunity of a lifetime, because I, I just did a little bit of everything because we had a small staff; I need to say that too. But at that time, Dr. Whitley’s vision basically was to remain a junior college, I’m not, I would never hear him say this, but to remain a junior college. His motto was community service, serving the community by educating these people. That was in ’61, but over a period of time, in 1968, the movement was to change to the four-year institution. It was approved, I think it was in 1968 you might correct me on that if you see that it is another date, but 1968 was the movement to move into the baccalaureate degree area. Keeping the other programs like nursing and dental hygiene and those things.

KSP: Right, keeping your two-year programs.

LM: Right.

KSP: And what year did the college move to its current location off of Manchester Expressway?

LM: Okay, when I arrived, I told you the Shannon Hosiery Mill, that was in ’61 and we moved to the new campus during, between the fall, it was quarter system then, between the fall quarter, which was in December, ended in December, and January ’64, we moved to the new campus. And there were three major permanent buildings and one small lab that’s over on the top of the hill.

KSP: What was that transition like?

LM: Well, it was a lot of fun, but a lot of work because see we had a library to move. And you had all the furniture to move, you had a new campus, which means you had mud. And a lot of people don’t think about those things, but when we came out, we had those paved concrete walkways. You had to walk on those, if you stepped off during that winter quarter after it rained, there would be mud on your shoes. So, the transition was, everybody was so eager to move and new campus, enthusiasm, nobody paid much attention to that. It was, it was really an encouragement, so to speak. We had our own place because that other place was Muscogee County School District, on the old place.

KSP: I see. And the students were excited about it?

LM: Oh, yes everybody was, I would say.

KSP: In the fall of 1964, Columbus College got its first African American student.
LM: John Townsend. He and I are good friends by the way.

KSP: Describe the atmosphere as John Townsend entered college.

LM: Let me tell you the first thing, when I first met John, the president asked me to talk with him, the gentleman that walked out with him, forget his name now, but anyway the gentleman brought him out. So we talked. To get in college, you had to take the College Board, even for junior college. My first experience with talking to John, his friend at that time, and then I asked John, now John you know you’re going to have to take the College Board exam and we give that at the beginning of each quarter. I said, this is new to me, it’s new to you. Let’s just talk about this a minute. You want me to give you that individually or do you want to take it with everybody else? He looked at me and his friend was sitting over there and I’m, they decided well we’ll take it with everybody else. I’m glad they did because a small group like that, and I could control the situation, but you didn’t know what was going to happen. Something new, in a community like Columbus, but everything went off fine. He took the exam and that got him admitted. He was a good student, by the way. He went in and the only problem I could remember we had, and we always had this. Somebody at the gym, they had lockers for their clothes, somebody in the gym, of all things, set his clothes on fire one time, in the metal locker. And somebody found it and put it out. You know, of course that, we had to face that. Dr. Whitley though, he and I talked, Dr. Whitley got the money and bought him an entire new wardrobe, not a whole wardrobe, but all the clothes, they didn’t really get burned up, they just got damaged, bought him some clothes and gave them to him. So, we tried to do everything we could to make him welcome. And it took a little while to gradually, people started accepting him. It was no problem with faculty of course anyway, and only just a few students. And you didn’t, we never did know their names because they—

KSP: They’re not going to come forward, are they?

LM: No. That worked out then pretty well. We started a– John stayed, did well, went to the University of Georgia and got his degree. I think he got his Doctorate finally.

KSP: Well, it’s very interesting to me because I was not born during that time. So, can you talk some more about the atmosphere and maybe the kind of, you said most students were accepting of John Townsend, did you have any conversations with him and how he felt?

LM: Well, I say accepting, you have to be careful when you use that word because a lot of times, you interpret silence as acceptance and that may not be true. Because sometimes people may be quiet, but you never know what they’re thinking though, in their heart or minds about it. I think, judging from the community we’re in, I’m a native Georgian, I know how people felt back in those days, and Columbus was a very much divided town. It still is, partially. But, back in those days we had some little problems. John, that’s about the only problem I know he had. He was a real, he was a, first of all, he was a man. He was not a kid. Wasn’t old, but he was just a man. He was, he had a lot of courage, he was intelligent, and so he could handle, he could solve, he could solve things and he could handle situations and I never did have to talk to him very much. Now, right after then, about the next year, we started getting some more, we
probably had more problems along then, not that we had anything bad. We had more problems then than we had when John came in. And we had for instance, I had watched, I was in my office one day, for instance, and I saw this occur across the campus. There were two or three black ladies walking across the campus, and there were a couple of male white students coming and I saw what was coming, I said uh oh, I said to myself uh oh, nobody moved. You know what I’m talking about?

KSP: Mmhmm.

LM: And finally, when they came together, give you an example of what I’m talking about, they gradually moved to one side. You could tell there was some–

KSP: Tension?

LM: There was some tension there. So, we had some of that off and on, but we never did have any, what you call discipline problems that you would have to come in and read the riot act to anybody. We had to really watch. I’d walk around the campus and other people would too, and try to see what was going on. We saw some of that, but we never did have anything that you would say was so disruptive that you had to call classes off or anything like that. No demonstrations, just acts like I told you, you could see quite a bit of that occasionally, bumping each other like this.

KSP: Really?

LM: Yeah.

KSP: So, so you and the other faculty and staff knew that it was important to keep an eye on the students and just watch what was going on.

LM: Right. And the faculty helped out a lot too because they didn’t try to preach acceptance or anything like that but they would, they would just do things and say things that would keep things calm, you know. I don’t think, I don’t know of anything that happened in the classroom [inaudible] people, I don’t know of anybody that–

KSP: Can you give any examples of the kind of things they would say that would help keep calm in the classroom?

LM: I don’t know exactly. I just heard people talk about it. I couldn’t quote anybody, but I think what I’m saying, I heard people say this, they would welcome in their own way all the students that, see them situated, everybody was welcome in the class, we look forward to doing this and that. I say we instead of–

KSP: Right.
LM: And I think that helped calm things down some. And of course I don’t remember names much, but we had one or two faculty that didn’t like it either. So, but they didn’t, they were such a small minority they didn’t say anything.

KSP: Right. So it was changing times for Columbus.

LM: Very changing, that was probably for about– Ray Lakes, for instance, is on the staff over there now, later on, he became two of the black males students, I forgot the others names, I think one of them was [inaudible] position [inaudible]. Three of them transferred from Dillard University out in New Orleans and I became, I really liked those three guys. They were mature and they were, they were just really superior students. They came in and I talked to them a lot about, not necessarily about that, but we got off on things like you and I are talking about. And those kinds of students help you out a lot because they’re mature.

KSP: These were black students?

LM: Oh yes. They were mature people. They had already had two years of college at Dillard University. I don’t think either of them [inaudible] Louisiana. And they’re very mature and they were intelligent, and we had a few of those and that helped a lot. Because when they get into the classroom and performed it showed people that they can do it. That helps you out more than anything in the world. They know how to handle these little jives ignore them for a while.

KSP: Right.

LM: And that helps a lot, but we had a, I think, considering what happened during those days, I think we came out pretty well. See we had no housing, and a lot of these places during those years had housing, and a lot of those problems came in the housing area. We were completely a commuter school. Everybody stayed home or in an apartment they got for themselves.

KSP: Right. So, the problems, the racial tension that was going on in society at that time was mostly, like you said, in the housing units?

LM: I think so. When I hear from the other places, it was mostly because on the campus, a lot of our Caucasian or African American students, they could go to classes and get up and go home. They went to their own homes, separately. They were still segregated out in the community. We were one of few places where they could come together.

KSP: Right. Did you see African American students and Caucasian students intermingling? I mean, we talked about the tensions, but also were there some students who were accepting?

LM: We got more and more. We got, when you’ve got one or two people, like we had to start with, maybe two dozen, you didn’t see a lot of that because they tend to, I think they tend to, some of the Caucasian students don’t know whether they should talk to them. So, the black students feel a little bit of uneasiness but they don’t say anything. But I think that, that was broken down gradually. I mean, you could see them sitting around together at the student center after three or four years. And, but sometimes when I went in down there, I walked around a lot,
you could see, they were still segregated for a while. They’d sit over here at a table by themselves, and, which is a natural thing in a way. But after a while, gradually down through the years, it’s started to, another thing too, shortly after that, they started adding some black faculty and staff members and that helped. Some very good ones, by the way and that helped out a lot. I had, I employed Thelma Robinson, she was a counselor at Carver High school and on my staff. And I tell you what, she taught me a lot. She’s one of the finest women I’ve ever met. She and her husband retired and still live here. Thelma and I talk a lot, we take a trip often [inaudible] business trip to another college. And we talked in the car, just the two of us. And that’s why I said if you can get staff members that are black and white, again to use that word, to talk, discuss and things, after a while you will open up a lot of communication. And the understanding will take place if you’re open-minded. And we started getting some staff members like that, it helped out tremendously.

KSP: How did the white students respond to the black faculty?

LM: It’s difficult for me to answer that because the first black faculty were highly specialized and I didn’t, like for instance, one of them was a, came in later on as the head of the baccalaureate nursing program I believe. And we had two or three in education, the school of education, and I think we started, we got some in physics, just really specialized areas where, and the reason it’s hard for me to answer that question is that all I know is what I saw at the faculty meetings or group meetings like that. But just my casual, I guess you might say, evaluation, I think they probably got along pretty well. I didn’t ever hear anything. Most of the deans or department heads or whatever, we didn’t have deans back in those early days, most of the departments heads were, when they were told to start looking for black faculty, they were pretty, it wasn’t easy to do. At that time, at Columbus College, a lot of people say, where is that located? It’s quite different now.

KSP: Too during that time, trying to recruit someone maybe up north, down south in the mid-‘60s, I can certainly see why they would not want to come down.

LM: We did not have a name that you could, if you looked on [inaudible] maybe like 1972, when our first baccalaureate class graduated, I think it probably the enrollment, probably something like 4,500 or something like that. And you got a college that small, still college in the south in Columbus, Georgia and at that point still trying to establish a reputation, although we were not ashamed of any academic program we had, but the national people didn’t know this. Recruiting is hard, and a good black, or good faculty members of any kind are hard to get, but you only get quality black faculty, it was just, you didn’t have the money to buy one is what it amounted to.

KSP: What was the president’s vision and the staff’s vision towards recruiting African American students and faculty, I mean, did they, were they encouraging, did they want, was it something that they wanted to include all people?

LM: Oh yes. In fact, the University System, we’re not talking about just Columbus College, the University System at that time was pushed, if you can use that word, the presidents and also the same thing you and I have been talking about, you’ve got to have some more black faculty and
staff. It was staff too, by the way, remember, that’s important. And we were successful in getting staff much faster than we were getting faculty. But yes, all the people that, in fact, they finally, in Atlanta in the Regent’s office, they finally had a person, a black man that worked with the colleges trying to get out and do this on a statewide basis and I don’t know if our president, I don’t remember, we had an evaluation one of our title, national program’s title, whatever it was, that doesn’t mean anything now to me, but three of them came down. I know what it was, evaluate us because you know all colleges then were getting federal funds for different things. And to evaluate our, what we were doing, how we were doing it. And a fellow came in, I forget his names, sharp as he could be, a black fellow. And so we had a fun little meeting with three of them, the president’s staff, there were about five of us there. And he talked about you need some more black staff members, and the president said yes, we need somebody. And he said, he was not joking either, fellow, I think the black man thought he was, he said, by the way, how would you like to have a job? The fellow looked at him he said, I mean it. He said, I’ll hire you tomorrow.

KSP: Did he get a job?

LM: No, he just laughed, he thought he was kidding.

KSP: Right.

LM: But he was very serious. He wasn’t angry or anything. He said, we’ll look at what his point was, were trying to do that, but it’s very hard to find anybody that would take a job here at this point. The fellow then kind of relaxed and made some suggestions. So that gives you sort of an idea of the flavor of the attitude of the hiring people.

KSP: Right. In 1970, the college changed its mascot from the rebel to the cougar.

LM: Go ahead, I’m glad you brought that up.

KSP: Can you describe the events that lead to that change?

LM: Sure can. We started on a process of trying to change it; we knew it had to be changed. When I said we talked about it, the administration mainly. We tried to get people, mainly the students, to accept it, you know. And we had all kinds, I don’t remember all the things that were done, we talked and everything. This went on for about a year, and it started to have divisions, you know when you bring something controversial up, people start choosing sides, mainly to see–

KSP: So the students were choosing?

LM: Mainly the students, and a few faculty members, but mostly students. This went on, we voted, democratically of course. We did this, that, and the other. We didn’t get anywhere. I remember this just like it was yesterday. President Whitley, who was the founder, founding president of the college, and grew up in deep south Georgia, was about as southern as you can get. He was an honest man of integrity, that’s why I liked to work with him. We had chapel in
the Fine Arts Hall, it was where our largest assembly hall was, for a meeting, he called it and wanted all the student body to attend, faculty to attend. He gets up to the, this is not very democratic now what I’m getting ready to tell you, but he got up in front of, and made his little talk, and he said I’m here to tell you right now from now to this day on, our mascot will not be called Rebel. You can get out there and vote for anything you want to, but it won’t be that. He just walked off stage.

KSP: And how was that received?

LM: Oh, a lot of people got angry.

KSP: Uh huh.

LM: But after the, after the few that did get angry, I said well, if you got angry [inaudible] and all this, [inaudible] but he got tired, it was splitting up the college, and he just got tired of it. Well, I don’t know how long it took us, but a period of about six months probably in all. It was dropped in our laps down, getting the process started, I say our laps, I mean administration, I was a dean of students at that time, we didn’t have vice presidents, we just had deans of students. So, I got together with some students, student government, and some of my staff and some faculty members, what we decided was, we’d have a, an opening discussion with some student leaders, but then after that, they could kind of take hold, student government. And what we wanted them to do is to have a, you might say a referendum, and anybody could nominate any name they wanted to, with an exception, no rebel. And so we did, that’s how we got the one we have now. Cougars– cougars, is what came out of all that.

KSP: Right, the cougar, and also the colors were changed from–

LM: The colors were changed.

KSP: Gold and grey to red, white, and blue. However, the Saber remained the name of the school newspaper.

LM: Right. The reason for that, the reason behind that was, it really wasn’t compromise, but in a way if you look back, it probably was a good compromise. But that is the Saber is, is a sword. It applies to any– it’s really a historical thing going way back to ancient days, really. It was just, you know, that let us, I’m glad you mentioned that, because that let us at least let people know we weren’t trying to complete a [one rush job?], we wanted to correct a problem. And so, that’s the way that happened.

KSP: And was it a problem, was it a problem to have the rebel as a mascot?

LM: Yes.

KSP: Did it not?

LM: It was continuous thing,
KSP: Who was it a problem for?

LM: The whole, the whole black community, everybody. The adults, the students.

KSP: So, I would think it would have been hard for an African American to go to a college whose mascot was the rebel.

LM: And then too, there was, there were quite a number, I don’t know what there hearts really felt, but there were quite a number of white students who wanted it changed too. I think, really, most of them, deep in their heart, they just didn’t want those people to continuously having problems with it and not feeling good about it. There were enough of those too that helped, because student government came up with the process, we asked–

KSP: Lots of changes going on during that time in society and in Columbus. That was 1970. Maybe that’s a, maybe this is a good time to bring up the Vietnam War. How– we’re very close to Fort Benning, Georgia.

LM: Yeah, all that entered in too.

KSP: Can you talk about that?

LM: Sure. As you know, I won’t have to talk about a controversy, you know it was all over society, about like the Iraq War. Well, without getting into a lot of details, we had a group of faculty members really lead the charge on campus, the students I don’t believe would have started this.

KSP: Do you know what faculty members? Do you remember? Or what they taught?

LM: Names, I don’t particularly remember many of them, but they were young faculty members. When I say young, I don’t mean twenty-five, but they were younger ones. They were not from this area, obviously. They were mostly philosophy and psychology and sociology. And maybe English, but practically, I think practically all of them were in those areas. And these were well meaning people and I don’t want to criticize them at all, they were good teachers. But as for most of them were, but they just decided they were gonna get involved with all the protests like it was going around the country. And then lots of students had a, the one day they wore I think black arm bands. And things like that. And they had a rally out, and when I say students and faculty, because students would rally around the flagpole when the flagpole was outside around the little, outside the administration building, but–

KSP: Oh okay.

LM: Around that area between there and the Howard building.

KSP: In front of Richards, what’s Richards?
LM: Right. Between Howard and–

KSP: Right.

LM: Right in that area there, because there was some, didn’t exist at the time. They had that, and it was, nothing was tearing up or anything, we had demonstrations, but we never did have anybody out trying to break windows or anything like that, that I remember at any time. And uh, we had that and some of the students, the thing I remember the most I think, we had a young soldier, I don’t even remember his name, I think it was the [inaudible] who came into the student center one day along with other students. He was, he was on active duty, and he came in and tried to get something started to organize students and so forth, but he– Lon Marlowe’s father, who was, I think he was still in the service, but anyway, so Lon, Lon wouldn’t mind me saying this because it’s not connected to [inaudible] at all, and Lon had been in service for about three or four years too in Hawaii, and his father was a colonel over there. And he heard this guy, and he was president of the SGA at that time.

KSP: Lon Marlowe was?

LM: Mmhmm. He was walking through the student center. I remember these things, he went over to this guy, he walked up to him and said I understand you are, you’re on active duty. He said yeah, he was kind of boasting. He said, well I think you’d better leave campus just go on back to Fort Benning, he said, my father is the colonel out there. He said, he is in charge of something, I can’t remember what it was, which is related, he said, I don’t believe if you’re on active duty, you’re supposed to be doing these kinds of things. And that guy disappeared. I tell you that to say that we had that kind of thing but no, no destructive things. It was just kind of free speech type stuff. People say what they wanted to say and when you have a small campus like we had then, the community was highly military oriented. See, we were a fishbowl.

KSP: So, the community maybe as a whole, would you say, supported the (overlap) war in Vietnam?

LM: (overlap) Oh, very much so, not like the war in Iraq. No, they supported it. But like I say, some people–

KSP: Probably–

LM: But ninety percent of them did.

KSP: Okay.

LM: A lot of retired people in Columbus. It is a, the military is supported pretty well, even now it is. But that, that was something that the, some of the community people weren’t accustomed to. They heard about the faculty and so forth and they, and this is Dr. Whitley again, he said he’s and old conservative guy, but he believed in academic freedom, and he protected it.
KSP: The rally that was conducted in front of the Richards building, was the media invited, were there television, or did everybody know about it?

LM: I don’t remember. The news picked it up, but I don’t think at that time we had a lot of television people around. It isn’t like it is now. Now, you have something there would be a car and camera out there in fifteen minutes anywhere. But back then, they had a limited amount of mobility for cameras. We had an article in the paper, if I remember, I think about that. Of course this just didn’t happen that one day, it kind of drifted around for a few days. It was picked up because some of the other campuses were having it too. But those days, we went through those, I can give you a talk and I could tell you how much that’s happened, and it’s just one of those things where I wouldn’t give a thing in the world for the experience. It taught me a lot going through all this, I learned as much as anybody else did, or more.

KSP: Please do tell. I have two or three tapes, so. We can–

LM: Well at that, that part of it didn’t last too long. Because the Vietnam War started to wind down a little bit after that.

KSP: Well, you know, on one of the protesting in the ‘60s were against Vietnam, and for civil rights, but really a lot of the protesting was against the establishment.

LM: Yes, yes.

KSP: So, was that feeling evident at Columbus College?

LM: Yes, yes, that, well some of that, we were conservative, don’t let me say, what I said in the last few minutes, don’t think that we were one of these highly visible colleges that everybody came to like California was back in those days. No, but it was just enough to let the students know there were some things, they got an education too by just listening to some of this. But there was, on a college campus, you were learning, we didn’t tell them this, but that’s what it inferred, that you were learning things by discussing issues, watching people, learning their opinions, and of course that’s why, you don’t want any of that, that’s why you don’t get out and try to break up anything, so to speak. They were learning something and you did too, about what’s going on. Of all the places you can do that, the college campus ought to be the place. You can’t do things like that in many places. Not destructively, but if you want to voice your opinion, you ought to be able to do it on the college campus.

KSP: Is that just your own philosophy, or was that the philosophy of most of the administration at the time?

LM: I think it was most of us. Some a little bit more than others, but in my position, since I was at that time a dean of students, I couldn’t have any other opinion, whether I wanted to or not. I wouldn’t be, I wouldn’t be doing my job. Because one of the things that you have to do in the student affairs, student personnel, is that you are, you’re supposed to be the dean of students, whatever it is, the vice president, all of the students, sure I saw some things that I would tell you
one later on, if you don’t mention [inaudible] they had nothing to do with the Vietnam War, but that was one, that was a tough time.

KSP: Go ahead.

LM: The streaking.

KSP: I was going to ask about that. What, what was that all about?

LM: Would you think, well, what happened is, that was one of those protests that you talked about a while ago, against society, so to speak. Now there was no, as far am I’m concerned, and I’ve talked to other people from other campuses like Florida State, they had a lot of it. Some of the big universities, and you could not pick out one thing that I know of that was any reason at all to do that except to, I don’t know, protest is really not the word, maybe it is a protest, rebel is a better word.

KSP: Right.

LM: Well, it’s funny, and it’s also, at that time it wasn’t funny. Because we had to watch, the community out there wanted everybody arrested, put in jail because it really is conservative and-- (overlap)

KSP: Now was this, did the streaking occur just one time or were there many times?

LM: Many over a whole week, but during the week, it started to finish. But the interesting thing about ours, I was talking to some people from Florida State University, and they were talking about how much streaking they had every night. I said night, they said yeah, I said ours are in broad open daylight. They didn’t even believe me. I said we don’t even have any people around then. We don’t have housing. Theirs was from one dorm to the other, you know, that kind of thing. Ours was from, you know where the student center is now?

KSP: Uh-huh.

LM: Davidson Center.

KSP: Yeah.

LM: Ours was from the restrooms in Howard Hall across the campus to the restrooms over there. And I mean, the ladies, the women were topless.

KSP: Oh wow.

LM: Broad open daylight. And then men, some of them, well they had on undershorts, and this happened one day, and this is the part that, disappointed me, although later on I got over it, the second day we had streakers, we had businessmen from town out there, people were lined up watching them run through.
KSP: They were putting on a show.

LM: Yeah, so it was. But that’s the part, I guess, that disappointed me. It’s, here we are out here, we’re trying to deal with this, we did not discipline anybody after this. After, let’s see, I say the worst, most of it was about three days. We started just a little bit the first day. And then the second day was really, really, people got their nerve up, I guess. There was a lot of that, the third day kind of settled down. Well, what we did, people in town were demanding that the police chief and sheriff go out and arrest those people, really. They were breaking the law, and what we did is, Dr. Whitley, the president, always, I never did ask him this, but by the third day, it happened he was gone. He had to go to a meeting; I always thought he maybe planned that meeting.

KSP: Maybe he did that on purpose.

LM: I never did ask him that. But, along about that time, the police chief called, in fact I think it was chief Wetherington at that time. If it wasn’t him, it was, no it wasn’t him, he was on the police force, because that’s when I met him, right after that. But they got the, the town must have been, was really getting, becoming upset about it. But one of them called the president’s office and I got the call transferred to me. And James Sanders, who was the vice president of business affairs, I was the dean of students, and Jack Anderson was the academic dean. We got together and talked, the police people came out, we all kind of agreed together how to, we were going to handle it. It spilled over to the campus, then. And we sat around and what we agreed on is that the police agreed, they would not arrest anybody on campus. This is a state institution that was one of the ground rules. They would not arrest anybody on campus. We all, we suggested that and they agreed to it. But they said, and the second thing was, but if they leave campus without any clothes on, they’ll be arrested. Alright, that was the second point, which is not too bad when you think about it. The third point was that I had the, they gave me their police chief’s, they had a safety director then too by the way, they don’t have it now, they gave me the private number for the police chief. It would go straight into his office instead of going through all the switchboard, and told me that if I had a problem and needed any help, to call that number. And they also, the safety director said the same thing, and they said well, we’re going to arrest them if they come off campus. So, we all agreed and the police chief told me, he said I’m going to call you every morning at eight o’clock if this continues and see what’s going on. And he says anytime, twenty-four hours a day, you have a problem, you call me. That was our agreement. Well, fortunately, there was, I think it was three days, maybe it was four days, but anyway, the day, the second day, the first day I called, I said no, we’ve had some streaking, but we haven’t had any problems. He said well my men patrol out there, they haven’t seen anything either but then the next day, he called me. He called me that day and he said, I’ve got something to tell you. I thought he was going to say we got about ten people in jail down here, but he didn’t. He said one of my cars was patrolling the campus out there, around the campus out there and they saw a bunch of boys running without their clothes on down toward the street on the edge of the campus. I said, yeah I remember who you’re, I don’t know who they were, but I saw them too. He laughed, he said you know what happened, he said, they jumped in a pickup truck. He said by the time my car caught them, they had their clothes on. I forget, I don’t think it was chief Wetherington, it wouldn’t have been Wetherington, because I think he, I’m not sure, he became
police chief later than that. I’ve forgot who was chief then. But then, one problem I did have as we had, I’m trying to remember the fellow’s name, but I don’t, because one of the detectives, he was really upset about it. He came out on the campus one day when all the businesspeople and they talked and tried to get everybody to say they want to arrest them, that kind of thing. And I called the safety director and that guy, I knew his name, but I forgot it, he said I’ll handle it. And that guy disappeared; he didn’t come back on campus anymore. So, they found out we were working with them. And they were working with us. So, we handled that whole situation. I don’t take any credit for it except to say I just tried to follow some instincts and trying to listen to students, open up communication. Here’s what I told them, the last day we had it, I called the president of student government in my office. I said I want to talk to you. I told him, I said this is, we’ve had enough of this. I said you’ve had your fun or whatever it is, and I said we’ve cooperated with you, nobody as far as I know has been arrested; nobody’s been hurt. This is about eleven o’clock one day, and I said, I know you know who, I didn’t know who these people were. I said I know you probably have a couple dozen people doing all this. I said you know, I know you know them. I said, I want it to stop. You’ve had your fun or whatever it is, I said, and I’ll never forget what he said. He said let us run them one more time. Well, he did. I looked out my window about thirty minutes later and here comes about six or seven of them across the campus into the student center, just like, because my office was in the student center, they went into the ladies’ and men’s restrooms and dressed and came out. But you know, after that we didn’t have anymore. Except for one thing, I made a mistake. Somebody must have heard me. I was telling somebody one day, we have everything out of here the last two or three days except Lady Godiva. Well, that was, that was just the point I told you they quit. But about four or five o’clock in the afternoon on the campus, the campus was open for that, you know where the Fine Arts Hall is, it’s not, straight out toward the open, there was not an entrance out there then, but out toward where the BSU the house, the

KSP: Right, yeah. Now it’s the-- (overlap)

LM: The International Student Center. (overlap) There was a truck pulled up out there, it was an open area, a truck pulled up with a horse trailer behind it. I don’t have to tell you the rest of it. This girl, woman, rode out of that horse, of course someone was pulling with the truck, she rode out on that horse and she was completely nude except she had hair like most people would think Lady Godiva wore. She rode around and went back in that truck and they left. That was, that was the last of the event that I remember we had over there.

KSP: Wow.

LM: This was about three or four days after that. I was fatigued, but you know?

KSP: Do you remember what year this was approximately?

LM: Let’s see now, Dr. Whitley was still president. He retired in 1980. He was not, he would have had to be, don’t hold me to this, and I’ll look it up, but it was probably between 1975 and ’80 somewhere in that period of time. Because I go by his presence, because he retired in ’80 and it was somewhere in that time, I think it was. It was a nationwide thing.
KSP: Right.

LM: Not every campus did it, but a lot of them did. And of all the things here is a community college, no housing, and relatively young or it was young?

KSP: Very conservative.

LM: And very conservative. Ultra conservative community.

KSP: Ultra conservative. When you say the community was asking for them to be arrested, did you mean like, there were a lot of letters to the editor in the paper and?

LM: Well the police, the police people told us that.

KSP: The police.

LM: Of course they got a lot of phone calls, people angry and all kinds of things. Maybe, there were probably some letters to the editor afterwards, but they didn’t have time, it was over before they could get anything in print.

KSP: But probably these kids were just having a good time and doing some self-expression (overlap).

LM: It started, they were imitating other colleges too. They’d read about it, hear about it, some probably got the bright idea, why don’t we do that. I can just hear that going on, and I think I knew people enough.

KSP: Do you need a break?

LM: No.

KSP: Okay. The college, how did the college change when it came to a, changed to a four-year status?

LM: Changed to a four-year status?

KSP: Yeah, right.

LM: Well, it was a gradual change. See, what we got, we got the approval to start in 1968. We would add a class, you know, add a year each time. We graduated our first, graduating class, I think it was ’70 or ’72, I think it was. In other words, people became freshman in 1968, graduated ’72. Because if you were only two years, it would be difficult for you to graduate in exactly two more years because you might not have arranged your courses right or the curriculum for certain degrees would change and so forth. So, some of them may have graduated earlier than ’72, but we could not give them a high quality degree. Because the authorization
was to start in '68, they would converge in '72. So our first baccalaureate degrees if I remember right were in '72.

KSP: And you also added graduate?

LM: Well that was, the graduate was a little bit later than that, don’t pin me down on those years, but gradually what happened on that, certain degrees were added, for instance education was one of the areas. The education and business got into it first because they’re professional schools. And then later on they started a, we had a community planning I believe it was or something in that general area anyway, I don’t think it was called a degree, but it was something like that. The sciences though, you see, you don’t add Master’s degrees in your sciences like you do in some of the others are a lot easier to do. And nursing, we had a very strong nursing program, all the way from the two-year program that we had the baccalaureate at that time.

KSP: Right.

LM: Very strong then, and music, you know, has always been very strong, the school of education’s got a good reputation too, a lot of the teachers are. So we, we’ve had some, we had a lot of our people, for instance after that four or five to go to medical school and it’s amazing when you see these doctors from out of town are graduates, baccalaureate graduates.

KSP: Right. So your student population changed?

LM: Yes it changed and we got, of course they stayed longer and got more mature as they got older of course and better leadership. There was, it took a while, of course this was not my responsibility, but I remember it, it took a while too to get enough qualified faculty to teach some of the courses you had to teach in the second two years, especially in the sciences. That kind of thing, so you had to, we gradually did that. And we hired all, I don’t know how many faculty and staff we hired from about '68 to about '72 or '73. A bunch of them just retired not too long ago. See, that would be about the time they’d retire. If they hired somebody in ’70 they were retired, if they stayed thirty years, there was quite a change in faculty, we had the whole faculty, well let me put it this way, I think we are maturing on campus as far as [inaudible] faculty members that were well qualified, not even more than we had necessarily, those who have recently studied in their fields came in with lofty ideas. And both in the administrative area also; I expanded my staff about that time a little bit to also take care of some of the other things that we had. About that time also, we started, we started having a little bit of housing. The first housing we had was not, we didn’t own it. A fellow built some housing for college students that we’d refer to him. After that, somebody gave the coach enough money to build an athletic dorm to have up there. And gradually the people, the first housing, real housing we had was what they called the courtyard area, what they called Courtyard I and II. Those were the first. They were privately built by the Columbus College foundation actually, ran by the foundation. Then from then on, things started happening. That’s how the college got housing. Gradually. Of course that’s where the enrollment’s been. Oh, you’re not from Columbus are you?

KSP: Yes, I am.
LM: Oh, you are?

KSP: Yes, I remember when the first dorms were built. I do (overlap).

LM: (Overlap) You probably remember then, because you remember then it started gradually, then all of a sudden it was booming. That’s what growth has happened for the last few years.

KSP: Right, due to housing. So you had graduate programs added. Do you remember which graduate programs, probably a MBA?

LM: Yeah. MBA and Master of Education.

KSP: So you were doing classes at night.

LM: Oh yeah.

KSP: Which, probably?

LM: A lot of the business, especially a lot of the business because business, you know business men work the daytime and go to school at night.

KSP: So that probably also helped the community.

LM: Oh yes, oh yes.

KSP: Was it because the college saw a need for that from the community and added that?

LM: Well see, that’s one of the things that’s what happened down through the years. Dr. Whitley was a, he got a, his background was in junior college education before, he got his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. Back in those years, there weren’t too many places, Mississippi had junior college program, a lot of the junior colleges were private, were not public around the country. This is beginning a movement of public junior colleges. Texas had them, Mississippi had them, and Georgia was developing some and some of the others too. That’s what happened. So you, this town [and gown thing?] became very important to Columbus State University, Columbus College it was then.

KSP: Right, so the administration was always looking to the community to see what the community needed and then tried to fulfill.

LM: Right. In fact, that was Dr. Whitley’s whole philosophy, develop a program, community service, community needs.

KSP: Well that’s what I was wondering. Did the administration feel like we wanted to educate students so they could work in Columbus, which is a little different than what the philosophy was when they began.
LM: Well, I think in the very beginning, for the first few years, that was probably the main idea because you could draw community interest and support that way. It wasn’t an ulterior motive by any means. Because a lot of our students, we have, I guess that during those days we had our own, the age of our student body was probably the highest it’s been. It’s probably been dropping ever since, the average age. Because— (overlap)

KSP: So you’re saying with the addition of the four year college and graduate (overlap)

LM: No, the two-year colleges, just the opposite.

KSP: Okay. So, when it was a two-year college, you had a, an older student?

LM: Maybe not the first two or three years, but after, you know we had a lot of older students.

KSP: Really?

LM: We had a lot of them, and of course with a small student body, see, it doesn’t take much to raise your average age. And I think probably it stopped, the average age probably leveled off after about four or five years. Then you had a, and then it probably dropped a lot since the enrollment– housing, you had housing to put younger people in. That’s probably what happened, if you [inaudible] probably be like this.

KSP: Right. I think that’s very interesting that a town like Columbus, which is considered a mill town is so willing and wanting to put education in. And–

LM: Well, what has happened, I’ve known a lot of these people, I mean, I didn’t have much to do with it but I’ve met them all. What’s happened now, and a lot of the people don’t realize this, even the faculty, some of the staff don’t, unless you’ve been there long enough, what happened when I first came, and these people are not living, some of them anymore. We had a large group of people, highly they were all, Mr. T. Hiram Stanley who was the chairman of the Royal Crown Cola, we had all kinds of people own the mills around here. Banking people, all of those people are probably deceased, the people you see now that are in Columbus that are running these same businesses are either their children or grandchildren. See, all that was built up over a period of time back then, and the college established its reputation through a lot of these people. Dr. Whitley was always, he started the first foundation by the way, a very small foundation, but that was the whole idea. Of course Dr. Brown has really built on it the last few years. But that was for the seed that’s planted back in those days.

KSP: Yes.

LM: And once that got started, the town got interested in, and Dr. Whitley would tell them I never want to forget, for instance, that Turner center, Elizabeth Bradley Turner center down there. That was Mr. D.A. Turner’s wife who was Bradley Turner. She was a Bradley and he of course was a Turner. And he was a nice old gentleman, and he gave the money after his wife died to build that building in honor of her. So you had people, a lot of those names almost, buildings almost as old as those people. Davidson center was named after Mr. J. Q. Davidson.
KSP: Really?

LM: Stanley Hall was to T. Hiram Stanley. Tucker building was for one of the people in the newspaper business, I think.

KSP: And, you’re right, a lot of those buildings are even named after professors, LeNoir.

LM: Yeah, LeNoir.

KSP: Did you know him?

LM: Bill LeNoir.

KSP: And?

LM: And the Howard building.

KSP: Howard.

LM: He was very, he, his nomination there was well, he was student oriented, taught English, but he’d do anything in the world for a student. I don’t mean he was easy, but I’m talking about if they had a problem or anything like that. Drive, he used to drive, for instance, we didn’t have any transportation for the athletes. So we would take them in our cars and drive them over, I drove and we had about three or four cars drive, we didn’t have women’s athletics much then, but we’d have three or four cars and drive them to play a ball game that night. Mr. Howard, he was a fine person.

KSP: Was he?

LM: USO person, you know what USO stands for? Mr. Howard, he had a background in USO back in World War II.

KSP: Oh okay. And the Richards building, is that?

LM: Mr. Walter Alan Richards, Tom Houston I believe.

KSP: And, well Illges I imagine was from the, Illges Hall.

LM: Illges, yeah, All those were some of the prominent families in town. And let’s see,

KSP: Arnold.

LM: Arnold?

KSP: Arnold Hall.
LM: Yeah, that’s another one. I didn’t know this, I can’t tie this in to Illges and Arnold as I could the others because I just didn’t know, but all those are families in town. In fact, I don’t believe you’d find, of course I don’t have any surveys on this, but I have never seen as much money released there, especially at Columbus College’s days, from private enterprise to a public institution. I, people you can tell would never believe. That much money was coming out for a public institution.

KSP: Absolutely, Columbus State has been fortunate in that respect to get a lot of money. What role did fraternities and sororities play on campus?

LM: Very little until I guess recently, I’m not sure that much now. But it was a gradual–

END OF SIDE A

START SIDE B

LM: We had a fraternity first and I escape, I can’t think of the name now it just escapes me. Because it was a very, they had some problems, I don’t mean discipline problems, but it was hard to get them going. Because the kind of campus we had, it was a lot of work.

KSP: Non-traditional type stuff.

LM: Non-traditional, they did not have a fraternity house to start with, I guess none of them had any for a while. I think one finally–

KSP: TKO or something.

LM: Yeah, something like that. I don’t think they have much now even. But they, it was very minimum during my stay over there. We had had one black fraternity and I think one white fraternity. I hate to put it that way, but that’s what they were. And we didn’t have a sorority, but I think we had, I don’t think we had but about three when I retired, two fraternities, maybe one sorority. That was what it was, they’d start and they couldn’t get enough people to do much. They stayed on our books so to speak, for awhile. They did some good things, but they weren’t big enough to, some of them were working. I don’t mean to criticize, there wasn’t anything wrong with them. They just didn’t go over too well to start with.

KSP: Did you ever have any trouble out of any?

LM: Not really, there were one or two instances that were so small I can’t even remember them. But we did have one or two, one of them was a bed race some of them had one time. I think one of them got hurt. Not bad, but they had their old bed, back then was one of those gimmicks that came up. They had a hospital bed and they got approval for all of them, they weren’t doing anything, in fact the police cooperated with them. They had a bed race from one place to the other to raise money for something. The thing fell apart. The bed, it was a race too, there were three or four of them
KSP: Right.

LM: I remember that, but that’s all, gives you an idea that we didn’t have, we didn’t have problems with them.

KSP: Well let’s talk presidents.

LM: Okay.

KSP: You mentioned–

LM: Let me say one thing.

KSP: Okay.

LM: I’ll be as candid as I can, but some things I can’t say.

KSP: That’s fine.

LM: Not that they’re scandalous or anything like that.

KSP: I understand.

LM: I’ll skip some of them.

KSP: Only say what you want to say.

LM: Alright.

KSP: You mentioned Thomas Whitley.

LM: Yeah.

KSP: Could you, how would you describe him?

LM: Dr. Whitley, let me start off by saying this, of all and I don’t see this in anything Dr. Brown and other presidents, and in fact I love Dr. Brown, I mean I worked with him, but Dr. Whitley was a fatherly type. And from the old-school, but a man with the highest integrity of anybody I’ve ever seen. He would not do anything, oh he was aggressive, like I told you about, what he said about the rebels, he said we’re not going to have it anymore. But, he’s a person that you could, he would back up the people, his administrators, the faculty, right down to the hilt unless he thought they were just completely wrong and something ought to be done about it, but he would back you up. A lot of people, Dr. Whitley had one thing about him that a lot of people didn’t understand, but to me it was great. If he thought something should be done, he would call you in and say hey look, you need to look at this and everything. But he wouldn’t do it in an
angry way. He was sincere but at the same time, if you did something and maybe was a, I wouldn’t say a mistake, but maybe he disagreed with you, he might say, but he would back you up. And I like that about a person. I don’t like wishy-washy people.

KSP: Right.

LM: And I have, I have for instance, I remember one time that a student appealed, I tell this story to illustrate how it was, a student appealed to him directly. He had an eye problem and of course the president’s home was on the campus at that time. And he had a student, I think he had a financial aid, he hadn’t paid some money back and then he had borrowed from some fund we had. Well, the rule was if you didn’t pay it back you couldn’t register the next quarter. Of course it wasn’t much, it was just enough to register. And he, went to the registrar’s office flagged his record, said you can’t register. And on all that, he was on academic probation. So he goes over to Dr. Whitley’s home and had a little eye problem, so he goes over to his home which is only a four or five hundred yards from his office over there and appealed to him and said Dr. Whitley and gave him the story. I won’t go into all the details. And so he called up the registrar’s office and said go ahead and register this young man. I’ve talked with him and said I’m gonna approve him to register. Boy that really, that didn’t go over too well with the people who were responsible for that program. And of course, he was wrong by doing that way. Well, they went ahead and did it. I told them, I said well, do it, go ahead and do it. I said, I’ll handle it from behind the scenes. I said, I’ll handle it from behind the scenes. Well, uh, he would probably laugh at this, he’s deceased now, but I, he came back to the office the next day or the next day and I said Dr. Whitley I need to talk to you. He said come on in, the door was open. I said I want to talk with you about the name, I say I can’t call the name, I remember the name, but I won’t, I said he came over to you yesterday and you just approved him to register and everything. I said you made a lot of people in my department mad, because I was in charge of all the registration that was my area then, plus the student affairs. And he listened to me and he said yeah, you don’t just go into your boss and say that kind of stuff much, but I knew what kind of person he was. And I talked to him, I told him, I said you know, what you should have done, and you don’t tell what you should to your boss, I said, I think it would have been better is what I said, if you had sent that person to me. I wanted to do it, but at least that would maybe make things a little smoother. So I talked to him, he said you know you’re right. He said, next time I’ll send him to you, send somebody to you. I said, ultimately you, if there was a controversy you would make the decision anyway.

KSP: Right.

LM: But I said let’s let it work through the process. And he said you’re right.

KSP: That’s great.

LM: That’s what I mean by (overlap) that’s the kind of person he was. His opinions he’d tell you, but when you, he would not argue about principle. That was a principle, I thought, he just had to— I tell you that to tell you what kind of person he was. And he’d do the same thing to me sometimes, he’d say, he’d call me in and say well, I want to talk to you a minute. I didn’t mind going in his office because I knew that if I had done something wrong he was going to tell me
but most of the time what it was is that he used me, and I’m not saying this to, I shouldn’t even say it I guess, but he used me a lot of time to mediate on campus.

KSP: Mediate?

LM: That’s what I used the word for, maybe a faculty member and student had a problem or were fussing and something, or maybe it was between, of course at that time the academic dean did a lot of that, but sometimes it was, it was just they were arguing, fussing, and so he’d call me, he’d say I want you to, I met with him one Saturday morning for instance, and I won’t call a name here because a faculty member, in fact it was a member of that Vietnam protest group I was telling you about. But it wasn’t about that, it was about students, I think it was about student grades or something. He said, I want you to come in my office Saturday morning about ten o’clock, see if we can meet a faculty member if you don’t mind. He said, all I want you to do is be a third party, he said. And I said okay, alright, and I sat there and listened for an hour for them to talk. And all he wanted was a third party for both of them. That’s kind of the way he handled those situations. He was a wise person when working with people.

KSP: But it seems like what you’re saying is, yes he was president of the college, but he treated his administration, people under him like you all were a team.

LM: Right.

KSP: And working together towards something.

LM: Right. And if it came to the point that he really did not go along with everything, he overruled you, but not very often. Because by the time that happened, you had to come to a common conclusion or something that whatever was to be done.

KSP: And he allowed people to do their jobs, make decisions.

LM: Right, right. Some people didn’t think that, but I did. I didn’t have any problem at all, I did whatever I thought was right and I went on, now he had some very, let me tell you something that happened one time that it was funny. But I was, in a way I wished it hadn’t happened from his standpoint. He was a really a tiger on dress. You know, back then, you didn’t have, you didn’t just go out, you didn’t have to wear a tie and coat, but you had to be, you had to be clean and it’s a conservative town. And I remember one day out in front of registrar’s windows, it’s gone now, the whole building is, is boarded up, not boarded up but bricked up, and the registrar’s office has moved over into another building, it was in that Richards building then. There was a young man standing up at the counter one day talking to one of the women, that’s where you went and picked up an application form and turn it back in, that kind of thing and also you could check on your grades there. This young man was standing up there with his shirt tail, long tailed shirt out. That was back in the days when dress was pretty important. He walked up to him and said, I don’t remember what he’d say. They told me this, I didn’t see this, but he walked up to him and said put your shirt tail in. The guy looked around and looked at him and said, I said put your shirt tail in. And he turned, the young man turned around and said sir, who are you? And said, well I’m the president of the college. He said, well you know, I’m not a student here, I’m
not, I’m not applying to be a student here. He said I’m going to keep my shirt tail out, you can’t
do a thing about it. Of course he was right. I say he was right, that was his side of the story. Of
course the president said I’m sorry and walked off.

KSP: Wow. Okay.

LM: He was not sorry but– (overlap)

KSP: Okay, and just walked off. Interesting.

LM: But that’s the kind of person he was. He was always above [inaudible] always, wished–

KSP: After Thomas Whitley retired, Francis Brooke became president. How would you
describe Francis Brooke?

LM: An entirely different person from Whitley.

KSP: In what way?

LM: Mainly because, the orientation toward higher education. Which remember now you’ve
got an era when Whitley came up when the college was being established and he was trying to
foster the institution, and you learn a lot from both ways, a lot from him, his actions and all this
other stuff. When Dr. Brooke came in, I worked with Dr. Brooke, I stayed, I mean I was on his
staff all the way through, his administration. He could have gotten another vice president if he
wanted to, but I worked with him all the way through and he stayed there from about ’80 till ’87
I believe it was, something like that. Dr. Brooke was more of an academician than anything else.
He was, in administration, first of all he came from Virginia, that University of Virginia
atmosphere which I’m not criticizing, it’s a quality, a highly academic situation up there. And
Columbus College was completely different institution from that. It was a smaller college, but it
was more diversified from the standpoint of the community. You have, what’s it called, courses
that taught people how to live and how to get a job and that thing where Virginia was a
sophisticated liberal arts kind of orientation. And Dr. Brooke and the faculty had a little bit of a
conflict sometimes because of his administrative style. I worked with the guy, I thought he, I
didn’t have a problem with him, but in my position, it was the administration, which is different
from working with the faculty. And the faculty was getting a little more sophisticated, I mean,
that good, quote sophisticated then too, and a little bit more, I won’t say qualified is not the
word, but more liberal arts oriented, more talents, we had more talents than we had earlier. It
was getting bigger and expanding. It was a different kind of college than Dr. Whitley
exchanged. Well, but so they had some ideas of their own and for some reason or another, and I
think the only thing I can tell you is administrative style because then, I mean, he was a highly
intelligent person. As you know, he just resigned and left in 1987. And I, the conflict got worse
as it went along. Everybody knows this, it’s not a secret. The conflict between him and the
faculty mostly and they, and I don’t know one time, there was about three faculty members even,
I won’t call their names because I’m not sure I remember, but it was three or four faculty
members went down and talked to the chancellor.
KSP: Really?

LM: Yeah.

KSP: So, I mean, what was it that he was doing, and I really don’t know anything, what was it that he was doing that the faculty didn’t approve of or, you know, had a problem with?

LM: Of course since I wasn’t a faculty member, I talked to him, I told him, I had a meeting with him every week. My interpretation of some of these things probably would be a little different than some of those faculty members. But it seems to me, listening to these people talked, and in faculty meetings, I’ll tell you in faculty meetings, because I actually did have faculty ranking, the way I was professor of education. But it seems to me, when I say style, Dr. Brooke tended to, and as I say he was a very smart person, I think we tend to get the idea that he was talking down. And whether that was his intention or not, I don’t know. I mean, in faculty meetings when he said something like that–

KSP: Right.

LM: And he also, as far as I know, had almost a closed-door policy. I got in there most any time, after all I reported to him, I could call him and he, I mean he’d answer the phone, I mean he wouldn’t answer the phone but get on the phone. And I think a lot of the faculty members were so accustomed to walking into Dr. Whitley’s office, if he was there and say Dr. Whitley I want to talk to you about something. Well, you can look at this two ways. In a way, if it did something to policy, they’d be talking to the dean first. I’m not saying anything like this happened, but I really talked to anybody. He had an open-door, Brooke did not. I think that was probably the thing right there.

KSP: The faculty maybe felt he was unwilling to listen.

LM: That and I think they attributed it that way. Because I like to give the guy his due because I worked with him, I never did have any problems with him. He’d tell me, he told me to do a couple of things sometime that I didn’t really want to do, but I did them. And it was, and when I say that it sounds like it was a simple statement but it was not difficult. I know some faculty members gave him some problems and he wanted me to get rid of them. I say faculty members, staff members, and I didn’t disagree with him too much, I just hated to have to do it. And the guy wasn’t doing anything really illegal or anything, but they just didn’t, didn’t like his philosophy. And so I think faculty and maybe some staff too got the idea, that he was sort of looking down and it was kind of a communication problem maybe.

KSP: Really? And he wasn’t from Columbus?

LM: No.

KSP: No.

LM: He wasn’t even from the state of Georgia.
KSP: So they felt maybe like he was an outsider?

LM: Well probably, but he was a highly intelligent person. He was, I talked to him and I listened to him make talks and he was sharp as a tack. He was a liberal arts type person and boy he really, his father was a, I think he, I think his father was a Presbyterian preacher. And Dr. Brooke was called on, and he actually read the eulogy for one of our black staff members that died out in the black community. I went to it, it was very good. He was a highly intelligent person, very capable. But the administration style–

KSP: Was so different from–

LM: Was so different, I think that’s probably, and there were some personalities involved and a lot of that too, but from faculty [inaudible] there always is.

KSP: And we come to Dr. Brown, Dr. Frank Brown. How would you describe him?

LM: Dr. Frank Brown. First of all, I’d do the same thing with him as I’d do with Dr. Whitley. First, high integrity, he would not do anything dishonest like Dr.– well I don’t think any one of the three would, what I mean by that is I think everything’s gonna be a [inaudible]. He is gonna treat people decently like human beings, whoever they are, even though sometimes he may not agree with them. He can make a decision though, he’s not a wishy-washy person. He could make a decision, he could explain his decisions, why he did. I think he has the grasp of a, of situations [inaudible]. I think he can grasp a situation, maybe a potential problem about as quickly as I can on a college campus if you give him all the facts. And I remember him like that and I also remember him as a person that’s, he’s a people person. He’s a decent human being. I believe that a lot. He’s a decent human being that his feelings are for people. I think he loves people. And I think these kinds of characteristics is one of the main reasons he’s so successful. Whether he’s talking with a student or he’s talking to the, I guess even the president of the United States, I don’t know how that would be, but I think that’s the way he is. And it’s a very unusual person who can do that.

KSP: He’s been president a long time.

LM: Yes. In fact, to me, if I had to pick out, if I had to write his job description, for any president, coming from the college level, I know that campuses are different and you’ve got to have people that [inaudible] raise money and academic stuff, let somebody else do it. But I think Frank Brown epitomizes this kind of situation, and when I say he loves people, if you do not like people and cannot get along with them, you’re not going to be successful as a college president. Even though you might not deal with all the students or hardly ever see a student, you’ve got to keep their interests and their needs in mind while you’re doing all this other stuff. I think he does.

KSP: I do too. I think we really touched on my next question. My next question is Francis Brooke served as president for seven years which is shorter than Whitley or Brown, why do you think that is?
LM: Because of what I said. He resigned. He resigned.

KSP: Okay.

LM: I don’t know what happened in Atlanta, when he went up there I can’t tell you that, I don’t know whether they told him to resign, I have no idea what happened there.

KSP: Was he summoned to, was he asked to come to Atlanta or something?

LM: Well they went up there quite often.

KSP: Oh okay.

LM: Sometimes a group of presidents would go up and sometimes the chancellor might call one up because he wanted to ask him some questions. That’s not unusual, but I know that they might have asked him to. All I know is I saw his letter of resignation.

KSP: Switching gears here, what is your best memory from Columbus College?

LM: My best memory, that’s a hard one, I’ve got a lot of them really. I guess really though and this is, this might be selfish to say this, but back in the, when I retired I had no idea this was going to take place. It’s a small thing really, but I retired, and this brought tears to my eyes because I’ve always been, tried to be an advocate for students. I love the students some of them I want to kick them out the door sometimes like the streaking and that kind of thing, but I think the highlight and I say it’s the simple thing, I should tell you other things but this is, I say that what I remember and I cherish the most at this point is two things really, not one. The experience of coming to a young college three years old, and growing with it because I was a greenhorn when I came. I mean, I don’t know everything now, but boy working with Dr. Whitley’s staff and everything, we all kind of grew together. It was, because that was one of the highlights, and you might say that’s not really a highlight, that’s a process. But it really is, growing, that’s the number one I’d say growing through that and just having all kinds of good experience learning along the way, meeting the people and that kind of thing. Because I had many hats, all of us do. At one time I had five different titles I think it was. Director of institutional research, started the financial aid program and all that stuff, so I’m not bragging but I learned while I was doing it and making a lot of mistakes. So that’s number one. The other one is at my retirement reception, there were, at the reception, my wife and I, my family, my two brothers and everything we were walking through and everything and after we, of course the people were making speeches or doing all that and the other, but in the end, the president of student government came up and walked up to me and said, and gave me, it was something written down, and he said the student government association has voted to spend I don’t know how much money student activities funds and the college would match it to build a Mock Pavilion. Boy that just about got me, I couldn’t say anything. Because it was coming from the students. And they did, of course they moved it, they had to move it because of the development of, did you know where the old one was?
KSP: I didn’t know where the old one was?

LM: The soccer field, the round building out there.

KSP: Oh okay.

LM: That was the original one they built and put the plaque up there and then they had to move it, but I wasn’t aware, in fact I guess it was, I think it was Dr. Brown that told me they were going to do that. I said well yeah, they rebuilt it over there. So those were the two things and a lot of things in between [inaudible] beginning, and the end. And that, it’s a minor thing in a way, but it was the thought behind it, especially since the students did it.

KSP: Right. I can certainly see that you are and have always been an advocate for the students.

LM: Well that was my job.

KSP: Yes. Do you have any regrets about your time at Columbus College?

LM: I don’t have one.

KSP: You don’t have one.

LM: There’s some down times, yes. A few times I’ve been angry, everybody has their emotions, I’ve been angry, I’ve been sad, I’ve been, none of it that I would say I wished I hadn’t have been here. Some things I wished didn’t happen maybe, but–

KSP: It was a pretty good gig, huh?

LM: Yeah– (laughs)

KSP: During your thirtyone year career at Columbus College, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

LM: Accomplishment I’m most proud of, I can’t give you one specific thing. I think the thing that, and these weren’t even accomplishments I guess, but they, what I remember that I had the most satisfaction out of I guess was my relationship with the students and what I mean by that is student government, the student leaders because that’s what you work with mostly. I think I’m proud of the relationship I had with all of those. Some you see different students as the years go by, you got strong student body president and some not so strong. You have to prop them up when they get that way. So I think that my accomplishment with the student leaders is one of the things I was glad of. And after I left, I know Dr. Bagley and Mr. Kees have really built on this. I don’t know what they would say, but I think it’s been, I’m proud the way we started. Because we started off struggling with our student leadership because they didn’t have time to do it. They didn’t know what to do anyway.

KSP: Right.
LM: And I guess the other thing was that, I’ll go back to one other thing, this was not an accomplishment, but another one of those things that, there’s certain individuals on the faculty I’m talking about faculty now, that I became very good friends with, I can’t give you accomplishments, but I guess this was an accomplishment. But I felt very close to and they, when I had a problem that I wanted some advice I’d call them and from a faculty standpoint sometimes they would call me, it was about three or four of them, and they could call me and say hey, I want your opinion on this. And I guess that’s an accomplishment, but what I’m trying to say is it makes, it builds up your ego both ways when somebody calls you and says I need your advice. Not just necessarily boasting about it, but you think well maybe I’m doing something right. What I say, building up the confidence that we had, not everybody probably thought that about me, but I’m sure they didn’t, but I felt that I built up enough trust and so forth that people felt free to walk into my office and talk.

KSP: Right.

LM: Because I’ve had people come in and talk with me about another faculty member or even about the president, but they [inaudible] that’s what I’m talking about.

KSP: Right.

LM: Makes you feel good when people trust you.

KSP: Enough to be able to do that.

LM: Confidential things really–

KSP: Have you been over to Columbus State lately, walked around the campus?

LM: Well, yes but you know what, now when I go over I have to be careful to find my way around. But yes I go, not as much as I used to. What happens to you when you work in a place that long, first ten years I went over quite often. At least once a week and sometimes I’d go over and drink coffee two or three times a week. Just kind of gradually phased, but you know why, because some of that you knew retire too.

KSP: Right.

LM: And you don’t see as many faces as you once did. Now I go over there and I see very few faculty and staff I even know. Dr. Brown obviously, Mr. Kees, and most of your academic deans, let’s see, one or two that were faculty members are deans, like George Stanton. I worked with George Stanton a lot. He’s a real fine person also very capable person. And I imagine he’s a good administrator. And Dr….

KSP: Chappell?
LM: Dr. Chappell, I think a lot of Dr. Chappel, I see him, we worked together. And of course most of the others, business and education and music, all of them are gone that I knew over there. Some of the new programs I wouldn’t know those people anyway.

KSP: Well Columbus State has certainly come a long way from the Shannon Hosiery Mill.

LM: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

KSP: Even have branched out with the downtown campus

LM: Yes, yes.

KSP: And the new center for international education, a lot of study abroad, lots of housing, as you sit away from the college, what do you see as the future? Well first of all, did anybody ever anticipate the college getting as big as it is?

LM: In the beginning, no. I don’t think anybody had that much vision at the beginning, because it was a struggle to get the campus built, started with temporary quarters. Most of the emphasis of the first ten years was just getting buildings and getting concrete for you to walk on, and getting trees planted and that kind of thing. Then it started some interest, more interest in academics. I know, I’m sure the faculty was frustrated for the first ten years because it was, most of their salaries, money for their salaries didn’t come out to build buildings, there’s so much emphasis on the state level to build and I don’t know [inaudible]. When I first started in 1961, my first contract was for $7,200. That gives you an idea of what I’m talking about. And we stuck with it and things got better later on, but that, the vision of [inaudible] I still say Columbus College sometimes. I don’t think anybody got this, but I think what happened is that Dr. Whitley of course was, I won’t say built the college, just laid the foundation. It was a struggle to do all the things I just talked about. So his vision was to, and then he retired just a few years after the baccalaureate program was underway. Dr. Brooke came in and I don’t know what his vision was. I know, I’m sure the faculty was frustrated for the first ten years because it was, most of their salaries, money for their salaries didn’t come out to build buildings, there’s so much emphasis on the state level to build and I don’t know [inaudible]. When I first started in 1961, my first contract was for $7,200. That gives you an idea of what I’m talking about. And we stuck with it and things got better later on, but that, the vision of [inaudible] I still say Columbus College sometimes. I don’t think anybody got this, but I think what happened is that Dr. Whitley of course was, I won’t say built the college, just laid the foundation. It was a struggle to do all the things I just talked about. So his vision was to, and then he retired just a few years after the baccalaureate program was underway. Dr. Brooke came in and I don’t know what his vision was. I think it may have been to improve the quality of the academic program. I’m not saying that— but I think sincerely he wanted to do that. And things got sidetracked a little bit too because we had, it got hard, hard times for the state. But then I think that it all probably started, I don’t mean all of it, I think that those were the roots or foundation, but then when Dr. Brown came in, in 1987 as the president, Dr. Brown was already entrenched in the community and he knew all these people. Like Dr. Whitley, Dr. Whitley knew them, like their fathers and grandfathers, Dr. Brown knew, picked up on all the same families, and knew where the money and things were. I think Dr. Brown with his personality and his leadership, I think then, about 19, late ‘80s, early ‘90s was when the vision started changing drastically. [inaudible] he could tell you much better than I could but [inaudible]. But I think along about that time, and then we went through, when I retired in ’92 got no raises the state was about broke, not broke, it was not dead, but it was broke. We didn’t get any raises for a couple of years. I think I slowed it down, but I think from then on with Dr. Brown’s leadership, and the participation of the faculty and the students, and I think it was, all of a sudden things came together from the standpoint of expansion of the academic programs, expansion of the campus, and I think everything started coming together. I think that’s when the vision really changed to what you see now.
KSP: And what do you see for the future? Where do you see Columbus State University going?

LM: It’s hard to answer such things; I haven’t been over there in a while. I see it continuing to gradually increase in enrollment. Not as gradual as the last few years I’ve been around, you’ve really grown the last few years. I see so many increases, I see a period, maybe I’m wrong, but I see a period of some, what I call mature, when I say mature with all the record expansion downtown. There are a lot of things to learn down there, and I won’t go into that because I’m not supposed to have memory. I’m not a critic, I won’t say anything bad, but I know from the past, any time you expand as fast as you do, you’ve got to put your feet on the ground and take a look a while. Then you can move on to the next step. Now that’s just my opinion. But and they’re doing a great job down there. In fact, that River Center and all that stuff, housing, and all that fine arts division moving down, I think all of that’s just great. I think wets the appetite of the town to get more involved by doing that. But I think too you’re gonna have situations like this, I’m sure Dr. Brown would say too, I know that I’ve thought about it, but now you’ve got to mature a little bit, maybe some changes need to be made. You know, a little, what they call adjustment.

KSP: Tweak it a little bit.

LM: Yeah, that’s right. Adjust it a little bit. But I think that they have a place right now to be up from what they already are, but I mean to be a tremendous influence not only, we used to say this community, they’re already influencing the whole state of Georgia and Alabama, this part of it. In the beginning it’s be felt around the whole nation, especially in specialized departments like music, and some of those things.

KSP: Dr. Mock that concludes my questions and this interview, I just wanted to say thank you very much for allowing me to do this.

LM: I hope this made sense.

KSP: It did. You gave us some really good information. Thank you so much.

LM: It was from my heart, I think a lot of this institution as I say, it gave me the opportunity to do things I never would have done other places really, because especially the first few years and then knowing people like Dr. Brown the later years.

KSP: Okay, well thank you very much.

LM: You’re certainly welcome.

END OF TAPE