

Wright State University

CORE Scholar

Wright State University - Miami Valley College of
Nursing and Health Oral History Project

College of Nursing and Health

1-22-2004

Fritz, Ira interview for the Miami Valley College of Nursing and Health Oral History Project

Carol Holdcraft

Wright State University - Main Campus

Ira Fritz

Wright State University - Main Campus, ira.fritz@wright.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/nursing_oral_history



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Nursing Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Holdcraft, C., & Fritz, I. (2004). Fritz, Ira interview for the Miami Valley College of Nursing and Health Oral History Project. .

https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/nursing_oral_history/22

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Nursing and Health at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wright State University - Miami Valley College of Nursing and Health Oral History Project by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact library-corescholar@wright.edu.

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

IRA FRITZ

JANUARY 22, 2004

CAROL HOLDCRAFT: Well today, what we're doing is recording another in our series of Oral History of The College of Nursing and Health at Wright State. Today it's January the twenty-second, I believe in 2004. We have Dr. Ira Fritz, who's with us today. So thank you for coming.

IRA FRITZ: My pleasure.

CH: Okay. And we're interested first of all in having you tell us a little bit about your background and how you came to be at Wright State. And as I said before we started the interview, we're really interested in the early days of what was then the School of Nursing at Wright State and you were, as I understand, here before that.

IF: Yeah, I came to Wright State in '66 into the biology department and I came to handle the developmental biology area, although my PhD's in nutrition. I was at that time an embryonic nutritionist or embryo nutritionist and came in '66. When I came here I told everybody I'm going to start teaching nutrition as soon as I can and we'll set it up somewhere in the program. In '69, when I was promoted, we started an interaction with Miami Valley Hospital School of Nursing and the head person down there was Mary Edwards. I haven't seen or heard of Mary and I know when she retired she left the area. She had an assistant whom I saw, and I don't remember her name, five or six years ago when Evelyn and I were down at the Valley. So she is still around. She had retired but she was volunteering down there. She was the, I don't know what their titles were, but Mary was the head of the program and this woman was her assistant, the associate head of the program. They forged a relationship with Wright State through Brian Hutchings, who was then chair of biology, for us to teach nutrition, anatomy, and physiology to

their nursing students because they saw the BS in handwriting coming up through the state and they wanted better training for the people down there who got minimal anatomy, applied physiology, and dietetic style nutrition. So they wanted us to teach basic courses for them, real basic science courses for them. And Andy and I were part of the founding group. Budge McFarland, who has since passed away, was the person who did the microbiology for nursing and then we hired a laboratory assistant, Henry something or other to work with Andy in the anatomy and to handle the cadavers. And we hired Roger Glaser to teach the physiology. So Roger took the physiology, Andy did the anatomy, and I did the nutrition and we went down there twice a year and I went down there once a year in the summer time and brought some Wright State students down with me, biology students who came to take the course. And that started roughly 1970, '69 or '70 somewhere in there. There was a movement here to start our own nursing school out here. They did that and that started, I don't know when it formally started but they hired Joyce Randolph in 1972, I think it was. She brought on a faculty and they started getting students and I was involved two ways then because I was teaching the nutrition course but in '72 there was also what was then called vice president, now president of the faculty and several nursing faculty came to me probably in '73 and said we've got a problem here, we need help.

CH: What was the nature of that problem?

IF: The nature of that problem was the difficulties that the faculty and the students were having with Joyce Randolph. And so they called me in and Andy Spiegel who was in the provost was very unhappy. He said, "What are you doing? You're not supposed to do that." And I said, "Yeah, I am supposed to do that." Then it came out that Randolph wasn't doing her job appropriately and Andy asked me, Andy Spiegel, asked me to find some folks who could come and evaluate. And we got the woman who was then the Dean of the School of Nursing, I

don't know if it was Louisville or Lexington. I think it was Lexington. That was one of the two who came and the other was Gracie Sills from Ohio State. They came in, they looked at Randolph and they said no way. More politely than that of course but they said this is inappropriate.

CH: Right.

IF: Randolph was let go just before she was about to get tenure which worked out really well in terms of what happened to the development of the College of Nursing and Health. Then they went out for a search and that search resulted in what I tell people now and I work with some folks, some nurses who are working on their PhD's through the other institution that I'm associated with now. We had what I called the greatest School of Nursing in the universe. When Gert came and brought Marge with her and they were able to recruit Joanne Ashley, Peggy Chinn, Sue Falco, there were two others who were just cutting edge research leaders in the nursing process. And we had a faculty here that was vibrant and active. They recruited superb students and they just did a hell of a job. It was amazing.

CH: So that opportunity to, that initial start up time and the difficulties that the school had with that first dean in your perception it sounds like that was handled appropriately as far as that process of the it was brought to the attention of the administration and the faculty government system that things were not working as they should be within the school.

IF: Right. And what happened is Spiegel had a delegation of a couple of nurses, Donna Dean was on the nursing faculty then before she got her degree. I'm not sure if she was working on her degree yet or not. That I can't remember although she knew Gracie at the time. They went to Spiegel and Spiegel said, I guess, my impression he never said it directly to me, "Oh, there's a couple of unhappy people there, it doesn't mean anything." He didn't do much and then it came up through the government system and they talked to me and because I was

teaching nursing students I knew that there was a good deal of unhappiness and sometimes you don't know when students are unhappy whether it means because people are asking them to work at a higher degree of rigor than they want to or whether there's really an oppressive situation. As it turned out this was really an oppressive situation. And so I talked to Donna and one other person and then I went and talked to the faculty. I was invited to talk to the faculty and John Tracy who was my vice president elect came with me, we talked to the nursing faculty and it was clear then that there was a major problem. I knew Joanne Cross whose husband was chair sociology, I think, at that time. And Agnes-

CH: Bennett?

IF: Yes. And I'd met Aggie when I was teaching at Miami Valley because the anatomy and physiology was being taught both at the Valley and St. E's at that nursing school. And I met Aggie through that because she was on their faculty and then came and joined us. And it was clear that there was a major problem. I went and told Spiegel and that's when he said, "Well, but you're interfering." And I said, "No, I'm not. This is an issue that concerns government." When he looked at it and he went over and he talked to nursing people and had a meeting with the nursing faculty without Randolph then he came back and he said, "Ira, there really is something wrong going on there." And then some student delegation he said, "We've got to get consultants in," and he asked me to help him find them. I met Gracie once, I think, before that but I knew her reputation of course was well known in nursing education circles it was impeccable and so I suggested her and she suggested the woman from I think it was Lexington. It would be in nursing at University of Kentucky. And they came in and it didn't take them long to decide that things were inappropriate, that the Dean was not listening to the wants and needs of students and was not listening to the advice consul and curricular expertise of the faculty. She wanted it to be, this is this and nursing students were going to do this and they were going to

wear this kind of uniform and this kind of hat and this kind of this and this kind of that and she wasn't listening to anybody. Some of the curricular decisions she made were from what I heard from the nursing faculty just totally out in left field. When the administration let her go and it was strange because not only was I Faculty Vice President at the time but I was also named to serve on her tenure review committee. And Bob Connelly who was Vice President for Development at the time and who had gotten that committee together and said, "Well I want you to meet really quick Ira and get this stuff done." And I said, "No, Bob it's going to go on hold." And he looked at me and I said, "Talk to Andy Spiegel." He did and he came back and he said, "There's really something bad going on there." And I said, "Yeah." And he said, "Well what do you want to do?" I said, "If you want the tenure committee to meet once to do an organizational thing that'll be, that's your call but I'm going to do everything I can to have it just stop at that point until this other stuff is done." He said, "Yes." We waited and she was asked to leave and the tenure committee then became issued.

CH: Okay. And then in the interim period then at that point as we understand it, Andy Kuntzman and Donna Dean were asked to serve in an interim basis.

IF: Correct.

CH: Or administrative leadership of the college.

IF: Right. Correct.

CH: And do you have any recollections of that period of time?

IF: No. Everybody was busy then. There was stuff going on besides what was going on in the School of Nursing but that was a reasonably quiet time. In other words everybody was doing their jobs. We were teaching students and we had the initial class started about that time. I don't know when I taught that first group on campus but we had twelve students who were the initial College of Nursing and Health class and we taught them on campus. That was a winter

course. We still taught down at the Valley in the summer, the nutrition course and I forget when McFarland thought, but we had set up so the biology department was providing the appropriate courses both on campus and off campus. That was about the time we pulled away from St. E's, did the stuff here and at the Valley. We did that for several years. Carol Dixon was in that class. Betty Schmoll was in that class. There was an African-American woman who was in that class who was super and Bobbe?

CH: Nolen?

IF: Bobbe Nolen was in that class. So there was some really high-powered folk there. They were really smart. They were really good. They were thoughtful. They certainly weren't the kind of student who would sit there and do anything that was requested in class. Why are we doing this? What does this mean? What is the value of this? They were terrific. It was almost like having graduate students. That group was older folk. They were not the typical younger nursing student and they came in and that was an excellent way to start, excellent way to start.

CH: So, do you recall, Dr. Fritz, were you involved with the recruitment of a new dean at that point?

IF: No, I was involved in dean selection later.

CH: Okay.

IF: But not that round. Andy came to me and said, "I think we're really going to do well because our first choice is a woman who is going to come to us from Columbia Teacher's College." And I think he showed me Gert's CV at the time and said, "She's really good." And then Gert came and Marge came with her and then other people started to come afterwards. (Pause) And the nursing college then was just doing all kinds of stuff. For a while Andy served on the, after Gert and Marge came, Andy served on the curriculum committee. When he went off they brought me on because they wanted a basic science person on the committee.

CH: The nursing-

IF: On the nursing curriculum committee.

CH: Okay.

IF: The College of Nursing curriculum committee and I thought Gert was really progressive because she thought nutrition was very important which obviously I agreed with. And as a matter of fact they hired a dietitian to work within the College of Nursing that was actually a person who was hired in our department because nutrition was our department. We were just forming a department of biochemistry then because we were getting ready for the medical school. Bob Connelly had written the VA grant which made us one of the VA Medical Schools and the four basic science departments were pulling out or were being born out of the old preexisting biology department.

CH: That was a fairly exciting time at that point.

IF: It was a really exciting time. Things were happening and it wasn't long after that that the catastrophe struck.

CH: Tell us more about your perception of the catastrophe.

IF: Well, and it happened, and again I was involved in two ways.

CH: Okay.

IF: I was on the Nursing Curriculum Committee and so I met with the nurses once a month with the Nursing Curriculum Committee and at that time I think eighty percent of the nursing faculties were on the committee. Bonnie Sommerville had come and joined us then. I forget there were a couple other people. There was a woman who got her doctorate, who had been a practicing nurse for a while, who Gert recruited from outside and did some administrative stuff. I forget what her PhD was in. She got a PhD before nursing degrees existed. Got a PhD and I don't know what it was in. And came on board and she was the prime

mover in the curriculum or one of the prime movers in the curriculum committee. I'm trying to remember, I can picture her face. She was a red head and she came from Maryland, well I think around the Washington D.C. area but I'm not sure. I couldn't hold myself to that. But there was lots of stuff going on and nurses were hooking in with research with other folks on campus. People were interested, some people were interested in science, a lot of people interested in soc. and anthropology, some people interested in psych. and they were hooking into research programs that various other faculty were, had as ongoing problems which did two really neat things. One, it was good for the nursing faculty, it was good for the preexisting faculty at Wright State because it kept them involved, brought new ideas into their laboratory and research notions and integrated what some folks, particularly in liberal arts, thought was this new upstart thing which was sending us in what they thought was the wrong direction, into the campus and all of the sudden hey, the nursing faculty are really nice folk and they know what they are about and they're smart, ta da, ta da, ta da, ta da, they don't have two heads. You know all of that kind of preditionional thing for other. They weren't other, they were part of us. And then (Pause) when Beljan had already been named as dean and he was creating, John Beljan was the founding dean of the medical school when the first push; he came on board in late '74 and the first year and a half or two everybody was busy. New departments were forming. We were hiring folks like crazy. We brought in four people into biochem. We had a nucleus of three on campus and we brought in four new people, one from Miami, one from Central State which were part of the consortium of the medical school and then two others from outside. At that time Fay Paris was hired as the dietitian to work with the School of Nursing. Things were moving along quite a reasonable way because of Beljan's ambition to go up the ladder and become president of the university, he hoped this one. Then as there were problems with Spiegel and it was funny because we lost the provost because of parking.

CH: Tell us that little side story. That sounds interesting.

IF: Well, there were a lot people that were not terribly happy with Andy Spiegel for a variety of reasons. But it was kind of a simmering discontent and then with the highway, they were going to expand Colonel Glenn and put in the new highway related to 675 and in doing that they were cutting across and taking away part of campus, a hundred and fifty frontage feet disappeared. But with that they had to shift a bunch of things and it took away two hundred parking spaces and Spiegel without consulting anybody said, "Well here's how we're going to do the parking. The students are going to get to park here and faculties are going to get to park here." And because of the loss of these two hundred parking spaces which were mostly student spaces out in the interlands. He said, "We're going to lose four hundred faculties and staff parking spaces on campus." There was a rebellion and what had been a simmering pot became an explosively boiling pot and Kegerreis had to move Spiegel out of the provost slot. John Murray came in and Murray had been Chair of Management and I don't know if he was Dean of Business or not but high in the School of Business administrative hierarchy and Kegerreis brought him over because Kegerreis knew him well. He had been involved in faculty governments. He chaired the student affairs committee at a time when the students were all frothy about student governments and there was a lot of activism. And so, John had done a really good job there. So, Kegerreis brought him in as, I forget what the title was, he deliberately did not give him the same title that Spiegel had had. And Murray came in to handle internal stuff on campus, to be functionally the Academic Vice President, I don't remember his title. That's somewhere in the history books. And Beljan saw that as a political opportunity to rise up in the academic hierarchy. He did that and that's when the crisis began because he wanted to become whatever the title was going to be but essentially the head of health affairs. And Gert and Marge

and Sue did not want to report to a physician. Nursing is no longer the handmaiden of medicine. Nursing is an independent, ta da, ta da, ta da. And it was strange then because there were really two issues going on. It was that philosophical principal issue. There was the other issue because Beljan wanted nothing but excellence and he wasn't going to interfere with anybody who was doing a good job. That was clear from what he had done with chairs in the medical school. If things were going well, people got all the money he could muster for him and we had the VA grant then so money wasn't a big problem. And although space on campus was a problem, he was building all kinds of things at the VA, some of which they're closing now which absolutely frosts me. He wanted excellence because if there was excellence around him then he would get, that would better his reputation. Gert and Marge and Sue had the principle we don't want to report to a physician and Beljan didn't understand it wasn't a gender issue. It was an issue of principle because even if the Dean of Medicine who wanted to be the Vice President for Health Affairs had been a woman that would not have been an issue. It was nurse-physician that was the issue. That started it and Kegerreis came to my office and said, "Ira what can I do? What's the problem?" And I said, "Well, okay you need to go talk to Gert and Marge because there's a major issue here now and you have to try and separate out the gender issues, the principle issues and the ambition issues. Beljan's ambition, the principle issues from the School of Nursing point of view and mixed all in this were the gender issues." And Kegerreis I think really wanted to put oil on troubled waters because he knew how good our nursing faculty was. And I'm not sure what happened. I don't know whether Kegerreis said something or some of the interaction between Beljan and Gert and Marge because Gert and Marge really functioned like a team. They functioned like a team and if you want, if I wanted to talk to Gert about something and she wasn't available I could talk to Marge and Marge would either say, "Well I can make that decision or I'll get back to you in an hour." And I'd get a phone call and say, "Here's the way we

think it should work." And more often than not Marge could say, "Yeah, this looks like it makes sense so let's do it this way." But in a couple of cases I got that phone call an hour later but as far as I can tell it was like a thirty second conversation. This is what the basic science folk are talking about makes sense to me or I think we should not do it that way and then I'd get the phone call and we'd negotiate whatever was appropriate. But it was a really nice way to work and it worked really well. But somebody said something to Gert and it may be Marge but I think her and that started the real schisms. And that got in the student paper and in the local Dayton papers. We will not report to a physician and then one of the members of the Board of Trustees got involved. Ed Hardy who was a chemist from Monsanto, and eventually taught chemistry here when he retired from Monsanto but ended up in chemistry and brought to campus one of his assistants from Monsanto who ran the freshmen chemistry labs for nine, ten years. And Ed and Kegerreis tried to soothe things and it didn't work and then the Board of Trustees got involved and people on the Board of Trustees were upset because they felt that the nursing faculty was working on a scorcher policy. And that's when that whole upheaval occurred and we lost Falco and Stanton and Torres and Ashley who was sick anyhow and Peggy Chinn. I will try and talk to Peggy and get some of her reminiscences from this. I know I'm going to see her in April.

CH: And we've actually been able to interview her.

IF: Oh, you've already interviewed her.

CH: Right.

IF: You've already interviewed her.

CH: Yeah. So we've got her direct.

DONNA CURRY MILES: She sent us her personal papers from that time, her transcript, her speech she made to university faculty. So, it was a wonderful donation to this project.

IF: Yeah. Peggy went from here to, I don't know if there was an intermediate step but was first in Colorado and then went to Connecticut. And I renewed my interaction with Peggy through, I was doing some amount of interaction with the Union Institute which is, at that time was a freestanding, non-traditional graduate school out of Cincinnati who got as their president in 1980 or '81 Bob Connelly who had left here gone to Seton Hall, had a problem at Seton Hall with the Jesuit establishment there. They had never had a layperson as president of the university and they didn't know how to deal with that as an issue and Bob Connelly was not a shrinking violet. He was tough and he didn't mind getting down and dirty and saying, "No, that's stupid. Don't do it that way. My way may not be the only way but that way is stupid." And you don't say this to Monsignors and last very long and he didn't. And so he left Seton Hall and just at the time that the chair, the first chair of our Board of Trustees as an independent university was Bob Oelman of Oelman Hall. And Bob was retiring from NCR and retiring from our Board of Trustees and ready to go to Florida. He was also on the Board of Trustees of what was then UECU, The Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities. He said well, when I retire from this job and because I've been Vice President of Faculty, Bob Oelman and I interacted a fair amount, he said I'm going to, he knew that I had done some work for UECU, he said, "I'm going to give union a real presence; I'm going to give you Bob Connelly." He became their president, got them successfully accredited from NCA, took them through an Ohio Board of Regents Accreditation and Review and really started what is now The Union Institute University off on a really scholarly and academic track. I'd been involved with him in the early eighties had a, was working with a doctoral student who was a nurse in Chicago and in that program you pick your faculty. You have a fixed number of doctoral people, so a learner or student who was chair of the committee and have a core faculty from the Union faculty, you have two adjuncts that you pick and two peers. I had a learner then who was looking around for adjuncts and wanted to pick

someone who had been a graduate of the Union who wasn't very good, didn't have any publications, hadn't done much and she said, "Well, I really want this person or that person." And I said, "Well, their not a very good adjunct. I want you to talk to somebody else." And she said, "Is it somebody you know." And I said, "Yes." "Well, who is it?" And I said "Peggy Chinn." Her eyes got big and Peggy Chinn. Peggy was in editing I forget what. And she said, "Well, she'll never talk to me." I said, "Well use my name. Peggy knows me but I think she would talk to you." Well it turned out not only did this woman and Peggy have a conversation but Peggy served as one of her adjuncts and Peggy already then had been an adjunct in the Union system. Peggy had now been an adjunct on several of my committees with nurses who were getting doctorates. So I see her from time to time and chat with her from time to time and get a chance to renew that old acquaintanceship. But that was the time when, I forget if it was a student paper or the Dayton paper, there was a picture of Gert in her office and the photographer caught Gert when she was trying to think through an issue and it was clear that one she was thoughtful and trying to deliberate on a problem and at the same time was just totally depressed by the surrounding circumstances. And that was shortly before she left. At that same time we lost I don't know how many but four or five of the nursing students whom I thought were superb left at that time and two or three of them went to UC, the University of Cincinnati and I don't know what ever happened to the other couple of them but we-

CH: Undergraduate students?

IF: Undergraduate nursing students. We lost some super ones. I wasn't much involved then with the masters program. I was more involved with the under. We lost most of the faculty and that was just such a tragedy. And I've thought about it from time to time and don't know, first of all I don't know what happened that was the kind of spark that really started the flames going and secondly I don't know how we could have stopped that. And I'd tried to talk to Doug

and told him well why don't you go chat and talk to the people of nursing and try and show them that you don't want to take them over that you want them to be independent, that you want them to be good. And he acknowledged that they were really excellent then.

CH: Do you remember what his response to that was?

IF: Yeah, he was open to that notion but I think what happened was instead of going alone I think he went over with Kegerreis. And I think that didn't help the situation because after that I talked to Agnes Bennett and Aggie said, "We had an absolutely awful meeting." I never got any more details than that. But Aggie was pretty patient and not one to be inflammatory and when she says stuff like that then I knew something went wrong. And then subsequently I was involved in the selection of two deans. I was on the interview committee for-

CH: Jeanette Lancaster?

IF: Yeah. I wasn't on the selection committee for her but was on the interview committee. I was on some subcommittee for the selection of, there was the one after, and I think it was the one after that, the woman who eventually died of pancreatic cancer.

CH: Jane Swart.

IF: Jane, yes. Whom I thought was an excellent dean although she and I had a disagreement over a particular student and you know that was a faculty student interaction problem. But the era but before the crisis and the catastrophe there was so much going on here in the College of Nursing that had spread out to campus. There were people from the College of Nursing who were on various committees. There were, I forget, Sue Falco served on some committee and somebody from Liberal Arts and I were sitting having lunch and he said, "You know, there are people over in that Nursing School that are so bright and so competent and so capable, I can't believe it." And I just sat back and agreed and said, "Yeah, we're the best Nursing School in the universe now. Not on the planet but in the whole universe." And I said,

"You just don't know." I was closer to it but until I did some reading I wasn't aware of what kind of reputations at that time Peggy Chinn had and Joanne Ashley had besides what was already reported about those two and it was unbelievable. The students were excited. The students were active and we just you know it was terrific.

CH: So, that time was a high time as you call it, the catastrophe occurred and it sounds like from your perspective people were trying to do things to avert it.

IF: They were. And I don't know because early on there were members of the faculty who wanted this to work and that the two or three people that I talked to, I talked to Joanne Cross once or twice. I talked to Bonnie Sommerville once or twice. I talked to Aggie Bennett more than once or twice and they, and early on they wanted there to be some negotiation and have it work. They thought what we had here was really worth protecting. And then that meeting occurred and whatever happened they weren't interested anymore. They absolutely were not interested. And we lost almost all the Nursing faculty and we lost some students and it was just-

CH: What do you recall was the perception of the faculty on campus when all of those resignations occurred?

IF: I think there were two or three perceptions. One of the perceptions was that it was a gender issue and only a gender issue. And there were some of us that tried to refute that because there was, I don't know that you could pull out the gender and say it didn't have anything to do with it but there was a principle issue from Gert and Marge and Sue and probably Joanne, I'm not sure where Peggy stood on that. That nursing is not, nursing is a profession, not handmaidens to the physicians. As a profession we have a separate process. We do better on both in terms of patient/client care, in client education, in interaction and we treat people as individuals. We don't treat people as sick livers or broken legs or bad hearts all of which was true and real and which medicine has come, is trying to come back to, has tried to come back to

over the years but wasn't very much in that direction and particularly with the curriculum we had here which was a departmentalized curriculum that didn't allow the integration that was, that had been going on in nursing. That was a time when nurse practitioners were becoming important and popular. When nurse practitioners were doing work both within urban areas and certainly in rural, outlining areas. The faculty in terms of engineering, that was before we had the School of Engineering weren't terribly interested in what was going on and everybody wanted to be in their lab and do their work and some of us in biology and the new departments were more involved because we were involved with the students and faculty but the folks in liberal arts just you know and it was not an easy job to educate them and saying no, it's not gender. There are issues of principle here and those issues are important to the nurses and they have to be negotiated and I think that was part of the problem because Beljan didn't want to negotiate. In some political settings he acted like a surgeon. I guess I don't mean that in a complimentary way in that there's a problem I'm going to go in there and fix it and if that means cutting something out I'm going in and fix it. And that was an attitude and a mindset and I think he wanted to negotiate and I know he wanted to support what was going on in the nursing school, college. I forget what it was called then. I think it was School of Nursing then. And I think he wanted to support that but this meeting occurred and literally the malarkey hit the fan and it was all over and the resignations and students leaving happened.

CH: There was a report in one of the papers that said that Dr. Beljan announced that the School of Medicine was going to initiate or start a new nursing program that was going to focus on a hospital based nursing, clinical hospital based nursing and that they would be separate from the School of Nursing at Wright State and I have, we haven't really been able to validate whether that was truly something that was in the planning stages, that was occurring or could have been a misreport in the media.

IF: To the best of my knowledge I think that was a stocking horse. I heard that as a rumor but I don't know what the quote was but I think that was a stocking horse after the crisis had set in to try and get those rebels to quiet down and realize that we can bat them around because when a fight started then Beljan got very stubborn and kind of cut off his ears or turned off his ears and didn't listen very well. And I think that was what happened there. As far as I know there was never any plan to do that and there were negotiations already going on then to phase out Miami Valley and bring them under our offices. And I think part of the rumor was that well the people that are trained at the Valley are trained as clinical nurses and in the early days of the Valley they had no idea what the term nursing process meant. They didn't know the word and I wasn't immersed in it but at least I knew the term and had some idea of the concept. And I was really and I guess my immersion, I don't know about my immersion but my real exposure to the concept was I was standing with a couple of nursing faculty and students and some students who were applying to the School of Nursing at the time and one young man said, "Well I think I want to be a nurse but I don't know that I want to change bed pans." And Agnes Bennett who was standing next to me looked over and said, "Well, if you're going to be a nurse you're going to work with a set of clients and you're going to take care of that client and if that means changing a bed pan than you're going to change a bed pan because you're going to work with that client and help that client through the healing process." And this eighteen, nineteen year old looked at her, thought for a minute and said, "Tell me more." And he was hooked. He was absolutely hooked. And Aggie went on to explain more and he signed up and became a nurse.

CH: So, let me kind of get back to the pattern kind of questions but can you talk about some of the challenges that you faced fulfilling your role at Wright State?

IF: There were real issues. Andy had some of the same kind of issues and I guess in the early years Roger did too before they hired Katie Mechlin. And that was that those of us who

were involved in teaching nursing students had an inordinately high teaching mode and trying to do research in your lab which is what you were going to get rewarded in this system for and trying to do your job both in planning and curriculum design and trying to meet the challenges of what was going on in the development of School/College of Nursing was really intriguing and I had a couple of students who'd come to my office and said, "Well, teach us how to eat." And I said, "Well, you're talking about dietetics, you're not talking about nutrition." And I said, "I'll go talk to the Dean of Nursing but my conception of what you really need is an understanding of the principles of nutrition and a few facts and the notion of how to evaluate nutrition information as it crosses right in front of your eyes. And I don't have the impression that the School of Nursing wants a feeding course, a dietetics design course but I don't know and I'll go talk." So, I went into Gert's office and said, "Here's what I'm hearing from a couple of students. Here is my philosophy. What does the College of Nursing want or the School of Nursing want?" And Gert looked at me and said, "What is your best estimate of what a student needs?" And I said, "An understanding, an ability to work with nutritional problems." She said, "I trust you. You design your course that way." She goes, "That's why we have dietitians working out of your department with us to do the applied stuff. If you think they need principle and I think they need principle but you're the expert. You think they need principles then by golly you teach them principles." And that was great but in doing that it meant that and I don't know what it was, I talked to Roger once and he said he had a lot of traffic too and Andy and anatomy were different because of the way the course was. In fact it was very rigorous basic anatomy course but I had a lot of traffic when the two terms, the two quarters when I taught nursing students it was not unusual for me to have two or three students in my office and six, seven, eight or ten out in the hall and that was tremendously time consuming. And the system wasn't set up to recognize that.

CH: As far as perhaps having a graduate assistant or some additional help to meet the demanding students.

IF: Right. Correct.

CH: And I guess I want to clarify a little bit whether the students were placing more demands on the science faculty because the students had a need or desire to have a more applied type of technical course or whether the students were really sort of struggling to rise to the level of expectations?

IF: It was the later. It was the later. They, fairly early in the game they understood that this was important and they understood that it was important because the nursing faculty was telling them it was important and that kind of interaction was superb. But many of them came out of high school backgrounds in Piqua or other places north of us that high schools weren't terribly good. They didn't have very much good chemistry. They didn't have very good science background and they didn't think of nursing being rooted or parts of nursing being as being rooted in science. And they just struggled.

CH: So they didn't have a solid foundation.

IF: Correct.

CH: Okay. Well and I think you described a lot of your interactions with administrators and colleagues and students within the College of Nursing. That's really helpful. Did you have any interactions with wider, community based individuals in terms of this period of time?

IF: The only interactions I had were with the people at Miami Valley. I talked with a couple of people at St. E's once but those were people who came and went on faculty here. But I had a fair amount of interaction with Mary Edwards and one of the things that Andy had started and I was trying to help support was having Mary Edwards given one of the first honorary degrees from Wright State. That never happened and that was a real shame and pity.

And I interacted with those folks a lot. I interacted with some of the physicians at the Valley both related to the Nursing School and related to the Medical Schools. I had a foot in both puddles at the time. But other than that I did not interact with the wider civic community.

CH: Right. What was your perception of the opinion of the people in those areas about the School of Nursing at Wright State?

IF: Edwards and the person who was her associate and again I can picture her but I don't remember her name were sympathetic to the notion of the nursing process and liked the idea that there was stuff going on in that but also were somewhat skeptical and said, "but the people who came out with nursing degrees have to be able to work on the floor and work in a hospital setting at least to some degree." And so there was clearly a tension there but the administrative hierarchy at the Valley at least understood and was sympathetic to the notion and didn't know how you get it right and have the right mix. And I think it took a long time for that to settle in out here. And that was more an impression because after awhile I was just teaching and trying to get stuff done. I was out of the campus politics.

CH: That period of time after the faculty left and the period immediately after that time when there was more stabilization kind of going on do you have any particular recollections of that time?

IF: No. I was really, to see the disintegration of the faculty as it had been and then to see what I thought just a caretaker although I don't think Jeanette Lancaster thought of herself as that, as a caretaker dean and a rebuilding setting and I was just really disgusted. I just thought we had such a terrific operation and you got involved in all that administrative crap and I just want to teach my students and work in my laboratory and the hell with it. It isn't worth it because I'd invested a lot of time and a lot of effort in trying to avoid what happened. And when had happened I just retreated.

CH: Retreated and stepped aside.

IF: You bet. You bet.

CH: How did your experiences at Wright State and with the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing affect your career since that period of time? Has there been an effect?

IF: It certainly made me a better negotiator. And it certainly sharpened my observation skills. I think I'd been something of a people watcher before that but I was more of a people watcher after that. And in '86, '87 I went on sabbatical to Vanderbilt and when I came back I still taught nurses until I retired in '93 and then taught them twice a year until '97. But was really not much involved in stuff here. Talked a couple of times. Spent some time interacting with Jane Swart both about curricular issues and over a couple of specific student issues. But really wasn't much involved in or had increased to some extent my interactions with Dr. () at Union and knew I guess in '91 or '92 that I was going to retire from here and go down there and spend more time with those folks.

END OF SIDE A

START OF SIDE B

CH: There we go.

IF: But my negotiations got significantly better, I think, I feel like I'm better and I used those because eventually I was head of faculty down there as well as I had been up here. And I was, in my experiences, up here made things more operational down there.

CH: Is there anything that we didn't ask you today that you think is important to share?

IF: Not that I can think of because I thought about this when you set up the appointment and I probably should have done a better job of seeing if I could have gone back and gotten some names out of my files but most of those files I pitched in 2000. But, Hury, Elizabeth Hury was the associate to Mary Edwards. H, U, R, Y. And I saw her four or five years ago and she's

worth a contact because she was still around. She was doing volunteer work at the Valley. But I thought about that stuff and tried to think of what things would easily come out here based on what you've got and based on what things I could bring that might be new.

CH: Yeah, I think you've brought some new things that we have not heard before and I think in particular noting sort of the history of Wright State's involvement in nursing education prior to School of Nursing. I think you had a significant part of that.

IF: Well, Brian Hutchings was the one who cut the deal. He knew that he could make the biology department bigger and stronger by hiring some more faculties and that he could get the money to do that by interaction with the School of Nursing. The Valley came out here and made the first overtures and then he went and talked to folks in the administration and then they went down to cut the deal with St. E's and we hired, Andy was on board and I was on board but we hired Roger Glaser and Katie Mechlin and I don't know what his name was but the anatomy assistant who then went on and got a doctorate later. And the anatomists and physiologists were teaching four quarters a year and I was teaching two quarters a year. They were teaching at St. E's and the Valley and I was teaching here and at the Valley and then St. E's dissolved and that stuff came out here and that was the School of Nursing that started on campus.

CH: Right. Okay. Thank you very much.

IF: Oh, you're more than welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW