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Richard Williams Interview, Dean and Professor Raj Soin College of Business at Wright State University

Lewis Shupe
Wright State University - Main Campus

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
Retiree Association Oral History Project

Interview date: 10/08/2014

Interviewer: Lewis Shupe
Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Communication

Interviewee: Dr. Richard Williams
Dean and Professor Raj Soin College of Business

Lewis Shupe: This is Lew Shupe, Professor Emeritus from the Department of Communication at Wright State University. Today is Wednesday, October 08, 2014, and I am interviewing Dr. Richard Williams, retired Dean and Professor Raj Soin College of Business. This is part of the retiree association's oral history project. Richard, would you be more comfortable if I called you Dick? Thank you so much for being here.

Dick Williams: Sure, sure, glad to be here.

LS: To get started, tell us a bit about your background how you came here and an introduction of you?

Dick Williams: Sure. I am, I grew up in northeastern Ohio, right over near the Pennsylvania border. My father had attended Miami so when I got to be college age. I of course had to go to Miami too. I was a legacy I guess. And um, after graduating from Miami I went on to get my master's degree at the University of Florida. While I was there, it would have been the academic year 1964-1965 I was encouraged by a professor to think about getting a PHD and um, I thought well, it wasn't what I thought I was going to do. I thought I was going to be a banker, but you know maybe that something I should consider. I never talked before I had no experience in teaching so I thought may I should teach for a couple of years and see if I like it before making a commitment in getting a PhD. So the question was well where do I look for a job. Of course I immediately thought of Miami having just graduated from there. So I wrote them a letter to the chairman of the finance department by the name of Fred Amling . And said do you have any um openings for an instructor. I am interested in teaching, and he knew me because I had him in a class. He liked me I think.

LS: What was his name again?

DW: Amling.

LS: And what year was this?

DW: This would have been sometime in early 65. Winter probably. And he responded back well we don't really have any openings at the Oxford Campus but we've got this little branch up in Dayton and we need some people to go up there and teach. Would you be interested in being an instructor up there? I said, yeah, sure why not. So that's how I came to be employed by Miami as an instructor at the Wright State campus as it was then known. I started in September 1965 at that time there was just the one building open on campus just Allyn was the only open building. They were building the other three on the quad they didn't opened in fall 66 so I started my career teaching my first office interestingly was in a farmhouse down the road down approximately where the Nutter center is now. It later became the riding stables for a while and they tore it down to build the Nutter center.

LS: Did that home, did the home have a name?

DW: I do not remember a name, we just called it the farm house.

LS: Okay, if you want around the corner there was Warner House.

DW: That was Warner House. I guess the Warner family lived there. But no, I never heard a name for this house. If had one, we didn't use it.

LS: You used the name?

DW: We just called it farmhouse.

LS: Oh, okay.

CW: And it was where the riding stables

(talking over each other)

CW: Where the riding stables became.

DW: Just before you go around the bend to the Nutter Center. Yeah, It was interesting, I was in the living room and three desks in the living room I had one of them, there was a guy who taught accounting, Gary Throckmorton had a desk in there then and there was an economist who had the third desk. Political scientist in one of the bedroom, Bob Adams. And there was another political scientist Bryon Lang in the second bedroom and then the third bedroom there was anthropologist whose name I don't remember anymore. He didn't stay at Wright State for too long. He was young and moved on somewhere but uh, it was an interesting arrangement to have all these people in this farmhouse.

LS: Did you have secretarial staff?

DW: We did. We had a secretary who sat in what was the dining room in that house, she had a desk and a phone. And I don't remember her having a lot to do, but I guess she

must have had some paperwork to processed. But yeah, we were only there for about six months and then plumbing stopped working and they made the decision that it wasn't worth fixing the plumbing to keep us there so they moved us all back up to the main campus and wound up giving us carrels in the library which is now the Hanger. It was the original library. Carrols over on one side of the main room and they stuck us there for a while. And then after I don't know two or three months of that they finally find a room up on the third floor of Allyn to put me. Where I stayed until the end of the year when we all moved into Millett.

LS: See and at that time all of the faculty were in Allyn weren't they?

DW: All of the faculty was in Allyn we all shared a break room up on the fourth floor which was really, really neat in my standpoint because I got to meet really everybody in the university. It didn't matter what college they were from what their discipline everyone went to his break room to get a coffee, you get a chance to meet everybody and I always thought that was a good experience. Something that faculty now don't have an opportunity to do you know. Now you just walk into your college you don't really get to meet other faculty from other parts of the campus except maybe occasionally on a university committee.

LS: Can we come back to the farmhouse, (yeah) did they destroy the farmhouse after you left.

DW: Well, it was destroyed after served as a riding stables for a few years. Yeah, they tore it down when they built the Nutter Center so that would have been in 87 I guess when they build the Nutter Center, started on it they tore it down. I don't know whether they ever fixed the plumbing.

LS: Do you know why they started a riding academy?

DW: You know I don't. I was always curios about that, because I, you know being here in the urban, or suburban setting you kind of wonder why we would have a riding stable at Wright State. No, I don't know why that happened.

LS: Okay, coming so you came from Florida?

DW: Yes.

LS: Okay. What was your impression coming to the Wright State Campus?

DW: Well it was certainly different than anything I have experienced in higher education. (laughs)

LS: In what way?

DW: Well, it was, you know so small, just the one building. It was so new and uh, you know it was a commuter school. Students came in everyday by car uh, we were out in the middle of a field. It felt very, raw and new. You know, that was I guess that was my first impression. They were so new, there wasn't any place to eat. There were machines. Coffee machines and vending machines down in the basement of where now is part of the physical plant offices. And that was the only place you could get anything to eat unless you went off campus. So it was it was very new and very unrefined.

LS: But you taught your class in Allyn.

DW: The classes were all in Allyn, yes. All of my classes were in Allyn. I had my class, like most people did, cause they had a fairly sizeable evening program compared to their day program. A lot of part time students coming out in the evening. So yeah I taught all my classes in Allyn Hall. Like I said that only lasted a year, then we all moved to the other three buildings on the quad we were all spread out then.

CW: Where was the College of Business moved to?

DW: Initially we were in Millett.

LS: Initially you were in Millett.

DW: Initially we moved to Millett on the fourth floor. The dean's office I think was down on the third floor so we didn't see him much often. Because he didn't come up to visit.

LS: Who was this dean?

DW: Well, it's interesting, I guess using the title of dean maybe inaccurate initially. The first year I was there, there wasn't anybody in charge business faculty, there were only six of us. There was an assistant administrator from Miami side of the Wright State Campus Warren Abraham. That first year they went out looking for somebody to head up the business group because they didn't have a title at that point, there was no organization, infrastructure and that is when we hired a guy named J. B. Black was the, who was from Miami another Miami guy, and a matter of fact I had him in class. He was a professor of finance at Miami. He came up here, started in let's see I guess he must have started in fall of 66. Like I said his office was on the third floor of Millett.

LS: How long was he here?

DW: J. B. was here until 1969. When he took a job as president of the Kemper Military Academy in Missouri. Um, I always thought it was bad timing on his part, because this would have been 1970 and it was where the antiwar was at its peak, I thought being president of a military academy probably wasn't a great job to have (laughing) You are in that sort of political climate. But that is what he did. He left and went there. Later all wound up his career at Ball State as a vice president of Finance, dean of school of

business for a while, then became vice president for finance, so he had a long and productive career in higher education. He was kind of a character. He used to make us all laugh. I could remember one he came in to a faculty meeting which like I say he could have held it at this table and so while the university has decided that if you want you could spread you paycheck out over twelve months. At that point the first couple of years we were just being paid like high school teachers. Over nine months, no paycheck in the summer. And he said now that is not a good thing to do, he said I'm a finance professor you are better off to get your money over nine months, save some of that and invest it you'd be better off. So how many of you wanted to spread you check out over 12 months. Everybody in the room put up their hand. Which he was just flabbergasted. He assumed we would all be rational finance people would accept pay every 9 months but nobody wanted to do that so. As a matter of fact the first year I was here uh, I didn't know what I was going to do in the summer I remember there were no classes in the summer. There was no summer term those first couple of years. So I didn't know what I was going to do and Warren Abraham the administration of Miami side, said that Bill Evans and I, Bill was one of the first faculty members in business, would you guys like to earn two dollars an hour something like that typing up inventory records. State of Ohio is requiring us to uh, have an inventory of everything we bought for Wright State, every typewriter, every desk. Every bookshelf we have to inventory so we need to have somebody type up inventory cards. Bill and I said "sure". You know it will give us some summer income. So we spent that first summer in an empty classroom with IBM typewriters in front of us typing up these little 5 x 8 inventory cards which I'm they were never looked at again. They disappeared very shortly into the trash can somewhere, but uh, yeah, that was how I made a little money that summer. Then after that they started summer school, so we all had summer teaching opportunities.

LS: Now how many years were you here before you went to go do your doctoral studies?

DW: I was here until 1969. In fact J. B. and I left the same time. He left at the end of the 68/69 school year and so did I. So I was here four years.

LS: During those four years who was the person in charge of the university?

DW: Uhhh, well initially I said there was a Miami side and there was a Ohio State side, Warren Abraham was the administrator for the Miami side. So he was in charge of education, business, liberal arts and the fine arts. And then on the Ohio State side, uh, a guy named Jack Redden was the chief administrator. I am not sure if they called them dean or not, they might have had the title of dean, it could be they were deans of Wright State campus. Anyway Jack Redden was the head of engineering and sciences. One of the peculiarities of the Wright State organization structure was that psychology is in the College of Science and Mathematics and that is unusual. Most universities psychology is under the College of Liberal Arts. The reason why it was under the College of Science goes back to those first couple of years when we were divided between Miami and Ohio State and Ohio State was given psychology as one of their areas to administer. They thought of them as scientist, rather than social scientists so ever since then they've been in the College of Science and Mathematics.

LS: So during those four years, was there a president or acting president?

DW: No. So the first president was Brage Golding. He came in, maybe in I could be wrong but it was in 68. It was when we became an independent university.

(a lot of talking over each other)

DW: He may have started well, maybe he started Summer of 67. At any rate until he showed up as the first president of Wright State University, now there was no president. There was just these two guys from these two campuses.

LS: But you worked with him when he arrived?

DW: With Golding?

LS: Yes.

DW: I was here for, he was president here for a few years while I was here while I went back to graduate school. Yeah, as a lonely instructor I did not much contact with him. He was not very well liked by most of the faculty. He was a little bit of a martinet.

CW: Not the first time we had heard that.

DW: He insisted on his way of doing things. Like I said it really didn't affect me very much, but uh, he was not very well liked. I think people were happy to see him move on when he moved on to Kent State in 1970 when the shootings happened.

LS: Well what about Fred White?

DW: Oh Fred was wonderful. He was a wonderful old gentleman always thought of him as a grandfather sort of person. Fred was the, when I came here he was the first employee of Wright State as we all know and later became the head of business manager. He bought and bought things and supervised the budget. Such as it was and yeah, just the nicest the you ever want to talk to, very gentlemanly, very quiet and unassuming and yeah he course once Golding came and became president, he continued on in that capacity as the business manager and eventually when Golding left and we had an opening, uh, he was the interim president for a year. His pictures downstairs in the library as one of your presidents. But yeah, very nice, very nice gentleman. Everybody liked Fred.

LS: How were the support staff to you during those early years?

DW: They were few in number. We didn't have a lot of support staff. There were a couple of secretaries you could give your exams to, to type up. Other than that there wasn't much of an organization structuring. We didn't, it was several years before we

hired someone to be our advisor for our students. So, yes, the support staff was limited. They were always very helpful, very nice to be around, but there weren't many of them.

LS: Did you have to do all of your typing for tests?

DW: I did, like it said there were a couple of secretaries. As fact the first year we moved into the lab they asked us, they created a typing pool for everyone who was in Millett. Then for everybody for education, business and liberal arts there was a typing pool that had maybe, I don't know six secretaries in it. But yeah, you could give your exams to them. I tended to do my own exams, but uh, yeah that was about the only staff we really had. Now the university had people that they were hiring. The university groups, student services group and expanded. They were hiring directors that sort of thing. But at the college level we didn't have much.

LS: What is your memory of the student services during those early years? If any.

DW: I was gonna say not a lot. I remember, I remember all the student services were on the first floor of Allyn Hall. It was were, there were registrar was, where the bursar was and uh, I you know I knew who the registrar was. I had talked to him a couple of times about grade issues that I had.

LS: And he was?

CW: Um, was it Walker?

DW: Walker Allen, that's it. Walker Allen, thank you. I don't remember who the bursar was, I never had to really deal with them. That was the student services group there on the first floor of Millett: the registrar's office, the bursar office, you know they took care of registering students. Back in those days you registered with a little card that you filled out, you know, then somebody would look up to see the classes to see if the class was closed or not. If they weren't closed, they would let you in. So it was a very cumbersome process.

CW: It was like that for a long time.

DW: Yes, it didn't change anytime soon.

LS: What was your impression of the students? In those first years.

DW: They were almost all first generation students. First in their family to go to college. So they really didn't know what the college experience was going to be like. Um, and sometimes you really had to sometimes as an instructor or really had to say look you need to read the textbook, you need to take good notes, you need to study because they are coming from high school really hadn't had to work that hard and nobody in their family could really give them much insight as to what college was going to be like so you had to kinda put your arm around them learn how to be students. They were, I always

thought Wright State students were generally uh, bright and interested in learning. So I never, you know I never had a problem with students, you know, ever walked out or fell asleep or anything like that. That was my answer. Um, yeah I think they were interested in getting a degree, they were just very unsophisticated. Especially when I compare them with say my cohorts at Miami, five or six years before that, you know by and large came to Miami as second or third or fourth generation college students and were very sophisticated.

LS: You said that you came to Wright State to see if you wanted to continue in education. What were your feelings about that?

DW: You mean after I got here?

LS: Uhuh.

DW: Yeah, I discovered I enjoyed teaching. I enjoyed going in and telling people what I do. (laughs) I, that's when I decided I was going to make a career of it Yeah the idea of being a banker sort of went into the recesses of my mind, I didn't think about much more. I determined I was going to be a teacher. Then I knew I was going to have to go back and get a PhD. Wasn't going to have much of a future as an instructor.

LS: Do you remember initially what your impression was when you saw only one building as the campus?

DW: Well, you know I knew that it was a new facility. I'd been told that by somebody that I talked to on the phone when they were giving me directions on how to get here. Because I wasn't familiar with Dayton even though I'd had gone to Miami I never come to Dayton. I didn't know anything about Dayton so I had to get directions on how to get out here. I guess what I remember is there was this one building sitting in the middle of this great big huge corn field. I thought this is kind of weird, but it doesn't look like Miami.

LS: Were you discouraged?

DW: No, I don't think I was discouraged. Like I said I thought I was getting in on something at the right at the ground level, at the start. It was exciting to be a part of a brand new university that's starting out, it's going to grow. So I think I was I was more excited than I was put off of the looks of the place.

LS: Well that's good. Now then you decided to go for the doctoral?

DW: I left in fall of 69 went to Michigan state. Got a PhD in finance there. And again, its interesting how I keep coming back to wright state. At the end of my PhD program. All my fellow PhD student were out looking at schools, looking for jobs and I um, I had been told when I left Wright State by the guy who became the first department chair, Bob Dolphin, Robert Dolphin. He had told me when I finish my PhD give us a call we would

be interested in bringing you back. So I did! And I said, I'm about ready to finish up here. You still interested? He said, Oh yeah, we still need you. We are expanding, the university is growing like crazy. We need new facility. So yeah! We would be happy to offer you a job. So I came back to Wright State without ever really looking at my other options just because I had already been here I knew the people. Some of the people here at least. I was happy here.

LS: Introduce us just a bit to Rob Dolphin.

DW: Yeah, Bob, like I said was hired as chair of the then department of finance and management science and law. It was sort of one of those combined units that had faculty from three different disciplines. Um, he was an interesting fellow. He had been, was from Indiana, had gone to the University of Indiana. When he was growing up he had contracted polio back in the days before there was a polio vaccine. As a result had very limited use of either of his arms. He walked fine, his legs were okay, but both of his arms almost useless and so he had to function you know in a much different way than most of us do. He would use his knee to lift his arm up. He could put his hand around a fork, but he really couldn't lift it to his mouth. So what he would do would use his knees to lift his arm up to where he could eat. That is how he ate. Um, and he had special um, special steering installed in his car. Essentially they had the steering wheel on the floorboard so he could turn it with his foot. That's how he drove. He drove like a maniac, I mean driving with him was scary. He drove fast, you know, you kind of wondered who is this guy and it must have been very disconcerting in other cars passing him. When you looked at him his arms were just hanging down and his hand weren't on the steering wheel. He was sailing down the road with his arms down to his sides.

LS: Did you have an occasion to ride with him?

DW: Oh yes. We used to go to meetings together, Columbus and other places.

LS: That is interesting. Was he one of the first disabled persons to be on campus?

DW: Oh, I suspect he was. He must have been one of the first. He would have come here in probably in 67 I would guess. I think JB Black hired him after he came here as dean in 66. I think he hired Bob to be head of this new department. So yeah he came here probably in 67. So yes, I can't imagine there have been too many.

LS: That would be interesting to know because if he would have had any influence on how Wright state became such a comfortable place for disabled persons.

DW: Yeah, that is a question I can't shed any light on that. I don't.

LS: So you came back now to a different university.

DW: Yes, much bigger. I came back in 1972, fall of 1972. At that point you know not only the quad was fully finished and running, the library was built at that point. The

student union was here and uh, where they building anything else. (Inaudible talking)
That was here in 72. So yeah all of the sudden it started to look like a university you know. There were all these buildings all over the place.

LS: Were you pleased to come back?

DW: Oh yeah! I was happy to come back. And like I said I came back Bob Dolphin was chair of the department when I came back. So you know, I felt right at home. I was several of the other people were still here teaching so I didn't. It wasn't like going to someplace new and having to.

CW: How had the department changed and grown?

DW: It had grown quite a lot. Like I say the uh, out student growth was pretty rapid and so all of the department were hiring faculty and I would guess there were probably, when I left the college, the college all the people in College of Business were numbered about between 15 and 20, when I came back I think there were something like 40 or so.

LS: And where were you housed?

DW: We were still in Millett when I came back. We stayed in Millett until sometime in the mid-70s, I can't tell you a year. It was sometime in the mid to late 70s when they moved us all to the fourth floor of Allyn cause liberal arts and education were getting big enough that they needed the space in Millett. We were the easiest ones to move I guess. They moved us all to the fourth floor of Allyn where we stayed until 1980 when Rike Hall opened.

CW: Were you were smaller than liberal arts, smaller than education?

DW: Yes, I'm sure we were smaller than education although not a lot. Liberal arts, you know the elephant in the room.

CW: Were you about three the biggest?

DW: Uh, science and math. Back in those days science and math and engineering where all in the same College of Science and Engineering

CW: So they may have been the biggest.

DW: They were bigger than business. I guess they were teaching all those freshmen. General education courses. We needed a lot of people to do that.

LS: Where did you go after Allyn?

DW: After Allyn we moved to Rike Hall. Rike Hall was opened in 1980, we moved in. At that point, let's see, Joe Castellano was dean at that point. While we were in Allyn I

should say we had a couple of deans. Bob Kegerreis who of course went on to become president was the second dean of the College of Business, he succeeded J. B. Black in the early 70s when I was in graduate school. And then by the time I got back from graduate school he had moved on from administrative wing where he was vice president of finance, business. But then when Golding had left the university, like I said Fred White became interim president while they looked for a permanent president. And that permanent president turned out to be Bob Kegerreis. So they had to replace the business dean and they hired a guy named John Murray, who was at that point a professional manager and was a former air force colonel. At that point we had a lot of former air force employees. At that point it was a natural cycle for people to retire after 20 years to come to Wright State and teach. So John Murray became dean for several years and then he stepped down and a guy named Ed Nicholson who was associate dean at that point became dean and would remain dean until 1980. He left to take a better job so that was kind of the sequence of deans and yeah, Joe Castellano became dean in 1980 he moved us in to Rike Hall basically. He was the dean when we did that and of course that was wonderful. Rike Hall was wonderful new building, much bigger than what we had been in before.

LS: The nicest place on campus.

DW: It was, everybody thought it was. We supposedly had these state of the art air conditioning and heating systems after being there for several years we were wondered what state of the art was because they didn't necessarily keep you cool in the summer or warm in the winter. They said they were state of the art when they opened the building. I can remember Wald Goulet was the associate dean and he was in charge of all the furniture in the Rike, he was in charge of buying, picking out all of the furniture that we were going to use. I remember one day after lunch there were a group of us including then Dean Joe Castellano who decided we would go over and look at the new building. It was fairly well along at that point. They had moved in all of the chairs that they were going to put in the faculty offices, they were all sitting there in a big empty classroom down in the basement and so we walked and saw these were the chairs we were going to have so we had to try them out. We sat down in the chairs and they were awful, the back came up to the middle of your back and very uncomfortable to lean back in and we all said to Joe Castellano, Joe these aren't very comfortable chairs. He said they aren't, so he sat down in one and said you're right, they aren't very comfortable chairs. So he looked at Wald Goulet, Wald, replace all of these. So Wald had to bring in a whole new set of chairs which were comfortable, which was interesting things that happened moving into that building.

LS: When did Wald become dean?

DW: Wald became dean in 1985, um Joe Castellano was a very popular dean. Joe was, as I say succeeded Ed Nicholson who was the least popular dean in the history of Wright State University Dean's, Ed was partially disliked by all of the faculty. In part because he was a little bit too much of a dictator, you know, he kind of didn't like to hear faculty talk back to him. I always thought he was a good administrator. He. Subsequently, he was president of Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh. He had a good career as an academic

administrator, but when he was at Wright State University nobody like him, he was heartedly, heartedly disliked by everybody and he was replaced by Joe Castellano in 1980 and everybody love Joe. Joe was just a perfect opposite of Nicholson. He was laid back, very friendly. His leadership style was to you know was to bring everyone into the room and say okay, let's solve this problem, and what we are going to do. So he, he was liked by one and all and uh, probably could have been elected Dean for Life if we had such a position. Um, but after 5 years, Joe said, you know I don't want to do this anymore. He liked teaching, he was a wonderful teacher. You know I want to go back being a teacher.

LS: Do you have any interesting stories about Goulet?

DW: About Goulet? He was interning, yeah. He was again, you know, very much different than Joe Castellano. He was very, how should I say it, temperamental. He had a huge temper. He would blow up at his staff daily almost, but he never fired anybody. I don't think he fired anybody the whole 5 years he was dean. He would get angry with them all the time. Yell at them, curse at them, Wald smoked cigars. That was back in the days when we were still smoking in buildings. And uh, he had one of those cigars going most of those days. Anytime you walked into the dean's office, there was no question on whether he was there or not, you could smell his cigar. Some of those staff were crazy about that. I could imagine to small that all day, but um, you know, that was the way we worked back in those days. Yeah, he was a very volatile personality. I think generally the faculty liked him because uh, he always you know, he always was trying to do things that he thought would benefit the department. Mainly get them more money.

LS: When did you become an assistant dean?

DW: Well, associate dean. I became an associate dean in 1992.

LS: Could you walk us through the other deans beyond Goulet?

DW: Okay, yeah. Wald Goulet was dean from 85 until 92 and he was replaced in 92 by his associate dean Rishi Kumar. That's when I came into the dean's office as Rishi's associate dean. Um, Rishi was then dean from 1992 until 2001. When he was replaced, he stepped down in 2001, and we hired Berkwood Farmer to be the dean. And Berkwood was dean until the end of 2013 when we brought in the current dean, Dean Li.

LS: How did the new name of the College of Business come about?

DW: The Raj Soin. Well,

CW: It would be interesting to find out. I know the Rike family was very supportive of the new building.

DW: Way back in when Joe Castellano was dean, this would have been 1980, 1981. Oh, we got what was then considered a major gift from the Rike family. It was used to support for a while an endowed sharing in marketing. The Rike family wanted the money

to be used somehow for marketing, since they were in a retail business. And so we got I think it was, at the time we thought it was a huge gift, nowadays we think it would be chump change. About a half million dollars from the Rike family, that money was used to support an endowed chair until late 90s when uh, I guess it was Kumar, yeah it was Kumar, when Kumar was dean, he decided that we weren't getting much for our money, that the endowed chairs we had brought in were not particularly imminent scholars as they were supposed to be they were not any better than most of the regular marketing faculty. So he decided that money could be better used elsewhere. So we discontinued the endowed chair I don't know, I think that money, it probably still be on the budget somewhere, just not much of it left. But yeah, that was the Rike uh. Then when Kumar became dean in 1992, Kumar was of course Indian as was Raj Soin they knew each other and I think you know over a period of several years Kumar probably when he would see Raj he would continue make suggestions to him about maybe helping the college out in some way. And that resulted eventually in 2001 when Raj gave us a \$2.3 million dollar gift I think, something like that. For which he got the college named after him, the Raj Soin College of Business. Nowadays we wouldn't sell it anywhere near that, we probably want \$20 million dollars for a college name nowadays. That was you know that was the first college to be named at Wright State. The first named college.

LS: It's impressive walking into that building now.

DW: Yeah, Raj. The money that Raj gave us was supposed to be used for faculty support and over the years we used the, the support people going to meetings. We always said, anybody can go to a conference meeting in their field as long as there are presenting a paper. So we encourage people to do that. So a lot of the money was spent that way. We used it to support faculty in other ways. It was just about 3 or 4 years ago I guess Raj indicated he wanted his name on the side of the building, is how we got the strip along the parking lot with his name on it with it in lights that go on at night.

CW: I remember when you got the stock trading.

DW: Oh yeah, yeah. That um, that was interesting at the time we were one of the early schools to have a so called trading room. Where there was lots of electronic machinery. You could look at uh, on time trades being made on the ticker tape. We had monitors for the Bloomberg quotations. It was really a very sophisticated uh, room when we first had it. Now the other school have the option um not as new and daring as it once was, The money for that also came from Raj. From Raj's company actually. Originally it was going to be called the Soin Trading Room and then Raj sold his company and so there was no longer and MTC so its name has changed but yeah, they the most of the money for that trading room came from Raj, although not all of it, brokerage firms from here in town kick in some of the money, James Investments people, uh, put money in so it's not it's not entirely Soin money that went into that trading room. But a lot of it.

LS: If you can go back, what would you like to have that you miss, what do you miss now?

DW: I miss the comradery, of seeing people every day and you know, just being around fellow academicians, being around staff that I worked with. enjoy working with, um, like I said that was something the very first year I was here, I one of those things, about that little room on the first floor, then the fourth floor of Allyn Hall, was you got to meet people across the university and uh, over the years I think that few of my interests in doing a lot of service I was on a lot of the committees, I was vice president of the university faculty 86-87 where I got to go to committee meetings ten hours a day. Might have been too much. (laughing) I think just like I say coming in the morning seeing people that you like working with them. That is what I miss. When you retire you don't see a lot of people here most of the time.

LS: When someone asks you about Wright State, what do you say? What is unique about Wright State?

DW: I guess I like to think it is innovative seems to me the whole time I have been here there has been you know constant attempts to be innovative and creative in our educational programs. Um, and I think that we are very student orientated. I think that most of the faculty that I know, not all of them but most of them are very interested in their students, very interested in students learning and uh, you know its not like at Ohio State where you got graduate assistants in most of the undergraduate classes it really is a really is a an educational orientated university, as opposed to a research orientated university even though we now starting to do a lot of research, certainly building a lot of research buildings. But yeah, I think they started the commit of faculty to their students and the, the idea let's try something new. Let's do something different. That's Constant theme around here. Did not always work. Some of the things we tried haven't always worked very well. But, you know that is what comes from innovation.

LS: Your office has a nice view of the campus.

DW: A few nice view, yes. I got to see everybody going and coming. Yeah, if I got tired staring at the computer screen or temporarily had a, you know mind cramp, I couldn't think of what I was trying to write or something I could look out the window watch the students walking by, watch. It was always nice. Yeah, it was a good office.

LS: You're right near the Bart, right, the statue?

DW: Right near the Bart fortunately my office didn't look right directly out at Bart that was the unfortunate (or fortunate). Some of the advisors had to look at that. Their offices were along that wall. So they got to look at Bart day in and day out, 360 days a year.

LS: How did that ever get the name Bart?

DW: My understanding is that, that was named by Kim Goldenberg, when he was, I guess it went up when he was president, of course his office, the president's office looked right out where that is sitting. He was the one that sort of named that, now I could be wrong about that. My understanding was that looking at it somebody said "What are we

going to call it?” and he said let’s call it the ‘Big Ass Red Thing’. (laughing) I suppose it could have been somebody else up there on the second floor that actually named it.

LS: But it is really quite attractive.

DW: Yeah, I don’t mind it.

CW: It is actually ‘Turning Points’

LS: ‘Turning Points’ is that the name?

CW: Yeah.

LS: What would you recommend someone coming to Wright State now knowing what you started with?

DW: I recommend to them, well I think it’s a lot different place from when I came. Its much more a traditional university now so, if you want to make your own way through the university system, um, you kind of have to do the things that every university expects. You have to do teaching, well, uh, you have to do a least a modest amount of research um, at least in business, I think in other colleges research is more important. In business at least you have do a reasonable amount of research and you have to do some service um, so I think you know new faculty coming in need to be told be quiet the first few years here, keep your nose to the grindstone. Get you teaching up to par, do your research, serve on a couple of committees and you too will be promoted. Once you get that word tenure behind your name you can start to be more adventuresome. In that sense I think we are a more a traditional university than when we were back in the early days.

LS: What would you like to share with others through this interview that we didn’t ask for?

DW: That is a good question. You let me talk a lot, so I’ve said a lot of stuff. Um, I guess I would say you know, I think Wright state a great place to work, not good, great place to work. I think you can have a meaningful, profitable career at Wright State. I would certainly not discourage anybody from coming here, making it a career like I did.

LS: Dick, Richard I should say thank you so much, its been a pleasure to have you walk back through the years with us.

DW: It was my pleasure. You want to call me in again I’ll keep going.

LS: You should be very proud of the college.

CW: One thing I have always been impressed with that college it’s always been very involved with the community and with the businesses within the community.

DW: Yeah, of course that kind of comes with the territory being the business. It's supposed to be connect with the business community. I think in the early years we weren't really. In the early years we were just trying to teach our students, get a grip on things. But as the years have passed, we've increasing had deans who have pushed us more in the business community yeah, that was the service part of teaching research and service. It has come much more, much more important than what it was.

LS: So I assume, that you don't regret having come back to Wright State?

DW: No, not at all. Looking back on it I don't know where I would have wound up going if I hadn't come here. I can't image I would have, you know, been any happier.

CW: Do you ever regret making that choice you did you know about banking versus going for your PhD and doing the teaching route?

DW: I have always wondered what would have happened to me if I had I become a banker. I had a couple of offers, as an undergraduate of Miami, at that point I wasn't sure going on to graduate school, so I had interviewed, you know, done several rounds of interviews, I had several offers from big banks, so I know I could have, you know, gone to work for a big bank. Yeah, I always kind of wondered. Like you always do. All those pathways. You always wonder what if I had taken the right pathway instead of the left. Yeah, I wondered what would have happened to me. But I don't think I would have been any happier, I might have, I might have made more money. That is a good possibility.

LS: Well, we are very lucky you (inaudible) Thank You.

CW: Thank you.