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# Lorna Dawes Interview, Director of the University Center at Wright State University

Gary Barlow

*Wright State University - Main Campus*

Lorna Dawes

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**WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Retiree Association Oral History Project**

Interview date: 11/10/2016

Interviewer: Gary Barlow  
Professor Emeritus, College of Education and Human Services

Interviewee: Lorna Dawes  
Director, University Center (Retired)

**Gary Barlow:** My name is Gary Barlow, Professor Emeritus, the College of Education and Human Services. Today is November 10, 2016, and I will be interviewing Lorna Dawes, Director, University Center, here at Wright State. This is in cooperation with the Wright State University's Retiree Association Oral History Project. Lorna thank you very much for being, being with us today.

**Lorna Dawes:** I'm delighted to be here.

**GB:** May I call you Lorna?

**LD:** Yes, certainly.

**GB:** Lorna tells us a little bit about your background, where you are from, where you've studied, any previous work you've done before coming here. That's a good way I think to get started here.

**LD:** Well I grew up in Iowa. I came, and I went to Iowa State. I came here to this community many years ago in the 50's and have been back and forth on both coasts, but I came to Wright State in 1973, October of 1973. I came to work with the Office of Special Events which was just created about that time, and I was here for, my first, the first major special event that I worked with was the inauguration of Dr. Kegerreis, and I hold that very fondly in my heart. So, that was, that was the start of it all, and in 1977, I was named Director, by that time, what was called, University and Community Events, that which was the extension of Special Events. So I, I was in that position from 1977 to January of 1982, when I became Director of the University Center. The first Director of the Center was Elizabeth Dixon and she decided that she would like to recommend me to follow her. And after some discussion with her and with [Eleanor Cook], I agreed to do that, so I began officially in January of 1982 as Director of the Student Center, then called the University Center.

**GB:** Lorna where was your first office? Was your first office the Office of Special Events?

**LD:** It was in the Administrative Wing in Allyn Hall.

**GB:** It was in the Administrative Wing in Allyn Hall.

**LD:** Right. We were part of the President's Office at that point.

**GB:** Okay. What did you, where did you work before coming here?

**LD:** Actually I was a professional homemaker and volunteer. I did a short stint for the Dayton Bar Association, just helping manage a conference but this was my, my first venture into this part of the world.

**GB:** I know one time you told me in high school you played the oboe.

**LD:** I did, yes, that's what led me to Iowa State actually.

**GB:** Oh really?

**LD:** Participated in [?] contests and that sort of thing and I really loved it but I've not continued it except for one year when Sally Johnson who was then the Chair of the Department of Music, decided she was going to put together a group of people she knew had played instruments back in their day, and she approached me and I told her, "Sally, if you can provide me with a soundproof room, a very good reed and an oboe, I'll check it out and see." So, it was something for a special event for United Way or something, so we did that.

**GB:** That information leads me to the Artist Series which we'll get to a little later. Okay, how did you learn about Wright State at the beginning? And, the position that was open for which you applied?

**LD:** That sort of came to me, that position, but I learned about Wright State when a very dear friend of mine was in the very first class, and I was there encouraging her on. She also was a professional homemaker and volunteer, and she decided to do this, and at that point in time, people who did it needed encouragement and I encouraged her. And, she turned out to be a stellar teacher and I have met some of her students even in these years and she retired quite some time ago.

**GB:** Who offered you the position? Was that Elizabeth?

**LD:** The University Center position?

**GB:** The University Center position.

**LD:** Eleanor Cook and Elizabeth were the ones who recruited me.

**GB:** Eleanor, okay, okay. When you came here Lorna what was your first impression of Wright State? What, what did the campus look like, what was your first impression?

**LD:** Well, I was fond of Wright State from the beginning. I'm very proud that we had a university here, and it was the quadrangle, that was basically it. The Student Center, called the University Center, and Hamilton Hall, that was pretty much it at the beginning. There's a wonderful story about Elizabeth when she was recruited it was back must have been about '67, I'm not quite sure, but, when she was recruited, the Student Center was a hole in the ground. And Elizabeth, and if you know Elizabeth you would understand this, in her high heels she hiked right down the ladder to go down there to check it out before it was even built.

**GB:** The University Center was built about 1967 or '68 wasn't it?

**LD:** Yes.

**GB:** Now were you, were you involved in the, the, in the re, reconstruction of the Center or the uh uh....

**LD:** Well there was an addition almost immediately, I was not here for that. But oh yes, when we got to the point where we were planning for that huge expansion, yes, I was involved and chaired the committee for the percent for art, which is how the sculpture there was chosen, and I was right there through all the architectural plans and all that. But then my husband was recruited to go East, and I decided as much as I love Wright State, as I said in my reception, farewell reception, I did love my husband more so I was going to go with him. And then I was able, well then I was able to advocate for Kathy Morris whom I had hired in 1983 for her to be the Director. She had gone through every step of the planning for the huge renovation, the expansion with me, and I had a conversation with Harold Nixon who was the VP for Student Affairs then, and we managed to work it out that it was most logical because she had an excellent background for this plus the experience, that she'd be the next Director. And it worked out. She put the hard hat on, literally, and worked with that expansion. And when I would come out from New Jersey where we were, to visit, I would put on a hard hat and walk through that expansion.

**GB:** Lorna, in planning for the expansion of the Center, tell me a problem or two that you might have run into.

**LD:** Well, we had tremendous support from the Board of Trustees. And I would not, I do not recall a problem, now Kathy might because as I said, she was the one who had the hard hat on. But, I'm sure they had some of the usual challenges that one does in building.

**GB:** I guess I was thinking did you have to move the food service to the left more or add a room, or those kinds of things.

**LD:** Well, this expansion, this expansion was really focused on covering the atrium and then incorporating, and combining the University Center and the Physical Education

building, so there was tremendous focus on that. Eventually the bookstore had to be moved and all that but I was here through the conceptual part, as I said, Kathy Morris, who just retired, would be a very good one to talk to about that next stage.

**GB:** I've forgotten where we moved the bookstore from.

**LD:** It was in the basement. Not the basement, the lower level of the University Center. Uh, the same floor as the Rathskellar, and the meeting rooms, the Guardian, uh, all of those offices.

**GB:** What did the campus look like, the campus in general, when you first came here?

**LD:** It was well well taken care of. We had wonderful Grounds crews, and I thoroughly enjoyed working with them, we can talk about that later when I came up to the University Center. But no, it was well kept. It was expansive, not a lot of buildings, across the road there were fields, there was no I-675, so my commute from south of town was a little bit longer then.

**GB:** Were the farms here when you...

**LD:** Yeah.

**GB:** The llama farms and all of that?

**LD:** I don't remember the llama farm, but then, I didn't go look for it. But the, as I recall, I remember now, I probably just visited this because I'd go to theatre, I remember when theatre was in a building like a house or something, and then also one of the first events that I worked with was the Creative Arts Center dedication, back in those years.

**GB:** You mentioned Hamilton Hall, say something about that. That was our first dormitory.

**LD:** Yes, and it was accessible for people with disabilities, and uh, that was a very, very important part of our mission here, as you, as you well know, having worked with faculty with people with disabilities. Um, we already had the tunnels at that point, thanks to Eleanor Cook's dream and vision. Uh, we had wonderful students working with the people with disabilities in Hamilton Hall because many of them needed to have aides, etc. Uh, so, a wonderful relationship is what I remember.

**GB:** How many, how many people did the Hall, how many students were in Hamilton Hall? Do you remember?

**LD:** I don't recall, that was not part of my responsibility, so it would be the Housing people that could tell you that.

**GB:** Was it always named Hamilton Hall, or who was it named after?

**LD:** I don't know that because it was named before I came, but, it was Hamilton Hall and it's still Hamilton Hall.

**GB:** Um hum. Can you describe your very first day of work here? Where were you located? Did you have your office? Who was your supervisor?

**LD:** I was in the Administrative Wing. Interesting, I'm trying to remember exactly where, but the person who was the Director of Special Events was Pat O'Brien. And Millie Wydale was working with Fred....White. Yes, and...

**GB:** Now mention who Millie was.

**LD:** Millie was his assistant, as I recall, yeah. And I remember that, oh, I remember so many of the faculty from that, that period of time. I have fond memories.

**GB:** Are you going to mention a fond memory or two?

**LD:** What I loved to do in that capacity, uh, was work with the faculty, part of what we did was help facilitate conferences, etc., where people from the outside would come into the university. So, and also, we would work with faculty as one would work with an artist. Uh, they were the people that had the concept, and they were the people that knew what they wanted and then we put the physical parts of the campus, the resources of the campus together to, to make that happen, the invisible part that makes all the difference. And in that capacity, I loved working with the maintenance people, the grounds people, Physical Plant, which I didn't realize at the time, was a forerunner for my being able to work as Director of the Student Center because we worked with all those people and I've always respected them and appreciated them and asked their advice.

**GB:** Lorna, based on this I asked you about your first day of work and where you were located, just for historical record, who was your immediate supervisor, I mean, not necessarily Elizabeth right now, but....

**LD:** Are you talking about now,

**GB:** In Administration, at the beginning. Was it here....

**LD:** At the beginning of the, my work with the Student Center or at the beginning of my work at the University?

**GB:** At the beginning of your work at the University. Was it Harold Nixon, or Fred White or

**LD:** No, no no. When I came, I was reporting to Pat O'Brien, she and Millie were the ones that approached me, and um, so Dr. Kegerreis was already here, it just happened that his inauguration fell after, after I arrived, well the month that I arrived as I recall.

Um, I do have a rather humorous memory from that one. Um, so yeah, we were in the Administrative Wing and Pat reported to Dr. Kegerreis. Do you want my humorous memory from the inauguration?

**GB:** Yes.

**LD:** This is terrible. Well, do you recall when the marshals wore those really wonderful sort of European hats? Well, we were going through and preparing everything and I discovered one of them had a loose band around it so I decided to take it home and fix that, which I did. However, what I realized once [Hamilton Medic] was putting it on, I had left, I had left a needle in it, and he punched his thumb and said, “aaahhhh, a rat just bit me there, just this week”. It was horrifying, I felt very embarrassed. To this day he hasn’t forgotten and we still talk about it when I see him.

**GB:** That’s a good, that’s a good memory.

**LD:** Yeah, very embarrassing but.

**GB:** Lorna, in in the Center, I’m going to come back to the Center, how quickly after you came here in, tell me again,

**LD:** ’73.

**GB:** ’73, over the next few years, how quickly did your unit grow? I’m not going to call it a department it was a unit.

**LD:** Are you talking about Special Events?

**GB:** Uh, uh, yes.

**LD:** Where I first came?

**GB:** Where you first came.

**LD:** Well it grew to be University and Community Events because that more definitively described what we did, because we did a lot of work with the community coming in as I mentioned before.

**GB:** So that was the foundation for the University and Community Events, that’s good.

**LD:** Yeah, began as Special Events and it grew, although it did not grow in numbers particularly, but we grew in responsibilities. And, I’m trying to think when that was named but I’m not recalling exactly what year it was named, the name changed.

**GB:** Who were some of your initial staff?

**LD:** Dessine Fricioni was work, worked with us. Um, she was the major one as I recall. I mean, she could do the work of ten people.

**GB:** What was her name?

**LD:** Dessine.

**GB:** Dessine.

**LD:** D-e-s-s-i-n-e. A lot of people called her Dee but I liked to call her by her full name. And her last name was Fricioni. F-r-i-c-i-o-n-i. And she continued to work with the President's Office until she retired.

**GB:** Well describe the physical facilities where you were located. At the beginning, when you first came here.

**LD:** In Allyn Hall.

**GB:** Mm-hum.

**LD:** Yeah. In the Administrative Wing.

**GB:** Oh. I know, describe the physical facilities when you first moved to the Center.

**LD:** Oh, it was the, the old University Center. You know we have pictures of it all around, and um, it held the bookstore, it held as I mentioned before, um...

**GB:** Were you crowded at there?

**LD:** Mmm, not really. Not really.

**GB:** So it had the bookstore, what else was inside the University Center?

**LD:** Uh, the Guardian, uh Student Activities, we had meeting rooms. Um, as I mentioned, the Rathskellar. Upstairs, on the first floor, um, there were meeting rooms, of course, food service. Um, it was not a huge building.

**GB:** Were there other offices besides yours, like Office of Handicap Student Services, or whatever it was titled then?

**LD:** That, that wasn't there at that point as I recall.

**GB:** Or was any of PE, Phys Ed, spilling over into your...

**LD:** No, no.



**GB:** Okay.

**LD:** It was really not a very large space.

**GB:** Mm hum, okay. What were some of your initial impressions, when I say when you first came here, I know you were in the Wing and then up here, so you can pick wherever you want to be in these questions, but what were some of your initial impressions of the students when you first came here, what was campus life like, and what were some activities and events were some of them that were taking place on campus you were involved with?

**LD:** In with the students? Once I was up in the Student Center?

**GB:** Once you were in the Student Center.

**LD:** Well they still had October Days and May Days which were very lively times and fraught with potential challenges. And um, the Guardian was very active. Oh, we also had the dark room in the University Center. And, I really enjoyed working with the students. We had many concerts and so forth in the old cafeteria and that too was something that evolved over time as did May Days and October Days. Um, one of the things that occurred when we had events in the University Center, you know concerts, one thing or another, was that the backstage area was the Upper Hearth Lounge, which was a wonderful space, but, would inevitably really be trashed when there was an event like that. So eventually we, um, we redecorated the Upper Hearth Lounge and I spoke with the student leaders at the time and I said, we have some options, you know how this looks after an event would you consider the possibility that you might have your backstage area downstairs, let's think about that together. Because there is no point in redecorating if we are going to have the kind of activity there that we do with a concert. And, we worked together on that and they bought the idea of having it downstairs. And then we really did a nice job on redecorating the Upper Hearth and all the stains and one thing or another that had been there were, either, were either replaced things or we were able to clean them. And then they respected that space, they respected it and it was no longer the challenge that it had been. I think, and I, when we, we redecorated or refurbished the dark room, I never ever just decided I knew how to do and do it. I would call the students in and say you are the ones that are using this so they gave recommendations on what equipment to get and they also gave recommendations on what guidelines to have. And again, I said, you use that equipment. You know more than I do about this. So by their being a part of it, I think it, they were certainly invested and we were able to make it work.

**GB:** Do you remember around those times what our student population was?

**LD:** I don't remember in terms of numbers but, but I do remember that when we began hiring student employees, in the University Center, the ones who were drawn to us and the ones to whom we were drawn, were people who really knew what they were here at Wright State for. A lot of them were from the rural areas, around Greenville and that

whole section, Jackson, and some of those places, and those students knew, they knew how to work. And that's what we wanted. We wanted that kind of focus and camaraderie and we had that. And, if they didn't want to work, they didn't usually stay, and they worked out something else.

**GB:** We had the commuter students at that time a number of ...

**LD:** Oh yeah because all we had on campus was Hamilton Hall.

**GB:** was Hamilton Hall.

**LD:** We did have students living close to campus but not of course a lot of them.

**GB:** How did you handle that situation where you in charge of the Center which involved a lot of students and student activities coming and going and some were residential students, resident students, and others were commuter students. How did you balance that or what did you do to face that situation?

**LD:** Well one thing we had the Student Activities Board and we had a person in charge of Student Activities, so he or she would work with the student leaders and they were very invested in what they were planning to include both on campus and off campus students. And, again we had some very, very fine student leaders in that group so they did their best to make activities available across, across the lines of commuters and non-commuters.

**GB:** What were some of the memorable issues expressed by the students over the years, do you remember?

**LD:** Well, parking was always a major issue and I ended up chairing the Parking Services Committee, so that was interesting too. We had students and faculty and so forth on that. And it was a challenge you know. We worked together on it.

**GB:** Tell me a couple of the challenges.

**LD:** Well the same complaint that you hear now. I mean, there's just not enough parking, what are we going to do about the parking? And, what we did was work together to help everyone understand what those issues were. And, we just did the best we could to be sure they knew that they were being heard and that they knew the challenges as well as we did.

**GB:** And I don't think that we had bus service at that time on campus did we?

**LD:** I don't think so. I don't think so. I'm feeling really old. [laughter].

**GB:** I don't believe we did. So you, you really had an opportunity to interact with a lot of students on this campus.

**LD:** I did.

**GB:** Were they mostly upper graduates?

**LD:** They were across, across the line. Usually, across the board. Usually the students that I became involved with were the ones who were working in the Student Activities Board, that sort of thing, so um, and usually the ones I would be interacting with would be the ones that were the chairs. I remember many a time when a student would come in and just want to talk, and I loved that. And, but, Kathy Morris, when I hired her as I said in 1983, she was the one who was the major person working with the student and the students leaders.

**GB:** And the Board was a part of the Student Government, the University Student Government?

**LD:** Student Government was a separate thing. University Center Board was the Activities Board and they were the ones who worked with concerts and films, and all.

**GB:** Mm hum, did your students, were they represented on the Student Government?

**LD:** Um, I'm trying to think if there were any crossovers, there might have been. But I don't know if there was an official, official one.

**GB:** I don't really remember that. What was, I think maybe you've answered this, uh, Lorna but I want to make sure that we have something on this relative to our history. What was the role of the Administration during your time, uh, what was the relationship between Administration and staff? I know the Administration in terms of Colleges and Programs and so on, what was the relationship between Administration and staff? How did they, uh, how did they connect?

**LD:** Are you talking about the President's Office.....

**GB:** The University Administration.

**LD:** are you talking about the Deans or....

**GB:** Yes. Were you, I know you, you weren't an academic program, you were kind of a separate entity, um, entity in your, there in terms of Director of that...

**LD:** Yeah.

**GB:** I guess what I'm asking....

**LD:** It's basically an auxiliary.

**GB:** Pardon me.

**LD:** It's basically an auxiliary.

**GB:** An auxiliary, yes.

**LD:** Yes. So, say more, what was your relationship?

**GB:** Well did they, did they, did the University Administration step in and say this is what we want or need or did you present your plans to them in terms of being a Director of that entity?

**LD:** It depended on what kind of plans we were talking about. Of course they'd be involved with things, major things like the expansion.

**GB:** Yeah.

**LD:** But um, we maintained, a healthy communication. Uh, the, the Vice President for Student Affairs was the one, uh, under whom we, we was umbrella we felt, and uh, we always made sure the VP was informed. That so we could alert them so that they wouldn't have any surprises. So, you know, I wouldn't want them to have any surprises if we, if there was any particular challenges coming up, we made sure that they knew. Uh, I always enjoyed working with them, and uh, we were a team.

**GB:** Good. I'll ask you just a couple more things then I'll move on here to another, um, was there good camaraderie among the staff in the Center as a whole, did Food Services and the Board, did, did everything work?

**LD:** Well, Food Services did not report to me.

**GB:** Oh, they didn't.

**LD:** No. Uh, they had reported to Elizabeth but when she retired, they hired someone to be in charge of quote unquote Auxiliary Services.

**GB:** Do you remember who that was?

**LD:** John Cwan. C-w-a-n. Right. And technically I reported to him but I always had a very clear line of communication with the VP.

**GB:** If you could go back and do it over again, is there something different, is there something you would have done differently?

**LD:** That's a very interesting question. Is there something I would have done differently? I can tell you more what I would do again exactly the way I did it which was hire Kathy Morris. A wonderful gift to the University and I also hired Bill Shepherd, um, and I always

said those were the two best things I ever did for Wright State. They, Kathy had a wonderful career here and Bill is still here and doing a magnificent job. So.

**GB:** You know, those early days I want to just have you mention something here with the students, we had a lot of people driving back and forth but on campus, where did students live? We know Hamilton Hall and around campus, where did students socialize?

**LD:** Well we wanted them to socialize in the Student Center, so there was you know, a lot there, uh, some of [tape cut off before finished] that would be done in Allyn Hall that sort of thing. But uh, the um, we called, the the Student Union which is what it is called in the professional terms across the country, and across the world actually, um, is to be the living room of the campus, and that's what we strove for. And as a matter of fact when I became Director, I was, I really wanted to do something that would be similar to what, smaller Liberal Arts Colleges do, so I consulted with some of the faculty I knew from my work with them, and uh, we got together to talk about what we might do of that nature. So, what came out of that was Friday at the Hearth. So on Fridays, every Friday, we would have a gathering at the Hearth, the Hearth Lounge, and uh, have a fire in the fireplace if the weather was such that it, we could do that, and various faculty would take on the responsibility for the, the discussion, whatever it would be, and we publicized it around the university and we had we had some pretty successful times there with interesting subjects that it was an opportunity for uh students across the, actually across ages, across disciplines to come together and uh, exchange. And I, and that was something that I always really enjoyed.

**GB:** How, how or why did you change the name from the Student Union to the University Center?

**LD:** Back up, it was University Center first. When it grew into the huge facility that was when the name was changed to Student Union. It was named University Center when I first came so I'm not quite sure why they named it that but it was sort of the center of activity for the campus.

**GB:** Generally speaking, how has the campus and university changed over the years in terms of your perspective. What are we doing now that you are very proud of or what's what's unique about the university?

**LD:** I, well, I love Wright State and that's no surprise to anybody. I think it is one of the unheralded triumphs in this community. I, I am very proud of all the accomplishments they have made in the arts, in science, um, they were fledgling when I first came. And it was interesting because nobody said well we've always done it this way so we could create new things and that was a wonderful part of the process and there is still some of that I think that is inherit here in this university. Uh, I am so impressed with what Student Affairs has been able to accomplish. The Student Success Center is just a really amazing place. Uh, I appreciate that students can have still, even though we've grown, students can still have the kind of interaction with professors. That means a great deal to them. Many students that have transferred here, who would come into my office and say,

“oh I have personal attention, all I have to do is seek it out,” and I think that still is, would be the case here. Um, well it’s expanded physically, physically the expansion is just mind-boggling, but I still think we have a personal touch. I don’t work here anymore so I don’t know that for sure but I think so, yeah. Does that answer your question?

**GB:** That, that does and it’s very, very good to hear that. What, what do you think, what do you think we’ll be like in 20 years?

**LD:** Well a lot of that depends on the kind of support that we will get, from the State and the nation. If education is valued as I think it should be, then I would expect that we will be continuing to grow and improve and find various ways to reach people who can’t necessarily make it all the way to campus but I hope that we will never lose the interaction among people, students, professors, I think we can go too far sometimes with remote technology. I want the interaction like we had at the Upper Hearth Lounge.

**GB:** I’m going to have you look back at, which we’ve been doing, but at some memorable experiences so I’m going to ask you, what were some of your additional responsibilities over the years such as committee assignments and special projects and artist series, and so on and so forth.

**LD:** When we put together the list of committees I chaired, it was really interesting, it was a very long list, and I don’t know why I kept being selected for chair positions but I think it’s partly because I really listen. For example, Paige Mulholland asked me to chair the committee to turn the campus non-smoking. And when he asked me I said, “Paige are you trying to shorten my career or what?” but I did chair that. And I helped form the committee. He had some ideas and I said well I want so dedicated smokers on this committee, which we had. And we had one minority report, which I encouraged because there was one person that could not go along with the decisions that we were making or recommendations we were forming. I also asked him, Paige, to come and give us our charge as a committee so that it was coming directly from him and then we worked from there. And, uh, it was the first step that was when classrooms, buildings were to be non-smoking. Then he came to me later, a few years later and wanted me to chair another committee turning the whole campus to non-smoking. And that was a point in which I didn’t think it would be wise to do that, there were many other hills to be climbed at that point. So we talked about it and he decided to wait. He waited and then eventually it all happened but it had to happen, in my estimation, had to happen in considering timing. Oh, and one of my loves, as you know Gary, was the Artist Series. And that was a wonderful oasis for me, in the midst of a lot of administrative work, and I took whatever time it took, the clock was not important. But uh, we had a great time and of course you chaired the committee for quite some time and so you know firsthand a lot of the experiences we had, but we brought people to this campus that are now known nationwide. I hear their names frequently and hear their performances on Dayton public radio. And, and we had them here when they were just beginning. Joshua Bell, of course Leon Bates was with us many times, um, Canadian Brass, many, many wonderful people.

**GB:** One of our favorites Vincent Price.

**LD:** Oh, yes, yes. There are stories about that one yes.

**GB:** Yes. What was one or your, oh, any other committees do you want to mention?

**LD:** I think I chaired Food Service for a while, there were several I chaired, I'd have to go back and look at my vitae to figure all of it out.

**GB:** What do you, what do you think was one of your biggest successes at Wright State?

**LD:** Well, I believe that the most important thing that a leader does, is to encourage the growth of the people with whom you work and people you hire. So, I would say my greatest success was as I mentioned before was hiring Kathy and Bill. They both have contributed so much to the university. I believe that succession planning is very, very important, and, inclusivity of all kinds. So, I think the Artist Series was one of the, one of the, that you could call it success but it's never an individual success it is always a team. And then the other of course, is the Madrigal Dinner. Um, when Kathy came, I had already been doing some preparation for reviving and changing the Madrigal Dinner. Years before I had gone to Madrigal Dinner celebrations and they were run by Student Activities as long as there was someone who was the chair of Student Activities, it, it was quite successful. But it began, it eventually it just sort of dwindled and left. But when I came up to the Student Center one of the first things I thought in addition to the Fridays at the Hearth idea which we named together, I didn't name it by myself, uh, was I would love to have the Madrigal Dinner reinstated but I want it to be sustainable. So again I worked with faculty, food service, and we talked about how, and Music Department, see how we could do it in a way that would highlight each of those areas and have us do the administration which was our area. And it turned out to be a very successful, Friends of the Library guaranteed the first Madrigal Dinner so that we could get it started, and then it grew and just grew really quickly and well. So it started in 1983 which was Kathy's first year with us. I had done some research on it with Indiana University, I had gone to one of theirs, established a rapport with them, they had given us a script, Paul Lane was the one that agreed to work with us on it, and he and Dee were our Lord and Lady of the Manor for the first one.

**GB:** Paul was in the Music Department?

**LD:** Yes, uh, at that point I think he was but he might have been adjunct or, I'm not quite sure. But anyway they were our first Lord and Lady so that grew and developed over the years and when the expansion occurred, then the dinner was moved to the huge facility and I have just been amazed at how beautifully they have been able to, not only accommodate many more people, but make that space a very lovely space, and we are, we are, we are closing it as of December, it was closed really last December. So the last one has been held, it was a fantastic event, and, and um, we will remember it fondly.

**GB:** Well Lorna I know in asking that question you have so many successes at Wright State but I wanted to see what you touched on but I have to ask on the counterpart, what was a big disappointment that you had at Wright State if any?

**LD:** Well, I'm trying to think, um. During my time here?

**GB:** Yes.

**LD:** I was so fortunate that one door after another just opened and I, I was opened to exploring it, so, and I was sad to leave when I did, because I wouldn't have left except for my husband's opportunity. But, at the same time my comfort was that there were wonderful people who were carrying on. One of the things that I do want to mention about the Student Center, um, is that, we have only had five directors. The first one being Elizabeth, the second one being me, Lorna, third was Kathy Morris, fourth was, and Kathy was recruited by the VP for Student Affairs to um, work in his office, so she, really it was very hard for her to leave the work she loved with the Student Center, but she did that and then she was able to name Bill Shepherd to follow her, and then Bill Shepherd of course went on to work with Development, first in Student Affairs, after he served very, very well as Director. But then, Eric Corbett, who had been at the University Center for a long time, and he had been working in the um, the athletic part, became the Director, so this is a very small number and each one of us built on the foundations left by the ones who, who we succeeded. We have always honored Elizabeth, now she would have been 100 years old.

**GB:** Elizabeth Dixon

**LD:** Dixon, she would have been 100 years old in August. She lived to be in her nineties. And we managed, we, I wasn't employed here at that point, but those of us that were so connected with each other in so honoring Elizabeth, uh, we were able to name the Hearth Lounge for her. So instead of the Upper Hearth Lounge it is now the Elizabeth Dix, Elizabeth M. Dixon Lounge.

**GB:** If you were asked to describe Wright State then in one word, what would it be?

**LD:** An interconnected community.

**GB:** If you were asked to describe Wright State now in one word, what would it be?

**LD:** It is still a community. Much more complex. And there is still a great deal of work to be done to unify it.

**GB:** Okay. I like your one word.

**LD:** I can't do one word Gary, you know that.

**GB:** Lorna, I think it's important to hear from you because of your importance and, and, contributions to Wright State, I'm going to ask this, from your responsibilities of overseeing, supervising, and responding to students over the years you were here, what would you recommend or what advice would you give to a new student coming to Wright State now?



**LD:** I would suggest that they, never underestimate the resources that are available to them. That they, they seek out assistance starting with Student Affairs actually, and seek where they need to go to get the support and assistance that they need. That would be my first, my first word of advice.

**GB:** Okay, very....

**LD:** But I also have advice for the people who are working with them. Listen. Listen. Don't judge. Listen.

**GB:** Very good advice. Lorna, we're, we're drawing to a close here, is there anything that I didn't ask you that you would like to share, any additional unique perspectives, or anything that perhaps I missed?

**LD:** I think you've covered things very well. I'll probably think of something when I walk out the door. But, I treasure all the relationships that I still have with my, I call it my Wright State family, there are some who are literally extended family and there are some who are dear to my heart from all the experiences we've had together. And, and I recognize that there have been growing pains, which is very, very natural in a place that's growing so quickly. Um, my, I have, my wish is that Wright State will be recognized for all of the incredible, wonderful work that they do. The students, they deserve to be, Wright State deserves to be honored and we just, as I said we have some growing pains but it will come.

**GB:** Well Lorna I thank you very much for your, for the interview today and as you know, I've appreciated all that you've done over the years and had the fortunate, the good fortune to work with you on many of our committees, and so thank you very much for this.

**LD:** You're welcome, you're welcome.

**GB:** And with that, we'll conclude the interview.