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Richard Roy Interview, Wright State University Class of 1970

Richard Roy

Wright State University - Main Campus

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
Retiree Association Oral History Project

Interview date: 9/29/2017

Interviewer: Chris Wydman (CW)
University Archivist

Interviewee: Richard Roy (RR)
Class of 1970

Chris Wydman: Well, just to get started, this is Chris Wydman, University Archivist here at Wright State University, Special Collections & Archives. It's Friday, September 29th, and I have the pleasure of interviewing Richard Roy, who was a class member in the inaugural class of '67/'68? Is that the year you started?

Richard Roy: Yes. No, I started in '66. It was the Dayton Campus, but I had the pleasure of being here at the celebration out there outside of Allyn Hall.

CW: Right. Right here.

RR: I remember that afternoon. It was awesome.

CW: On the day that you gained independence?

RR: Yes, that's when they had the celebration.

CW: And when did they have that celebration? Was that like right after they got the approval?

RR: I think, you know within a week or so, I believe. It was a hyped event so I'm going to say maybe that same day or the day after.

CW: Right.

RR: But it was really special, whatever the marketing group was at the time, or public relations or affairs-

CW: For the campus here?

RR: Yeah, and I recall, you know the campus was small, but if I recollect, I've seen a couple pictures, there were several hundred excited students and faculty and admin there. And that was a big deal, and I remember it very well, it was a beautiful day.

CW: What time, was that in the summer?

RR: It was in September.

CW: It was in September?

RR: It was in September. September of '67.

CW: September of '67. So it was pretty much the first day, and it was just a big celebration?

RR: It was just great, the ambiance and the togetherness, a day like today, Indian Summer, and we knew it was happening and we wanted our independence from, you know, Miami and Ohio State University.

CW: Right.

RR: And we got it, and it was. I'm glad I got to be part of that, because not many people, whether they would be out anymore, you know how many people were there and how many people are still surviving today, I'm not sure. So it was really, really nice and I feel bonded with Wright State, I got my Masters here after my Bachelors and this is my University.

CW: Right, right. I remember seeing photos of them having a funeral procession for the Dayton Campus and they constructed this fake coffin and a procession of students walked it out to the woods somewhere. And buried it.

RR: Yeah, isn't that great. It's hidden under concrete along with Jimmy Hoffa I'm sure.

CW: Well that's what I was going to ask, do you have any idea where they actually took that thing.

RR: I have an idea, and I think where it was, certainly could be wrong here, there may still exist an area, near the ball field I guess, called Achilles Hill.

CW: Oh, down there. Okay. Yeah.

RR: We kinda took that over.

CW: The hill is still there, yeah.

RR: Yeah it's still there, and it's shrunk and there's no signage where it is.

CW: There's stuff all around it, but yeah.

RR: But its right there and I suspect, and that's when we found it, cause this was a six-hundred and some odd acre campus and not a lot of foot print at the time, and it may be somewhere else, I don't know. I'm gonna say that's where it's at, somewhere buried.

CW: So back in that period did students spend a lot of time down around Achilles Hill?

RR: It was more sororities and fraternities.

CW: Really?

RR: Because it was a lot of undergrowth and fallen trees, it was just not developed at all, and so we kind of...

CW: So it was more woodsy down there now than it is now?

RR: Yes, correct.

CW: Was there, did you guys clear an area?

RR: We cleared out, oh I'm gonna say maybe an area of three acres. We spent a good amount of time.

CW: Yeah then they had some concerts and stuff or some big events down there?

RR: Yeah, they did.

CW: And it looked like a big open, you know, space in front of it.

RR: Yeah and I think that it was Achilles Hill, because the sororities and fraternities accepted the opportunity to kind of clear it out, and we had bonfires.

CW: So you got permission?

RR: Yeah we got permission. That one time, I guess, we got it. And I remember the only way in except was to march through the woods. There was an old farmhouse off of Colonel Glenn and it was a long and winding road, it was probably somewhere at least a quarter mile if not a half a mile from Colonel Glenn, driving around and people would get stuck, because we created a road just by driving vehicles on it and that was kind of our outside area.

CW: So to get down there the back hill was just a muddy road.

RR: Oh yeah, there was no road to begin with, not that I recall, so we made sure there was enough tire tracks and there was a lot of tracks.

CW: Yeah we've got a couple pictures of that, but it's not dated and I was wondering exactly when, when that became a paved.

RR: Oh paved, I don't know, because that's not the case.

CW: It was long after this?

RR: Yeah it was a long time, and I'm going to say we started as a group of fraternities and sororities, probably in the spring of '68 I suspect, it wasn't right away.

CW: So that first year when it was officially Wright State that...

RR: following spring.

CW: That following spring is when, because you said you guys formed right near the beginning of the year.

RR: Yeah, the fraternity got together, we didn't know what we were going to do just a group of folks. Some were around when Wright State became a university and within a couple weeks after that we formalized it by drawing the names out of a hat and drawing the colors out of a hat.

CW: For the name of the fraternity?

RR: Yeah, that's how we decided to do it, and that became the Beta Phi Omega Fraternity.

CW: And it was Beta Phi Omega.

RR: Yeah, and we do look at it since we are a spinoff of the Dayton campus being Miami University and "The" Ohio State University, we look as ourselves as "The" Beta Phi Omega Fraternity, since it was just all you know the, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury all aligned just perfectly.

CW: Right, were you, were there other fraternities, sororities already forming?

RR: Yeah there were, one or two other fraternities and another sorority I believe and there were a couple after that and one or two evaporated after a year or so, and looking back over 50 years we are still in existence and we had our big gala and golf outing, that's why I'm here because of the 50th and we had a special thing, we have a, a year or so ago one of the standing Presidents of the fraternity passed away, Cameron Dolansky, and so...

CW: Cameron Dolansky.

RR: Cameron Dolansky, and so he, his parents were at the gala and started an endowment for scholarships and they put in a lot of money, right now we've got over \$10,000 for scholarships towards that, and his parents very thoughtful.

CW: At the gala that just occurred.

RR: Yeah it just concluded, that is really special, if you think of all the.

CW: Well that's what so neat right now, you know and that's why you're here, the 50th. We are celebrating the 50th of Wright State, and we have all these groups coming.

RR: Yeah this is just terrific, I wish I was going to be here these weekends.

CW: Yeah there's fraternity reunions and

RR: Government.

CW: Yes, student governments, student newspaper, you know all the different student groups, it's going to be really neat.

RR: I think it's going to be terrific, I wish, I'm be here in spirit, but I fly out tomorrow.

CW: Right, Right. So, we talked about this a little bit when I saw you before, how is it you guys first got together? Did somebody approach you in class, or hanging out at campus?

RR: Somebody thought of it, you know, with all the high schools it's still a small community. I recall I was in Allyn Hall at the Library, no excuse me in Millett Hall.

CW: In the new [library].

RR: New at the time, and I was just being a good student [*exaggerated wink at camera*], looking for books and a friend of mine from the high school I graduated, says hey you want to think about joining a fraternity or starting a fraternity was probably the better term. Well sure I'm interested, let's see what it's all about. Probably that kind of informal networking, when networking wasn't much of a term as far as whether its professional or personal and twelve of us got together, and a lot of us didn't know each other at all, it was just from Beavercreek and Carroll High School and Springfield, so we were new to each other, a couple of us knew each other but that was it. So the odds of something like that developing and nurturing over time is pretty remarkable.

CW: Yeah, we have a long list of the different Greek groups that have been here over the years and some of have gone.

RR: There's a lot more now.

CW: Yeah, that's interesting. So I know in that period there wasn't a lot going on on campus, there weren't a lot of places to hang out.

RR: No, there wasn't.

CW: I mean was that just kind of part of it was kind of getting some sort of social interaction at the school and starting to develop that kind of community out there?

RR: Yeah, it did, because the first library was in Allyn Hall that fronted the moat, and we certainly seized the opportunity to do the rowing the moat, where we used it for I believe Toys For Tots or a charity, and the idea was rowing back and forth, and we measured it so we could get 200 miles in to set a milestone or a benchmark, and we would row seven twenty-four, we did it for a week until we got the 200 miles and none of us,

CW: You did it for a week?

RR: For a whole week.

CW: Like a marathon?

RR: Yeah day and night, seventy-two hours and.

CW: When did you decide to do that? Did you do that the first year? Was that the first sort of organized activity you guys did?

RR: Yeah it was.

CW: Because that became a tradition.

RR: It became a tradition, I think they still do that, they did it about a week ago for a day or two, we actually did it seven twenty-four, it got so bad, because again none of us were in the Navy and it was a rubber raft and it was like a an eight or twelve man raft, it was huge for a moat like that and so as we tried to turn around we would scrape the sides of the moat and before you know it there was more holes in the raft it was almost like every time we would successfully make a round trip we had to pump it up. But people would come out late at night or early in the morning and bring us hot chocolate and so forth and it became an interesting social gathering, and we had no idea that was the case. Then the following year we got smart and got a smaller raft and just to do it to perpetuate.

CW: It is interesting because you know at that time there weren't any dormitories, there weren't any people living here, you know, there was very little here and not the most accessible place in the world for people to be coming out and staying overnight for a week and watching you guys.

RR: Oh yeah, you couldn't see much of that four buildings from the road. It was just kind of down, not in a valley but- and I do need to correct, rowing the moat we started in the fall of '68 so.

CW: In the fall of '68.

RR: Yeah, because that was way too much going on, we had to get to learn about ourselves.

CW: Well sure.

RR: So that became not only that, and looking back that was a very good way of advertising for Rush Week, potential pledges to perpetuate. And we always set it around the time of school starting and our founding. It was a week-long endeavor.

CW: So you would always do it at the beginning of the school year?

RR: Absolutely.

CW: And then people would see your fraternity, these look like a great bunch of guys.

RR: And we would have the Beta Phi Omega in the Greek on the side of the rafts, you know, and it was a yellow raft with burgundy letters, it was pretty clever looking back, and we didn't know all that, we thought we were smart because we were out of high school and into college but, you know, with everything you kind of mature and understand. Somehow it all seemed to work pretty good. And to kind of expand upon your question here, since it wasn't a very big campus, four buildings and the quadrangle. Not only was the moat, but the quadrangle was a really big deal. That was the collection point, that's where everybody would cross, the trees that were there were just little saplings. It was just so new.

CW: And you came in '66.

RR: Yeah I started in '66.

CW: Were all four buildings up by then?

RR: Yes.

CW: Or were they still building the last one.

RR: They were still finishing up Fawcett and Oelman[*Millett?*], and still I remember to this day putting the pencil sharpeners in the classrooms, you know, where you could do the size of it and pick? Oh yeah, I mean very non-tech at the time in technical buildings. Yeah, so it was just the four, just the four and a parking lot here and there.

CW: Because it was the campus in a building, you know, when it was just Allyn, and then in '66 -'67 they finished, so I can image the quad was wonderful, you know, to finally have a kind of a gathering place, this nice lawn and the moat, you know, we've got so many wonderful pictures of students just hanging by the moat. They had four academic buildings but they didn't really have anything else.

RR: No, they didn't.

CW: There wasn't really anywhere else, there was no student center yet.

RR: That may have been building five, maybe.

CW: Yeah, they were, that came in '69, I think.

RR: Yeah, they were starting to build it.

CW: They built that over...

RR: '68, in the south part of that photo.

CW: Yeah, and there was that big soccer field.

RR: Yeah, soccer fields tended to be wherever there was space and they could kind of level it out.

CW: Right, wherever you could put up a goal.

RR: Okay, let's go over here now.

CC: Between these two trees.

RR: And we used that as intramural sports for football, I believe it was that, there wasn't intramural soccer because we didn't want to dilute the opportunity for the soccer team to establish themselves and grow and to be successful. Everything was used as much as possible because there was a lot of trees and a lot of-

CC: Yeah, the campus was still pretty much the old Warner land, the farmland and the base land, those parcels. You know, it's interesting when you talked about getting down to Achilles Hill. That was just, I mean, that was still the farmland.

RR: It was.

CW: And that white farmhouse.

RR: That white farmhouse, because there was the road, I forget, University Boulevard, I'm not quite sure, that kind of cuts through were Walker field [?] is, and down and

connect, and that was there. But there was no connecting road, if I recall, right from that road towards that farmhouse, and we were adventurous, you could get in a couple ways; take in a road that became a road, or kind of park wherever you can and kind of trudge up the hill and start clearing it out.

CW: Right.

RR: Really some good times.

CW: I would imagine.

RR: We had fire pits and it was you know there wasn't the rules there are now.

CW: You got this campus out in the country and all this beautiful forest.

RR: Oh yeah.

CW: You guys could go off on an adventure.

RR: It was a total adventure, and it was an always...

CW: Were they... was campus, were the administrators, I mean did they have any problem with students venturing out?

RR: Well, if they did, I don't recall it.

CW: They weren't hassling you guys too much?

RR: No, no, because we helped. We helped... I'm going to say maintain, bring stability. In that particular time period, in the late '60s, there was academic freedom, and there was the Students for Democratic Society, and there were I guess what you would call more left wing than not, you know, in the center of a probably more conservative area with Wright Patterson Air Force Base and so forth. And so that wasn't always a utopia, you know, just like people, you get that, you get issues and things. The Vietnam war, and Dow Chemical, there were protests for that, and we didn't know a lot about protesting, and those that were open minded enough would at least engage, and that was really kind of cool that there was not closing off discussion, but welcoming it. And that was really part of the maturing of, I'll say not only myself, but really the campus and what it became. It was really a wonderful time period to do that.

CW: Yeah I've seen a lot of, it looked like the Greeks started to develop and a lot of the student interest groups started to develop and, you know, with the Vietnam war there were some demonstrations and protests, but I kind of get the sense that students here didn't quite know how to go about that.

RR: Oh, not at all.

CW: Everybody was still kind of figuring it out.

RR: There were no rules, no guideline book. But you're right, there was two or three people interested in skiing, there was the freedom of getting a charter in the university supporting establishing an organization for skiing or for horses.

CW: Sailing.

RR: Sailing, for sports cars, there would be Jim Connor races up in the parking lots just north of Allyn hall, you know the slalom and back and forth, there was that and that transpired a year later. Just, I'll say north, of the existing Achilles Hill were some old barracks, Korean War barracks, I believe, that were demolished and the road stayed along with the fire hydrants, and there were a lot of Greater Dayton Automobile Association, sports car fans, and we would race on that asphalt road.

CW: I wonder if that was the old Skyborn, it was old military housing.

RR: That's it.

CW: Yeah, because that was done there until the '50s I think.

RR: Correct, and it was just abandoned, it was just there, so let's do it, and so there wasn't all the rules and regulations at the time. And I think that really gave everyone an opportunity to really feel to belong to the campus and university because of the diverse activities and the freedom to be able to not be bounded by think manuals, read before you do it.

CW: Right, so you don't have all these organized activities that have been going on, carried on, everybody was kind of inventing it as you guys were going along.

RR: That's correct.

CW: That's a common theme of that early period, is it was such an organic, there were no rules, there was no tradition, you know everybody was kind of, it was all everybody was developing together.

RR: Yeah, they were creating a tradition and they had no idea it was going to be one.

CW: Yeah, it's interesting, you see it was a similar experience, I think, for the students and for the faculty, you know, it was like this grand experiment.

RR: And it was. Unfortunately, when I went into the service- well, I don't want to say 'unfortunately', that's not right. Well I went into the service in 1970, the following spring was Wrightstock, which was a spinoff, obviously, of Woodstock and Earth Day and so

forth, so I'm going to say all that was April of '71, and so unfortunately I missed that because I was serving the country.

CW: Yeah.

RR: To be able to do that, I don't know whether you could do that anymore or not, but as we talked about the opportunity to do that there was a lot of latitude of being creative and just being sensitive as best you can. There's inherent rules, and pros and cons, and restrictions that usually are followed, but not all the time. To have that on the campus, that was kind of clever, Wrightstock, and I think that helped cement that identity of what Wright State was becoming and what it is now. And of course we hated UD. You know, they didn't want to play us in basketball, and I remember years later we finally played in the UD Arena and beat them and that was a glorious thing for this campus, and it was doom and gloom at UD, and none of us really lost any sleep over that.

CW: That's funny. So circling back to the fraternity, you got a group of guys together, how did you spend that first year sort of getting organized as group?

RR: Well, we had our meetings, obviously, and we had to form our own constitution. We again drew the names.

CW: And where were you doing this? Were you, was there a hangout where you guys...

RR: Probably when Allyn Hall's library moved to Millett that became kind of the cafeteria.

CW: Right outside, where the library used to be at Allyn?

RR: Right outside the moat, yeah, that was kind of the collection point. If there was bad weather outside.

CW: Kind of became a lounge?

RR: It became a lounge where students would eat something, or catch up, or play euchre or whatever. That was kind of the pre student union or Student Center, that's what it was called at first. And so that became the collection point, and to answer your question we would have things, kind of to get to know each other, we would have swim parties in the apartment complex that was covered. We started to sponsor- and then along with other fraternities and sororities- dances offsite. A quarter to get in, a quarter for beer, if I recall, and musical groups. A lot of one piece kind of a things because in the '60s there was all the Rock N Roll and Acid Rock and all of those, the Led Zeppelin the Beatles, The Rolling Stones.

CW: So you would have dances, and you would bring in a band?

RR: Yeah we had dances in what the existing Student Center, or Student Union is, the old portion of it.

CW: The old University Center?

RR: Yes, that's where it was large enough to have that kind of thing and so we did, but the focus was the Quadrangle, the Moat, and Allyn Hall when it became the collection point for the synergism of crossing each other's paths, and again being only four buildings plus the focus point we'd see each other all the time. Whether it was other fraternities or other people. We were people and not a number, and it was so small of a campus it was very intimate, and so we were able to not only have our own as a fraternity, organize events, but there would be many events, we got to other, rival fraternities and sororities, we would play against each other in softball, basketball.

CW: In intramural.

RR: Yeah, it started to morph into we'll play one fraternity versus whoever loses had to provide a keg of beer, so there was an incentive, so we did those kind of things, the healthy competitiveness I think also drove the ability for us to get to know each other and to get to know other people. We would invite other sororities and fraternities to different functions, maybe not anything outside of that, but going over to other homes and having parties, get-togethers,

CW: With the different?

RR: Yeah, yeah. It was rivals but it was also-

CW: Was it friendly?

RR: Yeah, yeah.

CW: Wasn't nasty?

RR: Yeah, we were all under the common denominator of a Greek organization. And if I recall the spring, maybe it was in '69, the creation of the Inter-Greek Council, the trugerry council [?], which implied sororities and fraternities, so we coalesced as a Greek organization at that time. And continued that at least through when I graduated and I don't know what happened there and I think the importance of bringing this up, every spring, every May, we would have Greek Week, you know we would start it out with a toga party and then through a series of sporting events were the Olympics, from discus, to cross country to weight lifting, there was a lot of things that sororities and fraternities could compete against, and it was just them.

CW: Did this grow out of the Inter-Greek council?

RR: Yes, and with that would be a final Greek formal, it was a formal you know tuxes and so forth. And what was important about that, which we didn't know at the time, say in the spring of '69, but became very important, and we still didn't understand the significance or the meaning of it. Was the weekend before Greek week with the chariot event and toga party was the tragedy at Kent State. And we had, we got together as the Inter-Greek council, sororities and fraternities and talked about what should we do, so we had a common problem.

CW: You mean whether to have Greek week in light of what had happened?

RR: Yes, whether to have it or not, so if memory serves me right it was unanimous that we need to be sensitive to the tragedy up in Kent State but it's also to show life goes on and that all campuses aren't set up to what happened at Kent State, so we continued that and I really do not remember any back lash or any protests. I think myself, we needed a distraction because some brothers and sisters family, went to Kent State and so there's.

CW: Connections.

RR: And cousins and so forth, and we felt that to proceed, and of course I'm sure there was criticism and I can understand that, but we decided as a group let's move forward and continue life on this campus, to not let the campus turn into turmoil but there's other things going on, be sensitive to the tragedy, but life goes on and we felt that was such a perfect timing to continue it right after

CW: Sure.

RR: It's like May 4th I believe, that may have been the tragedy but May 4th of 1970 rings out. And so we continued that, and that was I think important. Maybe it was a distraction.

CW: And it was probably a good sort of release and you know for the students, talk about after 9/11 and next week in New York they had a big football game you know.

RR: Yes.

CW: And they weren't sure whether to have or not but it was a real opportunity for the community to come together.

RR: I remember that. Same situation, you're absolutely right.

CW: Kind of grieve together and you know be together, were you, do you remember when that happened, were you out on campus when you first heard about what had happened at Kent State.

RR: Well I think it was a Saturday or Sunday, so I heard about it before that.

CW: It was a weekend ok.

RR: And I did with a group of, a small group of sorority and fraternity brothers we just happened to visit Kent State campus that weekend before.

CW: Really.

RR: And we certainly didn't know at the time, but we sensed something strange about that campus, maybe because we never were there before, we just went there, why? Because some other friends decided to go to Kent State verses Wright State or UD or Miami or Ohio State, so we just wanted to go up there to see what it was like. And it was a strange sense, a feeling in the air that something just seemed amiss.

CW: Was it bubbling up a little bit?

RR: Yeah, and maybe it's over the years I've got to think that's what happened and isn't really, was the situation, but it was like the weekend before, if not the second, two weekends before. It was really close to that and so it really hit home for me because I had just seen that campus. I did not recall where all the National Guard and the students lined up and so I wasn't that familiar with the campus, but it was that close. So just like right after September 11th and continue the football games, we decided, as an intra-Greek council to continue what we were doing and not let that influence ourselves, because it was not only identity for us in the fraternities and the sororities, but I think it was an identity crisis that could be for Wright State, because of the Dow Chemical protests.

CW: I have seen a lot of pictures of Dow protests on campus, those seemed to almost be, the most documented anyways, of some of the student demonstrations that happened out here.

RR: Right, from Agent Orange or maybe napalm or whatever that was.

CW: And what form did these protests take, did people just kind of gather out on the quad?

RR: Yeah they did, it was very peaceful, there were signs, they probably chanted, I don't remember that, but there was no even thought of it turning violent at all. It was acceptance for somebody else's opinion, which was really a wonderful experience as we were maturing as young adults, we didn't know, there was no rules like we talked earlier, there were no traditions to follow, we were creating them at the time, and along with the protests of Vietnam, there was a lot of that back then, but it never turned anything besides acceptance for someone else's opinion, that's pretty cool.

CW: Just the opportunity to...

RR: And again Wright State provided the venue.

CW: It was always kind of about freedom of speech, freedom of expression, academic freedom seemed to be a very common themes.

RR: It was huge, and I took one of those academic freedom course, it was like movie studies, okay I can do that, because there was no A, B, C, Ds, it was pass or fail everybody gets an A and I thought I need to get on that coattail while I can before I graduate. But your right, academic freedom was a big thing, and there was professors that believed in that and they were expressing themselves and they were allowed to. And some students bought into it and some didn't, but that's the refreshing part of looking back now, it all started to emerge at that time.

CW: Well it was an interesting place, because it wasn't your typical college, you know? It was new, but you know the age of the students was a little older, the age of the faculty was younger than your typical university.

RR: Oh, they all looked old to me.

CW: Right, but I know when a lot of these guys came here they were in there mid to late 20's.

RR: Yeah, that was old you know, way back then.

CW: Oh yeah sure, when your 18, 19, 20, then you're an old man. But that kind of made for an interesting mix during the 60s to have a very young faculty and this brand new student body and then as things developed, what was the initial reaction here after Kent State, I have heard some different stories about that, mainly from the faculty and you know they have said a lot of what you've already said is that people kind of came together and were trying to, and were upset, but seemed to very deliberately kind of make the choice not to be sort of more pragmatic about it in their approach to it.

RR: My answer would be I was so involved in the Greek side of things that there's only so much you can do and being able to answer your question about what the discussions were between the faculty and staff, I don't know, we were, there was just so much going on.

CW: You were just much more involved in developing your fraternity.

RR: Yeah I had to be, and what was really nice, we got know, and I certainly did, Brage Golding, the first President of the university, that I feel very fortunate whenever I needed to talk to him about things, because I was in student government as well, that was always an open door policy, he was so welcoming, so open-minded, he would listen instead of insert himself, you know a lot of people ready to give an answer before the question is even finished. I think he did a lot to set the tone, I was certainly comfortable around him, not all students were, but I think most of them were, because it was really quite an open welcoming environment. I'm going to say he really has a lot of credit to establish back then as well, because he had a lot of balls being juggled.

CW: Yeah he had a hard job to do, definitely.

RR: Very much, and I highly respect the gentlemen.

CW: I think good university Presidents are always the ones really interested to know what the students think and what the students are thinking about and like you said to talk with them and listen to them instead of coming in with you know preconceived agendas about a discussion.

RR: Well I'll tell you a good example of what we are talking about, because a big thing at the time was coming up with the constitution, Student Constitution for Wright State. And it was to be voted on by the student population, and Dr. Golding was really concerned on if it would pass or not, and it was not unusual for him to get out of his office and go out in the quad or whatever and mingle with students, he was like "Brage" he wasn't like the suit and tie president. He had that ability to mingle, and ask questions, and get a sense of the pulse of the student, now in this large campus now probably no chance, but it was different because of the intimacy back then. But he was so concerned, he wouldn't just have people tell him, he would find out for himself that was pretty refreshing.

CW: He wouldn't just come out and say, you know, this is the way it is and you got to stop doing that or this.

RR: No he was a very good administrator, he organized you know I'm going to say staff real well. But he wouldn't hesitate to go out there among the student population and mix and be in a conversation. Something that I will always remember him telling me is, I try and talk with people not to people. Woah. And that to this day is something I use and that is a, to me is a very good rules of the road as you go through life and your personal and your professional life and maybe that's because of my undergraduate degree but when he said talking to versus talking with it just opened up the flood gates of understanding how interpersonal skills are so important and now it's all cell phone kind of thing and that's a testament to who I think Brage Golding was as a leader and I can't compare a lot of university presidents I can only talk about him and what influence he gave me and that's pretty remarkable, to this day I still carry that, that's a very good way, we're talking with each other, you're not talking to me and vice-versa. That really opens up a dialogue to get to know whether it's participative management or whatever. Whatever your supervisor with your CEO or whether you custodial, you're a person. I mean those kind of things, I'm going to say the selection of the staff had a lot to do with his kind of view of the world on what kind of faculty and staff that he wanted here to administer over. Now I could be wrong and looking through rose-colored glasses, but I think he sat a very high standard, it was achievable if he live what he talked, if you can tell I have a lot of admiration.

CW: Oh yeah, it's interesting to talk about him because there's a lot of different opinions about him.

RR: Oh, I'm sure.

CW: And a lot of the faculty, you know, didn't have a whole lot of nice things to say about him, but every one of them to a T said he was a very good administrator, and was probably the right guy at the right time for Wright State, but you also, you know, have to take into account, this was kind of the faculty's campus up until he arrived and you know, when he came administration came, you know...

RR: In strength.

CW: Yeah, it became more, you know, it wasn't, you know, this campus where the administrators were elsewhere. All the sudden it was Wright State University and we need to develop our own institution and you know, the chart of organization and vice-presidents and blah blah blah and all of that, but yes, I've always been kind of intrigued to hear about Brage, but you know I think he definitely was the right person for Wright State at the time.

RR: Well it worked for me.

CW: Did he come out when students were demonstrating, did he come out and engage.

RR: Oh yeah.

CW: Most pictures I see are a lot of people, people gathering around and there'd be like a microphone and people would have the opportunity to speak and that was kind of where one tradition that kind of developed was the speaker's corner out on the quad and to this day when some group wants to come out to campus and, you know, it's free speech, that's where you got to go there to do it and I think it all kind of developed from you know, from that period.

RR: Well I'll tell you a little snippet here. It was I'm going to say it was fall of '69 and there was student unrest, campus unrest all over the country and there was an organization that I don't recall, it may have not been SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, but a group called CORE. And they held a gathering in the auditorium of Oelman hall, and I don't, it seats 300 or 400. And so being in student government I was kind of curious because although I was conservative and they weren't my job was to listen and to understand the best I can. While being in the student government some people knew me and so I remember being out in the entryway or the lobby kind of looking in and checking on things, someone that was on stage noticed me and called me, asked me to come down and say whatever I had to say or they wanted to say to me whatever they wanted to say and that was a very intense moment and fortunately I had a little bit of public speaking classes here, thank goodness to choosing that, and I remember a spotlight on and I was pretty nervous and it was pretty tense in there and one of the students had a, like a two-three year old boy, that is you can't control kids that age, and I was up there and I was being asked a question, or I was responding to one and that little

boy in the upper, as you're looking up from the stage the entry way in the upper right side, he just started to play and jump down the stairs, you know making some noise. And I said oh here's the president now and they turned around a saw him and the noise and they all started to laugh and it broke the ice and suddenly the ability to have an open discussion instead of a one way, we hate this we hate that, it broke it. Now so I used Dr. Golding to an extent it just came out, it wasn't planned it just kind of happened but that then kind of changed that the energy and we had a much better understanding of what there issues were and another perspective and that I think is another example of the dynamics of the campus at that time. I have no idea what it's like now, then it was pretty good. Thanks to Dr. Golding I was able to name drop him in an "oh right" moment.

CW: Do you remember what CORE stood for?

RR: No I do not.

CW: You see that in a lot of the- it's funny when I was talking about faculty and students and how the faculty were very outspoken in some ways, you know, about academic freedom and that kind of thing, we have all these old alternative newspapers, campus newspapers, and we had a whole bunch of them, and we thought they were written by the students, but they were written by the faculty.

RR: Really, so that explains all that misspelling and bad grammar.

CW: Exactly, exactly, but one thing I also noticed in reading them, you know various of these alternative publications, they all talked about CORE and it sounded like just about every other group on campus was kind of a reaction to that, to CORE and a lot of groups coming and saying this doesn't really represent, you know, you're saying you represent the student body of this campus and we're here to say that's not true.

RR: Well I believe in one of the yearbooks, maybe the '69-'70 yearbook, I believe there's a photo of a group of the sign CORE and I thought it explained what CORE, the acronym, meant.

CW: Yeah, I'm just miss remembering right now it's the committee of something expression or,

RR: It was a fringe group.

CW: Or is it CODE.

RR: CODE, that's right it's CODE.

CW: Yeah, the Committee of

RR: Democratic Expression, or something like that.

CW: I think that might be right.

RR: Your absolutely right, CODE.

CW: Interesting. So in Greek Week this was like a mini Wright State Greek Olympics, you had discus.

RR: Yeah, we had discus, weightlifting, we had cross country, we had javelin, we had shotput, we had sprints, and you know what started it all off was the chariot races.

CW: Was that, I mean was chariot races, that was the crowning.

RR: What a kickoff.

CW: I mean that's wonderful, was that part of it right from the get go, the chariot race?

RR: The chronology of the events, is we started out, it went from a Saturday to a Saturday. The first Saturday was a toga party and we would the thinner sorority girls as batons that we passed off for relay races and we got to carry them between one point and another, and you had to drink some wine, and you pass them off and you go.

CW: And that was out here?

RR: No, no, no, no that wasn't on Wright State, I forget where, was somewhere North Dayton.

CW: Somewhere off campus?

RR: Somewhere off campus, and that started it out and then there was really nothing on Sunday and then it started out that Monday with the chariot race, I'm going to say it was late morning or early afternoon. And all the competing fraternities built their own chariot, and I'm going to say there was probably some kind of rules, but all the fraternity brothers had to be the horses, you know, they had to be the power behind it, and sometimes there was just a two-person, you know, four or six and so forth and we would have two races. One would be a sprint which started on I'll say the southwest corner of Allyn Hall and the moat and we would go around down Oelman and Fawcett and into this finish line near the entrance to Millet, that would be the sprint, and whatever chariots were still left after being destroyed, just think of Ben Hur, it was great. Then would be the relay which was the same start and stopping points, but we had to go a full loop around the Quadrangle and there were hundreds of students, non-Greek, that would be out there, it became kind of an event, what the heck's going on here? I'll sit and watch. You know we were all in the toga stuff and you know there's photos, of course you didn't wear togas if you were one of the chariot horses, but it was quite and appeal, quite an interesting thing observe. There was a lot of people.

CW: Did the faculty come out too?

RR: Oh yeah, I'm sure, and then throughout I think Monday afternoon through Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday I believe, is we had a series of organized different kinds of Olympic events for the sorority sisters and the fraternity brothers to compete against. And, well as I said the javelin, I'll say the bow and arrow, the cross country, the weightlifting, a lot of things, the relay races you see in the Olympics now, we tried to duplicate as much as we could considering it was all volunteers so things were limited and so there was a lot of places on campus, we kind of spread out among wherever there was cleared area to do these kind of events and you would keep track of it and it became from Monday to Tuesday, Tuesday to Wednesday, we published the current results and who was competing and what the events were. You know, like from 1:00 to 3:30 and so we would publicize that to the campus so any of those that would be interested in watching or maybe those interested in pledging and becoming a sorority sister or fraternity brother that was again a marketing way besides us competing against ourselves and having a lot of fun. Because we did have a lot of fun,

CW: Who were the judges?

RR: Well it was independent for the Olympics it was there were rules as far as, I don't remember how much independent, but you measure and somebody keeps track you know except for...

CW: Volunteer scorekeepers and...

RR: Yeah, that kind of thing and Cliff McPeak at the time, same as I mentioned earlier, was involved in a lot of the PE side of things. Volleyball was his specialty, I think he became the US volleyball coach for the Olympics for quite a few years.

CW: Cliff?

RR: Yeah, Cliff McPeak.

CW: Yeah, because I've heard his name as well I think he was involved with student affairs and probably it sounds like the Athletics part and recreation, campus rec.

RR: Particularly the Volleyball, like I said he became... so after that was we capped it all off with a Greek formal, it was a formal. It wasn't just wear your blue jeans it was tux and gown and all that.

CW: And this was again at some nice...

RR: Yeah nice country club, with all these, some of the archives I have we crowned a King and Queen or something like that and we had a court.

CW: Do you remember where? What club was that at?

RR: I want to say the Pine Club, but I could really be wrong on that, but it was a really nice nice place. And so earlier Chris you had mentioned one of the collection points and there was one down Colonel Glenn, and it was called, well it became Airway, Airway Inn, and it was just a little bar restaurant kind of thing and I remember after one late morning class on organic chemistry I think it was, it was a Dr. Kline I believe, he ended up spending the entire class time about the pros and cons, but really the nutritional value of beer versus milk. The class period, and so a bunch of us thought, you know we need to do some field research so we went down to that Airway Inn and all we can remember is the beer was nice and cold, I don't know how nutritional I felt afterwards.

CW: I'm not sure too many people were drinking milk.

RR: Yeah, no, no. But honestly he spent the entire, what, 15 minutes I guess it was at the time, in Oelman Hall in that little, that same place. Now why he did that I don't know, but that's a great memory I have of that, never did cut class, but that was really cool.

CW: Did you say that was biochemistry, is that what you said?

RR: Maybe it was, organic chemistry, yeah something like that. It's been a few beers in the past.

CW: Exactly.

RR: So I don't know whether instructors and professors do those kind of anymore, and that may be tied to kind of the academic freedom or kind of the emerging culture of Wright State at the time, I don't know maybe it's the normal thing, I don't know it was unique to us.

CW: There were fewer constraints and I think it also, you know, they were encouraged to try new and different things out here.

RR: Oh he tried.

CW: That's great, that's great. So it sounds like with the chariot races and Greek Week, was there any competitive recruiting for the best incoming athletes arriving on campus?

RR: Oh yeah, we had our own kind of network.

CW: Yeah, get a ringer for the chariot.

RR: Oh, no no, you had to be a, oh I see what you mean, I think mostly by that time, no. I think what we probably did was more during the fall football at first and then transcending into basketball.

CW: So the intramural were still kind of the big deal.

RR: Yeah we actually would steal, no reallocate, some players that were really good.

CW: There was some switching teams was going on.

RR: Yeah, but we would not tap into another fraternity, there was kind of an unwritten rule, but there were some really good intramural kind of team, there was a couple were good and we recruited and they became brothers and they stayed with Beta Phi Omega for whatever kind of intramural activities and we were pretty good, you know it was hard to beat us, whether it was fraternity versus fraternity or us versus other independent football, basketball... we were, no matter, we have a lot of these certificates showing that we actually were more than just talk about it right now, but we actually did that because we would get the certificates and somewhere and other fraternity brothers will probably be cycling their photocopies of those things to show off.

CW: I remember there was an old newsletter, I think it was called *The Athletic Supporter*.

RR: Imagine.

CW: And it was the newsletter of the intramural athletics here, and you pull it out and you know instantly this was a serious thing, this was a big deal.

RR: It was, like I said earlier we would bet a keg of beer, we played football or softball whoever won got the beer, of course we shared it but whoever lost had to provide it, and I think maybe and I could be wrong, maybe it was a half keg, probably, it would be right there on campus, right there in the back of a pickup truck.

CW: Down at the hill or just out in the parking lot.

RR: Out in the ball fields that were out there by the Student Center at the time and of course they were everywhere behind I guess the north side of Millett, there was the first soccer field and then it moved to the west side, I guess, of Oelman, so it did move around, we moved with it, you know a field that was kind of flat it worked.

CW: You would find a place that worked a little better, a little flatter

RR: So that was very competitive on all that too, it was a healthy competition, you know, we didn't mind whopping on anyone else for sure.

CW: That's neat, how did you go about recruiting for your fraternity.

RR: Well we did it through word of mouth, maybe some networking, word of mouth networking, we had pledge week along with everyone else where all the fraternities and sororities would set up a booth around the quadrangle and they would have whatever literature and the colors of their organization and the letters and pamphlets and meet and greet and whatever it could be to market for them. And of course in the fall, for us, it

would be rowing in the moat. We were the only one that was privileged to be able to row in the moat, there was no other fraternity or sorority, we were the first so we stayed that way.

CW: You were the only ones who...

RR: As far as I know, we were the only ones who did it.

CW: So it was just your frat, that's interesting, I didn't know if it was different frats together and they all had their own.

RR: No we kind of beat them to the punch, you know you snooze you lose and we didn't snooze a whole lot, we were really excited about what we were doing, we were excited about how we got to know each other and the initiatives we had. The finding of the things, whether it's parties or community events because the community support was one of the legs of Beta Phi Omega when it came to be existed, it was certainly the brotherhood, but it was also the University what we could do, but it was also community outreach because we can't just look in the mirror we have to reach out if we're going to be a viable organization we have to contribute more time than just ourselves. Why are we here because Wright State University, why is Wright State there because as students graduate and they have an impact on the community we wanted to be part of that as we were growing up and maturing to find out who we were as an individual let alone as an organization to do that, so we would be multi-purpose. But pledge week, and we would have one in beginning of winter trimester, I think that's what it was back then, it may have changed to quarters, but we would have a couple times a year.

CW: A couple pledge weeks?

RR: Yeah and then it would cap off with, I, it's not a week, pledge could be a couple months long and then there was hell week and hell night were they had to go through certain kinds of activities, just because they were pledges, you know to see if they could be tough enough, then it was fun, maybe not for the pledges but it was for the actives.

CW: It was you guys, right.

RR: Yeah and an example of it is...

CW: And that's what I wanted to get to, and I think it's funny that we talked about this before, oh no I didn't have to do it we were the ones who made it up, you know, and then got to sit back and watch them go through all the fun, that's, you know, but you went through all the turmoil and did all the hard work of developing the fraternity.

RR: Yeah the founding fathers, didn't have to do that at all. Yeah that's right eventually they accepted. Some of the things we would do.

CW: This is for the hell night?

RR: Hell week, okay recite the Greek alphabet, and they did it, but now recite it backwards. Between when you light a match and before the match burns your fingerprint, now that's pretty hard, so you would mess with people and it was so much fun. There was one time during hell week all the pledges had to wear burlap miniskirts, burlap. And they had to wear them to class if they're on campus they had to wear it and they had a little stuffed animal with a little notepad and pen and an active they would have to write what that particular pledge had to do and confirm that they did it and they had to carry that around with a cute little stuffed teddy bear and that kind of reduced the male ego a little bit, having to do that, but they had fun doing it to, at least that's what I understand and we had a lot of fun you know those were the kind of things and I don't know whether they're allowed anymore or not, I don't know, but it was allowable back then because again we were establishing things and nobody knew whether, what was kind of right or wrong and what the rules were.

CW: And nobody's getting hurt.

RR: No. We would have great pumpkin hunts in October, great pumpkin hunt were you go so far it's like a, I forget time and distance on sports car, you go from point A and you had to go so many miles to point B. And it would end up leading somewhere off campus where there would be a beer or a concoction of all kinds of juices and things in there in the pumpkins and it was a fun event because you had to find the pumpkin and it was all in a, everybody would finally get to the same place where it was some kind of bar or and there's a lot of literature on that with the different maps and so forth from when it occurred and that became, I think it's still one of our traditions, every Octobers is the great pumpkin hunt, still, to this day. Again it's one of those traditions you didn't know if it was tradition or whether it lasts more than one time or not.

CW: What was that, there was one other activity you told us about where you wrapped them up, wrapped students up or something.

RR: Salad bar.

CW: Salad bar, right.

RR: The salad bar, okay you want me to relive that okay. It was the fall, probably around October, something like that, of '68, and we had probably about 20 some-odd pledges and there was probably about 125, probably no more than that, current actives at the time. And we got them all together, right out between or near, well between Oelman and the Student Center. They were just bringing in ground moving equipment right then, so it was just the beginning of it, and we got them all together and tied them up and we had flour and rotten tomatoes and sour milk and garlic and salt and pepper and sugar and spoiled eggs, Thousand Island dressing or whatever, we called it the salad bar, you know bad old you know, bananas and lettuce, and we just piled it on top of them.

CW: You tied them up and then you just started letting them have it with this stuff.

RR: We just, I don't know 15, we had a great time and they were just you know, oh my god.

CW: They were horrified.

RR: And then we gave them like 30 minutes, you have 30 minutes you can do whatever you want to an active in 30 minutes and there would be a certain sound when 30 minutes was over and then we just scattered and what we didn't know or think of, because these were clever guys, they were already starting, cause the wrists were already slick with all this crap, of course they smelled like Dickens and most of the actives were captured and you could tell by the pain echoing off the walls around the quadrangle.

CW: So they were running into the buildings?

RR: Oh yeah, out of safety, I had one, a founding father and I just relived that again a couple days ago, that we were hiding behind a caterpillar or earthmoving piece of equipment and three of the pledges they were not happy, so one fraternity brother panicked and darted and two of them went after him and there was just one other guy and I and he knew I was there and he said, they had to call us mister, so Mister Roy. And the picture of the salad party is in existence if you have, because I had the camera and I thought oh I'm just so screwed here you know he is like ten feet away and he was really not happy, he was a tall really athletic and could run fast, and I'm short legged and I thought okay the camera with a flash so I stepped out away from the big wheels of this caterpillar and I was probably as far away just that close and I took that camera and I did the flash and I bolted towards Allyn Hall desperate to get in, because that's where security was at the time and I felt him, and I know he touched me, but somehow that adrenalin it was just pumping through me and I barely got into security when he almost got me and I was safe kind of thing, but it smelled so bad that the elevators, the underground tunnels that connected the buildings at the time, ten days, two weeks it was terrible.

CW: I'm sure the janitors loved it.

RR: Oh god, the rotten, let alone the pile of debris that was out there but to this day we laugh about it, we talk about, we just love each other, that's the fraternity. You know, a lot of those that were in there, the actives were at these events here and so we were able to talk about it a lot then, you don't know, but that camaraderie, those kind of things continue to build and when we have our every five year reunion it just kind of solidifies the togetherness we had on the small campus at the time and the opportunity of seeing each other all the time was just a perfect blend in time for being part of the Wright State becoming a university as well.

CW: You guys get together every five years you said?

RR: Every five years.

CW: Here, out here?

RR: Out here.

CW: How many were in your first class?

RR: Pledge class?

CW: How big were you in that first?

RR: In our highlight, all I can speak of is when I was part of it. Probably by the Spring, late Spring of 1970 right before I graduated from Wright State, there was probably fifty of us, it was pretty significant. Some have passed, some have moved on, but a good number of them were there at these events and that's the formal every five years, there's a lot that still live around here and they'll get together every couple of months and play golf together or just get together as families and picnics and cookouts and it's just not beer drinking and fraternity guys, it's now the families, the grandkids, they go bowling or golf or again for a picnic. They just get together it's still there, that mojo or that feeling is still there.

CW: Takes you guys two seconds to pick up where you left off.

RR: Yeah it's just like an hour ago it's just great, every five years it's the formal but in-between that people fly in just to visit and make sure the brothers get together, you can't say that I don't think for any other sororities or fraternities, a lot of them that were existent before, during, or after I graduated are no longer, they're just memories and so seeing all those banners in the student union and seeing Beta Phi Omega and knowing that's the one that has always been and everyone else are afterwards that's kind of a, it really strokes the ego just to be able to reflect back and see that.

CW: Sure, so these are, it's all class, all classes, these five year reunions. Who puts that, does the school organize that or is it totally through the Greek.

RR: No it's through the group, and it's the current president and somebody that volunteers from the alumni, we have a Beta Phi Omega Alumni Association and there is somebody there that will volunteer and step forward to organize, and those are tough, as you probably know for a volunteer that takes a lot of work and usually a lot of people don't appreciate the hard work it takes, but it happens. It happens. It is pretty much the same kind of blueprint.

CW: So it's your Alumni Association and they make sure somebodies lined up.

RR: Yeah, and so the involvement with Wright State, we always have something, an activity at Wright State, on campus, and this time around it was Thursday night it was a reception that we had at the Student Center. Because we can't, we will not do anything, at least as far as these official every five years, if Wright State isn't a part of it. And we, I

forget I think the ladies name is Holly Gersbacher, but I could be wrong, but they stay in contact with her.

CW: Yeah, she's with the alumni relations office.

RR: Yeah, five years ago we had the reception at Rockafield.

CW: The house down there.

RR: Yeah, this time we had it at the Student Center, and so somewhere along in these activities, usually it's the reception that starts off the reunion, is we have it a Wright State, because if it wasn't for Wright State we wouldn't exist, we would know each other. So marching towards the 51st year of Wright State and the fraternity there's that common denominator that I think we're very proud to be part of as well.

CW: Wonderful, do you have any other anecdotes, favorite memories from your time here.

RR: Yeah I will tell you one more, and this, going back the hell week when they had to wear the burlap miniskirts with the little teddy bear or whatever kind of stuffed animal. The pledge master at the time was former Marine, and this was like in February, okay, I'm going to say it was 1970. And the moat had a nice glaze of ice on it, and he decided to march all the pledges, about 30 of them, through the moat you know with a burlap mini-skirt and you know it was cold, and I was at, I don't know whether it was an interview or bowling somewhere in Beavercreek, I was bowling that afternoon and I got an announcement over the PA system, would Mr. Rich Roy please come to the counter. I heard it but I was like, no, and a minute or so later it was repeated would Mr. Rich Roy please come to the counter, you know where you get your shoes paid money and all that. And it was a little note to call Dr. Bruce Limes, the Dean of Students, right away, okay, well I called him and I found out just how unhappy, rightly so, Wright State was, because of we marched these kids in burlap mini-skirts across the frozen moat in February and now I would probably still be locked up a Leavenworth or something like that, I'm sure I would, but you got to take responsibility, yeah it was kind of obvious, yeah we did it.

CW: Maybe we crossed a line?

RR: Yeah, Beta Phi Omega, everybody knew the burlap mini-skirts and all of that, and again that was before really an understanding, no one was going to be hurt, they were just going to be cold. But that was before this term hazing, but now we couldn't get away with that.

CW: Yeah now there's standards and lines drawn and yeah, but before that it was a judgement call.

RR: Yeah, and we didn't know there was no definition of hazing, just knowing that the definition is an interpretation and so who would have thought that some idiots college guys would voluntarily, kind of, march through a frozen moat in early February and then get out

and enjoy every minute of it and go to classes. Who would have thought, those good old days Chris. And that's all I can think of, there's probably others, but you get the gist kind of of what it was like and I think that's what you were after on looking at the first three years of Beta Phi and how we were in alignment with Wright State, very proud not only to sit with you, but also very proud to be part of Wright State and part of the Beta Phi Omega fraternity without a question.

CW: That's great, well thank you very much for sitting with us today, we really appreciate it.

RR: And I will see you in five years.

CW: All right sounds good.

RR: All right, later.