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### David Buzzard interview (3) conducted on March 16, 1984 about the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University

David Buzzard

James St. Peter

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# WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

## School of Medicine Oral History Project

### INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Interview date: March 16, 1984

Interviewer: James St. Peter (JS)

Interviewee: David Buzzard (DB)  
Director of Communications, WSU School of Medicine  
Interview 3

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

[Beginning of recorded material]

**JS:** My name is James St. Peter, and this is a third in a series of interviews with Dr. David Buzzard, first Director of Communications of the Wright State School of Medicine. The date is 16 March 1984, the time is 2:00, and we are in one of the classrooms at the Eugene W. Kettering Center in downtown Dayton. Dr. Buzzard, what I'd like to do with you for this last interview is to simply throw out some names, and just give me your recollections or reminisces on each of the names that I give you.

**DB:** Okay.

**JS:** Let's start out with Regina Borum.

**DB:** Very good. Regina was Dr. Beljan's – I guess you would call it "administrative assistant." I'm not sure that that was exactly the title, but she functioned in an administrative [assistant's] capacity. Regina was – I think she had worked prior to that in one of the hospitals in the Dayton area. She would probably have been in that point in her mid-30s, as I was. She was, I thought, a very, very effective and very efficient person to work with with John Beljan. She was efficient because she did the job right. She was effective because she did the right job. And I won't go into a long dissertation on what I mean by that. But Regina could do the work she needed to get done through some of the people who reported to her. She was in charge of a secretary or two. And she became looked upon – she eventually was simply looked upon as, oh, kind of a traffic director around Dr. Beljan's office, and she seemed to interact and work very, very effectively with him. Again, that was my impression. Even after four or five years, I still [had] the feeling that she understood him very, very well and, you know, acted appropriately with him. She helped to protect him, as is the job of somebody in her role. She helped protect him from the literally

scores of people who wanted to see him day in and day out. So, she served as a buffer between him and the people coming to see him. But she was, I thought, a very capable person. Good worker, hard worker, loyal, dedicated, and all of those things.

**JS:** Why do you say she was effective because she was in the right job?

**DB:** I'm sorry?

**JS:** Why do you do you say she was effective because she was in the right job?

**DB:** Oh no, that's not what I said. I said she was efficient, which meant to me that she did the job right – whatever it was, she did it right. She was effective because she did the right job. In other words, she didn't waste her time doing things that were irrelevant or trivial or that didn't impinge on Dr. Beljan. She didn't spend a lot of time worrying about, for example, what was going on over in the Liberal Arts College, things over which she had no control, or which weren't impinging on Beljan's life. She did what was – you know, she was a good manager. That's what I mean by "being effective." She managed herself, her operation, she managed the people under her, and finally she managed the person above her, which to me is the essence of an effective manager. She managed Dr. Beljan as well as he managed her, okay? She anticipated his needs, his whims. This is kind of interesting. His whims, his moods. A person in Regina's position must be able to anticipate the boss's moods, his whims. And that's very useful to know, like in my position, I didn't want to spend time wasting time hitting him with proposals which I knew he would turn down. Or sending him information to read which I knew he didn't have time to read. So, Regina was a key person for me personally, because I would often go to Regina, let's say on a Sunday morning, and say to her, "How's the boss feeling this morning?" or "What's his mood this morning?" And she would tell me, "Don't bother with him this morning. He's really grouchy," or "I wouldn't recommend that you see him within the next week because he's got so many meetings lined up." Things like that. And that would save me a lot of time because I wouldn't send him stuff which would get summarily rejected. And then when the time was right she'd say, "Now would be the time to go in and see him about that," and I would hustle my buns in there and usually get the response I wanted. So that's why I say she was effective, because she understood him and she also understood the people coming to see him.

**JS:** How long was she with the School of Medicine?

**DB:** Well, she and I were there – let's see, I think she had been there a few months before I arrived, and she and I left there then at about the same time in 1980 or '81, whatever the year was. So she was there almost exactly the same time I was, slightly longer.

**JS:** What about Dr. Sam Zappala?

**DB:** Uh, Tony Zappala was actually the guy's name. Dr. Zappala was a character, one of the first people I ever met, I think I told you several hours ago. One of the first people I ever met when I came to Wright State Medical School. He was from Brazil, spoke with an accent. Dr. Zappala had an M.D. and a Ph.D. He was a physician as well as an anatomist, so he had a Ph.D. in anatomy. He seemed very excitable. Perhaps we as non-Latins see people with Latin

temperaments as excitable, perhaps given to emotional outbursts, and he was a little bit that way, I think. He would get sort of wound up in the language and get off on – and seemed to babble, to us. It was probably just, perhaps, speaking a second language, in this case English, for him. But he seemed to be a very capable anatomist and teacher. I really – I assume that he was at least, the students seemed to like him all right. He seemed to run a good Anatomy Department. Why he left Wright State I honestly don't know. I never talked with him about that. But he was just an interesting, flamboyant, colorful character who wore unusual clothes and big funny striped neckties and things, and uh...

**JS:** Dr. Edward Spanier.

**DB:** It's interesting that we would have Zappala first and then Spanier, because really they're kind of contrasts when you – in terms of their emotional makeup. As I said, Dr. Zappala was kind of a flamboyant, let-it-all-hang-out type, perhaps overly emotional. Spanier, on the other hand, was and is a very analytical person. To me, he was one of the key people to help not only create the Medical School, but also to keep it together, [who] was sort of always there when you needed someone to turn to with a question. Ed Spanier would either help you find – he'd either give you the answer or help you find it. He's a very, very analytical type of guy, [a] very good problem solver. I always got along well with Ed. A lot of people don't seem to like him because he's the kind of guy who asks questions, and if he doesn't get the answer he wants, he'll ask another one, and he'll keep asking and asking and asking. And I value that in him, because to me that's simply the way you get a problem solved, and that's how you find out what a problem is, is by asking the questions over and over. I always liked Ed Spanier. I think he was a very, very good person to do budget tracking and to work with John Beljan, because Spanier is a very gutsy kind of guy, and Spanier was not afraid to say to Dr. Beljan, "Look, John, you know, think twice about that before you do it," or "I don't agree with what you're gonna do here. I think you ought to look at another approach." He was one of the few people, I think, in the early days of the Medical School who were willing to sort of challenge Beljan. And usually, I would hope, and I think it's true, that Beljan respected that, even though at times I'm sure he found it very irritating. I think in the end, when push came to shove, Beljan would turn to Spanier as sort of a calm, steady influence. You know, when everybody else was losing his or her heads, why, there was Spanier with his well screwed on and ready to get on with the job and to do it well. I have a lot of respect for Ed Spanier.

**JS:** Dr. Samuel Kolmen.

**DB:** Sam Kolmen was – ah, gee – sort of the eternal devil's advocate. Say to Sam that this is Friday and he would say, "Eh, it's probably Thursday actually, if you just look at it a different way." That was – and he was, again, he was a delightful person. Having that ability to really throw the monkey wrench into things, like in meetings and things when everybody would be, perhaps, headed in the same direction, about to come to some agreement, then Sam would come in with some sort of off the wall objection or comment. Usually, he was wise enough not to press it and become a total nuisance. He would just, you know, raise his objections and let 'em be known. He was one of the few people, I think, actually in the Executive Committee meetings that I can recall who would actually vote nay occasionally on something. And that was pretty rare. For the most part, the people in the Executive Committees pretty well went along with, you

know, whatever the issues were, but occasionally Kolmen would object and vote his conscience on issues. I found him to be very forthright. Again, I can't judge his scientific ability or his teaching ability. He seemed to me to be a good administrator, and that, again, is a rare commodity in academe, I think. He was, let's see, a physiologist, I believe, by training. But he seemed to me to be a very capable administrator.

**JS:** Dr. Robert Suriano.

**DB:** Dr. Suriano was and still is the Associate Dean for Admissions in the Medical School, and he came – he was here when I arrived. He, as I recall, had come down from Toledo Medical College. I found him to be a warm, genuinely concerned kind of guy who was probably the best possible sort of Dean of Admissions for a medical college, or for any other college for that matter, because he genuinely worked his tail off for those students. And he [is] one of those characters who always – no matter how bad things are, you can always get a laugh out of him or a chuckle. And again, it was nice in the early days of the Medical School when there were times that people were overworked, they were tired, they were stressed, and you just wanted to cry or go home, and you could always know that if you went by Suriano's office, he would at least tell you a joke or listen to one of your jokes and laugh with you. So, he was a warm, friendly kind of person. I think in his own right he was very strong, because as Dean of Admissions in a medical school you have to be strong, because you get a lot of people trying to buy your favor or to curry your favor to admit their children or friends of friends or something like that, or their wives or husbands even, into their medical school. So, a dean of admissions has a really kind of special burden that's put on him or her. And Suriano seemed to handle that very well. He understood all – he anticipated all of the kinds of things that people would try to do to him at cocktail parties to, you know, to win his favor, and yet as far as I know, he never ever succumbed to any of their, uh...

**JS:** Blandishments.

**DB:** Blandishments! I couldn't think of the word. Blandishments or any of their perhaps initiatives to win his favor. So, I liked him a great deal. Nice, warm man.

**JS:** Dr. Manny Cowder.

**DB:** Dr. Cowder was at that point Chairman of the Pediatrics Department, but he had a second and probably to him more important job as President of Children's Medical Center here in Dayton. Dr. Cowder was, I think, John Beljan's equal. One of the few people around who really was, I think, an equal in terms of his native intelligence. An equal in terms of his leadership ability to Beljan. Beljan couldn't manipulate, in either a positive or negative sense – he couldn't manipulate, I think, Manny Cowder as well as he could some of the other chairmen who didn't have perhaps the same administrative and managerial skills that Cowder would have. Cowder could smell out any efforts on the part of the Dean or anybody else, for that matter, to take advantage of him, or of his hospital, or of his department. And he could be very, very strong and very, well, strong, in resisting any – what he would perceive to be any efforts to co-opt his organization or himself. Strangely enough, when he left the Chairmanship of the Pediatrics Department – it must have been about 1980 – he finally just realized that he couldn't wear two

hats. It was just too much of a time commitment on his part, and he was getting really stressed with it. And he decided to give up the chairmanship and focus his fulltime attention on being, again, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Medical Center. He invited me over to interview for a position as his Communications Director. He was also gonna make me his Strategic Planning Director along with Communications to kind of sweeten the pot. In the end, I didn't accept that position, obviously, for one major reason. I didn't like the place where the hospital was located. Cowder was a fine guy, and I think he would have been a good man to work with. Probably just as much fun, I suspect, working with him as I had with Beljan. I simply didn't like the place where it was located. Secondly, and I know this is off the subject, but I walked into the hospital one day. He invited me over several times for interviews, and I would go each time, but each time that I went, I got a little less excited about the possibility of having to go there every day and work. Because I really began to feel so sorry for the kids that I would see over there with – many of them with cancer, for example, and they would have no hair. And I got to thinking, "God, I don't know if I can stand this, day in and day out for the rest of my life, to work in a place like this." Cowder himself, as I recall, was what's known as a pediatric oncologist. That's, in other words, a guy who treats children's cancer. And again, I think that he was probably a very fine physician. I don't know that. I would assume that. He certainly had the tickets. He had lots of training. He had done a lot of publications. He's now out in the West, somewhere in California or somewhere out there. I'm not sure what he's doing these days.

**JS:** Let's go to Dr. Robert Jewett.

**DB:** Robert Jewett. Dr. Jewett was Senior Associate Dean, came here from Tennessee. He was the dean of a newly developing medical college in Tennessee. Dr. Beljan, I think, wanted him here because he – Beljan – needed someone in a senior role, senior administrative role, who could take care of a lot of the administrative details, particularly involving faculty development and faculty affairs. And Jewett was seen as a guy who could do that, and I think he did that very well. He was not – uh, let's see, how do I put this? Jewett was not interested in the limelight. He was perfectly willing, I believe, to work as a senior associate dean, simply helping Dr. Beljan to develop a new medical school. Jewett was not after any personal aggrandizement. And I think that that's probably one of the things that endeared him to Beljan, because my impression would be that if Beljan had had any real stars, in the sense of people who had to have a lot of attention, in his deanship, he probably would have been a bit uncomfortable with them. Because I think that he realized the fact that he needed to be the person seen as leading the charge for this new medical school, and he was the guy that was in charge of getting out into the community and carrying the banner for the Medical School. I don't think he would have been all that happy if any of his other deans had done that. That's just an impression I have, you know?

**JS:** Donald Haggerty.

**DB:** Don Haggerty was at that point – let's see. Going back to '75, actually, when I first came to Wright State, Don Haggerty was still at the University of Detroit. His predecessor was a guy named Russ Strong, and when I came into the School of Medicine, Strong was the university's communications director. And then Strong lasted, I think, all of three or four months after I got here, and then he – I don't know if he was dismissed, fired, whether he chose to leave. I really don't know what the situation was, but he was only here a couple of months. And then Don

Haggerty was the man who came down from Detroit, from the university up there, and assumed the position of Director of University Communications. I worked with Don on a few projects. Found him to be the sort of person who kinda wanted to get a lot of credit for stuff without doing a whole hell of a lot of work to earn it. Didn't really have a good relationship with him, but by the same token, didn't have a bad relationship. Just sorta worked with him. Realized that he probably wouldn't last too long in his position, and sure enough he didn't. He was there, I think, a grand total of maybe two years. And then he was replaced, I think, by the current Director of University Communications, Larry Kinnear. I don't know if Larry's on your list or not, but if he is, why, let's go ahead and—

**JS:** Okay.

**DB:** —just do him next also, because Larry is currently the Director of University Communications. I've found him to be a very fine guy to work with. He's got a fair — he's got an awfully good staff. And he himself is a former newspaper man who came to the university, as I said, to work as the Assistant Director under Don Haggerty, and when Haggerty left, Larry quite logically and naturally assumed the position of Director. But Larry's a good man. He's been responsible for bringing a lot of good publicity, I think, and public relations attention to the university. I think that he is one of the people who has helped to bring attention to the Petrosky projects and those sorts of things. So, Larry's a good man. Next?

**JS:** Ray Palmer.

**DB:** Ray Palmer was the Medical Librarian at the School of Medicine when I first came there. Ray had previously been at the Countway Library up at Harvard. Ray, to be very frank about it, was a pain in the ass. And yet, if there's such a thing as a positive pain in the ass, Ray was a positive pain in the ass because he, I believe, was an excellent librarian. He was a darn good developer of a library, too, because you gotta remember, when he came here there was nothing, and Ray put it all together. He developed the library. As I recall, at one point, his library consisted of a few bookshelves over in the Montgomery County Public Library. I may have misplaced the library by one or two buildings there, but it was somewhere like that, you know, in a basement [where] they sorta said, "Yeah, you can have a little space in here." Ray Palmer went in there and, you know, began to develop that library, eventually had that library, of course, in the university, in the Medical School, put together. Did a nice job, I think, of developing it. Ray was also very effective, I believe, as a cultivator of benefactors. By that I mean he was a very good guy to do the fundraising or the public relations necessary to get people like Mrs. Pruett interested and involved and willing to contribute to the development of the Medical Library. Now let me go back and tell you why I think Ray was a pain in the butt. Because he was very aggressive. He was very eager to get on with things, and sometimes some of the people in his staff were not quite as up to speed as he was, so I think he made himself a nuisance to a lot of his staff members. Maybe it was inevitable. I used to find Beljan to be a pain in the ass sometimes, because he was so far ahead of everybody else, in terms of his brains and his eagerness to get on with things, that he could be a nuisance to people. I think Ray, in some ways, was that way. He was out there, you know, ten yards ahead of his interference sometimes, and he expected them to catch up.

**JS:** Do you feel he was operating at the same speed that Dr. Beljan was?

**DB:** Uh, he had many of the same kind of tendencies. He was very, very, very determined to get and to have things his way. He was not inclined to do a lot of compromising about things. Now, he and I, you know, got along perfectly, because, you know, I'm sort of that way myself, to be honest, I guess. I don't know if I'll appear on other people's lists. I guess I will. But commenting on myself, I guess, those of us who functioned best in the early days of the Medical School may very well have had a lot of similar tendencies. Maybe it's necessary that you step on a few feet, that you be aggressive, be headstrong even. Because, you know, why bother to compromise about things that you've already done in the past and you know what works and you say, "You know, let's go with it. Let's not screw around and negotiate and compromise these things until they're running out our ears," because all you do is end up with three options, and then you just frustrate yourself. So, if you're in charge, sometimes you do have to just say, "Right, this is how it's gonna be." That was the way Palmer was. Ray would say to his folks, you know, "This is how it's going to be," and there were no two ways about it. You could either do it Ray's way or go somewhere else and do it, I think. But a very witty, delightful kind of guy. I mean, I liked him a lot, even though he was a pain in the ass. [LAUGHS]

**JS:** Dr. Sam Sava.

**DB:** Sam Sava was not a part of the Medical School. Sava was the Vice President of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation here in Dayton at that point. Sava had been on the original citizens' committee that interviewed all of the candidates for the deanship. I knew Sam Sava because I worked with him at the Kettering Foundation before I went to the Medical School. Sava was a very wise, very astute, political kind of guy. Good educator also. He'd come to Dayton originally from Washington. Strangely enough, after he left Dayton he went to Michigan, to the Mott Foundation, left the Mott Foundation, and is now back in Washington. So, he's come full circle. He's now with the Association of School Principals, I believe. Sava, though, was a very wise, perceptive guy. When I went back to the Foundation the day I took the job with Wright State, I went back and I said to Sam, "I'm sorry, I'm gonna have to be leaving here in a few months. I'm going to work for a thing called the Wright State Medical School." And he said, "Who are you gonna be working with there?" And I said, "John Beljan." And he said, "Oh, God, you're a very lucky guy," he said, "because I interviewed John Beljan when I came here for the job." And he said, "as far as I was concerned, Beljan was by [far way] the outstanding candidate of all the ones we interviewed." He said, "In fact, when I saw Beljan walk into the room, heard him say a few words, I knew that, you know, the game was over. He had to be the choice because he was so good." Uh, but Sava himself was – like I said – was a very wise, capable, very astute, political kind of guy who I think did a very good job as the Vice President for Education at the Foundation. But as I say, his involvement with the Medical School was simply as a result of his being on that committee that helped select the dean.

**JS:** Frederick White.

**DB:** Frederick A. White was the first employee at Wright State University, at least that's what the President always told us. And I think it's probably close enough. Mr. White had been an executive, I think, with GM or NCR, one of those organizations around here. And in his mid-

fifties, let's say, he decided to change careers, and by golly, he went out and became the first Business Manager of Wright State University, which didn't even exist, I guess except on paper in those days. It may have had a bank account somewhere. But Fred White was the Business Manager. Eventually [he] rose to the position of Acting President of the University in 1972, I believe. He was the President – Acting President – for one year before Dr. Kegerreis was named full-time President in '73. Fred White was one of those charming, superb, intelligent kinds of people who, if you had to choose somebody to be your father other than your real father, you would choose Fred White. He had a very deep voice. He was very fatherly. He had a [shock] of white hair. He was a raconteur. He could tell stories until hell froze over and never repeat one of them. He was just a delightful guy. He was also very interested in medical education, and as you may or may not know, the Ambulatory Care Center on campus is named after Frederick A. White. Again, Fred White's involvement in 1975 was not all that great in the Medical School, because I believe at that point, he had just retired as Acting President or Vice President or something at the university. But I know he would sit with me and sit with Beljan and a few other people, for example, to help us choose these Directors of Development that we were trying to hire in those days. He was somewhat active as a committee member on search committees and things like that, helping to trying [sic] to get appropriate people into key positions in the Medical School. His own direct involvement, though, was not all that great, I believe, in those days, with the Medical School.

**DB:** Mrs. Fred Young, Joyce Young.

**JS:** Joyce? Oh yeah. Joyce Young was a woman who came to the Medical School – in I don't recall the exact year, but I suspect it was along about 1977, '78, '79, somewhere in there – as [a] Director of Development for the Medical School. She had previously been, I believe, working at one of the banks in town for a while. Prior to that, she had a long and distinguished career as sort of a civil – uh, not a civil rights activist – as an activist in the community. She was heavily involved in activities, voluntary kinds of activities. She, I think, did a very good job, because you gotta understand that her predecessors had been – her predecessors had left her with a very uneven history. The first Development Officer in the School of Medicine was a guy named Paul Harris. I don't know if you want to talk about that now, but let me just quickly spend a few minutes and say that Paul Harris was a man from California, Pepperdine University at Malibu. He was, I believe, a Vice President there. He was a lawyer and a development officer, and Beljan hired him back in 1975 to come to Wright State University to develop the funds, or to do the fundraising and development necessary for this Medical School in its infancy. Harris interviewed me, as a matter of fact, for the job when I took it, as Communications Director. He would come into town, oh, like every two weeks. He would fly in from the West Coast, spend maybe two or three days here, fly back to the West Coast. After about three or four months of that, one day, he sent – in fact, it was at Christmastime, 1975. He sent Beljan a little note saying that he, Paul Harris, had been considering it for the last couple of months. He just felt that at this point in his life, he would not choose to go on at Wright State University, so he was declining – even though he'd already signed the contract – he was gonna decline to come here on a full-time basis, and I believe he sent back all of his checks, unopened paychecks, which was a nice gesture. But what it did was leave us again with a void because we had assumed that we were gonna get literally one of the best development officers in the country to come here. So that put us back, you know, several months in our staff development. So the next thing Dr. Beljan hired – the next person,

rather, that he hired was a man named George Vangellow, spelled V-A-N-G-E-L-L-O-W. George Vangellow came to Dayton from Rochester, New York. I'm not actually sure what George had done in Rochester. I think he might have been with one of the hospitals up there. He came down to Dayton, though, by himself. He had a family of four children – three or four children, a wife, but he – and a home of course, in Rochester. He came to Dayton, but he never moved his family in here. Really never sort of took hold here, never kinda got rolling or developed anything that I'm aware of. And after about nine months, I think he became frustrated. He got angry at me, he got angry at Ruth [Hardin]. I think he was really just angry at the world because he was, I believe, unhappy here. He challenged me one day in Beljan's office and accused me of not having supported him properly and all of this stuff, and really sort of, I think, behaved very inappropriately. Beljan apparently felt the same way because Beljan, after listening to George for about ten minutes, said, "George, I believe really that the problem is yours, and you are the problem." And later that day, George went back into Dr. Beljan's office and handed in his resignation. So, here again, nine months down the tubes. So at this point, Joyce Young, then, was the person that was hired in. She was a very good person in that position because she knew the community so well. As I said, she's a community activist. She knew all of the movers and shakers in the community. She came in and she organized a couple of things, like the Academy of Medicine Ball over at the Dayton Art Institute. She organized that. I don't know how much fundraising she actually did, but she seemed to be heading in the right directions. And then, a couple of years later, she was hired away by [Metropolitan Insurance Company], and I don't know what's happened to her since then. And then her successor – just to finish the story – her successor was a man named Gavin Pitt. And Mr. Pitt is still in the university, working in the development office over in Allyn Hall. His title has changed somewhat. He's no longer called Director of Development for the Medical School. He's called the Associate Director – or Assistant Director – of University Development for Health Affairs, or something like that. It no longer has just the Medical School emphasis. I think he's tried to work with the Professional Psychology School and the School of Nursing to help with some development activities there as well. So you asked me how to – or you asked me what the time was, and I told you how to build a watch. I've given you four there for the price of one. How's [that]?

**JS:** Dr. Andrew Spiegel.

**DB:** Dr. Spiegel was the Provost of the University when the Medical School got started, now I'm talking about 1975. I didn't have any really close interactions with Andy Spiegel. I know Beljan reported to [Spiegel]. [Spiegel], though, I saw him enough and interacted with him just enough to realize that he was very brusque, very blunt. Really to be honest, I think brusque and blunt. I don't know what else I could say about Spiegel. Of course, we know eventually he was sort of moved out of the Provost job in the university by vote of the faculty, [when] they voted no confidence in him in 1977 or '78, somewhere along in there. I don't know, he just – he didn't seem to be eager to or willing to go along with the Dean of Medicine. He seemed to resist a lot of Beljan's efforts to do things. That was [an] impression that I had. But I think that – my impression was that Spiegel was probably that way with everybody in the university. It wasn't just the Dean of Medicine. He seemed to be the kind of administrator who probably caused himself as many problems as he solved, just because of his brusque, rather blunt attitude. He seemed to very honest, though, and that of course is often [the] trait of a brusque, blunt person. They are really just being honest, whereas a lot of people will be dishonest and seem to be

friendly and all of that and warm, when really, in point of fact, they aren't. So Spiegel seemed to be honest, but I don't think it got him any points with the faculty or with the people that reported to him. I think they just saw him as a blunt, brusque person who was difficult to deal with.

**JS:** [President] Robert Kegerreis.

**DB:** Dr. Kegerreis, I always felt, was a delightful, charming kind of guy. He used to ask me occasionally – he would ask me through Beljan – to do projects for him. Like, one year Dr. Kegerreis wanted to do something that would appear in the Sunday edition of the Dayton Daily News, so we're talking about a 125,000 newspapers, potentially reaching, let's say, double that number, so you might be talking about circulation – er, I mean, potential readership of a quarter of a million people. Kegerreis wanted to do something that could get out into the newspaper, a brochure, a pamphlet, a magazine, something like that, and I wrote that for him. Worked with his designers, his people. But again, he had checked it out with Beljan, [and] Beljan had said to me, "Go work with the President and do this for him." I found the President, though, to be just a delightful kind of person to work with. I never had any problems with him, but again, I was interacting with him simply as a subordinate, and I didn't report to the President. But he seemed to me – and I've since then seen the President in many situations, and I am absolutely convinced that he has no equal in terms of his wit, his wisdom, his ability to get his way. He is absolutely the greatest I've ever seen. The man is a survivor on top of that because, these days, in order to be the president of a university for ten or eleven or twelve years, or however long he's been the President, you've got to be doing something right. You may be doing a bunch of wrong things at the same time, but you've got to be doing a bunch of right things, because it's tough to survive in a presidency in the 1980s that long. So, I've got tremendous admiration for Dr. Kegerreis. He's always struck me as a super guy. But again, he's got to be strong, he's got to be perhaps even ruthless on occasions. I've never seen that, but I think that chief executives in any organization probably have to be somewhat ruthless, because there are times when they have to be.

**JS:** I want to go back to Dr. Kegerreis—

**DB:** Okay.

**JS:** —but let's go on now to Dr. John Beljan, the Dean of the Medical School.

**DB:** Yeah, okay. Dr. Beljan was, well, in some ways like Andy Spiegel. Brusque. Could be brusque, could be blunt. But was more capable of perhaps hiding some of characteristics or traits like that because he seemed to realize the value of trying to work with and get along with large groups of people. Beljan was an outstanding leader. I believe that on a day-to-day basis he was not a great manager. He was an excellent leader. He was very, very effective with large groups of people. He could get them pointed in a direction. He could motivate them. In terms of running a day-to-day operation, I'm not saying he couldn't do it. I just don't think he was as effective as a day-to-day manager of the Medical School as he was as a leader of the Medical School, and eventually a leader of an entire Health Division. That never ever got off the ground, so I really have no basis for saying that. I think, though, that Beljan is an effective leader, was an effective leader. He is a very good politician. One of the brightest, I mean in terms of IQ, perhaps the most brilliant person I've ever known. He was absolutely phenomenally well rounded. A lot of people,

particularly over in the rest of the University, did not realize how well-rounded John Beljan was. I went to his house once with a newspaper reporter in the middle of the night. We were going to have an interview. Just because – and I say “the middle of the night.” I don’t really mean that. I’m talking like ten o’clock at night, we’ll say. [We went] up to Beljan’s house. We sat down in his living room. We were sitting there talking. And the reporter, who was Diana [Kunde], was sitting there, and she looked up on the wall, and she said, “Gee, that’s a nice painting up there, Dr. Beljan. Who did that?” And he said, “I did.” [LAUGHS] And it was a seascape that he had painted when he lived in California. And I got to talking – I didn’t know that he was interested in art, so he and I got to talking the next day, and we were talking about Salvador Dalí. And I thought I’d try to show off a little bit, and I said, “You know, the one thing that I like of Dalí’s is that – oh, you know that painting with all those twisted tree stumps and the watches, melted watches hanging over – I don’t remember what it’s called.” And he says, “Oh that’s *Persistence of Memory*.” And he knew stuff like that. See, he was Phi Beta Kappa at Michigan as an undergraduate. Beljan was brilliant. The guy was just – he could write, I mean, he could type! He could do crap that most people would even think of doing. If he needed a letter in the middle of the night, he would go down to his typewriter and type it. Regina Borum used to say that if he ever wanted a job, she’d be delighted to hire him as her secretary. I mean, he could type as well as most secretaries. He was an editor. I mean, he would take my – sometimes I would write stuff for him, if he didn’t like it, you know, he would start to edit the hell out of it. And he knew all the proofreader symbols the same way as an editor or a newspaper person would. And I don’t know how a person learns as much as he knew. He had a phenomenal memory. He could remember people’s names, and he would always remember to say something when he was talking with them that would just blow their socks off. It might be some little detail from a memo three months later that he would remember and mention to them. And it was a way of ingratiating himself to people because they thought that he really, you know, cared about them. And he – maybe he did. I’m not saying he didn’t, but he also had a phenomenal memory. It was easier for him to say something about somebody or to recall some detail than it was for most people. It was almost like if [he had] a little computer chip in his brain there, he just [CLICKS TONGUE] could always [drudge] up all kinds of information. And again, now, I think that was a part of his brilliance, but it was a part of his effectiveness. Eventually, it may have been a part of his downfall, sadly enough. I think that there were times when Dr. Beljan was so far ahead in terms of his thinking, of his leadership, of his sense of direction. He was so far ahead of the average faculty person or the average administrator that he was not always very tolerant of other people’s ignorance. We wouldn’t call it ignorance. He might see it as ignorance. They were just average people, average administrators, average faculty. He was way ahead of them. And sometimes, I think his intolerance may have shown up with people, and he made them feel uncomfortable. I’ve had a lot of people over the years say that John Beljan made them feel uncomfortable. He never made me feel that way, not because I was as smart as he was – I guess maybe I was just stupid and didn’t really, you know, I didn’t care nor was I intimidated by the fact that he was the most brilliant person I’ve ever known. I simply accepted that, and he could either accept me or not accept me. And he accepted me. But he intimidated a lot of people because of his brilliance. You know, he was so many things, Jim. He was a pilot. He was a flight instructor, for example. He’d build his own television sets at home. If he knew the basement rec— or the basement, you know, refurbished as a record room, he went downstairs and would spend the time to do that on his own. He was just so willing and able to do what needed to be done. The final thing I wanted to say about Beljan was, what I consider to be his most

remarkable trait was his ability to deal with highly complex, abstract issues and within a space of seconds, nanoseconds, to shift gears and to deal with details. He could go from very complex issues right down to nitty-gritty things, and back up the scale the other direction, at the drop of a hat. And I've never known any – I mean, I've known lots of people who could do that, but you had to give them more time. He could do it, you know, in the space of just seconds. It was phenomenal, his ability to deal with so many things and so many levels of complexity very effectively and very well. And that, I thought, was – that was very impressive to me. I can't do that kind of thing. I've gotta have time to think about complex issues. But he could think through those things and at the same time be deciding – I mean, I'll give you an example. I went up to his house one Saturday morning, and I wanted to talk with him about the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. There were some complexities involved. I was writing some stuff for him. So he sat down, he sat back – reared back in his chair, and rattled off about – and he was always very good at going, “One, two, three, four,” you know, or, “A, B, C, D.” Typical academic kind of mind. He could rattle off almost in [an] outline fashion the points that he wanted to make, and then he said – just sort of off the cuff, he said, “By the way, the bottom line on that certificate that you did for us the other day is off to the left,” or off to the right or something, and he says, “Aesthetically, you ought to balance that and get that line...” It just blew my socks off, you know? Because he could just ramble on forever, at all levels of abstraction or of triviality, as the case may be.

**JS:** How would you characterize his relationship [to] Dr. Kegerreis in those developmental years?

**DB:** I think in the early years his relationship with Dr. Kegerreis was one of – uh, I don't know if “mutual admiration” would be the term for it. I think that the President was probably more tolerant of Dr. Beljan in the early days of the Medical School, because the President realized the need to sort of take a hands-off attitude, because the President, let's face it, was not a medical educator. The only medical component of the University at that point was the School of Nursing, so the President hadn't had a lot of experience dealing with health-related colleges or issues. So I think he was more than happy to have an aggressive, first-rate kind of guy like Beljan in the position. I think the President was willing to take a *laissez-faire* attitude as much as possible. Beljan's attitude toward the President? You know, he never actually said, or at least he never said to me, what he thought about President Kegerreis in those days. I've got to assume, though, from what I've observed that he felt that the President was a good president. I think he also felt that he was gonna be President someday, to be very honest with you, and I think that he felt that he needed to work with the President, to make himself, perhaps, agreeable. Not agreeable, that's the wrong word. He needed to be seen by the President as somebody who would be a good successor, if and when the President ever decided to retire or resign or whatever. And I think that he, Beljan, played the game pretty well in the first four or five years of the Medical School, and then he had a lot of ambition, though, and he couldn't be contained or content just as Dean of the Medical School. That wasn't enough for him because he's a builder and a developer, and once he had that Medical School up and running, once that first class had graduated, I think he lost interest in the whole enterprise. Because it was, you know, it was done. He was not the kind of person who liked to maintain things, so it wasn't for him any longer. So the Vice Presidency for Health Affairs, then, was something that attracted him. And I think that that would have been a good thing for him to have stayed in for a few years. As it turned out, he was only in that

position for maybe a year or so actively, and then [he] became the Provost, and everything just seemed to happen awfully quickly. And I'm not sure that Beljan really thought all of that through very well. I think he really was very eager to climb the ladder then as quickly as possible, and perhaps threaten – I don't know, I'm guessing – threaten the President. And if the President were threatened, I can certainly understand why he was.

**JS:** The School of Medicine was developed in record time, by anybody's [standards].

**DB:** Yeah, right.

**JS:** Do you feel he was [the] major reason for that?

**DB:** Yeah, I feel that – again, I'm not saying that nobody else could have done it as quickly. I feel that, though, given Beljan's personality and his dynamic, aggressive approach to anything that he took on, that he's got to be considered the key element in that rapid, record-breaking kind of growth. I think that most people in that position – to use an example, any of the other deans or faculty members who he brought in. I don't [see] in them the ability to put it together that quickly. There were a lot of very capable, talented people. They simply, I think, did not have the drive, nor were they as effective as leaders, and leadership was the key. It was not – again, it was not managerial skill. It was not his brilliance as an educator, his skills as a surgeon, or any of those things, I think, although those things may have contributed to this thing that I call leadership. It was simply his ability to lead and to get everybody excited about the whole damn thing. I mean, you know, he could have you convinced that this Medical School was gonna be the greatest in the country. And it may be someday. I don't know. But I know the first time I ever interviewed with him, you know, I said something – some stupid comment, like, "What's this gonna be like here in five or ten years?" And he kind of looked at me like, you know, "You turkey, how could you ask such a dumb question?" You know. And he said, "This is gonna be one of the first-rate medical schools within ten years. And you think back on that, and I think if he had stayed in the deanship, maybe it wouldn't have been one of the best schools in the country in ten years, but it's a respectable school. After all, we are turning out physicians who are going out now and doing their internships and their residencies, and they're practicing physicians in this community who are [graduates] of that school. And that's rather phenomenal when you realize that that darn school didn't admit its first student until 1976. That's only eight years ago, and already there are people out practicing medicine as a result of it. So, I'd say Beljan's leadership was the key factor in the whole thing.

**JS:** Here comes the toughest question in our three interviews. If you had to describe the role of Dr. David Buzzard to someone else, how would you describe his efforts [in the] development of the Medical School?

**DB:** Um, let me be somewhat facetious and say that there's the old story about the people – when Sir Christopher Wren was developing St. Paul's Cathedral in London. And there's a story about this American tourist, and he's standing there on the side of the building. He was watching it go up, and he stopped one of the fellas who was working and he said, "Pardon me, what are you doing here?" And he said, "Well, I'm just carrying these bricks, you know, around the corner here, and that's all I do day in and day out. I pick up bricks and carry them around." So

then, the American stopped another fella and he said, “Well, what are you doing here?” And the guy said, “Well, I’m the hod-carrier, and I have to carry all this heavy hod up and down these ladders here day in and day out, and I don’t care much for this job.” So, the American finally stops a third man, and he says to him, “Pardon me, sir. What are you doing here?” And this worker says, “Well, sir, I am helping Sir Christopher Wren to build a cathedral.” Now, I guess that if anybody were to ask me what was Dave Buzzard’s role in this, I would like to think that I was helping Dr. John Beljan build a Medical School. I was not a hod-carrier. I didn’t carry bricks. I did [the] details, certainly. There were lots of details that I was responsible for. There were lots of details that I’ve told you that John Beljan was more than happy to deal with. So, we did deal with lots of details. We did carry bricks. We did carry hod, figuratively speaking. [We] did a lot of things, and I’d like to think that my role there was one of helping John Beljan build a Medical School, one that really is a nice medical school. We’ve got super people, still super people out there. Good students. And my role was simply to get that thing get rolling. I won’t deny that there was a lot of ego involvement in it. I felt good about being part of that Medical School. Because let’s [face it], at that point, Jim, there were only about a hundred and twelve medical schools in this entire country. And there is a very heady feeling about being a part of something that is that exclusive. In Ohio, at that point, I think we had six medical schools. I think we still only have six. We probably don’t have more than six. So really, it was probably one of the last efforts in this state to create a medical school, and when you look back on that, that’s rather heady stuff. There was a lot of ego involvement in it. There was a lot of personal pleasure. But again, you sort of have to recognize that we were just a lot of individuals working, I think, toward one goal, and that was to build a Medical School, and John Beljan was the leader.

**JS:** Well, these three interviews have been extremely informative and a lot of fun for me, and [I’d] like to thank you very much for taking the time to sit down and talk to us.

**DB:** Oh, my pleasure. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it. It’s been a good opportunity to reflect back and to think about some things that I haven’t thought of in a long time. And I hope I’ve been useful to you and helpful, and I would like to listen to this sometime, maybe twenty-five years from now.

**JS:** Well, I don’t know if I’ll be around that long, but I’m sure that the tapes will—

**DB:** [INTERRUPTING] The tapes will, right? [LAUGHTER]

**JS:** Thank you.

**DB:** You bet.

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