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Dr. Robert T. Conley interview (3) conducted on April 19, 1985 about the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University

Robert T. Conley

James St. Peter

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Medicine Oral History Project

Interview date: April 19, 1985

Interviewer: James St. Peter (JS)

Interviewee: Robert Conley (RC), Former Dean of Science & Engineering, and former Vice President for Health Affairs Planning, Wright State University

JS: My name is James St. Peter, and this is the third in a series of interviews with Dr. Robert Conley, former Dean of Science and Engineering, and former Vice President for Health Affairs Planning at Wright State University. The date is April 19th 1985, the time is 2:00pm, and Dr. Conley and I are in Suite 1010 of the Provident Bank Building in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dr. Conley, in our last interview we left off with your just being appointed to the position of Vice President for Health Affairs Planning, why did you move from the Dean of Science and Engineering to the Vice Presidency.

RC: That's a good question, I'm going to waste your tape while I think about it. Fundamentally, we had worked for the period of time from 1969 when the project started, that project had run out of the, really the office of the Dean of Science and Engineering and we had reached a point where there was a need to spend a lot more time in getting the school off the ground, in other words, we had, we had gotten the legislature approval, we had gotten all those things that had to be done at that stage, and then it became how where we going to get the funding for the school. We had the Veteran's Administration stuff we had been working on for some time, and that had to be finalized, the application had to be written, we had to select the Dean, we had to have all that kind of stuff going on. When I moved, I moved in... as the Vice President for, I guess it was for planning for health affairs or some ridiculous title of that type, and moved away from the college, simply because I knew at that point we were not going to be able to handle both adequately and somebody was going to get hurt in the process. So, since we had gone through all the work to do the politics and to do all the detail work for so long that it just had, somebody had to do that, so that's the way it came about. It was the only Vice President, probably, Wright State ever created by a legislative act, I mean somebody had to take that job and continue it on, and I guess most logically that fell into my bailiwick because, I was probably at that time the most versed about the, about what we had done and what was done and everything else in respect to development of the school. So I moved over into the central administration at that point.

JS: Did your responsibilities as Vice President for Health Affairs Planning differ very much from what you had already been doing?

RC: Well with respect to the medical school, no. With respect to the College of Science and Engineering, yes. I mean I just, you know, left the college basically at that point and that was probably fine, I think I was in that deanship for five years and that was probably a good time to

make the move, although I think one or two more years I would have been more satisfied had I stayed in retrospectively, not at the time. As far as the medical school was concerned, not really, not really. The stuff that we were doing was just a continuation at that point, at least I thought it was, I didn't really see any change in responsibility.

JS: When did you make the move from being Dean to being the Vice President, was there a formal transition?

RC: No, I moved into the office, which has now been reconfigured and is occupied by the Vice President for Student Affairs, the only thing we did was go out and get some furniture to furnish the office and that was the transition, there wasn't anything formal about it, it was just sort of business as usual except you transferred your files from one organization to the other. I brought over my secretary and so forth as I came across, so we had the same group together. I still had Ed Spangler, still had, he was still back in the office at Science and Engineering at that time, for a period anyway until John came on board. We also knew at that time that, the way I looked at the position, it was a short term position, it was not a position that was going to last for very long, it was not a position that was going to be there in perpetuity. I don't think a lot of other people looked at it from the same perspective as I did. I knew I was going to leave the position, I knew that the minute the Dean came on board, I knew that the relationship between the Dean and the upper administration had to change and therefore I knew that at some point and time that position was going to be wiped out.

In other words it was going to be in there until we were able to select John Beljan, get the adequate funding for the school, we started the planning for building, you know all of that was beginning to go on at that point in time, we knew where we were going to be headed, so we went ahead with the total sort of package. Now I moved again, a couple years later into planning and development, which was a natural thing because that didn't change a lot for the responsibilities very much either, because at that point of course the major funding effort was directed towards the medical school but then of course John reported directly to Bob Kegerreis at that point and really he was doing what would be the VP for health affairs in a traditional setting. So we had, we put a real map out of the flow and ebb of what was going to happen, you knew where the thing was gonna go, it was successful, and you knew exactly what the transfer was gonna be of the relationship between myself and the other people within the administration, I mean it was quite clear I was in an interim planning capacity for the medical school and that was gonna be a finalized thing within a very short period of time.

JS: Was there any delegation of responsibilities for the school of nursing, the college of nursing, or was there any planning done for a professional school of psychology at that point?

RC: There was discussions going on with Dr. Fox, then he was at Ohio State, and there were discussions going on between he and people within the administration including at that time, myself, Andy Spiegel, I think Ed was involved in some of those, and we were talking about the school of Professional Psychology, of course the nursing school that was moving along very well they had selected the preliminary dean, who left the institution and then, who was the second one that came in, was on her way in the door?

JS: Dean Maloney?

RC: No, Gird Torres. So we were going through the beginnings of the development of the nursing school before, and I had of course left the University before the real conflict started between the institution and the Dean. We had talked a lot about the relationship between nursing and medicine and some of the problems we were trying to head off, because we knew there was going to be some conflict there in reporting authority. And we were trying at the time, I don't think I was every successful, this was of course well after John Beljan came on board, that I was trying to avoid the formalization of a Vice President of Health Affairs at the Institution.

JS: Why?

RC: Well because in every case I had looked at in the planning of the medical school, and every campus I had visited, you always got an undercurrent in your interviews, you always got an undercurrent of a strife between the nursing professionals and the medical professionals on the same campus. And it always focused in that the Vice President for Health Affairs was always and MD and the profession at that time was an emerge profession from the hospital based nursing schools to the campus, and what they were really trying to establish was the professionalization of nursing and that strife existed on traditional campuses and the longer that you could avoid courting that strife with two new schools being developed simultaneously, the better off we felt we would be, so we tried to delay, probably the inevitable, but we tried to delay it for a period of time. But there was a number of planning things going on, we knew that we eventually would have to deal with professional programs because we were working on environmental health, we were working on bio-medical engineering, we were working on all those kind of things that were potentially going to infringe upon health and medicine and we wanted to be sure that when they were developed they would be developed in a solid way and we would avoid some of the conflicts you would have in a traditional situation. And that went back to a basic philosophy we had early on, we felt we were somewhat, I better say we felt we were somewhat egotistical, because we were a new school, because we had the elements of some flexibility and freedoms, we felt we could do it better so we were going to do some experimentation. I'm not sure that's every worked out, but you know idealistically you go through that stage of your career were you do that, well that's some of kinds of discussion we were carrying out while I was the Vice President for Health Planning. I don't know, I haven't really kept track of how those things worked out, I assume they went well.

JS: How did the move to Vice President affect your lobbying efforts?

RC: It strengthened my hand, insofar as the ability to carry a little more clout, one of the things we felt, at least I felt at the time that was difficult was to really represent Wright State, I could represent Wright State in the locale with the Clara Weisenborn and people of that type, because they knew the inner structures of what we were doing with the institution, they knew Wright State well. Were we felt weakened, at least I felt weakened was in the medical school hearings as they moved around the state and things of that type. When I was dealing with the people who were coming out of the what is now Northeastern, what is it, Northeastern Ohio Medical College they already had a structure in place, and their representation was the Dean of their medical school or a Vice President of that consortium they put together. We didn't have that kind of

clout, when you carried a title of Dean of the College of Science and Engineering. Like, what the devil are you doing representing a medical school. So I think the title and the position, we never used the title anyways we just used the fact that I was representing the institution as one of its Vice Presidents, so I didn't really care what it said after that, it didn't make any difference. But that did strengthen the hand there's no doubt that people respond to someone who's in the Vice Presidential or Presidential cadre at an institutional campus a little better than they do with a department chairman or a dean. That's the fact of life, which you just recognize and go about your daily business.

JS: How did you interact with the Ohio Board of Regents?

RC: I did, of course the time that we started I was working closely with John Millet, and we went along very, very well. We really went, we got along I would say reasonably along with the Ohio Board. I don't know whether they liked what we were doing, but we were doing nothing different than the other schools competing for a medical school in the state were doing, the Ohio Board of Regents did what they had to do, as I think I explained somewhere else on one of your tapes, it came down to the decision that the Board of Regents was not willing, I don't believe, to make, and it became a legislative decision to make. Now whether that sat well with the Regents, I don't know, I would presume it did not. And then things went their merry way. Now where we did run into, when we were looking for capital funding for the medical school from the State of Ohio, we foolishly meant with the legislative committees and we presented our case before those legislative committees as part of the funding bill, in that time frame. I don't think, I think the Regents allowed us to do it, I don't think they liked particularly what we were doing at the time. I think there was, there was something to be said that the Regents felt that maybe we shouldn't be doing that, that maybe that should be coupled with the Regents total budget, where it eventually did go, but it went through the lobbying for the legislative part of that act. I don't think we received any flack or had any sharp words with the Regents until we went for the release of the money and we actually planned the building and were going to look at approval for the plans that went through the Regents. We had a very good relationship built up with the, and I can't remember the name of the department, but it was the name of the department that was for the construction of buildings were they reviewed the, the Field Architects Office, we had a very good relationship there, we had a very good relationship with the people in the Regent's office that interacted with the State Architects' office and interacted with us. Well we ran into a problem was when George Steinbrenner and Marvin Warner were appointed to the Board of Regents, and they were appointed by the Democratic Governor, Jack Gilligan. Mr. Warner felt, I think, in the first draft of the plans that he saw that we were building a palace of gold and squandering the state taxpayer's money and a few other choice words, all of which we took umbrage to, and he had been involved in several meetings while we were putting the medical school together, in which he represented the University of Cincinnati and the point of view was that we should not have a medical school in Dayton and Cincinnati should expand into Dayton, and that discussion I think we described somewhat earlier as some of the politics involved. I think he sort of remembered those discussion and I think in that process we were not held back, but we were given a little bit of negative vibrations so to speak, in other words we were told what our place was within the system. They did not make it easy to get the next phase of the project underway on reasonable time schedule. But, other than that, I can't think of anything that really

worked out highly negative, I think the interaction we had, that I had at least, with Mr. Warner was that he and I didn't get along at that time.

JS: If Melvin Warner was tied to the University of Cincinnati, where did George Steinbrenner come in?

RC: Well he was chairman of the Board of Regents, and he and Mr. Warner were fairly close associates, they were close friends, or at least appeared to be, and seemed to be supportive of one another. And we knew that if we wanted to get our building approved that we had to get those two people to approve them. Even though we may have had the State Architect's approval, we may have had the administrative approval within the Regents, we knew we also had to get the Regents to speak on our behalf and approve that project, otherwise it wasn't going to get released by the controlling board.

JS: This was after the legislature had allocated the funds?

RC: Oh yes.

JS: So this was an administrative delay?

RC: Somewhat, yes. This was in. What you do in the State of Ohio is once you have the appropriation, then you go through the selection of an architect, and they release a certain amount of money for that architectural planning, and then you bring the plans back, and you have to bring the plans to the State Architect who has to approve them, and then you have to go through the Regent's approval process of the physical attributes of the building and they approve the plans, and if they disapprove them it goes back to re-plan the building. And then once that happens it goes out to the bid process, and then after the bid process then the controlling board releases the money so that you can fund the building, and that's the way we went through that operation. And it was an interesting kind of exercise, I don't think they delayed us particularly long, we were already under construction of the current Biological Science Building which looks like a butterfly if you look at it from the air. And we had put one building in place, the building closest to Fawcett Hall and Oelman Hall that comes off on an angle, we had already sighted that spot, when we started the next phase of that, we simply flopped the plans over 180 degrees and built the second half, and if you look at that building, and then we put a bridge across it. That's built with two state appropriations. Right adjacent to that we knew we could draw the plans for the tunnel system we could draw the plans on where we would put the Medical Sciences building and how that would interconnect then with the Student Center and the Physical Education Building. We had that all planned out, and we did that because we had wanted to continue the tunnel system for the physically disabled, and we wanted to make sure we could get the campus to flow evenly for that group of students because we had already set the sights, of that time period, we had set the sights at least among the administration, we had set the sights that was going to be one of our fortes as an institution that we would be barrier free. I think if you look at that campus, up until, well when that final segment was put in, that final length of tunnel was put in and it connected with the Student Center, I think there's something like 830 square feet of that campus which is not accessible to a physically handicapped person, and there is a lot of square footage on that campus. And that was all done in a sequential bit of planning over the years starting with, well the first

quadrangle, and then from the first quadrangle we just carried that theme forward throughout the rest of the institution. It was an interesting period of time in Wright State's history.

JS: Let's move into the area of the selection and recruitment of the first dean, were you on search committee?

RC: I chaired the search committee for the Dean. We had a committee of, golly knows, had to be over 20 people.

JS: What kind of people were on the search committee?

RC: All of them that were on the search committee for the review were individuals from the community, they represented various hospitals, the research centers, Cox's Heart Institute, which was Paul Kezdi at that point, it was, I don't remember his name from Kettering Hospital, then from Miami Valley we had a surgeon, I don't remember his name anymore either. Each hospital had its representative, some of them, we had St. Elizabeth's had at that time their Chief of State represented the Hospital, so they had selected at each of the communities bases they selected people that we went on a major search, and we would meet on a regular basis, this group was an outshoot of the original planning group, when we had the second major proposal, many of the members of that planning committee became the representatives of their organizations in the search committee for the Dean of Medicine. And that committee meet and we received the information on each candidate that were coming into my office and we presented each individual to the committee and they would screen them and we had a ranking process.

JS: Before we go into the ranking process, when the committee first got together as a search committee did you set a certain priority and a time frame for your activities?

RC: The honest truth, I don't recall. I knew we wanted to move ahead as rapidly as possible, but I don't honestly recall the time frame.

JS: Were there other major University officials on the search committee besides yourself, any of the other Deans?

RC: No, I don't think there was. I think the only person that was involved in search at the committee level, who appeared at the first meeting only to charge the committee was Bob Kegerreis. He charged me then let us go about our work.

JS: Who was staffed to the committee?

RC: Joyce Mouse, and Ed Spangler. Joyce Mouse was my secretary and Ed Spangler and I, Ed was my staff person and really he was, he and I would work on what was being said. What we did was, when we were going through it we used to hook up a tape recorder to the telephone in the office, and if people, after they received the information after we had the meeting and before we, we went through what we wanted in a dean, what were the characteristics were, what the type of personality had to be of the individual, all of those-

JS: What were those attributes that you wanted?

RC: We wanted a person who would handle the kind of school we were developing, one in which the emphasis would be on the training of family practitioners, and that would be done in such a way that the school would be structured and would operate so that that department became a keynote department. You can take that in any school if you have the concept when you build a new unit, you can destroy very quickly the hierarchy and you can change it over into a hierarchy in which you are already familiar with. So we needed a person who had the attributes of agree in principle with what we wanted to do and willing to commit to see that that department was one of the key and major departments in the school and willing to dedicate his efforts to that thing, to that principle, and we felt that that person was going to be, during that time frame, that that person was going to be difficult to find.

JS: What kind of personal attributes did you feel a Dean had to have?

RC: He had to be politically savvy more than any others. He had to be able to convince us he could work well with the legislature, he could work well within the institution, because one of the things we had built into the program was, that we were gonna bridge faculty from the College of Science and Engineering with the medical school particularly in the basic sciences, the basic biomedical sciences. So therefore, he had to be able to work with the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering, he had to be able to deal with the faculty and department chairman in that school and to maintain a relationship between the basic sciences and the medical school, so that was from inside. He had to be a bit of a campus politician, he had to be a good committee person, had to be able to work out in the community, had to be able carry out the problem of coordinating the thirteen participating, the original participating institutions, he had to be able to work out the final agreements. We had a series of agreements signed for each of those participating organizations, pledge their support. That's fine and dandy but when it gets down to the distribution of dollars, then that's the Dean of the medical school who has to work out those negotiations. So we were looking for a person who could handle that aspect of it as well as the internal aspect of it. And then we had to make sure the same person could be the spokesman for the development of the medical school in Columbus. So, you could almost predict, at least I felt, and maybe my ego was too big at that time, but I felt that we could between Ed Spangler and myself and a very few other people, we probably, without knowing it, we could sense what we felt would be a good person to do that and the person we sensed would be a bad person. It was strange with the outcome, because of the final three candidates that they, the committee of twenty plus came up with, we could have worked with any one of those three individuals.

JS: How many applications did you get?

RC: I honestly don't remember, maybe Ed Spangler does, but it was a lot.

JS: Was there a specific sub-committee set up to do the screening?

RC: No, we presented everyone to, what we did was we divided them up, we divided the committee up and we circulated the resumes to everyone on the committee and then we ranked the candidates and we asked them to group them into three groups, and the top group I think we

set a number like fifteen would be in the top group of the candidates and then we would rank fifteen behind that, and then the rest would be in the third group. If we could boil it down to two groups of fifteen we thought we wouldn't have to do any further, and we worked with the top group, the secondary fifteen were left alone. We developed a top group in three groups of five, and we dealt with three groups of five. Again the top group being the group we were gonna interview and then we left the other two groups alone. So we sort of boiled it down to a final group of five people. Of the five people we invited in three if I am remembering the data right.

JS: Where were the five?

RC: California, Arkansas and Michigan I believe.

JS: And who were the other two in the top five?

RC: I don't remember now, I don't remember.

JS: Was there somebody from Nebraska?

RC: Gee, might have been. Might have been. But I honestly don't know, I think it was Michigan, Arkansas, might have been Nebraska, California, which was John Beljan and there was another one, somebody from the eastern coast, somebody from the east coast, I think, but I don't remember at this point. There was a group of five, and what we did was then hosted a community based, board of trustees based, social kind of an evening. Which were an opportunity for the doctors in the area, and the head of the medical society in the area and so forth to meet and also to meet the potential candidate for the Deanship and his wife in a social circumstance where you could carry on discussions and get an impression about people. And then we had the call in system where we would get reactions. It was boiled down that way and then we simply were the tally keepers of what kind of responses we got, and then there was, we had to select between the three after we interviewed, and that would be the recommendation that Bob Kegerreis would take to the Board of Trustees. And we then sat about, after we got all the input, a final ranking of the three people. And we talked about all three people and John came out, John Beljan came out on the top of the list after the interview phase, and the recommendation was made to Bob Kegerreis that he should be the primary appointee, when Bob said yes that's fine I got on an airplane and signed John Beljan in Chicago.

JS: What was your first impression?

RC: Of John? He and I got along very well.

JS: When did you first see him?

RC: Oh, very early on, he was one of the, I first meant him during the interview phase, and when he first came in, he was the kind of person that I felt, very frankly, very comfortable with. He and I, when I stepped down and went into planning and development, John and I maintained a very close relationship as individuals. If he needed any dirty work done I'd be happy to sit on and take care of it for him. And we had taken, I had taken on a very supportive role for that thing

and it was because we worked well together, because John and I worked well together, we maintained, in fact after I left Wright State John Belgium and I kept, if I got back in Ohio I'd stop in and see John. If he needed something done, and I could help him do it, I took on a role to be supportive and help him do it. If he had a rotten committee to chair or something I'd say John if you the help I'll do it, don't worry about, just ask when you need it. I maintained that kind of relationship with John who I think was just a super person.

JS: Was there a back-up committee if he hadn't taken the job?

RC: Oh yeah, I think the second candidate, and I don't remember his name now, but I think the second candidate was very close to John in terms of qualifications. They ranked one two, one right behind the other.

JS: Why did the committee pick John Belgium over the second candidate?

RC: Perfectly, I don't know. I guess it was a matter of personal preference, personality, ability to interact with people. John was probably a better communicator than the second candidate. The second candidate was a little more reserved, a little quieter if you will, was not as open and conversational as John was. So I think that's what really, what really tipped the scales, John came on stronger as an individual and very articulate, able to express his point of view very clearly, I think he expressed his commitment to the program very clearly and what we wanted to accomplish. So I think John came on, presented, made a better, perhaps presentation and left a better reaction than the second candidate who was more standoffish as an individual. So I think that's what probably tipped the scales.

JS: You signed Dr. Beljan to a contract in Chicago, how long was that before he came on board officially?

RC: Couple of months.

JS: How much of your duties, as lobbyist, did he take over?

RC: All of them, as soon as he could. That was the agreement we made right off the back. I said John you know I'm not staying here, I have no intention of staying here so I want you to know I want to go, and then he said well what you are going to do with Ed. And I said that is Ed's choice, if Ed wants to go with you, then you talk to Ed about that, I don't want to lose him but I think Ed is the kind of guy who might want to stay around and if you're interested I think it's between Ed and you, so John recruited Ed as really his business arm and you could pick a finer guy, because that is his forte. At the early stages I would sit in on John's hiring of other people, what's his name, Sam Coleman, used to run the animal facility.

JS: Dr. Stillman?

RC: Yeah that's it. I sat in on their initial hiring of the institution. More as a person they would meet on campus and talk with and of course I got involved with Bob Stillman after he got there with the animal facility design because then I was in the other end of the thing doing the

development shop and the planning and development for the campus. So I sat in on the early discussions with those people as they. And then there was an anatomist from Brazil.

JS: Dr. Zapalla (sp?)

RC: Zapalla, he came on board very early. This was the early group of people who were coming in. So those were the kinds of things we did in a supportive way for John. There were things that John could do, that there was no way in hell I could do.

JS: Like what?

RC: He had to be the one that took over the leadership role quickly and firmly of the medical school for the best interest of the school. Though very early on we had to deal with the Medical Millican committee.

JS: The Millican Committee on Medical Education?

RC: On medical education. I could it up a point, but the rest of it had to come from the Dean and his staff and that kind of thing was were John, it was essential that John was in place and ready to go. We had to be able to identify a dean before the VA was going to make a final decision about the VA grant which finally came out to somewhere, 33 million dollars or something like this. I think we had to prove, preliminary I think our first application was 20 million and when John came in of course before that thing was completely finalized he wanted to re-app it to make sure that we would protect ourselves and the institution, so we began the work on the re-app the day after he was appointed in order to build that if we could to get as much money as possible. So all of that stuff had to be taken care of, had to go on. When that re-app went in, the person who had to do the re-app work, had to do the negotiations, had to be John Belgium. It really wasn't appropriate for it to be a chemist who was not really, who was doing this out of something I wanted to do, rather than out of a professional career, and I knew it wasn't going to be a professional career and maybe I projected that to, but at any rate there were things that John had to do to be effective. That I couldn't, no way in hell...

JS: How would you describe the pace of development of the medical school, prior to when John Belgium arrived?

RC: Oh extremely rapid, in fact the pace of development of the medical school period was phenomenal, we completed a medical school in what four and half years, from first meeting to authorization to go ahead. That's almost record time, seven years, ten years is not uncommon, putting the school in place from the time that John got on board until the time he was functional I think was, I don't think there was ten people in the country, I don't think there was five people in the country that could have done what was done by John Beljan and the few people we had at Wright State to do it, to get it operational. I think it was done extremely rapidly and extremely well.

JS: Overall, what do you consider to be the highlights of the development process for you?

RC: The fun, I thoroughly enjoyed it. You look back on it and you say ‘What the hell did you ever do that for?’ I had probably, it was the most stimulating time I ever had in higher education administration. I actually thoroughly had fun. It’s hard to describe why, because it was brutal, it was hard to describe the days when you were going nowhere and there was no outcome. But it was one of the most rewarding times I can say I’ve had professionally as an administrator, it was actually an enjoyable experience to just do it. And maybe that’s the sign of a builder or whatever you call it, but it was fun, I enjoyed going to work in the morning, I enjoyed doing whatever we were doing, I enjoyed the interaction with people, I enjoyed the damn Senate hearings although I hated the outcome at first. Taken on balance it was a fun experience, and I liked it, I liked that kind of work at the time. I enjoyed it, I enjoyed working with the community, I enjoyed working with the legislatures, I enjoyed working with the faculty, we had set up the committee which is now the humanity committee and that distilled process had begun and I was able to interact with the people in the Religious Department, which I had no contact with the people over in the Arts School from the position that I sat in when I was the Dean of Science and Engineering, it might sound bad, but the fact of the matter is I had more concrete discussions and built some relationships, which by the way carried over when I got into development, because then I was working with Nick Piediscalzi and a few of the other people who were trying at that time to raise money. And those things that we were doing with development of the medical school and looking at the humanities side carried over into the next job that I took. So I really had a heck of a good time doing that, I enjoyed it.

JS: How long did you stay in the position of Vice President for Development and Planning?

RC: That’s a good question, I don’t remember that either. I don’t remember time frames, I could probably take it off of my resume if you wanted me to dig that out of my files. I don’t remember.

JS: What were some of the major things you got involved with there?

RC: Well, the biggest, there were two, three things. We wanted to solidify an alumni association, we wanted to try raise private philanthropy through the foundation, and we wanted to develop a strong grants and contracts program. Wright State was doing well, we wanted to get additional grants and contracts into the institution to enable the faculty to do better research, a lot more of it. So we did a lot of work in grants and contract development and we were quite successful, I have to admit we changed the image of the institution and we, I think, were very successful during that time period building a grants program. We did get the alumni off the ground, we got a board formed, and it was in the fledgling stages before I took that over it just wasn’t producing. I think we were the vestiges of the growth that occurred years later, or within a short time frame after I left within the Wright State Foundation, that was growing but had not taken to public activity in its growth and that was just beginning to take off. I guess the biggest thing that we did, in that office, during that time period, is we put together a master plan for the campus, and except for the siting of the white building, all of those buildings that exist on that campus were laid out during that time frame and shipped up to Columbus. Now I’m out of Wright State in 1977 and I think the last building is the Research Building being built now behind the Biological Science building in that quadrant.

JS: Yeah, that’s up.

RC: That's up that was the last building on that total master plan. They didn't put the business building exactly, they put it on the same site, but they didn't put it exactly the same geometry that we wanted it, that I had planned it in, but we had put it all out there and we knew exactly what we wanted, and we developed the back end of the building with the pump house were the motor vehicle pool is and that area been laid out. And I think, probably a master plan that stood up for almost ten years isn't too bad, I mean that was an interesting sort of operation. We did a lot of work on the parking plan and how we were going to park the people, I guess it never really worked out well because the plan was probably never really carried out, but we at least looked at it. The only thing we didn't, although we had picked out the site, we never did any work on it, we wanted the loop road system on the campus to open up the back end and go down and build the, what I guess is being planned know is the athletic facility which is going to be an athletic complex which is going to be down on the side of "K" lot. And you know, all of that was part of that process, although really what our main work did was lay out the central complex, the high density academic complex that had to be done in that time frame, because that's where the future capital appropriations were going to come from. And we spent a good deal of our time doing that kind of work, I think that was the last thing that was approved just before I exited the institution in '77. I guess it was in '76 when we presented the plan and then a year later I took a presidency and went on.

JS: Where did you go from Wright State?

RC: Seton Hall in New Jersey.

JS: As the President?

RC: As the President.

JS: And how long did you stay at Seton Hall before coming here?

RC: I was at Seton Hall for three years, three years and then I came, I had a fourth year I was there as a consultant and then came here.

JS: That's quite a varied career loop you've had. How do you perceive the school of medicine development in that career?

RC: It's probably, I guess the two, the school of medicine is probably the highlight, probably the highlight. I enjoyed the school of medicine work, except for the work in this school that I thoroughly enjoy, probably the school of medicine is parallel to the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities. Maybe it's because I don't have a great deal of love for traditional structures and maybe I have that kind of an ilk as an educator, I don't know. But the medical school was a challenge and this is a challenge. And I finally got a really good picture of myself when I went and became the president of my Alma Mater and found out that I had developed some personal attributes that were not acceptable to the traditional campuses. Probably because of the Wright State experience, and probably because of the medical school, because we were on a different course, charting a different course so to speak. What I realized after I got to Seton

Hall was I really wasn't what they wanted. I was someone different than what they envisioned and that's when I began to take a real hard look at what I wanted to do as a professional and that's all a result of the medical school experience.

JS: Would it be safe to say then that the medical school proved to be a watershed for you?

RC: You could say that, I guess you could say that, I'm not sure. I think what it did was it probably did for me what it did for me what I wasn't willing to do for myself.

JS: And that was?

RC: Just shake my career because I never did that in my life, I never had, I never thought about a position, I never thought about anything like that, I couldn't give a damn if I worked for you yesterday and somebody else tomorrow, that never was part of my make-up. I never had thought about what do you want to do, I never had given aspect of my career any thought, or given it any direction or guidance. When I got involved with the medical school I think that part of what you should have been doing years before finally began to emerge, and I said do I match or don't I match with an organization and I became a little more, I think, sensitive to the people I was working with and also the institution I was working for, because Wright State and I had a very deep connection, I mean I loved every minute at Wright State and it is part of my career I will never forget. And I found that I fit into the milieu quite adequately and felt comfortable and when I went into another one I didn't I sought an area I felt comfortable, for the first time in my life I actually sat back and looked for a long time before I took another Presidency or another job after Seton Hall's experience. Because I felt I'm not going to have another miss-match and that I wouldn't have done years ago, that was result of the medical school.

JS: If you had the ability to go back and change anything you've done with the School of Medicine development, is there anything that you would do differently?

RC: That I would do differently?

JS: Yes.

RC: No, no we did the right thing, in the right time frame, and we did right as far as I was concerned, as far as I'm still concerned, I don't know it's hard for me to review the outcome. It's hard at this point to review the outcome, I think we did, I think the plan was implemented, I think the community benefited and is benefiting and I only would have done one thing differently to be very honest. During the time that we were planning the medical school we put together what is being implemented now as a PhD in biomedical sciences, if they implemented that program. We also put together a PhD program, which was an interdisciplinary degree program in the College of Science and Engineering, I felt very strongly about both of those developmental programs. Both were put, reduced to ready. One was done in 1979 and never got outside the campus door, that sets in place as far as I was concerned, and am still concerned two classes of citizenry within the College of Science and Engineering and I don't think that's healthy, and I probably would have fought a little bit harder today to put pieces in place that I think would have augmented the College of Science and Engineering.

JS: What are the two classes?

RC: Well you've got people that do participate in a doctoral program and people who do not. You know you have dual-citizenship there. That's not healthy in a single college. You can do that, you can have one college, say you can have a school of business which does not offer a PhD program and you can have a college of Liberal Arts that may not, but you don't want within the same college some departments which are participating or some members of the departments that are participating and some members who are not. Because that means within that same college when you go up for rank and tenure you've got two classes of citizen and that's not healthy and you know you're going to have to have these because some people are not going to want to be doing biomedical oriented research, that's not their niche, that's not where they want to take their career and they're not going to have doctoral students in their operation. And then you've got others in that same department going before the same promotion committees, going through all those other things we go through in academe who are going to be involved with the medical school. Now when you come up for such things as promotions, and such things as merit raises and things of that type, how do you make the distinction? We work on the principle of committee, we work on principle that we can make judgments about each other, that's been in our blood as academia for twenty-five years. How can you look at a person's value to the department unless you have two different criteria and two different sets of standards? That's unhealthy because somehow you're asking people to serve, coop to serve themselves to another master so to speak. So I would have fought a little bit harder to put PhD programs throughout that program so that people could participate if you're going to get into a doctoral level offering. That I don't think has happened, that's the only weakness I saw in the program, but we did, we planned for it, we just didn't have either the stamina or we focused our attention away from it for whatever reasons, but when we did it we never really got the second doctorate through that would have, I think, strengthened the entire college. There were a couple things, little things like that I would have done differently.

JS: Well I want to thank you for this series of interviews.

RC: You're welcome.

JS: Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to see me and I'm quite sure anybody who listens to these tapes will gain insight from you, that it's not possible to get anywhere else and I think the project is going to be much better for it.

RC: Well, if there's anything that I missed or slipped, I have probably forgotten more about it than I probably should have. But you've drawn a lot out that I haven't thought about in years now about the medical school and about Wright State in general and it was fascinating time in the history of the growth of the institution, I enjoyed.