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Deanne, Donna interview for the Miami Valley College of Nursing and Health Oral History Project

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Nursing Oral History Project

Interviewee: **DONNA DEANNE (DD)**

Interviewers: Carol Holdcraft (CH) and Donna Miles Curry (DMC)

Date: October 10, 2003

CAROL HOLDCRAFT: We're here today and we're doing another interview on our Oral History Project of Wright State University College of Nursing and Health and it's October 10, 2003 and we have Dr. Donna Deanne with us. So, welcome.

DONNA DEANNE: It's good to be here.

CH: Okay. We start out, Donna, by usually asking people to talk a little bit about your personal background and how you came to be at Wright State. And we already mentioned that you've been at Wright State several times so you can start at the very beginning if you want to.

DD: Okay. My personal background and I'll start with being a nurse. I had had a number of years of clinical experience and then I also worked in teaching at Mount Carmel in a diploma program, Clark State in an associate degree program and then also helped with the LPN program while I was there. And I decided to go back and get my masters. So, I went back to Ohio State and got my masters in one year and we had traineeship, federal traineeships then. So, I was able to do that, and I have two sons and at that time they were just barely in grade school as I remember when I came back. So, after I finished my masters, I really did want to teach in a baccalaureate program and Wright State was within driving distance of Springfield, so I applied over here because the program was going to open that fall after I graduated.

CH: Okay.

DD: And there was a position open in pediatrics and I'd had experience in teaching pediatrics and so I accepted that position. Dr. Joyce Randall was the dean at that time, and she'd been here a year before planning the curriculum and then the faculty came in that summer and that fall right before school started.

CH: Okay.

DD: I don't know if there's anything else about my personal background that would be pertinent to this.

CH: Okay. But that's interesting so do you recall how you heard about the fact that the school was going to open and that there was a need for teachers of nursing?

DD: Well Wright State was fairly new then so there would be articles in the paper from time to time about a program starting. I don't remember any kind of recruiting that I saw or job postings or anything like that. It was more I just wrote a letter to see they had a position.

CH: Okay. You were aware that it was opening, and it was just in the community and in the news that you were aware of that.

DD: Right. Uh-huh.

CH: Okay.

DD: And I don't know that they did any recruiting. They might have.

CH: Okay.

DD: You know maybe it was in the Dayton paper or something.

CH: I just wondered about that because we hadn't had anybody really talk about that. How they first came here.

DD: Uh-huh. How they got here.

CH: So, you came then, did you start in the summer then?

DD: No, actually I believe I started in August and then the program started in September and most of us did come, there was two people who came a little bit earlier. It was Hilda Roundtree and Wanda Bledsoe were already here and they had come maybe a month or two earlier I believe. And then most of us came right about that same time in August.

CH: Okay.

DD: And also, Melinda Gregory was here at that time. I'm trying to remember there was a small group of us and we became very cohesive in working together and everything. Melinda Gregory, Joanne Cross, Yulanni Batagalia and Clay Poplauski came part of that time and then Agnes Bennet. She wasn't there right when we started in August but she came a little bit later and was here for teaching in OB when we started that part. I think that's most of the people that were here. And they, what I always thought was interesting was that there in, I forget what's the building they were in first? Was it Allyn?

CH: Was it Fawcett?

DD: Fawcett. They were in, we were in Fawcett to start with and the dean had been there for a year and she had this gigantic conference room with a table that probably held twenty-five people or so. In my mind it was bigger maybe than what it was, but it really was very large and then actually a full-size office at the end of that. So, it was all open you know the office and the table. So that and a secretary, the dean's secretary and the faculty secretary was only one person and the admissions person who was Scottie Clark and there was some storage space there. They were all down there in Fawcett and then all of the faculty were over in these little cubicles up there in the P.E. building. So, we got well acquainted with the Pys. Ed. Faculty and the gym and things like that but we were up there on the hill so to speak, and we were in these little separate cubicles you know we could yell at each other and talk to one another real

easily. So we really did become a cohesive group and we had a lot to do very quickly because even though there was a curriculum planned so that it was approved by the State Board of Nursing it wasn't really ready to implement. So, we did a lot of hustling where sometimes we were just a week ahead of the students in figuring out you know what we were going to teach and what we were going to present in class that day. There wasn't any kind of a skills setup identified or developed and so we had to do that right away too as school got underway and we actually I don't think we set any of that up in Fawcett. We actually did it in; oh what's that other building we were in Carol, when you came?

CH: Allyn Hall maybe?

DD: No. No, on the other side down by the library?

CH: That's Fawcett at that end by the library.

DD: Oh okay, I didn't mean Fawcett.

CH: So, maybe Oelman or Millett?

DD: Okay, we were in Millett to start with. That's what where it started. I'm sorry. It was Millett and then we went to Fawcett.

CH: Okay.

DD: And we had set up a small classroom area up there and we set up some skills in the end of it but it certainly wasn't a well-developed skill lab. Week by week we'd be ordering supplies or what else we needed for the next time. But we were having fun and every, the students that came were all excited about being the first ones in a brand-new program and we were excited about doing that too. It was a nice experience and a nice time of our lives to be able to do that. One of the things I thought of when I was trying to remember what I would talk about was this was the era when we had the streakers right there in that first and second year and so we would occasionally have streakers down on the quad area.

CH: No clothes on.

DD: Yeah, that's right and so that was a big deal at that time to have the streakers down there.

CH: So, what subject did you teach the first time?

DD: I taught skills and pediatrics as I remember. I know I was involved with the skills because we are, the faculty took it upon them, things weren't being ordered and the faculty took it upon themselves to order the supplies and I was identified as the point man and so I was hauled in to respond to you know why did we do that and I said I had to do it we need it tomorrow or whatever. So, I remember being involved in the skills piece but I was also over at Children's Hospital with students too when we started some of the clinicals. But we wouldn't have had them that very first quarter so it must have been the second quarter or something we branched out into those areas.

CH: Yeah, one of the things we'll want to do is maybe see if we can get the original curriculum from the Ohio Board of Nursing that was approved.

DD: Okay.

CH: That might give us something to take a look at.

DD: I don't think I have it but I could look back through some of my papers but there are these boxes of things in the basement. So, I could take a look there.

CH: So, what kind of recollections do you have of Dean Randall? We haven't had too many people talk about her.

DD: Okay, um, I think that she was quite taken with being a dean. You know and she really tried to build that role more from a social role or something not one a role where you were facilitating a group of people and planning a curriculum and so forth. She was really developing that; I believe you would call

it a social role, for being the dean. And one of the things that we joked about was if someone knew her hairdresser and even when she was in the beauty shop, she insisted on being called The Dean. So, you know it was an important piece for her. She developed, she had herself distanced from us as the faculty and I'm not certain why that happened but it was just not a familiar role and I think again that's how she viewed what the dean should be doing was not getting too close to the faculty or whatever but she was very close to her secretary, Nancy somebody who was wheelchair bound and then a guy named Gary. I don't even know if, he was a Wright State employee, but I forget what he was. I know he ended up being her driver, which was one of her problems for why she didn't succeed. He would drive her to the airport, and he would drive her somewhere else and so he would do, it ended up the two of them did a lot of personal things for her on college time.

CH: Okay.

DD: I'm trying to think, she was very you know she dressed very well, very professional. Let's see. I don't know what her relationship was with anyone in the community because I don't remember a lot of community interactions. The faculty pretty much went out and found the clinical facilities and things like that. So, I don't remember that part. Her husband was in another town in Ohio, and he couldn't move down here until later. I do know that occasionally she'd go back to the other city in Ohio where he worked. I don't even remember what he did. I forget whether she had that, she still had the practice on the side as a psychologist, but she was, that's what her doctoral or EdD was in was psychology. So, she did, when she left here, she did counseling and so forth and she had an office over in, I believe the Beavercreek area that she did. So, when she was asked to leave it was real curious because she was gone over night, literally overnight you know we saw her one day and the next day that office was totally cleaned out.

CH: Okay and was there a sense that faculty was really dissatisfied with her role as a dean and had something to do with her being gone or was it something that seemed to be an administrative decision that was made? Do you recall what you knew about it?

DD: I recall exactly. I'm concerned about what's going to be used. Definitely the faculty were extremely concerned.

CH: Okay.

DD: And I think really the initiation, I mean the prompting for her to leave came from the faculty as a group because I remember us even checking with faculty, the university faculty and what are the rules and what are expected of faculty and what are our processes that we can go through because we had major concerns here about what's happening to this educational program.

CH: Okay.

DD: And so, we had some serious concerns about what that was. So we did go through the faculty structure and ask, we didn't go to the big meeting and ask for information but we went to the leaders of that group to clarify what our rights were and you know if we're concerned how do we process that because we were, well Wright State was new so a lot of those weren't developed and definitely we were all new. So, we didn't know what our rights were. So, faculty actually prompted it but it was an administrative request that she disappeared over night.

CH: So, it was essentially that you, as faculty really weren't getting, you weren't getting the leadership and the direction that was really necessary to function.

DD: Yeah, the leadership and the direction, but I think it was more about the educational program that we felt restrained in what we could do as far as working with students or offering courses or even that little piece about ordering supplies and making certain that you had a learning environment that was

available to students and there just didn't seem to be any movement on it. She was somewhere else with her life and there wasn't any movement on that. So, there was a real concerted effort. Every one of us since we were a small group were quite involved in identifying hey what's wrong here and what do we need to do to you know get this turned around.

CH: And even though you all were new to Wright State as faculty members, many of you had taught other places and you had a sense of what was needed to be able to deliver a nursing program.

DD: Uh-huh. I believe so. I had taught before. Joanne had, Agnes, Melinda Gregory had taught at a couple schools in the south. Now Wanda Bledsoe and Hilda Roundtree had Bachelor's degrees and we couldn't figure out why and how they got hired but they had bachelor degrees but they hadn't had the experience in teaching but they were quite involved in our level of concerns too. And by the time we were doing our concerns students were starting to ask what goes on here? What are we going to have next year? You know what happens with the curriculum? Students, we didn't involve the students, well in the way it did at a later Point in time. We kept it purely with the faculty and we listened to students, but we didn't get them involved in that process or let's make some changes here.

CH: Okay. So, who was president of the university then?

DD: Tate.

CH: Oh, he was here?

DD: Uh-huh.

CH: And then do you remember who was president faculty?

DD: Yes, Jim Murray was the-provost and Ira, the nutrition?

CH: Ira Fritz?

DD: He was quite active in the faculty. I think he was president of the faculty but I'm not sure.

CH: Okay.

DD: I'm pretty sure he was the one, but I know he was active there. There may have been someone else that was actually president.

CH: Okay. I was just curious.

DD: Uh-huh.

CH: So faculty, you know faculty felt like they didn't have a good leader here that was really providing the kind of leadership and the kind of educational curriculum support that you all needed as faculty to be able to deliver a quality program. You expressed your concerns.

DD: Right and we really, we were so, it's like the nursing approach of being so obsessed with doing it right and finding out what the rules were and following through on those but actually that ended up a positive because we were new and everybody was looking at us you know what are you doing here and how's this program going to fair and everything. So, it was good we went that direction because we got good support from the faculty on campus.

CH: You were respected it sounds like.

DD: I think we really were.

CH: Because you went about it an appropriate way it sounds like.

DD: Right. Uh-huh.

CH: So, what happened then when the day happened, it turned around and Dean Randall was gone? What is your recollection of the next sort of events?

DD: Um, now I get concerned. Well, we were asked if we knew of someone who could step in and as interim because you can't hire someone that easily. It wasn't an established program. We really wanted someone with a doctorate and there really wasn't anyone real available. So, we were asked as a group if we could identify anybody, administration asked us this, who might be able to, if they're out of town or whatever and so by processing that Marian McKenna from the University of Kentucky, she was the dean there but she agreed to come and work with us to get things turned around and let us know what it was we should do and things like that. So, Marian would come in on a frequent basis from University of Kentucky and she was well respected in the country. She's retired. She might have even died by now. I don't know because she was I'm sure she was at least in her fillies then but was well respected and also had a very no nonsense way about her. She had years of experience in deanship and nursing administration. And so, it was a good person to work with a transition. We also got I'm trying to remember what the source of this was but we were, it was recommended that we try to get someone outside of Ohio so that you know other deans and so forth in Ohio wouldn't get caught up in whatever was going on with the dissatisfaction and it would be a more objective opinion so that was a plus too that she came from a you know nearby state.

CH: So, was she actually appointed as an interim or was she a consultant? Do you recall?

DD: She wasn't interim because at that time Andy and I were appointed as the interim team. And so, I think her title was consultant. I can't remember for sure, but I think it was consultant that she came in. And she even did some little things that some of us who hadn't done as much higher education administration said you know you really need to get membership in the National League of Nursing. Joyce Randall really hadn't done any of that. I don't think she'd had the background as looking at higher education and what happens with that but saying things you know like you need to get yourself in the National League of Nursing, you need to get yourself lined up for accreditation, you need to do this, you need to join these organizations, you need to go to these kind of meetings so that you get this college, or it was a school at that time, integrated into the you know the national picture of nursing and higher

education. And so that was the bit I think those of us on the faculty felt something was missing and it was well identified when Marian got here and walked in and she even taught some of our classes like concepts course. I forget what the name of that was and so she helped with that too. But just a really nice relationship.

CH: Experience.

DD: Yeah. And she wasn't one of these going around smiling and telling everybody they're okay. It was all check, check, check. She knew what was needed to be done and she was very directive about it and I really liked her style and it was what we needed at that point in time.

CH: Okay. Good, that's interesting. So, then she came, did she come like for a whole year did it seem like for a quite extensive period'?

DD: She, actually she was our consultant until we went through the dean process, I mean the search for a new dean process, and she was still on board and then she left when Gert came. So, she was actually in a position that when Gert interviewed, she could fill Gert in on what was going, and then also you know gave her information. She walked out the door when Gert was walking in. She was there.

CFI: Okay.

DD: I'm forgetting exactly what that time was. I think it was about a year.

CH: And we can check more.

DD: You can tell on my resume too, but I can't remember what that was.

CH: Tell us a little bit about the relationship that you and Andy Kuntzman had. What were your roles during that time'?

DD: Okay. Obviously, we needed a nurse person. I had a masters at that time. We really wanted someone with a doctorate but we didn't have anybody on board but we, for Ohio Board of Nursing reasons, you absolutely have to have a nurse who is in charge of the program or whatever terminology you want to use and at that time too administration felt like additional support could come from the university and Andy came in primarily to help with facilities and he did a lot of the budget, well we actually both did the budget process because he hadn't done it before either but they just thought with two people we might be able to move. We had to move a lot of things very quickly because it was like we had this group of students here and the program really wasn't moving. So, I of course did all of the curriculum pieces and the faculty were just very supportive. Everybody just worked real well as a team to get things turned around and support that. But I'm trying to think. Andy and I did, I would say we didn't make any independent decisions. We did both of them; I mean we made the decisions together. Well I did on the curriculum pieces but personnel, budget, facilities and at that time we were trying to get some more space. We did a lot of work on how much space do we need and how big are these classes going to be and you know the university we need and this kind of; so we had negotiated quite a bit of that by the time Gert walked in the door and gotten that.

CH: Uh-huh. So that was really positive probably that that happened.

DD: That was.

CH: Andy as really an insider in the university and he was somebody who was well respected with the faculty group.

DD: Uh-huh. Yeah. And Andy continued to, he was well respected by nursing too because he was teaching anatomy at that time and he continued to teach his anatomy. So that was positive as well.

CH: Okay. So, you've really talked about some of the challenges that you faced early on during that span of time. I think it sounds like you know it was a major challenge to get started with a curriculum that really wasn't ready to be implemented yet that was really spelled out.

DD: Uh-huh. Well and as we filled it, you know we worked like crazy to get it filled out and then we had, during that period of time we also had the RN's coming back for a BSN and that program really hadn't been well developed either so we were hustling to stay ahead of that. And we had a really nice group of individuals in that first class that graduated. I think they might have graduated in '76, '75, '76 something like that, like Betty Schmoll, Ann Peters. I can't remember all the names but a nice group of people. But we had to work out how do you handle transfer credits. What do you give them credit for? What do you do testing for and so forth? So, we didn't have that in place either. But as you know because you came about the same time Gert did, I think, Carol.

CH: I did.

DD: And um, Gert came in with an agenda and we know that when we did the dean search and so forth and she had been at the National League of Nursing and had done a lot of work with the newer trends in nursing curriculum, which was the concept development and conceptual framework and things like that. So, we had one of the very first ones in the country because she had been teaching that in the NLN and she wanted to go to a program where she could do that. So, it was a nice fit because a lot of programs would already be established, and we were ready for someone to come in and do that piece and then of course she had a lot of those skills. She'd been writing in the area. She'd been doing CE's in that particular area. So actually, we continued with that, the curriculum we started with, until that new one got in place. But that was pretty fast because we did it in time to get the National League of Accreditation and Gert, when she came in, had her agenda that was going to be done in a year so we could go for our accreditation. But it was a fit for her the kind of school she was looking for and then we were wide open to you know new ideas, new possibilities and everything.

CH: Do you remember anything because we haven't had anybody really talk about the dean search as Gert was pulled into it? Do you remember the dean search process and where there lots of candidates? Was she...

DEANNE, DONNA

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DD: Um yes we had a number of candidates who have since went on to do other leadership kinds of things but we were really impressed. We had one person from Ohio. Well, we did the process, first of all, it seems like there were university standards for how you put people in new positions and so forth but we did a national search. We did a lot of advertising and so forth so we got a national group of people who came in but some of the applicants we had, well the one Ohian one we had was Faye Carol Reed who was at Ohio Wesleyan at that time and they were thinking about closing that program and it wasn't a complete program anyway. It was in liberal arts and they have since closed it. Judith Plwecki.

CH: Who was that?

DD: I think she was the Iowa area or something. And then who was the most recent president of NLN? Um, out of New York? I'll try to think of that name because she's been in national leadership positions since then too. Now all of them, I'd say that all of them were at places that they had a doctorate. They have a solid background but none of them including Gert really had the kind of piece you would be looking for today at Wright State. You know someone with other kinds of experiences in writing and research and things like that. But we had you know we had a nice group of applicants and I think I can sincerely say all of them really wanted to come here. It wasn't they were just testing the waters or whatever. And we had of course the faculty were involved in that. We had an advisory group from the community at that time and they came in also. You know they represented like Good Sam, Miami Valley and St. Elizabeth and so forth and they came in and interviewed. Students interviewed and the RN's interviewed so it was a real, I think it was a real solid involvement from the nursing community in looking at all those applicants and what their possibilities might be.

CH: It's a good process it sounds like.

DD: Yes. Uh-huh and they came, I don't know how many applicants we had to start with, and I would have known that at the time. You know if it was ten or fifteen, but I can remember we had at least those four in. I can't remember if we had others in.

CH: Okay. So, then she was selected really based on a lot input.

DD: I think the biggest reason was the curriculum experience.

CH: Okay.

DD: And we really thought that we needed the curriculum piece here.

CH: And she had been consultant in curriculum coming out of the NLN.

DD: Um, I don't know. Yes, she was, I think.

CH: Okay.

DD: Not to us.

CH: That was my understanding of how she was first introduced to me was that she had been the nursing education consultant from the NLN who would be called upon by different programs.

DD: Okay. I think she did do some of that traveling. She did, you know some of them around here somewhere are one of those first little book, NLN curriculum books a little set of them. And she wrote most of those even though her name isn't on all of them because they were NLN publications, but she authored most of those. And you can see parts of those copied in her curriculum book that shows the Wright State curriculum too. But she did most of the writing for those. So, I know she did that kind of

thing. She did CE's and so forth so she probably did go out and do consulting but I can't remember that piece.

CH: Okay. So, she came on board and it sounds like a lot of work around with the faculty, with the curriculum occurred.

DD: Uh-huh and about that time we had already broken up that great, big, gigantic room in Millet but when Gert first came we stayed in there a little bit, I mean she did we were still up in the PE building but sometime within that year after she arrived we'd already reconfigured and negotiated for it and we had most of that, was it third or fourth floor?

CH: Third floor of Fawcett.

DD: Fawcett, third or fourth floor and so that helped a lot because we were closer together. But Gert, I think, it started out so good because Gert is a very charismatic leader and very strong and we had an entire group of people in here maybe with the exception of one or two people to do curriculum development and everyone was interested in it and she was very skilled at pulling people in and I think most everybody was wanting to learn and get new experiences and things like that so I think she was very successful in a very short period of time pulling together a very complicated kind of, I mean the curriculum isn't complicated but a complicated task. And she pulled all of that together, I think most of that was done within a year and all written and it was written well. Well, it's practically like it is in Gert Torres' book that she was able to do that.

CH: Okay. So, what kinds of things were you trying to accomplish when you were at Wright State in that early space of time and then we'll maybe talk about some of the other times.

DD: You know I was trying to remember that. When I first came, I wanted a teaching job because I liked to teach and so you know that was it. I mean it wasn't it, but I just liked the idea of being able to teach again and so forth because I had already done it for several years. I had two years at Mount Carmel

in diploma education and then I had, I think, four or five years at Clark State in the AD program and the JVS LPN program and at Clark State, which was interesting, also I was there when we first started Clark State too. And so, I'd been in on that initial curriculum development and everything there. But I really like to work with students and to teach so I wanted to do that, and I knew I wanted a teaching job. Beyond that I'm not sure I had real goals. I probably wasn't even thinking about a doctorate at that time and there was actually after I had been here a couple of years, I decided I really wanted to go back and get a doctorate. So, I was here a year after Gert came and then I went back to get my doctorate.

CH: So, you were here a year during that curriculum change process.

DD: Uh-huh and I also started the development continuing education program that Gert wanted. So that was the position I had; I think it was Director of Continuing Education, some title like that. And then when I went back for my doctorate that's when Lovetta came in and she was going to do it. So, we worked together before I left and Lovetta went ahead and did the continuing ed. after I left.

CH: Okay. So, during that year and having the experience really doing some administrative work with Andy Kuntzman the year before is that when you really decided that you wanted to get a doctorate in higher education?

DD: Well yes, I think that was a part of it and being in an environment even though this was new university it was obvious if I wanted to stay in higher education the doctorate was important and if you wanted any kind of recognition or what is it called, respect as someone in higher education that was what I needed to do. And so that was the direction I went, and they didn't have traineeships again but I was able to get an assistantship or something like that. That's how I financed it.

CH: How you made it possible.

DD: Actually, I was a single parent before I came the first time. I've been a single parent since the boys were three and four years old. And so, when I went back the next time they were in, the first time

when I got my masters, they were in grade school and then they were in grade school, junior high when I did the other. But the boys were never those kinds of kids that wanted.

CH: That's interesting. I had a thought and then I lost it. It's really a typical type of thing. So after Donna then you were really off getting your doctoral degree in 1980 when the faculty-

DD: No, it wouldn't have been '80. I finished my doctorate in '78 so it was '76 to '78. CH: Okay. So '76 to '78 was when you were doing that.

DD: Right.

CH: And then after you got your doctorate-

DD: Well I had an assistantship in the College of Nursing (OSU) even though I was getting my degree from College of Education. And I did things like I did all the graduate admissions and I was assistant teaching in some of the graduate courses and things like that. So, when I finished that, the day I finished that they hired me to be their director of student affairs and I was in that position for two years and then I went into the director of the undergraduate program and also continued to do graduate teaching and advising. So, I was there, actually I'm trying to remember, two years and two years. I was there; I'm trying to remember what year I came back here. It was when Margaret Maloney was here, and it was that year.

CH: I think it was maybe in '82.

DD: It was '82 because that's when my friend had a major accident and it was '82 I came back here.

CH: Okay.

DD: So, I was gone from '76 to '82.

CH: Okay. So, did you have any knowledge of what was happening back at Wright State in 1980?

DD: Oh, everyone in Ohio knew what was going on but I hadn't really, well when you're in a doctoral program you kind of lose track of friends and communications and so forth. So, I don't remember if I was really had been talking to anybody over here or not. But certainly, in the newspapers and things like that. So, I think everybody was well aware of what was going on here. But no matter who you talked to it was pretty controversial about these are the facts or these are the facts or do you know what happened to the students and so forth. And then some of the students in my position at Ohio State they, because I was still taking care of all of the graduate admissions. We started getting calls for the students who were in this program that were really concerned about they'd started a program and it sounded like it was going to be closed. And so, we had a number of those students come over and talk to us to see how they could you know finish their graduate degree because of their major concern about they're going to close this program down. So, I got information that way as well.

CH: So you heard about it through the newspaper, you heard about it because there were students that came over and you may have talked some of your colleagues or whatever.

DD: And then I probably talked with some of the faculty here.

CH: I'm just trying, to think. Did you, what was your sense of what was happening? Did you form an opinion on why you thought the school might be closing or what was going on?

DD: I think a critical piece of it was a crisis point between the dean of the College of Medicine and the Dean of the College of Nursing. And Beljan was probably in before I left so I had worked with Beljan also but those, he and Gert were not ones to negotiate or let's work this out or you know what can we do about this. Both of them went to round eight you know as soon as they made up their minds what was going to happen. So I think that was a major problem in what happened and I even forget what all of

the conflicts were about but the other one too was Gert still hadn't had enough time to establish herself in this community in a positive way. So that she would have enough community support to make some of those things happen. And then she had this persona that definitely wasn't conservative, which is what the Dayton community is, and it just didn't go along with the culture of the Dayton community. I mean what kind of leaked out or whatever. So, I think that made whatever the disagreements were I think that made it difficult - Beljan's personality and Gert's personality. I was never able to make up my mind about what really went on here but it was like it just kept escalating on the basis of some of those personalities as much as this article talks more about political process and conflicts between medicine and nursing. And I'm sure that was part of it because Beljan certainly didn't have let's say what we consider positive concerns about nursing. And Gert certainly didn't have positive attitudes about what medicine is and how are the two of us going to work together. So I think that was a big part of it, of what went on. No, I don't know if everyone would have a different version. It's one of those crises that had so many complexities that it would be difficult to say what happened. I also read something that Julie George had written. I think she did it as part of her doctoral program. I don't know if you've seen it or not. It was about organizational conflict and she wrote like an essay on that. Where did Julie get her doctorate?

DMC: Ohio State, the same as you.

DD: Yes, she came to Ohio State right after I did.

DMC: She shadowed Gert for her administrative practicum.

DD: Yes. Okay. And she wrote an essay on it and it was very different too. You know there were pieces in that that I thought oh now it couldn't have really been this way. It was difficult but she had I don't know, I'm sure she would have a copy of that. She's still in California and she would have a copy of that and that might be nice to have in the archives too because it's another perspective and it was an academic perspective that she did as part of her course work.

CH: Analyzing what was happening.

DD: Yeah, what happened here.

CH: Okay that's a good help. I just recall because I wasn't here at the university at that time either. I was home and my kids were babies and I remember opening the paper and I remember just saying "Oh my goodness! Oh, my goodness!" I was sort of thinking what's going on and-

DD: And by that time, you know Gert had pulled in you know some real powerhouses in here and so that escalated it even more on a national level because people knew those names.

CH: People knew them.

DD: Oh yeah. You know like Peggy Chinn and you said someone else.

CH: Joanne Ashley.

DD: Joanne Ashley and well Marjorie Stanton and Suzanne Falco was new but she you know she was here, and she certainly stood behind them and contributed but she didn't have the name that some of the others have. So, you know some of those people that were pulled in here really made a difference too about how this is going to be.

CH: How it was perceived.

DD: Right. But the part, I guess the part that concerned me the most was that students were pulled into it. And I know, you know I know Gert very well and worked with her for that year and her sense of it would be that they need to be involved because that was a part of their profession and they need to be activists and so forth. So, I know, I understand why she did that because that's her view, but I see more that you know these aren't people that even have the background to understand what's going on. So, you end up pulling them in and they're somewhat powerless, they don't have all the facts but you, but

they are a group of people you could pull in to take your side kind of thing. And so, I really never saw a reason to pull the students into that and I think that maybe that was a negative in the long run as far as the outcomes go.

CH: It sounds like for you that felt like that was manipulation in a certain sense.

DD: With the students.

CH: Because it was controversial.

DD: I think it was. And I don't know but I think Gert might even say that. You know that she would agree that that was going on because she would use the tools that were available to her to go ahead and make her point in whatever task she was about. Where you around here then Donna? Where were you in this?

DMC: In the middle.

DD: I mean where you a student or a faculty?

DMC: Faculty.

DD: You were a faculty person?

DMC: Uh-huh.

DD: I couldn't remember if you were here.

DMC: I'm trying to be neutral for the interview.

DD: You what?

DMC: I'm trying to be neutral for the interview.

DD: You are? Well, I just want to know what your job was at that time?

DMC: I was objective.

CH: Did you get a sense Donna-?

DMC: Which Donna?

CH: That Donna, Donna Deanne did you get a sense because you said you felt like she pulled in students into the situation and that wouldn't have been something that you would do because it wouldn't philosophically be the way you would go about dealing with a conflict.

DD: Right.

CH: What about the other faculty? Do you think other faculty was pulled in and do you feel, or do you have an opinion about that?

DD: Well I think that there would be some of them that would support that and some that would not put I think that Gert was such a strong charismatic leader that whatever went on in there was going to be consistent with her philosophy of what should be going on in there. So, I don't think that anyone here would have had a choice other than to do what was philosophically consistent with what Gert wanted to do.

CH: Good. Okay.

DD: Should we tackle the next decade?

CH: Um, because we've been focusing so far really on the first ten years of Wright State from '73 until '83 and you actually then were, were you recruited in '82 to come back or was this a position that just opened up?

DD: (Laughs) No, well I think the position of, I came back it was assistant dean or associate dean or something. I forget what the title was at that point. I should have brought my resume. That position was open but there were already concerns with Margaret Maloney who was here at that time not only from the administration but also from the hospital community. So, I heard from both hospital community people, and the administration and I actually got a formal recruitment from the administration that was here. In fact, it was Dean Beljan, and he even came to meet with me in Springfield and Columbus to pull me in to the position but it was consistent with some other things that I was doing. I really enjoyed Ohio State and the stimulation and so forth but my sons at that point were teenagers and the drive to Columbus of course takes an hour and a half like it does today but I really felt I needed some more hang around time. The boys who are teenagers aren't interested in sitting down and having long conversations with you; but you need to be there when they decide they want to talk or just know that you are there watching or whatever. And it was a time when I felt like I wanted to make a move back anyway, back closer to home. And so that was consistent with some of the things that I wanted to do as well. But I did come back, I formally applied for the job and I was hired by Margaret even though I recognized Margaret did not know I was getting extra recruitment other than just her. And they had, several people had suggested to her to contact me. So, she knew my name she knew I'd been there before and so forth. So, I was hired by Margaret to come back into the position.

CH: So, it's your understanding and I know this is probably getting confusing but it's your understanding then or it was sort of widely touted that there was going to be another nursing school opened under the School of Medicine was one of the reasons within the newspaper for why the administration and the faculty in the School of Nursing were resigning was that the School of Medicine-

DD: So, you're talking about back before?

CH: Yes, back in 1980. There was some sense that there was going to be sort of a competing College of Nursing opened or School of Nursing opened under the offices of the School of Medicine.

DD: Okay, uh-huh. I forgot about that part.

CH: But that really, as far as we've come to understand-

DD: When I was contacted, I was assured that was not going to happen.

CH: That that was not going to happen.

DD: Yes.

CH: So once Gert Torres, Marge Stanton and faculty members resigned that program of nursing under the School of Medicine never materialized?

DD: No, it disappeared.

CH: It just disappeared.

DD: I don't think anything else was ever done with it.

CH: And we did have some sense from people we interviewed that resources and support was sort of poured into the school to keep it afloat at that point and to not have it fold but to hire new, additional faculty and to provide more skills lab experience and monies to do things. And so there were some resources put into that.

DD: Uh-huh. Yes, I think that support was definitely there not only from the administration of the university but from the community. The community really, really wanted this baccalaureate nursing program in this community so that was very critical to them. So, I think that support was always there and even though that controversy existed, and maybe other things were said the intent was to keep this program here.

CH: And really Dr. Maloney being hired was really putting a resource of a doctorally prepared and a well-known leader in nursing in as dean to kind of keep things going.

DD: Right.

CH: But it sounds like what you were getting, the message you were getting was that people were not as well satisfied necessarily with her leadership as dean also because you were then recruited for additional resources to come in as associate dean.

DD: Yeah. Urn, no, there wasn't that support. I mean also within the faculty there was some concern because I still knew some of the faculty that were here although I didn't really, I purposely didn't really interact with them to ask what was going on before Margaret Maloney asked me to come on and I got interviewed and so forth but there was also a big concern in the hospital community and the biggest one would have been Miami Valley.

CH: Okay.

DD: That was the time, it was during that time that I don't know if it started before I came or right after I came we started negotiations with Miami Valley because they were closing the school and we were going to become a part of, we were going to somehow meld the organizations so that we would be known as the school or whatever and part of that was definitely finances and because you get the federal monies if you have your own nursing program and not your own but you have one that contributed to. But another one was it was during that time Dottie Rye and Sue Fitzsimmons and Waltham-

DMC: Louise Waltham.

DD: Well Louise and Dottie were and then Sue came into it as well so all three of those people were there by the time I got this job and they were there and they and the CEO at that time and I forget his name. His name might have been Rush something.

CH: Uh-huh. It was.

DD: Okay. They were really turning that hospital around and moving it forward and it was during that time that Dottie made the decision that nurses coming into any management position at Miami Valley was going to have a masters degree. And it took them a few years to turn that around, but they were one of the leaders in Ohio. In fact, in Columbus now there's still lots of positions that you know you've been here for twenty years or whatever but that became a real strong philosophy at Miami Valley. It made major differences in this whole community and all the other hospitals about nursing and how they were viewed because of that kind of leadership and that need. So, they definitely if they were going to close down their diploma program they still wanted to be identified with education and they had strong allies by that time with the School of Medicine.

CH: Right.

DD: So anyway, you know we were doing those negotiations. They had strong concerns about; the negotiations were not going well. In the meetings, and I was going to those meetings and so it would be Beljan, Margaret Maloney and I and sometimes one of the other administrators would come along and then I think his name, was his first name Rush or his last name was Rush?

CH: His last name was Rush. There's pictures in the lobby. I'll look it up.

DD: And Sue and Louise and Dottie and I'm telling you those what we were calling negotiations but-

DD: But anyway, those negotiations did not go, did not go well and we received a request from Miami Valley that they were not going to continue and it was to Beljan and the president they were not going to continue those negotiations with us unless Margaret was out of the picture. So, this became very uncomfortable. They asked Margaret not to show up to the meetings, the university did.

CH: Okay.

DD: And that I was named solely as the decision maker and the negotiator with Miami Valley to process.

CH: For the collaborative.

DD: Yes, to process the collaborative then. And so, we went forward and got that done.

CH: And did that. And so once again was it just the difference of personality? Was it an inability, were there certain issues that Margaret Maloney felt strongly about?

DD: I'm trying to re. ember. You know Margaret wrote a leadership book and she did another edition of it she left here. And so, I don't know. I'm not certain, you know I read that book and it didn't fit.

CH: It was a good book.

DD: Yeah, it was a pretty good book on leadership.

CH: But what you saw in terms of her leadership wasn't necessarily that.

DD: Even her ability to talk at a theoretical level or her ability to interact or what you do in negotiations or how you work with people it just wasn't there. And I don't know if she was just in a different place in her life. She wasn't that engaged. For instance, we would have these staff meetings and she would never write a note. Now, for some reason Andy was here. Andy came in to help her out as an assistant or something. He was involved in the college again, but he was, I think, as her assistant. I don't know what his title was. He still taught the anatomy and everything. And so, she would depend on him to do whatever came out of that meeting and to take care of whatever happened.

CH: To take the notes and take care of it.

DD: And one day I got so excited because she took a note. She folds her piece of paper and you know she wrote down something I thought wow and she came in my office and closed the door behind her and wanted me to know that I misused some word. I don't know if it was "want" or "shall" or whatever and she wanted me to know that.

CH: You think that was what she made the note on?

DD: Yes. She had it on a piece of paper. (Laughs) But that was her level of what she operated on. It was sad. You know it was really sad for me because I really have a heart for Wright State and of course was here at the beginning and we wanted to see it succeed and you think my God where do these people come from? You know. You know why do we end up struggling with this over and over again and why can't we just get on with the academic program? So, anyway Margaret, I forget how much longer she was here, but I don't remember for sure, maybe a year.

CH: Okay. So, during that period of time then you were really instrumental in helping get the collaboration with Miami Valley.

DD: Yeah, I was.

CH: And was that an exciting time?

DD: It was exciting because we had some opportunities. Now, I still, and Margaret thought that it made us, pull us back to the diploma program and I think people had real kinds of concerns. She had some concerns that were very real. You know you get pulled in under a hospital and then what happens to the decisions you're making and do you look like a diploma program and so forth. But she couldn't get beyond that you know what some trends are, what are some things that we could do with this. So, she had some real concerns and I shared some of those but I thought in the negotiations we might need to make certain these don't happen but whatever. So I in addition to being part of that and it was exciting also I was a part of, I don't know if you'd call it exciting but a part of the program and ended up going in with

Sue Fitzsimmons and then I did all the presentations to the current students about it was closing but these are the opportunities you're going to have and tell them how their courses, you know at that time Wright State was teaching them most of their sciences and so it was the nursing courses that didn't but most of their things would have transferred anyway and telling them what would transfer or if you wanted to continue out the year Miami Valley's going to continue this program until the last one of you graduates and things like that. So that was very interesting too in working with those students and parents would call and things like that. But helping them transition to a new kind program. It was a very exciting time.

CH: And Sue Fitzsimmons was considered to be fairly charismatic leader at Miami Valley. Now she was first pulled in as the head of their School of Nursing at the point when they still had a School of Nursing.

DD: I think so. Now, Sue was here.

CH: Right. She was a faculty member here.

DD: I think when Gert was here.

CH: Uh-huh.

DD: Yeah, I think that was her first position and then Sue went to get her doctorate too. And actually, I was one of the advisors on her doctoral committee or dissertation committee and so we had interactions that way, but it seems like she got another position after that. No, she was head of the school, but it seems like she had another title, I forget what that was, maybe the clinical coordinator or something for all the students that came in. I forget.

CH: Right. Could've been. And so, then she moved into really the VP position at MVH at that time but to have a doctorally prepared nurse in that role was sort of a first in this area.

DD: Right. And she really, Dottie had a masters degree and it seems like I had, oh, Dottie was also one of my students at Ohio State. She was one of my graduate students at Ohio State. So, I already knew Dottie before I came to Dayton as well. Anyway, Sue continued with that same philosophy of hey, we need masters prepared nurses and you know I've always been so impressed with the way that particular hospital turned things around and it really influenced the other hospitals in this area and it's too bad it didn't spread through the whole state of Ohio but you know some of the magnet hospitals do have that you know that kind of approach. It makes all the difference in how a hospital advances, what they do with nurses and the research that's been available to faculty in this college is just unbelievable. You know we did a lot to nurture the research here but that wouldn't have went anywhere if it wouldn't have been for that. I mean it would have went somewhere but we wouldn't have had the richness and the access to resources if Dottie and Sue wouldn't have believed in that kind of approach. Actually, Dottie is the one who hired Pat Martin to be the nurse researcher and that was the first time, I don't think there were any other nurse researchers hired by hospitals in Ohio or a lot of the nation. So, Dottie made that decision that that was another direction they were going to go. So, it you know just so much richness in professional nursing in this community because of some of those decisions and moves that were made.

CH: It was an exciting time I think all in all. So, you've told us about some of the community institutions, really Miami Valley in particular that you have a relationship with. Did you have any others?

DD: Yes, actually I forget which positions it was or whatever, but I ended up going to all of these hospitals for meetings. There was a strong, it wasn't called Dayton Area Nursing Educators then but there was a strong group of those people that I was involved in then and we'd get together about clinical agencies and things like that and go to the different hospitals. Then there was a nursing research group, I had forgotten about this but Ruth Ann Yaeger at the VA. She urged this on and a number of us in the community formed this research group and so we would encourage one another in doing research at the different agencies and we'd go around. We'd go out to the VA or we'd got to Greene Memorial or Good Sam or St. E's and so it was a group of people that you know even the competitiveness of the hospitals

didn't reach this level that you know you couldn't be seen over there. But we did a lot of interacting and for instance I have a book chapter that I published with two people from Good Sam and then I have several research projects with people from Miami Valley and the VA and actually a lot of the faculty here have that same kind of interaction with people. And also of course I live in Springfield and at Mercy Hospital in Springfield and the result of that, I mean that resulted a lot from some of the students, the nursing completion students we had that were from Mercy and in some era that I was here I taught at Mercy for this group of students from the Springfield area.

CH: It was an outreach that done in the evenings I think at Mercy because I taught some of those too.

DD: And that's when Jane was here. I believe that's her.

CH: Jeannette.

DD: I mean, no after Jeannette was here. I think that's when I was doing it. But they started a research committee over there and I have been on research committees for all of those facilities. So there was a lot of nice interaction get to know a lot of different people in working with them.

CH: That's really true because I haven't realized that really before Wright State those kinds of things really weren't happening. The nurses in each of the different hospitals were a little more isolated just within themselves is my belief. Now we might want to try and check that out with some of them first.

DD: No, I think you're right. Wright State really pulled some of those agencies together. And it was as much them as us. They were able to use us to be able to do that. So, it made a lot of interactions but also the people that worked here made it happen. You know because you could have kept it isolated. But by being a part of those groups and pulling them together really did make a big difference and more of a community program.

CH: Are there areas that we haven't asked you about or talked about that you think are important'?

DD: (Pause) I'm blank here. I'm trying to think. We haven't touched upon Jeannette also came to the college after Margaret had left and Jeannette was really on her own career track at that point. And so I think she helped make us more physical but she was more concerned about personal career development, I think. So, the college sort of moved on it's own during that period of time but we by that point had a good start and faculty interacting and a lot of faculty going back for doctorates and you know kind of started to take care of itself because of people matriculating

CH: Now my feeling about her one contribution she really made, I think, was in really allowing faculty to step off of the tenure track line and saying if we're going to expect people to have a doctorate we've got people who've been moving along who've been on tenure track lines who really needed the opportunity not to be on a tenure track. So, she was able to negotiate that within the university system And people then began to go back and get their doctorate without necessarily completely leaving.

DD: Uh-huh. And see we were still young and it was at a point that all of the sudden you have this nice core of faculty and you're going to lose all of them if you don't find something to do and everyone had been so involved in other kinds of activities. So, it was at a stage that either you do that or you lose your core of faculty that were experienced and it would be tough to pull in from that level of experience again.

CH: Right. And I guess the one thing that we didn't really talk about is whether you feel like the experiences you had here at Wright State shaped your career after leaving Wright State in terms of the directions that you took your personal career, professional career in. Was that shaped by the things that occurred, experiences that you had while you were faculty at Wright State?

DD: Well, I think most of my career shaping had to do with well, at Ohio State and Wright State the things that I ended up doing. Of course, you know I retired when I left (Laughs) I don't know what you call career shaping at that point, but I had a thought. I guess that the way it helped shape my career is because I was in so many pioneer situations and that's the kind of area that I thrive in is you know new territories and do something different. You don't keep doing the same kind of thing. I think that's probably the way that it helped shape many of the things that I did is because I was in the right place at the right time or the lucky place at the lucky time or something because it was a place that you really had to pull up your boots and roll with it or do something new. So, it shaped probably the kind of career I had with you know working with Wright State and all that.

CH: It sounds like you were seen as somebody who could come in and make some changes and do some things differently.

DD: Right. As you know I did that several times after other people left. And that's also something I enjoy doing and I like clean up and many times there were so many frictions by the time someone left and so forth. And I feel one of my talents was being able to pull people together because I'm not territorial. You know I don't think they aren't going to do that because this is what I want to do. And so, I always felt like I was effective in pulling most the people, you'd say ninety-eight percent or something, in pulling people together so that again they were working as a cohesive group. But at times it was discouraging to me because then the next year I would see some of that you know when we would start all over again with a new person, a new philosophy, a new track and it really was discouraging after a while. You know like how many times does Wright State College of Nursing need to do this? We didn't get the continuity and maybe that's where Wright State, why Wright State is where they are today is because they had to keep restarting with new rules, new philosophies and everything or maybe we would be even further but probably it helped contribute too but at times it was discouraging. You know why? Here we go again kind of thing that was difficult to watch and be a part of.

CH: Right. Just because there really hard-working individuals that are caught up into it sometimes.

DD: Right. And also, I think too nurses are so compulsive about things. That whole thing of making new policies or writing rules or having committees and Wright State isn't, every place is like this you know, there you go again and if you revisit it three years later and some of the same people are there it's the same discussions that you had three years ago. And you think gee, we could have put our time into something better than that.

CH: Right. Okay. Well you know Donna I think just to share with you as we've talked to a variety of people out in the community and tell them about what we're doing and what's going on many times our alumni speak of you and talk about the role model that you were to students, undergraduate, graduate students and how much they learned from you either as a teacher or as an administrator here. So, just want you to know that you're very warmly thought of in this community when we talk to people about Wright State and it's history it's always a very positive kind of thing.

DD: And I have those positive feelings too. You know that you know when you asked me if there was special people or whatever that's hard to do to pick out one.

CH: You had a long period of time.

DD: Right and you know that whole interaction with so many people it certainly enriched my life. And as you know working with graduate students or BSN completion students particularly you should be paying them because you get so much out of them, new ideas, new possibilities, keeping up with what's out there in the real world and everything. And so, I just feel like it was so rewarding and it still is with people that I work with now. And we just started a new graduate program in the fall that I'm coordinating.

CH: Oh, how fun. Good for you.

DD: So, I'm starting it again. I'm starting in it again. The reason that I got the job, see I've been consulting after I retired here and one of my consulting jobs was at Mount Carmel and I was at Shawnee State and some other places but anyway one of them was to start their RN to BSN program. So, I did that and that turned into a full-time job. So now I'm developing and starting the graduate program there as well. So, it's always fun to be a part of new beginnings. But you meet with the students and the faculty you meet so many people that really do enrich your life with new ideas and I cannot stay stagnant, and you know do the same thing all the time.

DMC: Will you ever really retire?

DD: No, I don't know. I have to. I'm tired. But students energize you and working with young people. I'm glad that I took this track of going into education. I loved practice and I, some days I have regrets, how could I ever go back on a nursing unit and act like someone that was halfway capable. And so, I miss that piece you know that's a piece and I don't even know how well I could even try to that. But I am glad I have this track because I think in some ways it's so energizing to work with young people or people who are set on some goals that they want to do something new in life and you can be a part of that.

CH: And you really are a part of their lives forever more because you're with them and some of your thoughts with them.

DD: Yes, you are. Uh-huh and you think I helped facilitate that. And the neatest thing is to meet people who have, I've read this before, who have exceeded and went beyond you know. I'll be at a meeting and here's someone that's a CEO or Vice President of Nursing at some major hospital and they come up and talk about their education and how wonderful it was. You think here we've been a part of this. And there are lots of people from Wright State that are out there who are getting to the point very successful.

CFI: And they've gone beyond just this area. They're out in the world.

DD: Right. They're very successful.

CH: Well we really thank you for your time.

DD: Oh, thank you for the opportunity.

END OF INTERVIEW