Bud Baker, Professor (retired) Department of Management and International Business, Raj Soin College of Business

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Kathy Morris

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Interview Information

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Interviewer: Kathy Morris (KM), Associate VP for Student Affairs, Retired
Interviewee: Bud Baker (BB), Professor (retired), Department of Management and International Business, Raj Soin College of Business

Kathy Morris: Well, let’s go. Welcome to all who hope to be listening in or reading what we’re going to be talking about. I’m Kathy Morris, retired member of the Division of Student Affairs, and chair of the historical preservation committee of Wright State’ Retiree’s Association, and today I’m very pleased- on this day, Thursday, December 8th- to be talking with Dr. Bud Baker, professor, retired, from the Department of Management, and Professor of Management in the Department of Management and International Business in the Raj Soin College of Business, which also included graduate instruction, administrative and faculty work. So, I’m really excited to have a conversation with you. You’re the first person I’ve had an interview with in the College of Business.

Bud Baker: Really?

KM: Yeah, I am, and I’m trying to make my way through each college with a faculty member so that I can learn a little bit more not just about the college and some history that you want to share, but also more about you, how you ended up here. But I like to start these interviews by going back as far as you’d like to go. A little bit about family background, where you grew up, where you went to school, and then ultimately how you found yourself to this university. So, let’s go ahead and get started however you’ll like to begin.

BB: Well, I can do that. I grew in upstate New York in Rochester, which is a city very much like Dayton. And I had the good luck to be graduating in the mist of the Vietnam War. I had the bad luck to have a very, very low draft number, which meant that I was going to be drafted, and I thought that the Air Force sounded better than more slogging pursuits like the Army. So, I went in the Air Force. I was too blind to be a pilot. So, I become a navigator in cargo jets and spent a few years doing that through Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

KM: Where did you get the training for that?
BB: There’s only one school. I graduated from college in upstate New York and I went in the Air Force, and the Air Force’s navigating… there’s a number of pilot training bases for the Air Force, but there’s only one navigator base.

KM: Okay.

BB: And in those days it was Sacramento, California. So, I went to Sacramento, California for a year and then came out of there and then went up to Tacoma, Washington to those big cargo jets that I was referring to, and then from there out into the Pacific and basically as far as Vietnam, Southeast Asia, Thailand, Cambodia, places like that. And then did that for a while, I then became a… eventually I was replaced by a machine that the addition of global positioning systems like inertial navigating systems meant that people who got airplanes around using the moon and the stars and the planets, which was what I did, were not very useful anymore. So, they made me a strategic air command missile crew commander, in the Dakotas, at a place called Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. Did that, went out to California to a strategic air command headquarters out there, and along the way I got introduced to a fellow who is probably the most famous man in the field of management. His name is Peter Drucker and he was my professor for three years at my doctoral program at the Claremont Graduate School. Finished from there, went to the Air Force Academy, spent four years there as a deputy department head in teaching management.

KM: So, you lived in Colorado Springs?

BB: We lived on the academy on the north edge of Colorado Springs. So, we were actually living in the housing valleys on the base, on the academy.

KM: So, somewhere along the line you got married.

BB: Yes, yes. That happened really right at the beginning. So, we’ve been married now for 50, going on 50, this month it will be 51 years.

KM: Congratulations.

BB: Yeah, it was probably the biggest mistake, but from my point of view it worked out pretty well. She might not… well, we’ll see. Um, it was a good deal, though. I was going around flying here and there and doing all this kind of stuff, and she was 19, going to places where we didn’t know a soul in the town, and then she’d get a job or she’d go to school, and halfway through it I would be, “Okay, time to move again”.

KM: Did you meet in Rochester? Or were you-

BB: Yeah, yeah.
KM: Okay, so from the very beginning. So, you were all across the country-

BB: Yeah, all across the world.

KM: She was somewhere in the Northwest coast and you were over in Northeast Asia?

BB: Somewhere, there, and at some point in Oklahoma, and Florida, Colorado, and California, and California, and California, and all these different places. So, it was a tough life for her. It was an easy life for me, but it was a tough… being married to someone in the military is not the easiest thing I think.

KM: Many years in the Air Force then-

BB: Yeah, 20.

KM: -and then you went back to school?

BB: No, I did that while I was in school.

KM: Okay.

BB: While I was in the Air Force. The teacher, the professor I mentioned, Peter Drucker-

KM: Peter Drucker, mm hmm?

BB: -ran a group that had the general, the Air Force general, it was like, it was almost like a community group, they called it the “Monday Morning Group”, because they met on Fridays.

KM: *Laughs*

BB: And they would meet, the general and Peter Drucker, and Peter Drucker said, “Do you have anybody that you would nominate for my PhD program?” The general came back and said, “Is anybody interested?” Everybody else went, “Nah”, I said “Hey, I'll do it.” So, that’s how I wound up doing that, and then from there that led to the Air Force Academy. And then at the end of four years at the Air Force Academy they came to me, and I had written my dissertation- and it kind of made me famous in the 15 minutes of fame thing- on a canceled Air Force program called “The Flying Wing”, and there were a lot of allegations that the Northrop Corporation had gotten abused by the Air Force, and in particular, by the Secretary of the Air Force, that the Air Force had corruptly taken away Mr. Northrop’s design and his business. And I came stumbling into that looking for a dissertation topic and saying, “Gee, that sounds kind of interesting.” So, you know it was going to be an ethics and government kind of study, and the next
thing I knew, I was the world’s greatest expert on this airplane, because I knew a lot of the old Air Force people, people who are all gone now. The Secretary of the Air Force from those days, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, which was the number one military leader, a guy named Curtis LeMay. I knew all these guys, and so I was able to do this dissertation. So, I finished my time with the academy and I got a call, “Would you like to come to Dayton, Ohio?”, and I said, “Well, no, not really”, but that’s where I ended up. So, they said, “Where do you want to work?” Then they said, “We have a job for you if you want it”, and I said, “Well, what would I be doing?”, and they said, “We can’t tell you.” So, I said, “Who would I be working for?” and they said, “We can’t tell you that, either”, and I said, “Well, what does the job entail?”

KM: We can’t tell you that, either. *Laughs*

BB: “We can’t tell you anything. Do you want the job or don’t you?” So, I said, “Sure, why not?” So, we came to Dayton.

KB: Because you’re a risk taker.

BB: Yeah, you know, by then I figured I had nothing to lose. So, we came to Dayton, and I ended up going to going into what they call “the black world”, which was the secret world there, because that’s when the stealth bombers were being built. And the stealth bomber it turned out, although nobody knew this at the time, certainly I didn’t know it at the time, was building on the thing that I had become the world’s greatest expert on, the original Northrop flying wing. The stealth bomber was another flying wing, being built by Northrop 40 years later, and people reasoned- probably not correctly- that I might have a leg up based on knowing something about the history. So, I-

KM: So, did your dissertation end up getting passed around kind of like, like the novel, the story, not the true story. It was non-fiction, but it could have been a best seller.

BB: Well, that’s exactly what happened, and the reason that it happened that way was the Secretary had cleared- Mr. Northrop gave a deathbed interview where he said that the Secretary of the Air Force, a man who went on to be senator for 24 years, a man named Stuart Symington, that Stuart Symington was a crook, and that he had tried to force Northrop to do something corrupt, and when Northrop didn’t he canceled Northrop’s airplane, he being the Secretary of the Air Force. So, I ended this ice stumble, and I write to Symington and say, “Hey, this guy says that you’re a crook. What do you have to say?” Well, the next thing you know, I’m in trouble with everybody. The Air Force is mad at me because now this guy is a U.S. Senator and he’s screaming about me.

KM: Powerful, right.
BB: It all got kind of evened out, it all got worked out. Again, I knew all these guys, so I was in a position to do the dissertation and the dissertation ended up cleared and signed with him. So, the reason it got passed around was that he had hundreds of copies of it printed up and distributed all throughout the aerospace business, and it got to many people. But the Commander at Wright-Patterson got a copy of it and then contacted me and said, “Would you like to come work here?” and I said, “Sure.”

KM: That is a fabulous story, Bud.

BB: Yeah, it doesn’t happen much in the Air Force.

KM: That is a really amazing story.

BB: That's not the way it usually works.

KM: No, and I would wager a bet that most dissertations sit on dusty selves, and maybe the dissertation committee reads it and a couple of your loved ones might get through it if they’re so inclined, but to have your dissertation distributed to so many powerful people?

BB: Yeah. He put a sensational cover on it. The title of it was relatively dry and academic, I can’t remember what it was. But he put it out there, you know, “the real story” kind of thing, and then distributed it, and he distributed it to every congressman, every senator, and to all the people that he knew in Washington. He’d been in Washington for 40 years at that point, so there were a lot of copies to this, and they were floating around, and the next thing I know, I guess I was famous. And then I came here and immediately disappeared, because one year in the secret world here, you become a non-visible person, you know. So, I couldn’t write anymore. Eventually after I retired, I turned the dissertation into a couple of articles.

KM: Okay.

BB: For popular journals and things.

KM: Is it still something somebody could find if they searched it? Because I would be very interested in reading that.

BB: Yeah. I’ll send you a copy of the short- of the 10-page article, from Claremont, which is where I got my PHD. I still get every month a list of a number of people who downloaded the dissertation every month. See, Northrop just came out with another one. Last Friday night they did the rollout of the new stealth bomber, the B-21.

KM: Just saw that. I just saw an article on that.
BB: Well, that’s generated all kinds of interest in the flying wings, whatever happened to the original one, oh, this guy wrote a dissertation on this, and now I’m getting… yeah, it’s gone from two or three a month now to fifteen to twenty a month, people downloading the dissertation, and finding it-

KM: I find this fascinating, and I would never have guessed.

BB: Yeah, it’s kind of a different world.

KM: So, you find yourself in Dayton, Ohio at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in this dark world. How did you get connected to Wright State University?

BB: Well, that was interesting, too. Around this time, I’ve got maybe sixteen years in the Air Force, and I open the base newspaper and there’s an ad in the paper from Wright State University. All I knew about Wright State is that was where our kids went in the summer, the kids went to the little kids program-

KM: Summer camp, mm hmm.

BB: Yeah, the summer camps. But it says, “we’re looking for somebody who’s got a PhD in Management, who’s got experience as a project manager”. Because I’m working as the production program manager for the B-2, but I couldn’t tell anybody. “Somebody who has written articles, somebody who has got a PhD…”, and somebody who’s got all these qualifications, and I thought. “God, that job is perfect!” But I’ve got sixteen years in the Air Force. I’m not leaving at this point. Maybe they’ll fill the job and maybe that guy will get hit by a bus or something and then it will be open again at twenty. Because I made a deal with my wife that I would have the first twenty years, and she would have everything after that. So, I knew that the Air Force wanted me to go to Washington, but we weren’t going to move again. Everybody knew that in the family, but also my bosses and stuff knew that. So, I thought I would be sticking around, so I began teaching as an adjunct at Wright State and at UD, thinking that something might work out. In the meantime, there’s this job that I can’t take, but it looked perfect for me. Well, it was my introduction to academic thinking, because they never filled the job. Four years later when I retired the job is still open and they ran another ad. In the meantime, they have been taking students into this program, but nobody can teach the courses. So, they hired me, Wright State-

KM: And who was dean at the time?

BB: Wald Goulet.

KM: Wald Goulet.
BB: Wald Goulet and Rishi were the deputy, or the... I forget the terminology, I had the job-

KM: The Associate Dean.

BB: Yeah, Associate Dean. So, they hired me. So, it was kind of... it was the strangest negotiation I was involved in. Did you know Rishi?

KM: I have met him on several occasions. Because I started here in '83, and people in Student Affairs don't necessarily interact regularly with the senior staff in the colleges, but yes, we were in different social circles.

BB: He had a pretty heavy accent, he wasn't always easy to understand.

KM: Right.

BB: And so, he had called me to give me the job offer over the phone, and he said, “Well, we're very happy to have you come to Wright State University.” And I said, “I'm happy, too”, and everything. “We're prepared to offer you a position as an Assistant Professor in Management at a salary of [...] 5,000 dollars.” Well, I didn't hear the first digit. 5,000? It was something 5,000. I was sitting there thinking, and Rishi is thinking that I am playing hard ball with him. He thinks that the silence means I'm negotiating silently, but the truth is I'm trying to figure out what he said.

KM: *Laughs*

BB: So, I, he came back again and said, “Well, or we are prepared to go as high as [...] eight thousand dollars.” Well, I still didn't hear the first digit.

KM: *Laughs*

BB: But I knew he wasn’t going to go up forever, and I wanted the job. I really liked Wright State as an adjunct. So, I said, “That will be fine.” So, I called my wife who is a negotiator buying billion dollar airplane programs at this point for the government, and she said, “So, let me get this straight. You've taken a job and you don't know within 10,000 dollars what the job pays?” I said, “Yeah. Actually, I don't know within 20,000 dollars what the job pays. I have no idea what the first digit was”.

KM: *Laughs* “I don't know what the first couple of numbers were!”

BB: But whatever they were I’m really happy about it. So, for the next week I ran out to the mailbox everyday to see what the offer was in the mail. So, that's how I ended up coming to Wright State.
KM: That’s really pretty funny.

BB: So, Wald was the Dean, Rishi was the Associate Dean, The Chair in Management by the time I got here was a guy named Bob Scherer.

KM: I remember that name, too.

BB: And he- they were all wonderful to me. You know, Wald was always a big, cuddly guy. They treated me great the whole time I was here.

KM: I remember Wald pretty well, because he and the woman who was my direct supervisor, Lorna Dawes-

BB: That’s another name I know.

KM: -were friendly. Lorna was the director of the University Center back then, and she and I started a program called the Madrigal Dinner which ran for 30 years, almost 30 years, at Wright State.

BB: Oh God, yes, I went to those.

KM: Wald every year would get a table, you know, and invite friends and whatever, and that was a pretty good holiday tradition which involved collaborations with Music, and our theater folks, and other people in the community. But it also brought a lot of colleges, and other academic folks to events that we were doing and showcasing our students. So, I always thought that he was pretty generous when it came to being a participant with that.

BB: He was a very forceful guy. He had grown up, um- I think I’ve be told that he lives by us down in Florida now, though I haven’t seen him in a few years. But he was a… I think he’d done his PHD while working like on the floor as a foreman in an auto factory or something, so he had a lot of, um, he was a forceful guy.

KB: Yeah.

BB: -You didn’t have any doubt of where you stood with him, and he was the dean when I got hired. Paige Mullhollan was the president. My very first faculty meeting, as I recall it, was over in the Med Sci auditorium where the were holding a vote of no confidence for Paige Muhollan, because he had the gall to build the Nutter Center, and I remember thinking, “This is crazy, this guy should be commended for doing this”, but, you know. He had also had the vision of Wright State as a community… what do you call it, a metropolitan university, that was the term.

KM: Yeah, that was a term where we all kind of scratched our head and thought, “What exactly does that mean?”. I’m interested in your… how it was for you to go
from the military world to strictly an academic world, and the environment of and
the politics of higher education. How did that compare?

BB: It is a huge difference, that’s true. But there’s a joke sometimes people say,
“Oh, I heard that your son is in the military”, and the answer is, “Oh, no, no, he’s
in the Air Force.” Because the Air Force has a little bit more of a- the parts of the
Air Force that I was in has a little bit more of an intellectual bent than other parts
of the military. So, you know, the cargo operations that I flew in tended to operate
probably more like Delta Airlines than they operate like the Marine Corps. For
those of us who were missile crew commanders in the Dakotas, the Air Force
paid for our MBAs, they arranged cooperative agreements with local universities,
in my case the University of North Dakota, and we got our MBAs while we’re in
working on missile crews and stuff, so there’s a really high value on education in
the Air Force that I don’t know is always there in the other services. Having not
been in the other services I can’t say for sure. The Air Force really pushed that
kind of thing, so the academic part was okay. The politics was different. At least
in my part of the Air Force, there was very, very little politics. For example,
everybody knew what everybody made, everybody knew what everybody’s rank
was, everybody knew what everybody did and everything.

KM: Transparent.

BB: Yeah, and that transparency wasn’t always there, you know, here. So, there
was some adjustment to that. I had it really easy. A lot of guys who did make that
transition from the military to Wright State- because there were others like me
who were hired before and after me. A lot weren’t happy with the transition and
soon left. In fact, I think toward the end Joe Coleman and I were the only two
retired Air Force guys still in the College of Business, where at one time it was
largely made up of those people. The people who came here at least in
Management at the beginning of Wright State tended to come from the Air Force
by way of Ohio State and by way of something called “AFIT”, the Air Force
Institute of Technology.

KM: Mm hmm. Yeah.

BB: But that was all gone by the time I got here. The cultures were too different.

KM: Its interesting about politics in higher education, I heard a really cynical
comment made by someone who said, “Politics and higher education are so high
because the stakes are so low.”

BB: So low. Yeah.

KM: That was kind of depressing. But, you know, it was interesting coming from
my background in the Student Affairs area and the non-academic area, we
always kind of knew where we stood in the totem pole of institutional value. And

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there were some who actually who had, you know, rankings of which academic areas were more important or had more gravitas than the others, and so it was interesting to be on the outside, you know, looking in to that and working within that environment.

BB: The Air Force was that way, too. There were ins and outs, you know. It was largely- my pilot friends would be upset with me for saying this, but it was largely a pilots’ Air Force run by pilots for the benefit of pilots. Navigators, even though we were officers like they were, were kind of second-class citizens a little bit. And so, when I came here and found out, for example, as a non-tenured, you know, until you get tenure, you’re sort of pond scum, and I think instructors and lecturers will tell you that they are treated that way, sometimes.

KM: When did you get tenure?

BB: I got it really early. I came here in ’91, and I was tenured in ’94.

KM: That is fast.

BB: Well, it was, but I had-

KM: You had a lot of experience and a lot of-

BB: Yeah, and I had taught. In fact, I’d been an associate professor at the Air Force Academy. In fact, they would have hired me here as a- my job offer was I could come as an Assistant or I could come an Associate. They recommended- and they being the people who made me the offer, which was Rishi and the department chair, Scherer, they recommended that I come as an Assistant. They said, “First of all, when you come in and make Associate, you get a bump in pay”. But the other thing is if you came in as an Associate, as I recollect the rules at that time, you had to make tenure within 3 years, and if you came in as an Assistant you had 6, and nobody knows how long it’s going to take you to get published. So, I wasn’t in any hurry, you know? I never… I only intended to stay… I never intended to stay 30 years for sure.

KM: There you go.

BB: I intended to stay 20.

KM: That was going to be my next question, is did you have this notion when you came to this university how long you’ll be here.

BB: I was going to be her exactly as long as was in the Air Force, 20 years. So, I retired from the Air Force at age 41, and I figured I retire from here at age 61,
and then I’d go out, and of course I ended up retiring here at 71. Um, so it changed.

KM: So, you had experience, significant experiences, both as the faculty member but also as the administer.

BB: Yeah.

KM: How do you describe those two experiences, and your preferences for one or both? Or neither. *Laughs*

BB: You know, it’s funny, I would tell my students, the sort of Delphic Oracle “Know thyself” kind of thinking. Understand yourself, and it will help keep you out of doing these that you’re either not good at or not going to be happy in. I was very good at giving that advice. I was very lousy at following that advice, and so I felt like I… what I wanted to do is teach. That was all I wanted to do. I think I wound up being okay at that. I was very happy with that, I know that. I think I wound up getting like 25 teaching awards while I was here.

KM: That’s an impressive number.

BB: It was a lot. I won the Kegerreis thing twice [Robert J. Kegerreis Distinguished Professor of Teaching Award], for the top [?], but I didn’t want to say that for the tape-

KM: But that’s important, though. That’s institutional recognition, and those of us who would attend the “Three Legs of the Stool” ceremonies as well as the President’s Awards for Excellence for Staff, that’s part of the way you would find out who’s one first on campus and who were the people that you could reach out to if you-

BB: I’ve got that plague, back when they called it the “Three Legs”, with the leg out of it and all that.

KM: Yeah, yes, yes.

BB: Um, I never- I think if I’m right in saying, I never did anything in my life as well, as successfully, as teaching. I was a good navigator but I wasn’t… well, so is everybody else. I was a good missile crew commander, but so are other people. But when I found my calling in teaching, not here, at the Air Force Academy when I was still on active duty, and I went in there in class and all of a sudden everything worked.

KM: It felt good.

BB: It felt right.
KM: Yeah.

BB: And so, coming here was not a mystery to me. I figured if it felt right there, it would feel right here.

KM: And I wonder about that, because there are plenty of people who came here as early faculty, as young faculty members, not having had any experience beyond really maybe they came right from dissertation completion and were thrown into a classroom. You might know your subject matter incredibly well, but do you know how to teach? That’s a good question, you know? And that’s one of the weird things about higher ed. You know, when you’re a teacher in K through 12, part of what you’re learning is how to teach, the pedagogy, how do you do this? But in higher ed it’s not quite that way.

BB: I always thought it was ironic that I would be perfectly qualified to teach at any university in the world, and totally unqualified to teach the 3rd grade class in history in Fairborn or in elementary school. I mean, because of that, all the things, the stuff that… my wife went on and finished her- essentially, I pulled her out of college, she was 19, she got her degree, eventually she got her master’s degree, and she got another master’s degree. And then when I decided to teach online, she said, “If you teach online…”, and by then she was a high-level person out at Wright-Patt, “… I’ll go back and take courses from Sheri Stover at Wright State about how people learn, especially how they learn online”. And she said the same thing that you said, in that you’ve got all these degrees, I’ve got four degrees, and they’re all in the same subject, and none of them have the slightest thing to do with teaching. And she said, “We’ll learn about teaching online”, and I said, “Okay”. So, she did, she went back, she started Sheri’s program and she got halfway through it, and at that point Sheri said, “We want to select you as the outstanding student in the program, but you’re not technically in the program if you’re not pursuing a degree.” Diana said, “I don’t need a degree. I have three degrees now.” She said, “Well, if you change your mind.” And so, Diana just said, “Well, okay”, and so she went back out to finish the third master’s.

KM: Oh, my goodness.

BB: But that’s all about teaching, it’s all about learning, it’s all about… the things that I took, I’ve always believed, for example, if you are talking in front of a room, you’ve got a visual up there, the visual reinforces what you are saying, I sort of believe that. Data free, but I still believe it. The evidence seems to be the other way. The evidence says that they can watch you, or they can listen to you, but they can’t do both at the same time. So, by doing this… so Sheri, for example, her approach, you know, I’m talking for Sheri, was if you got a visual up there, make it something with no words on it at all, just background relative to the topic, but understand that while you’re talking, they’re either listening to you or they’re reading that, but they can’t do both. Those are the kinds of things that we never
thought of, and were disciplined type teachers. Anyway, the biggest surprise to me coming to Wright State from the Air Force Academy was that the Air Force Academy was at that time the most or one of the most selective schools in the country. I was on the admissions committee for at least 2 of the 4 years. Our acceptance rate was somewhere between 7-9%. And I came to Wright State and everybody said, “Oh, you know it’s an open enrollment university, God knows what you’re going to run into”, and I really thought that, it crossed my mind. But it was never the case. Here at Wright State, we tended not to have 1/10th of 1/10th of 1% Rhodes Scholars. rough scholars. The Air Force Academy had more Rhodes Scholars in the last 25 years than any other school in the country, even more than the big ivy league schools. You didn’t have those. Those kids are at Stanford or Northwestern or Chicago somewhere. But you had these motivated—especially when I started here—these motivated mothers who were coming back to school after having being away from school for 20 years. And were… the people, I loved the students here at Wright State, and I never once felt that I was having to slow anything down for, you know, compared to teaching at the Air Force Academy. Never once.

KM: I love hearing you say that. Because not being a faculty member, but working with students more on their out of classroom experiences and the kind of experiences that can connect their in-classroom to out-of-classroom and future career experiences, I was also very aware of the fact that so many of these students were coming to Wright State as non-traditional or first-generation students, and they were highly motivated. They, as compared to some of my friends that worked at Ivy’s, or para-Ivy’s I would call them- expensive, private schools that like to think that they maybe had this wonderful reputation for turning out brilliant students- and a lot of my friends who worked there said the students drove them crazy because they came from privilege and they acted as if everything should just be given to them, and they weren’t good at coping because everything had been given to them, and I never had that experience. And now, years after retiring and still in touch with so many graduates from Wright State, including many students who were graduate assistants in our various departments who’ve gone on to wonderful careers, and they are so bright and so motivated and special. You know, that was the greatest joy of working here, for me, was getting know these students.

BB: It was for me, too, and it continued to be all through the 30 years I was here. My students were… our daughter went to OU, and then to the honor program there, and our son went to Miami. And they, my students, would refer Miami as J. Crew U [laughs]. Because their impression was, you know, Buffy and Skippy park their Land Rovers over here, you know, that kind of stuff. And I don’t know if that stereotype is right, but certainly here people work for what they had. I went to college at a small Catholic college, it was called St. John Fisher- it is now called University- in Rochester, and you worked for a couple of hours and then you drove to school, then you went to school for a couple of hours and then went...
back to work, that was the experience of everybody back then at my school. And I found a lot of that here, too. Almost none of our students- almost none of the undergrads that I had and very few MBA students were just full-time students. They were full time students plus.

KM: I know. It's really pretty impressive. Our older three, we told them that they were going to come to Wright State because, I don't know if you know this, but our older three are triplets, and so my husband and I said, "Look, none of you really know what it is that you want to do, so we're telling you, you will spend your first year at Wright State, and if for some reason you decide you don't want to stay there, or if you find a passion to do something and you want to do it somewhere else then we'll talk about it, but that's what you're going to do your first year." So, they came up here, they lived on campus, and all three of them landed in three different colleges, and after that first year they said, "We're not going anywhere, we love it here". One of them is a Raj Soin College of Business graduate, one was a school of Science and Math, or College of Science and Math, the other one was in Liberal Arts, and they all went on to graduate programs and went into other things, but they had the best experience here, and ours was just one of hundreds and now thousands of stories of people who came here and thought, “This is a pretty good place”.

BB: I think ours would have, too. They did come here once we had we had to pay for it, they only walked away when it would have been free. So, our son went to med school here, and when you don't get a break from being a child, and our daughter started her MBA here, then she left the MBA and went to law school, but yeah, they both ended up here for a graduate program, but for undergraduate they wanted to be on their own, away from here.

KM: I totally get it. Totally get it.

BB: I didn’t.

KM: It’s interesting how… what happens when it is your children and how you advise them through the process, but now watching my friends and colleagues, including just talking to Eric Corbitt, his daughter is a freshman here, or sophomore here now. Many of my colleagues who were staff of mine, I knew them when their children were babies, and now their children are here or they’ve graduated from here and they're onto their next adventure, and it’s exciting and very satisfying to know that.

BB: I’ve known Eric for so long, but I can’t remember from where. I don’t remember him from the MBA?

KM: Eric, no, he has been- he was in charge of Campus Rec for a long, long time, and then for the last 12 years he’s been in charge of the Student Union and Campus Rec, he’s got Campus Life and Student Activities, and commencement
functions and special events fall under him, and there is a whole bunch of stuff squished into his world at this point.

BB: I think he… I guess I knew him from here, from-

KM: Mm hmm, from Campus Rec.

BB: From Campus Rec, and then he asked me to speak at a couple of their different conferences or some kind of seminars that they had or something.

KM: Here is a special guy.

BB: So, I knew him, and I knew Drew, you know, similarly, and I always joked about “the brothers”.

KM: We did kind of see them as twins, with same names spelled differently. But yeah, two good guys.

BB: I remember Drew was- you mentioned the Christmas thing.

KM: The Madrigal.

BB: Yeah. Drew was a waiter one year that we went.

KM: Yes, he was. [Laughing] Yup.

BB: He took care of us while we were there. We had to do a double take.

KM: Well, part of the reason we had staff involved in that, too is that was part of a- we did some fundraising for the scholarship program in the Student Union and Campus Rec. So, funds that they would raise with tips and other things all would be channeled into scholarships that they would give students that were employed in the Student Union and Campus Rec, which is a pretty cool thing.

BB: I feel very glad to have stumbled into Wright State. I really do. I don't know, it was just the perfect thing for me, and the students were the perfect thing for me.

KM: Do you have a best memory?

BB: The… I'd only been here a couple of years, and I'll tell you how altruistic we were, and it was hard to believe in the days of the AAUP and things, and what we did would never have been allowed. Six of us, altruistically and naively, decided to create a course and team teach it, and we would all be there all the time. This was not a tag team, you know, “You've got the first few weeks and I've got the second few weeks”. We didn't get paid at all for it. And it was a former
 dean, Joe Castellano, and I forget her name… Suzan Lytle, Robert Sweeney, me, Paula Saunders, and a guy from management science named Gordon Constable.

KM: That name I don’t know.

BB: He was not a- he was kind of a solitary guy, so you wouldn’t see him around campus much. So, the six of us taught this course for two years. As I said, we didn’t get paid for it, it all came out of our hides. We all ended up putting an extraordinary amount of effort into it. But those 6 people, those 5 other people- Dick Williams was involved in it, but not as a member. But Dick got- he helped us get grant money for it. But those people ended up being probably the closest relationship, in fact, Diane and I just left Venice, Florida a couple weeks ago to drive to South Carolina to spend the weekend with Robert, and Michael, and Suzan Lytle and her husband, and Carol Hartwell, she was an accounting professor.

KM: I knew the name.

BB: She and her husband, too. The 8 of us to get together- the Lytle group it became to be known as- wound up being the basis for a European travel group, and a dozen of us would head off to Europe- Ireland and Paris and things- for different trips. Then it became the basis for an annual celebration called “Festivus”. If you’re familiar with Seinfeld. Festivus is the holiday for people who don’t have other holidays. So, a bunch of people, John Talbott and others, were all part of this Festivus group, and every Christmastime we would end up in some hotel or somewhere, and just kind of have a weekend, with Charles Hartmann and some others, and that was Festivus for the rest of us. That all grew out of that one thing. It was a totally sincere and altruistic thing. Nobody got promoted, nobody got extra money, nobody got any money.

KM: How many students were in this class that you offered?

BB: It went for… we did it for two years and it went for a year both times, it seems to me. So, it was three terms, it went fall, winter, spring, and I would say it was either 20 or 25.

KM: Did you select who was able to take it?

BB: We started thinking that, but the enrollments were not so… we thought we’d have- it was such a great idea, we thought we’d have to beat people away with a stick. But the truth is we wound up taking pretty much everybody who was interested. Not everybody stayed with it, so some would take one term, and then say, “Eh, it’s more work than I want to do.” But like I said, we did it for two years, it was completely outside of the normal part of the university. It didn’t have a business course, it wasn’t like an MGT course or an ACC course. I think it was
just called business. And that sort of- now its 30 years later, those friendship are still intact. None of us are still here.

KM: But those relationships are still there.
BB: Those relationships, yeah.

KM: And that’s probably, you know, if you last someplace long enough, if you’re fortunate to be in a place that has the kind of culture where those relationships can grow, you can leave and have those friendships. It’s very much how I feel about the people that I spent almost 34 years with here.

BB: Really? I didn’t know you were here that long.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: For me, I say 30. It was actually 30 total, it was 29 full-time. I started in ’91 and I retired in ‘20. But I had been teaching as an adjunct in ‘90.

KM: ‘90?

BB: Both here and at UD.

KM: And you’re still teaching, occasionally.

BB: I’m still teaching, but it’s purely… what do they call it, psychic rewards, you know, you’re not on anybody’s payroll. Osher is a concept that was… what they do, it was a guy named Osher, and what they do is they forge a relationship with a university in town, and in Dayton it’s UD.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: And so, they have an office down there with 3,4,5,6 people, and they call it UDOLLI, University of Dayton Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and they offer courses. Do you know Barbara Dennison?

KM: Yes.

BB: Barb was the past president of UDOLLI. She’s very, very active in it.

KM: She was one of my favorite faculty members-

BB: Mine, too.

KM: -as a new professional. She was on Wright State’s Artist Series Committee and our Lecture Series Committee for many years, and always brought really
good energy and ideas to those committees and was really supportive of the things that we did. So, I always appreciated her input.

BB: She’s been after me for years to teach down there. And I always, you know, I was a teacher here, or always had some excuse. But I started teaching... do you remember Jim Gallagher?

KM: Uh huh.

BB: Jim was teaching classes down there.

KM: He’s Air Force, too.

BB: Yeah, he’s a retired civilian. Jim’s teaching classes was really what Jim was all about, which was connections. So, if Jim’s teaching a class, it meant that he would bring in six people to teach one lesson each, and he would sort of coordinate the whole thing.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: And so he got me involved in it, and I taught some courses for him, and then Barbara was involved in it, and anything Barbara was involved in I was interested in, so. And she still is.

KM: I saw Jim not long before he died. I was accompanying a friend to her rotary meeting, her Dayton rotary meeting.

BB: Yeah.

KM: He was there and we chatted for a while. I hadn’t seen him for a while. But yeah.

BB: His passing was quite sudden.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: He was playing tennis, his wife had made him stay home through the pandemic, and he was playing tennis and he went to serve and he couldn’t raise his arm, and the next thing you know he had a tumor in his arm, and it led to one thing after another very, very quickly. People, we kind of thought this would be a years-long process, and it wasn’t. But he was 85, so.

KM: Still, yeah, it’s-

BB: It was a big surprise to us.
KM: There have been several of late at the university, the passing of several, and on the retirees committee we have a memoriam moment at our meetings every month. We've got a person on the committee that usually reports on people who have passed, and it’s becoming more and more strange to me because I know so many of these names.

BB: I know.

KM: And for a long time, I was the only person on the retiree’s board who was not in Medicare, on Medicare, [laughs], because I was the youngest one on the board. So, it always seemed odd to me, but it’s… it becomes a little more real from year to year, doesn't it?

BB: It does. It does.

KM: It does. What other stories or memories would you like to share for this purpose?

BB: Um, you know, I was thinking about it on the way here, and I figured you were gonna ask a question along the lines of best experiences. So, that naturally- because I'm that kind of person- sent me to thinking about worst experiences.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: And…

KM: We've talked about that with some of the retirees.

BB: For most of the time I was here- almost all of the time, in fact maybe all the time? Almost all the time- I felt that the leadership- how do I put this in a positive tone- that the leadership of the university was vastly stronger than the leadership of the college, in our college. Working for Goldenberg and Hopkins and such, I felt that they had their act together better than the College of Business did, with some of the deans that we had were not as strong as the sum of the people at the college level, as at the university level. And I think towards the end- I'm not positive of stuff all the time- but for most of the time I was here. But there were things that the university did that just left me wondering. There was a… when I was delivering, when I was a kid, like 20 or 18, I was delivering groceries in a very high-end neighborhood, and one of my customers was a guy named Al Neuharth. It's a name that people don’t know anymore. He was the head of Gannett Publishing, and he was the founder of USA Today.

KM: Okay, okay.
BB: He wrote a book and in it he said, “Keep the accountants on tap, but never on top”, and there was a period here where we did things at the university level that absolutely destroyed motivation and quality at the college level, and I was just shocked at that. Because up until that time, I really believed that the university leadership was smarter than that, frankly, and all of a sudden, you know, the whole business about activity-based costing, “Princeton does it so we should do it”, and all that. It killed cooperation in the college, between the colleges. Management, for example, we would be happy to have a student take intro to leadership over in the College of Education.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: All that ended. There was none of that anymore. Because your hours determined your budget, and the idea of the university to me was for people to mix and-

KM: Across the table.

BB: -across the table, and not silos, and seamless organizations, and all of this.

KM: Right.

BB: And here, the accounting system was driving the exact antithesis of what the university ever stood for, and what it continued to say what it stood for. You know, we’re for creating whole, well-rounded people and all this kind of stuff, but yeah, take all your classes at Rike Hall at the College of Business. So, we did that. They… there was a whole series of programs called "75/25". 75/25 stood for, if you were the college, decided to go out and do something on your own, not during the day, making use of weekends, night times, and all the rest-

KM: Yeah.

BB: -you could get, the college could get 75% of the revenue. 25% would go to the university.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: 75% stayed with you. We began a lot of innovative, creative programs that way. We began the weekend MBA, on campus here. It was 75/25. We began the Lake Campus MBA. Bob Scherer and Tom Knapke up there created this wonderful program up there that thrived for many years. We did Tortola MBA-

KM: I remember that.

BB: We did China in Shanghai, we did China in Beijing, both of which I got to teach there. We did years of China here, with MBA students coming here. All
those were 75/25’s, where we would get the money, and the college would keep 75% and 25% would be handed over to the university. And then one day, “Sorry. Can’t do that anymore.” And I was saying to Steven Angle and to others, you will kill motivation. Right now, people are giving up their weekends to drive to Gallipolis to teach at the University of Rio Grande in an MBA program- all day Saturday- and what you’re going to tell them is that the benefits that their college got from that are now gone. They’re not going do it anymore. “Well, that’s the way that it is”. And we let an accounting-driven change drive the vision of the university in that regard, and I thought it was the biggest waste.

KM: Do you thing it created…

BB: None of the programs survived. None of them.

KM: Do you thing it created more siloing across the institution among, you know, separating colleges?

BB: I think activity-based costing definitely did that. The 75/25 just kills innovation, period.

KM: Altogether.

BB: Every one of those programs, every one, died. And they were never the same. We were doing the MBA at Mason, we were doing the MBA at the Mound… gone. And it was all because of the university accounting system saying, “We want 100%”. Well, we said, “100% of nothing is less than 25% of something”. They didn't hear it. And it just destroyed it.

KM: It’s frustrating…

BB: And I never understood it.

KM: It’s frustrating to be part of something that you see as being really positive and creative, and then being an observer to watching something come apart.

BB: It was… I mean, the money was being used for things like nowadays. In fact, ever since the renovation of Rike Hall, which- I don’t know, there were a couple of them- but ever since that, if you walk into a Rike Hall classroom there’s a computer-projector set up, and you manipulate it and it works great.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: In those days that was not the case. In the early days, the money… all the audio visual was bought with what they called, “fallout money”, the money that was around at the end of the fiscal year, and they bought whatever fit with whatever was available, and so of course every single classroom was different.
So, you go into a classroom and the things that work next door don’t work over here. That was... that just drove us nuts. So, we took that 75/25 money and we started putting it into classroom facilities. We bought projectors that would actually work. We bought projectors that would not blow bulbs every five seconds. You know, we would do all those kinds of things with that money. I mean, people weren’t taking the money home. Well...

KM: You hope. [laughs]

BB: Not in the business we’re in [laughs]. But, anyways. Um, we just gave up this whole good thing. I mean, talk about killing the golden goose. And I said it to the provost, and he said, “Yeah.” But he was listening to the accounting people. This wasn’t Matt Fillipic or anything. I mean Matt was... but this was a bunch of people who came after him, and I think they just-

KM: Yeah. I know of what you speak.

BB: Just killed innovation.

KM: I know. Well, you retired in 2020?

BB: Right, yeah.

KM: And I retired in 2016 when the buyout was made available, and um, that was my most painful thing, was deciding to leave at the time that I did. It would have... it would not have made sense for me not to, given what they were offering and given the writing on the wall that many of us saw. And for those of us who had over 30 years, it would not have made sense not to take what they were offering. So, in the division of Student Affairs, the five senior people walked out the door. And there is no division now.

BB: I remember, I remember seeing you walking out with an armful of pencils or something and you were going to your car, maybe for the last time. I remember that so clearly, and I remember thinking, “this isn’t good”.

KM: Well, it was hard. It was hard, because most of us really didn’t envision that being the way that we wanted to leave.

BB: I didn’t, either.

KM: And fortunately, some really fine people are still here working hard and doing the right things. People like Eric [Corbitt]

BB: Yeah.
KM: And I think all of us who have been part of... certainly those of us who are a part of the retiree’s association care a lot about the institution, or we wouldn’t be here doing any of those kinds of things or whatever. But it’s hard to see an institution go through difficult times.

BB: I felt the same way leaving. I felt like... I never intended to. I used to be like, when people would say, “Well, when are you going to retire?” Retire? I was having a great time.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: And then they hired a kid, a young kid, in Management, and right at the time that it looked like we were going to have this blood bath in the faculty, and I pretty much- he wasn’t the only reason why I left. He was a wonderful guy, an international guy, and he came here, he had a family, you know. But I pretty much knew if I left- the department by then was down to 10 people, they weren’t gonna... it was the best thing that I could do for them. But it’s not fair to say I left because of him. So, well, I figured that the time was maybe right. I’d said no to the first buyout, said no to the 2nd buyout, and then- it’s funny how these things pivot, the Wright State Guardian said to somebody- let’s just say to a senior administrator here at the university, “How many tenured faculty took the buyout? And her answer was, “Not enough”. And I thought, “You know? To hell with it”, and at that point, just those two words were enough to...

KM: It’s really disheartening, isn’t it?

BB: At that point I was right on the edge, and I’m like, “Wait a minute”, not only am I busting my butt by doing this, but I’m dragging my wife into it, because I can’t teach a course on Pilot or Zoom or whatever it is to save my life. She was doing all that stuff, and of course she does it without me, and I’ll tell ya, there were not enough of us left to fix that.

KM: That’s disheartening and, um-

BB: I can’t fix that.

KM: It makes me sad. That was, um, probably one of your least favorite memories.

BB: Yeah, it was...

KM: But I gotta tell you, I was so happy to see you at a retiree sponsored event.

BB: I was the same way, when you asked. She didn’t say what you had to say, but she kind of said that. She said, “you know, your perspective isn’t any different than everybody else’s perspective.”
KM: What I love about this is that everybody’s perspective is really important in terms of telling the story of the institution, in the best of times and in the not so great times. Um, I think most of us who’ve- at least those that have been a part of the interviewing process that I’ve been involved with- have a vast majority of positive things to reflect on, and if the vast majority of what you’re talking about brings you joy and a smile to your face when you’re talking about it, that says something, and most everyone feels that way. Um, I feel grateful for the opportunity to be able to have these conversations with faculty and staff, most of whom are people that I knew more than just an occasional acquaintance. Some people I’ve interviewed I really don’t know very well at all, but it’s been really enlightening for me to learn backstories, history, family, because it even tells a bigger story about this place and the diversity of people who’ve come here and how they got here is always an interesting story.

BB: Well my motivation was you. Um…

KM: I appreciate that.

BB: She said, “so tell me what you’re doing”, and I said if Kathy wants me to watch a dog fight somewhere I would do it, because you and Dan and stuff were always terrific to me. I was always very grateful.

KM: Well I appreciate that. We were very grateful for the relationships that we had across the table. Across colleges, across non-academic departments. In fact, he and I, one of our greatest joys at a certain point in time, a couple of years before we left, Dan was one of the teachers, one of the faculty in the student affairs-higher ed program.

BB: I remember him doing that.

KM: We had at one point- and I coordinated the assistantship matching process and would work with the faculty in the department to try to create assistantships within the colleges and academic areas. At one point, I think we had 31 people in the program who were in assistantships in academic and non-academic areas. Every college had somebody who was in our program. Every administrative department, every major administrative area, had somebody in our program, whether it was advancement or business and finance or academic affairs in general, administration. All these student affairs people were in it, and that gave us joy in part because we knew that people who were doing the work we did were in all areas of higher education. So, you could whether you were doing fundraising, or you were doing advising, or you were doing something programmatic, or something instructional. It was all connected, and it was a great, great experience, and we were so proud of that, and that is essentially gone.
BB: Why is it gone?

KM: Because all of the assistantship money was pretty much wiped. When the budget fell on hard times and there’s I think a handful of people in the program now.

BB: I think I taught some of those students in…

KM: You probably did.

BB: There was a program called DAHS (?)

KM: Yeah.

BB: That's over in education and Mindy McNutt…


BB: was involved in it but was there a Susan, Susanne?

KM: And Carol Patitu is the department chair.

BB: That's now, yeah.

KM: And Dan was part of the faculty and Roxanne DuVivier, and um, and then there were several who were like Dan. Um, had Ph.Ds. and were teaching core courses. I did a couple of the classes. They were, with Master’s degree you could teach a course but the one’s that I did were on facilities and event management kind of things. Because that was my jam for the most part, but it was just really great to be able to know that these students were all over the place. But it's really kind of not working now.

BB: That's a shame. I, I, Suzanne Franco her name was.

KM: Yes!

BB: She, she was leading and Mindy was assisting…

KM: I think she did statistics, a lot of the statistics stuff was Suzanne Franco, right?

BB: I think she was there in education…

KM: Mm hmm.
BB: No, she was doing a lot of certification, she, her specialty was certifying educational programs. I don’t really know what all that means but, but I was doing my international leadership courses or something for them.

KM: Mm hmm

BB: Um, and I know that there were some people from- many of them were on some form of assistantship.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: But, it’s, you know, much was lost.

KM: Yeah. It was.

BB: And, I’m always optimistic that things can be rebuilt but…

KM: I’m glad to hear you say that because I am, too.

BB: I hope it’s true.

KM: And I don’t have any illusions about it being something that’s going to take a long time, and I think when it does, as it evolves it may well be a different looking model than what existed at the time I was there. It already has evolved to a fairly different model, with the college consolidations, administrative changes, and what have you. It’s different, and when you walk away from a place that you’ve spent so much time at, it’s hard to not feel some degree of pain to see it be very different. But at the same time, I think the longer I’m distant from it the less painful it becomes, and I just see that as a part of evolution of most things. There’s change, and there’s peaks and valleys with change.

BB: I was broken in in the Air Force, and what I mean by that is you could build something, or have something good, but when you left you just had to let go, because it was not going be the same no matter what.

KM: That’s right, that’s right.

BB: I built a group, 12 people. This was in the secret world out there. 12 guys, all men, all engineers, all with multiple advance engineering degrees. Half of them were graduates of the US Air Force Test Pilot school. They were really the best group I have ever been associated with, and I was the only non-engineer in the group. I was sort of the ringmaster of the group, but they were the brains of it. And we operated the rules- the black world rules- and what that meant was minimal paperwork, much more focused on face-to-face meetings than bureaucratic kind of stuff, for classification reasons.
KM: was this top-secret stuff?

BB: Yeah It was just- the focus was almost totally getting the job done, and not much at all with bureaucracy and paperwork. Then when I left, I had these twelve guys, and I had brought them in from all around the world, one at a time, for this particular opening. I had a lot… because of the priority of the program, we had a lot… I had the ability to identify somebody I knew. I had one guy in Albuquerque, and I wanted him there.

KM: Mm hmm.

BB: He shows up, you know, like 6 weeks later, and he’s all of a sudden like, “What the hell am I doing here?” and I said “Well, you’re here because we want you here.” And all that. So, I got these 12 guys, and we built this great organization, and when we left they turned it over to a colleague of mine, who’s a very good guy but a totally white-world mentality, and what I mean by that is he’s totally by the book, totally by the rules and regulations, everything is done with triplicate, everything is done, you know, the lieutenant can’t talk to anybody but the captain, the captain can’t talk to anybody but the senior captain…

KM: It’s all by protocols.

BB: And all that kinds of stuff. Within a year, every one of those twelve guys were gone, because they were so good at what they did, that they wound up going off to NASA, you know, and going all around the world to great jobs. The became Generals, they became ISCS’s, all that kind of stuff. And I had to learn it’s not mine anymore, and it’s not going to be the way that I think it should be, it’s not going to be the way that I wanted it. Life isn’t fair.

KM: That’s an important lesson I think for people you are retiring. We’ve had this conversation about… in fact there have been some faculty who requested some retirees come to do a presentation for faculty who are getting ready to retire.

BB: Mm hmm.

KM: To offer suggestions, observations, experiential thoughts, and one of those is kind of that you’ve got to be able to step away and know that it’s not going to be your job, even if you get replaced, someone else becomes the “you”, it’s not going to be the same, and you can’t expect it to be. You’ve got to be able to walk away and say, “I did the best that I could do, and I’m proud of what I left behind”. More power to you and I hope it goes well. Yeah, you have to do that.

BB: Did you know… there was always something kind of pathetic about people who try to hang on, and try to continue to influence things.

KM: Yeah
BB: Did you know, did you know Frank Stickney?

KM: I Know the name but didn’t know him

BB: He was my… he was me, frankly. He was a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who retired 20 years before I did, so he was getting ready to retire from here, and I kind of stepped in after him and this kind of stuff. Well, when he got close to leaving, he very, very much wanted to retain influence in the department. Even though he was going to retire. He wanted to keep his office. Well, some universities might consider that but we didn’t have enough offices as it was. Now they’re giving offices away.

KM: I’ve heard they are everywhere.

BB: My office, my name tag is still on the door, and I’ve been gone two years. Nobody’s in there. [Laughs] One of the department chairs sent me a picture just the other day of my name tag.

KM: [Laughs] Thinking of you!

BB: Um, he wanted to keep his promotion and tenure and those kinds of things, and when people wouldn’t give it to him- Rishi was the dean by then and wouldn’t give it to him- he got quite miffed well, Ritzi. Farmer was the dean he uh got quite miffed. He had given a lot of money to Wright State, and he sort of thought the money and years and effort and hard work should translate into sort of a continuing influence, which I just think isn’t fair.

KM: No.

BB: We had another guy, too, Charles Hartmann.

KM: Yes.

BB: Same thing, he came back and he got all dressed up, we’re like, all dressed up after going to the gym? We were at the lockers, right next to Dan, and he said, “what are you all dressed up for?” “Well, I’m going to see the president” or whoever it was, I don’t know if it was Hopkins or whoever, and he said, “I think they’re doing stuff that they shouldn’t be doing”, and I said, “they don’t care about your opinion”, and he said, “Well, I need to tell them my opinion”.

KM: Oh yeah, it’s hard, it’s hard. I was fortunate to catch up with- I try to stay in touch with my friends and colleagues that are here, and they fill me in on what’s going on, and on occasion they might ask my opinion on something, which I find sweet and endearing, but, you know, I feel like I’m so far removed from that, that
it’s most important for me to be encouraging to those that are still there plugging away and just be a good listener, you know?

BB: I try to do the same thing, and I think I am. Shu Schiller, do you know Shu? Chinese woman?

KM: No.

BB: She’s now the… I think she’s acting dean of the graduate school.

KM: I’m so clueless.

BB: She was a teacher in math and science, Chinese woman, and then she became- she did my old job, she was associate dean, and then just recently in the last couple of months- Barry, Barry, what’s his name? Retired, Irish name, Barry… Fitzgerald or Fitzpatrick? [Milligan] I can’t remember. Barry retired, and she’s taking his job on an interim basis. And she was having a meeting and invited me because I knew… I had the second-best knowledge base in the subject. The best knowledge base was my wife’s. This involved getting students from here hired into the contracting field out at Wright-Patt, and the people who did the hiring all worked for my wife, and they placed hundreds of students out there at Wright-Patt.

KM: I know they did, my son is one of them.

BB: Really?

KM: Mm hmm. He works in acquisitions.

BB: Being contracted?

KM: Uh huh.

BB: Who hired him?

KM: I forgot what her name was.

BB: Was it Estelle? [sp?]  

KM: Uh huh, yeah.

BB: Estelle worked for Diane. So, for probably 10 years I would go home with resumes at the end of class, and I’d say, “hey, this one is really good”, and they would work a little magic and try to get around something called USA Jobs, which was a tangled-up mess, and then try to hire who I wanted to hire. And you would think I was a genius, but the truth of it, as I used to say, if you’re sleeping with the
person who does the hiring then you can get it done. Well, that was what she was having the meeting for, so I wandered around Rike Hall, and I learned my lesson. A good friend of mine is an Air Force retired 3-star General, and we were out there together, he had been the commander, you know, and when he walks down the hall everyone quakes in fear because, you know, not personality-wise but just that position- there’s nothing in academia like that- and he’d been retired maybe three years and we’re walking through the basement of one of the buildings at Wright-Patt and nobody knew who he was, and I’m thinking “Sic Transit Gloria”, you know, how fleeting is fame, how fleeting is glory [laughs]. So, I left Shu’s meeting and I went upstairs to walk around the second floor, and I hardly knew- well, first of all, no one was there, and secondly, everyone is teaching online-

KM: It is totally different. It’s the way I feel walking into the Student Union. I went in to just say hello to Eric [Corbitt] before coming over here and walked in, and there was a nice-looking student behind the desk, and I said “I’m here to catch up with Eric”, and she said, “what’s your name?” and I said “just tell him Kathy’s here”. [Laughs] I was like, there are- the predecessors, all of the Student Union directors have plaques on the back wall with our names on them for different awards that we give to students at the end of the year and what have you, including mine, but she doesn’t know me from Adam, and I wouldn’t expect that she would, you know? It’s just, you know, it’s-

BB: If you’ve got the right perspective, you wouldn’t expect that she would, but my friend, the general, we continued walking around the basement of the building and some major or captain or somebody stops us, sort of like, “what are you doing here?” He didn’t say it quite that way, and me, my reaction is, “hey, hi, this is what we’re here for”, but my friend the general, that wasn’t his reaction, you know. “Three years ago, I was a commander!”, you know.

KM: I know, interesting, well-

BB: You’ve got to let go.

KM: And it seems like you’ve certainly done that. I like to think I’m better at it than I used to be. You still can get riled up about certain topics but I have mainly really good memories from being here and the vast majority of them are tied to particular people and experiences with people that I had here and I’m grateful for all of that.

BB: If I could have changed anything, you know, magic wand, it would be instead of the mix of 25 great years and then 5 “meh” years, I’d have the five at the beginning, and then the last 25.

KM: That’s a great way to look at it, because you want to go out feeling like, ‘yeah!’
BB: I feel like I went out feeling like, “meh”.

KM: Unfortunately, I think the vast majority of us who have left in the last 7 years feel like that. But you know what, we’re still coming back here, we’re still connected to people who are here, and that says something. So, I’m happy for that. And again, I appreciate you taking the time today.

BB: Oh, I’m happy to be here.

KM: It’s something I feel fortunately to be able to do. I took this over after Dan A., Dan Abrahamowicz, became president of the retirees, so he pulled me into the group and said “hey, would you do this?” and I thought, okay, this sounds like a fun thing to do.

BB: And you’re the right one to do it.

KM: The fun thing is it’s not administrative, it’s more programmatic, and you know, we’ve both probably spent enough time running meetings and doing all that kind of stuff where you think, “I really did that enough, I don’t need to do it [anymore]”.

BB: It does feel good to go to a meeting and not be in charge of it. be retired.

KB: That’s exactly it. Think about how much time we’ve spent in meetings?

BB: “I hope it goes well!” [laughs]

KM: Yeah, this is a lot more fun.

BB: I have a favor to ask.

KM: Sure.

BB.: If you need that filled out-

KM: I will fill that out for you.