

Wright State University

CORE Scholar

Wright State University Retirees Association
Oral History Project

University Archives

5-10-2024

Carl Maneri, Mathematics and Statistics

Carl Maneri

Kathy Morris

Follow this and additional works at: https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/archives_retirees



Part of the [Oral History Commons](#)

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
Retiree Association Oral History Project

Interview Information

Interview date: 5/10/2024

Interviewer: Kathy Morris (KM), Associate VP for Student Affairs, Retired

Interviewee: Carl Maneri, Associate Professor (retired), Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Science and Mathematics

Transcript

Kathy Morris: Okay, good afternoon. This is Kathy Morris, Wright State Retirees board member, and I'm charged with conducting oral history interviews with retired faculty and staff members. Today is Friday, May 10th, 2024, and I'm really pleased to be interviewing Carl Maneri, PhD., one of the early hires in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in the College of Science and Mathematics. I always like to begin by just encouraging our presenter to talk a little bit about your background. Where you were born, where you were educated, and ultimately how you ended up here. And then we'll just go from there.

Carl Maneri: Okay.

KM: So, go ahead and get started.

CM: Okay, I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in my grandmother's house on the west side of Cleveland.

KM: Was it in the city of Cleveland, or was it a burb?

CM: It was in the city, West 97th St., and I went to kindergarten for one year and first grade for half a year starting in January, so then when I was six years old we moved to Seven Hills village, which I believe is now a city. When I went to Parma schools, they couldn't decide whether to put me back in the first grade and repeat the first half or put

me into the second grade. So, they decided that they would put me in the second grade, but they put me in the slow class, and I was in there awhile, and I can still remember a classmate, Pete Boyas [sp?], he said, "You don't belong here, this is the dumb class". [Both laugh]. Then I was transferred into the regular class, and I did very well in school.

KM: So, your elementary years were in Parma, the city of Parma.

CM: The John Muir School in Parma, the Parma School District.

KM: I'm a Clevelander, too. Yeah, I grew up on the west side.

CM: Oh, okay.

KM: Born in Cincinnati, but then when I was in kindergarten my family moved to Cleveland. So, yeah, I'm familiar with that area.

CM: Okay, and then I went to high school in Parma, and that's where I met my future wife. I was the editor of the school paper, and she was volunteering to be a writer, and I said, "We don't need any more writers", and so I- but the advisor said, "Yes, we do", so she became a writer-

KM: Aww, that's a great story.

CM: -and we started dating then married three years after high school.

KM: So, you were in college then.

CM: I... well, three years later I was- I had finished three years at Case Institute of Technology, before it merged with-

KM: Western Reserve.

CM: Yeah, and we lived in the Polish side, the Polish section of Cleveland, which I actually liked that idea. There's something wonderful about living in an ethnic area.

KM: Cleveland has quite a few pockets of ethnic communities, which makes it a great town to visit.

CM: It is, right. Then I was- I was a physics major as an undergraduate, but I decided that I liked mathematics better, so I went to Ohio State majoring in mathematics, because I had taken enough mathematics courses to qualify to become a graduate student in mathematics.

KM: Now I know where Barb [Bullock*] gets her math and statistics background. [**note: Barb Bullock, former director of Institutional Research and family member of Carl Menari*]

CM: Barb is a great math student, yes. She was a terrific mathematics student.

KM: I wish I could say that I was, but if I had someone like you teaching my classes maybe it would have been easier.

CM: Well, I think women are taught that they're not good at mathematics, and that just isn't true. I still remember handing a paper back to a student, a woman student, and she said, "I'm terrible at math", and I said, "Did you look at your grade?" It was a 98%.

KM: So, I appreciate your observation, because I do think you're right about that, I don't think that women or girls, at least when I was growing up, were necessarily encouraged to go that route.

CM: Oh, no, definitely not encouraged. Back over the centuries they were greatly discouraged from studying mathematics. They had to fight to study mathematics, over the centuries,

KM: Well, I wish that I had had better teachers. I might have been less fearful of it.

CM: I think bad teachers are part of the reason.

KM: So, you went from Case to OSU-

CM: Yeah, I got a PhD there, and I had a two-year, post-doctoral instructorship at the University of Chicago, and then I was an assistant professor at Syracuse University for three years, and this new university was opening up near Dayton, Ohio, and so I applied.

KM: Did you apply in part because you'd be coming closer to family, back to Ohio? Was that part of it, or was it the aura of a new place that had potential?

CM: Both. I liked getting back to Ohio. I really liked being back in Ohio, and I was intrigued by being at a new university. Now, when I accepted, the legislature had not created the university yet.

KM: It was still the branch of OSU and Miami.

CM: Miami University. But in the summer of 1965, the legislature created the university, and so I was safe, so I came here in the second year of operation.

KM: And I understand that you also became the first department chair of the actual, newly determined statistics and mathematics department? Is that correct?

CM: Well, we had a coordinator up to that time, and this was in 1965 when I started. In 1968, they decided they wanted a permanent chairman, and so I was appointed chairman. But I found that that was not my calling, so I only stayed in that three years, and I was succeeded by Krishan Gorowara.

KM: That's a mouthful. You know, I understand there were a couple of other faculty who also had been at Syracuse.

CM: Oh, yeah. Well, one other faculty, Robert Silverman.

KM: Okay.

CM: He and I came at the same time. Yeah, Robert Silverman, who was a good friend and a very good mathematician. I would say better than I am [*laughs*].

KM: When you came to the campus, what was your impression, having been at these other fairly prestigious institutions, with lots of students and a lot of history, and you go from that to this place. What was the impression?

CM: It was a smooth transition, I had no trouble. Miami University selected our textbooks for mathematics. The problem, one of the worst things- well, not worst things- one of the characteristics of Wright State is that the students were first generation students, so we have to do a lot of-

KM: -remedial?

CM: -remedial work.

KM: That would have been me [*raises her hand*].

CM: I taught- I was in charge of college algebra, which was really high school algebra taught in college, so I was in charge of that and did a lot of that teaching. But we had- it was difficult to get an advanced course to teach because there weren't many, so it was a prize for a faculty to get an advanced course. But I did teach a lot of calculus and some more advanced courses, abstract algebra and advanced courses. But not very often, because we just didn't have that many advanced students.

KM: When you were saying that you had that chair role for three years and that it wasn't something that really suited you, what was it about that that you didn't like?

CM: I was not organized for that particular job. I mean, I did other jobs where I require organization that I had no trouble with-

KM: But that just wasn't your thing.

CM: Yeah. Yeah, hiring faculty, and- but I have to tell you, in the first year at Wright State, they had five PhD's in mathematics and one master's degree, and in the second year, they hired six more PhD's. So, at that time we had eleven PhD's and one master's degree, and the Dayton Daily News got hold of that information and said we had more PhD's in mathematics than Miami University did.

KM: Wow.

CM: They were not happy about that [*laughs*].

KM: Wow, that's interesting, and that's also interesting given what you were describing about the students taking the courses. How do you think that... how did all those faculty deal with the relative inexperience of the student body that you were teaching?

CM: Well, we could not have the high standards that Miami University had, because they had these really better prepared students, so we could not do the kind of thing that- I had a friend, Sam Dupain [*sp?*], who taught at Miami University, and he could do things in his same courses that were more advanced than I could expect of my students at Wright State. But I think Wright State was important, very important as a path to the middle class, up into the middle class, for students. So, I think we had a mission there.

KM: And I do think in many ways that's still pretty much embedded in the institutional mission, because- well, I retired after Barb [*Bullock*] did, a couple years after Barb, but I know that our student profile, while we were getting more and more students who were not first-generation college, we still had a very significant number of students who were coming from communities where they didn't have that kind of-

CM: Another impediment they had was that they were working so they could not spend as much time on homework as we would have liked.

KM: Right. Well, let's talk a little bit about your observations about the university administration in those early years.

CM: Okay. It was very difficult getting good administrators, and Miami University sent over some administrators that I didn't think were terribly competent, and we think they wanted to get rid of them. *[Laughs]* That's my suspicion.

KM: And in 1965, the president would have been-

CM: There was no... Fred White was-

KM: Fred White was acting president.

CM: -Fred White was acting president-

KM: Okay-

CM: -and he was a person that I developed great respect for. He was a business man, and as a president he was very understanding of what a university should be, and I am also inclined to say that he was the best president we had.

KM: Maybe, and very certainly then the right person for that job when the campus was getting started

CM: He was so competent. He set up a financial program, you know, they never missed a paycheck. The financial department at Wright State always ran smoothly, and I give Fred White credit for that. And then, I don't remember now who the registrar was, but that was another one that required... it was very complicated to set that up. I don't remember who it was that was registrar.

KM: And I don't, either. Lots of moving parts when you're part of a new operation.

CM: Oh boy.

KM: So, following Fred White, Brage Golding.

CM: Mm hmm. Brage Golding. Brage Golding was a brilliant scholar, but he had a disdain of faculty members. That was one of the things that... that was the main thing I didn't like about him. He didn't seem to respect faculty members enough.

KM: Enough. He was not... his tenure was not particularly long, as I recall.

CM: No.

KM: So, then Bob Kegerreis would have been-

CM: We like Bob Kegerreis.

KM: Yeah. I met him when I first started at Wright State.

CM: Bob Kegerreis was a very likable and I think all and all a very competent president. Yes. He was also a business faculty member.

KM: Right, and he's probably the only president- at least from my recollection- who really stayed connected after leaving, you know, because he did stay in the Dayton area, and-

CM: Well, Wright State was to a lot of administrators a stepping stone. We had a dean of Science and Mathematics, um... Millman, I can't remember what his first name is.

KM: Richards?

CM: Richard Millman, I think. Yeah.

KM: I don't know where that came from out of my memory.

CM: He was a terrific mathematician, and a good manager, but I think Wright State was a stepping stone for him, and he moved on. But he was a good dean.

KM: And what was your office environment like? I'm trying to think, were you in Oelman Hall? Where were you located at that point?

CM: In 1965-1966, that school year, all of the faculty were in Allyn Hall, about 40 faculty members, and I knew every faculty member at that time, and then shortly after Oelman Hall was finished we moved into a corner of Oelman Hall, the Mathematics Department. And then when Fawcett Hall was finished we moved into Fawcett Hall, and that was our home for a long time for the Mathematics Department.

KM: Before they finally built the first of two buildings that were intentionally for the college.

CM: It was the mathematics and... and the biology building, among other things, I don't remember exactly who else, but that became the permanent home of the Mathematics Department, and probably still is.

KM: What was your perception of just the campus environment, the comings and goings. I mean, it was before I-675 was built, long before that, so it was really like cornfields and farms turned into classrooms.

CM: Yeah. It took a while before they got enough pavement in for parking and paths for students to walk on, and that took a while for that to happen.

KM: Where were you living when you moved back to Dayton?

CM: I moved into Yellow Springs, Ohio.

KM: And the tradition continues with your family members.

CM: Yeah, oh yeah. Well, when Rich [*Richard Bullock*] came to become an English faculty member, my wife and I were thrilled to have Rich and his wife Barb to come to live.

KM: And that would have been a fairly convenient place to live, too. Because there were really no great ways to get to the campus, unless you were on a backroad or a state route or something.

CM: Yeah, I had always hoped that I'd be at a university or college where I could walk to work. But that never was feasible, never happened.

KM: Okay, so, those early years, in Fawcett for a really long time before finally getting moved into another building, what do you remember the faculty's priorities being? You know, when you think about faculty leadership and then the administration and the staff, there are always kind of like silos of engagement and interaction. What was the dynamic like?

CM: Well, that depends on who was chairman. I mean in 19__... well, let's see. Krishan Gorowara was chairman for several years, and then I'm not sure... I don't remember exactly who was chair of the department between them, but then in 1978 we brought in Edgar Rudder, who was a very fine mathematician and a very fine chairman. He lasted 20 years.

KM: Yes, his name was very prominently placed, you know, when you think about a faculty member who had lots of history, he definitely was one of them. Your college had quite a few that had lots of long history at the university.

CM: Oh yeah, of course. In 1968, they brought in a dean for Science and Mathematics-

KM: Was that the first dean?

CM: Yeah, yeah. There was another person, Jack Redden, a Geology faculty member, but when they brought in Robert Conley- and he was a brilliant chemist, absolutely brilliant- and he, I would say, pulled the college together. Just a terrific choice for a college dean. I had so much respect for him as a chemist, and in general, because of his brilliance.

KM: What were your observations about the institution's growth in those early times, and the evolution from that first one building to the four and then to the expansion?

CM: Yeah, it seemed to be smooth enough, I felt that it was a smooth growth. Now, Miami University... well, Ohio State I think gave the college the Science and Mathematics Department. They gave us the choice to do our own hiring, and I think we built a good faculty a little faster than the other colleges. Miami University controlled business, education, and liberal arts, and I think they were slower to develop. Miami hired lots of master's degree teachers who were expected to get PhD's, and a lot of them did and some of them didn't.

KM: So, Ohio State and Miami split responsibilities for college or major oversight until it officially transitioned to- [*Wright State*]

CM: That's right.

KM: Okay. I didn't know that. I always wondered how those two institutions partnered, or how they shared-

CM: That's how they did it, yeah. Even though Ohio State was in charge of Science and Mathematics, Miami still picked our textbooks for those first two years.

KM: Well that's interesting.

CM: I don't know how that happened, but it did happen.

KM: Okay. So, we get through the Kegerreis years and we're almost moving into- we're into the 80s, Bob Kegerreis is transitioning out and Paige Mulhollan is the new president, and during his tenure there was quite a lot of physical growth on the campus. Do you have any recollections of that period of time at the university? The good, the bad, and the ugly?

CM: Well, I didn't think Paige Mulhollan was a very good president.

KM: Because?

CM: Well, he never... he did not consult with the faculty on decisions. He would make a decision, then call an appropriate committee and tell them what he had decided, and I think he regarded that as consultation *[laughs]*, which I would say-

KM: Definite comparison to Bob Kegerreis, very different?

CM: Yeah, I don't remember Kegerreis being that way at all.

KM: Well, I know during Paige's tenure- and we were just talking about this at the retirees luncheon, we did kind of a game with questions and... a trivia contest of sorts about the history, and there was a question about the legacy of Paige Mulhollan and what he was known for during his time, and it was a lot of buildings, a lot of physical changes to the campus, construction, a lot of crazy construction. Probably the most controversial one, I think, was the Nutter Center.

CM: Well, the faculty tried to block that.

KM: What do you recall of that whole period?

CM: They were going to build a 26-million-dollar basketball arena, and so we had a faculty meeting and I made the motion that we not build it at this time, seconded by a good friend, Al Smith-

KM: [Nodding] Al Smith.

CM: That passed, and they didn't build a 26-million-dollar basketball arena; they built a 34-million-dollar basketball arena. So, that was our victory [laughs].

KM: [Sighs] Oh yes. Well-

CM: But they were determined to get into sports.

KM: And that was- after that arena was finished, I believe, is when the university moved to Division I status in the NCAA.

CM: Well, they were Division II for a while, and they won the championship-

KM: They did. That was my first day at Wright State.

CM: Yeah, they won the championship in Division II, and then they decided, well, we can become Division I.

KM: Mm hmm, right. You know, you have to have a certain number of sports that you're fronting- men's and women's sports- in order to qualify, among other things. But yeah, that facility did change... that was a very big, significant change. And I remember, too, how it just changed the campus, just... the footprint of the campus. Because when I arrived, where the riding stables were and Achilles Hill, and it was just this green, pasture-y space, and that quickly changed. Yeah. So, at the time that that was happening, the campus environment and the student body was changing a little bit. What do you recall about the student environment in the 80s and early 90s?

CM: It's hard to make a judgement on the quality of the student body. It was always fun to teach here, and I taught business calculus, and one of the most notable classes I taught in business calculus was I had two students- a man and a woman student- who came to class well-dressed every day, and they were obviously motivated for success. Their aim was to get at least a B in calculus [laughs].

KM: The thought of getting into calculus for me, you'd still... what were all the pre-reqs before you could even get into calculus?

CM: Well, for business calculus, just algebra, and strength in algebra.

KM: Really? Okay.

CM: Yeah, algebra is a requirement for calculus, and for scientific calculus you have to have trigonometry also, trigonometry and- so, they weren't required to have trigonometry, but just they had to be good in algebra, and these two students were as good as they needed to be. *[laughs]*

KM: As good as they needed to be. Did you also have graduate level classes?

CM: Yes, we got in 19-... what year was that? Let's see... oh, 1968, we got a master's program. Yeah, that's when we started our master's program in mathematics.

KM: And you still had that significant number of faculty in the mathematics department.

CM: Yeah, we had no trouble supporting a master's program at all. Now, I don't think we had the faculty that could have handled a PhD program at that time, but we had no trouble handling a master's program. We could give all the courses that were needed.

KM: What was your sense of faculty longevity?

CM: Oh, they tend to come to stay. Yeah, faculty came generally to stay.

KM: And, so, observations about faculty coming and loving it here, and administrators seeing it as a stepping stone. Is that kind of the perception?

CM: Yeah. That's correct.

KM: You know, from a staffing perspective, one of the things I loved about coming here- and I was 25 when I first came to Wright State, I was young and Lorna [Dawes] hired me, and I worked with her for almost 10 years until her and her husband moved to Princeton, New Jersey for an opportunity that he had.

CM: Yeah, I knew that he had an... I knew that's why they left Dayton.

KM: Yeah, and it created opportunities for me and others who were part of our staff, so I had the most fabulous career at Wright State, because there were so many opportunities. If you worked hard and did your job well enough, there was always something new that could be done because it was a new place, and that's what made it so wonderful to me.

CM: Yeah. Well, we had a lot of good managers at the intermediate levels, and of course- see, Lorna Dawes was not the first in... she was the second in command in University and Community Events. In my opinion, she was the one who made that department work.

KM: Well, she was then snatched up by Elizabeth Dixon, who was the director of the University Center.

CM: Oh, I'd forgotten that.

KM: And that's how I ended up meeting Lorna, because they became a team, and then when Elizabeth retired, Lorna became the University Center director, so that's how my connection with her happened.

CM: Well, I can see how she advanced, because she was so capable. Incredibly capable.

KM: Yeah, she was. She was, and she still is. She still tells me what to do, *[laughing]* after all these years. But what a great thing.

CM: I just loved working with her.

KM: What kind of things were you working on with her?

CM: Well, when the tornado hit in '74, it hit Wilberforce, and then Central State University could not handle the Junior Academy of Science science fair and so they moved it to Wright State. And so the dean at that time, who was Brian Hutchings, asked me if I would handle it, and so I managed that for a few years with Lorna's help.

KM: Oh, good!

CM: I think that's when I first started working with Lorna.

KM: I'll have to mention that to her.

CM: She was a great help in that.

KM: She was so pleased to hear you were doing the interview.

CM: She was just so good to... just, as I said, she made my job so much easier. I did another thing, although I didn't- well, I didn't have her help with this other job, I met a statistician at Wright-Patterson, P.R. Krishnaiah- by the way, I've always worked well with Indian faculty members and statisticians- and he was able to get lots of money from the Air Force to run symposia on multivariate analysis, and so I was very good at handling the local arrangements. That's another thing I did very well.

KM: And how wonderful for Wright State, its proximity to the base and those relationships that were established and have thrived over the years.

CM: Yeah. Well, he liked the way I ran the symposia, and he kept coming back with more until the Air Force stopped giving him money.

KM: And that program that you were facilitating on the Wright State campus for the Wilberforce and Central State folks, were those their students or was that a community-based program?

CM: Oh no, the science fairs were for students from the whole area, bringing their science projects in.

KM: High school? High school kids?

CM: Yeah, high school students. That's right.

KM: That's great. It's always nice to see... I used to enjoy seeing events where we would have- we would be hosting high school students and even the younger kids, giving them exposure to the campus.

CM: Yeah, I always felt that was a good thing that they could see Wright State University. I always thought that was a good thing.

KM: I agree. I agree. So, let's talk a little bit about faculty governance and how that evolved during your time here.

CM: I was on a committee that was given two tasks. One was to help select the president, and we didn't have anything... they never asked us for our choice. [Laughs] So, that's how much that went for. But we were also given the job of writing faculty governance documents, and I don't remember who were the other members of the committee, but there was one faculty member, Emil Kmetec, who had the idea for an academic council, and that prevailed. He convinced the rest of us, and we wrote-

KM: The charter.

CM: We wrote the charter for the academic council.

KM: And it stayed as academic council for many, many years, ultimately becoming the faculty senate, as I recall.

CM: Okay. Yeah, that was after my time.

KM: So, you were at Wright State from '65 until-

CM: Until '95.

KM: -'95. So, a 30-year stint.

CM: 30 years.

KM: I have to ask you when you retired, why you didn't apply for emeritus status?

CM: Oh, I did. I'm a professor emeritus.

KM: You know, I looked that up in the university's- the college's records and they don't have you listed as emeriti.

CM: Well, I am, I'm a professor emeritus.

KM: Well, I'm going to have to make a comment to them about it, because I thought that was a little strange, and in fact I asked Barb, and I said, "Okay, you told me that your uncle had a lot of years at Wright State and was one of the original faculty, so how come I'm not seeing his name listed?" She said, "Well, he's kind of a rebel like that. He might not have wanted to apply." But you are.

CM: No, I was happy to be a professor emeritus.

KM: Okay, well, somebody is going to have to make that correction on their website.

CM: In my file, I have a letter granting me that position.

KM: I'm happy to hear that, maybe we'll have to do something to get that fixed.

CM: It must be in their records somewhere.

KM: I did several searches, which I always try to do just in preparation, looking at history, especially because we're interviewing faculty and staff that had long histories here, and it kind of shocked me. I thought, 'Hmm'. Okay, well, thank you for making me aware of that error. Very good. So, you retired in '95, and at the time that you were leaving we would have had Harley Flack as president.

CM: Yes.

KM: What were your observations about him at the time that he arrived, which would have been '93? I'm trying to think about it in terms of what I was doing at the time. Yeah, he would have been here around '93, so a couple of years with you.

CM: When he applied, the faculty was overwhelmingly in favor of appointing him as president. Overwhelmingly. He really made a terrific impression on us.

KM: Did he? Okay.

CM: But when he got here, he didn't live up to our expectations, let's put it that way.

KM: Well, and then his illness. He had a fairly short tenure. But yeah, there were still quite a few changes happening at the university. We, as I recall, were merging the original University Center and the old P.E. Building to create the Student Union so we would have more space for university functions and gatherings and what have you. And

it was an odd time, because leadership was shifting all over the place in those early '90s. The president passed away, then before Harley... Paige left then Harley came, but the vice-presidents were all like musical chairs. And I'm thinking, too, that that's when we went to the Provost model. That's when things changed, it would have been when you were still at the university. There were vice presidents, like for Academic Affairs, but there was no Provost, until-

CM: Well, we always thought that the vice president for Academic Affairs did the same job that a Provost would do.

KM: But the Provost also had administrative units that also reported up through them.

CM: Oh, so that would be different.

KM: Yeah, and I remember at the time, my vice president- for Student Affairs- he left Wright State because of the Provost model. He didn't want to report to a Provost. So, I remember that being one of the oddities that was happening at the time.

CM: I guess I really wasn't aware of the differences.

KM: Well, I guess for some people that was a big shift, but it seemed like the logical thing to do, to have all of the deans reporting to a Provost, as well as some academic support components also reporting up to a Provost. It made a lot of sense. That's one of the great things about longevity at an institution is that you finally start to understand the pieces and parts, and how you'd like to see them working together.

CM: Mm hmm.

KM: What were your... Apart from your thoughts about the university and community events, and working with Lorna, did you have observations or perspectives on the staff, and the relationships between faculty and staff during your tenure?

CM: Well, I always felt that... I never felt that there was any bad feeling or anything, I thought that the faculty and staff got along quite well, at least in my experience. I always found the staff quite helpful. When I needed Media Services, it was very well run, they always got us the things we needed for media. So, I can't think of any negative thing I would say about the staff.

KM: That's good to hear. Sometimes, you know, I think it's easy for people in their departments or their administrative areas to be very siloed, and not necessarily be tuned in to what's happening elsewhere on campus. But if you stick around long enough, you tend to become a little more tuned in, which definitely helps in terms of navigating what you need to do.

CM: Well, maybe the experience through the years helped with that.

KM: What do you think was the institution's greatest accomplishment or accomplishments during your tenure?

CM: Well, I think developing advanced degrees, like a professional PhD program, a medical school, a nursing school, um, and there are probably PhD programs that I'm not even aware of.

KM: Which... what PhD programs were established in your college during your time?

CM: Umm... I really don't know of any in our college, I'm thinking more of the ones I mentioned. I don't think there were... now, in Mathematics there was no need for another PhD program in Ohio. There already were too many, and so that would have been a mistake for Wright State to try to get a PhD program.

KM: Were there faculty in your college who were part of the- what's the term? Faculty who also assisted in the School of Medicine, or teaching in the School of Medicine? It seemed like there were some crossovers in the sciences?

CM: Yeah. I'm not very much aware of that.

KM: Okay. Well, what would you say was your biggest disappointment during your thirty years at Wright State?

CM: Oh, that's easy. When we didn't hire Mick Ferrari as president.

KM: He was a terrific guy, wasn't he?

CM: Mick Ferrari, yeah. He was provost, or academic vice president.

KM: He came from Bowling Green, where I attended. That's how I knew of him.

CM: When he didn't get that, that is my absolute biggest disappointment.

KM: And I think he went to Iowa?

CM: He went to Drake University.

KM: Drake.

CM: Drake University, and he was there for a while, and then he went to TCU, Texas Christian, and I sent him an email, telling him how much I wished he had become our president, and I said, "But I'm surprised that a Catholic would be hired at a Protestant university, and he responded, "But I am a Protestant, I'm Episcopalian" *[laughs]*. So, being Italian didn't automatically make him Catholic.

KM: I'm an Iannucci. My mother was Nina Iannucci.

CM: Oh. A paisano.

KM: Yep. My grandfather came over on a boat from Naples when he was four years old.

CM: Oh, wonderful.

KM: So, that's my connection, and I have Polish in me, too, from my mother's mother. But back to Mick Ferrari, I remember thinking what a terrific person he was, not only- I knew he had a lot of respect from the faculty, but he was really great with staff, and with students, too. And that's when- when you see someone who has all those talents, you know, they're not just really good with a particular group, they're embraced by the whole campus, because they make an effort to get to know very different populations and their constituents.

CM: And it's my understanding that he was loved at Drake University-

KM: I'm not surprised.

CM: -which does not surprise me, either. I hadn't heard anything from Texas Christian, but from what I know about him I would assume that he was loved there.

KM: Yeah, yeah. So... do you have thoughts about the university and its evolution in the time since you departed? Like, what were your observations about the institution's growth and/or shifts after '95?

CM: Well, I have to admit that I was not too closely involved with the university after that, so my separation was kind of complete. Oh, I really don't have enough information to have an opinion.

KM: When you left, when you retired, did you just say, 'Okay, this is it, I've got thirty years, and I'm ready to just move into something new'. What was your thinking? What was your reason for retiring?

CM: Well, the retirement system was so good that I could not resist it, so I retired at 62. I didn't intend to retire that early, I was planning to work until I was 70.

KM: But I think you were right about the systems being pretty good for us.

CM: Ohio has these five retirement systems, and they are protected from the legislature. The legislature can't grab the money from these retirement systems, as they do in other states.

KM: That's a good thing, we're fortunate. Although I do think many people who've entered the system after us, even after me, it's not as-

CM: Not as good. Well, there's a reason for that. They got too generous. They were too generous with their benefits, and that caused some risk- not much- but some risk to the system for their overly generous behavior.

KM: So, when you retired, Rich [Bullock] was here. Was Barb [Bullock] here?

CM: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, she was-

KM: How wonderful to have family.

CM: Oh, my wife and I... well, she's the daughter of my wife's sister. We were both thrilled that Rich and Barb came to Wright State, yeah.

KM: And what a difference the two of them made at Wright State.

CM: Rich has been a terrific faculty member, and Barb is so bright, I mean, a brilliant person. She took over that job of university... um...

KM: Institutional Research.

CM: Institutional Research. I know the person who started that organization, but I can't remember his name.

KM: Who was that?

CM: I can't remember his name, but I knew him well.

KM: Umm... alright, when we walk out the door we're going to have to ask Barb, because it's on the tip of my tongue, but it's not coming, either.

CM: I knew him well when he started the organization.

KM: I remember-

CM: He was kind of an outrageous person, an outrageous sense of humor, but I really liked him.

KM: Yeah. Well, I remember one of my first interactions with Barb. She had this tiny little office, and we were doing some kind of student survey- I can't remember what the content was, it might have had to do with campus recreation or something- but I went to her to get assistance to set up the survey and collect the data, and that's how we ended up getting acquainted. And then over the years, worked on many, many committees together, and it was really one of the best parts of my time.

CM: Well, I think Barb and Rich were both very positive contributors to Wright State.

KM: I would agree. I would agree in so many ways, and I think for many of us who had the opportunity to come to a place that was new, it was fertile ground for people who were creative, or who had positive energy and wanted to try new things, and you frequently could get a yes to do new things, because-

CM: Rich's... I would say his biggest contribution, and he had a lot of support from Richard Millman, but Rich was- the emphasis on composition, that is his strength. He is an expert in composition.

KM: And helping all these students, who didn't necessarily get everything they needed in high school to be college writers.

CM: Yeah. See, it doesn't matter what field you're in, you have to be able to express your ideas, whether that's in medicine or mathematics, because there are people- a lot of mathematicians- that are not good at expressing their ideas, which leads to confusion.

KM: Well, sure, and if you're going to work in any kind of job, you're going to have to learn how to communicate effectively.

CM: I would say that's one of the prime skills that an employer should- and I think they do, or they should, and they probably do look for.

KM: I would agree. I would agree. What are... are there any questions that I didn't ask you about your time at Wright State? Or experiences that you had that you would like to have on the record?

CM: Well, let's see. Well, I did have a sabbatical.

KM: And what did you do?

CM: I went to- I commuted with Miami University. I had a friend there, he was a very good mathematician at Miami University and we worked together. Actually, a better mathematician than I am, believe me. We did work together on some research, and that was very nice, having a sabbatical.

KM: How far into your career were you before you had that sabbatical opportunity?

CM: Oh, I was well into it. Yeah, I'd probably had my PhD 10 or 15 years and then I decided a sabbatical was indicated.

KM: Were you publishing during that time?

CM: I published some, yeah.

KM: Did you feel, as a full professor, the pressure of publishing?

CM: Well, I actually never was made a full professor because I didn't publish enough.

KM: Oh. So, when you retired, you were an-

CM: I was an Associate Professor.

KM: Associate Professor.

CM: But when you become an Emeritus, you become Professor Emeritus, so that's when I got my promotion.

KM: Okay. Okay.

CM: Yeah, but the college wanted to see more publication than I had produced. But two of my favorite professors as an undergraduate retired as Associate Professors, so I never felt bad about that. I was very happy to be an Associate Professor.

KM: And have the career that you had.

CM: I had the career that I wanted. Yes.

KM: And your emeritus status was awarded how long after your retirement?

CM: Oh, almost immediately.

KM: Almost immediately.

CM: Yep.

KM: That's pretty remarkable to have a thirty-year career at one institution. Did you think you'd be here that long?

CM: I was looking for a job where I could stay. I did not want to change jobs. I wanted a career at one place.

KM: And isn't it interesting how the time kind of goes quickly, when you're doing something at a place where you feel appreciated and valued, and you can... yeah.

CM: And one more thing that I didn't mention that I should have. We were looking for a chairman in the late 70's, and we had a search committee, and I was chairman of the search committee for a mathematics chairman, and it took us two years to find a chairman.

KM: And were you looking exclusively externally, or did any internal candidates run?

CM: We had one internal candidate, who had been acting chairman. But I thought we needed some stimulation with an outside candidate, so we interviewed several people in the first year, one of whom I would have loved to have had, but the rest of the faculty didn't like him as much as I did. And he went to Cleveland State to become chairman [laughs]. He was a very good scholar from the University of Washington, name of Thomas Hungerford. A really excellent scholar, mathematical scholar, but he didn't publish original research enough. But he published a textbook, an unbelievably scholarly textbook, that I think should have made him a professorship, gotten him a professorship anywhere. But anyway, the faculty here didn't like him as much as I did, so, as I said, he went to Cleveland State.

KM: At least he's in Ohio.

CM: *[Laughs]* So, somebody who had applied the first year and we didn't invite was Ed Rudder, Edgar Rudder, and so the second year I called him up and I said, "Are you still interested?" and he said, "Yes, I am", and so we brought him in and the faculty loved him. So, he was appointed chairman, and he was so good as a chairman that he lasted 20 years.

KM: I was thinking that his time was a fairly extended one.

CM: Oh, yeah. From '78 to beyond after I retired.

KM: Isn't that unusual? For a faculty member to stay in a chair role for that long?

CM: Yes, but he was- beyond being a good researcher, he was just a terrific manager. Built the faculty, built a research faculty, yeah. He was just very capable. Oh, yeah, it is unusual.

KM: Yeah, because I would think there's an awful lot of administrative stuff that's part and parcel of that kind of role.

CM: He could handle all of that.

KM: But not something that you wanted to handle. *[Laughs]*

CM: That's what I was not good at. Yes, he could do the things I was not good at.

KM: What was your favorite class that you taught, of all of them?

CM: Favorite class? Oh, there are two of them. Two geometry classes. There's a course, Projective Geometry-

KM: Which is?

CM: It's hard to describe. It's a kind of... let's put it this way. When I was an undergraduate, I was signing up... I was a physics major, but I wanted to take this course in higher geometry as a physics major, in my second year as a physics major, and I remember talking to my professor, Max Morris, and he said, "You'll learn some geometry that you never suspected existed".

KM: Okay, so that was one of your favorites, Projective Geometry. And what was the other one?

CM: The other one I didn't learn until later, until I had to teach it. It's called Hyperbolic Geometry. It's a variation on Euclidean Geometry that was not discovered until the year 1800. Euclid produced this book on geometry in 300 BC, which is the... and no one would have used the term "Euclidean Geometry" in all those years between 300 BC and 1800 AD. It was just "Geometry".

KM: So, that was the foundational of all geometry.

CM: All other geometries.

KM: All other geometries sprang from that.

CM: All other geometries I think sprang from Euclidean Geometry, yes, and then this discovery of Hyperbolic Geometry in 1800 was really revolutionary.

KM: And how did it... what field do you think it most influenced?

CM: Well, it doesn't have the application that Euclidean Geometry does. It's just... to me, it's just interesting. It's just an interesting geometry. It's just so different from Euclidean Geometry.

KM: So, it wouldn't necessarily be used for anything in engineering or-

CM: I don't know of any applications for it.

KM: So, what would motivate somebody to want to learn it?

CM: It's because it's interesting.

KM: There you go. Well, and that's kind of the beauty of being at a university, is being able to take a class in part because it just intrigues you or you have an interest in it.

CM: Well, I always advise my students, "Take what interests you". I had a student who wanted to major in history but his father wanted him to be an engineer. He was an advisee, and I told him, "Take what interests you".

KM: It's good advice, because if you pursue the things you enjoy and you have passion for it, you can find work that applies to those interests. It may not be the easiest way to go, but if you're not doing something you enjoy-

CM: Yeah. My advice to students always was to take what interests you. Don't take something just because it will get you a job.

KM: [Nods] And we know plenty of people, unfortunately, go down a path that they feel obligated to go down- because it's practical or because they see dollar signs- and then they get into it and despise every minute of the time they're doing it.

CM: Right, right, right. Yeah.

KM: Anything else that you'd like to share about your time?

CM: No, I can't think of anything else to add.

KM: Well, I am really pleased to have finally gotten to meet you. I'm kind of surprised that our paths didn't cross in some shape or form, because I was attached to Lorna [Dawes] a lot, and got to know some remarkable faculty in fields that were never part of my world, but it was so much fun to hear about their backgrounds, and to get to know some of the students that were part of their world. A lot of great students. Do you have... I have a question for you. Are there any students who you have good memories of, who went onto something special or memorable?

CM: Um, well, I didn't follow-up with students after they left. There was one education major who made a terrific- I don't remember his name anymore- but a terrific impression on us and his ability to do mathematics, and we were very happy to see someone in education who was so talented in mathematics.

KM: And wanted to be a math teacher?

CM: Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah.

KM: That's what, you know, you kind of hope that when your children are in elementary school, because really that's when you want them to... they either get turned off by it or they get inspired by it. So, if they have the right teacher with a challenging subject, they can thrive.

CM: Very important. I mean, everybody remembers their good, best teachers.

KM: Or the worst. My geometry teacher was Mr. Kucheray [sp?], and he was awful! It's like, why do I remember him? Because he was awful.

CM: Well, I had the same experience. When I was in the 2nd year of high school, in geometry class, I had the football coach, Kenny Webber, with a great sense of humor, everybody loved him, but we saw no evidence that he knew geometry. [Both laugh]

KM: It does sometimes make you wonder, right? Oh, boy. I have this very vivid memory of that class with that teacher, and it pretty much turned me off to mathematics after that.

CM: Well, that can do that. Yeah.

KM: It's too bad.

CM: And one of my favorite teachers was my senior English teacher. An absolutely wonderful teacher, I will never forget her.

KM: Well, those are the people that help shape us. They shape us.

CM: They shape your lives, right. That's true.

KM: Well, fortunately for us, we had enough good ones to end up in careers where we felt like we could make a difference. That's so important. Well, I thank you so much for making the trip up from Cincinnati to share this.

CM: Happy to do it.

KM: And usually what happens is it takes... they're all caught up now, there was a time, especially during Covid, where we got backed up with interviews. But they'll let me know when they have it transcribed and when they put it up on the website, and then I can let you know.

CM: Okay.

KM: So, thanks again. And I'm going to let Chris know that we've wrapped it up, and thanks so much.

CM: You're welcome.