

10-8-1984

## Dr. William D. Sawyer interview (2) conducted on October 8, 1984 about the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University

William D. Sawyer

James St. Peter

Follow this and additional works at: [https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/med\\_oral\\_history](https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/med_oral_history)



Part of the [History of Science, Technology, and Medicine Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Sawyer, W. D., & St. Peter, J. (1984). Dr. William D. Sawyer interview (2) conducted on October 8, 1984 about the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University. .

[https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/med\\_oral\\_history/51](https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/med_oral_history/51)

This Oral Recording is brought to you for free and open access by the Boonshoft School of Medicine at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Boonshoft School of Medicine Oral History Project by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact [corescholar@www.libraries.wright.edu](mailto:corescholar@www.libraries.wright.edu), [library-corescholar@wright.edu](mailto:library-corescholar@wright.edu).

**WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Medicine Oral History Project**

Interview date:           October 8, 1984

Interviewer:               James St. Peter

Interviewee:              William P. Sawyer, M.D.  
                                   Second Dean, WSU School of Medicine  
                                   Interview 2

JSP	My name is James St. Peter and this is a second in a series of interviews with Dr. William P. Sawyer. Dean of the Wright State University school of medicine. The date is October 8, 1984. The time is 2:30 PM and we are in the Dean's office, Room 113 C, in the Medical Sciences Building at Wright State University.
JSP	Dean Sawyer in our last interview you talked about your experiences in Thailand developing a microbiology department. What University specifically were you at?
WS	I was at a University called Mahidol. You'll never believe it when I spell it, but that's 'm-a-h-i-d-o-l', but in Thai it's pronounced 'Mahidon' University. It is named after the present king's father. It's the family name of the King, and I was at an institution called the Faculty of Science of Mahidol University, and that was affiliated with the Ramathibodi Faculty of Medicine as the pre-clinical portion of the medical school at Ramathibodi.
JSP	
WS	Was the university to help develop there based on primarily the American model?
	It was put together really as a consortium of a variety of kinds of activities. Thailand for many years has had a distinguished University called Chulalongkorn University. He was the little boy in the King and I, Chula. They had a medical school and then the King's father upon earning his PhD as I recall in Public Health, or his DPH I guess, from Harvard returned to Thailand and was very active in the development of Public Health and Medical education, and they had a cooperative program with the Rockefeller Foundation in the '30's to build another medical school called the Siriraj Medical School and Hospital. That served as the basis of Mahidol University and eventually a dental school was added, a public health school, a Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Medical Technology etc., the Faculty of Science, for science and pre-clinical training, then a graduate program was added for the country, pharmacy school, and I have got these out of order. Then, the decision by the Rockefeller to engage again in a cooperative program in Thailand and it was put into the Faculty of Science. When all of this was in place and the King finally said "yes this is something I would be proud of" the name Mahidol University was conferred of the entire complex of graduate, undergraduate, medical and other disciplines. So, basically it was American in its organizational structure.

JSP	Did you include basically tried and true methods in organizing based on American models here in the United States or did you use any concepts from other models the British model or the Japanese model?
WS	The undergraduate medical education program was on the British model. It was a six year program directly out of the equivalent of High School. So, it was a two year pre-med, two years pre-clinic, and two years clinical medical education. Our graduate model was very heavily American in its orientation. I think our approach to graduate education as well as undergraduate education research development was very much patterned after really the sum of my experiences in microbiology. It would be probably only more to bury wood and Bill Sawyer's evolution then it would be to any other single structural element. I think that's fair.
JSP	Is it also fair to say that a lot of development in American medical schools follows that type of development pattern on the developers experience with a mentor type figure?
WS	I wouldn't try to generalize on the mentor figure, but I think everything that we are and how we approach things is really the sum product or the sum total of all of our experiences to date. So, I think when one individual or a small group of individuals takes on a development chore you really are going to gasp some sort of summative process of all of their experiences. So, fundamentally I agree. Whether one has one mentor or takes a piece from here and a piece from there and a piece from the other place will depend very much I think on how profound an influence given individuals have had on that group of people doing the development.
JSP	So, there is no basic one model that's used by many different people to develop different aspects of the medical school?
WS	I don't think so. I think they tend to be a product of their past experiences.
JSP	When you moved to the United States again in 1979, how dramatic was the change of a change of that was to you?
WS	1973 not 1979, but that's okay. Really it was not a dramatic change. The Rockefeller foundation has as an operating or had at that time as an operating principle that they did not want their staff serving overseas to become a professionalized patriots. They wanted them to maintain a contact with U.S. or World Science, U.S. and world culture. We traveled back and forth extensively. I remained actively involved in U.S. scientific organizations and we had in Bangkok an enormous sample of distinguished visitors. For example, about the second place in the world that Dr. David Baltimore, now a Nobel Laureate, ever spoke on his work on reverse transcriptase which led to his Nobel Prize was in my department in Bangkok. David and his wife were good friends from U.S. Days and he was coming back from the meeting in Germany and he was making a trip through Southeast Asia back to the

	<p>U.S. They spent time with us in Bangkok. I believe it was the second talk he ever gave on that. We had a lot of exchange with people coming through Thailand. I think we stayed pretty well associated with what was going on in the U.S. I had looked at a number of relatively major positions in microbiology even while I was in Thailand. So, perhaps the biggest change was missing the student unrest of the late '60's early '70's. I came back when that had calmed down, but a lot of changes had occurred in universities between '67 when I left which was pre the first student protest riots at Columbia. Came back in '73 and they were sort of over. We were in a wind down phase of that over protest period. I think that was probably the biggest change I observed was that the interaction with students.</p>
JSP	
WS	<p>When you went to Ball State University which was your first stop.</p>
	<p>No, Ball State, let me correct that it's in the curriculum vitae that I was in the faculty at Ball State. Indiana University School of Medicine had undergraduate programs that a number of sites around the state of Indiana one of those was at Ball State and they had a problem in which one year they had no one to teach a major part of Microbiology course and I simply commuted between Indianapolis and Muncie two half days a week and did their teaching so my appointment at Ball State was purely a without compensation, doing my job for Indiana University.</p>
JSP	
WS	<p>Why did you choose Indiana University to come back to from Thailand?</p>
	<p>A variety of reasons I suspect. I had looked at, been offered the chairmanship of Microbiology at a University in the east. Had been offered a senior position at a big ten another big ten University. Looked at Indiana. I liked the people. I liked what they were trying to do and it seemed clear to me that Indiana University School of Medicine was on the verge of becoming one of the countries truly outstanding Medical Schools for the '70's and '80's. They were not a school with a tremendous reputation or 50 years of Duke or Harvard or Hopkins, but they were a school that probably along with North Carolina, Chapel Hills Medical School was moving into the late '70's and '80's as leading Institutions.</p>
JSP	
WS	<p>How can you determine that an Institution is going to become a leading Institution in another decade or two?</p>
	<p>I think you talk to leadership and to the people who are gonna make that happen, who aspire to make that happen. Are they indeed marshalling their resources? Have they made a commitment to recruit outstanding people who can give them the leadership assistance that will make it go? Are they organized towards quality? Are they willing to set high standards of achievement and expect people to achieve them? Have they got the resources marshaled to allow them to do this? But overall it's a forward looking [spare] to the administration. It's not we're great because we say we're great. It's we're gonna do whatever is necessary and make whatever commitments we have to make for this Institution to be great. I thought some of the leadership and opportunity there was outstanding.</p>

JSP	Why did you feel it was there at Indiana and not at a prestigious University in the east or on the west coast or another big ten school?
WS	<p>I wouldn't by any means say I didn't think that potential wasn't there elsewhere, but Indiana had moved over about a ten or twelve year period. From a almost voluntary faculty exclusively Institution with a dependence on their Bloomington campus for basic sciences to an enormously forward looking, aggressive group leadership. They put in a full time program in the mid '60's. It was going forward. They had a chairman of Medicine who was first class at chairman of pediatrics, chairman of surgery. They had gone out and whenever they had a vacancy they got top notch people to fill it. They had a sense that the old traditions worked what was needed in the '70's and the '80's, but that there was new ways of doing things. I can't go much further than that. I just thought the people were forward looking. I'd have to say I didn't spend an awful lot of time looking at them or them with me. I visited the campus for one day and from that one meeting came the offer the position and the Mayor of the Bangkok and I accepted it. So, I think we had obviously we had certain repore with each other that was very good. I knew a lot about it. One of the people at Indiana had been at Bangkok with our program. Had been involved in the physiology program and I knew a number of other people at Indiana from one system or another. So, that was about the way it was done.</p>
JSP	You were regarded as chairman of the Microbiology and Immunology Departments. Were they two separate departments?
WS	No. It was one department.
JSP	That was obviously your second big leadership change of a department, going from one department to the next. Did you adjust your style of leadership when you left?
WS	<p>Sure. I think that one in Bangkok it had a position of having virtually nothing there and having and building. In Indianapolis the situation was such that the chairman who retired had been the founding chairman of the department in the Medical School of Indianapolis had recruited a faculty. It was a department that had not kept pace either with the Medical School or the Science. There were relatively few grants. Their productivity at scholarly work was depleted. The people were not, I think, completely up to date with modern science. In anticipation of my [prod successor] retirement the School of Medicine had not filled some positions. So, the leadership style had to change to be one of growth while recognizing that there was an existing group there to be dealt with. Some of who had promised, but had not achieved their promise. Others of whom probably had gone past their prime and maybe one or two of whom some had very little promised. So, the style had to be one of working in existing system, changing it [unintelligible] the department through a process of working together, bringing it up to date and developing it, causing it to grow. Developing approaches to get more space, more support, all of those sort of things. Plus developing a whole new set of relations with both the other</p>

JSP	basic scientist, the other chairman and the clinical scientists of the Medical School.
WS	Was it different pace of change development then what you experiences in Thailand? Were you able to do thing as quickly, as decisively?
JSP	They do some things quick as quickly or quicker and some things it took a lot longer.
WS	What was some of the things that you could change relatively rapidly?
JSP	Well, I think, we were able to work with the administration and get those kinds of support in terms of positions of space that we could renovate, of the acts that an administration can give a new chairman to say this is somebody good and we are supporting them. That was done very quickly. One didn't have to learn new cultural problems or new cultural interactions that I had to learn in Thailand, the Thai way. Although, I guess as a joke we could always say there is the [unintelligible] way, but really one was dealing in one's own culture with one's own cultural values. Those are the kinds of things that went very quickly, I think. Some of the hard ones were people who had acquired a bad reputation in the department with the School of Medicine for reasons that may or may not have been correct, who were pursued as being non-productive. Whom one had a responsibility to try and help them undo that to get back on track and become productive effective members of the department teaching, research and service. Then to bring in new people into this mix of established senior people who maybe weren't being productive without having the new people get caught up in the lethargy in the system.
WS	Do you feel your style as administrator has changed any?
JSP	Oh sure. One style, I'm gonna be repetitive, I think again is a product of all the experiences that one has had and so the pieces that evolved in Bangkok, the pieces that evolved in Indianapolis, there are pieces now that have evolved in Dayton together with things that one learns by talking to others administrators. Seeing how other programs are run. One very big help is I was very much involved, after I came back to this country, with the Association in Medical School of Microbiology chairman. It's a place for chairman to talk to each other and played a leadership role in that very quickly. I remained active in the American Society for Microbiology and had been able to keep up with that field as well as a number of other scientific and professional organizations. So, that too is another source. Now for example, I am quite active in the council of deans in the Association of Medical Schools and that's a way to get input. So I think you change because you're a product of all of your experiences.
WS	Let me ask you this: what was your toughest decision as an administrator in Thailand or as the chairman or acting head of the microbiology department?
WS	Well, there were personnel issues. I cannot honestly come up and say "This one

JSP	<p>decision to do X was the toughest. It's how to come to grips with people who are not doing the job you expected them to do, that is the hardest issue broadly I think.</p>
WS	<p>How do you tend to handle those kinds of issues?</p>
JSP	<p>Badly. Like everybody I suspect. I try to find things that they can do, and do reasonably well and to orient their career activities into a way in which they will receive positive feedback and feel useful. And to the extent at which the individual is willing to work to that and cooperate with it, give them chances, try to identify, as I say, what they can do reasonably well and feel good about and then take advantage of those talents by reshuffling their assignments. It's really looking at everybody and say they've got some talents, they do a good job as they could, maybe they're not in the right niche, and let's see if we can find a niche and help them to see that niche as important to them, important to the institution, and if they could reach it, indeed support them and let them function with dignity and grace in a niche in which they can make a real contribution.</p>
WS	<p>And if they can't?</p>
JSP	<p>To the extent possible, if we put in every effort, and they're unable and unwilling, I would think they have to bear the consequences of being on the short end of getting resources and so forth. After a real effort, if they're not tenured faculty, I think when you come up to tenure time, tenure doesn't occur. Promotion doesn't occur. Pay raises don't occur except in relation to their ability to contribute. I'm not sure that we in academics deal with those problems terribly well, we tend to almost put them under the rug and hope they'll go away in a nice, easy, comfortable way and they don't really. I'm firmly committed to counseling people on their performance, unpleasant as it may be to say "I don't think you're functioning well. Here's why I don't think, here's the things you can do. I think one has that obligation, and we try to do everything to see other ways. But ultimately it's a two way street. The individual being that one's having to deal with has got to be responsive in the system.</p>
WS	<p>How do you deal with an individual in your department who has tenure, but yet has passed their prime? Do you bring in somebody else and just ease them out?</p>
JSP	<p>Again, I would try to find a niche for them. We, for example, at Indiana had multiple courses to teach at 8 or no, about 6 different levels. And some of those people were very effective in becoming involved at a different level of course. We gave somebody an awful lot of course responsibility, their research program was not thriving, so they took on more course responsibility, were well recognized and rewarded for doing a good job at that. That then freed others whose research program was taking off from having to do quite as much teaching so that their research could thrive. We looked at it as an integrated affair for the department. That people contributed in many ways, not everybody's going to do everything. I guess that's as well as I can describe it.</p>

JSP	Did you find yourself being intellectually and mentally taxed more and administrator in a major department in an American university than you had been in Thailand?
WS	No. I worked awfully hard, both at my own research, my own scholarship, as well as getting the department on track while I was in Bangkok. And I could not see any intellectual fallout going there or any intellectual pickup coming back. If you'll allow me a brief brag again, a recent study was conducted by the people who do Science Citation Index, and they took a period and sampled all papers from third world countries during as I recall a five year period, while I was in Bangkok, and then they've done a subsequent sample over roughly five years as to how many times those third world generated papers were cited in the world's scientific literature and three of the top fifteen in the world were my papers, and five of the top fifteen in the world came from our program in Bangkok. So we were not in a little backwoods operation, you know? We were publishing actively, leading work in the field, and helping my Thai colleagues do it, so I would not say there was a major change.
JSP	You came from Bangkok, a situation in a university where you were pretty high up on the pecking order. How did it feel coming down to Indiana University and becoming, I hate to use the term, but just another department chair?
WS	I don't think I ever felt I was just another department chair in Indiana. I intended to be the best department chairman in Indiana and that's true whether I was at Hopkins or Washington U or the army or Bangkok. I suppose you don't win your argument every day but I'd say that won very quickly if you do a good job and acquire a reputation for whatever competence you have it doesn't make any different whether you're in Bangkok or Boston or Bangalore. You're going to be accorded a hearing in relation to the quality of what you do. So I can't really say I felt low on the pecking order or high. We had a change in deans at Indiana really during the first year I was there and when Steve Bearing became dean at the end of that first year, Steve and I had for one reason or another developed a very good rapport. So I never really felt left out or put down.
JSP	Was there a flagship department at Indiana University in the school of medicine?
WS	Among all the departments in the school of medicine, yes.
JSP	How do you feel – Was there a similar flagship department in Thailand?
WS	In the basic sciences, yeah. There were two – biochemistry and microbiology.
JSP	How did you feel coming from one flagship department to an area where there was clearly wasn't a flagship department.
WS	Oh, the microbiology didn't exist when I went to Bangkok so it became a flagship



JSP	<p>because of the enterprise of everybody that was involved in making it that. And I simply had no question in my mind that the goal of our program in Indianapolis was to become the flagship basic science department. And that we were going to collectively, not just me, but everybody, do whatever was necessary to have that happen. And I suppose it became one of the two or three outstanding departments, probably along with pharmacology or biochemistry, but it was good. And so that never entered my mind. We were just going to be good, get out, and get on with it.</p>
WS	<p>In the very hard pressed world of being a department chairman in a busy school, did you feel you were a good advocate for your department in obtaining the resources and material you needed to not only function as a department, but to make that into a place?</p>
JSP	<p>We did pretty well, so I don't know whether I was a good advocate or the people behind me provided the evidence that any advocate could have used to accomplish it. It must have been reasonable</p>
WS	<p>How long were you at Indiana?</p>
JSP	<p>Seven and a half years.</p>
WS	<p>And you came directly from Indiana to here?</p>
JSP	<p>Yes. With a little bypass through Oxford in England.</p>
WS	<p>Tell me about Oxford.</p>
JSP	<p>Great place. It's my second or third home, I love it. If I could pick any place to live, that would be in the running.</p>
WS	<p>You were the visiting professor in microbiology in the department of biochemistry. What does a visiting professor do?</p>
JSP	<p>At oxford, what I did was to go into the microbiology unit and set up and begin to do research. Again, full time. I washed my own glassware, some of it, I made my own media and got very much engaged in the research enterprise that was going on in Oxford and a couple of problems. I had no teaching responsibilities, although I began to work with one of Professor Mandelstand(?)'s post-doctoral fellows, and occasionally had a chance to interact with a number of the undergraduates. Dr. Mandelstand(?)'s.</p>
WS	<p>What was his program?</p>
JSP	<p>He was one of the world's leading experts on the process of spore formation in bacteria, the molecular biology and genetics of spore formation. So I was a visiting scientist as it were in the unit, and also I was a visiting fellow of Wadding(?)</p>

JSP	College which is one of the undergraduate colleges at Oxford. I'm going back in two months and I just can't wait.
WS	You didn't do any teaching then, in Oxford?
JSP	No, not formally.
WS	Did you have major responsibilities to teach at Indianapolis?
JSP	Yes.
WS	What percentage of your day was divided into teaching versus administration?
JSP	<p>At IU, our department taught its major course for medical students in the first quarter of the first year of medical school. And we were occupied fairly heavily during that quarter. We had, a typical load would be 8 or so lectures a week, a three hour conference, plus seven hours of laboratory time. Each week, during an eleven week quarter. So we taught very intently for eleven weeks. I did all of the bacteriology and bacterial diseases and some miscellaneous things in the course, so I carried the largest teaching load in the department. So during that quarter I was very heavily engaged in teaching and trying to keep things running smoothly. I fortunately had a very good crew in my laboratory that kept the lab program going without my hour by hour attention, which I couldn't do. Then that slacked off when that course ended and I didn't do nearly so much teaching in the rest of the year. Just the occasional lecture in a graduate course or teaching some other program, and spent more time on research and various kinds of committees and administrative matters. So it would be hard to sort it out by day. I carried a full year's teaching load in one quarter in essence.</p>
WS	What kind of committees did you serve on in Indianapolis?
JSP	<p>All basically but those two that I advise anyone to avoid: parking and admissions. Virtually every aspect of the school of medicine, the executive committee of the school of medicine, the education curriculum committee of the school, student promotions, chaired several subcommittees of those various committees. I also was on the promotion and tenure committee each year in the school of medicine. I was in the university faculty council for four years I think, I'd have to go back and look it up, and chaired their subcommittee in university structure and governance for two years. I was on the university promotion and tenure committee essentially every year, some search and screen committees, the usual kinds of things. It's pretty much a repertoire of whatever committees existed in the school.</p>
WS	The executive committee of the school of medicine, does that function similar to the one that Wright State has?
WS	I would think it's not very different. Originally it did not include all of the basic

	<p>science chairmen but in Steve Bearing's time was expanded to include that and became a large committee that tended to be more of an information endorsing mechanism for communication with ad hock committees or task forces or various committees or subcommittees of the institutional organization becoming the full side of the day by day work. And an awful lot of interactive governance. It was easy to pick up and talk to the chairman of medicine about some problem or the head of OBGYN or surgery or so forth.</p>
JSP	<p>How would you fit your administrative style under that of the dean of the school of medicine at the time?</p>
WS	<p>I'm very much, then and now, oriented I guess to what I would call a middle management style. I believe that the departmental structure or program structure is very important and that that is an essential part of the leadership, and if you've got strong and active chairmen, you'll have strong and active programs in the school and that they must be expected to exhibit leadership and develop programs. I suppose it would be fair to say that I didn't always agree with the dean, but we got along very well because we understood each other's willingness to disagree on an issue, but 95+% of the time we were both looking at a similar goal down the way. And all we were doing was saying that I wouldn't have done it that way, that doesn't mean that you have to be disagreeable in order to disagree on an issue. I think that I was a pretty good player in the school and Steve and I remain very good friends.</p>
JSP	<p>Do you consider yourself a team player in your management style?</p>
WS	<p>Sure. Very much so. I think if you can't be in any organizational structure you're going to end up either messing up the organization or causing a major disjunction between your entity and the rest of the organization. And when you reach that point where disagreement over substance, and I really think it ought to be more over substance than style, you get unhappy over style, we need to talk about substance. And when issues of substance become major differences between a member of an organization and the rest of the organization then I think ultimately one has to separate oneself from it. I think style things tend to be what we talk about most of the time, and most disputes tend to be style disputes. I don't like the way X does this, that's very different than X and I don't agree how to do it in this case, we're going to do it that way, I made my case and the decision went the other way, now I've got to get in and support it. I'm very much a believer that if one is hurt but doesn't carry the day in an organization, one has the responsibility to support the ultimate organizational decision. I guess it's called being a good soldier in the management vernacular. Or else one has to recognize a responsibility to openly step out, if you will. I don't believe you can or should be functional if you're backdooring and trying to shoot down the organization because...</p>
JSP	<p>Would you expect (indistinguishable) from your subordinates?</p>
WS	<p>Yes. Absolutely. They get it from me and I expect it back. I'm always disappointed</p>

JSP	if I don't get it, let's put it that way.
WS	You were at Indiana University for 6 years, and then your 7 <sup>th</sup> year you spent at Oxford.
JSP	About half of it, yeah.
WS	When did you first find out about the opening here for the deanship at Wright State?
JSP	It was basically in October or November of '79. I had, over the previous year or so looked at a number of deanships, had turned down the deanship of one very large, well-financed, one big school, let's put it that way. And was still looking at two or three others but had made up my mind that I wasn't going to take any of those. I was getting ready to go to Oxford that winter on a sabbatical and Steve Bearing, who was the dean at Indiana said Bill, there is a school that is looking for a dean and you may not have ever heard of it, I'm sure you wouldn't think of it spontaneously and I know you'd never apply to it. But I'd like you to take a look at it. Steve at that time was chairman of the liaison committee on medical education, so he knew about medical schools. And he said this is a new school, it's been well put-together, it's got a good basis to go on and grow on, the dean over there has done a good job, he's going to become VP, it's an orderly transition and I wouldn't ordinarily mention you to a new school or a new school to you but, he said, I think this one is different and I'd like you to take a look at it. And I said okay Steve, fine, thank you and went on our way. I met John Belgian briefly, Steve just introduced us in Chicago or Washington, at the Association of American Medical Colleges, hereafter AAMC if that's alright again. The AAMC meeting, at we sort of said hello and John wasn't there to talk about that and I was getting ready to leave the next week to go to Oxford and that whole scenario so I did send in my CB and the information and went on to England. So that's really how I became involved and I would have to be honest, all I knew about Wright State before that is we had a PHD student in our department at Indiana who decided to go to medical school and lived in this area and was recruited very heavily by Wright State for either the first or the second class, was also admitted to Cincinnati and I told her to go to Cincinnati rather than this new unknown medical school. Confession is good for the soul. That's how much I knew about Wright State up until that point. So Steve Bearing was really instrumental in my even interacting here.
WS	Why did you turn down the deanship of a major university?
JSP	Well, let me tell you, at the time I had all sorts of reasons, and I had all sorts of reasons for all the ones I wasn't interested in. While we were in England, not having the same responsibilities and so forth that Jane Anne and I had a lot of time to walk and to talk and to just sit and think and have a great, great experience. I began to think about all of this, and we got to talking, and it became obvious to me that all of the reasons that I had given for turning down these other institutions were valid, but probably were window-dressing rather than the actual fundamental reason. And I

	<p>came to realize I think correctly that I had enjoyed very much the development work I'd done in Bangkok. I was very proud of what I'd done there and what was still going on there. I had enjoyed very much the challenge of really doing a development job in Indianapolis, which is what it was, and was very proud of the program we had there. What I was probably doing was looking at some established relationships or institutions where I perceived a need for them to make some changes and to get on a kind of modern course like Indiana was doing. And get on with things instead of living in the recent or remote past. And what I was really doing was saying that they weren't prepared to do that for whatever reason. Either in terms of their resources or in terms of preventing attitudes. Many of them haven't even recognized that they weren't moving into the next decade of the 80's, and that it was that sense of development and making a difference that I missed. I would have worked like the very dickens to make a millimeter or so difference and I think that was why I was finding reasons why I wouldn't go. The reasons were more manufactured than they were an overt expression of an interaction but that was not probably the basic problem.</p>
JSP	<p>When you applied to Wright State University and sent in an application, what is the normal procedure for that? For a position like the dean?</p>
WS	<p>I can't really tell you what the normal is. Steve Bearing had suggested to John that he contact me. John wrote and asked would you be interested. And I have always followed a policy, again, back to Barry Ward (?), Barry told me one day as we were going someplace in the car, well Bill, my view is... I'd ask him that I'd gotten a letter was I interested in a job, I wasn't sure what, how did he feel about it? And he said, "Well, unless you're absolutely sure under no circumstances should you go. Never insult anybody by refusing to look or listen about a position that they think you might be qualified and good for." So when John wrote to me as I do regularly, and I tell other people the same thing that Barry told me, I routinely, unless it really is something that there's no way I would do, respond, send them a CV, a list of references, and then the process is typically a search and screen process, you may never hear, you may make the short list and go through all of that. And I'm not hung up on not being asked. I think that if someone wants you to apply, thinks highly enough to you to put your name in, I think you ought to let them look, and I think that most of these are not races based on competent, they are events related to particular mixes of people, of needs, of talents. And you may have someone in one of these job searches who is superb at X, but you really need somebody who is superb at Y, and you find somebody who has got stronger credentials at Y than X does and they get the job, it doesn't mean X isn't a good person. So you try to match skills with needs, and you're not always going to get selected.</p>
JSP	<p>When you send in your CV, who does a department chairman of a prominent university list as their references? It's a common term for people who are in the normal world, but who does a professional man list for their references?</p>
WS	<p>What I've always done, and all I can tell you is how I do it, is I try to provide the</p>

	<p>name of a reference or a source of reference of the major phases of my career. So, without going back and getting out the file, when I provided references to Wright State, I'm sure Steve Bearing who was dean at Indiana, I'm sure a senior professor in the department at Indiana was on the reference list, I'm reasonably sure that someone who had been involved in the leadership of the program at the Rockefeller foundation was on the list, at that point I wouldn't have put somebody from Oxford. Somebody who I had worked with at Hopkins was on the list and somebody whom I had worked with at Walter Reed was on the list I would guess. And I try to give them people who have close knowledge of my performance in various phases of the career. Right now if you were to ask to see my reference list, it would include the president of the University, Steve Bearing, again back to Indiana, a professor at Indiana, I'd probably drop out the Rockefeller because most of those people have become very distant from my direct contact and a couple of principle sources of references are dead. I would include the major scientific organizations I'm active in, Joel Mendolstam (?) at Oxford where I worked. Somebody who's in the national academy of medicine or institute of medicine who I worked with professionally. I'd try to give them some choices of a very broad spectrum of what I've done.</p>
JSP	<p>When you sent the response letter back to Wright State, did you expect anything back from them?</p>
WS	<p>Yeah, I did.</p>
JSP	<p>Why?</p>
WS	<p>In that when John and Steve and I talked in Chicago, or at the AAMC in Washington, I keep saying Chicago, in Washington that year, it seemed to be reasonably clear that I was going to hear some more from John, from the conversations that he and Steve had had. But there was nothing earth-shattering about that, and if I hadn't I wouldn't have and the world would have gone right on.</p>
JSP	<p>Did you answer a number of other responses for positions?</p>
WS	<p>I think right then, at that point, we had ended up breaking off discussions with everything that was active, so there was... and I cut that off because I was going to England on sabbatical, had a commitment to go back to Indiana for a year afterwards, and I said hey, I'm not going to get in the middle of this while I'm getting ready to spend the rest of this year in Oxford and I'm going to go do that, and that's going to be my primary goal. So the only thing I really had going at that time, or the only discussions, well I didn't have any because I had just sent John the CV.</p>
JSP	<p>When you were in Oxford, what plans did you make for your future? Were you thinking that far ahead?</p>
WS	<p>This may sound funny, I've never planned ahead any of the things I've ended up</p>

	<p>doing. If you go back over this rather long tale, you'll find that almost everything was an evolution out of something that happened or some contact or some connection. So I suppose when I was at Oxford my mindset was such that someday I might become a dean, I didn't have to, I had already had the chance to, there was no drive that I couldn't stay at Indiana and be a good chairman of microbiology for the rest of whatever would be a nominal career. I didn't feel compelled to move. And we were just enjoying a very productive period of science, enjoying that wonderful university, had the best of all worlds there. I interacted with the leadership of British science all day, every day at lunch. Had an interaction with the college system in the evening. We lived comfortably and could travel around the (?) and the science I did there was as good a piece of work as I've ever done in my life, and it was just great. So no, it wasn't a period of intense career thinking, although I obviously thought some about why I'd rejected a number of opportunities, but it wasn't done in a sense of what's next. I don't think we spent a lot of time talking about what's next.</p>
JSP	
	<p>There's an axiom in the business world that you should never spend more than 7 years in one place. Do you feel that applies in the world of academic medicine?</p>
WS	
	<p>No, I wouldn't say that. My career has ended up that, my kind of joke is I can't keep a job. If it had been for Indiana, I got tired of people saying where did you go on your last sabbatical and I had to tell them I'd never stayed anyplace long enough to get one. So Indiana resolved that. I don't think that's valid, I think different people, different circumstances. My career has been one of a series of moves because each time it seemed like the right thing to do. But we didn't set out to move every seven years. Don't tell my wife I'm going to move again in three years.</p>
JSP	
	<p>How did your wife react to all the shifts in your career? Jumping overseas and then back again?</p>
WS	
	<p>Oh, we've had a great time.</p>
JSP	
	<p>She must be a remarkably patient woman.</p>
WS	
	<p>To put up with me, you'd have to be patient, whether we've moved or not. She's first rate, and she gets involved and does things wherever she goes and we've had a good time.</p>
JSP	
	<p>Well thank you very much for this second interview. We're ready to move into our next one, into the big wide world of Wright State University and I'd like to cover, in our next interview, your interview process and your first period of time here at Wright State as Dean.</p>
WS	
	<p>Great.</p>
JSP	
	<p>Thank you.</p>
	<p>END</p>