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Dr. Robert T. Conley interview (1) conducted on February 21, 1985 about the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University

Robert T. Conley

James St. Peter

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Medicine Oral History Project

Interview date: February 21, 1985

Interviewer: James St. Peter (JS)

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

JS: My name is James St. Peter, and this is the first in a series of interviews with Dr. Robert Conley, former Dean of Science and Engineering, and former Vice President for Health Affairs Planning at Wright State University. The date is February 21, 1985, the time is 1:30pm, and Dr. Conley and I are in Suite 1010 of the Provident Bank Building in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dr. Conley, would you tell me something about your background prior to coming to Wright State?

RC: I was a professor of Chemistry at Seton Hall University in South Orange New Jersey, immediately prior to joining Wright State.

JS: You joined Wright State.

RC: In the Summer or Fall, and I'm not, I don't really remember now, Summer or Fall of 1967. At that time Wright State was a branch campus of Ohio State University.

The way I came to Wright State is one of my graduate students, years prior, became an Assistant Professor at Ohio State, and somehow became familiar with the work that was going on in Dayton to establish Wright State. And it was quite clear, at least from his description of Wright State, to me, that Wright State was going to become an independent state university in a very, very few months. And I might be interested in talking with a person by the name of Dr. Brage Golding who was then the Vice President of Ohio State and also the Vice President of Miami University.

As it turns out, Dr. Golding fields of research and my own while he was at Purdue and my own at Seton Hall were, there was some overlap in the kinds of things we were doing professionally in research.

JS: What do you mean, in chemistry?

RC: In Chemistry, Brage had written a book which was called *Polymers and Plastics* which was a very excellent book for the time period in which it was written, and had some rather extensive work in the exact area in which I was carrying on further research. So I knew of Dr. Golding, and I knew about his reputation as an engineer.

JS: Do you remember the name of the graduate, the Assistant Professor who was at Ohio State, Graduate Student, you said that...

RC: Yes, Paul Gasman. So, with that in mind I applied for a position at Wright State and visited Columbus, because at that time I presumed because we were a branch campus of Ohio State when you interviewed you interviewed in Columbus and then you came down and interviewed in Dayton. While I was interviewing at Wright State, Dr. Jim King of the Chemistry Department asked if I would stay over and give a lecture in Dayton on my field of research, which I did for the American Chemical Society in the Dayton Area. That led to some discussions about the Chemistry Departments in detailed discussions. And I became the Department Chairman for the Chemistry Department in the Fall of, I believe it was the Fall of 1967. I had been acting Chairman at Seton Hall, because the Chairman of our department was ill, and he had hepatitis from coming back from a Mexican Trip. I sort of enjoyed it, I sort of liked administration for some reason, god only knows why now 18 years later.

I came to Wright State as the Department Chairman of Chemistry, at that time we had a coordinator assigned from Columbus by the name of Jack Redden, and Jack was leaving to go I believe to South Dakota or North Dakota.

JS: Was he a chemistry coordinator?

RC: He was coordinator of the whole, what we call the Colleges, then it was the College of Science and Engineering, but it wasn't a College at that point. And Jack ran all of the, he ran the Ohio State Branch, which was combined and I believe, I don't know who was running the Miami Branch, but they were combined on the same campus in the two original buildings of Wright State. With, Millet Hall was going up then, and Fawcett Hall, they were both under construction at that point. Jack stayed on through 1968, the Spring of 1968, and then Jack left and I became the first Dean of the College of Science and Engineering, I sorta fell into the job, so to speak.

Shortly thereafter, in conversation, it was quite clear that there was activity in the Dayton community for some years regarding health education. And, the Dean of continuing education was Warren Abraham, and Warren had been involved in some discussions with the Dayton Miami Valley Consortium about nursing education. Walking across campus one day Warren said "how would you like to put together the nursing program for the institution." This was sometime in 1968, early '69. And I said I really have enough to do Warren, but if it's something we are interested in as an institution, sure I would be willing to take a look at it. So between Warren Abraham and Brage Golding I got zapped with setting up a community committee of those people who were in the diploma schools and the nursing directors of those schools, and a team from Wright State and they were mostly people we drew out of our biological sciences department, John Ross Miller and people of that type. We developed in the normal fashion of 20 people sitting around the table, my office doing the drafting with the help of John and his group in the biological sciences, we drafted the Nursing School, the original Nursing School proposal.

At that time there was no mechanism to get a new school established at Wright State. So we put it through the mechanisms of the acting, well I guess it was the Academic Council then. We bred it out as a program that would be started under the auspices of the College of Science and

Engineering and eventually would become a separate school as soon as everything, if it ever was approved by the Regents and it would get going. So, we were finishing that project, all right, when the medical education thing began to develop, and that is how I got into Medical Education. It was the farthest thing from my background that you could ever imagine and in retrospective thinking, now that you can do Monday morning quarterbacking later on. At that stage in the formulation of any school you're not talking about the altruistic or the educational need of it, it's the political problem, it's a political social decision, it has to be made. And it really didn't have a hell of a lot to do with medical education. As such, I mean it was in itself in its full blown eventuality it would, but not at that beginning stage.

JS: You related to me earlier how you got the idea of bringing a medical school.

RC: That started through an outside contact. It started through Dr. Dick DeWall. Now, I don't know how many, what Dick did in the community, I mean I don't know the background or what the extent of his discussions where extramural to Wright State, but Dick met a business faculty member by the name of Norm Amon. Norm was, I guess, a full professor at the business school and they were, they met socially. And the question was broached as to whether Wright State would be interested in participating with whatever group Dick was thinking about at the time in assessing Dayton's capability to embark on a medical education program. Now, that was not new for Dayton, Dayton had done that years prior through the Miami Valley Hospital and that project years before was not approved by the state. So what was happening was it was becoming a resurgence of community interest in medical education. Norm apparently spoke to Brage Golding and then he spoke to me. That was early after the first social meeting and asked if I would get involved and write a memo to Brage expressing an interest in seeing this come about. I don't remember whether I did it or not, I do remember that within about five days I met with Brage on medical education.

JS: Who else was in that meeting?

RC: Fred White, myself, and Brage Golding. At that meeting we decided that Fred White and I would represent Wright State on a community committee and we would get together with Dick DeWall. We got ahold of Dick, and he sat up a dinner, for the life of me I can't remember where that dinner was held. But, there were representatives from the medical community and Fred and I. And we discussed the feasibility of getting involved in a medical education program, both from the University's prospective and the communities' prospective. Out of that meeting it was generally decided that Dick and I would essentially be co-directors of a feasibility study to determine whether it would be practical to develop a medical education program in Dayton. And that's how it happened, it was sort of a community interest kind of a thing. Of course we were, at Wright State, at that time period, that was our forte, we were very comfortable with that because a lot of the programs developed at Wright State over a period of time really were coming from leading community meetings and locking and tying the institution into the Dayton community. So that's really how it got started. As far as my background in medical education, it's zero.

JS: What was the next step after that meeting?

RC: The next step after that meeting was to meet, over a period of months with 13 or 14 or 15 different organizations throughout the immediate Dayton Area and to find out if they, in fact, would be interested in participating in a medical school which would be somewhat unusual natured compared to the traditional school.

JS: What kind of organizations?

RC: We meet with the Miami Valley Hospital people, we meet with St. Elizabeth's, we meet with Kettering and all the hospitals in the area.

JS: Did you meet with the medical societies in the counties?

RC: Medical society as well, in Montgomery County we did. At that point we stayed with them, pretty much within Montgomery County. We didn't go outside, that came at a much later evolutionary phase of the program. We developed a rather large proposal and in the process of developing that proposal we recognized we had amassed a tremendous amount of data with respect to feasibility and then Warren had to get involved with doing a marketability kind of excerpt of that. At that point, we brought in other people, because we certainly were not in that, that wasn't our yoke. Our yoke was to take a look at what kind of medical education program would be suitable and what we felt the interest and what we thought would be a good direction for medical education to take as far as we were concerned. We really were more interested in stressing the family practice kind of approach to a medical school and taking a look seriously as to why that was not being successful throughout the county. Examining schools, for example, that were trying to do this and what their failures were and things of that type. We did a lot of that kind of, not only discussion, but that kind of research.

Well, Mr. Oelman, who was then Chairman of the board, volunteered as public relations officer. Who was, former President, former President at Antioch not too many years ago, came out of the state of New York after he left NCR, I can't even remember his name now. But he developed a little four or five page or maybe ten page, promotional document that would preambule this huge one volume of eleven-hundred pages of feasibility study. And that got him involved from the NCR, he was then very active in the community, he then tied in and he was helping us within the community recommending people we meet and talk to. So we had NCR, which was coming in with us, helping us with that kind of discussion and so forth. We finished the proposal, we sent it to Columbus.

JS: Where did you send it to?

RC: To John Millett's office. Meet with John.

JS: The Board of Regents.

RC: And what happened at that point was that the last schools had submitted proposals, if I remember the ones it was Akron, Youngstown, Kent, Wight State, Toledo. . . A whole group in this whole thing that did that. I'm not sure if Toledo went or not, Toledo was created before this but they of course were involved somehow in that whole proposal stage. They were getting off

the ground and I guess somebody was trying to not see them get off the ground, but they were involved in the group that was competing for what was to be funding. Out of that there was not action taken by the Ohio Board of Regents, even though we went to Columbus and presented our case and every other school did. They did not really take any action at that time, and the program sort of stopped for a period of time. The next basic thing that happened was that we were afraid that interest was going to wane. And certainly we were seeing signs of erosion of interest when well it's not going to happen again, it's going to be a failure. That there was a bill introduced in the legislature to provide seed funding for a number of schools to produce a final study for medical education, and at that point the . . . Kent, Akron and Youngstown formed a consortium, which is not the Northeastern Medical College, and Wright State decide initially to produce a proposal on its own. And those two groups were given \$250,000, they were appropriated in the legislature \$250,000 for two feasibility studies for medical education.

And then we began the next, the next phase of the school development. We basically rewrote the proposal, expanded on it, cleaned it up, made the work more precise, and that kind of thing was the next step was to get a final proposal to establish, not look at feasibility, but to establish a medical school. They gave us \$250,000 and six months. I was the Dean of Science and Engineering, I had one Assistant Dean, and two secretaries and that was Science and Engineering at the time. And it was completely, it just was not feasible to do the study that was called for. At that time Ed Spangler, who was a colleague of mine back on the east coast, through a third party that I knew.

JS: Who?

RC: I'm trying to remember who it was, it was another chemist, had expressed some interest of dissatisfaction and wanting to make a change of jobs. I called Ed's wife and told her, who I had known for years because she used to be secretary in the Chemistry Department where I was before, I said I understand Ed is on the market, he's just the person I need, would you have him call me if interested. And Ed called and we brought him out to the campus and interviewed him and told him what we were contemplating and what we wanted to do and the fact that we desperately needed help. That if this thing was gonna go we had to bring in additional staff and that I was willing to do the dog and pony shows outside, but when I was doing that, that was a full time job I couldn't get anything written on paper and here's this 11,000 pages, what do you recommend we do with it Ed? How do you want to handle this? So we broke up between Ed Spangler and myself, we broke up the responsibilities of getting a final proposal generated.

JS: Why did you want to bring in Ed Spangler?

RC: Because Ed has all the characteristics that we need at that time. One, he's a superb analyst, alright, he has a natural ability to well and balance we should say this or we shouldn't say that, he's not the kinda person who will yes you. He tells it like he feels it is, and what we needed was sounding boards, both Dick and I were deeply involved and at that point it became an emotional thing. So we wanted a sounding kind of a person that could, we could bounce ideas off of, we could bounce stuff off of that could give us a I don't like that, and I like that kind of thing. So we got Ed involved in that kind of a role. In a role of writing, in a role of construction budgets, in a

role of analysis of what's going on. So that all started to germinate at that point. So that's how we really got started up to the point of the second proposal.

A lot of things transformed after that, but that answers your first question, that's how we got started in this whole thing and a lot of things happened in the intervening time, but most of it was, really it, we were like between, in the early days between Dick and myself it was like meeting at each other's kitchen table and putting the medical school feasibility study together.

JS: How do you feel Dr. DeWall was involved, what motivated Dr. Richard DeWall's involvement?

RC: To this day I don't know, except he just felt there was need for that kind of education, and his commitment was really to the organization of the medical school using the community resources for the beds, for the clinical resources, and the stress on family practice really was Dick's commitment. In other words they were not ideas that came from Wright State, they didn't come from any of us. They really were the thoughts that Dick, after his experience, that he felt was the best needed thing. We were really the instruments of bringing it about than we were the creators of any ideas.

JS: Describe Dr. DeWall to me, what kind of a man is he?

RC: Extremely competent scientist with a deep concern for the delivery of medical services. Very serious, quiet gentleman, but with very strong convictions. On top of that, just a superb practitioner, he's very, very good, in my opinion. I'm not sure what that's worth but that was my impression of Dick, and we got to know, we got to work very closely, I got to work very closely with Dick, he's a very impressive individual.

JS: You mentioned that you and Dr. DeWall had in fact, by the time Dr. Spangler arrived become emotionally involved, why was that? Why take this one thing and become involved in it?

RC: I don't know. . . that's like why you get involved in anything, why do you stay at Wright State, why don't you go somewhere else, I guess it's because we got tied to the community. We really believed in the need after we began. . . after we finished the initial feasibility study, we honestly really believed it was feasible. We honestly really believed we had a case, we believed we had the resources in the community, we believed we had the cooperation of the people in the community, we believed all the pieces were in Dayton, and the only thing that had to happen was to bring those pieces together and make them work. And we actually, seriously were committed and believed it, right or wrong. At that point, now a lot of people disagreed with us of course, you had everybody on each side of that fence, but we honestly believed that that thing was capable of coming into existence. We weren't sure whether the two of us were the guys that were gonna do it. Right, we weren't sure we were gonna have all that capability, but we sure as the devil knew who we had to bring into the arena and who we had to get interested in it in order for it to come about. I mean, we knew that we had to get the political machinery into it, we knew we had to get the editors of the local papers behind us, we knew we had to get the leadership in Dayton to get behind us. And, one of the people we had to talk to was a fellow by the name of Larry Kinnear, because Larry used to write editorials for us during that time period for the

Dayton Daily, and when we got involved of course it garnered some public interest, and it garnered some press. I can remember going into the office of the editor who I had never met before and telling him who I was, and him looking at me over the desk and he said “what do you want from me” and I said I want help, and I got help, and Larry was the person doing a lot of the background and behind the scenes work. So there was a lot of people outside of Wright State who got involved in those very early days on medical education. Probably a better one who knows more about what was going on outside was my wife, who has a complete scrapbook of every, I think, newspaper article ever written on Wright State’s medical school because she was a widow while I was doing the damn program. And we did a lot of that kind of thing in that time frame.

JS: What would you describe as the climate politically in the State while you were writing and studying and coming up with the paperwork?

RC: I’d say the climate was one of, from the Board of Regents side of it an open minded and interest in seeing whether we were doing things in Ohio correctly. Politically I would say the legislative climate was we don’t need another Medical School at the time. That would be State wide, particularly anti would be Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. Cincinnati was openly committed to the fact that we did not have to have a medical education program in Dayton Ohio. Columbus felt, that I think, there were only so many bucks to go around and if you wanted to run a quality medicine through a medical school then you ought a put the money into the existing medical schools and expand those, and not create additional medical schools. And I think that was there pitch throughout that whole time period from 1979 forward. And then you had Case Western Reserve who was getting a cut of the legislative apple at that point and although neutral politically I don’t think they were supportive of increasing medical education. I think that’s why the group in Northeastern Ohio created their consortium because they knew that no one single school could muster the necessary political clout that would be required in the legislature to put a medical school forward. And in the final analysis, again Monday morning quarterbacking, the very reason why Wright State joined forces with Lionel Newsom at Central State and with Miami University was to garner political support, and really in the final analysis to get the thing approved through the State Legislature. The two groups were different, but there were three schools involved in each one, one was a formal consortium and the other was a more collegial relationship between three institutions that recognizing that Wright State would have to be the financial factor, controlling factor in development of the second. In the Dayton political community we had support from Clara Weisenborn, from one camp, and we had the Paul Leonards and the CJ McLins in the other side, so we had bipartisan support in Dayton, and they were really behind it, they were very enthusiastic. Again I don’t think that was anything that Dick and I did or anyone from Wright State did at that time. That support came because of the prior proposal that was done years before through Miami Valley and at that time the community was very interested in it, and of course that was thwarted at some point in its development. So I think there was an underlying support network out there in the Dayton community that had felt it had not accomplished its mission in the prior attempt and was ready to go back at it and try again and I think Clara represented the leadership in that group from the Republican side, and of course then you had the Democratic side with CJ and Paul and that group on the other side. So I think we had the basic support in the community.

JS: What would you say was the attitude in the Governor's Office? And in the office of the Board of Regents?

RC: I think at the beginning, at the very beginning, at the very beginning John Millett was given the go ahead to do the feasibility study to begin with from the Governor's Office. I think they knew there was a problem in Ohio, they had to address the issue of medical education in Ohio, they had to surface it. At that time it was Jim Rhodes and I think Jim Rhodes was honestly interested in getting out a solution, whatever that solution would be. I don't think he had any favorite sons or anybody in the woodwork who was going to come out and be the school. I think it was really a fairly open competition. That, and I think John Millets approach at the early stages of development was altruistic, I don't think it was preconceived, that there were preconceived decisions at that phase. Later on those attitudes crystalized a little bit differently.

JS: Why?

RC: A change in Governor.

JS: How did the actors change, and why did they change?

RC: I think because when you get to a certain stage in development of a program where it begins to look like it is going to become feasible, and you have differences, different political alignments. I think that they, when we came in with our two proposals one from the Northeast and with Wright States at the final hour. I think I took a truck load of proposals up, one for each legislator and delivered them to the State House, with the Governor's copy and the Regent's copies and every one of the people that was, had been in office. I think they were surprised at what they saw, and I think both proposals were good, I daresay that Wright States was superb by comparison with that that came out of the Northeast at the time, because I'm prejudice and think it was a better proposal it was done in more depth and in more detail. It was not a public relations document and I thought that the Northeastern section did more of a public relations approach than we did. We did, I would say, more scientific kind of approach, it was more rigorous and more fully documented. But both had, both of them came out exactly the same in thrust, they proposed virtually, if you have seen copies of those two proposals, what is said in those two proposals is remarkably similar, and we never compared notes one to the other. And what happened at that point is someone had to evaluate those proposals and the Regents deferred, fundamentally deferred decision, they didn't make a decision on, even though they gave us the six months to do it and the \$250,000 they didn't make a decision, they went into limbo. After going into limbo the only thing we could do at that point was to make sure we appeared at every hearing, every finance committee meeting, every education committee meeting, every public hearing they had out on health education in the State of Ohio. And I went on the road, and I was sitting in that room for every damn one of them, and I covered the entire State of Ohio. On some of those I was out with church groups, I had my little dog and pony show with my slides and off I would go. We were doing this seven days a week, every damn night of the week that we could possibly muster up were we didn't have to be at the institution. We were pushing the medical school, in fact, there was a point in that stage of the thing being in limbo were on the Wright State campus it became Conley's folly, and that was a quote from Gene Cantelupe, if I remember it right. But

there was that kind of, a thing that would never happen, so we began to see our support base inside our institution deteriorating, and that was a little discouraging, that turned my head a little bit, I felt a little bad about it at the time, in fact I was angry about it at the time. There was very little support, I guess philosophically if you look at it, no one likes to back a dead horse and that's what we were exhibiting, people said well the Regents didn't make a decision and therefore it isn't going to happen and so it's going to die a natural death and let's not get too close to it. And I can remember coming off an airplane one night in Dayton Airport, and this was before Barge Golding left and there was a hearing the next day in Columbus and I had a message delivered to me at the airport to get in the car and drive to Columbus. And I was furious, I was exhausted, about eleven o'clock at night. And I came back on the campus and said why me, wasn't there another Vice President of this institution or somebody that could go up there and testify for that hearing, why did I have to get up there that night to testify. Well it turned out, what the communication that was left with me was, at that time, we don't want to stick our necks out. True or untrue, what the communication is you get from that kind of occurrence is that you are pretty much standing alone fellow and if this thing goes down it's yours and expect too much support from inside the institution. And that's the way at the time I perceived it, retrospectively it turns out probably there was not one else available, that felt comfortable in doing it, but there were a lot of mixed messages coming out from within our own institution about the whole project. The underlying support was there though, the underlying support of the Board of Trustees was very strong.

JS: What do you think that was from?

RC: I think because they were all community leaders in Dayton and they had all been involved, historically in medical education in Dayton. And I think they were committed to that and I think that committee rang through at every meeting. They were behind it, they were backing it, they were active politically, within the community, within the legislature, within the political contacts they had, they were really carrying the ball. So, that and the Clara Weisenborns outside in the community and that group, they were very active in the community and that kind of thing kept the pot boiling and get the thing moving ahead at the time. The decision, on the paper the proposal was written on, pretty much at this point be recycled, because that proposal and what's written in it had absolutely nothing to do with the decision.

JS: What do mean?

RC: The proposal was simply something that had to be produced to get the forum for which a political decision could be made.

JS: If you take the normal process the University now enjoys in its mature years, of stages of process and approval. Looking back on your document, I am amazed the fact it never went through hardly any channels at the University, it seems to have gone straight from your offices, with a short stop at the board, straight to Columbus. Why do think that occurred, why was it so quick?

RC: Because that's the response time we had to do it.

JS: But wasn't their demand for university input or?

RC: Well it did go through, it went through the graduate council. We took it through all the councils at the institution. The final proposal, see at that time if you go back and look at the documents there was only one proposal in that institution that was written by anyone else but my group.

JS: What do you mean?

RC: There was one new program document at Wright State that was not written out of my office.

JS: How many colleges were there at that time?

RC: Business, Education, Liberal Arts, and the graduate program in education was inherited from Miami, they had brought their graduate programs in with them. Liberal Arts had none, at that time and all of them went out of Science and Engineering. So we had prior to ever doing medicine or even nursing, we were pretty well stepped in proposal writing. First proposal we wrote was in 1967 when we wrote the Masters Degree in Chemistry. And then I became the Dean and we immediately followed it with Engineering, Geology, Physics, Biological Sciences, I mean we just turned out graduate proposals. In 1969 I produced a doctoral program in Science and Engineering which is still laying on the shelves, I'm probably the only one who has an original copy. And of course what we were told at that time was it was too early, you guys are too aggressive, back off, sit down and cool your heels and grow awhile. So we had an interdisciplinary PhD program in the disciplines encompassed in department of Science and Engineering, which was a wild proposal at the time, but frankly, well probably, one of the best doctoral proposals, if you look, if you want to be on the cutting edge of science, that was one of the best doctoral proposals of its day, and it never even got out of Brage Golding's office. It laid in the bookshelves, because he was right, we were not ready at the time. While all the Administration is there, that doesn't say there should be people underneath, inside that are bringing forth the new programs, you have to have that in order to have an institution, particularly a growing institution. And we felt that if, as aggressive as we were, we felt that was important to the future development of Wright State University, and we knew that some were gonna sail and some were gonna not sail, it was like trying to fly a paper airplane, every now and then you knew a couple of them weren't gonna do to well. But we had a lot of experience in proposal writing. There's a major difference between medical education compared to any of the others, the others were judged on their merits, now whether the educational system in Columbus, they judged the Chemistry proposal, the Physics proposal, I'm sure the proposals that came out of Liberal Arts, are judged and finalized at the Board of Regents. Medical education was not, medical education became a proposal which became a political decision to make within the State Legislature. And because of that it was a different mechanism that had to be used, the internal institutional mechanisms were the same. When we finished the medical education program we submitted it, then it was Dean Bob Milheim. Who passed it through the graduate council, and the graduate council, you will find in the minutes back in those days, the graduate council approved the submission of the medical education program to the Ohio Board of Regents. So we did go through the councils. Remember we were a much smaller campus then too, Wright States just grown tremendously, when I was there in those years, were talking about six, seven thousand

students, now you've got fifteen thousand students, probably three times the number of faculty we had. And with that growth comes more machinery and the need for a greater degree of bureaucracy and more regimentation to make the thing flow, because you're looking at every time you move into one of those areas you are looking at the commitment of institutional priorities and those institutional priorities are few and far between. So you have to be more sophisticated in your machinery before you make a commitment to a proposal.

JS: When you stated the document that you wrote this vast luminous document that you wrote and sent to Columbus, with copies for every legislator, you said that this was, the document was meant to open up a forum for discussion on the medical school.

RC: That's right.

JS: Do you feel that document has... why do you make that statement?

RC: Well, because I felt at that time- for whatever reason, it was just my opinion- that the Ohio Board of Regents was not about to approve the establishment of another medical school in Ohio all by itself. I felt that what was going to have to happen was it was going to have to have a legislative sanction. If you look back in the record, all the medical schools in the State of Ohio, prior to the two that were established when we finally were successful was Toledo, and that medical school was created legislatively. So the document simply provides, it simply says to the Regents we think we're ready, we think we've got the tools, we think we know what we are doing, we believe we can muster the banking to support, we believe we've got the community behind it and we believe we can muster the political machinery. And I think what to happen after that was we had to go out and get the political machinery to say yes there right, they do have it. And I felt at that time that the decision was going to be a political one that was made in the legislature and from there it was going to be made in the Governor's Office. And while we were doing our thing at that time frame, I think we, we politicized were we could, and everybody we could to ensure our position. I remember the day the bill passed, it was voted 99 to 1. I was standing in the wings and CJ was on the floor because he introduced it. CJ and I were writing speeches for a week before that and he was just superb and after the vote came down, he asked "Who was the guy who voted no?" (*Laughing*)

JS: Who was it?

RC: It was somebody from Cleveland that I don't know who it was that voted no, I used to, but I've forgotten the name. But there were 100 votes cast and it was 99 to 1. I will never forget that day because it was just like my god it wasn't gonna happen and it did happen. Well it wasn't finished there because then you have to get the Governor's signature on it of course. And that takes another whole framework of politics and that side of it I think was admirably done by Bob Kegerreis.

JS: How do you go from President Golding to President Kegerreis, when President Golding was in office what was his role in getting the document passed and...

RC: Well alright he left before the documents were really passed, the program was started under Brage's tutorage and Brage left and Bob Kegerreis came in as president and I'm trying to think now if I can piece that all together. The \$250,000 appropriation to do the final study was well after Brage had left the institution. That action was taken at a subsequent time, but if you asked me to go back and try to dig that it would probably take me another two weeks to think about it, I just don't remember the time frames anymore of when we did what. We sorta became aloof to what was going on with, when your involved in that kind of project and a number of others we had going, you sorta lose contact with some of the other dynamics of the situation, to be very honest with you, and they don't stick in your mind as clearly as some of the other things do, and telling you the honest truth I don't remember were Bob came in vis-a-vie were we were in the exact process, but it was before, I believe it was before we got the appropriation, and I would have to go back and check those dates, I don't honestly know. I know that when we delivered the proposal six months later, it was Andy Spiegel who was Provost and Bob Kegerreis was President, so he had to be in there well before we got the whole final proposal done. But, we were allowed to operate pretty loosely with respect to, at least during most of the early period, in fact even through the preparation of the document, we were given the charge to do a job and the only stipulation I can ever remember Bob Kegerreis saying was you think you've got a problem you get to me quick. In other words, if I was running into something which was a political problem, and I honestly felt it was going to backfire on it or something, we were doing something I even felt uneasy with, I was getting a gentle nudge you make sure you discuss it with me, you get back to me and we will see together what can be worked out. So we had it, other than that we were left alone, Bob was superb, he did not ask for constant, you know, touch base with me every week or anything like that. He was more, he said okay you know what you're doing, do your job and just keep me informed, and we would touch base probably once every two or three weeks, and he would be then operating, and Bob, he was a different kind of President than Brage Golding, Brage Golding was the traditional academician President, was not community involve. Bob Kegerreis on the other hand was 360 degrees, no I shouldn't say that 180 degrees apart in that respect he was a community animal and he did his job superbly, he's magnificent on his feet before a hearing, he represented the institution extremely well, he was I believe, extremely instrumental in the negotiations with the governor at the time when the bill was coming through he had laid out the groundwork with the political machinery and he was doing one thing at one level, and I was doing another thing at another level, so there was two different levels of operations going on at all times and it really worked out extremely well. His ilk as a President, is an ilk which is unusual, he was the outside man for Wright State, that was opportune in the history of Wright State, because Wright State had not developed, when he took over had not developed a community image, had not developed community involvement. I think probably, by the way, Bob became criticized because of his absence from the campus because of an over commitment to the external community. But, in the time frame of the history of the institution I think what he did was essential, it had to happen. And Brage had to do what he did when the institution was started, he had to devote his attention inside the institution because that's where all the startup problems were. That's when the computers didn't work and the registrations had to be manually handled and things of this type. He had a very small administration there were four deans and Brage Golding, five deans and Brage Golding, so there wasn't any real administration at that time. So each person had their role in that whole series of events that developed into what's now Wright State's medical school. And Bob's role was one that was utilized with delicacy and portion at the appropriate time and we did what I would call

the gut work or the scout work and he did the finesse work that was normally and traditionally left to the president of the institution, he used his clout well is the best way to put it.

JS: Well thank you very much for the information you have given me in this first interview it's a fascinating outlook on development and in our next interview I would like to cover a few areas of what we have covered today in depth a little more and then go into the planning after you had taken the document in and gotten it approved by the governor.