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Jackie Williams

Judson Williams

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Dr. & Mrs. Judson Williams

INTERVIEWER: Rebecca Craver

PROJECT: History of the University

DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 31, 1984

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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Dr. Williams came to the College of Mines to start the Journalism Department in 1940; Mrs. Williams came to the College of Mines in 1939 to teach Music.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

The beginning of the Music Department at the College of Mines and musical programs presented; development of the Journalism Department; how Mr. and Mrs. Williams met; faculty gatherings; the effect of World War II on the campus; the development of the Mass Communications Department; anecdotes concerning student publications; Dr. Williams' responsibilities as Dean of Students; pranks; the name change; recommendations for the future of UTEP.

Length of interview: 1 hour, 5 minutes Length of transcript: 35 pages

Dr. and Mrs. Judson Williams
by Rebecca Craver
January 31, 1984

C: Mrs. Williams, tell me why you came to El Paso and when.

Mrs. W: I came to El Paso in September of 1939 at the request of Glen Johnson, then head of the newly-formed Music Department, and Dr. Wiggins, who was president at the time. I was the first instructor to teach any courses toward getting a B.A. degree with a major in Music. I taught Sight Singing and Ear Training, and Theory and Harmony I and II, and History of Music. Those were the courses offered. At that time the college was very busily recruiting students and this is one of the reasons I was asked to come--both as a teacher, but as a performer. They needed people who could perform musically to go to the downtown civic clubs, to go to high schools, both in El Paso and out in the West Texas area, which I did a very great deal at the time. I sang mostly and I'm a soprano, and I also directed an a capella choir. We performed many, many places all over this area and had male quartets, ladies' trios, solos. And I taught voice and all of those things. That's the main reason I came.

C: And you were only 20 when you came.

Mrs. W: Yes. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

C: What did you think of the campus when you first saw it?
What were your first impressions of the campus?

Mrs. W: Well, the campus, first it was very hot. It was over a hundred degrees the day I arrived and I wasn't accustomed

to that, and it was very dry. And I had come from a flat area with citrus trees, and the mountains seemed very barren and very stark. And the campus was not paved. That's another of my first recollections.

My classes were in the museum building. He sort of after I got here, seemed to give it a second thought and said, "Oh, you have to have a place, don't you?" So, the museum seemed to be the place where music students could practice and make noise and so on, where there just simply was not any other place for us to be. So Bill Strain, the curator of the museum, and I became firm friends very quickly and he was more than helpful in finding the necessary paraphernalia to set up shop in the Music Department.

C: I have spoken to him and he told me there seemed to be some trouble with the heating in that building and there was a conflict between you and an art teacher over the temperature that you wanted in the building. Do you remember that?

Mrs. W: (Chuckles) Well, it was very friendly. Miss Wise was the Art teacher, but she needed it one way and I, for some reason or other, needed it another way. And right now I can't tell you. But I do recall that there were some conflicts. I had forgotten about that. But she and I were very good friends and it seems to me we did not come to blows.

C: Now, tell me about some of the programs that you gave. What kind of songs would you sing? Do you remember any

particular program you loved best?

Mrs. W: Well, I know that I sang at all of the civic clubs-- Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions. And at that time there was the Ormsby Club. I particularly remember that as being a nice group of men. And I never did know its purpose, I only remember that it met in the undercroft of St. Clement's. And I sang for the Women's Club. I, early, gave a recital at the McDowell Club, became very actively interested in the brand new Women's Auxiliary of Texas College of Mines, and through those wonderful ladies helped choose a new costume for the band. I think they were using castoffs from some high school or some such business, and that was one of the highlights of my first year there, and I sang for them.

Then we took several tours into West Texas, two busloads it seemed like, a tremendous amount of people-- the band and selected people from the Vocal Department, and then my singing and so on. And we went to every high school, more than I even knew. . . towns I had certainly never heard of. But it was fun, and it seems to me we did a good job.

Dr. W: What about the operas?

Mrs. W: Oh, my. Well, those were city and civic endeavors.

Dr. W: And the symphony.

Mrs. W: Yes. The symphony presented, as ways and means concerts, Gilbert and Sullivan, "Pinafore" and "Mikado" and so on,

and I sang the lead through those for several years.

And they seemed to be profitable undertakings and I know we had a fine time doing that.

C: How many years did you actually teach at UTEP?

Mrs. W: Two.

C: Two years.

Mrs. W: Only two, because there was in effect at the time a strict nepotism rule. So at the end of my second year I retired and taught privately since Judson was also employed there, and we married in June of 1941. So my career was short, but I enjoyed it thoroughly and that's why I stopped. But I kept busy doing the same sort of things, sure.

C: Tell me, Dr. Williams, then, what brought you to El Paso?

Dr. W: Well, Dr. Wiggins brought me. He was the Dean at Hardin-Simmons University, and there were two students there, of which I was one, and the other's Frank Junell. And I don't know what it was that attracted him to us, because we were not that. . .neither of us had ever planned on going in the educational field. But he was Dean, and he some few years, well I guess it was '37 when he came, but he came here and he recognized that this area should fill a need academically, higher education, than just the, at that time Mining Engineering, Geological Engineering, and some Arts and Science classes, primarily at the freshman and sophomore level. And he saw a great opportunity to build a college, a full-rounded college program here.

Well, he called Frank first, and Frank agreed to come. And he called me and I said, "Well, what would you like me to do?" And he said, "I'd like for you to come out here and handle the publicity program to build a Department of Journalism and anything else that goes with that." And I told him that I had graduated from Hardin-Simmons, as he knew, frankly, with a major in Mathematics. But I'd been editor of the newspaper and the magazine and the yearbook, and journalism was a field that I was very much interested in. And I told him that if he wanted me to come he'd have to give me two things: one is a contract, and the other is a leave of absence before I ever started. Because if I was going to come in the development of a journalism department, I felt I was inadequate in terms of background, formal background. So I asked for a leave of absence to go to the University of Missouri to obtain my Master's of Arts degree in Journalism, and my Bachelor of Journalism. He said, "Well, what do you want the leave of absence for?" I said, "Because I've got to borrow some money and I've got to have a basis to indicate that." And he said, "Fine." So, he gave me a leave of absence and I went to the University of Missouri in September of 1939. And at the end of that year and that three months in the summer, I did obtain my Master's and my Bachelor's of Journalism.

I came to El Paso in September of 1940 and took over my duties instructing classes in Journalism--the usual

Reporting classes, Editorial Writing, Feature Writing and Photography--and at the same time handled the first full time. . .and I say that because each one of the jobs I had I felt were full time, to develop sports publicity, because we needed to develop a good well-rounded sports program, and at the same time to begin to set up classes in Journalism, the sponsorship of the Prospector and all publications, including the catalog. All of those were as Director of Publications, Director of Publicity, and instructor in Journalism. That was my introduction.

And as Jackie had said, she came the year before, and I think it was customary to match up the faculty as oftentimes did. And we met, and each of us had other romantic interests from our own hometowns. That second year we hit it off. They had faculty activities because there needed to be a comradeship developed among the Arts and Sciences and Engineering and the Fine Arts, as Dr. Wiggins was trying to develop at that time, and did. And we met learning to square dance up in old Holliday Hall, which was the gymnasium at that time. And incidentally, that was the only auditorium of any kind that existed on the campus, and it was a gymnasium that was built out of WPA labor for the gym classes, the P.E. Department, the basketball team, the assemblies (which at that time we did have once a week), and those programs and any other type of congregation gathering whether it was

for students, faculty or out of town guests and so on.

So that was our auditorium.

So I met Jackie and we were very seriously interested and we decided to get married. And I went to talk to Dr. Wiggins and he says, "Which one of you will resign?" And I say this because there, at that time, were faculty couples, husband and wife, teaching. And the rule that came into effect was grandfather (?), so that those like the Balls, they were both teaching, the Quinns were both teaching, and there may have been others, I'm not familiar with that or don't remember it. But in our case. . .

So I guess I decided that the best thing for Jackie to do was to retire because she had plenty to do with the demands, because she is, was, a very fine musician--piano, organ and voice. And she had done so many fine things in the valley. She came from the McAllen area and she had already sung well over the United States even at the age she was. And Glen Johnson, who was developing the Music Department, came from that same area and he said, "I want her." So I feel a debt to Glen Johnson and Dr. Wiggins for providing me with such a wonderful person, which we've been married now for a number of years and have four fine children and eight grandchildren. And I think it's a tremendous asset to me to have had that opportunity for us to meet and to marry. And it hasn't been regretted by either of us that she couldn't continue professionally in the teaching fields.

C: Tell me some more about the faculty gatherings. Do you remember?

Dr. W: Well, the square dance functions, for example. There was an interest on campus and square dancing was new to me. Western dancing wasn't. We had all done that. But they put on these square dancing classes up there in the gym once a week or twice a week, and they really were a lot of fun.

Mrs. W: They were lessons and that's what interested us, because we had neither one taken any lessons.

C: Who called?

Mrs. W: I think it was a faculty member who had had experience.

Dr. W: Some of them were, and I think they brought in people who were, you know, experienced square dancers, loved square dancing, devotees of it who loved to teach, because there wasn't any money changing hands. Very few of us had any money at that time. And I have to say this, the salaries at the college were barely in line with the public school salaries, because the appropriations and the type of program that was being put together in order to broaden the base didn't allow for substantial salaries. But they were adequate, and we all made it without having to suffer at all. But these were activities that didn't cost a lot and the faculty enjoyed them. We had dinners in the then. . .

Mrs. W: The tenth floor of the Cortez Hotel.

Dr. W: Well, I'm really talking about on campus. The campus things were. . .it was in the women's dormitory. It was the lower floor. That was the cafeteria for the dormitory students, of which there weren't too many because the dormitory was very small. But we had faculty dinners there because we could do it very inexpensively and these things were fun. And we had many a picnic up in McKelligon Canyon, because at that time there was no television and there just weren't a lot of things that generated home entertainment. But we had some wonderful picnics and wonderful activities.

Mrs. W: Well, what I was saying, we had two formal faculty parties a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. And they were generally like a dinner dance or something like that. And the first one, October 15th, is the evening that I met Judson. We had both gone in different directions and we were introduced at the fall faculty formal, so I remember that.

C: Do you remember what you wore?

Mrs. W: No, just a long dress. No. But I do remember the date very well.

Dr. W: You know another thing, going back to that long ago, for those functions--formals, they were formal--we wore tuxes and long dresses. And it was delightful to all of a sudden dress up and go to the Del Norte or to the Cortez, and they were both beautifully. . .their ballrooms were excellent,

as they will be again under this new Renaissance Program.

But it was, it was a lot of fun.

C: How did World War II affect the campus?

Dr. W: Interestingly, in depleting the campus for a while in terms of the students in the age categories where they were being drafted. And a number of the faculty went into the Service. A lot of us were on our way and I had made application for Officers' Candidate School and had been accepted, even to the point of going down and Jackie and I picking out the uniform, deciding how she was going to. . .we had one child at that time.

And so Dr. Wiggins called me in one day and he said, "I want you to know I am not going to stay here and try to run the college program without some men. And we have been designated for an Army specialized program," which was the accelerated Army program whereby they brought in, I wouldn't say they were with the highest I.Q., but they were those who could take the program in the time allowed and come out of there with much more training. They did two things. One was the physical training which they had to go through on the campus, and the other was that they were in classes on the accelerated program like seven hours a day. And these days started real early and ended real late. And we took those little rooms in the men's dormitory and set them up in the women's dormitory where we could put four

people to a room. And we built the box. And it was my job to run this program along with the people sent in, and I had, I guess, the equivalent rank of a Captain.

And on that basis there was no question. . . this program lasted two years, and I met some fine young men who later came back to the college to go to school. So we had some of the most, I think, fine experiences because every evening that flag was lowered up in front of Old Main, and all of these young men, I think we had as high as 300 at a time, and they were turning over about every 6 or 8 weeks. They were coming for the most massive accelerated program in mathematics and sciences and all of these things, which the United States was doing its best to get ready in a hurry. And it was a real fine experience. And then when the program was dismantled, and moved out, it had been a good thing for the college 'cause it exposed us to a lot of fine young men who some came back to El Paso to live and many came back and went to college, and it carried the word of the then College of Mines across the continent.

So, then for a while we had more coeds than we had men students, and it was interesting because men who were there, the young men who were there, had them all, because more girls were coming out here because the curriculum program had been broadened where they could find things

that really appealed to them. And then as the war began to wind down and they began to get out, then the G.I. Bill brought the men back and we ended up with almost two or three men to each girl. So the thing reversed itself, and I think the girls were happier than the men were.

And we built a vet's village where the new library's being finished now, in that area. And we took what we call today prefab buildings, but they weren't, they were just barrack-type things that the college purchased from the government in various places where the Service brought them in. And that was one of the finest things that happened because that was vet village where as many as 200 families lived during their educational period where they could have their children--and many of them were married with kids and all. And they had their own little village government, elected their own officers and took care of the problems that would normally come, you know--people get mad, you live close together, the insulation in the rooms weren't too good, there wasn't a great deal to play in. So they put in a pretty good self-government down there.

And by this time I had moved from my original assignment to the college as instructor in Journalism to the development of the department, and I also kept the chairmanship of that department and the development of the Department of Mass Communications and Publicity

and became Dean of Students. So I had all of these various factors going at the same time. And boy, it sounds like a lot of responsibility, and it was, and it took a lot of time, but I enjoyed every bit of it and the challenge that went with it. And I'll come back and pick up because _____ some kind of _____.

But after I got here and taught the Journalism courses and those things that were more in line with the publication and work that we were doing and the publicity program, and we began to develop classes and developed interesting journalism, and the classes grew. And you could only expand as you had interest sufficient to make a class. The funds to the college came on the basis of the number of students you could attract. And the second year we had sufficient students that I was allowed to hire the first actual full-time faculty member, and I called on some of my University of Missouri friends. One came, and his name was Bounds and he worked in the Journalism Department. And he left and the next one was Milton Gross, who had been one of my fellow students at the University of Missouri who came out and stayed two or three years, I'm not quite sure of that, did a great job in his teaching and picking up the programs and developing the maturity of our struggling department. And then he was invited back to Missouri on the faculty and he became Dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, which is the prestige Journalism school. So,

I'm saying that we did draw good instructors.

And the department developed when the radio program began to be broadened and there were so many more radio stations being licensed, we saw a need. And I went to Dr. Wiggins and we talked about the possibility of adding radio to the Department of Journalism. And he said, "Everything's fine. How are you going to finance it?" So, Karl Wyler, who is still the head man in radio to me, and he still is active in the management and the operation of KTSM radio and TV, I asked him to /lend us an/ instructor. We didn't have the money at the state level, and if he would lend us an instructor to start teaching some radio classes and then let us use his station as a laboratory, we could _____.

We began that first radio course with nine girls. And Virgil Hicks was the then program director of KTSM and turned out to be an excellent instructor and a real challenge to him, and he came out and taught two classes. And some of those girls got on the radio programs at KTSM, did a good job. Some of them became full-time employees after a couple of years of training, long before we had a major in the field. And we were using more and more of Virgil Hicks' time. So, finally Mr. Wyler says, "Okay. If he wants to go, he can go out there full-time and I'll pay his salary." So, this was a tremendous contribution on the part of Karl Wyler, and a wonderful thing for us to develop a program not having the funds for the Legislature to support it. And then in addition to that he donated substantial equipment for us to begin to have the

laboratory material right there on campus. We had that and we called in other radio people who could instruct a class or two to give the professional side of the training and bring the laboratory to the campus.

One of the things that we were so proud of, we didn't have much money but we did finally get a \$3,000 dollar appropriation that Dr. Wiggins was able to get through the legislature. And we put in the first things--the microphones, the consoles and so on--to have a radio on the air. That radio was what you call a very restricted frequency, 'cause we didn't have the right to go into anybody's home. So we operated that radio for a while by what we call the pipes and the various sundries, the things out there that we could pick up to communicate. And then we finally got a license, with restricted license based on very minimum power, and we bought a windmill. In essence, we eliminated the windmill portion, put a windmill tower, and and put it up right behind old Kelly Hall on that peak of a mountain there, and that was our antenna.

And we began programming. We couldn't sell advertising and so we couldn't pay any salaries and we operated that on that basis. And it was a fine teaching facility and it helped us develop some fine people. The beginning of the radio program, and then we got into the TV. And also we were instrumental in establishing what was known as the first University Association for Radio accredited in the country, and we helped establish that. Tulsa University was

a member, the University of Texas at Austin was just getting started on theirs, and we had about 10 or 11 schools that were finally accredited before the program began to be something other than what we had started with. It served a great purpose.

The next thing that we did was take television as it came on and add that to our program. Some of the things I have left out here. I went to see Dorrance Roderick at the Times and I told him we needed to have, in order to teach some real editing and copy writing and other factors, we needed a teletype machine. And he installed in old Kelly Hall where we were an AP 24-hour teletype machine.

PAUSE

. . .professional training, because while we could use some of those things on our newscast, most of our newscasts were built around local things on campus because we didn't have a big audience. But he did give us that professional training of how it really happened--the Associated Press wire news--and AP was the biggest one then. And we kept that and he supported that for years. And he gave us substantial amounts of equipment plus some scholarships that we needed to attract students. Willard Kline then was at KROD, and he gave us mammoth supplies of records. You can understand, we didn't have the money to purchase those, but he gave us libraries of records so that in these programs we could then develop music programs. The student would have the experience of trying to test appetites and so on.

And then we moved into [the] television area. We were then, with a little more promise showing, we got some state appropriations for some television equipment, and we set that up in Kelly Hall and we had our studios there. We were able to get cameras, good cameras, and we had added to our staff, both in Journalism and Radio and Television. And it became the Department of Journalism, Radio and Television.

I don't want this to sound in terms of...everybody out there was doing more than one thing. I was still the chairman of that department, I was still teaching a course or two, I had achieved the rank of full professor, I was Dean of Students and Director of Publications, and still handling the major publicity and public relations. I had acquired a sports publicity assistant. That was a very busy time, it was a tremendous time, and I enjoyed it. And I continued with those responsibilities until 1956 when I left the institution.

I might say, in between I took off one year, a leave of absence, and went to the University of Texas at Austin and completed my Doctorate, and then on that basis, that was in 1952, I was planning to...my career was higher education. And a longtime friend, when I went to Austin to get my Doctorate, to complete it, he was recalled to Service and he was at Bergstrom

[Air Force Base]. So he and his wife and youngsters and Jackie and I were all at Austin at the same time. And he said, "What you need to do is get into business." He was the son of the owner of the White House Department Store. And when we came back to El Paso--we came back about the same time--his father died about three years after we came back and he came out and parked on my desk several mornings a week until in 1956 I resigned to become the executive vice president of the White House Department Store. And that was my adieu to the field of higher education and into business, for which I have no regrets because I thoroughly enjoy the business area. And that's not part of your story, but I've just taken you through this part of the experience.

There are many, many stories, anecdotes and other factors that go where students sometimes. . .the problems today with the student newspapers and they don't want to censored and they don't want to be edited, we had all that.

C: Tell me one.

Dr. W: Well, thinking back, Hawley Richeson, one of the students, and he since became one of the top public relations men, but he was editor to The Prospector, and he didn't like some of the things the El Paso Times was doing and he didn't like some of the ways they were treating news about the college. So he undertook to chastise the editor

of the El Paso Times, and very, very forthrightly. And so I called him in and I said, "Hawley, I'm not sure you really mean this." I said, "Do you realize that you have that feeling about Mr. Hooten, and, oh, I don't object to it. But when you put it in this official newspaper out here, it becomes something more than just your opinion. And these people that Mr. Hooten represents are supporting this college. I don't think that anything should be denied you in terms of what is truth and what is fiction, but you're criticizing him when you have no base on which on to be truly critical of a good newspaper man." And Hawley took it and he later came and thanked me for it, but he said, "You know, I just felt at that time I was probably much smarter than he ever was. And could write better."

And then we had some editorials that took the administration to task. And I tried to deal with those because while I didn't sympathize with them, I certainly did identify with them, because they felt. . .and they were not tearing down characters, the character of the individual, but they were taking an opinion that the administration of this school was wrong or there was something wrong with the lack of student voice and activities. They ought have more right to say what they think and what they do. And of course at the time, we

had a lot of veterans back; they were older. And they were pretty, not only wordly wise, but they had a lot of complaints. And we had some student uprisings, and yet they were not the. . . fact that we didn't have any vandalism. We had some paint scattered a few times but we didn't have any broken windows or any doors beat in or any of the things that came in the sixties, which was student revolt for a lot of reasons.

And to a large extent, and I don't know to what degree we might say percentage-wise it's changed, but the greatest majority of our students came from the El Paso area and they commuted to school. And it was difficult to build what students like to think of as school spirit because when the classes were over and the day was over, unless they were involved in the extracurricular programs, they went home. And we didn't develop a lot of boarding students of any consequence until about, oh, in the fifties. And then the school began to draw more from the outside and there was a need to expand the dormitories.

C: What were your responsibilities as Dean of Students?

Dr. W: Almost anything you can think of--the dormitories, the organizations, the discipline committee, the approval of rules and regulations that we would work out pertaining. . . we had fraternities and sororities vote at that time what you could do. And at that time we had programs and

I'm sure other campuses had whereby if you had a social function, you had to come in and get a sheet and you had to get it filled out and you had to have three chaperones. Now, this was a pain in the neck-- to me. And I know it was a pain in the neck to them, but that was the regulation sent out on that campus. And this was not my idea, which later I was able to put more responsibility on the students and less on faculty chaperones, because the faculty in the main didn't like it, and in essence they were taking their turn. We had college dances, there had to be three chaperones at those dances, on and off the campus. And we had social functions that were organized by student groups. By this I mean an organized student group like a club, well, it'd be a club of some type, an organization of some type, either on a continuing basis or a semester or something else. So those were responsibilities that I didn't much care for, but they had to be done.

And oh, traffic. There was a problem because the whole campus was a parking lot. We had no parking lots of any consequence because the hill still hadn't been knocked off and the open spaces were being used for buildings. Now that was later changed. They built the buildings in the gulley and used the other areas for parking. But they parked all over that campus. And I finally set up the first traffic police program, and they were individuals,

in most cases veterans, who were, I wouldn't say more mature, but at least accepted responsibility as a so-called M.P. on campus for parking violations. And we had a pretty good system. And all those tickets came into my office, and I had them reviewed and then the students who were oblivious to the rules and did not pay any attention to them and ignored them, I would call them in and we would sit down and talk. And I took many a student's car off campus and believe me, that was a hardship rule. And then where they still continued to get them and many students who were sons and daughters of prominent people in El Paso, I told them, "One more ticket and you're going to be taken off campus. Your cars were already off and you're still coming on, or you had finished up the time that you couldn't have your car on campus and you're now still getting the tickets." And so I did take some of the students off campus. In essence what you might call, well there were some cases they lost a semester, taken out of school. But we didn't have money, didn't deal in money. It could only be privileges that they lost.

And that has evolved until as the campus grew and the student enrollment grew, it appeared that every single student brought a car up there at some time or other. And there was never any satisfactory bus service. We tried with the then City Lines to get bus service that would

take up some of that slack, but it just never did meet the need and it never did work; it still hasn't worked. More students are riding the bus but we don't really have a satisfactory bus service that students will ride from various parts of the city.

C: Tell me if you remember any pranks, or any kind of discipline problems, like panty raids.

Dr. W: Yeah, we had those.

Mrs. W: Let me mention, and this is just a small thing. When the engineers had their fun things with dynamite, by this I'm remembering that Providence Hospital was there, and even Hotel Dieu would complain, they had. . . Oh no, that wasn't dynamite, that was football games.

Dr. W: No. Well, like you're talking about two different things.

Mrs. W: Well, I guess I am, but it's still all part of it.

Dr. W: The engineers, particularly the mining engineers, mining and metallurgy graduates, they really never did give up. They felt that institution was theirs and built for them, and they didn't have any use for what they called the Arts and Sciences Peedoggies. It was strictly an engineering school and they'd draw lines and say, "Stay off of this side of the campus." And that rivalry was very, very healthy in most cases. On St. Pat's Day, that was the big day for the engineers and they would, some of their initiations were. . .well, they were something else. They would go up to Oro Grande and they would come back and have a big dance in the student union building and it was quite an occasion.

But the night before, they would get off in those hills and they would package dynamite that absolutely you could hear everywhere. And then we talked to them on and on about the fact that somebody was really going to get seriously hurt, because they could by not being careful enough and running across those gulleys and those places. But many a night I went up to the campus. I was called by irate people, "Come up here and do something." Wasn't much you could do.

Mrs. W: (Chuckles) Yeah, after it's done. All the windows were _____.

Dr. W: But some of them were arrested by the police, and it was my duty, that's another factor I handled, because students did get arrested. Students got arrested in Juarez. It's just. . . I guess it's as normal as anything for somebody to test the situation, to drink a little too much, get a little too boisterous. But I went to Juarez many a time and got students out of jail, brought them back. I went down to the city jail after some of these St. Pat's functions, had to line up 10 or 12 that I asked to be released to me. And incidentally, some faculty members, I had two or three of those.

C: (Laughs) I won't ask you to name any names.

Dr. W: No, I wouldn't under the circumstances. But it's just one of those things that it fell on my job to do that,

and work with both fraternities and sororities. We didn't have a Dean of Women for a long time, and when we did it was a godsend because that was just not my cup of tea. But that was part of the situation there.

And the rivalry between New Mexico A & M and the college--and I do need to mention the name change a little bit because I was involved in that--but the rivalry between New Mexico A & M and Texas College of Mines and Texas Western was something. And it really was interesting because, again, I'd say the worst thing they did was burn the grass and I don't think that hurt a great deal, but it still created some problems in football. We had a cannon and they'd swipe the cannon and we'd get it back eventually but it roused feelings and so on. And then one time the Aggies had a bell up in a bell tower that was virtually impossible to get to, and our students went up there and took the, not the bell, but they took the dong out of the bell. And it became a demand on the part of the Aggies. But first of all it was _____ to do it and nobody would tell them where it was. So the next year they came, and the cannon we had at that time, I think it was over in front of the Centennial Museum, and they loaded that up and took it. And the students really patrolled the campus during the two or three nights before the game, whether it was up there or down here. They still swiped that and kept it for about two weeks before we got it back.

Well, those things, I don't call that vandalism in terms of anything other than the inconvenience it might cause somebody in getting it back, but we had those. And bonfires, we had some great bonfires. And then oftentimes we had, at that time El Paso still was blessed with outdoor privies. And many a time I'd go out there and _____ go out there and that night before they had gathered them, and there they were. They even left a privy or two on the girls' dormitory steps. And if you wanted to say vandalism, that was, because that did deprive somebody because at that time that was their bathroom, their outhouse.

C: Where were the bonfires held?

Dr. W: They were over in the area where the present. . .I'm trying to think. Anyway, it was over toward Globe Mills, but it wasn't down in one of the gulleys. There was a flat place there because we had some good pep rallies. And then it was later moved down where the present women's dormitory and cafeteria is. There was an area in there. We had some great bonfires and some great speeches. There were fantastic speeches. Well, they were just one of those things, and the people cooperated with the students. If they had an accumulation of things, they would save it until they needed it for the bonfire and then they'd go get it. So we had some rather gigantic bonfires, and they were well-marshalled by the students so

that we didn't have any damage or injuries to students or damage to property.

C: What put an end to the bonfires?

Dr. W: I guess it goes with a lot of things. It was too much trouble and there are other ways to show your enthusiasm for the games. But both the idea of trying to outdo the other sort of became passé between the two institutions, and the bonfires just passed out of the picture. And it's happened, I guess, generally and you don't see much or hear much about bonfires. I think television, a lot of things, have changed the whole picture. The spirit's out of it.

Getting back to the name change. First of all, we were created as The School of Mines and Metallurgy, and I know all of those things you have, in 1913 as an act of the Legislature. We were created legislatively. And then we were made a branch of the University of Texas. We needed something to give us academic status. And then the arts and science curriculum had so far out-distanced the engineering program, and it was done because there was a crying need for all of these courses and there was less of a need for. . .you could only educate and should only educate what the demand of the profession will want in terms of metallurgical engineers. After all, there's not a mine in Texas. There were in essence _____ Mexico. And let me say this, the metallurgical engineering

curriculum I think is one of the finest engineering programs. It's the M.D. of all of them. You could almost be an engineer in any field, almost, by taking metallurgical engineering, a tough curriculum. And then it branched off into, they had a great Geology Department because that goes with metallurgical engineering, and then we got into electrical engineering and some others.

But all of the time the arts and science program was developing, and the Master's degree was developing only in some arts and science fields. So the enrollment was about 80 to 20 in terms of it, and the students and a lot of other people wanted to better recognize the college. It was no longer just a college of mines. _____ for a while they without a history change called it the College of Mines and Arts. Well, it just didn't suit, it didn't fit. People didn't understand that and we were always explaining, "What do you mean.?"

So when Wilson Elkins came to the college and we were talking about better recognition of this college, and obviously we were looking for students and trying to strengthen the whole program, and we talked to faculty and we talked to students, we got input from all organizations. The engineers, the miners, never did want to change anything, nothing, and they never did. That came as close to a war as anything ever has and many

mining engineers at that time haven't forgiven the college yet. But the final name, Texas Western University, was the name that they agreed on, and the Regents didn't think the word university was appropriate. And we were not a university by any stretch of the imagination. They said, "You ought to do it, it ought to be Texas Western College." And that was the name. And we had the Cotton estate, which had been left to the college and was throwing a good bit of money at that time. We even thought about a Cotton School for Girls, just one of Dr. Elkins' ideas, but that really wasn't _____ purpose. So Texas Western College, it became.

After I left the College in 1956, Jack Vowell, a great supporter of the College, and Joe Ray--Joe Ray was the president--he and Jack came down to the White House and said, "We would like for you to chair a mission for this institution." And I said, "Why?" They said, "Well, call it what you want to, but we want to assemble a group of people who will be appointed by the President of the University of Texas at Austin and approved by the Board of Regents, who will set up a plan, which will be known as Mission '73, where this institution ought to be at that time." And I said, "Well, let me think about it," because this was going to take, gosh, a lot of time.

And we set it up and picked the people, and most of them were friends and relations that I had gone through in the college level and in civic and city level and business, and we got them together and asked to them if they would serve and the time it would take. And we figured it would take, oh, a year or two to develop this program, and so they were appointed. Mission '73 was the name of this group. I think it was a tremendous piece of work. Milton Leech became the faculty member assigned to work with this group, 'cause we had to have secretarial help, we had to have people who could work the various groups as they were broken down where we should be in 1973. He did a great job. We also had University of Texas at Austin support coming up who would work with us and give us ideas of things which we sorely needed.

I thought it ought to be the University of Texas at El Paso. There's the justification for this all over California. It wasn't a matter of our trying to be something we weren't, 'cause we were constitutionally a part of the University of Texas system, and so we needed a name. I went down and talked to Dr. Ransom, the then chancellor, and he said, "Maybe so, maybe so." He never would give me an affirmative answer. So about six months or so into our program, in the various conferences we were having, we were talking about the name, and I had enlisted substantial support from the business community for it,

because this would give us the designation that we could aspire to and at the same time put us on a quality basis of being the University of Texas.

My third meeting with the Chancellor, Ransom, he said, "You know, this Board of Regents might approve this, but we're going to have to look at the whole University system." And I said, "That's fine." At that time, Arlington existed, and the medical schools existed. And so in final analysis, when we finished our program, and we had strong support from the community who were doing all they could to influence the Board of Regents and others, the chancellor sent me a telegram-- and it's in the Mission '73 front page, or inside front page--for this had been officially done. And he said, "Congratulations to you and to the University of Texas at El Paso." That's the first time it was in print. It had not yet been done. Well, it had to go to the Legislature. The Regents approved it, the chancellor recommended it, and then we got our legislators to carry the bill. And by that time we pretty well had comingled that whole House and Senate, and we became then in 1973 the University of Texas at El Paso. And the easiest thing, of course, is to call it UTEP.

But those were significant milestones in this institution's history. And many of the things in Mission '73 came to pass just as if it had been chonicled with control. The thing that I regret is, our recommendations were to

tighten the entrance examination or the entrance requirements, and we felt we needed to do that in order to do two things--strengthen the quality of the graduates from that institution to have better prepared the students who are entering out of the high schools so that they would be set up on an academic basis. And the high school then had an academic route and a nonacademic route that the student or his or her parents can say "Okay, let him go the nonacademic route," he or she, and they will not be eligible to go on to college unless they take some courses. We looked at from the bilingual _____ that they ought to be able to speak, read and write English to communicate when they got to college. Lord knows, if they don't have it by then, they're not going to get it.

And we were able to actually set up the admission requirements that in my opinion, if it had been left that way, strengthening, that the institution would be better off today. It has to be. It went back to the point, more or less, if you have a high school diploma and your SAT score is somewhere in here, you can get in. And there's nothing wrong with that idea because it's taxpayer's money. But I think we've got an _____ responsibility to not... we had too many people flunking out at the freshman level and that's just money wasted.

But anyway, changes happened, and now they have the provisional program, not only here but in most of the other colleges of Texas. And if you can't quite make your SAT score and you don't have the grade equivalents, you can go to summer school, you have to go both terms. And if you pass, if you qualify with whatever you take that's freshman level of courses, then you can be admitted the next semester. Those are great experiences.

C: If you were on a committee now called Mission '93 what recommendations would you make?

Dr. W: Well, you know, you can't just say that because it takes a lot of penetrating study and looking at the resources, and also looking at the ability of the state to provide the funds, the appropriation funds, for these. And today we have probably too much duplication between institutions. If Texas Tech has a strong home economics school, which they do, there's no reason to try to put home economics in here. They're very, very expensive. So I'm speaking of that as just one area. And we do have strengths here. We have strengths that are being recognized in Geology, in English, in History, in the international program. I would say we ought to strengthen those, develop those, look at the other areas where we will meet a need by offering, speaking now of the Doctorate degree. Our Master's degree, I think,

is pretty adequately covered. I would be interested along with faculty members and others from other institutions, determine what are some of the things that you see we ought to do.

[END OF TAPE I]

Dr. W: The University of Texas at Austin was getting so bad that in essence what they would like to become is a junior and senior level institution of higher education and then the graduate programs. But Texans are not going to sit there and say, "You can't keep our kids from going to the University of Texas at Austin." So now they've set those levels, and if you can't qualify, you don't get in there regardless of who your parents are.

Now, we need more of that and have, I think, in El Paso, the El Paso Community College is a good preparatory program area to strengthen your English, your history, to get a chance to determine your own habits and study habits. And if you can qualify for what would be considered the then entrance requirements over here, then you'd probably make it. But without that, it probably would be the same thing of a substantial fail-out in the freshman and sophomore years, which is a lot of wasted money.

But to get back to your question. . .and I think it would be a good idea. The University has a big program under way now for the hundred years of the University.

"What do we want to do now? We're a hundred years old." And they're getting some tremendous ideas. The University has resources, it has all sorts of research grants and things which we have some of but not a lot. But by taking those areas where we have our strengths in the area where we are, we are international. We're bicultural. We're all those things and we don't have to say we're them because we're backed right up to Mexico, we share a common border with Mexico, a million people live there and a half million live here. I think there are things that we could do in the international area, strengthen those, give different types of degrees, and then build a library accordingly. And the new library facility is going to be second to none. We will have the physical side of it. It wouldn't be a bad idea. In fact, the people who talk about academics and want to criticize the one part of the college that's not doing as well, we'll say, is athletics, maybe money-wise. But those things will come as goals are set and goals are reached. And we need that academic challenge right now.

C: Thank you.