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## Andrew D. Virgilio Interview

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**Interviewee: Andrew D. Virgilio**  
**Faculty: 1961-1987**  
**Alumnus: Class of 1949**  
**Interviewer: Dr. Bruce Leslie**  
**Date: August 31, 1999**  
**Place: Brockport, New York**

**Bruce Leslie: Today is August 31, 1999 and we are at 54 Park Ave in Brockport NY. I'm talking to Dr. Andrew D. Virgilio, an alumnus of Brockport, a faculty member, and an administrator. Andy, where did you grow up?**

**Andrew Virgilio: I grew up in Rochester NY on the southwest side of the city over on Champlain Street, to be exact. I went to grade school at St. Peter and Paul's on West Main St. and attended Aquinas Institute.**

**B.L.: Could you tell me about your parents' education?**

**AV: Both of my parents were born in Italy. My father was from an area near Naples and my mother from Sicily. My father came to this country at the turn of this century with no education. I think he finished first grade. He was about twelve years old when he came and he could neither read nor write. But he was able to carve out a life for himself and he served in the U.S. Army during World War I and saw action in France. That was one of the proudest parts of his life, being a veteran. My mother came from Sicily and she had been a teacher over there, like a Sunday school teacher. She came over in 1920. My mother and father were married in 1923 and in 1925 I was born. I was an only child.**

**BL: And then you went to Aquinas, then did you come to Brockport or did you go into the service?**

**AV: No, I graduated from Aquinas in 1943 and many of my classmates went directly into the service. The war was ongoing at that time. I was only seventeen and I wanted to go into the Air Force Cadets, therefore I had to wait until I was eighteen, which was at the end of the year in December. I decide to go to school during that summer and fall. A lot of the colleges had semesters during the summer, so a couple of friends and I went to Villanova thinking I was to be an engineer. My two friends finally came back and completed as engineers, but that was far from what my talents were. But anyway, I attended Villanova for those two semesters and then went into the service. After the war, when I was discharged in May 1946, I knew I didn't want to go back to Villanova. I didn't want to go anywhere too far from home. My girlfriend at the time, who later became my wife, had just graduated from Brockport in 1946. She was teaching at that time in Niagara Falls. So I decided to take a ride out to Brockport one day and take a look at it. I remember meeting with Dr. Delancy, who was in charge of Admissions at that time. I decided to come to Brockport in the fall, thinking I'd try it for a semester and see what happens.**

**BL: This is the fall of 1946?**

**AV: Yes, the fall of 1946. It just so happens that one of the first classes that I had that semester was with Ray Conrad and I don't recall the name of the class but it was probably**

something like Educational Psychology. As I sat there, this man mesmerized me. I said if that's what teaching is all about, I want a part of it. I decided to stay at Brockport. And many times later on when I came back to Brockport on the staff, there was a large group, maybe I was speaking for one reason or another, and Ray Conrad was in the audience, I would always tell this story about him. I'm sure he had that effect on many of my contemporaries. But that's how I came to Brockport and how I decided to stay at Brockport.

**BL:** Did you enter the elementary or physical education program?

**AV:** I entered the elementary program. I was not gifted athletically, and the physical education direction was not for me. I went with the elementary education program.

**BL:** What was your first impression of Brockport besides Dr. Conrad?

**AV:** The very special camaraderie of those times, especially, with all of us veterans who came back. Fall, 1946 was really the first big mass of veterans that landed here at the campus. As Ray Conrad use to say "We didn't know what to do with you." It was a special bond between all of us. Also, I remember a very special connection or relationship with all of the professors. It was a very special time. They realized that we were 'different' because we were more mature and objective-minded. We would be here for a couple of years and then move on to our chosen field of work. Jobs were very important in our minds. The relationships we had with the professors were something I never saw again afterwards, even when I came back as a professor.

**BL:** Were you invited to their homes? Did you know their families?

**AV:** Yes, I remember a couple of my friends, in fact Harry Emerson, you mentioned him a little while ago. I think he and some others lived in the President's house. He used to have students upstairs. But I remember Russ Archer who used to be the Chairman of the Speech Department, also had dramatics. He treated our dramatic students like a family. I remember Jo Mannix who was a teacher in the Campus School, Josephine Mannix. She had responsibility as an advisor to the Newman group, there was no Newman Oratory, but it was a Newman Club. She would lend a few of us her car, so we would go to other campuses and meet with other Newman groups. I remember John Redling, Ann Brown, and myself taking her car and off we'd go. It was that kind of a spirit, that is like a family.

**BL:** You mentioned Newman, how numerous were Catholic students at Brockport ?

**AV:** I would say a very high percentage during the time that I recall. I don't have any scientific data or proof, just from conversations. I think it was a good percentage. Whether it was a majority or not, I don't know. I remember our Newman group was large.

**BL:** Did the Catholic students feel they were at home or were visitors at a Protestant establishment?

**AV:** No, there was never any feeling like that. It was family whether you were Catholic or whatever.

**BL:** How about the ethnic origins of your fellow students, could you characterize them?

**AV:** There were a lot, such as myself, who were of Italian heritage. I recall there were quite a few of Irish heritage. Then, I can't identify or block out, but I know those two heritages come to mind. But it was something that you never highlighted. There was just Joe, Mike, and Andy regardless of the heritage.

**BL:** Do you think the GI Bill changed the composition of the student body much?

**AV:** Yes, the GI Bill was one of the greatest acts of our Congress and our President. I think it transformed higher education. It made higher education universal and it's never retreated from that. The colleges were never the same after that.

**BL:** One faculty member I was going to ask you about was Harry Porter? Did you know him?

**AV:** Yes, I did. I took a class from him; he was in the History Department.

**BL:** I know his name because he went on to great things at SUNY, but I've never heard anyone talk about him at Brockport. Could you tell me about him?

**AV:** He was a professor of History and I remember taking a class with him, but I don't remember which one. I guess I'd describe him as an Abe Lincoln character. He was tall, gangly, and friendly in a shy way, and a great professor. He went from here directly to SUNY Central. No, I think he went to one of our sister colleges first as President. It was Fredonia. That's right, he went to Fredonia to be President, then he ended up being the Provost at the University.

**BL:** At the time would you have guessed?

**AV:** No, he was a great teacher and professor but to go up the heights of administration of higher education, no I would not have guessed it. He was good. He wasn't here very long, if I'm not mistaken. I think he was here the year I came or the year after and then before you knew it, he was gone.

**BL:** I think it was two years. And did he edit the yearbook or some role like that?

**AV:** No, the advisor for the yearbook was Jim Edmunds. He was advisor during all the years I was there. The year I was editor of *Saga* was when I really got to know Jim. We worked very closely.

**BL:** There's something intriguing about the period in the development of various traditions. I wonder if you remember anything about adopting the Golden Eagle as the mascot.

**AV:** Yes, I was very much involved in that. It was in the year 1947-48. I was the Treasurer of the Student Council. In fact, we had to campaign for an election that spring. Our campaign slogan was "Trust your Dough with Virgilio". We sponsored a student body contest to coin the name of the Brockport athletic teams. That was when the Golden Eagles was chosen. That had the most votes. I remember the ballot box was downstairs, right across from Ma Greene's Cafeteria.

**BL:** I saw in the *Stylus* that there were four choices, the Golden Eagles, Golden Bears, Badgers, and Beavers. How did you choose those four?

**AV:** I don't remember. I remember that on the ballot there were four. Maybe we had an open recommendation process for that and those four seemed to be the highest in what came through. Yes, the Golden Eagles that's when it began. Later on, Ellsworth came on the scene.

**BL:** Was there any embodiment as in Ellsworth when you were there as mascot, either in a picture or uniform?

**AV:** No, I don't remember, just the name Golden Eagles.

**BL:** We're trying to locate that picture. So, at that point there was no physical embodiment, it was just the Golden Eagles.

**AV:** Yes, then we got football in the fall of 1947. The fall of 1947 was the first football team. During the previous year, our first year here for the veterans, we decided we would like football and one day we borrowed a big bass drum from the Music Department. We'd beat it up and down the halls of Hartwell, in front of Dr. Tower's office. We chanted "we want football". I don't know whether that had an effect or not, but he took it all in good spirits. There was no animosity at all.

**BL:** Could you tell me a little bit about the beginning of football?

**AV:** Well, Bob Boozer came on the scene and his assistants were Clark Whited and Marty Rogers. We started training very early in September, but because the announcement came so late, the College was only able to schedule three games: Hartwick College, Sampson (at that time the old Sampson base became a two year college the forerunner of the community college), and Mansfield from Pennsylvania. The Hartwick game was late in September, I think. But we waited for our uniforms and we didn't get our uniforms until the week before the first game when we had to travel down to Hartwick. Of course, we didn't win any games. The closest we came was in the Sampson game. We lost 7-6. The Hartwick game was fairly respectable but the Mansfield game was a blowout. The following year was a full schedule and we went on from there. It was two or three years later, when they had the University of Rochester on the schedule. I remember the game, I was out by then but the Rochester press really highlighted that game and it was played at Rochester stadium, Fauver Stadium. It was a great football game. I think the U of R won by a slight margin. It was an exciting game. They never played us again, which was a shame. We held a scrimmage at the University of Rochester during the first year for preparation for the three game schedule, but that was the only time they played us. I always think back to what a great rivalry that would have been.

**BL:** Did Cortland have a team?

**AV:** Yes, they did. Cortland had football and they were the physical education school. That was always a rivalry and I don't remember the first time we beat them, it wasn't very often that we beat Cortland. But the last couple of years now, we've done well against them. They were always one of the powerhouses.

**BL:** Did any other SUNY school have a team that you remember?

**AV:** No, at that time it was Cortland and Brockport. Albany has always had a football team, I think. None of the four-year colleges, they had soccer but not football. Brockport and Cortland were the only four-year colleges with football.

**BL:** What percentage of the team were veterans?

**AV:** I would say that in the first year, ninety-five percent. We were not in very good shape. I remember that a few had just come out of high school like Ray Dougherty on that first team, whose picture we were just looking at. He was fresh out of high school. Lou Ricci was fresh out of high school. There were a few, but most of us were veterans.

**BL:** Was that a strange environment to have a couple of eighteen-year-olds and battle-hardened veterans?

**AV:** Yes, but the “kids” were good.

**BL:** Was it hard to get started at a school that had a soccer reputation?

**AV:** No, remember because the soccer reputation at Brockport started around the same time as I’m talking about. I think Huntley Parker had come to Brockport the year before. He was a high school coach somewhere south of Rochester. I think Nunda, but I’m not sure. During those years, football and soccer paralleled, but the soccer went to great heights. I’m sure you’ve got it in your records somewhere, that we were co-national champions with Penn State in the early 1950s. I’ve always wondered why outside of the Tuttle Building, there’s a commendation for wrestling at Brockport, but why there isn’t a sign there that says we were the co-national champions of soccer. Because we had many All-Americans during my years and soccer continued to be a power. It became noted for its soccer but it had not reached those heights when we started with football.

**BL:** Was there a lot of rivalry between the two?

**AV:** A lot of kidding, because they always won. We supported each other.

**BL:** What other activities were you involved in?

**AV:** I was also involved in dramatics. As I said, Russ Archer was the leader of the dramatics club. He directed all the plays. I participated in three plays: “Our Town,” “the Night of January Sixteenth,” and a Shakespearean play, which I think, was Elizabeth, but I’m not sure of the title. I wrote for the *Stylus*. In my senior year, I was Editor of the *Saga*. I was active in Student Government. In my junior year, I was Treasurer of the Student Council. That’s when I got to know Sid Eastman very well. Do you remember Sid Eastman?

**BL:** I’ve heard of him, but I didn’t know him.

**AV:** He was a beautiful man.

**BL:** Is he still alive?

**AV:** No, he just died this summer. He was ninety years old. We worked very closely with him and with whatever meager funds we had back in those days. When I first came back here as Principal of the Campus School, I worked closely with Sid again. He was just one of those special people. That was it, Student Council, dramatics, football and the *Stylus*. Those were the highlights of the activities I was involved in.

**BL:** Where did you perform your plays?

**AV:** In what's now called Hartwell auditorium.

**BL:** What did you call that building then?

**AV:** I don't know if it had a name. It was just the main building. Not the main building, when I was here, it was the only building. The Campus School was at the north end and the gymnasium was at the south end, which is now the beautiful dance studio, the library was upstairs and the cafeteria was in the basement. That was it. That was the building. Those temporary Quonset huts were added. I don't recall that it had a specific name; I think the name Hartwell came during the late 1960s or early 1970s.

**BL:** By 1970, that's when I came, it had been named for him. One thing that has interested my students is that student organizations became self-funded in the mid-1960's. What kind of autonomy did your organizations have? How free did you feel working on the *Stylus* or the *Saga*?

**AV:** I would compare it more with the high school model. We had the Student Council; I forget how the funds poured into that, then funds were allocated to the various organizations. Each organization had an advisor and the group worked closely and listened to the advisor. It wasn't like they felt like they were an independent body. For example, as Editor of the yearbook, Jim Edmunds was the advisor and I got to know him very well. He was a super individual and a great English professor. He was one that laid it out in the beginning of the year, got the staff together and he guided us. He let us have our freedom too, we decided on the theme, the cover, and so forth. His hand was always there. I think that's pretty much how the other clubs worked. I forget who the advisor for the Student Council was.

**BL:** Could you tell me about special events or any events that stand out in your mind?

**AV:** Yes, in the springtime, the "Moving Up Day" was a great day. That was probably the day you've seen pictures of when they carried what they called the Daisy Chain, up College Street. The caps and gowns were worn. That was the day when the Juniors moved into the seats of the Seniors of the graduating class. That was a special time. In the wintertime, there were nice teas in the library, in the campus school library. The campus school library was down just north of the President's office on the main floor. I don't know what's there now, vespers at that time of the year, the holiday time. During the wintertime, we use to try to do, if the weather cooperated, some ice sculpting right down there in front of Hartwell. There were always picnic gatherings in the springtime down at Hamlin Beach. I remember those. Places in town had a lot of 'social activities'. If you know where "Angus O'Brien's" is now, that used to be called "Tony's." That was really the center of gravity for a lot of meetings.

**BL: You mentioned Vespers and other religious sources. Were there any problems about Church-State relations involved?**

**AV: No, there was never any mention of that.**

**BL: Do you have any idea when sensitivities became greater about that?**

**AV: I would think in the sixties after the Civil Rights movement. I taught the Education Law course for many years after I left administration to do some teaching. I would follow the Supreme Court cases on education very carefully. I remember when the first major case in New York State that dealt with church-state was in the late sixties. I would say that's when it started. In fact, I think that during my time, we had a baccalaureate service for graduation. I'm not sure, but I think I remember it.**

**BL: I think I've seen pictures of that. Could I ask you about the curriculum that you went through?**

**AV: Okay, I would call it a basic liberal arts curriculum in with the addition of the professional part of it. The professional education, I can't remember the number of hours, but I think we probably had about thirty hours of the professional education, which included the student teaching. Courses in English, History, Political Science. I remember Dr. Edwards and some of the Political Science courses. I don't know if you remember him.**

**BL: No.**

**AV: I think he was deceased before you came.**

**And Sciences, I remember my course work. I took a significant number of science courses, English courses, history courses, and math. I would compare it with the degree they have now, the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies, where the person carves out his own program.**

**BL: How adequate did you feel it was as education and preparation of a teacher?**

**AV: I think very well because knowing you had to go out to the elementary school and teach all the subjects you made sure you had all the background you needed in math and science. Science was never one of my favorites, but I still had to go through the biology and the general science. The physical education people took a strong curriculum in the sciences. In fact, many of the physical education people over the years went on to medicine because the curriculum was almost as good as pre-med. I think there's one doctor here in Brockport who graduated from Brockport. Is Dr. Anderson still in Brockport.**

**BL: He left quite a few years ago.**

**AV: He was a graduate from Brockport. The student teaching program had a very strong preparation. While we were out there, the professors from here, I remember Frank Lane, that name doesn't mean anything to you, but he was here. He's an alumnus of Brockport and he came back as a Professor of Education. Then he went on to Central Office where he spent most of his career. He was my supervisor in the student teaching field. He was a great help to me.**



**BL:** And then you went on to teach?

**AV:** Yes, an interesting part of where I went, an incident in your life seemingly insignificant at the moment really directs your life for a good period. I was Editor of the yearbook and I compacted my program into three years because I had some prior college work before the war. I attended some summers to pick up some extra courses and did it in three years. My student teaching was delayed until the very last semester. Because I was Editor of the yearbook, I didn't want to be too far from campus. The way that student teaching was in those days, you did a quarter of it in the Campus School and a quarter of it off the campus. Herb Lyburger, who was principal of the Campus School at that time, also directed the off-campus assignments for student teaching. I decided that it was more important to be on campus for the first quarter because by then the yearbook would be mostly put together. I wanted to be close enough during the last quarter in case I had to come back for whatever reason. So I went to him and I explained my situation and asked if he could find something close. I remember to this day, he stood there at the counter, pulled out his book, looked down and said "How's about East Rochester?" Now, having grown up and lived in Rochester all my life, I'd never been to East Rochester because you didn't go to East Rochester unless you were going there specifically because it was off the beaten path of where you were traveling. I said "sure". So I went to East Rochester and I landed in the fifth grade. In fact, Richard Mancuso was one of my pupils. That's my claim to fame, he became a Professor of Physics at Brockport. I landed in the fifth grade there with a person named Louise Morgan, who was a beautiful person and she became very dear to me in my life. It just so happened that as the semester progressed, she liked what I was doing and she talked to the superintendent unbeknownst to me. They offered me a job, if I was interested in coming back in September to teach sixth grade and also to be an assistant football coach.

**BL:** This would have been the September, 1949?

**AV:** Yes, 1949. That sounded great, to teach and to be an assistant coach, so I did it. I spent eleven beautiful years there, because my whole family was born and started there. After four years of teaching in East Rochester, in the meantime, I had gone to Syracuse to get my Masters in Educational Administration, because that was my goal. I wanted to go into administration. During the spring of that 4<sup>th</sup> year, the principal of our elementary school, Norman Lyon, decided to leave for Geneseo to become principal of the Campus School, so the job was open. My wife and I debated because I felt that I was qualified but I wondered if it would have been presumptuous for my application. I went to the superintendent and I told him that I've been teaching here for four years and I've got my credentials, I would like to try. I got the job. I was offered the principalship and the rest is history. I stayed there until 1960 when I left to teach at St. John's University. One little incident directed my life for many years.

**BL:** A slightly different but related question, what portion of your class went into teaching?

**AV:** I would say all the women without a doubt and most of the men, but an interesting thing happened to the men in 1949. The physical education jobs were not as plentiful as they thought. Some of the fellows gravitated to other fields and never went back into teaching. But the large majority of them stayed. They became athletic directors. In fact, you'll see one at the July alumni gatherings, Thad Malarz. I don't know if you ever heard of him. He was

given one of the awards a couple of years ago. He's out on Long Island. He was Physical Education and he became athletic director out there. He's instrumental in directing a lot of kids to Brockport. In fact, I think this is a correct story. He was instrumental in getting Bill Heyen, our poet, here to Brockport.

BL: Should I take it then that the P.E. program was mostly male?

AV: I think that the majority was, but there was a lot of women. I don't know what the proportion was, maybe it was sixty-forty. It was not predominately male.

BL: But most of the women did get teaching jobs?

AV: As I recall, yes, they all did. In fact, at our fiftieth this past June, I met a lot of them and they had been teaching for quite some time. They came with their families and so forth. It would be interesting to go back to the archives and get the actual figures of what the P.E. enrollment was during those years.

BL: Yes, I have to do that. What's your impression on careers, family life and etc. on your classmates? There were many people; maybe you could characterize some pattern?

AV: Have you read Tom Brokaw's book *Our Generation*? As I read that book, you read one chapter and the rest of the chapters are the same but different people in different incidents. I think that's how we were. We came back from the war and we had a mindset. We had an opportunity to go to college and then you had to get a job. You got the job and you got married and you raised the family. We all did that, in different places, but by and large that was our story. Many of my classmates became superintendents, principals, and college personnel, like myself, but it was like the book *Our Generation* he said it well. That's what most of us did.

BL: And most of your classmates stayed in some form of education?

AV: Yes.

BL: What were the relations like between students and the Village or between the College and the Village?

AV: There were no dormitories then. We all lived in houses around the town. In essence, we were members of the community. We weren't outsiders. I remember a group of men who lived on the corner of Park Ave and State St., the northwest corner. I think the name of the man was Smith. It was known as the "Smith House" and it was quite a place. On Main, directly opposite of the street with the church, Monroe, there was a women's house and it was known by the name of the house mother. We lived in the "Cassidy House" across from Stull Lumber on Park Ave.; that was Mrs. Cassidy's house.

BL: On the East Side?

AV: That's right. We were all part of the community. It was not a town and gown issue.

BL: Did the College change much during your three years as a Brockport student?

**AV:** No. It changed in size because when I left in 1949, the next fall the student body was around three thousand. In size, yes it did. During the three years that I was here, it was pretty much the same tempo, the same kind of relationships, and so forth. After graduation I became very active in the alumni association, so I was back on campus frequently during the fifties. I don't recall, other than size, a big change. In fact, when I came back in 1961 as Principal of the Campus School, I saw very much the same pattern or lifestyle that I followed as a student here, but I could also see that things were beginning to change.

**BL:** Would it be correct to say that as you were leaving veteran enrollment decreased?

**AV:** Yes. After 1950, the large number of veterans graduated and after that it was pretty much high school graduate classes.

**BL:** Can you think of anything else you would want students, who hear the tape, to know about Brockport during the time you were a student?

**AV:** I would want them to know that it's not that Brockport and SUNY don't have great caliber professors today. I would want them to know that during those years, I think Brockport had a very exceptional faculty. When you look at the people, they were both scholars in their fields and true teachers. I think of Raye Conrad. I think of Dr. Morgan, an English professor. I think of James Edmunds, an English professor and Eric Steele, another English professor. There was Wayne Dedman in the History department and Art Lee also comes to mind. There was a science professor who went on the Cornell, Vern Rockcastle. Does that name ring a bell for you?

**BL:** Yes.

**AV:** These were great people, so as Brockport grew, it got more great people. It's always had a history of a caliber of professor that maybe some people don't think about.

**BL:** Is there anything you wish that I'd ask you?

**AV:** I don't know whether this is appropriate but when I think of it I want to say it. Early in the summer, President Yu invited the retired faculty to a tea in Hartwell to show off the new building. It was a beautiful event. During the time of the tea, the College photographer was roaming around, taking pictures which he usually does. His name was Jim Dusen. All of a sudden, ... let me backtrack for a moment, Huntley Parker was here for that affair. Huntley Parker is well into his eighties; he's the former soccer coach. He lives in Florida now. I noticed a round table in the foyer area and seated there was Huntley Parker, Bob Boozer, Clark Whited, and Jim Fulton. They were the original coaches in their field from my era. I grabbed Jim Dusen, the photographer and said "go and take that picture" and he did. That's going to keep them as a group in the archives. I guess I would say I'm a very emotional person when it comes to tradition. But, I think that no matter how young a student you are that you hang on to that tradition now matter what it is at your time or in the past. It's something that stays with you in your mind. As I looked at the four of them, so many things came to my mind like experiences and relationships during my time. When you graduate from an institution you are tied to it forever; so cherish the memories and recall and be proud of the traditions.

*[Discussion of faculty and administrator career begins here]*

**BL:** Andy, please describe your return to Brockport as a faculty member.

**AV:** I left public school administration in 1960 from East Rochester Public Schools where I was a principal. I had just completed my doctorate at Penn State that summer. My goal was to enter higher education. My mentor at Penn State put me in touch with the Dean at St. John's University in Long Island. I interviewed and ended up leaving East Rochester and moving to New York City to teach at St. John's University. I taught in the Department of Educational Administration during the year 1960-61. In that spring, Dr. Tower came to New York City for some reason and he called me. He wondered if I would come to Manhattan and meet with him at his hotel, which I was happy to do. He was my idol during my undergraduate years at Brockport. He offered me the job of Campus School Principal at Brockport. In those days and still in these days, it's a thrill and an honor to go back to your alma mater to work. We hadn't even unpacked yet in New York when I got home from that trip in the city and told my wife. It was a mixed bag, but anyway we returned to Brockport. I started in the fall of 1961 as Principal of the Campus School.

**BL:** And how long did you remain in that position?

**AV:** I was in that position until 1969. It was an exciting period for lots of reasons. The day I came, the Central Office of SUNY gave the approval to build a new Campus School. Raye Conrad was my boss, another special thrill upon my return because he was my idol. The administration was divided into three coordinators. I think one was education, which was Raye. One was Physical education, which was Ernie Tuttle. And the third was liberal arts and I don't remember who was the coordinator. Central Office gave the okay for a new Campus School; a few of the sister colleges received the same go-ahead. I think Oswego was one and I forget the others. We were immediately connected with Albany and started to work with the architects and planners. That was a great experience and a great thrill, to be able to plan and create the concept of that kind of school. I remember we visited several such schools. One place we visited that really caught our attention was the Campus School at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, which had just been built. It was built very similarly to what we built here with the observation rooms and etc. During the 1961-65, were the planning and building years and in the December of 1965 we moved into the new building. I'll never forget, in order to move the library, we gave each kid a certain responsibility for a section of the library. They would carry books from the old one to the new. December of 1965, we started business in the new Campus School.

Something else that was awesome and a thrill to me, was that some of the Campus School professors were there when I was a student. To name one in particular, Dorothy Foster. I did my student teaching in the Campus School in Dorothy Foster's seventh grade. To come back and be her 'principal' and supervisor was thrilling but I treaded carefully because I was the new kid on the block. That was very exciting. The school didn't look very different from when I was a student. The location certainly didn't. Well yes, the location in the years that I had been gone, an extension of the Campus School was built. If you're familiar with the old Campus School, you went down the hall and turned north. That wing in the north was an addition by Monroe Ave. By and large, it was still a place for students to come. About a year after I arrived and the college enrollment started to grow, we know it was an impossibility that every student in elementary education would flow through the Campus

School for student teaching. That's when we started to develop the off campus centers. By 1969, a minority of our students were teaching in the Campus School. The numbers were too great, so we established centers in places like Greece, Rochester, a big connection with the city school district of Rochester, Hilton and all other neighboring schools.

BL: Did that change the nature of practice teaching?

AV: Sure it did. It changed very much. I don't want to say it was a better experience, but it was a broader experience. When you went out in all these school districts and these teachers out in the field, many of them alumni of Brockport. It was a different situation. There was no question about it. Later on, we placed professors full-time in these centers. For example, Peg Browne and Jeanette D'Agostino, they spent most of their time in the Greece Schools because we were using eight or nine elementary schools. We probably had each semester, as the years went on, thirty, forty or fifty students, who were practice teaching there. There was a need for people off-site.

Rochester was the same way. Then, as we got into the mid and late 1960's, as a result of the civil unrest and the Civil Rights legislation, federal money began to come in for educational programs and innovation in connection with the inner cities. We developed a closer relationship with Rochester and developed the professional year. In cooperation and planning with the city school district, we worked it out so that two or three professors were housed, lived, worked, and taught right in the school districts. We had students there, who were there the whole year. They had both their professional coursework that was taught by our professors, and by people from the school district staff. They did their actual experience. That was a major change.

BL: What was the name of that program?

AV: "Professional Year" is what we called it. It was all federally funded. We were fortunate for the grants that we received in those days. Then from the Campus School side around 1966 probably, again with the utilization of federal grants, we got connected with the "Urban-Suburban Transfer Program," which had been in operation I think for a year with the West Irondequoit and Brighton schools primarily. Then, we connected to it and started to receive students around 1966 from the City School District. When President Brown arrived in 1965, and the growth really started to develop, then in the late 1960's and definitely by the 1970's, came the reorganization of the college. He reorganized the College into, I believe, seven deanships at that time, seven faculties. Education was one of those faculties.

BL: How did you feel about teacher education going from being the sole focus of the College to becoming one or two of seven faculties?

AV: I think it was certainly positive in the respect that around that time or shortly after, when the curriculum was reorganized, every student had to take an academic major including the people in teacher education. You know we hear talk about that now in some of the schools and reform. We were doing it then. When you went out of here as an elementary teacher, you had to have a math major or a psychology major. I think that only strengthened the capability and the preparation of the teachers. I felt good about it.

BL: So when Brown took Brockport in that direction, you felt comfortable?

**AV:** There's a lot of misunderstanding because I remember in those days, in a lot of our sister institutions, teacher education was on the downslide. They were hearing things about Brockport bringing in academic faculty in the arts and sciences. They said "too bad" and I said "not too bad at all." Teacher education never suffered. We grew our educational faculty to 100+ in those days. Now, that's not suffering. That was growth and progress. Teacher education grew, developed and expanded not only in numbers but also in its formation and emphasis with the other school districts. I never felt that we suffered, we grew.

**BL:** How do you think most of the educational faculty felt, or for that matter the whole faculty, felt about Brown's new directions and the new faculty?

**AV:** Well, I would say at first there was a lot of apprehension, again knowing what was going on at the other places and thinking we were going to be cut out so to speak. I think when things started to develop, they saw they were developing too. If you stop and think about the number of programs in education that were developed during those years. We never had an education masters program, it was developed then. We never had a specialist in reading program, a masters was developed during those years due to Fran Moroney. We also brought in faculty. I remember when Fran had developed the Masters in reading faculty members like Art Smith were brought in. Jerry Begy was brought in then to specialize. I remember going out to Chicago for conventions and interviewing people like Bonita Jorkasky, who we brought in to be a specialist in social studies education. We brought people in for English education. We were growing programmatically and in programs that existed.

**BL:** So do you think it was growth that smoothed the path?

**AV:** I think so, to see that we were not the second cousins. We were there like everyone else.

**BL:** To go back to the Campus School, how do you feel about the tradition of a laboratory school, a campus school, as a tool in teacher education?

**AV:** I think in its time, it was a very appropriate tool. I think there may still be a place for it now. Certainly, it can be a place for controlled and confined experimentation. The utilization of the public schools for the complete training for a teacher, I think that's where it has to be. It has to be that close relationship where students can get their feet on the ground. I've been away from it for such a long time, with the new certification requirements, where an internship is required for teaching, I think strengthens what I just said. That it is necessary. But there's still a place, I'm sure there is. I don't know of any campus school that exist within the SUNY system and that's too bad. Before we had to close our doors, we were seventy-five percent Federally funded. The other twenty-five percent SUNY central just cut. I think we were the second to the last to close and then Buffalo State finally. The Buffalo campus school was doing similar things to what we were doing with the close cooperation with the city. Then they had to close too. In that respect, I think that during those years even though education stayed healthy here and grew, I think it did not receive university-wide the support from SUNY Central it could have. That's too bad. Now, I understand the politics side of it; SUNY's Board of Trustees is chartering public schools or they are acting as a chartering body, which seems awfully strange to me.

**BL:** Or maybe the regents?

**AV:** They're in conflict. The Regents are chartering them too. There's an issue of the Albany schools. I think SUNY Central placed a charter school in Albany and the Board of Regents said no. I don't know the politics of it.

**BL:** Could I take you back to the Brockport you returned to in 1961? You were here for President Tower's last three years. Could you tell me a little bit about President Tower and Brockport in those three years?

**AV:** I knew him in my college years as a very warm and friendly person. He'd be in the hall talking to students. When I came back, I saw the same person. I also saw an administrator I had not known when I was a student. He was a good administrator. He was a fair one, but he was decisive.

He had an administrative staff around him, which he called the administrative council. He met with them and in those days the Campus School Principal was part of that council. I liked his style and the way he brought things into discussion, then to a conclusion. He was tough when he had to be, in terms of the annual ritual of faculty promotions and merit pay and so forth. He was a good sound administrator. He was highly respected. He was, when I was a student here, and when I came back nothing had changed in the respect the faculty had for him.

**BL:** When he left, did he retire strictly because of his age or the oncoming changes?

**AV:** I don't know. I never discussed this with him. I think maybe that it was a little of both. He went to John Fisher and made a career there. He worked as a special assistant to Father Charles Leary over at St. John Fisher for many years until he finally called it quits. I think that he probably saw the handwriting on the wall and he thought his time had passed. While he was still here, the first change of the College came in the first name change. They were still "Teacher's Colleges" in 1961 or maybe they had just changed to "Colleges of Arts and Sciences". That was the first change, then there were subsequent changes. He certainly saw that to come.

**BL:** Could you tell me a little bit about your colleagues, the faculty you taught with in the Campus School and the College in those early years?

**AV:** Well, a lot of my old professors were here then. I mentioned Russ Archer, who was the Chairman of the Speech Department and dramatics. He was still here. I remember the Campus School office was at the very north end of Hartwell. The Speech Department office was at the very south end of Hartwell in the basement. Every morning around 8:15 or 8:30, you could almost set your watch to it, you'd see Russ Archer pop in. He'd start at the south end and visit every office just to say hello. By the time he got to my place, he knew everything that was going to go on that day. He was a bit of a character, but a really lovable character and a great teacher. I always say that whatever I learned about how to write was from his English composition class. I remember the first paper I got back. There was more red than white on it, I'll always remember him. Jim Edmunds, of course my old friend from the *Saga* days, and Art Lee. It was nice to renew these relationships. I didn't have any feeling that I was still a student. They made you feel like a colleague and I was very well accepted right away.

**BL:** Could you tell me what the makeup of the religious identity, the ethnic identity of the faculty?

**AV:** When I came, Father Daley was on the scene. Does that name ring a bell to you? I don't know if he was still here or not when you came. But he was an assistant at the Nativity Parish to Father Linze who was the pastor. His mission, his assignment from the diocese was to develop a Catholic ministry for the College students. That was really the beginning for the Newman Center. In fact I hadn't been on the job yet and we built our house in Clarkson in the month of August. I was doing all the painting myself. I remember being in the kitchen painting and there was a knock on the door and it was him. He got me right away and said, "I want you". He got a number of us who were Catholic faculty members like Raye Conrad. He said, "I need to establish a physical presence." The first stop was a house on Holley St., which later the College took over those buildings. The house was located where the Tower building is now. I remember a large number of us, who had gathered with him. We weren't the only Catholics on campus, but there was a good number. In terms of proportion, I really can't say.

**BL:** Did you have a sense that the faculty was primarily changing from Protestant to a divide among Protestant and Catholic, and perhaps Jewish, faculty?

**AV:** It may have been, but it was something that I never paid any attention to. I really don't know.

**BL:** So there wasn't much consciousness of that?

**AV:** No, there wasn't. Father Daley was very well respected and he mingled with the entire faculty, the college community. Roy Agte acted the same way in his ministry to Protestant students.

**BL:** Can we move on to Al Brown coming to Brockport? Could you tell me what it felt like in the years of the mid-1960s when he came?

**AV:** Well, I should backtrack to the year before he came because Dr. Tower left and during the year of the search of a new president, Gordon Allen was appointed Acting President. He did a superb job. The day he got the faculty into the auditorium to announce that a new president had been selected he got a standing ovation for a long time. The respect that that man had among his colleagues! That year of transition was a very easy year. Tower's gone, there's a year in-between, everything just went on as normal. Then President Brown came in, he arrived in October of 1965.

All we knew was that he had been a dean of the arts and sciences faculty at Eastern Michigan University. I remember Gordon Allen saying some things about him during that meeting in the auditorium and saying that we would be very happy with what was coming. Then he arrived. I shall always remember the first Administrative Council meeting. It was different. President Brown didn't waste any time establishing the vision he had for the College. It did not take long for him to put his stamp on things. This was difficult for some of the faculty and some of the division heads. Again, going back to teacher education, there was a strong feeling from the remarks and the ways things were perceived that he was going to kill teacher education, but he didn't. There were some touchy feelings in those days; there's no question.



**BL:** You said it was different in the beginning. What would you say was different in that first meeting?

**AV:** He may have left Eastern Michigan as a dean [*sic.*], but he came into that meeting as the President. You didn't have any questions about who he was or why he was here. I'm reminded that we just got a new pastor in the Nativity Parish. I don't know if you've met him or not, have you met Father Peter?

**BL:** Yes.

**AV:** Well, he's been here two months. The first or second time he talked from the pulpit I said there's no question, he's in charge. That's it. He's going to be great. His predecessor was fine but it was felt right away. I think that's how you felt about President Brown. You knew he was going to take you to places unknown but it was exciting. I'll never forget a year after he came, probably in 1966, I was still Principal at Campus School. I was looking to see where I could go with my career. I wanted to continue with administrative work. So, I was looking around. I remember going in to see him; he didn't know me very well. He had been here around a year. I just wanted him to be aware and if I needed his name for a reference. I remember what he said back, and I always remind him of this, in his chair and listened. I remember it was a particular job I was applying for in Monroe Community College. He said to me "What do you think that you can do there that you can't do here?" I didn't answer the question, but I listened and I went back and thought about it. I made the decision to stay. I knew what he meant because I was able to do here at Brockport everything and anything I would have hoped I could have done somewhere else. I was here at a time when we were able to develop new programs and try new ideas. You just went in and told him something and he'd say go. For me, that was very significant and exciting.

**BL:** Why do you think Brown was so successful at getting the financial backing for dramatic changes?

**AV:** Well, he and the Chancellor Gould really hit it off. Besides being a great educator, Al Brown had a great deal of political skill. I say that in a very positive sense. He had a vision. He came from the Midwest and saw the Midwestern public universities. He believed 150% in public higher education. He felt that public higher education was for everyone, not just a few. I think one of the things that was stuck in his craw was the hierarchy of SUNY that had been established at that time. By the hierarchy, I mean there were the University Centers and the Colleges of Arts and Sciences. The University Centers were there by geography, not by quality. Buffalo became the University Center when the university bought it; Buffalo had been a private institution. He thought that the motto of SUNY being "let each become all that he is capable of" should apply to the colleges. I remember him saying that we have the faculty, we've got the programs that equate to the university level, doctorate programs and whatever. Why can't we? He kept pressing that question and he was able to have this place grow. We were the envy of a lot of colleges, as he began to bring in the type of faculty that he did. Now, whether faculty members who came became disillusioned because we did not become the university center, I don't know. I'm sure there were some. He never said this. He never promised that this was going to be a University Center. What he kept saying was we're going to do what we think we can do. The worst thing you could say to him was to say Albany says we can't do this. He would go through the wall. He said "don't make other people's

decisions for them.” We’ll do what we can within our perimeters. You caught that very quickly when he was here, his number one vision and the whole frame of reference he was in.

**BL:** So the impression some people would have that we would become a university center doesn’t stem from any promise that he made?

**AV:** No, he never got up in front of the faculty and said we’re going to do this. People around us saw what was happening here with the dance program and political science. To this day we’ve got some of the strongest academic departments you could find anywhere I don’t care where you go. You know we had some great people here. I do not recall ever hearing those words that we were going to be a university center, only that we had the capability academically to match any Center.

**BL:** Did he at some point lose his ‘in’ in Albany?

**AV:** When the chancellors changed, we went from Gould to Boyer. Boyer had been on the central staff. He and Brown had a good relationship. I remember on a couple of occasions when Boyer came to visit. I remember we had him over to the new Campus School. But when Boyer left, there was someone in between. No, I think Wharton came in. That’s when things started to change and the relationship changed.

**BL:** Could we talk a little bit about how the faculty changed as Brown hired new people with somewhat different credentials, how did that change the institution?

**AV:** The faculty that came was a more cosmopolitan faculty. It was an academic oriented faculty rather than a professional faculty. As I mentioned about my student days, with all of those liberal arts faculty, there was a frame of reference that even though they were teaching Shakespearean literature, they knew all of the students were professionally oriented. It was a different frame of reference for this new faculty coming in from all over the country and coming from outside the country. There was definitely a difference, not in quality, but in background and experience.

**BL:** Was there a sense that the new faculty then helped Brown to a different standard? Or were there unexpected consequences coming from hiring this new faculty, unexpected by him?

**AV:** I don’t think they held up new standards or different standards. Maybe the expectations were a little different, I don’t know if they were greater. I guess it was more the times of the 1960’s than it was the faculty with all of the crazy stuff going on. In those years, it was a more liberal time. A lot of stuff was being mixed up with the College and Civil Rights and so forth. You know, you were a student during those days. I always feel that those were the years when higher education gave away the store. I’ll never forget something what Harold Rakov said to me during the demonstrations when the students gathered together in front of Hartwell. I think the issue was that they wanted to develop their own curriculum and goals. You know, it was their mind frame. And he said to them “There’s a difference between you and me, if there isn’t any difference then your parents are wasting a whole hell of a lot of money.” I go back to those days that we changed the curriculum.

You didn’t have to take any math or any science. You did whatever you wanted to do. Higher education is coming back full circle now with a general education curriculum. Those

were crazy days, so it wasn't the faculty vs. Brown or any president. It was a mix of the times that made it that kind of faculty.

**BL:** Can you talk about how you saw students changing in your years at Brockport?

**AV:** Students, even when I came back in 1961, were all oriented towards the teaching profession. We added on more majors as the years went on. For example, this morning I was talking to Brad Schreiber about the Washington semester. I remember when the Political Science Department started the Washington semester and then we had that program in France, etc. The student body started to change in that respect. A great number of students were still coming here for the various teacher education programs with both the general education and the physical education. You could see that more and more students were coming to get a good solid education in business, etc. In that respect, it has changed.

**BL:** I believe the graduate program began just as you were graduating. Could you talk a little about how the program has evolved during your time as a faculty member?

**AV:** When I came here, I think the first graduate degree in the Masters of Education had been approved sometime in the late 1950's. Dick Cannioto, who was a friend of mine in East Rochester, was the first recipient of the MS. That still existed when I came here to work. It might have been the only graduate program for many years. As the years went on, especially after Dr. Brown came, we started to develop a lot of graduate programs. As I told you earlier, we brought in a person from the University of Michigan, Dr. Metivier, specifically to develop a graduate program in Educational Administration, which he and his colleagues did. The graduate program and the other graduate programs in education, such as the Masters in Counselor Education or the reading program. You could get a graduate degree in Secondary education-English or Social Studies. The Physical Education Department, added a graduate program, it seems to me that it was in some special field of physical disability. There was the Masters in Liberal Arts and the Bachelor's in Liberal Studies. The graduate programs really flourished and so did the students who came. One of the things that helped our Educational Administration program was the off-campus emphasis. The Department developed sites where the professor would go to the Rochester Center, which became the main center for teaching their students.

**BL:** Could you tell me about the most important changes in the program?

**AV:** Of the program and its emphasis off the campus, it was traditional for a student in the teaching program to have all the students to go through the campus school. Some of them still did, but a large majority had both of their assignments off the campus. This required a lot of preparation and negotiations. Dialogues with various school districts, which were willing to accept this responsibility. The responsibility was one of really feeling they had a partnership in this preparation of teachers. It wasn't all just the College's responsibility. Therefore, after that kind of preparation with the school staff and the administrators, we were able to establish what we call a teacher training center or a teacher education center. Greece and Rochester are the two that come to mind because they are our largest ones. We would place during any semester, fifty to sixty students in a Greece system, in various elementary schools. Then we would have faculty members who were practically there on a full time basis working each day with the various students. We even got to the point where many of those school districts'

personnel were invited to join the Department as adjunct faculty because they were also doing some teaching and teaching some of the credit work. That was a big change.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s we had some federal funding to assist us. There was a program with Rochester that we called "The Professional Year Program" where we placed students who were interested in urban education. We placed them in Rochester for their entire professional credits, the full year of thirty credits. We had full-time staff there, working with them both in the practical experience, as well as the professional courses being taught right there on site. We even went out of state and out of country. We established a program with Washington D.C.'s teachers college. Our purpose was to bring students and faculty into the urban experience of the Washington D.C. college because it was right there in the City of Washington. Also, it was an opportunity for their faculty to come to Brockport to study.

We did the same thing with overseas. We had a number of overseas programs. One of them was in Rio de Janeiro, the largest one, with the American school in Rio. We would send students down there. We would also send each semester and on a full year basis, a faculty member. He brought his family and moved down there to live. Dr Beers was one of those faculty members who was there for a whole year. I think Benita Jorkasky was another one. Students would be there on a semester basis to get the cross cultural experience. Many of the teachers from the school in Rio, who were Brazilian natives, would come to Brockport in the summer and study for their Masters degree. It was interestingly enough that the person, who was the initiator of the program in Rio, was a science professor from Brockport, Henry Gould. He was there one year, on some grant and he contacted people back here, Jeanette D'Agostino primarily. He said, "you know here is a place where you ought to send some students" and that's how it started. The other phase of it happened in the administration program with the off-campus development. I would say that was the most major change.

**BL:** Would you describe the latter years of Al Brown and the transition into the Van de Wetering years?

**AV:** The latter years, the University was changing. SUNY had new leadership. I think that the atmosphere and the environment of tremendous fiscal and programmatic growth stopped. Probably the reason was that the fiscal decline of the State. Maybe it was also an opportunity for SUNY Central to say "let's take a look at this giant before it goes any further". I know there was a fiscal problem. The budgets were no longer what they used to be; growth slowed down. Our President was one who was in growth and development mode and those must have been tough days for him. Those latter days were not easy times for him. There wasn't the relationship between the new Chancellor, as he had with the previous Chancellor that was clear. It was no surprise when he announced his retirement. I don't remember much of the transition years because during that time of President Brown's latter years, I was in the State Legislature. I was on leave for half the year. He allowed me to take a leave and I would be on leave without pay for the spring semester, then return in the fall semester. That continued throughout the years in the late 1970s until his last year, 1980 or 1981.

**BL:** 1981

**AV:** The actual transition year that Dr. Van de Wetering came to office, I held an administrative title as Dean of Continuing Education and Public Service. Donald Douglas was the Vice President. When Van de Wetering came on board, I felt that as a new administrator he should pick his own administrative staff. So, I resigned as an administrator and joined the Department of Educational Administration on a full time basis. I did that for a number of

years and then took another leave. When Governor Cuomo was elected, he appointed me to an agency dealing with the handicapped. I took a leave of absence for a three-year period to work full-time in Albany. I was away from the campus completely for the years 1984-87. In 1987, I decided that I was living two lives, one in Albany and one in Brockport was enough. I had the three years, I did it and I enjoyed working with the Governor. I decided to retire. I had the option of just retiring from state service and coming back to the College full-time, but I'd been away from the College too long and I felt that I'd be a fish out of water. I decided to retire completely. I did stay on as an adjunct for another ten years.

**BL:** During your time in the legislature, did you have many other SUNY graduates as colleagues?

**AV:** No, I think this is an important question for those interested in public higher education. I'll tell you two stories. The first to answer your question directly. When I arrived on the first of January in the New York State Assembly, there were only three of us who were SUNY graduates, myself, Maurice Hinchey, who was a graduate from New Paltz I believe, and Gene Amatucci, who was a graduate of Plattsburgh. We were the only ones. Many of the legislators, the majority of them, were graduates from the private institutions of New York State. As you know, New York State has a tremendous legacy in private education. Also, a good number of them came from the City University of New York.

Today, it's a different story, there are many more. To give you an example of the point I want to make; Dr. Yu the few times I've heard him speak, speaks strongly about the need for public higher education. During those years when I was both the Dean and the Legislator, I was giving a talk quite frequently about the meshing of politics and education. One year, I was invited to a national conference down in New Orleans to give the same talk to school administrators, who were largely superintendents, on the interface between the political and educational world. A man from Ohio who heard me who was the head of a conglomerate of colleges. It was like a study council of colleges. He invited me to come down and speak to his public school superintendents. I was invited to Miami University of Ohio. It's a beautiful campus. I got busy learning a little bit about Ohio beforehand and I knew my main emphasis was going to be to suggest what they could do politically in the State Legislature. When I found out what the Ohio Legislature was made of, I said you guys don't need me, you've got the map here. Ninety-five percent of their graduates were from Ohio State, the public institution. In New York State, because of the private higher education legacy, we're just the opposite. They had a lot of cooperation. You need that entrée into the legislative process. That's where your money comes from and where the policy comes from. Much has changed now to the better, I think.

**BL:** Did you have a sense of Governor Cuomo's attitude about SUNY?

**AV:** He also came in with a tough budget in regard to higher education. I don't remember getting any negative or positive sense. He felt that the state was responsive, because by that time the state had taken over support of the City University. Before that, it was just the City of New York. It was free tuition. When the City of New York was about to go bankrupt, the legislature said, "hey we better do something." I don't remember getting any feeling either way. I wouldn't say he was a flag bearer for the State University, but neither was he out to get it.

**BL: Do you have any major regrets about how Brockport has done over the years? What would you like to have seen done differently?**

**AV: I've always wished that the university would have made a better investment at the Central Office level for teacher education during those years, especially in the demise of the campus schools. I feel badly, I think there was a place for them. They could have been what they were purported to have the potential to become, at least if they kept a few of them around the state to use as innovative places. They chose not to.**

**A couple of years ago I would have said this, but now it's all changed. Myself and many others, both alumni and faculty, were so discouraged when we almost saw the demise of Hartwell Hall. There was a time when that place was just a junk shop. Every other campus was making its old main a flagship on the campus. I'm just glad that that got turned around and Hartwell has become what it is.**

**BL: What are your greatest satisfactions about Brockport?**

**AV: The opportunity to come back and spend most of my professional life where I started in college. That was a thrill when I came and continued to be when I became one of the Brockport family. My family grew up here. I think the associations and I guess one could say this about whatever college they come from or wherever they worked. I remember last July, when we had our 50th anniversary of our graduating class. I saw people there that the last time I saw them was the day we walked off of Hartwell's steps at the graduation ceremony. It seemed like the 50 years in between didn't exist. We just picked up where we left off. Those kinds of associations are lifetime. The faculty also was coming back. The faculty that I remember and the faculty that I joined, those were treasures in my lifetime. The opportunity to develop ideas, they didn't all work. Our "Urban-Suburban" program had a lot of downsides to it. A lot of them did work. As they used to say in Albany, "if you've got fifty-one percent, you're ok."**

**BL: What do you think that historians should really know about this venture at Brockport in the last fifty years?**

**AV: I think they should know that Brockport had a group of people, the administrators and faculty, who believed in making this a place of opportunity for all kids. We got kicked for it a little bit in the 1970s, when some students came here who were not as prepared. I think that Brockport did step forward in those years of the 1960s and 1970s and said "This is a place for all students. We're going to provide programs. We're going to provide opportunities to help students." We might have stubbed our toes during the times we had too many and we were too large. We didn't succeed with a lot of our students that's for sure, but a large majority of them did. When I see people like Terry Barnes, a graduate of Brockport directing the EOP Program, it makes me proud.**

**I think a legacy that I remember is when Dr. Brown came. Each of the colleges, if you were to do an historical perspective of that time, went in different directions. Geneseo clearly went in its own direction and today it's become one of the flagships for higher education, public or private. They said they were going to stay small and stay very selective, which they did. They were criticized a lot because they were as close to Rochester as we were. We went into a completely different direction and we were criticized. Oswego did one thing and New Paltz another. We each did our thing and that was the opportunity that was possible with what the presidents had with central office. I hope that we'll remember that we tried to be the**

**public higher education institution for Rochester. We had a lot of success, and yes, we had some failures.**