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Chinn, Peggy interview for the Miami Valley College of Nursing and Health Oral History Project

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START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

JUNE 18, 2003

CAROL HOLDCRAFT: We'll just for record on our recorder is to just identify the people that are in the room. I'm Carol Holdcraft. Also present in the room is Donna Miles Curry and Amanda Morris and Dr. Peggy Chinn is on our speakerphone.

PEGGY CHINN: Great.

CH: So we're getting started today with our Oral History Project with the Wright State University College of Nursing and Health. And we'll start with our first question, Dr. Chinn, which is to ask you to tell us a little bit about your personal background and how you came to Wright State.

PC: Um, well there's two questions there. I guess personal background you mean like where my degrees are from and so forth?

CH: Right.

PC: I have my undergraduate degree in nursing from the University of Hawaii and my master's degree in child health and in, yeah child health and my PhD degree from University of Utah in educational psychology. Then I went from Utah to Texas Women's University and it was actually at Texas Women's University that I first met Joanne Ashley and she came and joined the faculty at TWU I guess about 1976 or '77 and shortly after that there was a huge upheaval at TWU kind of like, not unlike the Wright State situation but the university administration went on kind of like a witch hunt (Laughs) and fired the dean and in part I think there were several things underline that the university never would own up to but it was pretty widely assumed or known just because of other statements that they had made. Part of it was the political activism that was beginning, to happen in the program there and that sort

of thing. And so Joanne felt really strongly that she couldn't stay at TWU and was in touch with Gert Torres and Marge Stanton and they recruited her to go to Wright State. And then I was also ready, shortly after she went to Wright State I was also ready to make a change and Gert and Marge contacted me and I went to Wright State.

CH: Okay, so it was really through the personal contacts and the upheaval that was occurring at the university at TWU that set the stage for your coming to Wright State.

PC: Right and there were you know a number of things. I mean I was kind of ready for a career change. I had been at TWU for about six years and Texas just kind of wasn't my bag of tea. (Laughs)

CH: Okay.

PC: You know just different things like that that were not compelling reasons to necessarily move but then the Wright State opportunity, I really wasn't seeking another position necessarily but what Gert and Marge were setting up and developing was very, very compelling. They were committed to developing a fully doctorately prepared graduate faculty and at that time this was the first school to have a fully doctorate prepared faculty. The, most schools were taking kind of a pragmatic approach, what ever warm body was available to teach. (Laughs) And were very, practically all faculties even teaching at the masters level were masters prepared and the only schools that really had doctorately prepared people teaching at the masters level were schools with PhD degrees and at that time there probably were somewhere around I would say no more than twenty doctoral programs in the country. When I got my doctoral program at University of Utah I did it in med phsc but there were only six PhD programs in the country at the time.

CH: In nursing.

PC: In nursing. And so that was in the late sixties, early seventies so by '76, '77 I really doubt if there was twenty. I mean you could find that out but that would certainly be a historical detail to really verify but it was very, very rare. And most people with doctorates have them in fields other than nursing for that reason because of the rarity.

CH: Okay and so that idea of joining with a program that was setting out to have an all doctorately prepared teaching faculty was one of the things that attracted you?

PC: It was faculty for the graduate program. The undergraduate program faculty were not all doctorately prepared but that was certainly not at all unusual. But they had every support and encouragement and most of the faculty who were there at the time I think have gone on to get their doctoral degrees. Another interesting little tidbit is that I would be, you know we never were able to follow up but most of the masters students I think, a great number of them went on and got a doctoral degree and that is very unusual.

CH: Uh-huh. Yes, that's true and that might be something that we can attempt to follow up on.

PC: Right because I think we graduated about thirty or thirty-two students by the time we left the program and by we I mean the twenty-six of us that left at one time.

CH: Right.

PC: Of those thirty or thirty-two I just would be really surprised if less than fifty percent went on for their doctoral degrees and that's still an extremely unusual number.

CH: Uh-huh. Okay. Tell us a little bit then about some of what you remember about your early years at Wright State.

PC: Well, they were great years you know. (Laughs) They, the curriculum, I have always said that the curriculum, the program, the leadership and everything, at Wright State really were the best of my career. They were, the leadership was clear. Gert was very, very adamant that everything that happened in terms of the faculty needed to, there was several fundamental principles that she really worked on and she was an excellent person in terms of just saying what she valued and following through in her actions totally, consistently. But she truly valued nursing and nursing values, philosophy, theory. She was very clear that every voice should be heard and everybody should participate in what was happening. And most places have found it impractical or impossible to have committees of the whole but at Wright State we had I think thirty or thirty-five faculty and we truly did work as a committee of the whole. And from my standpoint meetings were interesting. They were stimulating. They were full of issues. They weren't just basically nifty gritty and part of what made them interesting and important in terms of issues has to do with the fact that Gert provided leadership but other people were able to catch on and do it too to look at the larger picture and the larger significance of what we did so that any decision that we made like say a mundane decision that faculties make having to do with something like how many credits to you know set up a new course with or you know something really mundane like that would immediately move to a discussion of a larger issue about larger issues, about what are the implications of this decision in terms of the actual program and financially, economically, the use of our resources and time but also what does it say about where we place our emphasis and our values. And so we just had wonderful discussions around all of those things and every discussion became an interesting politically significant discussion and she was very clear that an organization needed to be developed and organized so that people could move in and out and the organization would stay in tact [sic]. So that for instance she always told us when we were about to make a decision about say bylaws or something you have to make this decision assuming that you have a real

bench worth team. Don't just make a decision assuming that I'm going to be a good guy and be what everyone, suppose I'm not the dean and the dean doesn't have the same kind of vision or whatever that you want. You need to set things up to protect yourself as a faculty and as a school. And so don't rely on the good will of the dean. You know it was that kind of just really larger picture beyond the person and the personality thinking that she really brought to that situation. And I learned heaps from just being there about what it is like to really work with a group of people who have a you know a strong value base to work from which in fact I didn't know it at the time but because I hadn't started experiencing some of the feminist process things that I later I got into at Buffalo and that eventually resulted in Peace In Power and the book that I wrote but much of what I learned about group process and organizational integrity and so forth really came from my experience with working with Gert and Marge.

CH: Okay, that's interesting that you can look back from this point from a little bit later perspective and see the roots of some the work that you did after you left Wright State.

PC: Uh-huh. Oh it was a very influential period in my life. And of course then working with Joanne was just truly a highlight of my career in every respect. I mean she influenced my thinking in terms of feminism and in terms of all sorts of things but then the other thing on a more personal note this is part of what I think students would never have seen because they really didn't know but she became sick just about the same time I got to Wright State. She had been there for a semester or two before I was there. You can check the dates because I don't really have them all right in front of me but then during the semester after I arrived there she was diagnosed with Metastasis and she really, she died then within six months after we all left Wright State. She went to West Virginia and then she died and she was very, very sick. She never really showed up as real sick while she was at Wright State before all this stuff ended. You , know she wasn't real jaundiced like she was when she went to West Virginia.

So it wasn't physical to the students and but she was in and out of health care, medical care we never really knew exactly what was going to happen and for that reason Gert assigned us to co-teach all the classes that we taught. And Gert had a strong belief in team teaching and truly team teaching, cooperative teaching and not just term teaching. And so it didn't seem unusual to the students that we were team teaching (laughs) and we were truly team teaching. We were there most of the time together and you know had just a wonderful time. It was more like being a student myself then you know being a teacher in a lot of respects.

CH: In terms of what you really learned from Joanne.

PC: From Joanne and from the process and interactions with students and so forth and one of the wonderful things that I think and you can verify this with the students too and I'm sure they'd have a much different perspective of it but Joanne and I frequently disagreed or had a kind of you know a tense moment you might say. You know I had a, my son was about eleven at the time and, eleven or twelve, and was in fifth grade or so and was in Miami Valley School, I think that's the name of the school. It's a day school in Dayton. She believed and said in class one of the first classes I know Marianne and Dorothy and Jackie were in the class and Susan Evans, she says, and they were all having kids or had kids and she said brattently [sic] well motherhood is a disease. (Laughs) So you know she always was there with something really you know totally startaling [sic] to the students and often to me and just really but very stimulating. And then Marianne and Dorothy ended up writing a paper, it was published in one of the early issues of A&S on motherhood as an impairment of the health care.

CH: We'll have to pull that one up too and take a look at that. I think that's something maybe our graduate can do.

PC: Yeah you need to do demo research on all those graduate students names

because that was the other thing they were publishing, they were really productive even before they finished their program.

CH: Uh-huh. Yeah that's interesting. One of the things, I'm not sure if you're aware of but after her death some of the new faculty who came on board were actually graduated from the program and they were able to get an award named for Joanne Ashley. So every year at our graduation we give the Joanne Ashley Award. Now we don't give it every year because if we don't have a deserving student that faculty really wants to nominate we will skip it.

PC: Uh-huh. Great.

CH: But um, to try to kind of carry that tradition forward and I think it was based on their having had such a stimulating learning experience.

PC: Oh yes. That it would be. (Laughs)

CH: What would you say were some of the challenges that you faced in fulfilling your role at Wright State?

PC: Oh goodness I don't think, just, I don't know exactly what you mean by challenges.

CH: Well and maybe challenges isn't the correct word for you. Um, in terms of what you were personally trying to accomplish in your role as a faculty member.

PC: Oh, I don't, you know I don't know. I've never thought of myself as having a personal faculty member really. I mean I was, A&S was really new. I had just started it I think I would have arrived at Wright State in about 1978 sometime and the first issue of A&S came out in '78 and so it was just getting started and you know so it was, I think it was all, it was

after I got to Wright State that the actual issues came out. It got started in Texas but you know just the challenges of getting a new journal off the ground and I had no personal investment in this journal. I mean I just and this is true in all of my professional stuff. Once something's done it's done. It's behind me and it belongs to the world then. But I started the journal because Ayanna Kramer and I from Utah had been trying to get our work published on theory development and that's kind of another story but I went to the NLM convention in 1977 I guess at Disneyland and talked to publishers about a journal because my sense was there were not enough journals in nursing to accommodate the kind of work that I knew I wanted to produce and then after Joanne came to Texas and I realized that I mean she had a terrible time getting any of her stuff published. And so part of my interest in publishing a journal was a journal that would be cutting edge that would not just publish the status quo and what people expected to read but challenge people's thinking and you know include some really good, strong, creative works. So I ended up with Aspen. There were about three publishers that pursued it and I ended up publishing it with Aspen. Then I think that move to Wright State happened just about the time we were getting the first issue out and then by the third issue or so it was, it had transformed into a completely peer reviewed referral journal unsolicited. So like in the early days when Wright State students would have an article appearing in the journal just as with any other this has been um twenty-six years.(Laughs) If I know the author and I just happen to shout oh there's an issue topic coming up on such and such and you might consider submitting things. They'd do just that. They submit it as if somebody I don't know so that it goes through a completely anonymous review process and has to meet the criteria just like everything else and often I even lose track who is the author of this because I'd put numbers on them and I don't really, I have to look up who is it and the same with the reviewers. So you know all of their work was fully peer reviewed and so on and so forth. But anyway I was really into establishing that and there was some link I think between what I was trying to accomplish with A&S and

with Wright State. Joanne became pretty influential in terms of some of the early development of A&S and it was at her suggestion that I scheduled the issue topic politics of care for volume two number three. I'm just looking at it here on my little shelf. It was the second year the third issue and that issue kind of is a conglomerate because it was not something that nurses were thinking about a lot. So there were some manuscripts that had coming in that weren't exactly on politics of care that were included in the issue but Joanne submitted a manuscript and it was just reviewed very positively and Denise Connor and I'm now opening up the issue right now but there were several pieces. And I sent their manuscripts in to Aspen and it was due just before Christmas and I was off to Hawaii to be with my parents for Christmas and Joanne went to Kentucky and I remember that Denise Connors ended up being a brevedo [sic] because I got the galleys just before I left for Christmas and they had cut Joanne's thirty page manuscript down to less than five pages print and they said, and before Joanne left for the holidays she said if they change one word I won't give permission for this to be published. (Laughs) So I called Aspen and I said you know we don't have an issue if you won't, if you insist on cutting this manuscript to the point that you have and I said you know just forget A&S. Let it go. I'm not invested in having this journal and if we can't publish what the peer reviewers have accepted and what authors want to you know publish then forget it. And I thought they would take me up on that because the you know A&S it's a strong prestigious journal now but it's not a huge moneymaker for a publisher and so it's very easy for them to let it go. So they said oh we can't do that so I said okay I'll take the galleys with me to Hawaii and I said Joanne is sick she will not talk to you about this but I will call her and get permission to go through the manuscript but I'm telling you now it has to be restored. And they said well okay we will go through it with you. So I went to Hawaii and it took twelve hours. They found, they did the same thing to Denise Connors' manuscript and they finally found her in Bermuda and went through hers with her word by word, line by line but it took about eight hours for me to go through Joanne's

manuscript with them (laughs) to restore it to something that was what she would accept. And then I took another two or three hours working with Denise's after they had gone over Denise's. So and I had told them before one of our editorial policies was that they would not compromise what an author wrote. You know they wouldn't step in as an editor and make it something that they wanted to publish. It had to be what the authors, what the peer reviewers stated. So we did restore it, um Joanne did accept it. Denise accepted hers and it got published. And then for about three or four years after that and you know like that volume was published in April of 1980 so it was right after the Wright State fiasco. (Laughs) And for several years after that when manuscripts would come in that were really controversial and I would talk to the editor and they would say well you know we need to be careful about this because of the response we got from that issue on politics in care and I said well what response. I kept asking them what response and they never would send me theirs. I said send me a copy a copy of what you got and finally one conversation one of the editors said well you know physicians didn't like it. And I said well you know physicians are not the audience. (Laughs) Give it up. This is a nursing journal. It's great if physicians look at it and read it and if they don't like it well that's fine but you know I said we're getting strong, positive responses from the nursing community and these are issues we are dealing with in nursing. And so gradually they kind of dropped that little line and never sent me any evidence of what was going on and A&S continued to get stronger and stronger.

CH: So it sounds like it was a little bit of a battle at that point to get that kind of journal in place and not to have some editors come through and really water down the material.

PC: Exactly.

CH: Now, I'm just curious who the editor, what profession were the editors coming

from?

PC: These were just simply copy editors.

CH: Just copy editors?

PC: So some of them were acquisitions editors like the managing editor. They're people who, Wally Hood who had initially been at Mosley was really the editor I worked with to found A&S and he was absolutely fantastic. He was a great advocate for nursing. He really believed that nursing needed to get stronger. He felt that physicians were kind of not our best friends in many instances and at that time that was much more true than it is today. And he was, he agreed with me totally and this is one of the reasons I went with Aspen because he was the editor. He was the acquisitions managing editor but he agreed that the, that nursing needed a journal that would publish works that really spoke out and spoke to the issues and you know really challenged the status quo but help to establish nursing as a strong you know science based you know really profession, discipline. And so it was really founded with that premise in mind. And it was written in the policies. I think some of the policies are still there and purposes and so forth reflect, haven't been changed in a long, long time. And so a couple of times in the first couple of years there were just some editorial things. I mean editors are trained to if the publishing house has a like an agenda they really aren't trained to watch for things that would set things off. Like you won't find for instance a Christian publisher that will deliberately publish gay and lesbian literature for example (laughs) or even something that mentions you know something that's favorable usually. So you know they have their perspective and they, they're trained by the publishing house to really hold to it and Aspen were publishing a lot of law stuff. They also were publishing a lot of stuff for physicians and they really didn't want to offend the quote- medical community.

CH: Okay. I think that's an interesting perspective on that that we really haven't heard before. So it's really something that will be interesting to track down a little bit more information.

PC: Uh-huh and it was kind of interesting that that was coming right on the heels of the Wright State experience as well. (Laughs)

CH: Right.

PC: Wright State was not just an isolated island. That's what I think is so important about if you folks will take your work and take it to a larger picture perspective then it's a very, very important area that I think deserves really in depth you know study.

CH: Right. Just moving on a little bit can you talk a little bit about some of your interactions with administrators while you were at Wright State with perhaps colleagues and students and you can really select which group you'd like to talk more about.

PC: I didn't interact with the administration very much. I think that people knew better than to let me do that. (Laughs) You know Gert was really the person that interacted with them and I really don't know too much where she is in terms of how she feels or what she you know how she looks at it now but I think her interactions and the only thing that I really know about the interactions that she had is kind of what she came back and told us which is pretty to a point. She didn't get into details. She didn't bad mouth anybody. She just said this is what I said to them and this is what they said to me and that's it and then she kept saying as a faculty you folks need to decide what you're going to do and how. And so you know that was really my extent of knowledge with that group. I participated in some of the kind of like public presentation hearings, meetings that we had with the faculty but didn't really talk with people very much. By the way there's a person who now is with the Union Graduate School in

Cincinnati, Ira Fritz. You know him?

CH: Yes, I do.

PC: Okay. He was very, very much of a supporter of ours. You should interview him

CH: Okay, we'll do that. He continued at Wright State as a faculty in teaching nutrition for quite a long time and is now retired.

PC: Right. But he's still very actively involved with D&D students at the Union Graduate School in Cincinnati and I know that he's you know active and I know he would be very delighted to talk with you and he would have a non-nursing faculty. I mean he was very much courting what we were trying to do and all of that but if you want to reach out to some other people who would have had another perspective and he remembers it clearly because he often will talk about how it goes. Unless something's happened that I don't know about but I know that I'm working with a doctoral student that I think he is the major advisor for at Union still right now.

CH: Okay.

PC: Actually but the one interaction that I recall is after we had made a big presentation at one of the auditoriums on the campus and had this thing we were walking back to the School of Nursing and you know through the halls, everybody was kind of going through the tunnel (laughs) and this faculty member who I don't even know, I don't think I even knew at the time but it was a male person. I was kind of walking along side you know everybody was just kind of going in a group and so nobody was particularly walking together but he just struck up a conversation with me and he said, "You know if you folks just wouldn't use the term professional then people wouldn't be reacting so negatively to what you're trying to say".

(Laughs)

CH: Really trying to be helpful to you.

PC: Uh-huh. Yep. (Laughs) Just don't call yourself professional and it will all be okay. He wasn't ha obviously. I don't know who it was but that was always just like just stunned me. I couldn't believe it.

CH: If you just go back to a status quo situation. Yeah.

PC: Yeah and then also you know that's just where the contact is so very important. Dayton was still very much a school town and it hadn't been all that look since you know the precursors to Wright State had been a school and that sort of thing. So that was kind of the expectation.

CH: Right within the community.

PC: Right.

CH: Did you have any interactions while you were here in Dayton with the community, with community agencies? Can you share a little bit about what your perspective was on the community at that time?

PC: Oh yeah. I did a research study at the time that I never published but it was on infant, mother/infant attachment and a couple of studies but the, oh goodness I can't remember the name of the hospital postpartum unit. What was the osteopathic hospital?

CH: Grandview? Grandview Hospital is the osteopathic. We also had St. Elizabeth, Miami Valley, Good Samaritan.

PC: I don't think it was Miami Valley. No, it wasn't Miami Valley and I can't recall particularly which one it was but it was on a postpartum unit and the, you know we were just doing our little thing with the study and a couple students were working with me and the nurses started saying something about how much easier their job was. They were kind of sitting around the nursing station painting their fingernails, literally. (Laughs) But they were you know just chatting about how their job had suddenly become so much easier. And it turned out the reason was that the Blue Cross and Blue Shied [sic] had stopped providing third party payments for some of the genital mutilation procedures that were going on in town. So, and I know that what's his name that was doing that in Dayton?

CH: Dr. Burt?

PC: Burt, yeah. He was working at Miami Valley so this was not even at Miami Valley but it was another thing and they were just kind of routinely doing some kind of cutting and getting reimbursed for it. And so I was kind of stunned to say the least and so we started looking into it, found out a little bit more about Burt and what his surgery was. It had just been published and all of this stuff you know that was right there in our doorstep. And so you know we started talking about it, speaking out and it was just such an emotionally charged thing. Many, many of the students and graduate students would not really pursue it very much. I know that I went to a workshop for nurses in one of the hospitals shortly before I left and we started talking about it a little bit and there was a couple of nurses who came up with tears in their eyes and said I was one of his patients. And you know it was just incredible. I mean it was so widespread and yet you know the Dayton medical community had protected this guy years and years. I think around that time and you can find this out a little bit more but he finally was disciplined and as I understand he went to Florida or someplace else. But just an incredible kind of an experience but that was the main incident around which a lot of my interactions in the

community had. Then I also know that there was a group of women in Yellow Springs who were involved with a radio show. There's a radio show that was recorded about the whole School of Nursing upheaval and I don't know if that's possible that there's a tape around of that or you might get a hold of that but we did talk with people at the radio show, radio station in Yellow Springs at the time.

CH: Okay, we can follow up to see if there's still a copy of that. I wasn't aware of that.

PC: Yeah, they interviewed several of us. It's about a thirty-minute piece that they did.

CH: You said that you did some research at the local hospital. How difficult was it at that time for nurses to come in and initiate a nursing research study at a hospital in Dayton, Ohio?

PC: I didn't have any real trouble but then what I was doing was pretty benign and you know I think people really didn't know much, have much.

CH: Uh-huh. So there weren't lots of hoops that as you recall that you had?

PC: No. Actually the IOB stuff was not really established at the time either.

CH: In general.

PC: It was real simple.

CH: Okay. I'm looking at our questions and I think we've covered a good bit of the area. Can you talk a little bit more about just a description of you [sic] perspective on how the resignations of the faculty at Wright State, how that actually came about for that to happen.

PC: Well, I do know that every person made their own decision and there was no coercion one way or another. I mean that was one of the things that all of Gert's foundation with the faculty had been for a long, long time that you have to decide for yourself of you know as a faculty group make sure that anything that has to do with the faculty, the curriculum, the school that you have you know that you were real clear that we established consensus. And she meant by consensus that really everybody did come to an agreement before we would really decide on anything. So but when it came to this issue it was really very, very clear that everybody needed to make their own decision. And I do think there was a certain amount of emotionality involved that Gert was really clear what she was going to do. She never looked back one time. (Laughs) I mean her perception as I understood it at the time and as she conveyed it was that she was recruited to be dean The administration had assured her that the School of Nursing would remain independent of the as then planned School of Medicine, hadn't started yet. But she knew it was on the horizon and she just wanted to be clear that there would be no merging or you know bringing together the School of Nursing in terms of the administration. That the two deans would have equal standing in the larger administrative structure of the university and report independently to the, whoever they reported to. And so she had secured that agreement from them before she even accepted the job and she ran into the first, as far as I know, the first kind of signal that things were not going to go smoothly when the School of Medicine started and almost immediately the Medical School Dean gave the order that all of the holdings in the library for nursing would be moved over to the Medical School Library. So Gert just said no that's not going to happen. The you know rationale then and it still would be the same today is that you know in nursing we use literature that goes far a field of just medical literature and our students need to have access to our literature in the context of the larger social and political and scientific literature and not just medical literature. And the thing at Wright State that's so ridiculous is like their down the tunnel from one another.

You know give me a break (laughs) or they were then.

CH: Right, they still are.

PC: So you know we couldn't understand why they just didn't put the Medical School Library over in the library you know or wherever it might be.

CH: Why there needed to be a separate--.

PC: Right, it had to be a separate library and you know all that. Gert wasn't into empire building and she wasn't going to I mean it was just, so that happened and she prevailed but ever since that victory quote that she won it was really clear that the Medical School, the powers that be, whoever they were and I don't really know and don't really care but you know they kind of I think it was an uneasy relationship and she knew that it was just going to be time until something else would happen that would create that kind of battle to be fought again. And so when they said well okay now we're going to move nursing into this other administrative structure she said without any, her meeting with the administration as far as I recall was very, very brief because she said, "No and I'm out of here, goodbye." And she came to the school and immediately told us what they had said and that she had given them her resignation and that she was not going to be remaining as dean under those circumstances. So we did meet quite often. We did have a lot of meetings with the faculty. We held some open forums. We interviewed, The Chronicle of Higher Education interviewed us and carried the story. I don't know if you've gotten a hold of those articles. I'm sure that those are available you know the chronicle archives. And we weren't doing that really necessarily to just say well you know we're going to you know try to force you to undo this decision because we didn't really have any illusions that they could or would do that but we just felt it was very, very important to make a statement in terms of what was really going on here and to let the world know and

not just passively you know fade into the woodwork. And so we were eager to take opportunities to let the public know what was happening. So as it got, there were lots of newspaper articles. I know that the dean of the Medical School and it was quoted in a newspaper article as saying that those nurses are little Iatola's [sic] and dykes in crepe soled shoes. Just incredible quotes and just, it was just an amazing kind of a thing. So it became pretty clear I think to many of us that staying was not, we just couldn't do it. We couldn't try to maintain the curriculum that we had. I know that there were several other things that made the administration, made the community uncomfortable. We had a full day workshop, Vella Aslick; Mary Daily came to speak and packed the auditorium both of those events. You know we were looking at power, power issues. All of the undergraduate students were following, families and the community and helping them to stay healthy (laughs) which is not a popular thing. We know that from how nurse midwives get treated in many communities. All of the graduate students as a part of their requirements were serving on a board of some agency in the community and were making really marvelous inroads in terms of helping boards to improve the services that they were doing in terms of improving the health of the community, which was the focus of the graduate program. So there were lots of things going on in the School of Nursing that were getting a lot of attention and that were pretty threatening. And so you know we just felt like that there was, we didn't want to try to continue that kind of work in a context where we knew at every turn we would be coming up against something like you know no you can't do that or whatever it might be.

CH: And so at your recollection of the events was that the administration of the school would be pulled under the administration of the School of Medicine?

PC: Well I don't know what the actual, I can't recall the actual administrative structure that was being proposed.

CH: Okay.

PC: But it really doesn't matter. The point was that whatever was being proposed had to do with a increasing kind of ability of somebody besides the faculty of nursing working at and having a say in what we would do or managing the affairs of the school instead of a direct line relationship to the university administration.

CH: Right and I asked the question really because there was one newspaper article that I came across that seemed to indicate that the School of Medicine was going to initiate a separate nursing education program that would focus on clinical hospital nursing.

PC: I think that that was part of the discussion.

CH: Okay because when I brought it up to someone else who was closer to it at the time they seemed to think that that newspaper article got it wrong and that really wasn't what was being proposed but you're thinking that may have been one of the things.

PC: No, I don't know that that was really part of what the administration of Wright State had in mind but I do know that in all of the discussions around why this needed to happen there was a you know like what Gert would say you know well what's the rationale for this. I mean they had promised her that nothing would happen along, this line in terms of the lines of authority in the university but that was what was really going on. There was going to be shift in the authority were by the School of Nursing would be either reporting to or having a different line of authority than the Medical School Dean. She wanted the Medical School Dean and the Nursing School Dean to be on equal footing in the university and comparable footing and that was what they were changing. And how this was happening or whatever I don't know but the other thing was that you know Wright State wasn't that far away from a hospital based School of Nursing and I think there was a lot of discussion, some throw away comments even,

different things that well what you're doing, as a School of Nursing is taking nurses away from the bedside and it was a very community oriented program and the reason I mentioned what our students were doing in the community and the changes they were making to keep people healthy was not really well received in a lot of ways because it was really threatening to the status quo and they were used to nurses who were literally quote trained to follow doctors around when they did rounds and hand them instruments and things like that. (Laughs) And so there was a lot of just discussion about well what you're doing in your curriculum doesn't really have anything to do with real nursing and we wanted a program that does real nursing you know that sort of thing. I don't know that even in the newspaper article that you're quoting that there was really a specific proposal to a new nursing school at that focus. Although I do recall that there was some talk about that that really is underlying maybe what their motives are but I do know that there was a lot of discussion around the fact that we were, whatever we were doing it was wrong and it needed to change and that was part of the motivation for making this administration change so that the School of Nursing would have to change.

CH: And start doing things right.

PC: Uh-huh. (Laughs)

CH: Okay. You spoke a little bit earlier, Peggy, about how your experiences at Wright State affected your career since then. Are there any additional things you'd like to say in that area?

PC: Well I guess that you know I just wouldn't want to be misunderstood that it was the upheaval that influenced me. I mean yeah I learned a lot from that but that happened to me in so many places that it's just not even a, it's like oh, so what. You know? (Laughs)

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

PC: Because I mean we just went through it, a similar kind of thing here in Connecticut where they merged nursing with allied health and you know all that. I made it clear from the get go that you know well this is not a place for me. It always undermines nursing and it's happened over and over and over again. And all of the schools that are really strong and in all of this criteria you might look at are independent academic units. But anyway so that's just, that's not anything in particular, what really influenced me was more how the strong, clear conceptual basis for the curriculum, the fact that the School of Nursing faculty was able to work together in such an effective way of which by no means is in fact I mean I don't know how much you folks knew Gert or Marge or Joanne or some of the other people that were there but you know this was not a group of women that would like to sit around and act like we were in Sunday school or something like that. It was all very strong minded, strong personalities, very opinionated and that went for all of us who were there and something that Gert and Marge addressed particularly contributed was that they encouraged that. They said okay let's get these issues out on the table and speak honestly and just and it's for that reason that the collective group was able to work well because when a group can't get all the issues out on the table and it starts happening in the hallways is when you get ineffective group process going. But anyway all of that sort of, that experience was just so wonderful and plus the joy of teaching in a curriculum that had such a clear and conceptual focus and such a firm grounding in terms of nursing values was just really, really wonderful.

CH: Are there any areas that we haven't asked you about that you think are really important to contribute to the oral history project that we're working on?

PC: Goodness I don't know. What do you think? (Laughs) Suzanne Falco, have you

talked to her?

CH: Um, we haven't talked with, Suzanne Falco.

PC: I don't know where she is but she always has a really, really solid you know kind of —

CH: Perspective?

PC: Yeah.

CH: Yeah, I had actually, I think I tracked her down and I have a university where she was last teaching. So she is on our list of people to try and get involved with. There's so many it's really, it's been a challenge to try and just get started with this whole project and make a connection.

PC: Yeah.

CH: Have you been in contact with Gert Torres recently?

PC: No I haven't but I know somebody who kind of and how about Carol Battra?

CH: I'm in touch with her.

PC: They both live in Buffalo, New York somewhere.

CH: Okay so Carol might be a good- -

PC: Carol would know where Gert is for sure but I also know someone who taught at Deauville where Gert went after she left Wright State and Adeline is in Toronto now but she taught at Deauville and I know that she talks to Carol Battra once in awhile.

CH: Okay.

PC: So if you'd like I can find out the contact.

CH: Yeah if you could help us in that way that would be good.

PC: That would be great. I'll do that.

DONNA MILES CURRY: Peggy one thing, you eluded at the very beginning that you thought it was important to look at the broader scope of what was happening. Do you think we've touched on that in your interview or is there anything more you'd like to comment about the broader aspect of the things that were happening not just the little microcosmic of Wright State?

PC: Yeah, well I think that there's you know several things that deserve a lot of study. I have a lot of opinions about it but you know for example that whole process of transitioning away from diploma education to baccalaureate education at the time when Wright State and Dayton was doing it it was you know kind of old news. (Laughs) You know most people in the country had already started that process but that doesn't make it any less important or difficult. I mean that transition which really in some places happened oh goodness even in the early part of the century like Cincinnati. Oh, Charlotte Bruin, she was teaching at Miami University. She did a historical study on the Cincinnati School of Nursing when she was a graduate student at Wright State and she's really an important person to talk to because she really, she got into the Cincinnati school because it was one of two Nightingale Schools established in the United States and one of the first baccalaureate programs I think that the Cincinnati and the Minnesota school vie for being the first. And Charlotte's thesis is very, very important and she would have some really good insight from what happened at Wright State as well.

CH: And was that Charlotte Broom?

PC: You know I think it's B R U I N.

CH: Bruin, okay.

PC: I think so. I think that's her name.

CH: Okay, well we can do a search on that.

PC: It was a historical study it was for a thesis at Wright State of the Cincinnati School of Nursing.

DMC: That'd be great.

PC: But you know that whole, that transition is not a simple transition like when you look at the transition from normal school training for teachers, for example, to requiring a baccalaureate degree or even from pharmacy moving from the baccalaureate degree to the pharm D degree as the standard. (Laughs) You know you're really trying to without changing licensing requirements you're really changing the entry expectations for the profession. It's not an easy transition for any profession to make and so you know it would be, that in itself would make a really, really fabulous historical study. It would require really doing some research into some of the what the transitional issues are in all of these disciplines. Social work has just moved from a baccalaureate degree to a master's degree. But nursing's degree changed more entry qualification changes. It's not really formalized as we all know but that shift has so many dimensions that's unique to nursing because of the fact that for many, many years in diploma schools physicians were the teachers and that is not just simply saying that physicians happened to teach the content that meant that they were able to define what nursing was, what nurses learned, what nurses did, how nurses functioned and really there's no other discipline that had

another discipline that was defining it. And so you know you've got an automatic power dynamic set up that to move away from that is to move away from having another discipline define who you are and that was at the heart of the Nightingale School of philosophy where Florence Nightingale said that no other discipline, she was, she did not approve of or condone nursing schools being in academic institutions because she said anytime nurses are educated in another kind of an institution whether it's a hospital or an academic university, college or whatever then somebody else is going to define us instead of us defining ourselves. And so that was really at the heart of what all of this was.

CH: We enjoyed speaking with you today and recording your insights into this whole area and I'm sorry your packet didn't get to you today as we had anticipated.

PC: Well that's okay. I can attach the permission form on an email and send it back to you.

CH: Okay and we also as part of that there's a little biography form that in terms of oral histories just kind of denotes your specific background and then also a CD we've asked people to provide us with a CD or--.

PC: You can download mine from the web.

CH: Okay.

PC: So if you go to my website that's on the, in the signature part of my email then there's a link to that. You can get that.

CH: Okay.

DMC: Very good.

PC: I like to make it easy.

DMC: Great to hear from you Peg.

PC: Oh goodness, it's good to talk with you and I hope that this has been helpful.

CH: Very helpful. Lots of good leads and obviously lots more work that we need to keep moving on.

PC: That's fine.

DMC: And you know where we are if you have any other ideas or suggestions we'd really appreciate it.

PC: Okay, well thank you and if you need to follow up just let me know.

DMC: Thank you so much.

CH: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW