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9-11-1978

## UA3/4/8/2 Dero Downing Interview

Dero Downing

WKYU-FM

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**Western Kentucky University**  
**UA3/4 Dero Downing**  
**Series 8 Interviews & Oral Histories**  
**Item 2 Interview**

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**Biographical/Historical Note:** The president's office was created in 1906. The search for the fourth president of WKU began with Kelly Thompson's resignation announcement May 21, 1969. Vice President for Administrative Affairs Dero Downing indicated that he would serve if asked. The Board of Regents elected him president on August 22, 1969. He served until his retirement in 1979.

Dero Downing was born September 10, 1921 at Fountain Run in Monroe County, Kentucky, and grew up at Horse Cave in Hart County. He enrolled at WKU in 1939 where he played basketball and earned both a bachelor's and master's degree. After serving in the Navy in World War II, he returned to Western as a mathematics teacher and coach at the College's Training School. He later became director of the Training School, college registrar, dean of admissions, dean of business affairs, and vice-president for administrative and business affairs. Upon his resignation as president in 1979 Downing became president of the College Heights Foundation, a position he held until his death on April 4, 2011.

**Description:** WKYU-FM news broadcast and interview regarding Dero Downing's resignation as WKU president.

**Dates:** September 11, 1978

**Subject Analytics:**

Audio recording

Downing, Dero Goodman, 1921-2011

Interviews

Radio broadcasting

Resignations

Western Kentucky University

WKYU-FM

**Accession Information:** These records were transferred to the WKU Archives upon its creation.

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Preferred Citation:** UA3/4/8/2 Dero Downing Interview, WKU Archives, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

**Processing Information:** Audiotape transcribed by Suellyn Lathrop, 2013.

# Oral History Recording List

UA3.4.8.2 ~ Records

12/03/2013

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	00:00:00	<b>Broadcaster:</b> In local news, Western president Dero Downing resigned on Saturday during an emotional Board of Regents meeting after serving as president for nine years. Downing has been associated with the university since he started his freshman year in 1939. In an interview yesterday at his home on his 57th birthday Downing explained why he will be stepping down January 8th.
Tape 1	1	00:00:20	<b>DD:</b> The resignation was made after long and careful consideration. It basically is a result of my having arrived at the recognition that the cumulative effect of the excessive demands and duties and responsibilities of this position while range wise is having a detrimental effect on the state of my health. And in commenting in that way there are those who may interpret that to mean that there is some immediate health problem and that is not the case. It's a long range thing. It makes me feel that this is a timely decision and I have made it on a positive note with a great deal of appreciation for the opportunity I had to serve the university in the various positions I've held at Western Kentucky University.
Tape 1	1	00:01:26	<b>Broadcaster:</b> Although he has tenure as a faculty member of the College of Education, Downing said he does not wish to serve in a full-time position. However, he will be available for part-time services and asked the Regents to grant him a sabbatical leave from January to August. Downing will also help pick his successor.
Tape 1	1	00:01:43	<b>DD:</b> I'm confident that there are a number of people both inside and outside the university who would be well qualified to fill the position effectively. And I'm sure the Board of Regents will identify that person through this process will make the selection that will be in the best interest of Western Kentucky University.
Tape 1	1	00:02:09	<b>Broadcaster:</b> The Regents appointed a committee Saturday to devise a selection procedure to fill the vacancy.