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Mebane Pritchett

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ORAL HISTORY

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DATE AUGUST 25, 1988

Mebane Pritchett
(Signature - Interviewee)

3131 SKATON DR., NW.
(Address)
ATLANTA, GA. 30305

DATE _____

(Signature - Witness)

SOCIETY OF YEAGER SCHOLARS

TAPE 4

August 4, 1987

AN INTERVIEW WITH: Mebane Pritchett

CONDUCTED BY: Michele Shank

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: Michele Shank

MUH-YS-4

Michele Shank: This is one in a series of interviews on the history of the Society of Yeager Scholars. My name is Michele Shank. Today, August 4th, 1987, I'm in Atlanta, Georgia with Mebane Pritchett, President of Coca-Cola Scholar's Foundation, Inc. O.k., Mebane, hi. (Laughter)

Mebane: Hello, there.

Michele: We're ready to go. Alright. Tell me a little bit about your background, Mebane.

Mebane: Alright, I'm a native North Carolinian, born in Lenore, North Carolina. I attended public school there until I went off to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I received my A.B. degree in English in 1957. Spent three years in the U.S. Navy. Then went to Harvard law school, graduated there in 1963. Practiced law there for . . . in New York City. . . with a Wall Street law firm for four years. Then came to Chapel Hill, North Carolina to direct the Morehead Foundation.

Michele: Alright. Now, how long were you with . . . at the University of North Carolina, and the Morehead Foundation?

Mebane: I was connected with the Morehead Foundation, which is located at Chapel Hill where the university is, for twenty years. I was there five years as the Associate Director and fifteen years as the Executive Director of that foundation, which is a private foundation, but involved totally with the University of North Carolina.

Michele: Why do we, in the academic world, need a program like the Morehead Foundation?

Mebane: Well, I think that the University of North Carolina needed it because the university is in the business of attracting, attempting to attract the very best students. The best students are the ones who keep the universities going and the Morehead Foundation was established by an alumnus of the university who wanted to do something significant for his alma mater. So he established this foundation, designed to attract to that campus the very best students. Having successfully done that for many years, it has enabled that institution to be a premier institution in this country.

Michele: The main thrust of the program. Was it designed for a special field for students?

Mebane: No, it was designed to allow a student total freedom to study whatever he or she wanted, as long as the study was done on that campus. That was the only requirement. And the main thrust being that Morehead wanted his institution there to receive the benefit of the presence of these outstanding individuals. The students themselves were really secondarily beneficiaries, the university being the primary beneficiary.

Michele: And . . . is it Mr. Morehead? Is that the man's name?

Mebane: Um-hummm. John Motley Morehead, who was a native North Carolinian, graduated from the university at Chapel Hill in

1891, was one of the founders of the Union Carbide Corporation. Also, about the time of the founding of Union Carbide, he was in Oxford, England, on business and witnessed the establishment of the Rhodes Scholarship program at that time. And he decided early on that if he ever had the funds to do it, he would like to start a Rhodes type program at his alma mater, putting it on the undergraduate level, rather than, like the Rhodes, at the graduate level. And sure enough, some forty years later, in 1945, he had amassed a great fortune with Union Carbide, and he put it in the establishment of this foundation, which has since that time, been doing. . . been attracting students on this scholarship.

Michele: Did he participate in establishing the criteria and qualifications and this type of thing?

Mebane: Um-hmmm. He was very much involved in it. He and his cousin, another John Morehead, John Lindsey Morehead, the two of them really designed it, they borrowed freely from the Rhodes trust, with the Rhodes trustees permission. Followed very much the philosophy of the Rhodes program and again, that was to attract to one academic community an outstanding group of scholar students, who could learn from each other, interact with each other, contribute to that institution and then go back to their native, in the Rhodes case, their native lands, in the Morehead case, to their native states and counties, and do good things

for society. And so, he was very much involved in the modeling of that and the criteria pretty much what the Rhodes was, and that is a blend of academic excellence, leadership potential, physical vigor, and character.

Michele: Did you have a Board of Directors?

Mebane: Um-hmmm. A Board of Trustees. It was pretty much a family type foundation. There were John Morehead himself, was the first chairman, and his cousin, John Lindsey Morehead, was vice-chairman. Then there were three others appointed by them who were close friends, and in one or two cases, were related to them. Those five members served um. . . well, there were no terms to it. They were lifetime appointments and in fact, there have not been a lot of changes through the history of the program since 1945. But there are still none of the original trustees, but there are still five trustees, all of whom were closely connected with Morehead, either by kinship or friendship. And they are responsible for the . . . for establishing and continuing the policies of that foundation.

Michele: And the year this was founded was. . . ?

Mebane: It was established in 1945. The first instructions of . . . that he gave his trustees was to build what's called the "Morehead Building" at Chapel Hill, which is a enormous structure. It's been added on to several times since then, but that building is in the middle of campus and it houses a

planetarium, an observatory, the offices of the foundation, has art galleries, dining halls, meeting rooms, exhibit rooms, miscellaneous facilities for the use by the Morehead Foundation, by the University and by the general public.

Michele: And you said this was privately funded by Mr. Morehead. And others. Were the others just exclusively Mr. Morehead and his family?

Mebane: Exclusively. He. . . in fact, there is no prohibition on the Board of Trustees accepting contributions from outside. It simply was his desire that it always be carried on through the funds that he had provided it and what the trustees could do in building that corpus. So then he put an initial amount into it. He kept it going while he was alive with sufficient funding to do what they wanted to do. Then at his death, he had outlived two wives and had no offspring, and everything went to the foundation, which certainly was a nice thing to have happen for it, because that increased the corpus tremendously. Since that time, the trustees have very successfully built upon that, while expending a lot of funds for scholarship to Morehead scholars.

Michele: Now, the Morehead scholar. What are the qualifications, to be a Morehead scholar?

Mebane: To. . . to qualify, to be eligible, one must either attend any secondary school in North Carolina, public or private, or one

of about 60 secondary schools in the United States, outside North Carolina. Most of those being independent schools, but a few public schools. Or one of a few schools in the Toronto area of Canada, or in twenty five selected public schools in Great Britain. If you are not attending a school to fit one of those categories, then you can't participate.

Michele: Can't do it.

Mebane: If you are, then you are eligible to be nominated by your school for competition. If you are in a school in North Carolina, your school can nominate as many seniors as it feels is qualified, but you then go through a series of elimination processes that. . . you are interviewed, following your school nomination, you are interviewed by a county selection committee in each of the 100 counties in North Carolina. If you survive that competition, you go to one of ten regional committees in North Carolina. If you survive that, you go to a final interview before a central selection committee that takes place in the spring at the university. If you are an out of stater, in the United States, then each of those 50 or 60 schools can nominate one person, but having done that, that one individual is eligible to come right to the final competition at Chapel Hill each spring. If you are at one of the schools in Canada or Great Britain, you go through a separate interview process

in those localities and Canada picks three and Great Britain picks four each year, as Morehead scholars to come to the campus. But they are interviewed and selected independently of the other process. That's how you become eligible. To actually win, you. . . the criteria for selection are a combination of academic ability, leadership potential, force of character and physical vigor. And there is no set percentage put on those different elements. It's a blend of all of those as decided by the selection committees.

Michele: So their test scores, for instance. Do they have to be at any certain. . . ?

Mebane: No they're not at any particular level. The school's learn, or have learned, through the history of this thing pretty much what it takes to be in the ballpark and what it might take to win. But the foundation purposely stayed away from specifics because it didn't want to rule out an individual who might have a relatively low SAT but have a lot of other qualities that it felt overrode that. And so a lot of flexibility is left to the nominating committee of the school and to the interviewing committees later on. Now, all of those committees have access to a full file on each candidate so they have all of those test scores, they have their grades, they have letters of recommendation, they have a statement written by the candidate,

they have some biographical information, they have just a real full amount of information prepared by a student, by the student's counselor, and by others. But they then study that in interview and make a group decision. But . . .

Michele: The criticism of some scholarship programs is that the creative child who's academic grades are not that strong, but are extrordnarily creative in other ways, that academic scholarship programs eliminate that student. Are you saying that the Morehead program does not eliminate the creative student, that maybe would be a B student instead of an A student?

Mebane: I would say that the Morehead program, more times than not, would eliminate that student as well, but not automatically. And the attempt was to get those who would otherwise fall through the cracks. So a B student is not ineligible in the competition. It's just if in that particular school, there's an A student who has all the other qualities as well, that student is going to have a better chance. But I have in my years as Director of that program, I have seen head to head competition in a given year, where a student, and I'm going to give you the most extreme example I can remember, but a fact, that a student with an SAT combined of under 900 win the award, another one who had a combined 1560 lose. So you can

certainly see that the selection process is not tied to an academic standing. We get a lot of criticism from that side as well, because most often people say, well, that's . . . you know, there's no objective standard. You are being very subjective and uh, . . . it's true. And yet, you know, my view and I think their view, was that if you look about you in life, people who are most successful are not at all those that are . . . who have been judged so subjectively. They do have a lot of intangibles and you simply have to deal with that the best you can.

Michele: For your recruitment, then, of the students, it is mainly the referral from the high school?

Mebane: Um-hmmm. Entirely. We can not do a thing, without the high school committee. Whatever they do sets the process for the year. And what every other committee after that does is based entirely on what that first high school did to set it in motion. So what we would do would be to each summer, or each . . . the beginning of each academic year, in late August or September, I would go around the state, conducting regional meetings of local selection committee people and school people. And I would go over the rules and regulations and I would talk to them about the whole program and what was the plan for that coming year. Nomination papers would be handed

out at that time and that would begin the process. And then the schools would have about a month to pick who they wanted to choose as their nominees. Then the local selection committee would have the next month to do the interviews of those and select its quota based on the student population of that county. And then a month later, two months later, the regional committees would interview and then two months later the finals would be held. But all of it went back to whomever was picked out by that school in the first instance.

Michele: So as an administrator, what . . . what would be your expectations for Morehead students?

Mebane: During their four years as . . .

Michele: Um-hmmm. Yes.

Mebane: Well, our expectations were, are, extremely high, but extremely general. Again, recognizing that we might pick someone who was a B student and a 1,000 SAT student over someone else who was an A student and a 1500 SAT student, having done that, it seemed unfair to expect the person we picked to be Pi Beta Kappa. We picked them, obviously, for other reasons. Maybe they were president of the student body and displayed unusual leadership skills, then we would expect that person to do the same thing at the university. If we picked someone else who had 1600 SAT's but was fairly narrowly focused in terms of other activities, we would expect that person to be Pi Beta Kappa.

In other words, we. . . each one having been picked for a certain reason, we would expect that that person, to the best of his or her ability, would uh. . . would proceed to that kind of excellence. We didn't have the kind of strict requirements that say, the Yeager Program has. Our academic requirements, because of what I'm saying, were really minimal. Uh, we required, the first year students, Morehead students to have at least a 2.0, which is a bare C average. The second year, a 2.2 and their last two years, at least a 2.4. Now, we expected a lot more than that, but we set that, again, because we didn't want to get caught in a situation where someone who was a tremendous musician, athlete, student government leader, journalist, what have you, but not, you know, not an academic student would get eliminated. Most programs do it the other way. I know from what little I know about the Yeager Program to date that I think there's a 3.5 academic average. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in its own financial aid office, has a B average requirement to maintain any scholarship. Most programs have that. But again, the thrust being so heavily toward, I guess, toward leadership, as opposed to academics, no, we've tended to go the other way.

Michele: How many students are admitted yearly to the program?

Mebane: The Morehead program, at this point, automatically selects 60 a year. It has fluctuated through the years. In fact, at one

time, we were up to around 90. We did that because that was shortly after Morehead died and suddenly, there was a lot more money in the program and at that time, the laws required you to spend all of your income and that was the easiest way to do it. We then reassessed the program, decided to introduce a very sophisticated summer component which was going to be quite costly and decided to cut back on the numbers. And for awhile then, we didn't give the final committee a set number, but just sort of a ball park figure. And it would range anywhere from oh, 60 to 70 usually. And then we decided for budgetary reasons that we really wanted to know exactly how many and so we set 60, which it's been for the last 4 or 5 years.

Michele: How many millions of dollars are we talking, to sustain this program, of 60 students a year?

Mebane: Well, the history of the program was such that during Morehead's lifetime, he would just provide a million or two here and there as it needed it. When he died, his estate was valued, and this was in 1965, at about 30 million dollars. And so that went into it. That was '65. Twenty two years later, that corpus is now worth about sixty million. From that sixty million, and of course, you do not have to spend all of your income under the laws of today, from that sixty million, say last year, we would . . . our budget was roughly, um. . .

well, totally spent was about three and one half million of which about I'd say two and a half were going into. . . was going into scholarship assistant directly to support about 275 students on full scholarships. The remaining million was going to administrative expenditures and to other miscellaneous things at the university that the Foundation was involved in.

Michele: So the one difference in the Yeager Program and the Morehead program is money, as far as the Yeager Program is actively seeking. They are on a fund-raising campaign, actively seeking funds, whereas the Morehead Program was established.

Mebane: Yeah, quite the opposite. And in fact, as I mentioned, uh, the trustees are not prohibited from accepting money, but they wouldn't take it unless. . . I mean, I guess everybody's got their price, and if someone came along and said, here, I want to give you five million dollars, I believe they would have taken it. But there were many instances while I was there of individuals, particularly for example, in a merit program like this from time to time, you'll have a winner who comes from a very wealthy background. And a parent would want to see that their child received the benefits that we were offering, but wanted to, um. . . wanted to do something, to replace that and would offer to either. . . either make some sort of contribution to the foundation or uh, in some form, and we

always refused those. We told them, if they wanted to set up a scholarship at the university, you know, for other students, but the foundation would not accept it. So, you know, it was a nice way to operate and certainly made it easy for me to, you know, spend it and not try to make it. (Laughing)

Michele: Sure (laughing). Making it is the hard part. (They both laugh.) O.k. Um. You were a Morehead Scholar yourself.

Mebane: Right.

Michele: Right. Did you find any pressure being a student in such a program?

Mebane: There was, but partly because I happened to be in the very first class. And of course, the Yeager's have their very first class. There's got to be some built in pressure there, just in being the first. And then everybody is looking at you and everybody's watching to see what you do and you have a certain amount of pressure. I always tried, in my years at the foundation, I felt it important to put as little pressure as possible on these individuals. They were the types of individuals who put pressure on themselves, anyway. And by the foundation, you know, unduly adding to that, I foresaw problems. And we still had problems. In fact, a fair share of our students would go for psychological counseling from time to time, mostly because, not because they were failing (How we doing?)

Michele: We're doing great!

Mebane: You're sure its on (meaning tape recorder).

Michele: Yes, it's on.

Mebane: I don't want to do this again (Laughing).

Michele: I don't either. (laughing)

Mebane: Being counselled not because they were not able to do the work, but just because, you know, they were demanding upon themselves too much, and letting the pressure get to them. And so, I think you've got to have standards. You've got to enforce standards. But as much as you can, and I think the Yeager Program will want to do this as well as the Morehead, you do want to recognize that there will be self imposed pressures anyway and that, uh. . .

Michele: Make life as easy as possible for them.

Mebane: That's right. And encourage them. Make them want to do their best, which they will anyway, if you've chosen correctly. But accept the fact that, you know, not all of them are going to pan out in the way you had expected, and if they falter, just try to find out why and see if it can be corrected and if it can, give them some sort of opportunity, a probationary period or something to do it, and then if they can't then that's too bad. But, you know, try. . .

Michele: Do you have a percentage of drop outs in the Morehead program?

Mebane: Oh, yeah. Uh. . . you know, there's that one to five percent of everything that's not going to be just what you want. And I would say, of the 60 a year coming in, we're going to have a couple who don't finish for one reason or another. It might be academic failure, but it would be more likely just a myriad of things, you know. It just turned out it wasn't the right place and that will happen sometimes because in a program like that, you are in essence recruiting. You are persuading someone to come to you who in the majority of the cases probably was not planning to come to you. I mean, because that's the essence of the program. Morehead didn't particularly want to give a lot of money to somebody who was going to go anyway and pay their way anyway. So he would rather give it to some youngster out of Huntington, West Virginia, who was going to go to Marshall University or Harvard University or somewhere else. And so. . .

Michele: What did Mr. Morehead feel . . . how did he feel these students were going to benefit the university?

Mebane: He just felt that they would uh. . . that if they were the exceptional kind that he had in mind, that they would. . . they would liven up the classroom, they would make teaching a joy, to have these bright minds in there and therefore, that would make it easier to attract better professors, what the

university was doing, uh. . . he wanted them mixed into everything. He wanted some of them to be star athletes, he wanted some of them to be the student government leader, just doing all the things that you do on a college campus that would make the institution as strong as it could be. And that was just simply because he wanted his legacy to be, he had, as I say, no offspring to leave it to, he looked at the university as sort of his child, and wanted. . . felt that really, by investing in students, that that was the best place that his money could be spent. He didn't want to put it in bricks and mortar, other than his own building. He felt like that in that situation, the university at Chapel Hill, is a public institution, and therefore the taxpayer had the responsibility to build dormitories. He felt that the taxpayer had the responsibility to provide funding for needy students there. And the student aid office does that. So could with a free mind establish a merit program and not worry about that so much.

Michele: So for critics who would say that the Yeager Program and the Morehead Program were elitist programs. How would you answer that question?

Mebane: Well, I would say. . . elite is a much often misunderstood term. It conjures up, and the way you asked the question, conjures up a negative image. Uh, it doesn't have to be that

way. Elite, you know, in the dictionary is the best. It's class. So what's wrong with elite? So I would say, if it is elitist, which it is, it's elitist in the most positive sense of that term and that that's o.k.

Michele: That's right. Good. O.k. When Dale Nitzschke, our president, and Joe Hunnicutt, our founder, and William Denman, our director, visited you on the campus of North Carolina, seeking recommendations and advice, what did you tell them?

Mebane: Gosh, I must have told them a lot of things because we spent a lot. . .

Michele: You must have convinced them. . .

Mebane: Yeah. . .

Michele: That it was a worthwhile thing.

Mebane: That was about a year ago. You don't know when it was, do you? It was last summer.

Michele: It was over a year ago.

Mebane: Yeah, but it was early summer of 1986, I believe.

Michele: Spring, I think.

Mebane: O.k. What I remember most vividly is that we had a nice visit in my office and then we walked uptown to lunch and the place, a nice little place that I like to have lunch, had just opened an upstairs and so we went upstairs and sat around this table. And they hadn't put the carpet down yet and it was the worse acoustics I've every heard in my life. And I never heard a

word. . . none of us heard anything we said in lunch. So we can strike lunch off. But we had a good morning and afternoon, talking about their ideas and I think I probably began by reviewing the Morehead history, and what was done there, and sort of some of the things that I thought were done correctly and some that maybe were done incorrectly, and kind of let them, you know, extract from what we had done, what they felt would best fit their situation. Because every situation is different. And I think that they were impressed with the. . . well, they were impressed with the history. I mean, we were at such a great advantage there, in that we had had 20 - 30 years to go through this and iron out all the bugs. And so, when something gets going, it sort of feeds on itself and it's just like in our selection process. People around the state, you know, you ask them to do this and they don't get anything for it and they are just begging to do it. You know, because they want to be a part of it. And so, you know, the whole. . . the maturing of a program is fun to see. And I think they sort of. . . and you know, I look forward to watching the Yeager Program, you know, get to that point, where everything just happens and you don't have to go out and raise money. I mean, people just can't wait to give it to you. (laughing)

Michele: (laughing) Right!

Mebane: But it was mostly a session like that, of just, in trying to answer their specific questions about things, but you know, I don't remember all the details of it. Except, that they were three very nice people and they were three very dedicated people and I saw that what they really wanted to do was to do something first class. To do it right and make it work. And I think that's what you have to have in any program. And that's why I came down to this one because Coca-Cola said we want to do something first class. Do it right. And if you do that, you can't miss out.

Michele: So now, with your position at Coca-Cola, are you just putting this foundation together? Is this the beginning for you?

Mebane: I am just spawning something, I mean from very. . . I bet I'm starting further back than the Yeager guys were last year. And you know, it may have been that in talking to them, I know that in my fifteen years as Director of the Morehead Foundation, I helped start a lot of programs. The Stuart Scholarship at Davidson, the Jefferson Scholarship Program at Virginia, the President's Scholarship Program here at Georgia Tech, uh, and then probably dozens of others who people, foundations, universities, who would call asking for guidance in starting some kind of program. And you know, I'm sort of fascinated with all that. And after so many years of getting the Morehead right and getting it to the point where it ought to be, I was

about to get to the point where I was just going to be minding the store. And you know, when I sat down with them, and it just sounded very exciting to start a new one. So Coca-Cola, as part of its hundredth anniversary in 1986, now this is the Coca-Cola system. This is a joint venture of the company and all of the Coca-Cola bottlers around the country, got together and said we want to do something in our centennial year that will be a strong philanthropic statement to society that we do good things all over. And they said, why don't we start a merit scholarship program that would cover all of the United States and eventually all of the world. And they decided to do that, and then they set out to hire somebody to start it. And they called me because they knew about my situation and kind of like Dr. Nitzschke and Joe Hunnicutt and said, here's what we're going to do. You know, how about giving us some input. and I said, sure. And I started talking a little bit with them and then they started the search for a president. And I actually recommended several people for the job. And then they sort of said, well, why don't you think about doing it. And I said, oh, no. Then I started thinking, you know (laughing), about the next ten years. Do I want to mind the store or do I want to pioneer a new program? And it had a tremendous backing of a tremendous organization and had sort of unlimited potential. So, finally led me to say, alright, I'll do it.

You know, I just got here in June. So right now, I'm in the process of putting together a permanent staff. What I have now are two folks, three folks here at the company who are temporarily assigned to me and then some office space. And then I have a separate foundation office in another part of Atlanta. I have two people out there who are on my payroll, but it was just for a transition, assigned there. So I'm in the process of putting together a permanent staff, of securing permanent office space, of developing a philosophy for this program and year one, that is June, 1987-88, will be the start up year. . . the year to establish all of these plans. And then starting next year, we'll start to give scholarships all over the place.

Michele: Sounds great! I hope you'll think of Marshall University.
(laughing)

Mebane: Well, the general idea now is to make every . . . think about this, now. . . all three million high school seniors in the United States be eligible. That's twenty five thousand high schools competing in a plan all over the country. Then if you win, and we would start presumably with about 100 scholarships a year, . . . if you win, you get to go wherever you want to.
So. . .

Michele: So it's a you pick your own university situation?

Mebane: Um-hmmm. For a four year, full scholarship. So with my attachment to Chapel Hill, with my attachment to Marshall, I'll certainly politic for both of those schools.

Michele: Great! Well, I understand (tape interference) a board members on our National Board of Directors. How do you see your role there?

Mebane: Well, I've got a lot to learn. You know, I had that meeting with the three last year, and they've been very good about keeping me posted on things as they developed on this first year. And I was certainly very flattered when Joe called and asked me if I would serve on the board. And I agreed to do so. I have not, of course, been to a board meeting yet. So I don't know a lot about the structure, or the plan, and all of that. But I would hope that my role, through a career in foundation work and in scholarship programs, would enable me to contribute something as the program develops. And I think one place you're at right now is - you've selected your first group, but you haven't seen them go through a cycle on the campus. And I've been through many cycles, four year cycles of students, Morehead students, on campus, and have helped established the programs there. And so I think I can be of, you know, of some assistance in doing all of that. But I'm looking forward to it. I'm eager to meet all of the folks involved and I'm eager to come up to Marshall on October the 14th. . .?

Michele: The 14th.

Mebane: And see everything for the first time.

Michele: Have you met Chuck Yeager?

Mebane: No, I haven't.

Michele: Oh, that'll be an experience you'll enjoy.

Mebane: I'm looking forward to that. Joe sent me his book and it's on my bookshelf at home. Obviously, not on my bookshelf here, since I don't have one. And look forward to meeting him. And I look forward to meeting. . . I was watching television not long ago and saw an interview with Ralph. . . Albertazzie?

Michele: Albertazzie, um-hmmm.

Mebane: Albertazzie. And I didn't realize . . . I had gotten some letters from him and suddenly I'm looking at this interview and realize that he was the pilot for the presidents and it was fascinating.

Michele: Yes.

Mebane: So, you know, it's an area that . . . just getting up there and meeting the people, seeing the place. I hear you've got a fine, fine headquarters.

Michele: Yes, we do.

Mebane: All of this is very exciting. And as I say, I do believe that my experience of twenty years at Morehead with a very major on-campus program after the selection will be certainly an area that I can add some input into, because you haven't been

there. And I hope that I can contribute more to, you know, how you do the selections as well, and I will share what I learned here. I mean, I'm going to be and already am, talking to educational leaders around the country, and to getting . . . reviewing some of the information from some of the ongoing programs that I want to, as I start a new one, again, try to extract certain things for this one. This one's different from the one I just left and different from the Yeager because those were concentrated on bringing people into one spot and working with them. This one is just much broader. It won't have that sort of basic operation. It'll be a different thrust. And I guess the . . . the most interesting part of it will be doing a program that will be, as you say, elite, that will be out there attempting to reward the best, the brightest. But it will also have to be a ubiquitous program because Coca-Cola is a ubiquitous product. I mean, it's in every home. It's not just in the elitist homes. It's everywhere. And we want to do something that will make everybody who's a consumer proud of it. It's going to be an interesting task.

Michele: Alright. As a . . . and this is a personal thing, but I'm going to ask you as a fund-raiser. . . you've been very, very informative, by the way. I appreciate your time. You as a person will have personally experienced three phases of

academic excellence: one, as a student, as a Morehead scholar. Then again, as an administrator of the Morehead program. Now as a major creator of a new program for academic excellence. How can a fund-raiser for a university that has a valid program, how can we convince corporate foundations that their money is not going to go down a rat hole? That this is going to be a valid program, when you are starting out from the beginning?

Mebane: Well, that's of course the sixty-four dollar question, and I have to . . . I have to figure that out myself. In my instance, the decision was made to do it, but I still have to. . . and the funds are there, the way the Coca-Cola one works, is that the company and every bottler around the country will be putting in so much money for every gallon of coke that's drawn. So I want you to go back and have a Coca-Cola on the plane before you go back.

Michele: I will. I've had several while I've been there. (laughing)

Mebane: That'll help. Good for you.

Michele: This is Coca-Cola country. (laughing)

Mebane: But they have committed to a program that will be ongoing to provide the endowment. Uh, but I still have to convince them that their money is being well spent. You've got to get the money. I've crossed that hurdle, but I still, I mean, you know, they're not going to do it forever, unless the product

merits it. And you know, I'm just sort of beginning to learn that myself. But certainly, I think that any organization, any good corporate citizen, should recognize that first of all, philanthropy is just good. It's what our country was built on and it's what we all ought to be involved in. I think it's good business because certainly, if you're doing good things, then. . . it's not direct advertising, but it's in essence advertising and the public is going to appreciate it and I think they are going to respond accordingly to what you are doing. And I think, certainly, any corporate citizen recognizes that the future of its being and of our country's being is to educate and ensure that the people who can run the companies and the country in the future are getting educated. . . are continuing to be in the mainstream. So it's a long term investment on their part. And certainly, all you have to do is look at what happened today, you know, with Japan, and everywhere else as we tend to sort of sit around and let people get ahead of us. And so I think the corporate sector is looking at all of this and ways to improve things and I think they can respond to it. The problem is that it is unlike selling fifteen crates of Coca-Cola. You can sit there and look at it as a bottom line and you can't here. You know, you've first of all, you've got to be a big thinker. You've

got to think broad, and you've got to think long term. And if you can do that, then I think it is a heck of a good investment. But I've got a lot to learn there too, and so I want to share notes with you as you go around doing this and . . . because, as I say, you . . . I have the advantage. I've been in different levels of this. With Morehead, I had it where he dumped it all in our laps and then he died, and he said, you know, spend it. Here, I've got. . . they've agreed to do it and they are dumping it in my lap, but I certainly need to justify that they continue to do it. You, more than that, have just starting and have to convince them to dump it in your lap.

Michele: We have to justify and get out and get the money (laughing).

Mebane: You have the hardest of all, but I to think that . .
.(laughing)

Michele: You can interview me next time.

Mebane: O.k. I really think that we can share some along the way, some mutually useful ideas. Then maybe, when I'm up in October, by then I will have covered a lot of bases and I'll be happy, you know, to . . . pursue that more.

Michele: We'll enjoy having you.

Mebane: And would look forward to hearing how your fund-raising is going.

Michele: Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate it.

Mebane: Pleasure. . . pleasure.