

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

KENT RICHARDS

INTERVIEWER: ELDON JACOBSEN

CAMERA PERSON: BOB JONES

Jacobsen: ... And we are recording Living history, are pleased to have Dr. Kent Richards of History, Professor of History, and we are going to begin by having him give us a background of what life was like before Central. Kent.

Richards: OK. To start at the beginning, I was born in 1938 in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and pretty much grew up in Kenosha, or in that general area. I went to College, Knox College, a small Liberal Arts College in Galesburg, Illinois, and I was a History and Political Science Major. I hadn't any particular ideas as to what I was going to do when I got out of college except I thought I'd probably go to graduate school, although it was only when I was at Knox that, I guess I had a couple of good history teachers and decided to go on in history, and ended up at the University of Wisconsin in Madison where I received my Masters Degree and Ph.D. in U.S. History, particularly in the American Frontier, the American West. Because of that field of interest, I was inclined to go West and in 1966 when I was finishing, most of the jobs in my area were in California. There were a whole slew of them. I think almost every State School was hiring, but didn't particularly want to go to California, and the Central Washington University job came up. Coincidentally the major professor I had at Wisconsin, Vernon Carsonson had left a year or so earlier to take a job at the University of Washington in Scathe, and I knew just in passing that he had started his career at Central, then a Normal School in the mid-nineteen thirties, and I immediately called him up and said, "What about Central?" I'd never been in Washington State before. The closest I'd been was in Portland when I was doing research on my dissertation a couple of years earlier, and he said, "Oh, by all means, come out if you have the chance." And I did. I had an interview in Chicago with Don Warner who was a Historian, and was also the Dean of Arts and Sciences, or whatever the exact name was at that time. Had a meeting, of some sort, in Chicago and they wondered if I'd be willing to come from Madison and interview there with him, and I did. He was primarily interested in someone to teach Pacific-Northwest History, which I knew nothing about, but I said I'd be glad to do it, and it tied in with Western History. So I ended up in Ellensburg September of 1966. One thing I remember, I met my wife Carolyn at Knox College, and we drove out here from Madison in a Volkswagen Bug, and I told her it might be a little bleak, but when we got to Ellensburg it was all green and nice and beautiful, and we were coming, still the old highway, in from Vantage over the hills, and she said, "We're getting close, and it's not looking any better, in fact it's looking worse" But then, indeed, it did look better, once we got here. Obviously we stayed thirty-some years since then.

Jacobsen: Enjoyed those personal touches. Let me ask, Kent, before we go on into Central, a little bit more about your background, your parents, brothers and sisters. What some of those happened to choose to do. Your parents, particularly.

Richards: Well, I was an only child. My parents both came from working class families. In fact the Richards family were coal miners in Wales and Cornwall, and then when they came to this country in the mid-nineteenth century, they settled in Iowa as coal miners. You don't think of Iowa as a coal mining area, but it was. And they came to Kenosha in 1929 to get out of the mines. They didn't pick a particularly good year to come, just as the Depression was starting, but that's how they ended up in Kenosha. I was probably fortunate that in some ways to be an only child, but the family didn't have a lot of money, but I was able to go to college, and like many of my generation, I was the first in the family to go to college.

Jacobsen: Thank you. Your first impression here of the dryness is common to a lot of us. Having come from greener pastures, if you will. Let's start in with Central. What sort of assignment did you have? What rank did you have and rough salary, just for historical purposes?

Richards: Well, I was appointed as an Assistant Professor. I had just finished my Ph.D., in fact I think I had my final oral exam on August 8th, and on August 14th we left for Central. The salary, and the only reason I know this is I just happened to be looking through some early files that I had, was less than \$9,000.00 the first year. And one thing I ran across in those files was a letter from Walt Berg, then the Department Chairman, to the Dean, well, to the, I've forgotten the exact... I guess he was the Dean of Faculty then, Charlie McCann, complaining about the new faculty members in History and comparing them with some other people on the faculty who had Masters Degrees from Central, and saying sarcastically, is a Ph.D. from Wisconsin or Harvard was one of the others in our Department, a couple of other places, not worth more than a Master's Degree from Central. I was teaching, as [said, Northwest History, it was one of my major assignments. No one wanted to teach it because it was required for, I believe then, all students in the Teacher Education program, was a State Requirement that they had to have, well, Washington history and government was what they called it. We broadened it a little bit to be Pacific-Northwest History. And I think that legislation went in, due to patriotism of some kind, I think, at the beginning of World War II. I might be mistaken, but that was the thinking behind it that every teacher should know something about their state, good things, I think, was their idea in the legislature. So we had these vast classes of up to 250 people in a quarter. We'd teach in Hertz, or often McConnell Auditorium before it was remodeled, which was a very grim, dismal place to try to teach a class. So I taught that every quarter, and then general U. S.. History Surveys, and upper division classes in the American West, and the Civil War. And I think before, . . . Well, I guess until I went in the Graduate Office in 1980, I suspect I taught that Northwest History Class every quarter for 13 or 14 years, and I was constantly running into people who stayed in town and said, "I had Northwest History from you." And, of course, I usually didn't remember them, when you have several hundred students a year in that one class. And it was a little bit embarrassing, too, because many of them do very well, and a few received a "D" or an "F", or an "A".

Jacobsen: Well, since you'd stressed "West" in your graduate studies, did you find the Northwest particularly interesting to you as a teaching area then?

Richards: Well, I did, particularly the earlier period, the frontier period, and at that time that's usually what was emphasized, and the course would come down to about world War II, or immediate post-world war period, of course there has been a lot of history since then, so it's quite different now for the people who are teaching that. But it did fit real well and I was able to teach much of the course as part of the frontier and then just fill-in for the latter part when Washington diverged more from the national pattern, became part of a region.

Jacobsen: Did you find much difference in interest seeing that that was a required for every teacher education major vs. the other courses that you taught where there were your majors and more elective?

Richards: Yes. Well a substantial difference, and that's why most people really didn't want to teach the course in the Department. They had pretty much passed it around, before I came, among the U.S. historians at least. Most people understand the void and see the value and they weren't interested in history in general and with that many people in class limited as to what you can do, and so they saw it as a chore that they had to get through. And I was determined, being young and idealistic, that, at least when I started, that they would learn some history whether they wanted to or not. I can't say I literally enjoyed that, that part of it. But I think some of them did, did learn something, so I guess there is some satisfaction from that.

Jacobsen: This is close to a topic that might come up later, but let me ask it now. What did you find about the quality of students at Central?

Richards: Well, I know when I first came, I heard from the Department Chair, others as well, used to students at Knox, and particularly at Wisconsin, as a graduate assistant there, of course, that they won't be the same quality, and I didn't find that much difference. I think there were a few more here that were maybe at the bottom tier and shouldn't have been here, but I think that there is a tendency to down-play the students generally. They're not that much different, that I have found, and I later taught at the University of Washington on a couple of occasions, and I didn't see that much difference there either.

Jacobsen: Your undergraduate studies was at a liberal arts college, and there's probably a difference in that.

Richards: Well, there were a lot of students who came from very well to do families, but that didn't mean that they were particularly bright, or particularly interested. In fact almost the opposite sometimes. There was a great diversity of students there, too. It was a pretty good school, I think. Well, maybe not quite up to say the standards of Whitman, but pretty close. I think, as long as were on students right now, the difference that I found more than comparing students, say in the Sixties with students elsewhere, or students in the Nineties with students, elsewhere, as I said, I don't think there was that much difference. But I think there's been a chronological change from the Sixties to the Nineties. You always get good students and poor students, those who are interested, those who are not interested, but now, I think, there are many more students who are not prepared, and are not interested in becoming prepared, and who are not interested in learning anything, who just want the degree and the credential that they acquire. I'm not saying anything new here, but almost everyone else is saying, but it seems to me that it's a striking change, and I know it's traditional for faculty to complain about students, and I've seen historical evidence of this go back a hundred years or whenever, but I'm convinced that there has been a change and the reasons are pretty obvious, the general change in values, or lack of values in society. The fact that more are going to Universities, that the University Degree is now equivalent to, what used to be a high school degree. And it's had a real impact, and, of course, not a very desirable one.

Jacobsen: Let me jump ahead first, then come back more to the middle of your career. You retired this year. Was it phased, or...?

Richards: No I retired fully. Officially it was in December of last year, 1997.

Jacobsen: From 66 then until 97.

Richards: Yeah.

Jacobsen: Thirty-one...

Richards: Thirty-one years, plus years.

Jacobsen: Was there satisfactory change in salary, or did you find that still way behind?

Richards: Well, I suppose almost everyone feels they're underpaid. Overall I don't think I have any serious complaints, however, what I had to do, and this isn't the only reason I did it, but it was only when I went into administration in the Graduate Office that I received an increase and continued to receive increases on a regular basis, and if it hadn't been for that I think I might be here complaining today. One thing that I thought about over the years is I believe that as a historian, as a member of the History Department, I received two merit increases in those thirty-one years, less ten that I was in the Graduate Office, so I want to say twenty-one years. And I don't think it was because my colleagues thought that I wasn't worthy, or unmeritorious, but it was due to, to a lot of circumstances and some of it was just chance, but for whatever reason, I'm pretty sure that I'm right on this, that I only actually received two merit increases in that time,

Jacobsen: Let me throw this out as a variable, is a lot of that attributable to the fact that that's a twelve month contract, rather than a nine?

Richards: Well, when I was in the Graduate Office, sure. And I'm not counting that as part of this because when I was in the Graduate Office I did receive merit increases, or whatever they were calling it, but it amounted to the same thing. I think every year that people reviewed every other year. I believe every year, as I recall, so there was a steady increase then, and I don't have any complaints. But it seemed while I was in the History Department, often there wasn't any, and when there was, well, a couple of years I know what happened. I was on leave and the policy then was if you were on leave, you weren't considered that year, so

maybe the one year out of three when there was merit available, I didn't happen to be here. And it was just a whole series of events of that kind.

Jacobsen: Would you fill us in a little bit. You mentioned that the first 13, 14, 15 years, you had somewhat similar assignment, with the Northwest History, and some major requirements and electives. The change then started after that amount of time?

Richards: Yes, I guess my career here has basically four parts. The first from '66 to the summer of 1975 when I became Department Chair, and of course my teaching load was somewhat reduced then, and I was Department Chair for five years, and I was just into my second term when I went into the Graduate Office in 1980. So '75 to '80, Department Chair, then '80 to '90 in the Graduate Office, either as Associate Dean and then for, something over a year of that time, I was acting Dean. And then in 1990 I came back to the History Department and in the seven years or so I was back, I was off quite a bit of the time for one reason or another, and so I think I probably taught no more than half the time. If you average it out, that's about what it amounted to, around seven years.

Jacobsen: Would you fill us in on some of these travels and sabbaticals, starting with the first, with some high points, please?

Richards: OK. I think, actually, I'd have to think a little bit, but I had four sabbaticals which maybe is a record, but one of them was technically as an administrator, but it was to do academic work, not related to the administrative assignment. I didn't do that much traveling because, unfortunately, I suppose, my research interests were in Northwest History, and many of the resources were here, or else in Washington, D.C. The first sabbatical, however was after I had been here six years, so it was in the early seventies, '72-'73. I did travel pretty much around the country. I was working on a biography of Isaac Stevens, the first territorial Governor, Indian Treaty negotiator, and the resources were scattered around, there were papers of his at Yale, so... and my wife went with me and we went by car, and pretty much made a circle all around the country doing research, plus doing some sight seeing.

Jacobsen: Culminating in a major publication.

Richards: Yes, eventually. I did publish that. The later ones, I was working, well, always on Northwest History topics, but more on shorter pieces, on articles. As time went on I got more specialized in U.S. Indian Policy and Indian-white relations in the Northwest and that was the focus, but I suppose, two unusual things. That there were so many sabbaticals, and then unlike most people, most of the time, at least of the last three, was really spent here, at least this was my base. So, I didn't get away a lot. Jacobsen: Either during the teaching phase, and/or the administrative phase, can you remember significant problems that occurred in either area? For you, the university, or whatever?

Richards: Well, it seems as if the same problems are, in some ways continuous, and in other ways cyclical. Of course finances are always a problem no matter what the situation. I remember in the old days, well I guess we're still doing it, that there's a yearly faculty meeting when classes start in September, and the President and others talk about the state of the University essentially. And every one I ever went to Presidents, or Provosts always said, "Well, these are unusual times and can't be business as usual, and we have to change our way of thinking about things, and we don't have enough money to do what we want to do, so..." Some things don't change, and, of course, I'm not really criticizing them because we can look at the statistics and see that the level of funding for higher education as a percentage of total State revenues has gone down steadily from, well beginning in the early seventies, I think, when we had the first crisis, to the present. So it is a very real problem; I'm not minimizing that. And of course there are always tensions between the faculty and the administration, and that's not anything new to Central. It, I suppose, just comes with the territory. One thing I think I learned, or observed when I was in administration, that administrators, whether you agree or disagree with decisions they were making, worked darn hard. AU the ones I encountered, put in an incredible amount of time, and I think they don't receive enough credit for that. Part of it is, well, I'm sure is always true, but part of it then in the eighties was due to the increasing impositions

that the State and the Council on Higher Education, whatever it happened to be called, Council on Post Secondary Education asking reports on whatever it is, you name it, and they wanted a study and a report made on it. And a lot of it was just a waste of time, it seems to me, but it had to be done.

Jacobsen: With your having served in both roles I'm glad you mentioned that, because sometimes you get a perception by a fairly large number of people that it's an easy ride, administration. So I'm glad you made that comment.

Richards: it certainly isn't, and those I worked with, I must say, I think very conscientiously were attempting to do a good job and do the right thing, and help the University as a whole. Now, everyone makes mistakes.

Jacobsen: While we're in that sphere, are there particular administrators that you worked with either when you were on the faculty or in administration that stand out for some reason or other?

Richards: Well, when I was a young faculty member. I think we were very fortunate, I mentioned Don Warner briefly before as a Dean and Historian, and I suppose one would say he was one of the old school, a scholar and a gentleman in the literal sense. And Charlie McCann came just after I did, maybe the same year as Dean of Faculty, and certainly seemed to me, had the right ideas about turning Central from what still, essentially, was a Normal School even though the name had been dropped, into a multi-purpose University, and I thought it was unfortunate that we lost him to Evergreen State College when he became President there. So the early experience was a good one. Some of the later experiences were not so good. On the negative side(?) a large school (?). (?) Yes. He did replace Don Warner. Don Warner went to Winona, Minnesota. And Neil Gilliam came in as the Dean then. I was involved with a lot of others, the whole series of battles and that was a new experience for me, and I think I had the rather naive view when I came that I would be a teacher and a scholar and didn't think about committee assignments and fighting with administrators, but certainly you're in a different world when you encounter a man, you take notes at every meeting and file those in voluminous file cabinets stretched out into the hall ways so you have a record of everything that happened, and be ready for the law suits that occurred. And with that mentality the law suits did occur. I think, while we're talking about administrators, Jim Brooks was President when I came, had been for a few years, and by all accounts, started out well, and I hate to be critical because I've always liked Jim as a person and I think he's done a lot of good things for the University and the State, but it seemed to me, unfortunate that they brought in someone at that point who was a Central product, and a local product, and in a certain sense had, what seemed to me, to be a too narrow and provincial view as contrasted to Charlie McCann for example. And as long as Charlie was here, it was OK, but then when he left and Jim was on his own, I think he went in some directions that I thought were not the best for the University. Unlike most people I had, and I still have, I think, a pretty high regard for Don Garrity, I think. And there's the contrast here with Jim that he knew what higher education was all about and what it should be. He had those intentions for Central, and in some respects, carried them out. Now, I think at the end, he got a little bit tired, and a little bit careless, for health reasons, or other reasons, and everything he did, but for a number of years I think he was, by and large, a very good influence at Central. Well, that's when I was in the Graduate Office, and maybe it's because I encountered him quite a bit and had something of an inside perspective, I suppose.

Jacobsen: What about faculty? People in the faculty that sit out in that role.

Richards: Yes. There's one other administrator, or maybe two others. One, Dale Comstock, who was Graduate Dean for twenty years, and I was with him the last ten, and left the Graduate office about the same day, literally. Extremely conscientious, hard-working man. I can't say enough about him in that respect. The other is Ed Harrington. I first encountered Ed when I was Department Chair, and I think my opinion was not the highest and I said a lot of critical things, at least to Department members about Ed, but again, when I got to the Graduate Office, I could see how conscientious and dedicated he was, and after he left many others on the faculty said then, too late, "Oh, wasn't Ed a great administrator, and it's too bad that Ed's not here." And in the years after he left, heard that more about him than, I think, anyone else I

encountered at Central. Appreciated by his absence. The faculty, I think I have to start with Floyd Rodine who came here in the mid-nineteen fifties, and so was something of a mentor to me as he was to many other people. A man of the highest academic standards, very ethical man. Unfortunately died suddenly of a heart problem when he was only fifty-four years old in nineteen seventy-seven. I notice, I'm getting out of order here a bit, but one of the topics on the list involved the naming of buildings, and after Floyd's death, or shortly thereafter, I started a movement to name what was then the new library, or fairly new library, after him. And received, I sent around a petition to get signatures, and almost everyone on the faculty signed it, including people in the Education Department with whom he had some monumental battles over the years. I thought that said something. It did not happen because Don Garrity came in about that time as President and he had this plan that they would find large donors who would give a million dollars, or whatever, and they would name the library and other buildings after them. Well, you notice that the library is still the library...

Jacobsen: Nameless.

Richards And doesn't have a name, so the large donors never appeared, and it's one of the regrets I have that this didn't happen, and I've often thought about it, but now most people who are here didn't know Floyd. I'm just disappointed.

Jacobsen: No He well deserves mentioning in our history, clearly.

Richards: And I suppose the other one, why I must say my colleagues in History Department have been almost without exception, agreeable people I have liked and admired, but perhaps one other that deserves mention is Sam Mohler who was here when I came and, again was one of the old school and a very, very gentle and a very gentlemanly-like man who puzzled me a bit because he had taught. I think, twenty- three or twenty-four different courses, and was very proud of it, justifiably, and I thought why world anyone want to do that, but we've come not quite full circle, but back to the point in the History Department where people have to do this.

Jacobsen: In order to get established, there's no other way, when you're too small.

Richards: Right. The History Department, this gets away a little bit from your question about people, but at least it's numbers of people. We hit a peak of 17 full-time faculty members in 1970-71, and it's gone down steadily since. Right now I believe there are six tenured, tenure-track faculty members, and well, maybe one other that we should count that isn't quite full time so we've gone from 17 to 7 which is dramatic, obviously. With the student population it's about the same as it was in the early 1970's.

Jacobsen: Sam Mohler of gentle and gentlemanly, was not afraid to confront the administration.

Richards: No, no, he had some major battles long before my time (?).

Jacobsen: Yes absolutely. Shifting the gears a little bit, there's a question here that, about what humorous events that you might recall during this event, this interview.

Richards: Yeah, I read that, and I thought about that, but maybe still as I am not a humorless person but honestly nothing really jumps out at me. I suppose there were things that occurred that at least brought a smile or got a small chuckle. I can't think of ally, any real good, good stories.

Jacobsen: I think some of the people who pose these questions are looking back when the institution was a lot smaller, and a humorous event would spread a lot faster.

Richards: Right, yes I remember having coffee back many years ago with Milo Smith who, of course, is famous for his stories and he had a lot of them about the McConnell days. In fact some people in the

History Department. Oh, we had stories about the McConnell days long before my time. And I think that's, you hit on a point there, the institution was changing so rapidly in the 60's, in many respects, and we became so much more insular and just saw people generally within our departments and didn't talk too much to other people. One thing that was very interesting to me was when I was in the Graduate Office and one of my main responsibilities was for outside grants, I mean funding and submitting proposals, or shepherding them through the process. It seemed to me by the end of that ten-year period that I almost literally knew everyone in the faculty and administration, counted one way or another. And right at the end of that period the late 80's, is when we started to hire once again. Of course, part of that reason was that almost no one had been hired before the mid 70's and the mid to late 80's. But now, after only seven years, again I don't know most of the faculty because everyone of my generation or a little bit older has retired. The last couple years I went to a meeting, I might not know half the people there.

Jacobsen: Massive change.

Richards: Even people who were Department Chairs in my area.

Jacobsen: Well, I think you're right about the smallness. I also, Vietnam War which sobered people about your arrival time.

Richards: Yes, right, it was not a good time to come because '68 in particular, and I've heard some of my colleagues look back on that period and say, "Well, taken as a whole, just looking at the students, that it was really better than now because now they're so apathetic. Then they were at least interested in something and so on." Well, at least as far as the impact on higher education and Central I can find nothing good about that period. I think that, and of course, there are a lot of reasons, but one of the main reasons for the deterioration of the academic process and experience, I think, goes back to the late 60's and we've never really recovered from that in a certain sense. The old idea of what higher education, and learning, and the whole college experience should be, I think, changed, and I don't see much of anything good coming out of that.

Jacobsen: We're down to that place where we kind of give you a word as a cue and you take off on it, if you like, or ignore it if you like. Salary schedule.

Richards: Well, I think I referred to that to a certain extent, talking about merit. This has been a constant problem that does not end. And then also how do you decide what merit

is. I'm all in favor of it, and I keep thinking there must be a way of doing it, but maybe not. I'd hate to see us go to the union salary scale that's based just on seniority, but in many ways, that's the way it's worked anyway, or there've been certain people who have received merit who may not have been the most meritorious by generally accepted academic standards. So, I'm in a quandary. I guess, in theory I very much like the idea of merit; we're not production line workers. It should be recognized, but I don't have any better answer than anyone else as to how to do it.

Jacobsen: Well, our viewers of this tape in the future probably don't realize that at a point just about before you arrived here, there was a general increment that occurred to the faculty, and many have contended that was a serious loss when we failed to continue doing that. Not negating merit, but some kind of sharing.

Richards: Right. And I would agree with that, but there should be a general cost of living increment, and then merit on top of that, but the budget has seldom ever, Well, I guess maybe in the Sixties it was able to support that. But once we got into the first budget crisis in the early Seventies, that's pretty much gone by the boards.

Jacobsen: How about the Faculty Code?

Richards: The Faculty Code is something that's good in theory also, and I think a lot of people, including Beverly Heckart in my Department have spent a lot of time over the last thirty years refining it, and on paper it looks pretty good. But the problem is when something truly important comes up, that the Code can be ignored by the Trustees, or by the administration, so unless it really is a legal and binding document, it's not worth the paper it's written on. This came home to me, probably without taking too much time to go into this, probably the biggest personal battle I had with the administration in the University came about five years ago when I applied for my last sabbatical leave. And Ivory Nelson was fairly new as President then, decided that he wouldn't follow the recommendation of the committee, and or follow the procedure spelled out in the Faculty Code for the granting of sabbaticals and professional leaves. And of the list of thirteen that were ranked, he picked four for whatever reason, and I happened to be fourth on the list that came from the committee and was sent on, and was not one of those on his final list. And I and several others, particularly Ken Hammond and Terry Devietti, when we found out the details, protested this in a series of meetings, and threatened to sue, and went through a grievance within the University, and the Grievance Committee agreed with us. And finally what it came down to was the Board of Trustees said that without criticizing what the President had done and saying that he had the perfect right to do it, went back to the committee decision, we received our sabbaticals. But it's a good point that without a serious fight, and the three of us spent an awful lot of time, and had to show that we were willing to go even further, and commit resources, hiring lawyers and everything else, that the President's decision would have stuck, and it just flew in the face of everything that was in the Code regarding sabbaticals. So I give this story just as one example of the way the Code has been honored often in the breach. It's honored in small things, but it's the big things...

Jacobsen: That's good because it also gives the perception on the sabbaticals we need, too.

Richards: Right.

Jacobsen: Faculty-Administration collegiality.

Richards: Well, again, I referred to this briefly, and it's always been a problem, but I don't think that unique to Central in any respect from where I've read and heard about other places. In fact it may be that it's been better than most places. Maybe we don't know how well-off we are, but, and there are always going to be differences. It seems to me, and this goes back to the Code question, that if the administration says, "Yes, we will follow the Code to the letter, whether we like it or not." But this is taking a large step toward faculty-administrative collegiality.

Jacobsen: Closely allied with that, Faculty Senate.

Richards: Well, the Senate is a little bit like the Code. They have served a purpose in small things, some things that aren't so small, supervision of the curriculum. But it's difficult for the Senate to function as a real voice of the University. I served on the Senate for a time like most people, I suppose, and it's an interesting experience and something that everyone should probably do, but a very frustrating one.

Jacobsen: Town and Gown relationships.

Richards: When I first came, the town tended to dominate, I think. They didn't see the University as all that important, except as a source of income for some, and this has changed a lot over the years. I don't know that I'm one who's been really involved in that directly, but there is more than accommodation now and I think less tension, in some respects. The University is seen as part of the town, but not, there's not this distinction that there is the town and there is the University and they're two separate things, and that they're always going to be at odds with one another.

Jacobsen: Long Range Planning.

Richards: Well, this is something that we always are doing, and I've always been pretty skeptical about it. We can't foresee events even in the very short period, the next bi-ennium. So much now is imposed from Olympia that, and of course, they're requiring that we do it, but it seems to be of really little value, but I think the administration needs some idea, vision. I use the cliché terms to where they're going, but it's pretty hard to put that down. For what you get out of it, I think, we probably spend way too much time..

Jacobsen: History's more tangible.

Richards: Yeah, right. But we're reacting to events. Think of the last thirty years. The Viet Nam War. The various recessions and the cut-backs. These are things that you really couldn't get ready for.

Jacobsen: You talked about Building Naming Policies, do you have anything to add to that, or do you want to leave it where it is?

Richards: I guess we can leave that, except the policy of naming them after big donors doesn't seem to have been very successful.

Jacobsen: Well, I'm glad you made your effort in terms of getting it about the library naming after Floyd Rodine, but policy's policy.

Richards: Yeah, I suppose this may come up with two new, Well, I guess Black hall already is, is named even though it is essentially a new building. The new science building. A monument waiting for a name.

Jacobsen: Right. Academic Organization.

Richards: Like long range planning, this is something we're always doing is organizing, or re-organizing and I don't know if it makes that much difference, particularly the School of Arts and Sciences, or Humanities has gone through many configurations so that most of us can't remember when it was which. And I don't know that that's really made any difference one way or the other. Of course the big change came just before I arrived in the mid-sixties with the Department structure, and certainly this has made a difference, both good and bad. I mention the isolation which is probably part of the bad, but the sense of academic cohesiveness and more emphasis on scholarship, and that kind of thing is something that I think is necessary, you can't get away from. So I think Departments are here to stay, despite a movement a couple years ago, few years ago to maybe move away from that. Which didn't go very far, as it turned out.

Jacobsen: As one who is published, the Publish or Perish argument.

Richards: Well, I don't think there's been much publish, or perish here. It seems to me that there should have been more of it. I think that, perhaps, the thing that shocked me most when I first came is that I expected everyone among the faculty to be interested in scholarship and to be active in their field, and to . . . Well, this would be part of their life and what they were, and I found that that was true for some, but that many saw this as a job like any other job. You would teach your classes and then head to the golf course, or the local bar, or wherever, and it wasn't important, I think Don Garrity tried to move us more in this direction, but largely, and we have, but a lot of it has been lip service about scholarship and publication, rather than reality. I think this may be changing now. I don't know enough about the new generation to really comment, but what I've seen, I think maybe we are moving more in that direction that I had hoped, or thought that the school was moving in the nineteen sixties. But I guess all that says is, change takes a long time and maybe thirty years really isn't that long. Now certainly a lot say that maybe that isn't a good direction to go. I think it is.

Jacobsen: Elaborate on that in terms of research vs. class room teaching.

Richards: Yeah. I think this is a false...

Jacobsen: We have about two minutes to go.

Richards A false distinction that, certainly you can find good teachers who aren't publishing all the time, but by and large, I think the two go together. That generally those who are on the cutting edge, so-called, of their field, are the ones who have the most to offer in the class room.

Jacobsen: Considering our tape is running down, Kent, are there areas that I should have asked you that you really want to convey to us?

Richards: I'm sure I'll think of something in a few minutes, but nothing really jumps out right now. I think for myself it's been a good experience and a good thirty years despite disappointments that everyone has. I'm not sure I would do it that much differently.

Jacobsen: OK. We thank you very much, Dr. Kent Richards. On camera has been Bob Jones, and the interviewer has been Eldon Jacobsen.