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Interview with Marvin Newman

Monday, April 11th, 2011

Wenxian Zhang, Marvin Newman

WZ: Good morning.

MN: Good morning.

WZ: Today is Monday April 11th, 2011. My name is Wenxian Zhang, Head of Archives and Special Collections. Today I am going to interview Professor Marvin Newman. Which department are you in?

MN: I'm in the Department of Communication.

WZ: Great. I understand most people, they come from different places; I do not encounter a lot of native Floridians. Do tell us what's your background? Where do you come from?

MN: Well, I was born in Chicago, and I was raised much of my life in Chicago, but a lot of my life in South Florida. So I kind of went to elementary school and junior high school in both Chicago some of the time and South Florida other times; high school in Chicago. And then I went on to university at Northwestern University, where I did my undergraduate work and I obtained my law degree.

WZ: Is your father also in the legal profession?

MN: My father was a lawyer, yes. And he practiced in Chicago, but the reason for our going to Florida for some of the time—you see, in his later years he had emphysema, and so he needed the warm climate in the winter, so I would spend one semester of my elementary school and junior high school learning in public schools in both Chicago and South Florida.

WZ: So how's your father's impact on you to get into a legal career?

MN: My father's impact on me was great—not so much because he was a lawyer. And he never *really* ever told me what I should do, but I shadowed him a lot of the time. He was a trial lawyer, and I loved to watch him in trial. He was a great orator. And I saw him do so many wonderful things for people. And so many times some people couldn't pay him and he would tell them that that's okay. And I'd watch them bring things from their gardens that they had grown for him—because he did some of his legal work in nearby Michigan as well, so he kind of did a little bit in both places. And he'd help the farm people and they would bring him corn, and cucumbers, and peaches, and so forth during the summer months. And somehow when I'd see the glee these

people had and the things that he did for them—preventing them from being evicted from their farms and their homes—I thought, you know, “That’s something I’d really like to do.” But also, he taught me a lot about being poor, and that that doesn’t stop you from doing good things.

He was born in Philadelphia, the youngest of four children. When he was 18, he hitchhiked to Chicago, because he was admitted to law school in Chicago, and he was able to go to law school at night and work during the day and support his mother and sisters in Philadelphia. And he worked his way up and into the profession, but never forgot people who weren’t as fortunate as he. So yes, he had a great influence on me, and *maybe* that’s what made me go into law, but I’m not sure.

WZ: So tell me about growing up in Chicago and South Florida and your college years in Northwest.

MN: Growing up in Chicago and in South Florida were very rewarding. In those days when I was in elementary school, the average class size was 48 students. There were 48 seats in every classroom in Chicago elementary schools, and they were always filled every semester. One teacher took care of all of us. And almost every teacher I had, both in Chicago and most especially in South Florida, were very dedicated, outstanding, excellent teachers. I spent many a day after school, and I couldn’t go home—none of us could if we didn’t know the tables perfectly—multiplication tables. We learned poetry and to appreciate the great poets even in the sixth grade, as young as that. We learned grammar. Grammar—most of my teachers were perfectionists in grammar. We worked hard, they worked hard, and there was a great harmony between home and school. And the emphasis that I had—and I think most of the people I knew had, in both Chicago and South Florida—the attitude of our parents were that the “teacher’s always right.” So it was a rare time when we were punished for something we did wrong, where the parents came in and took the teacher’s side. So we learned discipline. We learned that learning is necessary and can be fun and earnest.

At Northwestern University I had a wonderful time. In my undergraduate years, I majored in psychology. I had great teachers, great professors. And what I liked was that rarely were there large lecture halls. We did have large lectures in our first year, and then they broke us down into smaller sections with individual teachers in our area of expertise. For example, German might have 50 of us in the class, but twice a week 10 of us would be in a class with another German instructor learning from them. That was good, that was good. I belonged to a fraternity. It was good for me, because it got me very busy into athletics and improved my social life for me, so that I wasn’t always studying.

When I graduated from elementary school, in those days they had a valedictorian of the class, and I *was* the valedictorian of the class. I think because I worked really hard and took it so seriously. And in high school I was the valedictorian of the class with the highest GPA, but for many of the same reasons.

I have two lifelong friends that I grew up with since kindergarten in Chicago. They are still my friends, and they and I are married to our respective wives for more than 50 years. We keep close friendship, close contact.

The years at Northwestern Law School were wonderful. I was told that law school is so rigorous, and you never can find the end to what you should be studying, because nobody, no professor ever says, “Read page X to page Y,” and then you could feel comfortable knowing if you mastered that, well you’ve done your assignment; you’ll pass the exam. We were given exams in most of our courses at the end of a whole year of study, and the professor never knew the name of the person whose paper she or he was grading—I should say just “he,” ’cause we had no female professors in those days. So a lot rode on every exam you wrote. We didn’t have many papers to write, except in the legal research course, but I liked that, because that’s my pace of working. I could go ahead, and I could review on my own.

I worked very hard, but I found law school more exciting, more interesting, more intriguing than I did my undergraduate studies. I just loved to pursue the law, to read cases, to read law review after law review, and even wrote several law review articles during my years at Northwestern. So I can say—and I advise my present students whom I’m advising now, as a prelaw advisor here at Rollins—so many of them say to me, “I’m scared. I’m going to law school, but I’m scared; I heard it’s so hard.” And I told them that my professors always told me that the law is a jealous mistress. And you learn that you do have to study all the time. And I studied a lot, but I loved it, and I tell my students that if you really are dedicated to wanting this profession, *you will love this study*. And I do get emails and phone calls and sometimes visits from past students who say, “You were right. I worked hard, but I really enjoyed it. It was the best of my studies.” So I graduated from Northwestern Law School second in my class and then went on to the practice of law.

WZ: You were also a member of PBK right, at Northwestern University—Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society?

MN: No, I was not a member of Phi Beta Kappa, because in order to be Phi Beta Kappa, you had to be in Arts and Sciences, and I was not in the College of Arts and Sciences. And because I had a dual major in psychology and business, and so I was really based in what was then the School of Commerce. And so I couldn’t qualify for Phi Beta Kappa. I did for the business honorary society, but not Phi Beta Kappa.

WZ: I see. Okay. So you graduated in 1957?

MN: I graduated from Northwestern in 1956. I completed my four years in three years, and then I entered Northwestern Law School in 1956 and graduated from Northwestern Law School in June of 1959.

WZ: Okay. And then you started practicing law?

MN: Yes. In my last year in law school, I met my present wife, who was in her last year of study at the University of Illinois. I saw her in a restaurant—never had seen her before, to the best of my knowledge—thought she was very attractive, and found out who she was and contacted her. We dated; we had four dates, and then I gave her my fraternity pin; and three dates later, I gave her an engagement ring. And I told her at the time that the plan was that I was going to move to Florida to practice, because my family had all moved here by that time: my parents, in Miami; my brother, in Orlando; my sister, in Ft. Lauderdale; and because I thought Florida was a better climate in which to raise a family. We decided that, right there at our engagement, that Orlando would be the place to go, because it was small and a better place to raise children than would be the tourist area of Miami Beach. And so, after we were married, and since my wife had one more year of school, we stayed in Chicago, and I worked for a large law firm for nine months—actually, 12 months, now that I think about it. And she finished school and delivered our first child.

And so when our first child was but two weeks old, off we drove in a little Chevrolet convertible from Chicago to Orlando, where neither of us had never been before, and established residence here. And I went through the Yellow Pages of the phone book in Orlando, which was very, very thin in those days, and called law firms and said, “Do you need a lawyer?” And I finally got to one, and they said, “Well, yes. Do you have trial experience?” Well, I did have some, but I kind of thought they meant *real* trial experience—like defending criminals or corporate antitrust or something, and mine were mainly small traffic kind of things in Chicago—but I said yes. And they said, “Well, come down,” and then I did. They hired me, and I spent 16 months with that firm. I became a partner after a year, because there were two partners who ran the firm, and one of them unfortunately was killed in a plane crash as he was flying from Orlando to Tallahassee to argue a case before the Supreme Court. So here I was as a pretty young man, a partner in a law firm, and burdens were very heavy and trying some pretty hefty cases.

And I remember at the time, my first trial case was representing a young man who was charged with forgery—and he really didn’t do it, I’m sure of that. I had a pretty strong case, pretty good defense; but I remember he said to me—and this was my first jury trial and it was in Orlando—and I remember he said to me just before the trial started, “I’m so nervous.” And I didn’t want to tell him, “You think *you’re* nervous—you’re my first case! You have no idea how my knees are shaking.”

I eventually went out on my own; I started my own law firm and built it slowly and enjoyed practicing—mainly trial law, trial cases; but suddenly got involved in representing people who were claiming certain patients’ rights in hospitals. And that I think was the emergence of that kind of idea that patients had certain rights. And so I was representing them, and then soon asked by hospitals to represent the hospitals, so I mainly was filtering into the healthcare industry kind of litigation and counseling.

WZ: So, you come to Central Florida. What's your first impression of this area, and how did you get connected to Rollins?

MN: Well, Orlando was a pretty small town, especially compared to Chicago. The major arteries—there was no Interstate 4 when we arrived here—the major arteries were Lee Road and Orange Avenue and Colonial Drive. And all of them were two-lane, but it was easy to always find a parking space, so whenever I wanted to try a case or had a hearing at the courthouse, I could always pull up in front of the courthouse. There was always a parking space, with not even a parking meter.

I knew that, in the back of my mind, even as a young man, that teaching was something I had hoped to be able to do one day. And so I stopped by Rollins in 1960, just after we arrived here, and talked to the Provost then, and his name was Schiller Scroggs, and he told me there were no openings in the College. But he said, "You might go over and talk to Dr. George Sauté, who is the Dean of our Continuing Education School." So I went over there, and I spoke to Dr. Sauté, who had been a professor of mathematics here in the School of Arts and Sciences, and then was made dean of what is now the Hamilton Holt School, but was called the School for Continuing Education. And he was one of the nicest human beings I have ever met. He was very kind and encouraging. He invited his secretary, Rosemary Neff, to come in and take notes during our interview. And when we finished the interview, he said he'd keep my record on file, and if there were any openings for adjunct lecturers in my area, he would call me. And about two weeks later, I did get a call from Rosemary Neff, who said, "Dr. Sauté has found a place for you. Would you come and teach business law for us in the evening program?" And so in 1961, I started to do that. Dr. Sauté told me in later years how I happened to get the position; that he forgot all about the interview, but Rosemary Neff, who worked here for many years, had reminded him when he had an opening in business law; that she said, "Do you remember there was that nice young man, and why don't you call him?" And he didn't have the phone number, but she said, "I kept it." She called, I came.

I taught business law, one section of it, and the next semester I had two sections of it. And the next semester, I was asked by the dean of what was our business major then, now the Crummer School, if I would teach business law to the day students. So I did. On top of that, Rollins had a criminal justice program at that time. And so Dr. Sauté, who just was retiring, asked me to teach in that program. Dr. Daniel Riva took over as the new Dean of Continuing Education, and he one day said to me, "I've read your evaluations, and these students love you. I want you to teach in the criminal justice program as well." And I think it was probably around 1965—maybe '64—where I was actually practicing law during the day; coming here in the middle of the day two or three days a week; teaching business law for the business major; going back to my office and practicing law; going home, so I could have dinner with my wife and children; and I would change clothes and get here in time for the 6:30 beginning of classes—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday nights. And most semesters, all day Saturday and all day Sunday, from eight to five. And I did that and carried on a full practice of law and loved it. I was never tired. I

would get up early in the morning, like 4:30, run eight miles through the streets of Orlando and Winter Park, get back, have breakfast with my wife and children, drop the children off at school, go to the office and practice law, come to Rollins, teach my class, go back to the office, and then come back at night and on weekends. And I loved it. And I knew that I one day had to leave the practice of law because I had to do what was my first love: teaching. I loved this institution, I loved the students. I was in another world when I entered the classroom.

When I was teaching in the criminal justice program and in the continuing education program, virtually all my classes were in the Bush Auditorium—when that building was built—and the students would fill every seat in every class and there were wait lists. And it was so exciting for me to do that. And by the way, my salary was \$250 per course—per 13-week course—when I first started. And I remember when I got a raise into my third or fourth year here; went from \$250 to \$500 a course, and I thought I'd *really* made it. I felt so indebted to the College for that.

And I found that this was a great love of mine. And I began to meet people. Well, I remember once getting stopped for a traffic ticket, because the policeman said I was going 30 or 35 miles an hour in a 25-mile zone on Holt Avenue. And so I gave him my driver's license. And I remember his reaction. He said, "Oh my goodness! Oh my goodness! You're Professor Newman. Oh my goodness! All my colleagues are—!" He said, "The captain's in your class," and so forth. And he said, "Oh, here's your driver's license back." And I said, "Well, aren't you going to give me a ticket or a warning?" And he said, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no—just drive a little more carefully." And then he apologized to me for stopping me. And even today, there are some people on the city of Orlando police force who are retiring or still working and remember me.

And soon, I was—the criminal justice system elite funds that funded that ended; government ended that. The Continuing Education School asked me to please develop some new courses in the area of law and emerging disciplines; things that were interdisciplinary in nature. And that was a great challenge. I loved it. And so I developed about six or seven new courses, and one of them was *Death and Dying*. And that happened because one of the students who was in my business law class here at Rollins had a tragedy happen to him. I picked up the *Orlando Sentinel* one Sunday morning and read where this young man had been in an automobile accident on Princeton Avenue in Orlando. He had taken his date home, and—there was no drinking or drugs involved, but somehow he hit an abutment, which was in the middle of the street. And they found him unconscious. He was brought to Florida Hospital, and I read about it in the morning paper, and that he was in a coma. I drove to the hospital immediately. And when I got there, his parents were there; I introduced myself. And the physicians were all chatting about this, and I asked about the prognosis and what was happening, and they said, "Well, come into the room," and his parents nodded that that was okay. And he was in a vegetative state. He was in a coma, but attached to him was a respirator. And when I inquired, I learned that this was a newfangled machine that only Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami had and Florida Hospital now had. And what it actually does is, when the brain shuts down, it keeps the heart and respiration going. And I said, "So is he living or dead?" And they said, "Well, he's living. We define death only when

the heart stops beating” [*pounds on the table for emphasis*]. And I said, “Well, will it ever stop beating if he’s attached to the machine?” And they said, “No, as long as he’s attached.” I said, “Well, how long will he live that way?” And I remember one doctor saying, “Well, he could die in hours.” Another one said, “But he could live that way ‘til he’s 80.” And I thought this was something new, and the ethical issues in it began to bother me.

And I thought about a course in death and dying. Talked to the President then, who was our new president—Thaddeus Seymour had just started. We didn’t have, as I recall, a committee like we do now, Academic Affairs. Both the President, the Provost, the deans and some senior faculty members who decided whether a course syllabus that was being presented as a new course looked good for our program or not. And they all thought it was good, but I remember Dr. Seymour saying, “Do you really think that 18-, 19-, and 20-year-old students would enroll in a course called *Death and Dying*?” And I said, “Yes.” And that began years of intense scholarship on my part; *great* cooperation from Dr. Seymour and the faculty. And the course became so popular that I was teaching two and three sections of it every semester, with long wait lists. And I was just told by Deborah Wellman, our present Interim Dean, that *Death and Dying*, still to this day in 2011, still is the number one most popular course at the College, and semester after semester has long wait lists.

The College was good to me. I spent several sabbaticals studying in the Netherlands, observing people, interviewing people—people who had elected to be put to death because of terminal illness. I interviewed their ministers, their families, the doctors, the nurses taking care of them; published a lot in this field. And developed other courses here, in the Master of Liberal Studies Program and bioethics and then communication ethics. And basically my center of my scholarship in teaching has been new technology: how do we deal with it in the 20th and now the 21st century? We think so much of doing what we do, but at what point do we recognize and deal with the ethical issues involved, such as this young man? I mean, why are we going to let him just linger that way and with a respirator ‘til he’s 80? We have to develop new ways of defining death.

I also spent time in connection with those studies interviewing two of the people who were at Los Alamos and witnessed the first test of the first atomic bomb that fell. My interest in interviewing them was to say, “This is new technology. We’ve developed a bomb now that could do, what it would presently, at that time, take 10,000 conventional bombs to do. How did they feel about this new technology?” And I published that, and I remember one of them saying, “Oh, when I saw that mushroom cloud in the desert, I felt godlike. And that scared me.”

And so I did a lot of studies in those areas, and I’m doing them now even in the area of technology that we have now of computers and emails and issues involving employer monitoring of emails, rights of privacy, censorship by governments. How are we dealing with these problems ethically? And so that’s really been the center of my scholarship, my interest, my teaching; and hence along the way there has not been a year, in all my years of teaching here at

Rollins—I believe I was tenured in 1972, I think—but there has not been a year in which I have not proposed and developed at least one new course. And they were always related to technology, new inventions and ethical issues: how do they effect civilization, people, governments, and so forth? So that’s basically what I’ve been doing.

I gave up the full practice of law in 19—I did both full-time practice, writing, and scholarship for about 10 years, and I think it was around 19—late 1970s or early 1980s—I had already been tenured for quite some time—when I just gave up the practice of law. Because I realized that while I loved it, what I loved more than anything was teaching, and teaching at Rollins. And Rollins became like my family, another center of my life. It has been and still is.

WZ: Great, thank you. I want to get back to the course *Death and Dying*. I understand that students also are required to have a service learning component?

MN: Yes.

WZ: Tell me about that.

MN: The service learning component changes every semester, and here are some of them that we’ve done. A lot of times we have the students train to be hospice volunteers. They go through formal training, and then they learn how to deal with different things hospice does. *They* choose what they want to do. They learn how to communicate with terminally ill children. They learn how to communicate with those children’s parents. They learn how to communicate with terminally ill adults and families. They learn the importance of making a dying person feel human. We live in a civilization, unfortunately, where we see people in the medical profession—and many others—back away from the terminally ill person, and I think it’s because we’re facing our own mortality. These students learn this. And they learn that death is not a terrible thing for them to fear. In working with these people, they’re not afraid of them, and they learn how to treat a cancer patient as a human being and not a disease, which most of us—even people in the medical profession—do.

In other semesters, one of the most popular things we do is students are trained to do work at Give Kids the World. And here they’re dealing with very sick children, who are brought here to have a week or so of pleasure, going to the amusement parks, and so forth. If a child wants an ice cream cone at 8 o’clock in the morning, there’s an ice cream parlor, and no one says, “No, you can’t eat ice cream at eight in the morning.” These children are—many of them have chemotherapy, they have no hair on their heads—but they’re enjoying life; they’re enjoying today and the moment. And the students interact with them: they fill their ice cream cones, they take them to the amusement parks, they interact with their families, they play with these children, and they see how precious life is to them. And these children are not dwelling on, “Well, I may die next week,” but really on the pleasures of what surrounds them.

The students have done a lot of work with Make-A-Wish Foundation. A lot of times we have them do work in Legal Aid, where they help poor people, homeless people, hungry people, and learn about the importance of giving and what it does for you. And they write about this. And I've kept so many of these papers where the students—the most prevalent remark I get is that “This experience has changed my life forever; it has changed me.” And they leave with a sense of knowing themselves better—which to me, is really what we're trying to do here—but also of knowing the importance of caring and giving.

And so, those are just some of the things that we do. If they choose, we work with some of the church organizations in town—the churches and the synagogues and the assisted living places—where the students go in, and they may entertain for the elderly people; they play piano, or so forth. And one of the important things we do is we find people in the community—usually through ministers, priests, rabbis, and so forth—who are alone. And they learn there are so many people who are alone. Their children may live great distances away and can't see them often, or they may have no children—or spouse—living. And these students learn to befriend these people. And as part of their project, they spend so many hours a week visiting with them. They learn to listen to these people. And what they learn is that these people have a story to tell, and one of the awful things about loneliness is if there's nobody to tell it to. So the students learn how to communicate by listening; responding.

And we have found some very interesting stories in this. We've found a lady in the DePugh Nursing Home, a black lady who was just sitting alone for months; just looking through a window, going down for meals, coming back. And three of our students befriended her, and they got her to talking about her life, and found out that she had served her years of labor scrubbing floors—cleaning houses and offices seven days and seven nights a week—and managed to raise two children, one of whom became a medical doctor. And he didn't get a scholarship; she paid for his whole medical education— and he worked, too. And a daughter who got a master's degree and began teaching and is still teaching in the high schools here. They found a man who had worked for the CIA and been an undercover agent for so long; nobody recognized that or knew that. World War II heroes. And just plain ordinary folks who might not have won the Nobel Prize or done anything so great—but yes, they did things great, the students learned, because they gave of themselves, they raised a family. They wanted their children to have more education than they did, better opportunities, to learn about what diversity was. And in many of our projects, I required the students to actually do their service learning in places where the people were mainly not in the same—had the same ethnicity, religion that they did, and to learn to communicate with them. We give them funds to take these people to dinner or to lunches. And it developed understanding among these students.

So these are just some of the organizations that we've used and the vehicles we've used in developing our community service and service learning. And every semester I start *Death and Dying* by telling—excuse me, I *end* it by saying to the students, “Well, you've done a lot of hours of work in this class and going distances, driving to Give Kids the World, which is pretty

far and so forth, going through training. I want to know what to do for the next *Death and Dying* class. So I was wondering: should I do community service with them or should I assign a major research paper so that they learn about the customs/traditions of death and dying in different cultures? Because we're global now and it's important to know that if you're going to work in other places, live in other places, do business with people in other cultures. And unanimously, even though they complain during the semester about, "Oh, I've got to drive all the way to Give Kids the World today. I've got to give up my Saturday to do this," they all say—and the evaluations all say—"Please don't, don't stop this. This is worth more than any paper you can assign." So community service has been very central to this course and to the student learning.

And then they come back at the end of the semester, and we have a luncheon, and the students report on their experience. And they exchange ideas and their experiences, and you'll hear one student say around the table, "Oh, that happened to me!" and they're sharing. And this to me is my favorite, favorite session of the semester in *Death and Dying*.

WZ: You definitely make a difference in their life. And I like the description, "This course is more about life and living."

So are there some students in your teaching career you will remember? Some names of. . . ?

MN: Oh, there are so many. Just last week or two weeks ago we had alumni reunion here. And as I was walking across campus I had so many students who stopped me. And of course I didn't always recognize them, but as soon as they'd tell me their name, I knew the name, and I could tell them I knew exactly where they sat in which classroom we taught the class. And they would share with me how the course they had with me changed their lives. And I meet many of them at different parties and events in town and hear about it, and it's wonderful. I receive emails now; I have so many letters and cards from even pre-email days where students will tell me, "I had your course 10 years ago," or something like that, "and something you said sticks with me." And they'll even repeat what I've said or how much the course or courses have done for them. And that to me has been the greatest satisfaction I could have. It is. It really is. Knowing that maybe I'm making a difference in some way that's positive.

WZ: Earlier you mentioned Thad Seymour. In your 50 years' association with Rollins, you've been through several administrations: from Hugh McKean, Critchfield, Seymour, Rita, and then Duncan. So give me your impression of the different administrations.

MN: Well, Hugh McKean—I didn't have too much contact with him, because I was mainly adjunct at that time. But—he was nice, but I found him to be rather distant. And he had an associate—Vice President, I think, was his title—Fred Hicks, who was much younger. *Very* fine man, and he became a very good friend.

The amusing thing about Hugh McKean is that he really didn't know too many of the members of the faculty. There weren't too many of us, but whenever there would be a receiving line for

some College event, and the faculty members would file by, Fred Hicks would be standing next to Hugh McKean, and he'd whisper into his ear what that faculty member's name was. I always thought that was so funny.

And I thought Critchfield was a very—I found that every president we've had was the right person at the right time, fulfilling a need the College especially had at that time. And Jack Critchfield came, and he said the Continuing Education—I'm told; I was not present when he said this—that we needed to make money, that needed to generate money from Continuing Education to fund the Arts and Sciences School and scholarships. And of course, Daniel Riva, who became the dean after George Sauté, did exactly that.

But then came my favorite, favorite—one of my favorite people in the whole world, and I have to say, my favorite president at Rollins College—and that was Thaddeus Seymour. This was a man with a heart, with compassion; a scholar, a great teacher himself. He knew every faculty member. He was so dedicated to this institution, and his wife Polly was, too. And he made all of us feel comfortable and good if we *worked*, if we did our job.

And I remember that Thaddeus Seymour had been here but a year; I had become tenured and full-time, I think, a year or so before that. And one day, he called me at my office here at Rollins, and he said, "Marvin, do you have any time to come over? I want to chat with you for a few minutes." And I said, "Sure." And I came over there, and I will never forget his words. He came out from behind his desk, sat on a chair right next to me, and said, "I have to make a confession." He said, "You know, when your name came up for tenure, I was rather unsure about it. I didn't know if you as a lawyer would have the scholarship and the dedication that we would expect, since teaching excellence is our number one priority." And he said, "I am ashamed of myself for thinking that." Because he then complimented me and told me how much he appreciated my service, my excellent teaching, and scholarship. And I always remember that. He never needed to tell me that because he had never opposed me for becoming tenured publicly, but he had to share those thoughts.

I served as President of the Faculty for two years during Thaddeus's presidency. I worked very, very closely with him. We had some important and difficult things happen. We didn't have a Faculty Evaluation Committee; promotions and tenure were mainly administratively done and with some input from the faculty. We had some hard cases. And I admired Thaddeus Seymour because, first and foremost, he considered the College and its welfare. And also, he always considered the person. He was compassionate and kind. He didn't let that get in the way of making a decision that might have denied tenure or promotion, but he was a kind, patient, compassionate, wonderful administrator and teacher.

And he I credit with really putting rigorous, academically excellent courses into the programs of this school. He examined those programs. And programs that weren't living up to what he thought a good liberal arts college should do, he took the steps to replace them, to get rid of

them, or to improve them. But mediocrity in academics was not acceptable to Thaddeus Seymour.

And he and his wife, Polly, and my wife and I spent lots of time together. And I always felt comfortable in just walking into his office and chatting. And he would do the same to me—and to others. He was just a great president; good person.

Rita Bornstein was totally different than Thaddeus. But she came, and it's said—I don't know—that one of her missions was "improve the endowment." Our endowment was not too good. And so she came, she saw, she conquered. She really raised the funds for this school and brought its endowment way up. And while she didn't, in my opinion, emphasize academics quite as much as Thaddeus did, Thaddeus had put things in good order for her to be able to concentrate on making the name for Rollins and raising funds for Rollins.

I didn't find her as friendly as I did Thaddeus. She was always nice and always polite, but there was a distance. And she sometimes would be temperamental, and a lot of faculty members felt hurt by that, but she always said it like it was. She was good to me and I enjoyed working under her—served on many committees.

One of the things she did that affected me personally, and I think probably in a positive way helped the College: One day she and Charley Edmondson, who was her provost, called me into her office, and she said, "The Prelaw Program at this college is in shambles." And she said, "I want you to do something for us. I want you to create a Prelaw Program that is second to none. I want our students to be prepared to go to law school and to attend good law schools." And I looked at her and said, "I can do it, but there are certain caveats you might not like, Rita." She said, "What are those?" And I said, "Number one, I want to be able to have no committee. I don't want any committee. I'm involved in so many things at the College that I just don't have time to call committee meetings. Number two, you have to understand I will never hold evening programs and invite judges and lawyers to come here and talk to the students, because that's not what the students want. They want guidance on, 'What courses do I take that will help me in law school and to become successful?' They want to know what the practice law's like: 'How do I apply? What do I do? Are internships helpful?' and so forth." And I said, "I have to be able to work with advisors and do that. And—" And she said, "You mean there's something else?" And I said, "Yes. I want money. Not money for me, but I need you to establish a fund that will enable me to travel to law schools every year across the country. I might go to some lesser-known law schools because we have some students who don't get high—they don't get 175s on the LSAT test, they get lower-than-average scores or don't have great GPAs, but there are law schools for them. I need to create liaisons with them so they know who Rollins is. And then I want to establish liaisons with the Harvards and the Yales, and the Northwesterns, and the Cornells, Chicago, and Stanford." And I said, "This job has to be viewed also as marketing. I need to go to these places; make appointments with these deans of admission, dean of the law schools. Know them and have them know me. In that way I build this rapport." And she said,

“Well, what do you do with it?” And I said, “Give me a few years, and I’ll show you.” And we had several examples.

We then reached a point where I remember I was sitting in the office of the Dean of the Law School, University of Chicago. I brought a student’s file there. *I wanted a Rollins student*; I was trying so hard to get them into the big-name schools. So I actually went to Chicago with the student’s file, and I begged the Dean of the Law School to let him in. He said, “But Rollins, that’s not really a great name.” And so I started to tell him about his major and all these things, and finally the Dean looked me in the eye, and he said, “Okay, let me ask you this question: Will you stake the reputation of Rollins College on the success of this student at the University of Chicago Law School?” That scared me for a moment, and then I thought, “Well, I have tenure; they can’t do anything to me,” so I said, “Yes.” The student was very successful.

What else these funds have done for me is enabled me—I remember once getting a call from the Dean of one of the law schools, and he said—oh no, excuse me; I called *him*—and I said, “I don’t understand something. I have a student who has a 3.5 average—that’s very good in a very rigorous major—and a very respectable LSAT score, and I don’t understand why you waitlisted her. She should be admitted, and she wants your school.” This was one of the top schools in the nation. And the Dean said to me, “Well, let me review the file.” He did call me back, and said, “Well, the problem is this: this student was a 4.0 student in her first two years at Rollins. Then, in her last two years, her average dropped to 3.5. At one point it was 3.2, and then went up to 3.5.” And he said, “We would have liked to see the reverse. So we don’t know what’s happening in her life.” And I said to him, “I can explain it.” I said, “You see, our students declare their major usually at the end of their sophomore year, and this young lady chose one of our most rigorous and finest academic majors: History.” And I said, “They don’t give many As in that discipline. So tell you what I’ll do: I will go down to the Dean’s office, and I will send you a report on the number of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, Fs given in every course in that department for the last three years. And you will see that they just don’t give many As—in some classes, none.” And I sent him those statistics, because by that time Rita had opened the way for me to call the Dean for anything I need, Registrar for anything I need—just get the kids into law schools. And so, soon as I called the Dean’s office, within 15 minutes they had that material. I faxed it over to the Dean of the Law School, and he called me back, and he said, “She’s in. She won’t get her letter of admission for about a week, but you can tell her it’s official.” There’s story after story after story like that, and I credit Rita Bornstein and Charley Edmondson, really, for that, because they helped me do this and convert what was a Prelaw Program which would say, “Okay, Wednesday night this trial lawyer’s coming to talk to you and what it’s like to be a lawyer. . .” Kids aren’t interested in that. So many good things happened there.

Lewis Duncan—I have had almost no direct contact with him, and I really have no opinion. I think he’s a very nice man, but being that I’m not as active in the presidency of the faculty, or I’m no longer chair of FEC and things like that, those are all behind me—I don’t have the direct

dealing with him. And so for me, he's a nice man, and I think he's a good president, but I'm not able to pinpoint any specific accomplishments that I see yet.

WZ: You mentioned Fred Hicks and Charley Edmondson. What other people—faculty, staff, administrators—that you worked here at Rollins with that you can share. . .

MN: Well, I think that Maurice O'Sullivan, Socky O'Sullivan, who I knew; he had recently started here when I was still an adjunct. Somehow we latched on to each other. He was a great scholar—he still is—a great teacher. He and his wife and my wife and I, have been very good friends until his divorce; but even now, we're still great friends. His scholarship just excited me. I saw the excitement he had in writing, in researching, and in bringing this into the classroom in a meaningful way to students. So he was—though he's younger than I—he was a mentor.

Another one was Jack Lane, our historian and a great professor of history. And like Socky and his wife, Jack and Janne Lane, his wife, become very good friends of Myrna's and mine—Myrna's my wife's name. Jack used to, several days a week—it was about 10 o'clock in the morning—for some reason, there were no classes at that hour, I don't know why—and a bunch of us would sit around in Beans and have coffee. And Jack would head a discussion of maybe six or seven or eight faculty members—some days there would be 10 or 15 there, some days there would be four or five of us there—and all we talked about was how to be better teachers. And we talked about what was happening in our classes. This wasn't a formal committee, but you went if you wanted to be a good teacher, if you wanted to improve, if you wanted to learn. And so Jack was a great mentor of mine.

Other people who I remember very fondly: I remember Pedro Pequeno. Pedro was a professor of anthropology. I had the good fortune—we used to have winter courses in different places, and I remember being asked to be one of the teachers who would teach at the University of Merida, and then they sent someone up here to teach in my place. It was an exchange program we had: two professors from Rollins would go to Merida for the month of January, and two from Merida would come to Rollins for the month of January. And Pedro would be down there in Merida with us. And it was a wonderful experience that I had; but it enabled me to observe Pedro here more, 'cause I got to know him better. Pedro was a person who encouraged students. He was not just a good, great teacher, and a good scholar, but students would talk to him. And no matter if they weren't doing well—if they got a bad grade on a paper from another professor, whatever—Pedro, whether he was their advisor or not, was the person the student would go to. And he was able to encourage them and tell them about Abraham Lincoln's failures, other people's failures; that we have to fail to learn. He gave them encouragement, and I think he saved so many students who might have easily dropped out of college. So, in many ways, whenever I'm faced with a difficult problem with a student—because they're not performing, and so forth—I realize I need to encourage them, and Pedro was a mentor of mine in the sense that I could see that.

And of course, as I said before, Thaddeus Seymour. I would say those people, and of course the kindness and graciousness of Dr. George Sauté—and even Dr. Daniel Riva, in his years, who encouraged me—were all people who laid things out pretty well for me and helped me to develop my talents, my abilities, and encourage me, and make teaching for me even more of a pleasure and privilege.

WZ: Great. Thank you. You mentioned earlier about your scholarship. We have one of your case materials in our Rollins Collection. I hope we'll have the rest of your publications in our Archive as well. Tell us more about your . . .

MN: Well, I started developing—oh, early in my career—using my own anthologies. The reason I did that was because I like teaching with a case method. And so I would use Supreme Court cases, I would use Old English cases, and I would publish those cases in these books as related to the subject matter we're talking about. I would come across readings in fields of ethics and bioethics and so forth, and I would get permission to use them and put them in the books. So in addition to the students having perhaps a textbook, they would also have these books to rely on. And we could relate—we could take—for example, we could take *Antigone*, where we're talking about natural law, and *Antigone* is trying to convince Creon to let her bury her brother, and he says, "No, the law is the law," and she says, "But there's a higher law, and we talk of natural law." Well, that's wonderful for the students, and they love to learn that and read that, but then to be able to put cases in that book where the U.S. Supreme Court says something that really is a natural law concept, and they see how it's living today and how it relates today, is another reason why I use those materials.

Just last week, the U.S. Supreme Court, in an 8-to-1 decision, made the decision that freedom of speech meant that people could protest on public grounds, just outside of a military person's funeral, about public issues that they felt strongly about. Which, in the opinion of families, was very dehumanizing; it was hurtful to the families in their time of tragedy and sorrow; it might have disparaged the name of the decedent, and so forth. And the argument for the Supreme Court basically was that freedom of speech didn't go *that* far. And while the eight, in the majority, felt that it did, and even though it wasn't something we should be happy about, freedom of speech did mean that sometimes we have to hear things that don't please our ears in order that *we* can speak freely. But the one judge's decision is what I ran off for the students. It was Judge Alito's decision, in which he used natural law concepts. And he said he believed in the freedom of speech, *but* there are times in our lives—and certainly the burial of a child, a spouse, a brother, a sister, a close friend who died in the service of their country—we should allow them to have some dignity, and so forth. And so this engendered a great discussion. So now, if I weren't retiring now, my anthology for this course in communication ethics next semester would have that decision in it. And so we would read Sophocles, and then we'd go right to that decision, and they can say, hey, they see the relationships.

WZ: Now let's talk about your service. Not only here on campus, but also you serve on the ethical committee of local hospitals. Tell me about that experience.

MN: Well, I have been elected to the Ethics Committee of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Orlando; served on that now for about a dozen years. We meet every Monday, and sometimes some of us are on call for a given month. And basically, what we do is make life and death decisions. Physicians are sometimes faced with a terminally ill patient, and they would like to turn off the respirator or withdraw treatment, and they want to be certain that what they're doing is both ethical and legal. And so we now even are able to—we have arranged to have circuit judges on duty seven days a week, 24 hours a day, so if we have an emergency situation, we can meet in the Ethics Committee board room of the hospital, and on a Sunday night get the judge and have a television conference where the doctors explain the patient's plight, and all these

things involved, and the controversy of whether to turn the respirator on or off, and get a legal decision on this.

We talk about ethical decisions: where you have a child, for example, who's born with the intestines outside the body, and whether they can build something—a cavity—whether the child will ever be able to ingest food, or will have to—if they live—have to have a feeding tube most of their life or things like that. When that goes on, those things happen, the question is—the doctors want to know, should we feed the child, or should we put the child through all these terrible surgeries and everything, or just let the child die? You're making decisions about who lives, who dies. We have premature children, and they weigh less than a pound and a half; you can hold them in the palm of your hand. And the thing is that some of those kids, with the new technology we have, can be saved; but we know that more than half of them will be severely retarded or severely handicapped, blind or deaf or severe behavioral problems—but a small number of them will grow up perfectly normal and have very vibrant, great lives. And when we look in the bassinet, you can't tell which is which, so we're into that decision making. I have served on the Ethics Committee of Orlando Regional Medical Center and Florida Hospital as well and have lectured from time to time in these areas to their boards, and so forth. So that's community . . .

I've also been one of the co-founders of the Orange County Legal Aid Society. Edgerton van den Berg—a very prominent lawyer in Orlando, who has two grandsons presently here at Rollins College—and I helped found the Orange County Legal Aid Society in the early 1960s, and it celebrated its 50th anniversary, and we were both honored a few months ago this year for that. So I kind of enjoy doing those kinds of community things and helping out in Legal Aid, and so forth.

WZ: Great. Can you tell me about your experience filing a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court?

MN: Well, when I did that, I did that as *amicus curiae*, which meant I really didn't represent any particular party, but I represented myself as a party of interest in the decision. One of those cases, the argument that I supported was that Washington state, which wanted to bar physician-assisted suicide—and I argued against that, and argued that that was an invasion of right of privacy. And I analogized it to the right of privacy accorded to women in *Roe versus Wade*. That was a strong stand I took, and the Supreme Court—in a 9-to-nothing decision [*laughs*—I guess either didn't care about my *amicus curiae* brief, or it did nothing to persuade them, because they basically said it's up to the individual states; that the Federal Constitution does not give this right, nor does it prevent the states from enacting this right, but it's a state-by-state idea.

And I did an *amicus curiae* brief in another case as well. And, you know, you sometimes feel as if, “Well, at least I got my views out. Maybe somebody'll read it. Maybe it will persuade somebody.”

WZ: Okay, now let's go back to Rollins. So this marks 50 years of your teaching at Rollins. Now, looking back, how do you view your teaching career?

MN: It's been one of the most satisfying parts of my life. I think that to be able to teach is really to touch an individual life. You see—you know, when you're a lawyer, you win a case, you lose a case. You know what the outcome is, and unless it was on some great Constitutional issue,

nothing that probably will live with you forever. And, you know, if you're a medical doctor, your patient gets well, your patient dies, whatever. Teaching is something where you really don't know the impact on the life of the student, but somehow if you're a teacher, you know when you connect and when you don't. You get, you know, letters and emails and phone calls and visits from students, who tell you what you've done for them over the years; how you encouraged them, and "I never thought I could be a lawyer, and you told me I could, and I am." "You never told me that I could finish Rollins, but you said I will, and I did, and I finished graduate school," and so forth. That kind of satisfaction, you cannot get from any other profession in my opinion. You mold lives, you change lives.

You're part of a far-reaching community here. To get up every day and go to work with students who are so wonderful as we have, and with colleagues whom I respect so very much for their excellence in teaching and their scholarship and their dedication to this profession; to be with these people every day, think with them, work with them on committees, learn from them—I don't know where I could have ever found this great privilege. Sometimes I think that in many ways as a teacher, you really are the steward of the treasure that the school has, the student has, and in that stewardship you direct them, hopefully, towards successful lives of good achievement. Oh, I wouldn't change it for the world.

People have said to me—you know I've had luncheons with a lot of my friends who started out as lawyers with me in 1960 here—and I remember one of them telling me, "You know, I just got a \$10 million verdict and I get a third of that." And I congratulated him, and not for one moment did I ever think that, "Gee, if I had been practicing law—and I had a good chance to practice with him—I would have had a third of a \$10 million verdict right now." I don't know; it didn't cross my mind. I was just so happy to come back to my office here at Rollins and teach my class and wish my friend well. But I feel that it's the memories my students will have of me that will count more than the assets that I leave. So it's been wonderful.

WZ: Great, thank you. This will be a point to end our conversation. I really want to thank you for 50 years of your contributions to Rollins College.

MN: Thank you.

WZ: And thank you for helping us to preserve the history of liberal arts education at Rollins.

MN: Thank you.