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Oral History Interviews with Dr. Thaddeus Seymour, May 25 and June 1, 2005.

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Zhang: My name is Wenxian Zhang, head of Archives Special Collections. Today is Wednesday, May 25, 2005. Here's Dr. Thad Seymour, who's going to be interviewed by me, along with two students: Corey and Lily. Dr. Seymour, could you tell us about your family background? I understand your father is a well-known lawyer, and he was the president of the American Bar Association.

Seymour: Oh, good for you, that's right. I grew up in New York City in Greenwich Village. My father had come from Wisconsin, from which he graduated and went to Columbia Law School in New York and stayed there as a young attorney. He served briefly in Washington in the early days of the Hoover administration as assistant solicitor general, which meant that he did a lot of arguing for the Supreme Court. Then he came back to New York in the thirties, and I was a child at that point, and that's how I grew up. The two of us in my generation, my brother, who's a lawyer: Whitney Horace Seymour Junior, and myself. I went to school in New York City during the early grades. I went to a very progressive Greenwich Village type school called the little red schoolhouse, which is still there and quite famous for being a sort of avant garde, pre-Montessori school. Then to a little boy's school uptown called Saint Bernard's. I went— I left the city for my secondary education and went to a boarding school in Connecticut, the Kent school, and studied there until I graduated in 1945. My high school years, Kent school years, were during World War II, and it was a very interesting time for my generation. I was just a little young for the draft, so I missed the draft. But I was on the home front and watching that and I see so many echoes of those days now as the Tom Brokhaws and others are recalling the sacrifices of that generation whom I admired so very much as a teenaged boy.

I graduated from Kent and went to Princeton. I was quite young, I was sixteen when I went and was not ready for college. So my first adventure was to flunk out. And after an adventurous first year, in which I'd had the great satisfaction of rowing on the Princeton junior varsity crew, which won the championship and I got my varsity letter, I nevertheless did not have the grades to continue. So I was out of college, worked it out to be a sort of teaching fellow at the Kent school where I'd go on and taught Latin there and coached a little bit, and it gave me a chance to grow up and get my bearings. I went back to Princeton the following year, and did very well.

Even more importantly, I got serious about my childhood sweetheart, Polly. Polly Gnagy, now Polly Seymour. And the following year we decided to get married. And we decided also, because Princeton didn't allow you to be married, that we would go to California where her family lived. So I moved to California, enrolled in the University of California, and graduated at Berkeley in 1950. I then went from there in 1950 to the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. We lived there four years while I got my master's and did all but my dissertation for my PhD. When I went to work at Dartmouth in 1954, I finished my dissertation that first year and got my degree in 1955.

So my family is a New York family. My father was such a generous hearted person. He was very active in the American Civil Liberties Union. And he was a Wall Street lawyer, and his clients were Bausch and Lomb, and Ford Motor Company, and companies like that, Paramount Pictures. But he also, as member of the ACLU, defended an African American communist

named Angelo Herndon and won in the Supreme Court and got him liberated from the Georgia Chain Gang, to which he had been sentenced simply for distributing communist literature. So my father was well regarded as an open minded and liberal person. He was very loyal to the American Bar Association, went regularly to their meetings. In 1959, the American Bar Association was about to elect a quite conservative southerner, and my father's liberal friends encouraged him to run in order that the Bar Association not become even more conservative. And he ran and to his astonishment he won. So in 1960, he was president of the American Bar Association. That's a long-winded answer to your very simple question.

Zhang: Okay, that's very interesting. My follow-up question, since you come from such a prominently legal family, have you ever considered law as a career?

Seymour: Never.

Zhang: Never?

Seymour: Well in that old-fashioned way of things, I have an older brother. It seemed that he was destined to be a lawyer and it was the right career choice for him. He's been a very distinguished lawyer. He was for a while the U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York. He hired Rudolph Giuliani to be a young lawyer on his staff and, uh— So my brother was very prominent and continues to be very active in the law, and continues to practice at age eighty-two in New York City. Goes to the office every day. But his interests now are much more pro-bono. He's looking out for underdogs in legal situations. And also, he's very committed to historic preservation. He's currently working to save Steeple Top, which is the home of Edna St. Vincent Millay in Austerlitz, New York. And he's very much involved in that.

Zhang: So why did you choose eighteenth century literature as your specialty?

Seymour: Well, I— When it was clear that my brother was going to be a lawyer, it was clear then that I had no family obligations, or felt no family obligations. And even though I'd had my academic challenges as a freshman in college, I always enjoyed the campus environment and the community and congeniality of school life and campus life. After my year at Kent, I think I always wanted to be a secondary school teacher, maybe someday a headmaster. But, as I grew older my dad's good advice was: get a graduate degree and then you have the option of teaching at secondary school or college. And that was, as his advice always was, that was very good advice. So I started at the University of North Carolina. And my first teacher there was one of the dearest gentlemen I've ever known. His name was Dougald McMillan and his field was the eighteenth century. He encouraged me, I idolized him, and it was as simple as that. And I think that's the way most people make their choices; some accidents, some connection, some— something you stumble on that attracts your interest and one thing leads to another and you become a specialist in that field. I wrote a paper for him, it was my first year in graduate school, on the South Sea Bubble. It's a wonderful graduate topic because nobody knows anything about it. They've heard of it, sounds a little bit familiar, but they don't know very much about it. And I discovered in my little paper that some of the major literary figures had had an association with it, and he encouraged me and was my advisor for my master thesis, which was on the South Sea Bubble. And I found enough there that I decided to write my dissertation on the South Sea

Bubble, Literature and the South Sea Bubble. And therefore devoted the next four years of my—next three, four years of my life to that subject. And I've never regretted it. It was great fun.

Zhang: So what made you decide to go to Dartmouth? Tell us about your teaching career.

Seymour: Well, thank you. What made me decide was they offered me a job. It was quite accidental. I was a graduate student; it was getting time to leave. I had been invited to stay on at Chapel Hill as a teaching assistant and so on. We loved Chapel Hill, we had a lot of friends there, we were very happy there. I had founded the English club, and we had a lot of fun with that; put on programs and skits and I could do magic for the skits, had a softball team, it was a very happy life.

But a Puritanical side of me said, You know, this is too comfortable; I really ought to see what's out there. So I put my name on the list in the placement office and had an offer from Ohio State University, several other of the big institutions. And then the recruiter from Dartmouth, a nice man, Arthur Jensen happened to be at Duke, had a little spare time, so he came over to Chapel Hill. And looking through the names, happened to see my name, decided to see if I wanted to interview. We had a conversation; I liked him, I think he liked me. Several weeks later I got a letter asking if I would come up to Hanover for an interview.

And I remember this experience very, very clearly. I'd been in graduate school for four years. The process of graduate school is to beat you into submission and more than anything else to make you believe that undergraduates are inconsequential, that the real work of the academy is publication and scholarship. And so I let myself believe that. I went up to Dartmouth and I was interviewed by the English department, and they had a custom in mid-morning of a room, conference room, sort of like the room you and I are sitting in, where they had coffee together. And I went in and they're having coffee, and I could hear this conversation and one person was talking about a student, freshman, he had in class who had written a wonderful paper on *Paradise Lost* and somebody else said, "Oh, I had him last semester." And here were all these faculty members who were talking about students, freshman students, with interest and admiration as real people. I was dumbfounded. I had forgotten that that's what happens in a college. And that did it for me. I just so hoped that they would offer me the job and fortunately they did. So I went up there to start teaching at thirty-six hundred dollars a year, I'm very proud of my high salary, in 1954.

Zhang: So how did you make the adjustment from a student to a teacher? And what were the courses you taught at Dartmouth?

Seymour: Well, the adjustment, I think for everybody in the profession, is similar. You help pay the way through graduate school by part-time teaching. So I was a teaching assistant, and then got a fellowship, which is very generous, which gave me a higher pay with less teaching. But I did a lot of teaching of bonehead English, we called it, in graduate school, and found I enjoyed it. Enjoyed my relationship with the students. And yet, as I say this in 2005, I think it is no different from fifty years ago. Graduate schools do nothing, nothing, to prepare their students to teach. Nothing! Indeed, they the look with contempt on the education department. They look with contempt on any study of technique, any study of methodology, grading, and so on. And when I started teaching in graduate school, I remember that we were

told to report to classroom such and such at ten o'clock to be— for orientation. And they told— I got a piece of paper that told me where my class would meet, gave me the list of the students, and they gave me a grade book, and that was it. Not a word.

Dartmouth, to its great credit, was very conscientious about this. I had a mentor, Edmund Hendershot Booth and he came to my classes, he helped me when I was grading papers, we had meetings of the young instructors and shared our problems. I had a young man in the office next to me, Bob Fischer, and Bob and I helped each other. In part, we had an interest in doing the best we could at our teaching because we were on one-year contracts. We knew that by January or so they would be deciding whether our contracts would be renewed. So not only did we want to do a good job as teachers on behalf of our students, we also wanted our employers to think well of us. So it's a continuing process. And I must say, let me jump back and forth between fifty years.

One of the things I so appreciated and respected at Dartmouth was its commitment to undergraduate teaching. Dartmouth, although today it offers Ph.D., M.D., and engineering degrees, it's still Dartmouth College. It should be Dartmouth University, but it is so committed to the collegiate environment that it proudly proclaims that it is Dartmouth College and sort of says, If you don't like that terminology that's your problem; it's not our problem. It is committed to teaching, as Rollins is.

Jumping ahead to when we came here. What attracted me more than anything else was the faculty and their concern for teaching and their knowledge of their students, their commitment to their students. I've often said and I would say it again: Rollins faculty members like their students. They like their students. And I was trained in graduate school in an environment where not only were students irrelevant, they were in a way an unnecessary, burden. You have to have the students to get the F.T.E. [Full Time Equivalent] to get the budget from the state to buy the books from the library and build the buildings. How you teach them is quite irrelevant.

In fact the other day I ran across, I have it in my bookcase, an article I wrote. I got a little involved with student government as a graduate student, and helped them develop a faculty evaluation instrument. North Carolina did not have a faculty evaluation device as we have at Rollins. And we distributed this and collated it, and I then wrote an article about the need for evaluating faculty in part as a statement that the institution cares.

Zhang: Okay, I understand that after five years at Dartmouth you were promoted to Dean. So tell us about your administrative experience there.

Seymour: I appreciate you using the word promoted. My colleagues at the English department wondered what terrible thing had happened to me that I had given up the glorious career of being a teacher to become an administrator. Indeed, one colleague wrote me a note quoting Wordsworth: "Just for a handful of silver, he left us. Just for a ribbon to wear in his cap." That stung. And my dissertation advisor, after I did my master's these with Richmond Bond— I'm sorry, with Dougald McMillan, whose work— who was a nineteenth century specialist, but whose particular interest was drama and the seventeenth century work of John Dryden, he said, "For your dissertation you need to work with somebody who's familiar with eighteenth century periodicals." So my dissertation advisor was not Dougald, but was Richmond Bond. Richmond P. Bond. A wonderful man. But when I went to Dartmouth and accepted the

job, he said, "Now Thad, whatever you do, don't go whoring after administration (coughs)." And he was kind when I changed direction, but he never let me forget his own biases about it.

I had been teaching for four years. I had also been a volunteer coach for the crew; they had a little rowing club there. I had rowed in high school at Kent and I rowed at Princeton. Loved the sport. And they had a little rowing club and they needed somebody to help with the freshmen, and one of my students was on the crew and he asked if I would come down and one thing led to another. In the fall of my first year there I helped coach the freshmen. In the winter of my first year, the varsity coach, who was a faculty member at the Tuft's business school, his name was Marshall Robinson; Marshall called me up in February and said, "You know, I've just taken a job with the Brookings Institute, and I'm leaving in a couple of weeks and there's nobody to coach the varsity and I hate to ask you this, but I'm going to ask you if you would do it." And I was quite thunderstruck by that. Bear in mind that I was trying to finish my dissertation, it was my first year of teaching, I was very anxious about my job. I went to my chairman Arthur Jensen, the man who had hired me, and I said, "Professor Jensen, I've been asked to do this and I don't want to do it if it will jeopardize my position in the department." And he said, "Well, Thad, when we hired you, we expected that you would have your dissertation finished this year. As long as you can do that, that's fine." The result was, it was a fabulous incentive for me to get that darn thing done. And I finished my dissertation, did it, I had the final version done and approved just before crew season began. And it really, in a way, it helped me a great deal.

But I had been a teacher, had been crew coach. I had been advisor to several of the dormitories where faculty were invited to do that. And as I look back on it I realize that they— When they were looking for a dean, they thought somebody who was engaged with students would be an appropriate candidate. I was twenty-nine years old. The former dean, a wonderful man Joe McDonald, who was a senior professor of economics. A dear man, but elderly. And I think, coming into the sixties, Dartmouth said, It's time to get a younger person who will be more in touch with students and who can help us make the transition into what was still a sort of post-war, post-Eisenhower period. I was— The provost, his name was Donald Morrison, called me into his office and said that I'd been recommended to be dean and he hoped that I would accept the position. And I, heeding the advice of my advisor, thanked him very much and declined. Said, "No, thank you." And then he said something else that was powerful. He said, "Well I understand that, Thad." And he said, "Now we've been, you'll be coming up for tenure soon and we've been watching your research and publication activity and you haven't any publications that I'm aware of. And maybe you have some about to come out, but—" And sauntered off. And so, let me think about all this. And that's a very serious comment.

Polly and I talked obviously well into the night, because this was a fundamental change in my life and everything that I had worked for. And she, wise person she is, said, "Look, you got into education not because you love eighteenth century literature, you got into it because you like students. And this is a job that would you permit to spend full time—" The title was Dean of the College, the work was really being concerned for the welfare of students, their personal and academic welfare. She said, "Your interest is not scholarship, it's students." (Snaps) Simple as that. Came in the next morning and said, "I thought it over and if you still would have me, I'll take the job."

So I accepted the job, I think it was in October of '58. I spent the spring— The dean of freshmen took a mini-sabbatical and was gone in the spring, so I was acting dean of freshmen in the spring of '59. Became Dean, formally, in the fall of '59. So the first class I graduated was

the class of 1960. And I pause on that because the board of trustees at Dartmouth invited my father, who was president of the American Bar Association, to give the commencement address that year. So I had the great joy of introducing my father to speak at my first graduation. And that has always been one of my treasured memories. I have photograph of us in my office to remind of that. I think about it a lot.

So it was a comfortable decision, it was the right decision for me. I would say that I did it from '59 to '69. That decade was the most, was a tsunami of change in higher education. It began with a kind of Eisenhower tranquility and it ended with a Mario Savio confrontation. My last, I would say my last official act, in— On May 6 of 1969, I was carried out of my office. The students occupied the administration building. We knew it was going to happen. I was not surprised by it. The whole thing was a kind of guerilla theatre, almost scripted series of events. And I had already made plans for the next stage of our lives. But what began so sentimentally in 1959 ended quite traumatically in 1969.

Zhang: Tell us a little bit more about your experience in the Vietnam War era dealing with radical students.

Seymour: Well in a way it's kind of ah— Thank you. It's got a preliminary stage, perhaps which I ought to mention, which is that period from say '60 to '65. Very tranquil, good-humored. I now understand that the seeds of discontent were certainly there. And I remember when a student named David Webber, he was president of the undergraduate counsel, gave a speech at convocation, students would speak at convocation, in the fall of 1964. I remember hearing the speech and saying, there's something different. The song says, "blowing in the wind." There's something blowing in the wind. I remember talking to Polly and I said, "You know, there's something happening." And I was right. It began in the mid-sixties. And it had some simple manifestations. But by1967, it had gotten quite serious. The Students for a Democratic Society had been organized by Jack Newfield and Jane Fonda's earlier husband; I can't remember his name now. They had written a procurement statement and the political process had begun.

In the spring of 1967, the students, um, it was a brilliant tactic. I'm surprised it hasn't surfaced again. The students began to challenge the college about its investment policy. Dartmouth had a large investment holding in Kodak. Kodak was being assailed by an activist named Saul Linsky for its libber practices. And Kodak stockholders were being pressured to force management to change its policy. And this was a matter being brought before the stockholders at the annual meeting. Now what the big companies— What most people do, they get a proxy statement which invites you, tells us there's going to be a stockholders meeting. If you can't go to the meeting, here are the issues that are going to be voted on, would you vote on them in advance. And the recommendation is always to vote with management. So Dartmouth had, like everybody else, returned their proxy statement supporting management. And the students said, "Wait a minute, management is abusing the employees at Kodak. We want Dartmouth to go and tell management to change, tell Kodak management to change their policy." Well, Dartmouth had already sent in their proxy statement. And they said, Look, all we want you to do is to get a hold of Kodak and withdraw the proxy statement.

It sounds so arcane in the day in 2005 in Winter Park, Florida. But that symbolically would have been such a, in effect, sell out to the radicals and would be seen by corporate America as radical acts, and Dartmouth refused to do it. And the students occupied the

president's office. And so here are the students sitting there with flowers and so on in the president's office. It never reached confrontation. By the end of the day, the president was there and they left and life went on.

Shortly after that, I was very much involved with this and it's much too long a story, the student newspaper invited George Wallace to come up to speak. What had happened was that George Wallace, George Wallace's people had been in touch with all the Ivy League colleges to say, How would you like to have George Wallace come up? You just say yes and we'll come up there. So the student's name was David Green. David thought that would be kind of colorful and invited George Wallace to come up. Which has always made me appreciate the fact that one of the privileges that students have, which is of such high value and so seldom appreciated, is as a student of Dartmouth or a student at Rollins, they have the name of the institution to use or abuse. That's really Roger Casey's "I am Rollins College." Well, David Greene was Dartmouth College, and he invited George Wallace to come up to speak. And I remember the college proctor, dear man, his name was, head of campus safety called campus police, and his name was John O'Conner. John O'Conner came in and said, "Now we've got to make arrangements for George Wallace. We'll do it in the field house. I want to set it up so there's a buffer zone of security." He said, "Now it's going to cost eight thousand dollars to set this up." And so on. One of the biggest, dumb decisions, of many, in my life was I said, "We're not going to spend eight thousand dollars for people to hear George Wallace. It's just absolutely corrupt to spend money like that." So we ended up instead using the Dartmouth's equivalent of Bush Auditorium. Well, by the time George Wallace came with bodyguards and state police and so on, it was a zoo. The African American students waited outside and refused to go in. George Wallace was in there, the student radio station was broadcasting it. All over the Upper Valleys, they called it, people were coming to Dartmouth because the state police were there and George Wallace and so on. It was a really hyped-up event. And after he got talking, the African American students ran down the aisle toward him. They said their intention was to get him to leave. He left the podium and one of his bodyguards reached in under his coat and was going to pull out a gun. Can you imagine? Standing room only in Bush Auditorium and everybody yelling and somebody pulling out a gun. That's where we were. They hustled George Wallace out the side door, put him in his limousine. But now all the networks are there, this was on national news, they had these— It's a dark evening, they had klieg lights and the klieg lights lit up the center of the campus like a launch over Kennedy. So there were a thousand students crowding in on his car. And George Wallace was there. And students started to rock it (rocking back and forth), like this. And I was positive it was going to get tipped over. I was positive that it was going to burst into flames. The state police, who had tear gas, were there with their sticks and were pushing on the crowd. And dear John O'Conner was sitting on the hood of the car, telling the driver, "Get out of here," and kicking people out of the way. He was lying on the hood and kicking like this. And they managed to get the car out, and once they broke the crowd they were able to go. Anyway, that was the second thing.

So you had a sit in and you had George Wallace, and all of these created an atmosphere on our campus, which was mimicked on Columbia campus, and Harvard campus, Amherst campus, you name it.

Well, just at that time— This is much too long winded, I apologize, but it's my own therapy, thank you. They— In a powerful, simple, statement, the students opposed to the war, began a vigil at the flagpole at noon. Very simple. No violence or anything. They would just go out and stand at the flagpole for fifteen minutes as a way to say to others, we think the war is

wrong. Pretty soon it was ten, twelve, twenty. Pretty soon, the right-wing students began to come out and stand facing them. So you had two lines. And then one day a student named David Smith, who I knew well, who was in the ROTC [Reserve Officer's Training Corps], came out wearing his uniform. The ROTC went ballistic. They said, You have no right to do that; and did the equivalent of court marshal. And the students and faculty said, wait, wait a minute, are you saying that a Dartmouth student can't express his personal beliefs on this campus? What kind of academic freedom do we value at this place? It was a big issue. And it came down to the question of, wait a minute, what is, what are we doing with ROTC here, you know?

And then it started to come out. Do you know we don't pick the faculty members in ROTC? When somebody comes here as professor of military science, he's appointed by the Pentagon. If you're a professor of English, you're hired, you're reviewed by a committee. But if you're in ROTC you can be a professor here because the government — And besides that, if you're in ROTC you know there's some things you can't major in. You can't major in art. The place just, it got to be such a hot and complicated issue. And the faculty held meetings and students held protests. It was angry in every respect. I remember one time, a nice historian friend of mine was in a faculty meeting with a tape recorder. Somebody saw him. Moon, I lost his first name. Some faculty member said, "Wenxian's recording this (laughs)!" And he was just there trying to record it for history for the archive. And the place went wild, they threw him out, censored it. So it was that kind of thing.

I remember another very distinguished economist, Dan Marsh, distinguished economist. At a faculty meeting he said, "I can't stand this anymore." He was tenured, senior economist. And he said, "I'm quitting." And he resigned with us and joined the faculty of Stanford. Not much quieter, but it was such— It's impossible, sort of like trying conjure up our feelings on 9-11 from this perspective. It's impossible to conjure up the height of emotion in those days. Many other routines. The African American students had the list of thirty-seven demands; we had to deal with that. And there was a lot else going on.

But the real breaker was that the students, because other people had occupied buildings on other campuses, were going to occupy the building at Dartmouth. They began a custom on Tuesday afternoons of having gatherings. First they gathered in College Hall, it was equivalent to the Cornell Center. And then one Tuesday they gathered in the hallway of the administration building. I was in my office and they were out there having a sort of democratic meeting. Somebody had a bullhorn and said, "Well it's been suggested that we go out and get hammers and break all the windows in the building. Now what do you think about that? All in favor of that signify by saying 'Aye.' All opposing—" All this sort of stuff. "It's been suggested that we go into Seymour's office and tie him up and then take him out and tie him to the flagpole and release dogs to bark at him. All in favor—" And I'm sitting there listening to this. It was a very anxious time. But that one sort of fizzled out and they stayed there until about nine o'clock and left.

But the next week, May 6, we just knew it was going to happen. Eventually. And they met in College Hall and I do remember we got a little typed note. Somebody came in the office and said, "The students are going to occupy the building at three o'clock." I still have the note someplace. And that was no surprise, really nothing to do. And sure enough, at three, or about five minutes after three, I was on the phone with a dear professor of classics friend, Matthew Winkie, wonderful name. And Matthew was talking. He said, "Thad, I have a student, a very promising student. I'd like to have him tutor in Latin at the Thedford School, so I was hoping I could work it out for him to get credit for that work." And just then I look out the window, there

are a hundred students running toward the building. I said, "Matthew I hate to interrupt this very important conversation but there are a hundred students just about to occupy the building." He almost had a heart attack, I remember he said, "Oh, oh, I can't believe it (unintelligible)!" And he hung up the phone. And then the students came in.

We had—We knew it was going to happen, and we had tried to be careful and thoughtful about it. The, um, the problem most colleges have is when that happens they call the police. The police came in and they were just dying, loving the idea of coming in and getting some of these Ivy, rich Ivy League kids. And we decided that we wanted to do it better than that. And we worked it out with the local judge in Woodsville, New Hampshire. County Grafton. We wanted to get a restraining order from him to have him say to the students: You are violating the constitutional rights of the people in this building to do their job, you're in effect taking away their civil liberties, and I instruct you to leave. And what that does is put them between the judge, or themselves and the judge. And the judge gets to call the shots. And we had talked the judge, we knew he was a sensible guy. And sure enough, as soon as the students occupied the building— Now, one of the things he said is, "Look, if they come in the building and you leave, that's your problem." If someone comes to the office and says, "Wenxian, leave the office" and you leave, that's your problem. Somebody has to be forcibly ejected. Well, I had already signed a contract to go to Wabash. We were leaving. I was the youngest and the biggest and it sort of fell to me to be the one who was (laughs) forcibly evicted. So they pushed me out.

There's a dear friend of mine, named Paul Gambacini, who was head of the student radio station, who went on and is today one of the leading sort of music, pop music critics in England. You see his name in England all the time. But Paul knew this was happening, had a tape recorder and recorded the whole thing. And after I left, he gave me a copy of the tape, which I have, and I play it for my students here at Rollins when we're talking about conformity and rebellion and Martin Luther King and so on.

So Paul has a recording of the students coming into the building. But as soon as I left, we went to the judge, asked for the restraining order. The judge sent the sheriff, told students to get out of the building. When the students didn't leave, we then had a sort of council of war, which included the governor of the state, who was a Dartmouth graduate and a good guy and a friend, and a bunch of other people. And worked it out, negotiated with the students, and worked it out at three o'clock in the morning that yes, they would leave the building. They required that they be physically in effect ejected, that a policeman's hand had to be on them as they left the building (laughter). And fifty-four students were brought out by the state police. No violence, no tear gas; it was one of the better things I had handled in my life. Not that I wanted, but it came out as it should have.

The surprise was (coughs), excuse me, the surprise was that the judge wasn't taking any nonsense; he sentenced them all to thirty days in jail. So these fifty-four students spent thirty days in jail. However, the faculty was very sympathetic and said, If you're in jail you can study there and I'll come down and you can write your papers and so on. So I think, I think every one of those students got all A's that semester, because the faculty was very sympathetic. But that's how it happened, and when it happened.

As a footnote for some other conversation, I have reconnected with the young man who led the effort to get me out. And last spring, he came down and we had dinner together, and we correspond by e-mail every two or three weeks, and it's a very valued friendship.

Zhang: Tell us about your Wabash years in Indiana.

Seymour: Well, thank you. It's nice to do it this way.

I had— I was dean for ten years. It was a long ten years. By the end of eight years, eight and a half years, I knew it was time to stop. I told Dartmouth that I wanted to finish at the end of ten years and the English Department by then had made me a tenured full professor. And they offered me a one-year sabbatical and then a return to the English department. And it was a wonderful, generous arrangement. And so that was what we were planning to do.

It happened that Wabash was looking for a president. Now I'm a New Yorker. Indiana— My problem was, those states that begin with I are sort of a problem for me. Iowa, Indiana, Idaho, Illinois. And so I didn't know anything about— But when they called me up, I got asking my mentor, Dean of Freshmen Al Dickerson, about it. He said, "Well you know, Wabash was founded by Dartmouth people. It was a frontier college founded by Dartmouth people." And he said, "The great president of Dartmouth," that is the Hamilton Holt of Dartmouth, "was Ernest Martin Hopkins, and when he was president of Dartmouth, his brother was president of Wabash. You ought to go take a look at Wabash. It's a fine little college. It's a miniature Dartmouth in the Middle West."

We went out. Loved it. Small, seven hundred and fifty students. A men's college, which Dartmouth was at the time. And, no ROTC. Very personal, very good-humored. They loved their football. Academically, very, very solid. So we went out there. Our kids were young; we had five children. Our oldest was in college but all the rest were in grade school and middle school and high school. And one of the great joys was to raise them in the turbulent seventies. They grew up in a traditional Middle-America, family-values, county-seats, small town, in a county that exports more corn and hogs than any county I can think of. So it was just right. And the Wabash years were just right. It was a tough time. It was right after the war, right after Viet[nam]— As Vietnam was winding down. And Wabash had had its challenges. It had a very— It had had a very popular president, Byron Trippet, who had been a Rhodes Scholar, had been faculty member, had been dean, had been the president, and was really the epitome of everything the college believed in. And he had a nervous breakdown right in the middle of the year and had to leave. They appointed an acting president. While the acting president was doing it, they went out and hired a fancy guy from Harvard. He did not fit; everybody hated him. They fired him. They got another acting president, and all this is simply to say that I was the fifth president in six years. And more than anything else, what they wanted and needed was a sense of self-worth and a sense of stability and continuity. And that's what I wanted. That's exactly what I wanted after what we'd been through.

So we had a very happy time there. We were there for nine years, helped the place get stabilized, helped the place raise some money which it had not done before. We had Eli Lilly on the board and he was very generous during my years there. He gave forty-five million dollars, which was, in those days, a lot of money. Still is. So those were very happy years, and we saw it through the campaign. And then I was coming up on my fiftieth birthday and said, If I'm going to do anything else in life I better do it, because pretty soon after you're fifty, people say, He's a nice fellow, but he's a little, a little old for this or that, which would be true. So I told the Wabash trustees a year in advance that I would be leaving at the end of 1978 and it was a great adventure. In effect, I quit before I had another job. And they were very kind and generous about it. And we began to fantasize about what to do next; what adventure would be right for us. Our kids were pretty well grown by then.

I interviewed for the presidency of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I thought, I'm an old New Yorker; that would be very interesting. I thought about, did not interview for, running Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts; historic thing as I enjoy that sort of thing.

But increasingly it was clear that we ought to think about another college. And I had a couple of inquiries. I had an inquiry from Colgate, and we interviewed there. In fact, they really wanted us to come but we knew that was not the right fit for us. Baldwin, Lafayette, bunch of places. But none of them felt quite right. The, uh— And then, get a call from Rollins from John Tiedtke and he encouraged us to come down. We took one look and said, This would be fun. And so we came. And so Rollins took awhile to decide, but very kindly and generously invited us to come and we came. But whether—

You had asked about Wabash. Wabash was— One of the things that Wabash was fun. I had— Our daughters had gone to Smith College and Smith has a tradition called Mountain Day, where the president declares a holiday. I always thought that was a great idea. And I tried to get Dartmouth to do it. And took it up to the faculty and so on. And they said, Well you know, it'd interrupt labs and we'd have a problem with visiting speakers. They were very stuffy about it. When I got out to Wabash, the early years, Vietnam was still going on. I was there when Kent State occurred and a number of terrible things in the first years. But when Vietnam was clearly behind us, I said, you know, we need something like that. So I just told the faculty we were going to have a holiday. They didn't like it a whole lot, but at least it was a small enough place and I could get away with it. So I had a little holiday, which I called Elmore Day, called Elmore Day because of a wonderfully awful poet from Alamo, Indiana called James Buchanan Elmore. And I said, "You know, somebody ought to recognize this unappreciated poet," who wrote:

> "In the spring of the year,
> when the blood is too thick,
> there's nothing so rare as a sassafras stick.
> It strengthens the liver and cleans up the heart,
> and to the whole system new life doth impart.
> Sassafras, oh sassafras,
> thou art the stuff for me!
> And in the spring I love to sing,
> sweet sassafras, of thee."

Well, I had Elmore Day. I was pretty proud of that. And I use to read his poetry at the flagpole at noon.

Well, when it was announced that I was coming to Rollins, the first order of business at the next faculty meeting was the faculty voted out Elmore Day, discontinued it (laughter). But when I came to Rollins, I discovered that Rollins had had Fox Day. But understandably, in the sixties, when life was so earnest, Jack Critchfield understandably discontinued Fox Day. But when I came, one of the great bits of fun I had was to reinstitute Fox Day. So I was able to carry the Elmore tradition with me to Rollins and something that nobody, hardly anybody knows, is I had developed a funny little proclamation at Wabash. And I brought that same proclamation down here and I changed just a couple words, and I took the picture of Elmore out and put a picture of a fox in there. And I had a little verse by Elmore about Indiana and I took that out and found a verse by Elmore about Florida and put that in. So the original Fox Day proclamations are Elmore proclamations (laughter). And I sent that back to all my faculty friends at Wabash

and I said, "Elmore lives (laughter)." Any way, it was an easy transition, a happy transition to Wabash and an equally easy and happy transition to Rollins.

Zhang: Yes, but how do you compare your Rollins experience with Wabash, with you as president of college?

Seymour: See I— A little bit like— Indeed, when I left Wabash I had not planned to go to another college because I thought there was a fidelity issue. I so loved Wabash and had been so committed, a hundred percent committed to it. And I was saying, How could you now love another college? Commit yourself to another college? And then I thought of all the happy people I know who lost a spouse, married again, didn't for a moment diminish the value of this experience but they were enriched by that experience. I feel that way about Wabash. Wabash was wonderful years. We had the Wabash glee club down here last spring; sponsored them and a couple of concerts. We hold Wabash alumni meetings when they, when they come down here. We go back to football games and stuff like that, so we stay in touch. Wabash were very good years.

But I would have to say, as I look at a career in education, all of that was preparation for Rollins. I really feel, felt when we came, that all the things I'd done before were simply to get me ready for what needed to be done here and what I wanted to do here. And I think it worked out just fine. Couldn't have been better. But there's no way to compare them, anymore than there's a way to compare your children, or a spouse, or whatever.

I think, I do think, and this is a very interesting topic to me, I do think Wabash helped me do what I hope was a better job at Rollins. There are a lot of things I experienced at Wabash that taught me this that and the other that was helpful to me here. From this point in my life, one of the things I really savor is experience counts. Experience counts. And you can be young and brash and bright and know all the answers and so on, but a person who has had the experience and whose make-up permits him or her to reflect on it and learn from it has something that you can't fake, that's for real.

Zhang: So you served twelve years as the Rollins president and then another fourteen years as an English professor. How did you make that transition?

Seymour: It happened to be just beautiful from my point of view. And part of the fun of it for me was the symmetry. I started out as an English teacher. I got into this because I wanted to be with students. And after, what was really twenty-one years or, if you count the deaning, thirty-one years of college administration, I was able to liberate myself from those parts of it that were unrewarding, and all work has stuff that's unrewarding, and devote myself totally to what I'd set out to do in the first place. I tease my friends and say, you know, what I was able to have for myself was: I don't go to faculty meetings, I don't serve on committee's, I'm not worrying about publishing, I'm not worried about promotion, I refuse to engage in any conversation about campus politics. When you take all that away, what it leaves is a desire to serve my students well, to do justice to them, to teach as well as I can, have it be a rewarding experience for them and for me. And I said, you know, that's what I hoped for when I started out to be a teacher. And then I say playfully to my colleagues, if you can figure out a way to replicate that in your career, what a wonderful time you're going to have. And that's what I've had.

It was— It was hard work at first, and I did have a very interesting semester being a student, taking science courses being part of a program called the Science Community but the— and that was, for me, very helpful and important. But I found the teaching very hard work. I taught two sections of English 1— 101, E-101. And the teaching of composition in 1990 or '91 was certainly different from the teaching of composition in 1954. The students are different and the teaching is different. In 1954, in English 1 we started out with the first half of the Dartmouth Bible, the Old Testament. Second half was a Shakespeare play, in the first semester. Second semester was *Paradise Lost*, followed by usually a Faulkner novel or Conrad or whatever.

Zhang: So during your career, what courses did you enjoy the most that you'd teach?

Seymour: The course I have enjoyed the most— I really have enjoyed RCC. I believe in that course. It's a long story but I've been involved in the development of a course like that since 1959, when we developed something like that at Dartmouth in the English department there. And I just know that what we tried to establish there, what I know RCC works here was, let's have a course which is what new students will hope college will be. Now, they hope college will be x, y, z; they come and they end up taking Psych 1 and they learn about the optic nerves of rats, and then they have to take a language, and they're dealing with this conjugation of verbs and so on. So let's get something that teachers are excited about and give the teacher room to get the student excited about it and do it and let's have them all be different. And that's a great idea. And RCC really works at that. It's hard to sustain, but it's a great idea and I've believed in that.

It is hard to pull off, and I've had some RCC courses that went better than others. But my last one was— Not my last one. Four years ago, the class of 2005, was a particularly nice class and in fact, we had our last class in 2001 in the, down at the Power House. And two weeks ago, just before their graduation, I invited all those students who are now seniors back to the Power House and we had breakfast together. It was very gratifying to see how they've grown up and what they'd done at Rollins and so on. So that's a favorite.

However, the course I'm really having fun with is called Literature and Experience, and it's a course— The textbook is broken into sort of subject areas. The first one is— Let me see, innocence and experience, and the second one is conformity and rebellion, the third is love and hate, the fourth is diversity, and the fifth is the presence of death. These are the stages of human kind and the reading invites us all to share stories about experiences. Wonderful little story, "Araby," about having a crush on somebody. I shamefully tell my students about how I met Shirley Temple and I had a crush on her, what is was like, what it felt like. That sort of stuff. So that's a course I've enjoyed. And of course I will continue to teach; I'm a teacher next fall. I will teach that as an adjunct and have fun with it.

Zhang: Okay, on a light subject, how did you get into magic as a hobby?

Seymour: Well, thank you. Well, I started out, as all boys do, fiddling with my magic. There was a magic store in New York called Lou Tannens on 52nd Street and Broadway. And I'd— My dad would take me there and I'd buy little tricks, and he'd show me how to do it. And I loved doing tricks. Well I was in grade school; a couple of times for variety shows I'd do some magic and that was fun. And then like most kids I gave it up.

But I was in graduate school; by then we had a daughter, and Polly's father was an artist, a very good artist and a very significant artist. He was the first teacher of art on television. He had the first presentation on the first broadcast from the antenna on the top of the Empire State Building on May 16, 1946, and was a real factor in the teaching of art. But he also, for the fun of it, illustrated things. And he had a friend named Kajar, K-a-j-a-r, who was a magician. And for the heck of it, they made a magic book. Kajar picked the tricks and worked them out and John drew it, and they put this together. And he sent it to me when we were down in graduate school and I started doing it and I loved it. I started doing these things. To this day, there are still tricks I do, effects I do, that are from that book. I've been doing them for over fifty years.

And so I started doing it from that and found I enjoyed it and just kept doing it. It has been an outlet for me. I must say, in the last ten years— I use to always read a magic book, read a little magic every day. Half an hour or so, practiced a lot. Then I got my Macintosh. And now more of my time is spent doing the magic of Photoshop and stuff like that. I'm not teaching myself as much magic. But I will do an occasional show for kids or for old folks, whatever. So. But I—it has been a very happy part of my life.

And part of the fun of is it, it's intended to bring people pleasure. There's nothing unkind about it. Nobody loses in magic. I'm not a serious athlete. I did row, but that's good safe mindless stuff. But I'm not a tennis player or a golfer or any of those things so. Computer and magic have been my creative outlets.

Zhang: Okay. Last couple of years we did a Rollins digital archive project and we ran into quite a few pictures of the Renaissance festival. Tell us a little more about that.

Seymour: The, oh what's her name. It's on the tip of my tongue. Nice student, who, as a project, did the renaissance festival. And she asked if I would— Lynn Pool, thank you. Lynn Pool did this as a sort of senior project and it was just right, right in the center of the campus. And it's the sort of thing I wish more students would continue to do. And she got me to be King Arthur or somebody. And I remember I had to go out and get tights and wear this dumb costume and Polly dressed up as Guenevere or whomever.

And indeed, what I'm remembering is, because I'd done that, somebody at one of the local schools was having a Renaissance-type deal, and asked if I would come out there and wear my costume. So I'm driving my car in my tights and I suddenly thought, I left my pants at home and that's got my driver's license in it. If I get stopped by a cop and I'm here with no driver's license wearing tights, well I'll never be seen again (laughs). They'll lock me up. But it was just one of those very happy projects. I think she did it for a couple years. And we enjoyed that.

I must say that things like that, like Bits N' Pieces, which is a show we put on at the very beginning of the year, where I got to do magic on the stage of the Annie Russell, which is a great place to perform. Wonderful, you feel the audience right there. One of the more enjoyable chapters of my life is the times of doing Bits N' Pieces. But then it started to get, the show had gotten raunchier and raunchier and I finally said I'm sorry; I don't want to be apart of this.

But the Renaissance fair was one of the many things— It suddenly makes me remember that, for a number of years, we had the fall art festival on the campus, which I always thought was a nice thing. Students could sort of roll out of bed in the morning and see themselves surrounded by this interesting art, and it made a statement about the place and so on. But there were problems all during it, I know. But they had a stage in the middle of the campus in front of Mills. And they'd put on different acts, and Pinehurst decided to put on an act. And they

decided to do a kind of dance mobile and everybody at Pinehurst put on these white sheets and then they put on this weird sitar music. And then they got squirt bottles with different color (laughs) water paint. And they're going around gesturing in this far out way (makes squirting noise) and the person would suddenly be all green and that person would be all— It's the worst thing I ever saw. Absolutely awful. My dear friend, Spike McClure [David McClure], totally another story, but he's one of the two stars of Equus. We ought to have that down here at some point. Spike was one of them and I said, "Spike, you're a dear fellow, but that's the dumbest thing I ever saw in my life." So we had Renaissance festivals, and Spike McClure, and a lot of else happening at the center of the campus. You want to hear about Equus?

Zhang: Yeah, sure.

Seymour: It'll take two minutes. This is a bit of history. It's my first year here. Now I— For another conversation, the condition of Rollins, the challenges to Rollins in 1978, it was a pretty complicated time. The place was very fragile. The place was very leery of a new president coming in. It was a complicated time. Bob Jurgens, the head of the Theatre Department, came in to see me in the fall. And he said, "I do want you to know we announced the theatre season last year before you were appointed. And one of the plays is Equus. Now I don't know if you know Equus, but Equus has a scene in it where the young man and the young woman completely disrobe on stage. And I just want to be sure that you're comfortable doing that." In my deepest heart, I think there was a part of Bob that wanted me to say, "No," so he could go out and say, "See this new president, he has no care, he—" Quite to the contrary, if they picked it out, I defend their right to do it. So I said, "Bob, you know, on thing I would urge on you is be sure your ticket holders understand this so that nobody gets blind sighted, and grandmothers, or whatever, embarrassed. And be sure that the actors have been in touch with their families so you don't have some mother say, "You know, this old goat of a director made my daughter take her clothes off in front of that audience."

And so he sent a letter out to all the ticket holders, a very descent letter, it's in the Archives, you know. In fact all this stuff is in the Archives. And it alerted people. And that was where the— And he had the auditions and got the actors. A reporter— I'll show you how the mind works. A reporter, and I happen to remember her name was Jody Feltus. She's probably still around. Jody Feltus, in her follow-up file, ran across this letter from Bob Jurgens to ticket holders. And she called up Bob and said, "You sent this letter out, have you had any complaints?" He said, "Oh no! This is— Look, this is 1978, nobody's complained; we have an enlightened audience."

So she puts out a— Puts out a big banner headline: Community Accepts Rollins Nudity, or something like that. Big Headline. And suddenly, all the churches get up in arms, "What do you mean?" And they went to the city and said, "Do you realize Rollins is putting on this play with these naked students on the stage?" And the city digs up an ordinance that says: You may not be discovered in the state of nudity in the precinct of Winter Park. From 1912. And says, Okay, you put this on, you're subject to arrest. We'll arrest the director and the two actors. Oh, please. The place blows up. "What do you mean? The city is telling— Here's a play that won the New York City Critique's award, the Tony Award, and performed at Gainesville and Winter Park won't—" So the campus gets all heated up.

There's a wonderful picture, which you have here, of the students marching on City Hall, lead by Peg O'Keefe. I always give that to my students. And my favorite is the students went to that statue, which is still down there, and put a bra and panties on it, because she's nude.

The— I had the problem that the city attorney, Dick Trismen, was also the college attorney. Kenneth Murrah, bless his heart, called me up and said, "You may need a lawyer, and if you need a lawyer, I'll volunteer my services." So, they had a big protest meeting, they asked what we were going to do. And somebody said, "Why don't you get an injunction?" Well I'd never heard of it, and I didn't make that connection, and didn't realize you could get an injunction for this, even though we'd had it at Dartmouth. So I call Ken, and I said, "Could you help us get an injunction?" He said, "Yeah, yeah, I'll work on it." So we drew up the papers for an injunction and went to federal court to ask the judge to prohibit Winter Park from arresting the director and the actors. Now this was at— This was the afternoon of the opening night. Now there were two federal judges here, and one of them was sick, so there was only one. Judge Reed, Robert Reed. And it's four o'clock and if we— If for some reason he won't act on it, the next nearest judge is in Tampa. There's no way we could get before that person before curtain at eight o'clock, what're we going to do? We get before Judge Reed, and he said, "Will the council approach the bench." He said, "The code of judicial ethics says that a judge may not sit on a case in which he has an interest which will be substantially affected by the outcome." He said, "I'm sorry, I can't sit on this case. We'll have to let it go." And our attorney said, "Your Honor, what's the problem?" He said, "I have tickets to the play (laughter)." And our lawyer said, "Well, Sir, that's not a substantial interest." He said, "No, no, that's not what it says. It says an interest that will be substantially affected." He said, "I can't sit on the case." And then our lawyer says, "Your Honor, Dr. Seymour, President of Rollins, is sitting in the courtroom, and I know that if you requested it, he would fully refund your tickets for tonight." Long pause. It was probably the most delicious moment of my whole life. And he said, "Okay. But you'll have to explain this to my wife (laughter)." So he heard the case, we won, we got the injunction, and the play went on that night. It was picketed. I remember one of the signs said: Seymour wants to See More (laughter). But the play went on. That was the Equus chapter and that was— That was, again, my first year. Trustees never understood it, they were apoplectic about it. Then there were some complicated legal things afterwards, but we got it done.

Zhang: I appreciate your participation and thank you so much.

Seymour: Pleasure for me.

Oral History Interview with Dr. Thaddeus Seymour
(6/1/2005)

Zhang: Good morning.

Seymour: Good morning.

Zhang: Today is Wednesday, June 1st. My name is Wenxian Zhang, head of Archives Special Collections. I'm here again along with Lily and Corey; we're going to continue our conversation with Dr. Thad Seymour that started last Wednesday, May 25. Thank you for coming again. We really want to listen to the rest of your story.

Seymour: Well thank you. And even before we start I'm mindful as you identify the date, that this is the first day of my retirement. Indeed, I have been on the payroll of one college or another every day of my life since July 1, 1954. And I formally retired on May 31 of 2005. So this is my first day. In fact, I was filling out a form for something this morning and it asked occupation. And I checked retired. I've never done that before in my life. But I will, I will continue to teach an occasional course, so I don't consider myself withdrawn. Simply recognizing that it's a formal change in my professional life after fifty-one years.

Zhang: That's wonderful, congratulations on your retirement—

Seymour: (Talking at the same time) Well thank you. Well, I just happened to notice—to be aware of the date as you introduced our segment. But I'm at your service; go ahead.

Zhang: Now looking back, when you first came here in 1978, what was you first impression of the college and what's the conditions or challenges you faced and how did you foster the transition and growth of the college from a stereotype of a party school to a nationally recognized liberal arts education institution?

Seymour: Well there are several different elements. You mentioned the issue of reputation. That was certainly an inescapable fact. "Jolly Rolly Colly," it was called. People teased about underwater basket weaving, whatever that is (laughter). Indeed, I'm serious about this, I tried, in conjunction with our centennial seven years later, to see if I could find somebody who taught underwater basket weaving and for the fun of it, offer a course through the art department as a kind of statement that we're no longer embarrassed about those insults. Indeed, underwater basket weaving is a craft, like quilting and other things. But I never found a teacher, and to this day I'm not quite sure what underwater basket weaving is.

But I do know what Jolly Rolly Colly stands for. Somewhere, and I'm sure the archives has these, I have two or three student renditions of songs called the "Jolly Rolly Colly Blues," and they're kind of fun.

So the first challenge was that the college had an identity problem. It— And that was a very interesting problem. Indeed— I'll talk some more about that later. The second problem it had was inescapably a management and financial problem. The college was in fragile financial shape. People were not very well paid and were aware of that. Records were, in my view, quite chaotic. For example, I asked to see the performance of the previous years budget and I didn't

get it until October. I came in July. I learned that there were twenty-nine separate bank accounts, because the college could not correctly maintain its own books. And I learned that these bank accounts had not been reconciled. At the end of my first month, I received a small handwritten envelope on my desk with my name on it. And I opened it up and inside, handwritten, was my paycheck. And I said, "What in the world is this?" And they said, "Well this is— You're on the confidential payroll." And there were twenty or so people whose salaries were carried independent of the college's operating budget so that other prying eyes couldn't see them. Absolutely improper and irresponsible, we stopped it right then. I remember looking at the budget and seeing a line item for Thermafax. (Laughing) Thermafax was a precursor to Xerox by many years. It was something used in the sixties, but that terminology was still on the books. Indeed there was also a line item that simply said, Yacht. And when I looked that up I discovered that Hugh McKean had maintained a yacht in Palm Beach, and it was carried on the college's books. He used it for college entertaining. And that was still an account on the college books. So we had a real management problem and frankly the first personnel act that I took was to ask the then treasurer for his resignation and to instruct him to leave his office immediately. We paid him for the year but we relieved him of his responsibilities immediately.

Now I had an acute financial problem. The controller, uh, in— A new president was coming on board and the controller had a feeling that the new president was sort of no nonsense about budgets. And one of the questions I had raised was, "How many students are coming back next fall?" "Well, we don't know." "Well, haven't they made their deposits yet?" "Well, they're supposed to make a deposit by July 1, but we don't really enforce that." I said, "You mean you don't enforce it, so you don't know?" We only had, maybe, five hundred deposits for the coming year. And I was quite agitated about that and, without my knowing it, the controller sent a letter out to all the students who had not sent in their five hundred dollars, telling them that their registration had been rescinded and that they would not be permitted to come back. So here we were, looking at a college year starting with five hundred students. But of course his hammer-handed approach was to assume that if a student got that letter that the student, or his or her parents, would pay the money right away. My reaction was, Perhaps the students will believe that Rollins means what it says and will— The student will transfer someplace else and we'll really be in trouble. Well we also replaced the controller.

Indeed, by October that first year we had no treasurer, no controller, and the bursar left also. So we had no financial officers. And a nice man in town named Ed Schriber came by to see me. And Ed said, "You know, we moved to Winter Park several years ago. I used to be superintendent of schools in Great Neck, Long Island. And my wife volunteers for the additions program and volunteers at the Winter Park Library. And I really would like to be helpful. I'd be glad to volunteer to help out at Rollins, if there's anything I can do, I can do to help." And I said, "You ran a school's financial affairs in Great Neck Long Island?" He said, "Yes." I said, "I'm going to ask you as a volunteer to take on Rollins." So in the fall that first year, Ed Schriber was our volunteer Chief Financial Officer. He was special assistant to the president. He had a budget, which permitted him to hire an accountant. The name was Perry. I lost his first name. So Ed, as a volunteer, and an hourly accountant ran the financial affairs of Rollins College. Ed, sadly, died ten years or so ago. And his widow, who is still a friend of ours and lives out in the towers where we live, Julie, his widow asked me to speak at his service, which I was honored to do. But I pointed out that Ed Schriber, as a volunteer, held the financial affairs of Rollins in his hands for a number of months in that first year.

The financial situation was, was really acute and strategically a problem was that the then School for Continuing Education, that's now the Hamilton Holt School, but that's another story. The School for Continuing Education, the SCE, was generating a huge amount of income. Its costs were low, it was taught by adjuncts, and on a sort of piecework basis by regular faculty. Students could take any number of courses they want, wanted and any student who wanted to could take courses. So the School for Continuing Education was generating, probably, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars of income available for the operation of the college. And it was a crucial part of the operating budget.

On the other hand, and I don't— I certainly don't want to minimize the good education that very many students got from that program then. On the other hand, it had real problems of quality. We had a program in law enforcement for example. We would offer a degree in almost anything anybody wanted to get a degree in. And I had taken the position, going back to the Jolly Rolly Colly issue, that the destiny of the institution would be determined by its quality. That quality was the word. In my inaugural address and in every document in those early years, I said, "Every decision should be made on the basis of the extent to which it enhances the quality of the institution. That quality of the institution was our most important issue, period."

So that, among other things, meant very hard work on the School for Continuing Education. And we changed deans there and made important changes there. And then finally— Well two other things. I've talked about image, I've talked about finance, I've talked about mission. There're probably two other questions. One is, How do we define who we are and have the faculty collectively committed to those goals? They say of leadership, that leadership is a matter of articulating a shared vision and encouraging the members of the organization to work towards achieving, fulfilling that vision, achieving those goals. So they— It was very important that we start a planning process.

Now I knew, when I came, that the college's centennial would be in 1985. That was long enough to permit a planning process. And indeed in my inaugural address at the very end, I said, "Now, the centennial is two thousand, five hundred and thirty-seven days away and we have a lot of work to do. Let's get started." But we set up a planning committee to help us define who we are, who we wanted to be, and how we would get there by our centennial. In my inaugural speech I said, "Our goal should be, and is, to know ourselves, and to be known by others as the finest small college in the southeast, standing among the finest liberal arts colleges in the country." And frankly, I think we did that. I think, by 1985, we were, no—

I was looking, just this morning, as a matter of fact, at the *US News* survey for this year, and the number one college in the southeast is the University of Richmond. Now, as a New Yorker, I don't look at Richmond as the south (laughs). That's a little bit more, not the northeast, but the mid, mid Atlantic. The southeast to me is the, let's say the North Carolina-South Carolina border. And I remember I used to say, "Draw, in your imagination, a line from the North Carolina-South Carolina border across the country to the Pacific Ocean, and name five selective liberal arts colleges." And Rollins, of course, but then after that it gets hard. And you start saying, Well, let's see, Millsaps, Oglethorpe, uh, what else? Well, people say Emory, not Emory— Emory and Alburn and places like that, those are big universities. I'm talking about places like Rollins. Now you do that in the Northeast and it's easy: Bates, Bowden, Middlebury, Amherst, Williams. Do it in the Midwest and it's easy: Kenyon, Antioch, Wabash, Kalamazoo, Beloit, Grinell, Carlton, Colorado College, Occidental. But in the south, Rollins has the territory, it seemed to me, all to itself.

Indeed, one of the things that I thought about a lot was when I was in college we looked on education in the sunshine as somehow corrupt. We looked on co-education as a little soft. There was Cornell, which had women students. But the Ivy League was all male and indeed we used to think that students who went to Stanford went out there to play tennis and chase women who were waving pom-pom's. And I kept talking about the Stanford effect. I said, now Stanford today is arguably the finest educational institution in the world. So that Puritanical heritage that dominated my educational years that said you need to go to college at a place where it gets dark at about 4:30 in the winter time, where you are not distracted by the opposite sex. That whole idea went after World War Two. And I said, "Rollins can capitalize on this." And there was a— President Fairchild had a wonderful (laughs), wonderful line; this goes back to the nineteenth century. He said, "You must not confuse latitude with lassitude." Isn't that wonderful? Well, I tried to make a lot of that. That, one of our lines was, "You don't have to be cold to get a good education."

So the point I'm trying to make about planning was that we felt that if we could commit ourselves to quality, define our liberal arts mission, and really work at it, we could, by our centennial in 1985, be recognized as one of the finest, as the finest small college in the southeast. And we were. *US News* and *World Report*s started its reports about then and Rollins was listed. The University of Richmond was ahead of us, but Rollins was listed where we are now. *Time Magazin*e wrote a piece about, I hated the title, "Nine Nifty Colleges on the Move", but Rollins was one of them! On the move.

A final comment about the planning process. We felt very strongly in the planning process that we needed to be clear about what liberal arts education was. Liberal arts education is not the majority of your students studying business, and the second largest group studying communication, which was what was going on. Liberal Arts education is grounded in tradition, that goes back to the founding of Harvard College or goes back to Oxford in the Middle Ages.

So, probably the gutsiest thing we did, in the planning process, to define what the Liberal Arts stood for, was to drop the business major, to dismiss all the efforts to have a communications major, and, indeed symbolically to, at the same time, add classics. Indeed, playfully, as part of all that we changed our diploma from English back to Latin. We said we're going to change our degree from a BA to an AB. That is, a BA stands for a Bachelor of Arts; AB stands for Artium Baccalaureates. And so in 1985, as a centennial statement, we changed our degree to Latin to say we are committed to being a first-rate liberal arts college. That's the fourth point.

I want to say one other, probably the most important thing about that. I— In my 51 years in higher education, the person I have valued the most is Daniel DeNicola. Dan is a graduate of Ohio University, did his graduate work at Harvard, studied and got a degree in education at Harvard, came to Rollins to teach philosophy and was tapped to be the Dean of Education. And he was doing that in his early thirties when I arrived in 1978. He and I immediately liked each other. And knowing how important planning was and knowing that Dan was the brightest, most enlightened, most engaging person I have ever known in my professional years, I asked Dan to head the planning committee. He did an absolutely brilliant job. Now I suspect, I know those documents are all here in the archives, and I suspect they are encumbered by the passage of time.

But we set up a special office, we hired a fellow named Roger Baldwin who came down from Stanford. We put together a brilliant committee, and that committee, working with the trustees, produced a course-setting document for our centennial, which I think is probably the most important several pieces of paper of my administration. I think, maybe, of the last decades.

But Dan, who's now the chief academic officer at Gettysburg, is a person I admire more than any other I've ever worked with, and like more than any other professional or personal friend. And I have said, I would say it more formally in this occasion, whatever enhancements to our academic reputation and our academic program may have occurred during my administration, it was all Dan DeNicola. I depended on him, I turned to him, I was guided by him, I was educated by him, and I count him as the major figure of my administration.

The— I guess the final thing I'd want to say is that the place needed to be cheered up. It had had a beating. It— the, uh, you'd had the Wagner Era, you'd had the Era of Good Feeling for Hugh McKean in the fifties and early sixties. And then campuses got cranky with the sort of unrest we were talking about in our last conversation. Hugh left in '69, very bitter and disappointed. And then Jack Critchfield came in. Jack: popular, young administrator from Pitt [Pittsburgh]. And the place in its constituencies became divided. There were the McKean loyalists and the Critchfield loyalists. And that was very painful. And then Jack, in 1978, decided that he wanted to pursue a corporate career and he left to be president of the Winter Park Telephone Company. And then, and left that to work briefly in insurance, and then went to Florida Power, and, by the way, became chairman of Florida Power, a major figure. He's now retired. But Jack left and Fred, his assistant Fred Hicks, was the acting president and parenthetically an applicant for—to become permanent president.

And when I saw the place— You asked, half an hour ago, what did I see when I came here. When I saw the place, I saw a physical plant in quite serious disrepair; I saw a place that was embarrassed by its Jolly Rolly Colly reputation; and I saw a place that needed to be loved. It needed to be—to feel good about itself.

A quick story about its reputation. This is something that somebody could write a term paper on and have some fun with. When the position of president was advertised in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, its customary that you write a description of the place. And it says, Located in Winter Park Florida, adjacent to Orlando, community of twenty-five thousand, one and half hours from Atlantic beaches, and forty-five minutes from Walt Disney World. When the faculty saw this, they went absolutely bonkers. They said, What! We're advertising this as being close to Disney World? We're an educational institution! And they insisted that that line be taken out the ad, and the next time the ad appeared, that line was gone. I've always— I remember that so clearly, I was told about it. I've never seen it with my own eyes. But I've always thought it would be fun to go back to the *Chronicle* and track those ads and see it. But I had fun later on saying, "Really? You took it out? That's the only reason I came!" (laughter) They didn't think that was very funny.

But the place was disturbed by being identified with Disney World, with the beaches and so on. So, it was just what I wanted to do. I had been at an Ivy League college where I used to say one of the challenges was that the students are getting so bright that the trick now is to have the faculty be worthy of the students. I'd been in the Midwestern college going— Primarily going through the period of the transition to the seventies, which was very challenging. And this was an opportunity to participate in a college effort to fulfill its destiny as a first-rate liberal arts college, and, frankly, as a community where people cared about each other which was, has always been important to me. So I was very honored and privileged to come. It was just what I wanted to do, and I think it was what the institution wanted to do. Of leadership, they say, Leadership is fine, but you have to have followership. And the followership was there.

Though I'm suddenly reminded, when I came, full of enthusiasm, I began to worry, Boy, there's so, so much to do! And people are somehow expecting things that I just can't do. Maybe

I can do them eventually, but I can't do them right away. And at my, I think my first faculty meeting, I concluded by saying, "I want to be sure you understand one thing: I am not the tooth fairy." Somebody gave me a t-shirt that said "Tooth fairy." I still have it some place.

So, that's a very long winded way of saying, I came to a place that was wrestling with its identity, financial affairs, management affairs, planning affairs, where's it going. And I came to a place that had never raised a million dollars. It had an endowment of twelve million dollars, six of which was managed by Sun Trust and the other was managed by our financial people. So clearly fundraising was a big part of the goal as well.

Zhang: Could you tell us about your effort working with the Olin Foundation and funding for the Cornell Social Science building?

Seymour: Yes, thank you. In fact, let me precede that with another quick story about fund raising.

Rollins had never raised or received a million dollars until a bequest from George Pearsall. George Pearsall was a man from Deland, who, when he died, left a million, two hundred thousand dollars to Rollins. Now here's the story of Pearsall, and it's a story I've told often. George Pearsall lived in Deland, his wife had gone to Stetson, he was a modest man who had retired, but he had had a hobby of investing, and he had invested, obviously, in a very canny way and had quite a portfolio. He also had an interest in probability theory. Kind of wacky interest in probability theory.

And he went to the math department at Stetson and said, "Excuse me, I'd hate to bother you, but I'm interested in probability theory. I wondered if there was somebody here I could talk to a little bit about it, I'd like to read more." And the secretary said, "Well, Professor Johnson would be the person to talk to. His office is down the hall. I'm not sure he's there, but let me make an appointment for you to see him tomorrow at one o'clock." So, Mr. Pearsall came back the next day at one o'clock, and Mr. Johnson never showed up. He said, "Well I must've gotten it wrong," so he went back and made an appointment for the following week, Tuesday at three o'clock. He got there at three o'clock, Mr. Johnson's door was open, he was talking to a colleague, and Mr. Pearsall said, "I'm sorry to interrupt." And he said, "I can't see you now I'm too busy (unintelligible) so you come back later." And so he made another appointment and he came back a few days later, and the door was closed, Mr. Johnson wasn't there— Professor Johnson.

And Mr. Pearsall said, "You know, there's another college I've heard of down the road in Winter Park, Rollins, I've never been there." But he drove down to Rollins, went in to ask for the math department, was in the Bush Science Building. Went into the Bush Science Building, went down the hall, there was a door open, faculty member Sandy Skidmore was sitting there. And said, "I'm terribly sorry to bother you, but my name's George Pearsall, I live in Deland. I've gotten interested in probability theory and I just was trying to get some advice about some books to read." She said, "Oh, I'm interested in that, too. Come on in."

They sat down; they had this wonderful conversation. And as she talked about probability it turned out that he was interested in ESP [Extrasensory perception] and such matters. And she said, "Well my colleague, Hoyt Edge, in the philosophy department is very interested in ESP. So let's walk down and I'll have you meet him." So she walks George Pearsall down to the French House. They meet Hoyt Edge, he and Hoyt hit it off. Hoyt's father had taught at Stetson, so Hoyt knew Deland. The next year, out of the blue, Mr. Pearsall sent a

contribution of five thousand dollars to support research in parapsychology. And did that for several years, and became more interested in Rollins. And when he died, he left a million dollars.

Now, the point of this story, in my experience, is Sandy Skidmore, in a way, is responsible for that gift. But she didn't set out to do that. She's just a very nice person. And that's the kind of place we are. And, when he came, he knew he was in a congenial community and you can't fake that. You can't say, Whenever I see someone come in the door who looks like he may have money, I'll be nice to him. You can't do that. And the fact is George Pearsall never looked like he had money, he was a modest man. I remember when I was sitting down talking to him one time about his portfolio, he had it all written out on shirt cardboards. And we were sitting at his kitchen table. And he left a million dollars! Anyway, we were just not used to raising that kind of money.

When I came, the condition of the plant was acute, and probably the biggest problem was the library, the Mills Library. The *Yale Underground Guide to Colleges* said, The Rollins library is so bad students are advised to bring their own crayons. I remember there was an elevator in the stacks. And it was one of those things where you have to pull on the cable to make the thing go up and down, and a sign I've never forgotten was on the door. It said, Look before stepping in elevator. And what that said to me is, You may open the door and the elevator won't be there, so don't just walk through the doorway!

The archives, this collection was in the downstairs in the— No, instead the rare book collection, was in the down stairs in the back next to what's now the entrance to the post office in a room that had standing water on the floor. This is where the autograph book, Hamilton Holt's autograph book of the autographs of all of the presidents were, half of which had been ripped out. The Archives themselves were upstairs and you may or may not know the story of the transition, but if you ask Kate sometime that's something worth recording, because it was a very painful transition and the former— Anyway, that's another story. But the building was awful.

Jack Critchfield had made a preliminary inquiry to the Olin Foundation about building a new library for Rollins. Olin's custom was to build one or two buildings a year, mostly science buildings. Franklin Olin of Federal Cartridge was a scientist and an engineer. But they had done a few other buildings, and Jack applied for this and had an architect. And they had plans to build the library down where French House is. I didn't like the plans very much. I called on the Olin people and said, "A library is the most important initiative for Rollins. We want to stress our academic priorities. The heart of the campus is the library. I want to do this right. I'm not comfortable with these plans. I would like to withdraw our application." So we withdrew our application from the Olin Foundation with the understanding that we would come back to them.

Jesse Morgan, our treasurer, newly appointed treasurer— I'll say a word about him later. We kept trying— Jesse said, "You know, one of the things they don't like about the plan we had before is that the library is not prominent enough. They want this—they wouldn't say it in these terms, but they want this to be a prominent building." We talked ourselves into building it in front of Mills. Now, the Mills Grant prohibited building anything in front of Mills. But we even talked ourselves into saying, Well if we call it Mills, we can call it an addition to Mills, and the whole complex would be the Olin Library. And we were going along that line, and I never felt right about it. But we did get the trustees to approve, it's in the minutes someplace, to approve locating a new library in the horseshoe in front of Mills, which would have been a disastrous mistake. But we needed a library and we needed the money.

One day Jesse Morgan comes to my office and says, "I got an idea." He said, "Come with me." So we walked out of the office and walked down. And where the library is now, used to be where Knowles Hall was. And he said, "You know Knowles is about to fall down. If we took Knowles down, we could put the library right there. If we put it at an angle, it would take the eye down to the lake," which is another thing we had talked about. And I said, "Jess, you're absolutely right. You're absolutely right." I've often said to Jesse, "You're the most creative person I've ever worked with and you're that one (snaps) idea." There's a wonderful new book out by Malcolm Gladwell called *Blink*, and it's about those (snaps) ideas, and this was (snaps) one of those ideas. And we then began to draw up some plans, went back to the Olin people, they were interested, and we began a relationship which went on for several years.

I never worked harder on anything in my life. Writing that proposal was a full summer, I'm going to say, of '83 that I worked on that. I often wished that I'd kept all the papers, they were in this huge file, to show my students the draft, and then draft again, and then draft again, and then correct, and then revise. The writing is the easy part; it's the revision that's the hard work. And that was really revised.

The uh— But we pulled together a proposal for them. And one other hero to be mentioned. We were serious about this. We had to have— Everything we were trying to do depended on a new library. Not a new gym, not a new whatever. Library. Quality. We're a liberal arts educational institution. The most important thing we do is library.

The uh— A young couple of alumni, Barbara and Peter Dixon, they had been friends of mine, and they had— They understood this, and one of our problems was we had a very low book budget. If we were going to get a new library, what were we going to put in it and the Dixon's gave us a million dollars to buy books for the new library. Now that was part of what we were able to take to the Olin people. Said, "Look, we're serious enough about this. Our alumni are serious enough about this, and they've already committed a million dollars for book purchase. And if we get a new library, we'll have books for it." And I think that was a very important factor. I will never forget the day there were a group of us meeting in my office and Connie Riggs, who worked with me, came in and sort of said, "I have Larry Milas on the phone." He was the head of the Olin Foundation. And I knew we were going to hear pretty soon. And the whole place was watching me, and I did not go to the phone in my office. I went to the phone out there. So, if it was bad news, I at least would have the privacy. But instead it was good news and I stretched the phone as far as I could and looked at the group and did that (thumbs up) and they all exploded. It was probably the happiest single professional moment of my life. So we got that, that grant.

One of the things I've always known is we had no alternative. If we had not gotten the grant, they, uh— I don't know where we would've come up with a hundred thousand dollars to redo Mills, so it was, it's the most important tangible part of my administration. Larry Milas has just retired from the Olin Foundation. I wrote him a letter the other day to say briefly what I've just said here, and to say that what I most appreciated was that he knew that in making that grant he could give Rollins the good housekeeping seal of approval to help us go forward. I've been told, I don't know, that it came down to Rollins and Tulane. And for Rollins to beat out Tulane made us feel very good about it.

The other building projects included the Alfond Baseball Stadium; Harold Alfond helped us with that. We had gotten Dan Galbreath of John Galbreath Company in Ohio, whose son, Squire [John], had come to Rollins; gotten him involved. Wonderful man; wonderful friend. And Dan, who owned the Pittsburgh Pirates at one time, helped talking to Harry Alfond to encourage

his contribution, and also George Cornell. We put an addition on the Annie Russell Theatre with a grant from the Kresge Foundation, and a number of other things. But we really needed a social science building. We had torn down Knowles; those classes were being conducted in the old Park Avenue school building. And we needed a social science building. (coughs) We wanted a social science building that was designed for around –The conference plan I did, which would have lounges, comfortable offices for faculty, would have space for conversation. We knew it was going to cost 3.5 million dollars and we began working on, working with, working on the Cornells. The Cornells had given I think about a million dollars, or less, slightly less than that, for the Cornell Fine Arts Museum. We got them to give a million dollars for, to endow scholarship and the classics chair, but we had to get their sights raised to three million dollars, which was hard to do. They were not in the habit of that kind of philanthropy.

We had a campaign to raise thirty-three million dollars, and we spent a lot of time with the Cornells helping them understand that for a campaign to succeed, you have to have one gift of ten percent of the total. There's a pyramid that fund raisers use. And to help them understand, they were the only prospects that we had in the Rollins family, in those days, who could do that. And they wrestled with it. And we had an architect present the case. The whole thing was orchestrated very carefully and very hard. At the fall trustee meeting. This was '87, or so. We made a presentation, we were over in the green room, I remember we had drawings. And then that was Friday afternoon. Friday evening, it happened to be Halloween, and we had invited the trustee's to come for dinner at our house. Well, we had this little presentation in the afternoon for George and Harriet. And then it broke up with no, with no response or commitment on their part. And Bill Gordon called me, and Bill Gordon had been with them, was a friend of theirs, and called me up afterwards and said, "Congratulations." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well George and Harriet are going to do the building." I said, "They never said that to me." He said, "They did. They thought they said that to you." And I said, "I hate to be old fashioned about this, Bill, but until we shake on it, I'm not going to believe it." So Bill and Peggy drove the Cornells to our house for dinner on Halloween. And Bill said, "Thad, George has something he wants to say to you." And he said, "Trick or treat!" (Laughter) It being Halloween. I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "We decided to treat you with a new building."

And for years I called up George Cornell on Halloween. His birthday was on Saint Patrick's day, March 17. I would call him, for sure, on Halloween to say "Trick or treat" and on March 17 to wish him a happy birthday. But that was, just as the library was the center of the institution, the— a contemporary social science building was very important, both in a statement about education and about providing space for students and faculty. Jack Lane designed it, maybe you've already talked to Jack about his vision of that as, in affect, the student and the faculty member on either end of a log. So that was the Cornells, who were very, very challenging, as others have no doubt told you, but very dear people. And interestingly, as I finished my administration, we became much more comfortable friends, because they knew I was not trying to get money out of them. So we continued to be friends until, first Harriet and then George, died.

Zhang: Could you tell us a little more about your leadership effort in the centennial celebration?

Seymour: That was the most fun I've ever had! I, knowing that we would be talking, when I woke up this morning, I found myself thinking about the centennial, ranging from the photograph, which I think we may have mentioned when we were talking before, that photograph (points to photograph behind him). And you've seen the person in either end.

Right here, wearing a white shirt and a necktie is David Zarou. Right there. And when the camera passed it, he ran behind the bleachers all the way up to here and there he is right there (points to second picture). White shirt and a neck-tie. So he's in it twice. Now this is a, yeah. We modeled this on this picture, which I had in my office, and if you look at the sign, here it says: Rollins College, Winter Park Florida, 15 January 1941. The lettering on the sign here is exactly the same. Rollins College, Winter Park Florida, 9 September 1985. And this picture in my office was so important to me. This was the students and the faculty of Rollins College, 1941. And I said, "Any time you've got a college that hold for a portrait or a photograph, you've got a community you can comprehend." I use to say, you could hold this college in your hand. When I started out, somebody said, "Well I'm not sure you can hold this in your hands anymore." But you can still get your arms around it. (Laughter) As I was saying that, it's a wonderful, wonderful line and, uh, I— One of the things that really gets me is I know so many of these people: here I am, here's Polly, here's Olga [Viso], here is Octavia [Lloyd], who was just back for a visit the other day, and you look at that picture and nobody is making an obscene gesture or anything else. It's a wonderful, wonderful picture.

As you may know, we had set it up with Good Morning America. The camera comes in with Murry Sales, and he says, "I'm Murray Sales, president of the Student Government at Rollins College, celebrating our centennial and we're here to say—" And with that the camera goes (makes whooshing sound) and we all say, "Good morning, America!" (Laughter) And that was as much fun as I've ever had. And then for the birthday, November 4th, we had a whole bunch of things going on. We had a program in the Annie Russell Theatre, remembering Hamilton Holt' and we had his contemporaries talking about him and we put a portrait of him on the stage. We had the, uh, Mr. and Mrs. Hooker, people representing them, arrive by train at the railroad station. I went over in our old family touring car and met them, and I remember standing at the station, and there Hope Strong led a cheer, and then I led a cheer, and so we kicked off the centennial that way.

Saturday night, we had a performance of *Man of La Mancha* in the field house, which was wonderful. And then Sunday, the centennial was Monday, Sunday we had a picnic and then in the evening we set up luminaria on all the horseshoe and a big tent. In my mind's eye, I can see Lauren Matthews, the daughter of Dan Matthews, who'd given our commencement address, cutting the centennial cake, and then right at midnight, we had a fireworks display and I had worked it out with the man in charge of the fireworks to give him the signal. So I had a watch and he said, "Now it takes about 3 seconds from the time I light it until the time it goes off." So I had to give him a margin of three seconds. So thirteen seconds before midnight I started going, ten, nine, eight, and then they fired it off and we had fireworks over the swimming pool. It was wonderful. And the students all started chanting: "Fox Day! Fox Day! Fox Day!" They wanted a Fox Day the next day. And the next day was our big day. We were having an event at the chapel and there's something else about it, I need to tell you.

The uh— But I got a phone call at six o'clock in the morning at home. And someone said, "You know, I think it's great that you're a hundred years old, but are you going to ring the damn bell a hundred times?" And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well the bell at Rollins is ringing. It's been ringing for the longest time." I said, "Uh-oh…" And I got my car,

came up to the campus, the college bell was ringing. And there in the center of the campus was a papier-mâché fox. (Laughter) And everyone said, "Fox Day! Fox Day!" (Laughter) And I went over and picked it up, I saw it was very light, and put it in the back of the, uh— I was driving a VW Bug Convertible at the time, and put it in the back of the car and drove it off and took it home. But I just remember that moment of walking across the campus holding this papier-mâché fox with those bells going in the background.

The two things about the centennial day: one is, we had a very nice ceremony in the chapel. Very important, we had some speakers, that sort of thing you do when you have a hundredth birthday. But we had done something very important that weekend, and this is lost in the shadows of time. You have to go back to 1985 to remember that the big issues on campus was apartheid. And students were pressing their colleges not to invest in companies that were doing business in South Africa. And the term was divestiture: wanting their colleges, their trustees, to divest. Last time we were talking about the Kodak and Solinsky and the Dartmouth, that I answered your question, in 1987. Sorry, 1967. And here it is 1985, and that issue is big. Anybody, wonderful research paper, but anybody doing research on that will find that in the *New York Times*, things about divestiture. At Dartmouth, for example, the students built corrugated cardboard shanties on the campus and lived in them to make a statement about Soweto on the conditions for the communities in South Africa. So the question came up— Well one other thing. So the question was, don't invest in South Africa. But there was a man named Dr. Leon Sullivan, who was on the board of General Motors, who said, "Wait a minute, investment is important to the economic welfare. Let's identify those companies that have fair employment practices, give equal rights to blacks and whites, who have healthcare and other benefits. Let's establish what we call the Sullivan Principles, and any company that qualities for, that meets the Sullivan Principles, is okay for investment."

So we— This question of the Sullivan Principles became very hot on campuses and we had a group of students led by a student named Woody Nash, who set up corrugated cardboard homes in front of Mills to protest Rollins' investment practices and to urge the trustees to divest companies that did not subscribe to the Sullivan Principles. The trust[ees]— I've been so proud, I've always been so proud of this, the trustees were meeting in the Galloway room. And this was just before the centennial weekend. The trustees walked right by those shanties into the Galloway room and on Friday before the centennial voted to divest. Now, for Rollins that was big. It's a whole other conversation about how the trustees have come of age, but that was a huge, huge decision. And I was so proud that— And I announced that as part of the comments on Monday. I'm so proud that part of the coming of age, not just shedding the Jolly Rolly Colly, not just being a Nine Nifty College, not being in *U.S. News* and the *World Report,* was having the conscience to act out of a principle about its endowment.

The, uh, now the other thing that happened, you may not know this, is after the ceremony we came over here and put a time capsule in the Olin cornerstone. So that was the last event of the centennial. No, that was the last event of the centennial observation. The last event, and most people don't know this, was in Woodstock, Connecticut in August of that year. August, '86. When we reenacted Hamilton Holt's tradition of having his birthday party. And we had about two hundred and fifty people come out and had a wonderful picnic there. So we used that. We began the centennial with the dedication of the Olin Library on April 17, 1985, the anniversary of our charter. And we concluded it in August of '86. So they— That's what the centennial was all about. It was great fun, I loved it. I had a good time.

Zhang: Could you tell us about your involvement with the renovation of Walk of Fame and Pinehurst?

Seymour: Well, thank you. Well Pinehurst— Pinehurst was in terrible shape. When I first saw it, it had holes in the floor, it had rats coming in. When it rained, you'd get your feet wet in the bathroom because of the splashing up and so on. It was in terrible shape and everybody wanted to tear it down. And I knew it was our last original building and so our last link with our founding. I learned later, by the way, that the architect for that building was from Worcester, Massachusetts and he had also designed the hospital in Hanover, New Hampshire, Mary Hitchcock Hospital, where four of our five children were born, so I had a personal link, nothing to do with it. But I knew we should save Pinehurst. We had a consulting architect, Bill Turner, dean of the architectural school in Tulane, who helped us think through what could be done with it. And Bill helped us talk to our trustee Ira Kooger about making a gift to preserve the building. And we got enough money to restore it.

One of the things about the building is that it had been located very—located right next to the original Knowles Hall, and when Knowles burned we later discovered black marks on the north end of Pinehurst where it had charred. But it was very close to the Walk of Fame, which by the way in those days was a real road with cars back and forth. And very close to the dormitory next to it. So part of, because we had to redo the foundations anyway, part of it was to move it south by about twenty feet and east by about twenty feet. And somewhere in the archives is a film that a local T.V. company did, *Time Lapse*. And you see Pinehurst go: zoom, zoom! (Laughter) It was great fun to see. So that was very important to me and every time I see it I realize we still have that link with our founding, because it was a part of the original campus. I'm pleased with that.

And the Walk of Fame was gift of Frank Hubbard and his family to permit us to recast that. That was very important to me. I mean, that was pure Hamilton Holt. The Walk of Fame is pure Hamilton Holt. And indeed, at his home in Sunset Hill in Woodstock, is a walk of fame. With a mill wheel, and then stones from his forbearers, members of his family. So, when he came down here, he said, "Oh, we ought to have a walk of fame." And he got a mill wheel brought down from Connecticut. By the way, his tombstone is one of those mill wheels. If you see his grave in the Congregational Church in Woodstock, it's a mill wheel. But he brought that down, and then encouraged people, as we all know, to bring back mementos. I've always said it's institutionalized vandalism of the worst sort (laughter). However, it was a sentimental statement on his part that these mementos would inspire all of us. Those of us who live here know that part of the fun is to see visitors go around and look at them and usually it's funny. Funny sort of familiar style. And the husband will read the names aloud. "Oh yes, here's Shakespeare. Oh, and here's Robert Burns." As if he knew any of them. (Laughter) And then we've all been asked the question, "Oh! Are these people all buried here?" (Laughter)

I had some wonderful moments myself. The Martin Luther King stone was gathered by Dan Matthews, who talked to the King family and he gave it to his daughter, Lauren, who brought it down personally and we set that there. The Zora Neale Hurston stone, which was reflecting the one Alice Walker had put on her gravestone. One of our alumni read from Zora; that's the first I heard of her work. Tina Osceola helped us put in the stone for Chief Osceola, her grandfather. And I, somewhere, have a photograph of Tina in her full Seminole regalia and me in my academic gown standing there by the stone. So, the Walk of Fame was a very happy

project for me. For fun, because Susan Curran had been so interested in the walk of Fame, I designated her the college Lapidarian. She and I continue to tease about that.

Zhang: There's an old saying that says that behind every great man, there's always a great woman.

Seymour: Oh, indeed.

Zhang: So could you tell us about Polly Seymour?

Seymour: Well, I should not say. You would really need to ask her, because I would never speak for her, but we, we who have been married for fifty-seven years now.

Zhang: And how did you two meet? Last week you mentioned that you—

Seymour: Yeah, we met in the summer of— In New Hope, Pennsylvania where my folks had a place, and where her father lived, who's an artist. And we got married. And we— She sacrificed her work to permit me to go to school, and uh, so she did not graduate from college until we came to Rollins. I think I mentioned that she graduated from Rollins in 1985; straight A student, did wonderfully well. But she has been a partner, a great fun in this profession, as we've done it together and she's been a partner all along the way. We've raised five kids along the way as well. But she, she never liked the term first lady. Indeed, it makes her quite uncomfortable. But I think she has always been comfortable with our partnership with the three institutions that we've served. We have entertained a lot of people in our home, we have talked about everything, she's advised me of all sorts of things. Indeed, I remember one time I was visiting another campus and they were pressing me very hard, pressing us very hard to go there. And so I passed Polly in the hall; she just went like this, putting her thumbs down. Simply to say, I don't think this is the place for us, and she was absolutely right. So, she has been a joyful partner, and continues to be. And she would speak for herself.

I guess, if there's a downside, because, you know, these jobs are fun but they're not without their hard times. During *Equus,* which I talked about last time, I didn't talk about the bomb threats or the people who called her up when I was out at the courtroom. People would call her up and say, "You're going to die in Hell. You're going to burn in Hell." And when, we have often said, when the going gets tough, suddenly you discover that people won't talk to you very much. Our analogy has been that it's been like having a dread disease and your friends don't know whether you know that they know you've got it. And so, during some hard times, and I won't identify them. To myself, I can name five or six really ugly tough times at Rollins. During that, during those times, Polly always said she felt very isolated. Nobody talked to her, nobody ever said, Oh Polly I'm sorry you're having such a hard time, don't take it personally or whatever. It just— Like the Quaker shunning. And that's the downside.

But for those few occasions that somebody that had been such fun always ultimately turning on student friendships. We've had student friendships all our lives. Continued to this year at graduation. Some very special friends graduated. And that's what has made it fun.

I was thinking, I went through some papers, I won't refer to many of them, but one, as a reminder of perspective, alumni were asked for their view of the place and one wrote: "The school has lost"— This was written during my administration —"The school has lost the spirit of

Dr. H. Holt. It has turned into a pinko knee-jerk hotbed liberal mess. It's thrown off fraternities and sororities and let the faculty run the school who all have tenure, which is another name for unions. No wonder the alum's don't contribute!" (Laughter) So that helps with perspective on change.

Zhang: Some people believe another of your, the legacy of your administration in fact is that you strengthened relationship with the city of Winter Park. Can you tell us about your involvement with the community?

Seymour: Well, being a part of where we live has always been important to us. We were very much involved in Hanover. One of the things I did that was great fun, was to be the marshal of the 1961 bicentennial parade in Hanover. Gosh, I had a good time! I remember somebody in one article, I was quoted as saying: "Parades bring out the best in people!" (Laughs) Well, the sort of do. I love parades. And I, uh, I was involved in a lot of things in Hanover, I was involved in the church, I chaired the Campus Ministry committee. Through our church we founded a coffeehouse, which was a very big thing in the sixties. The Ram's Horn Coffeehouse. So we've been involved in Hanover. Both of us had friends and activities. In Crawfordsville, I was an active Rotarian. I remember I loved to go to Rotary and I'd sit across from a farmer, and he'd be telling about his problems with hog bloat. And I'd say, Isn't that wonderful? I thought I had troubles. Here's a guy dealing with hog bloat. (Laughter) And that was very important to me. I chaired at the United Fund there, and worked at the coffeehouse in that community. Polly was very much involved with the town swimming team. Our kids were all swimmers there. I helped organize a summer theatre group called the Sugar Creek Players. And again, I think balance in your life requires that you— You're deprived if you don't enjoy the fellowship of a community.

And when we were thinking about coming to Winter Park, the fact that Winter Park was a small town was important to us. So I was a Rotarian and got involved with a number of community organizations. I was chairman of B.E.T.A., the helping program for women and children in Orlando. Did that for seven or eight years, and enjoyed being involved in other groups not simply to be on the letterhead but it was fun to be involved with the Science Center and WMFE and stuff like that.

Polly's biggest commitment has been to the Winter Park library. She began running their book sales in 1980. Seventy-nine or '80. The first year they raised two-hundred and thirty-two dollars. They— The book sales grew and became very successful, raised maybe twenty-five thousand dollars a year. And then one day Polly said, "You know, all my volunteers and I are getting older. This is a lot of work." And when they remodeled the library, she and Bob Melanson, the librarian, worked out an arrangement for there to be a permanent book sale. A bookstore. The New Leaf Bookstore. And that's been Polly's passion. She has worked at that. She's there almost every day. It has raised, since the first book sale, it has raised almost three quarters of a million dollars. And I— Just watching for that, and she never says anything about it, but I'm watching for the day it hits a million dollars, which it will. I hope it will in our lifetime. But more than that, it's a statement of community spirit; a lot of volunteers work there. It recycles a lot of books; probably twenty-five to thirty thousand books change hands every year. She was chairman of the board, and she hired Bob Melanson, she was head of that effort. And then she got me involved with the board. I served as chairman of the board and helped with some other initiatives.

You and I served on the Smith committee and that's been fun. She and I both got involved in Habitat. I've chaired that for a while. One of the things that was most fun was chairing the task force on community civility, which I enjoyed doing back in the early nineties. So being a part of Winter Park has been very important to us. Very fulfilling, very natural, and very happy. Indeed, the work would not have been as much fun if it were not for the community as well.

Zhang: How do you view your Rollins career and now that you're officially retired, what's your plan?

Seymour: Well my plan is to stay in Winter Park and to be a part of it. And to teach at Rollins, probably as an adjunct. Probably, every semester, to do a course, but to have the option of maybe not teaching one semester so we can travel or whatever. We have organized life to spend the summers where it's a little cooler now, taking care of grandchildren up on Shelter Island. And to continue to be involved in the community. But I will celebrate my seventy-seventh birthday this summer and I'm trying to be prudent about not taking on more than I can comfortably handle. Indeed, I'm feeling a bit of the squeeze right now because I did agree to give the commencement address at Trinity on Saturday, where our grandson is graduating. So I have to do some things like that and enjoy it.

I'm so comfortable about our time at Rollins. When I finished up the spring, Barbara Carson very kindly made some remarks at a faculty meeting, and what particularly pleased me was that she talked about my work here as a teacher, and noted that I'd been teaching here for fifteen years, which is longer than any other job I've had. I taught for five years, I was dean for ten, I was president at Wabash for nine, president here for twelve, and I've been professor of English for fifteen years. And to have the privilege of leading the institution for the period through its centennial and helping the institution define itself as part of that discipline, and then to top it off with spending my, devoting my attention to students, has just been perfect for me. I couldn't be more grateful for that privilege. I mean that.

Zhang: Thank you so much. We really enjoyed your conversation.

Seymour: Thank you, it was fun for me.