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Oral History Interview with President Emeritus Thaddeus Seymour, January 30, 2009.

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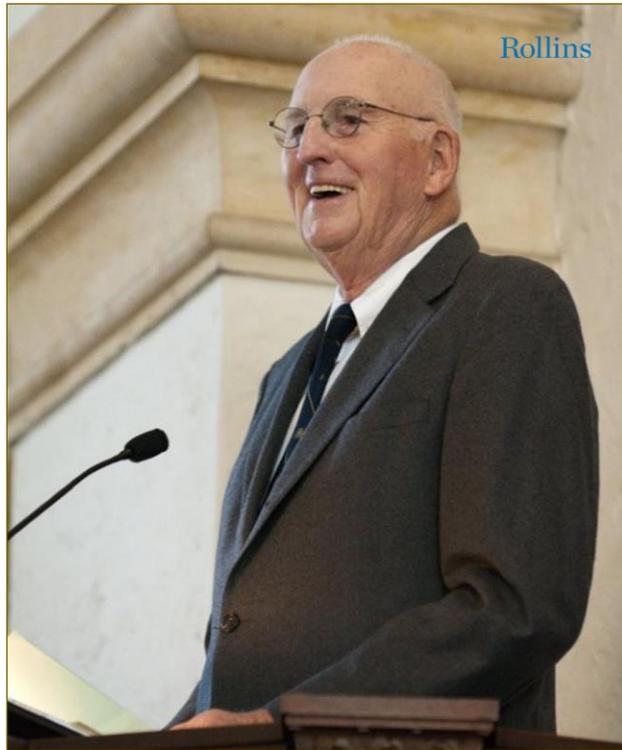


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President Emeritus Thaddeus Seymour, Sr. '82HAL '90H
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

Interview with Thaddeus Seymour, President Emeritus of Rollins College

Friday, January 30, 2009

Denise Cummings, Wenxian Zhang, and Julian Chambliss (partial session)

WZ: Good morning.

TS: Good morning, Wenxian. Good morning, Denise.

DC: Good morning.

TS: How are you both? I do apologize for my bandage (indicates bandage on his face), but it will come off in due course.

WZ: My name is Wenxian Zhang, Head of Archives and Special Collections. With me is Professor Denise Cummings. We're going to interview Thaddeus Seymour, President Emeritus of Rollins College.

We understand, Thad, you were invited to give out a speech at the Winter Park University Club, "Tabloid Rollins and Winter Park." We want to hear some of those behind-the-scenes stories.

TS: Well, thank you for the opportunity. And I'm even prepared to tell some of the stories that I wasn't even ready to give to the University Club members. But let me begin with the story that I was going to have be at the center of my remarks to them, which is the account of the Ohio Wesleyan-Rollins football game of 1947.

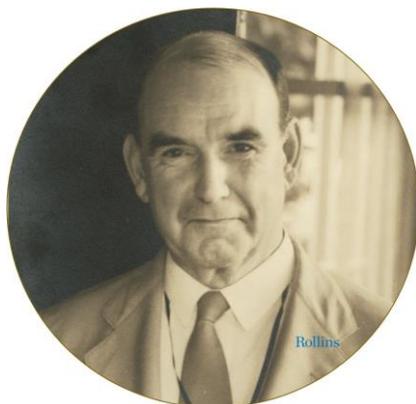


The Rollins football team, 1947-1948 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

In my teaching, I would often give a quiz on April Fools' Day of trick questions, and one of the trick questions was, What was the score of the Ohio Wesleyan-Rollins football game in November 1947? They would all guess, but the answer is there was *no* score, because the game was canceled. Because Ohio Wesleyan [University] had an African American player, and Rollins concluded that it would cause too much trouble to have the team come down and play in the football stadium that was managed by the local American Legion.

I got interested in that story and began to find dibs and dabs, and found there's a lot on this in the files and in the record about that event. And it sort of goes this way. In the fall of 1947, as the College put together its football schedule, the Homecoming game was going to be with Ohio Wesleyan. They were going to come down here, and it would be the highlight of Homecoming Weekend, which in those days had a big formal dance and parade and so on. It was the sort of fulcrum of social life in the fall.

Just weeks before the game, it was learned that Ohio Wesleyan had an African American player on the team. And Hamilton Holt [former President] and others were aware that that presented some challenges in the South in 1947, particularly since the game would be played in the Orlando Stadium, which was managed by the American Legion. Indeed, they were told, If that person comes down, there's going to be trouble.



President Hamilton Holt in 1937 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

Now it happened that Dean [Arthur] Enyart, whose name you may know—and whose house, by the way, is right across from Elizabeth Hall and is still there—Dean Enyart was an Ohio Wesleyan graduate. And he was enlisted to see if he couldn't persuade Ohio Wesleyan not to bring the player. And in the files, I found a transcript of the telephone conversation between Dean Enyart of Rollins and Dean C. E. Ficken of Ohio Wesleyan. It's an absolutely fascinating four pages of discussion of this issue and is worth revisiting, I think.



Dean Arthur Enyart (right) with students in 1936 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

Dean Ficken's assignment was to try to get the Ohio Wesleyan students to ask the Athletic Department not to bring this player down. Dean Enyart went up there personally and met with the Ohio Wesleyan student council, and got them to vote that the player not come down. He came back sort of in triumph, to say, It's done; we're all set. Homecoming will occur.

There's a—is it Paul Harvey?—or something on the radio, [that] says, “And *now*, the rest of the story.” The Ohio Wesleyan trustees somehow got involved. One of the trustees was indignant that an Ohio Wesleyan student was not a first-class citizen and could not go. And he protested. And the trustees voted that the student would go. That word came in a week before the game was to be played.

When Rollins heard this, it—my reading of it is, the trustees put real heat on Hamilton Holt, who was a very liberal and generous-spirited person, to cancel the game. On November 25, here's a letter from Mary Jane Whitley, Secretary of the Student Council (reads from document): “This is to inform you that the Student Council, at our last meeting of November 24, voted unanimously in favor of the decision made to cancel the Ohio Wesleyan Game.” So there was lobbying going on.

One of my favorite documents—and this is a master's thesis for somebody. At Ohio Wesleyan, Dean Enyart writes Dr. Holt, “When my letter to Dean Ficken was received, the student council asked that its contents be presented to the student body. As they have a democratic setup such as

we have at Rollins, the privilege could not be denied.” So Dean Enyart’s letter was made public at Ohio Wesleyan. (Reads from document) “The president of the student body presented the arguments against playing the Negro at Rollins. After he had finished, he called for a vote. The student body voted 1,500 to 20 in favor of leaving the colored player at home.” Now this is what’s worth some research: (Reads) “The president noted that the twenty voting against constituted an organization known as the Wesleyan Fellowship, a somewhat radical group. He asked for a meeting with them, and after fully explaining the situation again, they voted 19 to 1 in favor of leaving the Negro home.” Now, I want to know who that one person is. I’d be fascinated by that. The work to find that out is probably more than anybody could accomplish, but there was one Ohio Wesleyan student who, after all the pressure and all the votes and so on, still voted against it.

Anyway, so the game was cancelled, and Hamilton Holt had to go to the Annie Russell Theatre and explain this to the students. And here is the most anguished five pages, single-spaced, of rationale by this very dear man, explaining why it was better not to have the game than to run the risk of setting back the cause of racial justice by an incident. It’s a fascinating case study of attitudes. It’s not unlike the letter from the clergymen that Martin Luther King answered in “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Indeed, if there were world enough and time, I’d try to figure out how to run the two of them together, because it’s a very interesting insight.

Now, let me go back to Paul Harvey. Ohio Wesleyan said they were bringing the player. The trustee who made that happen was Branch Rickey. Now Branch Rickey was the manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who that summer—the summer of 1947—had put Jackie Robinson on the field, the first African American player. Rickey got death threats; Jackie Robinson was booed and hissed, and they’d throw things at him and so on. Just imagine Branch Rickey going to his little college in Ohio and saying, You know, this college in Florida won’t play against us, because we have an African American player. And he said, Like hell. And it was really Branch Rickey who made that happen. I think that’s a fascinating detail.

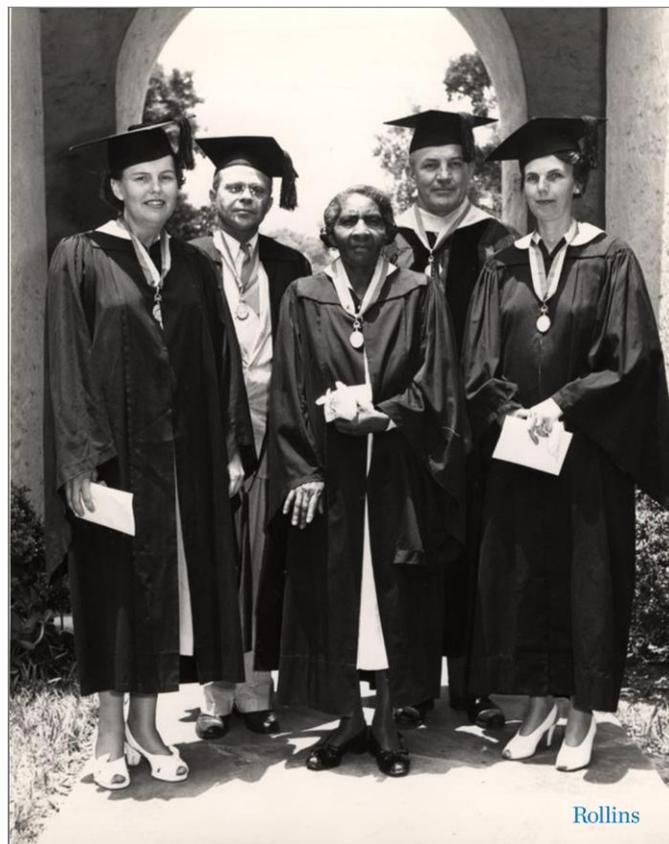
I did have a friend who did a little research on this, and it’s interesting. This is referred to in Branch Rickey’s biography. It says, “After the season, Rickey criticized his beloved Ohio Wesleyan upon learning its football team, scheduled to play Rollins College in Orlando, Florida, decided against taking the Negro tackle Kenneth Woodward with them. Alumni, faculty, and students called on Rickey to help, and he wired the president, ‘I think Ohio Wesleyan might make a great mistake relative to not playing a colored boy against Rollins with the resultant bad publicity based upon injustice to the player and an expression of intolerance that the university has never stood for.’” And it goes on to say, “Woodward went south with the team.” But of course, he never did; the game was canceled.

I’ll give all these to you (shows photos), but these are pictures of Woodward, who graduated; went to medical school; became a distinguished doctor in Rochester; was very active in setting up community health programs. He died in 1996. I had had the thought that on the anniversary of the game, it would be fun to have him down for an honorary degree. But it never got that far; actually, he died before the fiftieth anniversary. So, that’s the game.

Now, here’s another sort of Paul Harvey side of it. So here’s Hamilton Holt, for whom I have great sympathy; he was such a decent, good man, and his trustees were very hard on him in a lot of different ways. After the humiliation of the Ohio Wesleyan game, he went to Mary McLeod Bethune in the winter of 1948—now the year is 1947-1948—to offer her an honorary degree.

Now, we have to cast ourselves back sixty years, but there had never been an African American person on the platform of a white college in Florida in those years. When the trustees heard about it, they said, No, you can't do that. And he was put in the position of having to go back to her and explain what the trustees had done and to say, I'm going to do it anyway. In her autobiography, she talks about this discussion. Said he was in tears. And she said, "Dr. Holt, what you stand for and what you do is so important, I'm not going to let you risk your leadership at Rollins. I decline the degree." So that's in her autobiography.

At Commencement that year, if you look at the photographs, you will see—I've lost her name [Susie Wesley], but I've got it in the office—you'll see an African American woman among the platform people. She was the housekeeper from Cloverleaf [Cottage]. Now, Hamilton Holt could not award an honorary degree without the trustees, but he could award the Decoration of Honor. And so that woman—her name is out there—that woman is standing with all these dignitaries, having received the Decoration of Honor. I am absolutely positive that this was part of his response to what he had been through.



Susie Wesley (center) with fellow recipients of the Rollins Decoration of Honor, 1948
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

The next year, he retired. At his final Commencement, Mary McLeod Bethune received an honorary degree from Rollins College. I think that's a wonderful, wonderful story.

So, anyway, that's the Ohio Wesleyan game. It's got the insight into attitudes from 1947. It's got Branch Rickey, who had made one of the powerful contributions to American life. And it's got Hamilton Holt and Mary McLeod Bethune. I think it's a wonderful story. So there's that.

DC: In your documents, did you come across anything about how the students felt? Because you had this long sort of speech that he gave them in the Annie Russell [Theatre], but they had actually come to their determination before—

TS: Before the speech. But there'd been a lot of politicking on campus.

I don't know. I'm sure that's there; I haven't gone that far. But those are students you could interview now, because they're all around. These are kids who graduated in 1950. I graduated in 1950, so that's a generation that is still there.

I think for somebody that's writing a master's thesis, this would be a very interesting topic. And the people are there to be interviewed, including some of the old guard of Orlando.

WZ: Also, I understand that during the early years of the [Holt] administration, Zora Neale Hurston came to Rollins.

TS: That's right.

WZ: There was also some controversy surrounding that.

TS: Right. She was befriended by Edwin Osgood Grover [former Professor of Books]. Indeed, one of her books she dedicates to him, at least in the foreword. I think she went on to say, "I was going to say a lot more about you, but my editor made me cut back," or something like that.

Grover got her connected with a faculty member—whose name I can't remember, but I have written down [W. Robert Wunsch]—who was in the Theatre Department, and sort of encouraged her to think in theatrical terms. And she put together a show that ran in New York a little bit; I don't know much about that. But then it was performed here, called *From Sun to Sun*. And it was folk music, and the performers were from Eatonville and elsewhere; local African American performers. But it was performed off campus, because they could not use the Annie Russell Theatre. This would be in the '30s, I guess. And then it had been so popular, they performed it, I think in the gymnasium or the—

WZ: Recreation Hall.

TS: Recreation Hall, yeah. So finally, it was performed here.

The Zora story is very nice. That got me thinking about the Zora stone [in the Walk of Fame], which was the first I ever knew of her. Some students had come in and said, We really ought to have a Zora stone. So, Yeah, let's do that. I do remember a student whose name I've lost now, sitting in a rocking chair on The Horseshoe [Mills Lawn], reading from Zora Neale Hurston while we put the stone in. And it's now moved. It was there, fairly near the grinding wheel.

But right where it used to be is the Martin Luther King stone. And that stone has a Rollins connection: Dan Matthews, who's a Rollins graduate—was the last bugler—Class of '55. Now, classes used to change with a bugle rather than a bell. You wonder why it's called "Camp Rollins?"

Dan was the rector of a big church in Atlanta, and his daughter was a student here. And we wanted to put a Martin Luther King stone in the Walk of Fame. And his daughter went home, and she and her father went to the King family, and they personally gave her the stone, which she brought down, and we put it in the Walk of Fame. That's also right there.



L. Douglas Brockington '84 and President Thaddeus Seymour at the Walk of Fame ceremony honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in January 1983 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

Well, that's the Ohio Wesleyan story.

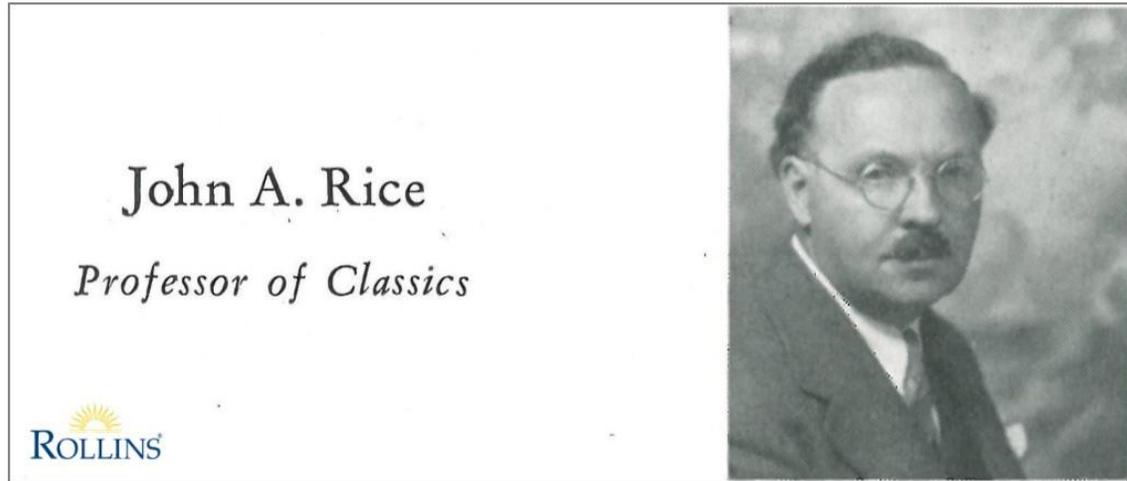
The E. [Ervin] T. Brown [former Rollins Treasurer] story, I don't know very much about, but there was a (pulls out documents)—I'm going to leave these with you. There was a former trustee, very active person, named George Carrison. And George was a, um—I won't say mean spirited, but he sort of delighted in intrigue and encounters and so on. He was right at the center of the [Paul] Wagner [former President] business, and there's a lot in here about that.

He got mad at me, because I wrote something in the alumni magazine about how John Tiedtke [former Rollins Treasurer and Trustee] had saved the College in 1948—when we really were bankrupt—by putting together some bonds and getting people to put up some money and so on. George Carrison said, "I'm the one who did that, and I really resent that you're giving John Tiedtke all the credit for what I did, and he didn't do anything." And on and on and on and on. He wrote me a whole series of letters—let me just find them—and sent me a whole bunch of stuff from his files, which include correspondence with Hamilton Holt and so on.

But George's position was that he was the one who blew the whistle on John Rice [former Professor]. Having said that, let me just see. Give me a second now. (Reads from document) "Just how unique my participation in the running history of Rollins over a period of time is, I shall leave to your judgement. I do not know, however, of a similar situation where the development of events called so continuously for action on the part of an alumnus in behalf of his alma mater." This was written in 1986.

Now Carrison died, but his daughter is an alumna, and she's still around. And my strong urging would be to get those papers; his papers. These are all Xeroxes of some of the papers he had. They include letters from Hamilton Holt, telegrams from Hamilton Holt, and so on. It's all sort of covert and CIA kind of stuff.

But let me read this much: “Dr. Holt knew me as a student, favorably I believe, in the early ’30s. But until Professor Rice’s personal attack on me one afternoon in class, the relationship was nothing more than the cordial one between the President and one of the students, albeit I was a prominent campus leader and a Rollins Key Society member. Briefly, Professor Rice was a very noted member of the faculty, whose ideas ran considerably at odds with those of Dr. Holt. Professor Rice asked me at one time to be an informer for him on the intimate aspects of student life. When I refused, he launched a vicious personal attack upon me without warning one afternoon in class, pointing to me and stating, ‘I show you there a man who would crucify Christ.’” And then it goes on.



John Andrew Rice, pictured in the 1931 *Tomokan* yearbook (Photo: Rollins College Archives)

But Carrison makes the point that *he* was the one who ratted on Rice and started the process which led to an AAUP [American Association of University Professors] review and the condemnation. When I was trying very hard to get Phi Beta Kappa here, we went to the Phi Beta Kappa office, and (inaudible) pulled out a file and said, “Now, I see you had some problems with Professor Rice?” Well, that was fifty years ago. But we were censured by the AAUP for the Rice Affair. Anyway, Carrison talks about Rice, and Rice is another story for tabloid Rollins, I think.

Oh, and I started to say—let me see if I can find the E.T. Brown reference. Here he [Carrison] talks about all the trustees. He talked about how E.T. Brown was going around lining up trustee votes, so that the treasurer would report to the trustees rather than to the president. This is pretty serious stuff. And Holt got wind of it. And they had a meeting in New York, and somewhere in Carrison’s correspondence is the indication that the votes were divided. And Hamilton Holt went in, and in effect said, You’ve got to decide whether you want me or E.T. Brown. And if you vote for him, I’m out of here. Now, this was 1948, so he was pretty close to the end of his career anyway, but somebody like John Tiedtke spoke of that as one of the high-water or low-water marks of the modern history of the College.



John Tiedtke at work, circa 1962 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

Now John Tiedtke said—and it’s part of what I wrote about in the alumni magazine—in 1948, which was Hamilton Holt’s next-to-last year, the College had the custom of collecting tuition by the year—not by the semester, by the year—and by February, they were out of money. And they couldn’t meet the payroll or provide the dining services and so on.

John Tiedtke was a young—he figures in this whole E. T. Brown business—was a young businessman in town. John was class of ’30 at college. So this is 1948; so he was in his mid-forties. And a very successful citrus investor, and a sort of a dilettante of a sweet sort. Did either of you know him at all?

DC: No, I’ve only heard anecdotal stories from (inaudible).

TS: He died now; it’s been a while, I guess. I sat with him at his ninetieth birthday party. He was the guy who hired me. Let me interrupt and say, he went to Dartmouth [College], Class of ’30, and was very loyal to Dartmouth. Indeed, the [Rollins] trustee meetings in the fall were always worked around when his class had a mini reunion in Hanover. And they would not schedule a trustee meeting when John was going to be in Hanover.

John’s son, Philip, who lives in town—very bright young man—John wanted him to go to Dartmouth, which is the primary reason he did *not* go to Dartmouth. I was Dean up there at the time; did not know John, but I had a call from a friend saying, “I got a classmate who’s here with his son. Would you be willing to meet with them and talk about Dartmouth?” So John Tiedtke and Philip came over to my office, and we apparently had a very congenial forty-five-minute conversation. Which obviously didn’t do any good, because Philip went to Stanford [University]; very bright.

But John apparently thought well of me from that experience. And when Rollins was looking for a new president, I had—totally off the subject, but I had made what in retrospect were really

crazy decisions. But in fairness to Wabash [College], where I was president, I wanted to give them lots of time for a presidential search. I gave them a year's notice. I said, "I'm going to finish up at the end of next year." And that gave them the summer to put a committee together and so on. But it was so early, I did not have a job. It wasn't, I was leaving for another job; I was just, I knew it was time to leave. I was coming up on my fiftieth birthday, and I said, "If I'm going to do anything else in life, I'd better do it pretty soon, or it'll be too late."

And indeed, I had not planned to go to another college. I interviewed for things ranging from a vice presidency of the Ball Corporation, which makes Mason jars—he was a trustee at Wabash. I interviewed for the presidency of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, because they wanted a college president to be their front man, and I had grown up in New York City.

But then I began to get some inquiries from colleges (laughs). Yeah, shame on me. One was Colgate [University]. And we went there for conversations in August. No reason you'd know the Colgate campus, but it's in a little town: Hamilton, New York. And the president's house is up on a hill, sort of overlooking the campus. You go through the town, and it's nothing but old bungalows with minibuses in the driveway and Schwinn bikes on the porch. It was really quite confining-looking.

I had been taken off to interview faculty and talk with students and all that sort of stuff. And some nice ladies took Polly [Seymour] off for lunch and to get to know the town and so on. At the end of the day, we went back to the hotel, and I happened to see Polly in the lobby. They had said, Now Thad, we really would like to continue these discussions. Our Executive Committee is meeting in New York on Tuesday, and we're hoping that you'd be willing to come down and meet with the Executive Committee—which is code for the fact that they were pretty serious about my candidacy. Then I walked past Polly in the lobby, and she went (gestures) (laughter). Put her thumb down, where only I could see it. And it was one of the most perfect moments in our life together; she was *so* right. And later on that afternoon, I said, "I'm afraid I've got something else I've got to do on Tuesday. I need some time to think this over." And that was the end of it. Anyway, we had had some conversations like that.

And somehow John Tiedtke was aware that I was looking around a little bit and called me up. Frank Hubbard had been Chairman of the Board, and then Jack Critchfield [former President] left. He and Jack were very close. Frank stepped down, and John Tiedtke became Chairman of the Board.

So, as Chairman of the Board, he called me up and asked if we would come down to visit, and sent two first-class tickets up. And we came down. While we were here, Sylvia Tiedtke—his very withdrawn, dear, rose-growing wife—put on a dinner party for us, and I think it's the only time in all the time that we knew them that we knew of their entertaining in their home.

It was very clear—I guess my point is, it was John who was working to get us to come. So I feel very close to John, and I wanted in a way to express that affection in a statement about what he had done. And I had one of those bonds, you have it down here [in the Archives] now, but one of the bonds from 1948 that saved the College (inaudible).

Okay, now, how can I be helpful? Let's see, here's what I thought when I was driving over. The George Morgan Ward [former President] story is a favorite of mine, and in his little Fred [Alfred J.] Hanna [former Professor and Trustee] publication on the administration of George Morgan Ward, there's a paragraph which I used to quote in speeches all the time. It was right after the

freeze, 1895; the place was broke. George Morgan Ward wrote, or spoke, or whatever the account—he said, “It was February. I always hated February, because those bills had to be paid, and what we as bill payers know”—from our point of view, February is good, because the payday came a couple of days earlier. But from his point of view, people had to be paid a couple of days earlier. And he said, “I said, ‘Lord, if this college is going to continue, you have to do it. I’m done.’” And he says, “Then the mail came, and I opened an envelope, and a check fell out. It was a check from [Mrs.] Francis Bangs Knowles [widow of a former Trustee] for \$10,000.” It’s a wonderful little story, and it’s all written up, but I always love to tell it as a reminder.

Then the other one reminding us of fragile days is that negotiation with the church. We were so fragile in the ’20s that if the College was to continue, it was going to have to turn itself over to a church. It had never formally been Congregational; it was supported by Congregationalists, but it was never structurally so. And it was very interesting, the correspondence about that. I’m sure you’ve seen it.

Then there’s the Rice Affair. There is the whole business—I’ve talked about this—of Irving Bacheller getting Hamilton Holt to come. Bacheller was a trustee. And the whole business of Holt—who had lost out on the League of Nations—being a man without a cause, who thought perhaps being a college president would give him a platform for continuing the fight for world peace.

You both know this, but the trustees wrote to him and offered him \$5,000. And he wrote back and turned it down. He said, “Any place that values its presidency so low is not a place I’d want to work.” So they made it ten [\$10,000], and he came.

The whole business of Hamilton Holt—oh, I started to say, Irving Bacheller. Robin Chapman [author of *The Absolutely Essential Guide to Winter Park*] did that little piece on Winter Park Land Company getting Bacheller here, and Harold Ward’s [Trustee] grandfather being the one who got Bacheller here. I’ve talked about it with Gail [Sinclair, Director of the Winter Park Institute], but I just haven’t done any work on it.

That period, between 1925 and 1940, was so special for Winter Park and its sense of it being a literary community, being cultural, in that Annie Russell [actress and former Theatre Director] was here; they had a symphony. It was a very special place in so many ways.

But Hamilton Holt and Irving Bacheller and Harold Ward’s grandfather and [Charles Hosmer] Morse, who had the land company, made all that happen. That’s a nice story.

Okay, what do you want to talk about? I haven’t gotten to the juicy stuff (laughs).

WZ: We’ll try to focus on some individual people, some special events, and some defining moments in the history of the College.

TS: Well, I’ve certainly touched on George Morgan Ward, for whom I have great regard and affection, he having served as president three different times, which is unusual.

I know very little about the history of the College before 1925; it’s one of those things I would usually work on. But we do have to remember that it was much more an academy than a college. And it, in a way, served the children of winter visitors who stayed at the Seminole Hotel, and so it was—

(Julian Chambliss enters) Oh! You hardworking fellow! Glad to see someone who taught a class this morning. I apologize for this (indicates bandage), I'm getting a little nose surgery, which will get itself done.

I'm just catching my breath after a review of a number of events, one of which I'd be glad to review with you one-on-one, which is the Ohio Wesleyan football game, that whole chapter, because I think you'd be interested in it; some of your students might.

JC: I would. I have a student writing a paper about that, actually.

TS: You have a student doing a paper?

JC: Yeah, well, they wrote a paper in one of my classes about a football game; found the Hamilton Holt speech.

TS: Found his speech?

DC: Thad thinks it could be, actually, a really good master's thesis for someone at some point.

TS: Well, because of the Branch Rickey connection; Jackie Robinson. I was saying that the tone of his speech reads so much like the letter from the clergymen that Martin Luther King responded from Birmingham. Interesting how it went.

I was talking about individuals who made a difference, and I don't have much feel for the '30s, except for the Animated Magazine and [Edwin] Grover. I wish I knew more about Grover and the town, because he was so active, he and his wife, in important works in the town.

DC: Thad, I would love to hear more about the Animated Magazine.

TS: Okay. Well, Hamilton Holt was an editor. He had been editor of *The Independent*. Now, here's something I bet you don't know. I didn't think to bring the letter. When he was managing editor of *The Independent*, just gotten out of college—he had gone to Yale, was managing editor of *The Independent*; there's some family connection that got him doing that. He got a letter from a young poet from New Hampshire, who said, "I have some poems I might have you consider publishing." And Robert Frost's first published poem was "My Butterfly" in *The Independent*, selected by Hamilton Holt.

DC: That's a big one.

TS: That's big. That's big. And there is some correspondence. The other side of it—we'll go back to the Animated Magazine, but Hamilton Holt tried to get Frost to speak at the Animated Magazine.

I've had the honor of watching Frost in his last years. He used to come south in the winter, and he'd stop at Chapel Hill [University of North Carolina] and read there. He had a friend in the English Department, and that's where I was doing my graduate work. So we heard him speak in Chapel Hill. And then I went to teach at Dartmouth, and he had been teaching there. He went there for a couple weeks as a student and then continued to teach there—the Middlebury [College]-Dartmouth connection with Bread Loaf [School of English] and so on. So I would hear him read there. By then he was very crusty and harrumphing and saying (imitates voice), "Wonderful!" It was a great experience.

But Hamilton Holt tried to get him to come to the Animated Magazine. And in effect, what Holt [Frost] is saying [is]: Look, when I speak, there's nobody else on the platform. I don't want to be part of a program. He said it in a nice way, but it's in the letter that's here in the Archives. He said, "I really don't want to be sharing the spotlight with anybody else," was what he said. So he never came.

Now there's some story that I ran across; I can't remember the details. I think [Alfred] Hanna or somebody went up to Gainesville and got him to autograph a number of books, and came down here, and Frost found out that he'd been selling them from the (inaudible) at the time. And I do remember when I first came, going to Mills [Memorial Library] and looking up Frost, and one of the Frost books in Mills was autographed (laughs). And in circulation (laughter).

DC: Wow!

TS: So Holt was an editor; that was his life. The book about Holt, that's by a really nice Rollins graduate, a (inaudible) guy named Warren Kuehl, K-u-e-h-l—and it really should be required reading. He writes about *Hamilton Holt, Publisher, Internationalist, Educator*; I think that's the title [*Hamilton Holt: Journalist, Internationalist, Educator*]. He talks about three sides of his life.

The Independent had been a very liberal publication, I think connected to the Congregational Church, and very much involved in abolition causes. And by the late century, they really were sort of looking for another cause. Holt had written a book of interviews with people from the working class; I can't remember what it was called [*The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told by Themselves*]. It's a kind of Studs Turkel book that he published, and it was republished a couple of years ago. Holt did some graduate work at Columbia [University] in sociology.

But he got involved with the Peace Movement, which is [a] very different movement from peace demonstrations as we know them. It was very intellectual, and world leaders would meet in The Hague and elsewhere to try to hammer out world peace. And the mechanisms for world destruction were not there yet.

At least, as I tell the story—I may have let this one go too far—but he was very close to Andrew Carnegie. There's a picture in Jack's [Lane, former Professor] book of the two of them playing golf, which I love. I've always wanted to frame that and put it in Carnegie Hall.



Hamilton Holt (second from left) golfing with Andrew Carnegie (first on the right) in New York
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

I did find the medallion of Carnegie that's up there, which, by the way, for a couple of years was—in those days, when colleges were trying to head their own odd traditions, there was a competition between the freshman and the sophomores to steal and hide “St. Andy.” And so the sophomores would hide it, then the freshmen would try to find it, and the sophomores would fight them when they came, and so on. I tried to get that started again, but without success. So it's hanging up in Carnegie Hall.

But anyway, Holt was very close to Carnegie. I have always believed, and had reason to believe it was true, that he counseled him on the establishment of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. It just fit Hamilton Holt's views.

Holt was very close to Woodrow Wilson. Holt was an active Democrat; in fact, he ran for Congress—the Senate—in Connecticut. And there's correspondence with Wilson in the files here; of course, the Hamilton Holt boxes are—are they now un-embargoed? Are they available?

WZ: The finding aid we digitized; now it's online. So we do have requests. I remember last time, somebody from Germany wanted to see some of the correspondence.

TS: How interesting. I'll have to review that online.

But as a result, Hamilton Holt had every sitting president come to Rollins while he was in office. And there's a wonderful speech where he's lecturing Harry Truman on the use of atomic power.

And the idea of Hamilton Holt standing in the pulpit of Knowles Chapel talking to the President of the United States has always pleased me very much.

So Hamilton Holt was a[n] editor/publisher. His connection to Rollins was Irving Bacheller, who got him down here, though Holt had spoken here once before, when he was sort of on the circuit talking about world peace issues and promoting our membership in the League of Nations. He spoke at Rollins—I want to say [in] 1921, or something like that.

So he comes down, and his first appointment was Edwin Osgood Grover. Holt has this wonderfully liberated view of education. He'd gone to Yale, found Yale very proscribed, and had this—God, what a wonderful character—had this absolutely free-form approach to education. He didn't have classes; he had conferences. He didn't have professors of history and English. So his first appointment was Edwin Osgood Grover as Professor of Books. He said, "You go to college, what you read is books; you need to know about those."

And Grover, in effect, invented what that was. Apparently, Emerson had made in one of his writings some comment, What America needs is a professor of books. Holt picked that one up, as he would, and took it from there. But Grover did a lot of work on the manufacture of books. And there's a lot of artifacts that you've got here [in the Archives]—stuff from Babylonian cuneiform and typesetting and so on. He had been a publisher, I think in Chicago, before he came here.

And Holt one day—so Grover told the story—said, "What would happen if we had a magazine where people told their stories rather than write them?" And as Grover tells the story, "Oh, you mean an *animated* magazine!" And that was it; that's where the name came from. Obviously, the work then was calling in chips, which they did.



The 1934 Animated Magazine (Photo: Rollins College Archives)

Now, coming to Central Florida in February in 1931 and being fussed over was pretty nice duty for people; so people were, I think, very glad to have the invitation. Holt had the sense to do it in February, not in April or October, so the Founders' Week is February. It had nothing to do with the founding; we were founded November 4 or April 17. But Founders' Week—the weather was better. Sort of like looking for something over here, because the light's better: I lost it over there, but I'll look over here. So they started doing it in February.

And all the [Animated Magazine] programs are online. They're fun to read. But it was classy stuff. They had riveting, wonderful people.

DC: I've often wondered, ever since I learned about it, why we haven't revisited it.

TS: I can tell you.

DC: Oh, good. I knew you'd have the answer!

TS: We decided to do it on the Centennial. A big thing in my life was the Centennial, 1985. I came in 1978; the Centennial was seven years away. We made that the sort of horizon for the new Rollins, or whatever. And the most fun I ever had was that particular couple of days, and it's not without some interesting refinements (inaudible). But one of the things we decided to do (inaudible) is, Let's redo the Animated Magazine.

Then you start calling up people who say, Well, you have to talk to my agent. And I was determined that we were not going to spend any money on it. We didn't have the money to spend, anyway. That we were going to call in all our chips. I wrote to every living person who'd spoken at the Animated Magazine in the past. We did a lot of research finding out who they were.

I, by the way, was mentioning this to somebody who said it really would be wonderful if Mohammed Ali would come. And so I said, "Mohammed Ali? He never came to the Animated Magazine." Then I went back, and some sheik named Mohammed Ali was here (laughter). But Cassius Clay was still Cassius Clay when that happened. I never heard from him, either. But I always thought, Wouldn't it have been great to have him come to the Animated Magazine because of my stupidity?

And we were having a harder and harder time filling the slate. We did get—again, pulling in chips—I was on the WMFE board, or had been, and we'd been pretty close to them. So they got Bob Edwards to come down, and he got Red [Barber] the great baseball announcer, whose daughter had gone to Rollins. He came down and recreated Cookie Lavagetto in the game of 1947. He did some narrative, as if he was doing the game. It was one of the best things I ever heard, and I didn't have the sense to tape it; I'm still mad at myself.

We got the head of the Institute for Government. I've lost his name now; former faculty member, retired.

WZ: Paul Douglass [former Director of the Center for Practical Politics]?

TS: Paul Douglass, that's who it was, Paul Douglass. Who was quite old, but we got him to come down, and he spoke. We got Arnold Palmer. And Connie Riggs, who worked with me, read some student poetry; we were trying to figure out how to pad out the program. Ed Cohen [Professor] did something; I had him on the platform.

Anyway, it was the toughest thing I ever had to work with in my life. And every once in a while someone says, Hey, that's wonderful; we ought to do that more often. And my answer was, Every president ought to do *one*.



On stage at the Animated Magazine in 1985

Left to right: Paul Douglass, Bob Edwards, Hugh McKean, Bill Frederick, Thaddeus Seymour, Arnold Palmer (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

The problem is—talk to Gail [Sinclair, Director of the Winter Park Institute], and she can tell you, passionately—these days, the kind of people who came to the Animated Magazine charge Bill Clinton prices. The Animated Magazine today would cost \$200,000. But Hamilton Holt maybe gave some of them a train ticket, but otherwise, it—he gave honorary degrees as part of the event. And they had a Convocation.

That would be another little oral history kind of focus. I keep running into people who used to usher at the Animated Magazine; who grew up with it; remember it very well. At its biggest, it had five thousand people.

DC: Was it always held outdoors?

TS: Always, until the end. Poor old Hugh [McKean, former President]—maybe Paul Wagner [former President] tried to do it. I have seen some pictures of the [Knowles Memorial] Chapel where Hugh was doing it; he had [Edward] Teller and a few people like that close to him.

But the Animated Magazine, I think, ended probably in the early '60s. Probably 1960 would be the last one, and by then it really required Hamilton Holt; it was really a prewar event. After the

war, I think, it wasn't much. Though there is a picture of General [Jonathan] Wainwright speaking to the Animated Magazine. He was the hero of Bataan and World War II who led the troops out. So there must have been some pretty good ones in Hamilton Holt's last years.

But my strong recommendation is, just go to the web page. And you'll find the programs there, and you can read them in ten minutes, and you'll get a feel for what it was. But at its peak, it was *the* major event of Central Florida.



Hamilton Holt and Edwin Grover walk through the audience at the 1941 Animated Magazine
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

DC: The first time I saw an image—it was, I think, in Jack Lane's book, my first year here, and I just couldn't get over—

TS: Just packed!

DC: Yeah. I thought, I want to be there, in one of those lawn chairs.

TS: There's one cute aspect of it, which I think is also here in the Archives. Hamilton Holt's custom was to have a big blue pencil as an editor. And if somebody spoke too long, he would go up, tap him on the shoulder, and tell him it was time to stop. I don't know that he ever did that, but that was what they said. So when we did it, I got a big pencil made. I think you've got it in the back room some place. But that was fun; I had it on my lap. Never did exercise it. But that's the Animated Magazine.

DC: Thank you.

TS: Thank you.

Well, well.

DC: Well, you could take us into some of the more—

WZ: Do you want to say something about your tenure and your administration?

TS: Well, I said at the onset, and I'll repeat it for Julian, my concerns are two: one, I don't want to be self-serving in things I'm saying about this. Not that I'm modest about it, I'm just uncomfortable with it. But I will come off sounding that way. And I'm very sensitive to people who are still around and so on.

But I did get thinking about the condition of the place when we first arrived. Well, two silly stories about before we arrived.

We came down for interviews. We came down, as I recall, maybe Wednesday night. Had Thursday and Friday interviews, all of which were very pleasant. We liked the place and the people. Indeed, we stayed over. We were supposed to go back, I think, Saturday morning, and we were having such a good time, we were encouraged to stay. So we stayed through the weekend, which meant that we went to a faculty party at Barry Levis's [former Professor] house Saturday night, and went to Chapel Sunday.

And at Arnold's [Wettstein, Dean of Knowles Memorial Chapel] service—because it was such a powerful experience for us, I remember exactly where we were sitting. Arnold—who, sadly, you all didn't hear preach—was a wonderful, wonderful preacher. Arnold got talking about the children of Israel complaining to Moses: Why did you get us out here? We'd like to be back where the fleshpots are. What is all this business of being out in the wilderness and so forth. He talked about a leap of faith; the importance of taking a leap of faith. And he was so eloquent. I looked over at Polly, and she was crying. We looked at each other, and we said, This is where we're called. That sounds fancier than it was, but it just was one of those moments of which you only have a handful in your life, and that was one of them.

DC: Very different from the Colgate moment (both talk).

TS: So we came down. And then—here's another brief chapter that I give Charley Edmondson a hard time about. Charley, again, you wouldn't know; he'd probably already left. But he was in the History Department and was head of the Faculty Committee. The Faculty Committee was Erich Blossey [Professor] and Karl Peters [former Professor] and a couple of other people.

We'd had this very nice time, and as we were going back to the airport, Karl said, "This is just wonderful. We're so pleased. We hope you'll come. We hope you feel at home." We did. So by the time we got on the plane, it was a done deal.

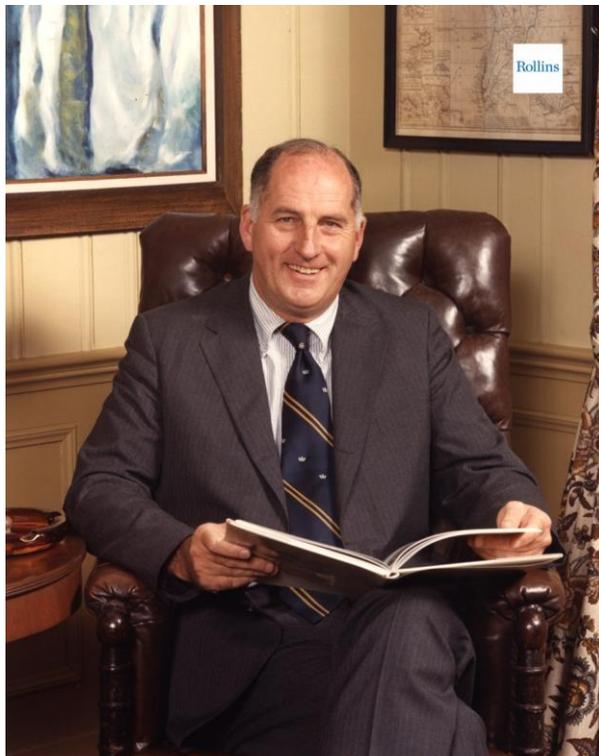
Then we didn't hear anything. We didn't hear anything for weeks. I learned later that some members of the faculty said, That's too easy; we really ought to bring in another candidate. So out of the blue, they brought in some other guy from the University of South Florida. And they took seven weeks.

Now the day I got back, I was in three other searches: Lafayette [College], Bowdoin [College], and someplace else. In fairness to them, the day I got back, I called them up and withdrew myself. So now it's March, and I go off the payroll. I've got five kids. I go off the payroll on July 1. I am hurting. That was as tough as anything I've ever been through.

But they finally—in fact, somewhere at home—I think I gave it to our daughter. Our daughter, Abigail, was nine or so. There’s a note written with a Magic marker: “Rollins called. They sounded interested!” Exclamation point! The committee called up.

But we accepted. Then we came down, and we’re getting to know the town, and Fred Hicks [former Interim President] had worked it out for us to go down to Disney [World] with Abigail and have her get (inaudible). But what I particularly remember is, it was a terrible winter in Indiana: forty below zero, ten days in a row. So cold that the State Police got on the radio and said, Do not leave your vehicle, because at these temperatures, your flesh will freeze. I said to Polly, “You know, *skin* is one thing, but when they say *flesh*” (inaudible).

So we come down here, and while we were at it, we took the scenic boat cruise. Now, it’s now late March, early April maybe. The azaleas are blooming; the orange blossoms. It was the most perfect day, and we’re out in the middle of Lake Virginia. And Polly nudged me and said, “I think we may have stumbled onto something” (laughter). That was one of the great family (inaudible). So anyway, so we came.



President Thaddeus Seymour (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

How did I get talking about coming to Rollins? (Voices talking at once) Okay, how we got here. Well, that was it.

WZ: I see you brought a folder on the [Paul] Wagner [former President] saga. Do you want to say something?

TS: Let me start on Wagner. Bearing in mind now, Paul Wagner is still alive. He has a place in Sag Harbor, New York, up in Long Island. We have spent the last several summers on a little place called Shelter Island, taking care of our grandchildren, because their parents both work in the city. And that’s twenty minutes away from Sag Harbor.

So Paul and his wife, Jeanette, urged us to come over for lunch, and we had lunch with them. I have a picture of us at Sag Harbor last summer. And I have regard for him; I think he's been much abused, and I want to be fair to him. And I don't want to have any of my comments be a part of the record until after he's been gone for a little while.

When Hamilton Holt finished—Holt had been the really progressive president of the '20s and '30s. Rollins was—you know from the Dewey [Curriculum] Conference of 1931—Rollins was a very progressive place, in the company of Antioch [College] and Sarah Lawrence [College] and Goddard [College] and so on, and felt itself very much in that company. I don't know who got this started, but it's no surprise to me that when Hamilton Holt finished, they wanted a president who would bring to the future what Hamilton Holt had brought in the '20s.

They went to Bell and Howell and identified its Vice President, Paul Wagner, who was a graduate of the University of Chicago; very much in the shadow of Robert Maynard Hutchins. Again, this name won't mean anything to you, but one of the great liberal Republican figures of the postwar period was William Percy [Charles H. Percy], who was an Illinois congressman, and he and Paul Wagner were contemporaries and were the two bright lights at Bell and Howell. The point was, Bell and Howell was audiovisual; learning is going to be—everything they said is now true—but learning is going to be a matter of film and recordings and interactive and so on and so on. So it was no surprise that Paul Wagner would come to Rollins.

Everything I've seen in his early days is very positive about him; that he was liked and—I'm just going to try to find one little visual aid here, if I can—and respected. I saw he was an officer of the Willkommen Society [Newcomen Society], I think that's called, and there's a little pamphlet they have—I think I've seen copies of it here—where he gives a speech about Hamilton Holt, paying tribute to Holt's leadership in education before the war, and so on. But here's an article—January 31, 1951. Now, it took a while to crank this out. He came in the summer of '49.

But here is (reads) "Education's New Boy Wonder." And there, by the way (shows photograph) is Paul Wagner standing in front of a familiar icon. That's the portrait of Hamilton Holt that's over in the Faculty Club.



President Paul A. Wagner with the portrait of Hamilton Holt, circa 1949
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

DC: How old was he?

TS: Thirty-two.

JC: Wow.

DC: He was pretty young.

TS: I'm pretty sure that's right; thirty-two when he came. (Reads) "Paul Wagner, thirty-three-year-old former newsreel cameraman and salesman, has made things hum at Rollins College since taking over as prexy, and the co-eds think he's dreamy." Now, "Education's New Boy Wonder": bear in mind, they fired his tail out of here so dramatically that *LIFE* magazine had this picture of the petition that the students signed to get rid of him (shows photograph). You could speculate that this was the first campus demonstration by students in the twentieth century.

JC: What happened?

TS: I assumed everybody knew all of this.

DC: No.

TS: It's a big story, and I think it's almost ready to be told.

DC: We'll keep it under wraps a little longer. But you can tell us now.

TS: Well, and a lot of the principals are out there.

DC: Sure.

TS: But it's—the feelings are this strong. And this is a little off sequence.

Not having any stake in any of this; I wasn't involved. When I got here, the place—Wagner did not exist. There was no picture of him. Nobody mentioned him. I used to say, "Now, where is Paul Wagner?" They'd say, Oh, I don't know; he left, got divorced; I think he was (shrugs) drunk.

One day, Polly and I were in New York—and somebody had said something about us going to New York. We were sitting in a hotel room; I can almost visualize the whole scene. I said, "Just for the hell of it, I'm going to try something." I picked up the phone book, opened it to the Ws; uh, Paul; Paul A.; Paul A. Wagner. I dialed the number. (Imitates voice) "Hello?" I said, "This is really silly, I do apologize. I'm trying to locate the Paul Wagner who was president of Rollins College some years ago." (Imitates voice) "Yes?" And I was talking to Paul Wagner. I just couldn't believe it! After all this (laughter).

Dan DeNicola [former Vice President for Academic Affairs] was with us on that trip, and Dan and I went down and met him for a drink at the Metropolitan Club, some place downtown Park Avenue. And he had brought a second, too; he brought a friend of his. So there were four of us. But we met.

My point is, I then undertook to bring him back in the family. Families have all sorts of people who you're a little embarrassed about, but they're still members of your family.

So my first project was to get his picture—no portrait. But I asked him to select a favorite photograph, which he did. When it came, I got it framed and put it up in the [Warren] Administration Building. Two days later, it was gone. Somebody took it. I never knew who it was, it was just gone!

DC: How many years ago was this? So this would have been in the late '70s or early '80s?

TS: This was in the early '80s.

I can make another comment about that. When we did the Centennial—which, as I said, was where I had the most fun—we had a funny little logo, and you can see one on the post going into the Warren [Administration] Building, that has "1885 / 1985 / 2085" with an old-fashioned typeface, a fairly traditional typeface, and then a sort of computer-generated typeface. And we made plaques for each of the former presidents; it's always been important to me to embrace fellow sufferers. So we made one for Hugh [McKean] and Jack Critchfield, and we made some for trustee—I think Chairman of the Board, Harold Ward has—I noticed he still has his in his office. We made one for Paul Wagner. It was very important to me that he be evenhandedly a part of the group.

A little while later, we went into the city, and Polly and I took him and his wife out for a drink. And I made a big presentation of it. He'd been very tender about—he mentions it often. He said, "It really meant a lot to me to be remembered at Rollins." I was telling Tommy [Thomas P.] Johnson, whose portrait is in the Galloway Room—trustee; very bright; very generous person. And Tommy we had lined up for a \$750,000 gift to the campaign, which in my day was a lot of

money. When I mentioned this to him, he got all red in the face, and he said, “You let that son of a bitch back on the campus, and you can kiss that \$750,000 goodbye right now,” turned on his heel and walked away. This is Tommy! Old drinking buddy Tommy! (laughs) Which made me realize that the Wagner issue had legs (laughs). That’s actually a true story.

There was another nice guy, who gave the money to support the Writing Center tutors—I can’t quite remember his name; nice guy. I worked with him on a number of things. It turned out that he had run against Paul Wagner for the school board of Rye, New York, in the late ’50s, early ’60s. And I got talking about Paul Wagner, and he just got up and walked out; didn’t talk to me for a year. Which just made me remember that the Paul Wagner story has a lot to it.

So here comes Paul Wagner as president. And what people don’t recall—and it’s understandable—1949-50 was a tough time. We were in the Korean War. The enrollments were going down like this (gestures), and the College had not been able to meet the payroll the year before; the College was pretty well broke. And Paul Wagner has to deal with this.

Other colleges—and this is something else that people don’t take into account; every time I say this to anybody who knew Wagner, they get mad at me—other colleges were dropping football. They just couldn’t afford that. I would have trouble getting a full list of who they were, but Stetson [University] dropped football about then, I think. Florida Southern [College] did; Florida Presbyterian [College], now Eckerd [College] did. Miami [University] kept it. Obviously, Gainesville [University of Florida]. [University of] Tampa kept it. But here’s Paul Wagner trying to figure out how to save money, and drops football in 1950 or ’51.

As an old administrator, I can say with confidence [that] when a new president comes, the community’s expectation, or the stiff-necked part of the community’s expectation, is that that president will get rid of the Greek system and de-emphasize athletics. So he walked right into that. He didn’t do the Greek system, but he got rid of football. And the place just blew up. The trustees supported him in that, to the extent that I can tell. Somebody working at it would have to study that.

But they’re also worried about money. And he was, at least as I understand it, supported in his desire to reduce the size of the faculty. My perception was that he started giving pink slips to the most popular faculty members and to the troublemakers; people who’d been critical of him. And then as the story continues to unfold, they sort of organize against him. This stuff is all documented in there. The faculty voted “no confidence.” The students demanded the trustees fire him; that’s where that petition came from.

But again, the part I haven’t done much work on, but it’s so interesting to me: he calculated that to be a trustee of Rollins, you had to be a Florida resident, because he wanted to cut out all the New York and other trustees. And they had had one meeting in New York to fire him, and it was apparently tied. But he enlisted people in Winter Park to go up to Tallahassee and introduce a bill to the legislature that you had to be a Florida resident to be a trustee at Rollins. And it passed both Houses and was on the governor’s desk for signing when people in Winter Park got word of it. At least as the story goes, John Tiedtke chartered a bus, and they all went up to Tallahassee and marched to the governor’s office, yanked the bill from him, and in effect, saved the College.

Now the legislator who wrote the bill was named Andrews; I can’t remember his first name [Charles], but as you drive down [Highway]17-92, you go by a lake, with Florida Hospital over

here. If you look on that, you'll see that that's the William Andrews Parkway or something [Andrews Causeway]. That's the guy, Andrews.

DC: Which is right near my house (talking) (laughter). Coincidentally, but—.

TS: Well, that whole business was *so* big that—just to give it a perspective, these are a calendar review of the Rollins controversies from the alumni magazine. These are all things from the alumni magazine. These are—everything in this notebook is from local newspapers. These here are articles from the [*Orlando*] *Sentinel*. (Reads from document) “Wagner decision delay.” Then they—

DC: This is as early as 1951.

TS: This is 1951.

DC: Wow.

TS: Then they started having meetings in town. (Reads) “Fair Play the American Way: To eleven trustees of Rollins College, will you answer fully and frankly these four questions for the people of Central Florida? Who offered to pay President Wagner \$50,000 last Sunday to resign and deliver to you control of Rollins? Why have you tried to fire President Wagner without having his answer? Why have you refused to make public—?”

Now this is—yeah, Reginald Clough is the guy I was trying to think of; he's the one who walked out of the room. Reginald Clough. He was one of the trustees. Thomas P. Johnson—“Kiss the 750 goodbye.” George Carrison, the one I was talking about earlier. Then I don't know. (Reads) “Fair play the American way.” “Rollins” (inaudible). “Eleven trustees say Wagner fired.” “Hugh McKean called acting college head.” John Tiedtke. (Reads) “Wagner says, ‘Still President.’”

They went through a period where the trustees made Hugh [McKean] the Acting President. Hugh's wife, Jeannette, was a trustee. Wagner refused to resign.

Now this—I haven't tested this out. You could almost test it out right now. I was told that at Commencement of 1951—no, let me go back. Seniors in 1951 were invited to two President's Receptions before graduation. The students tried to get Hamilton Holt to agree to sign their diplomas, because they didn't want Wagner's signature on their diploma.

And at the last minute, Wagner, in effect, caved for \$50,000 and left. We could find pictures—here we go: (Reads) “Scenes following dramatic announcement at Rollins.” This is May 14, 1951. (Reads) “Dr. Paul A. Wagner and Mrs. Wagner leave his office at the Rollins Administration Building last night as a crowd of students and faculty look on. The Wagners are preceded by Frank Long, Assistant Librarian to the College.”

My point is, the city police chief had to come and get him out of the office. And people will tell you he was destroying files, and all this sort of—. But this is at night, it's not fair (?) to the Administration Building. Getting Wagner out of the office.

So now this is just before Commencement. (Looks through documents) “Eleven trustees say they fired him.” “(Inaudible) threaten legal action.” There's one cartoon; I'll see if I can find it. It'll take a second. But look at this! (Reads) “Who owns Rollins College?” That's in the May 17 *Sentinel*.

DC: I'm struck by the formality of those flyers as well.

TS: That's right. (Reads) "Why is the Citizen's Committee dissatisfied with some Rollins trustees?"

JC: Can you tell me, was there any talk of him being communist?

TS: No, no. It was apolitical that way. The President of [the University of] Chicago, whose name I just had a minute ago—Hutchins—spoke at Wagner's inauguration; Robert Maynard Hutchins. So there was a sort of Chicago thing, but Chicago was never totally—that's an interesting question. This was at the height of the McCarthy period, but there's none of that in here.

JC: I was struck by "the American way,"—

TS: Yeah. Well, some of that may be in *their* minds, but—that's an interesting question. If it's there, I've never seen it.

DC: So we could assume that it was just really poor or unfavorable, unpopular decisions that—

TS: Right. And a part of me says that to some extent, he was left to twist in the wind by the trustees. The trustees went along with these decisions, and then when they were seen to be unpopular, they were saying (raises both hands), Oh.

JC: So he was president for two years?

TS: Two years. He did '49-'50; '50-'51.

DC: I've heard his name. I didn't realize how—

TS: It's a fascinating story. And I'm looking for one—yeah, here we go. I had this on my bulletin board for a while, when I was president. (Reads) "There's an old saying: There ain't nothing can bust up a community quicker than a church or school fight. Why don't everybody connected with the Rollins ruckus resign? Let's save Rollins." Isn't that a great cartoon? The [Knowles Memorial] Chapel in the background. Now this is the front page of the *Orlando Sentinel*.

DC: Oh my God. It's so hard to believe this kind of press about Rollins.

TS: I know! That's right. Or, in that day, about any place. Because campuses were—that was panty raid time.

JC: You know, in some sense (inaudible), it's a huge cultural institution. It's like the intellectual capital of Central Florida (inaudible). I've just never heard this history.

DC: As Thad said, it was really wiped clean.

TS: Yeah, it's just not spoken of. (Reads) "Students walk out." These are all *The Sandspur* [student newspaper].

Now, let me go back. Part of what was happening was the students who did that petition wanted the trustees to fire him. And the trustees wouldn't fire him; they couldn't get the votes. And so you had this real pressure on the trustees to get rid of Wagner, from the students. If you were to go back to 1968, you could make some pretty good parallels to student pressure on the administration.

Now, going back to the two President's Receptions. This just, I think, is charming. Yearbooks are put out in the spring, before the seniors graduate. And customarily, there's a picture of the

president in the front. The students did not want Wagner's picture in their yearbook. So the yearbook editors were standing at Commencement, giving out pictures of Hugh McKean for them to glue in their yearbooks. And here's my prediction: why, we could check it—if you're at a garage sale and see a 1951 Rollins yearbook, when you open it, you'll find four brown smudges where the rubber cement was, where somebody put Hugh McKean's picture.

DC: Do we have one of those?

TS: Let me, just for the hell of it, look. I'll be right back (leaves the room).

DC: Isn't that astonishing? The student uprising and protest around it is what—I mean, at night? Outside the building? It's just such a different kind of spirit here.

TS: (Returns with a 1951 yearbook) Oh, I would be in heaven if this works (laughter).

DC: Even if we saw the glue spots, we'd be excited.

TS: Nineteen fifty-one. (Turns pages) Hang on a minute; hang on. Ted Darrah [former Dean of Knowles Memorial Chapel].

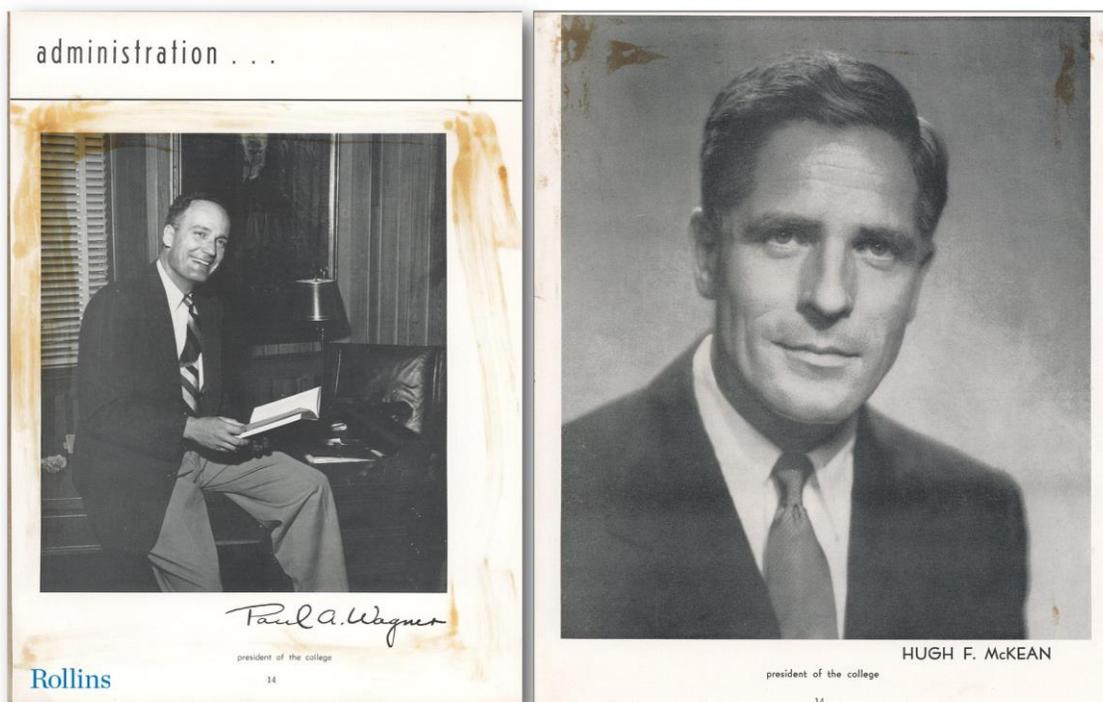
DC: Oh!

JC: Oh! (laughter)

TS: Isn't that interesting! I've never seen the photograph. But that was to be glued, and it says page fourteen. President of the College, page fourteen: Hugh F. McKean.

DC: Oh my gosh!

TS: Isn't that interesting! Isn't life grand!



Traces of rubber cement on photos of Presidents Wagner and McKean in the 1951 *Tomokan* yearbook (Photo: Rollins College Archives)

Well, anyway. Here we go. (Reads memo) Lorrie [Kyle, Executive Assistant to the President] must have told her. (Reads memo) “Are you familiar with the story that Hugh McKean’s picture was pasted over Paul Wagner’s picture in the ’51 *Tomokan*? Thanks, Lorrie.” And that’s it.

And clearly—I mean, this is not a casual picture of Hugh. Clearly intended to be put in here.

DC: It fits perfectly, everything, the signature, (inaudible).

TS: Typeface and so on.

Well, this [indicates a binder], which I’ll leave here—this has everything. I worked with a nice student. This was a Winter Term course I had, Writing about Rollins. Sally Fleischmann was the student who did the work, and I worked with her, because I really knew this was something worth saving. But it has all the faculty memos. And the Secretary of the Faculty was Flora Magoun, whom I knew, who taught typing; something sort of one step up from typing. She was a typing teacher and taught in the Economics Department. But she hated Wagner, and her minutes are just wonderful. Here’s an example (reads): “Chronological Outline of the Administration of Paul Wagner.” It’s all right there. She wrote all this, so it says, “Paul Wagner *defied* the trustees.”

DC: It seems remarkable to me that in such a short period of time, a person can become so reviled by a community.

TS: Oh yeah. Yeah, it is remarkable. And the old dean in me believes that he *never* could have been *that* bad, and that what’s happened here is that the (inaudible) people escalated this.

Paul Wagner remarried. His wife, Jeanette, is a delightful person, and she worked for Estée Lauder and became its international vice president. The Crummer School invited her down to speak, without knowing who her husband was. This would have been after I finished up; it was in the ’90s.

But he came down. They were both down here. And I intercepted him and took him under my wing and walked around the campus. And every once in a while, I’d run into Socky [Professor Maurice O’Sullivan] or someone and say, “Hey, Socky, I’d like you to meet Paul Wagner” (inaudible; laughter). But it was, you know, Fellowship Month, or something like that. They were doing t-shirts, and I got him a t-shirt with two hands shaking. He was very proud of that; I gave it to him as evidence that his College was still caring about (inaudible).

Two other things: he did not turn into a New York drunk. He worked for a public relations firm, I think, called Hill and Knowlton, and became its vice president; very distinguished. He said part of his work was working with college presidents who were getting fired (laughs), because he knew everything about it. He was sort of good-humored about that.

But his wife is a very potent figure in New York. She’s very much involved with education reform; with Bloomberg. She’s big time. And he had his ninetieth birthday last year—I told Jonathan [Miller, Director of Olin Library] about this; we were trying to figure out how to do something with it. She gave his dinner party at the Frick museum [The Frick Collection], which is big time.

And apparently there’s a publisher called Nation’s Library or America’s Library or something like that [Library of America], where you can make a contribution, and they will publish a book having to do with America[n] primary sources. Hers was *Mark Twain’s Minor Writings* or

something like that [*Mark Twain: The Gilded Age & Later Novels*]. But you can have a page put in it saying, “this book is published in honor of,” and she did that in honor of Paul A. Wagner, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday; the quote’s in the front. I was showing this to Jonathan, saying if you have a big donor, this might be something to tuck away as a way to make a fuss over (inaudible). She’s very proud of it.

But my point is, they did a big-time dinner for Paul Wagner at the Frick museum last year, with a \$50,000 book published in his honor. So he’s not hurting too much.

JC: I’m sorry, I have to go.

DC: Do you have another class?

JC: I have to go to a President’s Council Leadership Council meeting on the curriculum.

DC: Do you know why you’re going? [Because] I declined and said I had to be here. And I’ll bet you Mark [Anderson, Professor] found you.

TS: There’s a very special person to me there, and this is Dan Matthews, who is the retired rector of Trinity Church, which is the church at the end of Wall Street that you always see. Dan went to Rollins; his daughter went to Rollins. I’m godfather to his grandson. He’s a very special, good guy. He’s now retired, but he cares about the right things. You’d like him. He’s a good guy.

JC: Sorry I have to leave.

TS: Well, we’re just warming up. I haven’t gotten to any of the big stuff yet. Let me just give you this much. I found this memo. This is dated 1981. This is after the incident I described at the Cornell Museum, where [*Name redacted*], who was then Vice President for Development, describes or reacts to that occasion (reads):

“I suspect that all of us felt that the dinner with the trustees and new faculty last night was not satisfactory. From my perspective of development and public relations, for the success of which trustees are essential, it was a disaster. I suspect too that each of us recall trustee behavior that was not what the College needs or deserves. But, as someone testified in Washington recently about a critical issue, you have to scratch through a lot of grey before you get to the black and white. I’ve got some view of the other side of it from the other side of the table.”

A bunch of trustees took him out to talk, after that event that was pretty hairy. So I’ll save that for later.

DC: Okay. Thank you, Julian.

TS: Nice to see you, Julian. I just love what you’re doing. I have always felt that taking advantage of the lore that is right there is what historians can contribute the most, so I’m so pleased that you—

JC: Well, thank you. We’ll definitely talk again.

TS: Okay. Well, I’m just warming up (laughs). See you, Julian.

DC: Bye.

DC: Yes, I did decline that [meeting] because I said I had to be here. So Mark said he would find someone else, and I think he found Julian.

TS: Well, I'm so proud of that!

DC: My question for you, that I was going to ask before Julian had to depart, about Wagner was: obviously, you saw him as recently as last year. Does he hold any bitter feelings towards the institution or its people, or is just part of his larger—you know, lots of things happen in people's lives that you put into perspective.

TS: I have never really encouraged that conversation. He's always kind about my having reached out to him, as they say. I would love to go through these documents with him, though he's getting a little—as we all do—getting a little fuzzy now, I think. But if you look back on it, it was two years out of his life sixty years ago, fifty years ago. So he doesn't need it. I think that's probably his feeling on it, and he was pretty—when I saw him and walked him around the campus and got him a t-shirt, he was very relaxed.

We did get Rita [Bornstein, former President]—who shares my view, I think, about Wagner; I don't know how much she has gotten to know him. But she, knowing that his portrait had been destroyed, got another one, and I think it's now nailed to the wall of the Administration Building. So it's there.

But it's a fascinating story. And this is sort of organized topically, but chronologically, and a couple of hours flipping through that would tell you a lot. But the amazing thing to me is *LIFE* magazine, with that long petition. I guess it was at a time when people weren't taking colleges very seriously. It's not like student unrest on the campus, or when everyone was saying, Oh, what are they doing down at Rollins?

So there's that, and I will leave that. What else?

WZ: Do you want to say something about this memo?

TS: We did a questionnaire to alumni; I don't know if it's dated. I think it was after I finished; maybe it was in my last year. Yep; (reads) "Date of last visit to campus, 1989." I finished in 1990. This is a graduate, whose wife happened to be a trustee, who wrote, "How do you perceive Rollins today? The school has lost the spirit of Dr. H. Holt. It has turned into a pinko, knee-jerk, hotbed, liberal mess!"

This is off the subject. I was president of Wabash College in Indiana. The great president—the Hamilton Holt there—was a fellow named Frank Sparks. I got to know a faculty member who had worked with Sparks, [and] who is now teaching at the University of Virginia, and I've sort of fussed over Sparks in correspondence. He wrote back, and he said, "Sparks"—let's see if I can do this—"was a brassbound, copper-bottom, patent-applied-for son of a bitch" (laughs). "Brassbound, copper-bottom, patent-applied-for son of a bitch": I always wish I could say that about somebody.

Well, this is (reads) "Pinko, knee-jerk, hotbed, critical mess. 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 alums don't contribute." There's that voice in the alumni body; always has been.

But what I started on when I was talking about “we’ve stumbled onto something” was the College as I knew it when I first arrived. The next part—again, I don’t want this to be self-serving, but it was just so interesting. And it makes me want to say, I have always felt of my work in three institutions—Dartmouth, where I was dean in the ’60s; Wabash, where I was president in the ’70s; Rollins, where I was president in the ’80s—that if the individual is lucky, and the institution is lucky, you get a person who brings what’s needed to a place that needs it.

I’ve always thought of myself as a frame carpenter, and the people I worked with—we used to talk about that a lot—we’re frame carpenters. What we’d like to do is pour cement and bang two-by-fours. Somebody else can come in—and we really will admire their work—as cabinet makers and finish carpenters. In a way—not to speak improperly, but I’ve always felt that Rita was a wonderful cabinet maker, and she was just what the place needed. And what she was doing was something I could not do and did not do.

But one of the things that appealed to me so much about Rollins was, it had a lot of needs when I first saw it. The place looked awful (laughs).

DC: Really?

TS: Oh, God. The grass was all overgrown. All the signs were four-by-fours; square four-by-fours with four-by-eight plywood panels, painted; and then almost stenciled letters. It was awful, I couldn’t—

And when we came, Jack Critchfield had left mid-year to be head of the Winter Park Telephone Company. Joe Galloway [former Trustee] was a friend of his—the Galloway Room. Jack left to do that, and Fred Hicks, who was the sort of Assistant to the President, was Acting President for the spring.

The big issue just before Jack left was visitation: whether women could be in men’s rooms after a certain hour. It was not that long before that women had to check in to the house mother in Elizabeth Hall and all that sort of thing. And I had spent most of my life negotiating social issues.

[T. S.] Eliot talks about measuring your life in coffee spoons; I sort of measured my life in hours: eight o’clock; now eight thirty; nine o’clock. And I just said, “I’m not going to do this. I’m not going to come and spend all my time at Rollins negotiating with students about—.” So I quietly decided that we would let this happen. But I put it in so much cotton batting that nobody would ever know it happened; we just changed it. Nobody ever acted on it; it just happened.

But I say that because it had come as a big issue in Jack’s last month or so. The faculty voted for visitation; students voted for visitation; and Jack, as president, vetoed it. What the hell president still vetoes things on campuses? Jack vetoed it on the grounds that this was something the new administration would need to deal with. Talk about getting something dumped on your lap that you didn’t want.

But there was so much else. I want to take a step back and say I was very lucky that things were so bad, and the trustees were so embarrassed when that surfaced that they left us alone, to do the things that we felt needed to be done.

The first indication of things being bad—besides the place looking awful, and the dorms being in *terrible* shape, and the facilities being in pretty bad shape, too; and the place desperately needing a library; it had Mills [Memorial Library]. I remember going to Mills—it had an elevator, one of those elevators where you pull on the cable to make the car go up and down. And I remember

standing there waiting for the elevator and noticing a sign that said, “Please look before stepping into elevator.” What that meant is, the elevator may not be there (laughs). Mills was that bad. In fact, the Yale guide to colleges had put out a little thing about Rollins and said, The library is so bad that students say you should bring your own crayons.

Anyway, it had all that going. But I came. I had been a president of another college, so I knew a little bit about some of these things—which, by the way, you don’t know otherwise. I had been an English teacher; had been a dean; and suddenly I’d become president of Wabash College. And I didn’t know anything about endowment. I didn’t know the difference between a stock and a bond. I bought the *Teenager’s Guide to the Stock Market*, and that’s how I learned how to handle their \$30 million endowment, or how to respond to it.

Anyway, but I had done that, so I knew a little bit about it. As soon as I came, I asked the treasurer, a guy named Chuck Zellers, to see last year—the fiscal year ends, I think, June 30—last year’s budget and performance. Just to see, how did we do last year? What have we got to work with? I did not get that—and I came July 1—until the end of August. And it was off. The income was off by—somewhere I ran into these numbers—was off by \$800,000. The expenditures were off by \$1.2 million. The budget variance was \$2.2 million.

Zellers was quite impossible; the only person in my whole career I’ve ever fired. Fired. Every other encounter has always been trying to anticipate, help somebody find another circumstance, and so on. Maybe some people were hurt by what happened. But I never fired anyone; that’s always been very important to me. Except Chuck Zellers. There’d been a lot of hanky-panky. He bought a house and borrowed the mortgage from the endowment; it’s absolutely improper.

I came July 1. The end of August, I went into the office, and there was a little envelope on my desk with my name handwritten on it. And I opened it up, and there was a handwritten check for my salary for that month. I said, “What the hell is this all about? Don’t you deposit it in my account?” He said, “No, this is the confidential payroll.” There was a confidential payroll of thirty people whose salaries were not carried on any books.

I had a friend, who was an economist up in Ohio, to come down and help me out; I’d worked with him before. We found there were twenty-nine separate checking accounts at the Barnett Bank, because they couldn’t reconcile them all in one. So I had to fire him, Zellers. And we had to pay him a full year’s salary to do it. And I had to have the trustees’ support for doing that, so it was very important.

Then there was a guy named [Name redacted]. I had come in and wondered about, Okay, we’re talking about next year: how many students do we have coming next year? How many deposits have been paid? How much tuition has been paid? They didn’t know.

So there’s a deadline that deposits have to be [made] by May 15, and tuition has to be paid by August 1, or something like that. And [Name redacted]—new president in town, decides to be heroic, and without consulting me, writes to every returning student who had not paid tuition by August 1 that their registration had been revoked. Hell, this was half the student body. All got letters telling them they couldn’t come back to Rollins next year!

So [Name redacted] left, and then there was a third. There were three financial people, and I had to get rid of all of them. And how do we keep the books?

There was a guy named—I've lost his first name now—[Vincent] Perry, and he's still around, I think—who was the accountant for the College. And we contracted with him to come in X hours a week and just keep our books going. But it was very fragile.

And one day, I was sitting in the office. A man came in. His name was Ed Schriber. And Ed is one of the heroes of Rollins, as far as I'm concerned. Ed introduced himself and said, "Hi, I'm Ed Schriber. We're from Long Island. We came down here a couple of years ago. My wife has been working in the [Orange County Schools] Additions Program. She volunteers to help out with schools, and I know how much she enjoys it. I was in charge of the financial office for the Great Neck school system. Is there any way I could help Rollins? Maybe teach a class in accounting?" I said, "Mr. Schriber, let's talk." And the net of it was, he was our volunteer treasurer for six months. I made him Special Assistant to the President. We got to be great friends. And he—very decent, good guy, very professional, knew his way around—he kept the place going while I was involved with others in recruiting our new treasurer (inaudible); a wonderful guy, Jesse Morgan, who really saved the place financially.

Jesse had been the Financial Vice President at Tulane [University] and had been the president of the National Association of College [and University] Business Officers, NACUBO. A very good guy. He had lost his wife, had a new companion—wanted, I think, to start over again. We really like each other. We discovered we were both frame carpenters. He came over and really was the hero. He saved the place. All I was doing was bailing like hell that first year, with Ed Schriber saying, "Bail over here! Bail over here!"

But that was the condition of the place. So, very early on, I knew this was essential: we needed to plan for the future. We set up a Planning Committee. Dan DeNicola [former Vice President for Academic Affairs] chaired it. Leaving Jesse aside as for management, in my academic career, Dan is the brightest, most talented person I've ever worked with. He's really sort of a son. I now realize he was only thirty-two or so when he was doing that. But Dan did a brilliant job of the planning, and it had some fascinating components to it.



Prof. Daniel DeNicola, President Seymour, Administrative Specialist Marsha Clore, and Presidential Assistant Connie Riggs pictured with the work of the College Planning Committee, 1981 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

We had to address the issue of what is now the Hamilton Holt School; it was then the School for Continuing Education, SCE. It was the cash cow for Rollins. It produced \$750,000 of unrestricted income. It did it in exchange for letting anybody take any course and get an A for it. The dean—rest his soul, he just died recently—but the dean saw his job as producing income, rather than maintaining and representing the quality of the institution.

We knew that the key to Rollins was to be a good institution. People will pay for that. People will be willing to pay the tuition you have to charge. Indeed, my whole inaugural talk was the quality of the institution; you should measure everything by its quality. And here was the SCE, which was, we felt, killing us. If we let that go, it will slowly erode the reputation of the place then, and kill us.

So we took a huge step in making it a respectable—and still very complicated to do it, with adjuncts and the relationship with full-time faculty and the adjuncts, and so on. But the deans have been very good, and they've done a very good job with this.

We had a huge push to have—we had a business major, and we had the Crummer School; all this was stuff that Dan was working on in the Planning Committee. We had hired Marty [Martin] Schatz as Dean of the Crummer School. I was thinking about this the other day, thinking about our conversation. Marty was the first Jewish administrator. It never occurred to me, but years after he was appointed, someone said, You know, that was so brave for you to—. Anyway, Marty was *very* ambitious for the Crummer School. The first thing he said—and I agreed with it whole-heartedly: We've got to get it accredited. And if we're talking about quality, and you have

a business school, an unaccredited business school, forget it! Either drop the business school or get it accredited.

So we set out to get the Crummer School accredited. The first thing we learned is, if you have undergraduate business, it has to be two-thirds of the undergraduate curriculum, and it has to award a Bachelor of Science degree. And we said, Well, no way. Here we are, trying to bring back the liberal arts. So another big recommendation was dropping business as an undergraduate major, but that part of that strategy was to permit the Crummer School to seek accreditation.

It happened that the head of AACSB [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business] was a very dear friend of mine from Dartmouth days, John Hennessey. And John came down and counseled us in how to advance our case; very even-handed, but very professional. And we got the Crummer School done in a year. From the date of application to the day we were accepted by the AACSB board, one year. That was very important.

So we dealt with the SCE; dealt with the Crummer School. And then Dan, who's a classicist, and I said, What the hell. If we're talking about the liberal arts, let's bring back the classics. And so we gained dropping business and adding classics, as a sort of grandstand play. And it worked. People picked up on that.



The Alumni Record reports on the elimination of the business major, February 1985
(Image: Rollins College Archives)

It scared the trustees to death, and people like this (holds up the alumni survey) felt that it was a terrible mistake to drop business. Now, my sense is that the international business program has worked out well for everybody. I suspect that those issues, when enrollments get hard-pressed, are going to come up again, and I'm glad somebody else is worrying about them, not me.

DC: When you made that decision, for all these reasons that I never heard about, to move the business away from the liberal arts model, was it commanding a large percentage of majors?

TS: Oh yeah, it was two-thirds of the majors. The year we did it, two-thirds of the students had either declared or were planning to declare. But—in that way that Obama, thank goodness, keeps saying—it’s one of those things where you had no choice. This place was going to go under, I believe, or it would be Flagler [College]. And it had the potential, honoring the Hamilton Holts of its past history.

I used to give another talk—and then we’d better talk about Olin. I said that Rollins has the benefit of being known. Now, the people say it’s a country club and a girl’s college for tennis and all this stuff; at least they’ve heard of it.

I mean, the president of Wabash says, That’s a river, isn’t there? A train? I said, “Take a map of the U.S.” Can I borrow your pencil? Take a map of the U.S. and draw a line from the South Carolina border to California. I said, “Name six small, independent liberal arts colleges. Now take a line here, and draw it at the Connecticut-Massachusetts border, and start naming, and you’re going to go, Bowdoin [College], Amherst [College], Middlebury [College], Grinnell [College], Oberlin [College]. Down here, what do you have? You’ve got Oglethorpe [University] and Millsaps [College] and Stetson [University], maybe.” And they’d say, Well, you’ve got Emory [University]. I’d say, “I don’t want to talk about Emory; it’s a university.” But we have the whole Sun Belt to ourselves, at a time when America has this love affair with the Sun Belt.

When I was in college, Stanford was looked on as where you went to play tennis and chase girls and sit in the sun by the pool; nobody took it seriously. When I was in college, you needed to go someplace where it got dark at 4:30 in the winter time; where it was single-sex, so you didn’t have distractions. It was like boot camp.

And I used to talk about the Stanford effect; what we want is the Stanford effect. This is arguably one of a handful of the greatest institutions in the world right now. They managed to outgrow—or maybe history led us nationally to outgrow—that bias against fun in the sun. And I just knew Rollins could do that, if we did it right. But it could only do it if it would do it with a commitment to quality.

I also knew that when I came, the trustees were so afraid of scaring people away with tuition that they had made a two-year commitment: we’ll raise tuition for the next two years. They won’t change it, so you know your tuition will be this for the next two years. And I just knew that, like perfume pricing—you have very low tuition. We could live off tuition for a while.

Now that hasn’t changed. I thought it was just going to be for a few years, but that continues to be the case for Rollins and other places. But the real key to it was, if you are good enough, people will be willing to pay the tuition. That’s where the Planning Committee came in, and Dan was very much a key to that. The trustees sort of didn’t know what we were talking about. But they really were so embarrassed by the stuff that was coming out that they just left us alone. That was a very lucky thing for us. So we get the Planning Committee done.

There was one funny part of it. A guy who might be interesting to talk to—who will have, obviously, a different perspective—but Ed Cohen [Professor] was president of the faculty my first year. And he lived through a lot of this. I do remember one night we still tease about, where seven or eight of us who were running the place met in my office to try to put together a budget for the succeeding year. I had pieces of paper and Scotch tape and was putting them up on the

bookcase that was in there. I said, “Okay, now here’s admissions and financial aid and so on.” But Ed was a great ally in that year and helped us get through.

And I can’t remember who did it the next couple years, but when the Planning Committee was finally done, the faculty elected Wayne Hales [former Professor]. I don’t know if you know Wayne—wonderful, dear man, who just lost his wife. We had a service last week. But a real roughneck; a real grouch. I always felt that this was the faculty saying, Okay, you had a couple years. You got it through, but now we’re going to keep you honest.

But we shifted gears to get ready for the Centennial, which was, as I say, seven years away. In fact, Jim Warden, our computer guy, did me a favor of printing out, for every day, how many days it was until the Centennial. In fact, in my Inaugural, I said, “It’s 4,024 days. We’ve got to get to work.” I think each Convocation, I’d make some reference to it. I could always look it up in this book.

But coming up on the Centennial: on the one hand, we had this great fun of the Animated Magazine. We had this bright idea of having alumni come by train, then we would go meet the train. We couldn’t get any alumni, so we got a few students to go up to DeLand and get the train and come down. But I have a picture I’m very proud of, of meeting the train; and Hope Strong, who was the mayor of Winter Park, leading a cheer; and I then led a cheer. It was just that kind of corny, good fun.

We had a big party out on The Green in front of Mills [Memorial Library]. And then I had arranged for fireworks at midnight. The party was November 3, and I got a fireworks company to come in. After the party was over, we all went down by the pool. The students were all chanting, “Fox Day, Fox Day!” They wanted the next day to be Fox Day. Hell, I had Convocation and a bunch of stuff going on; couldn’t do it. But I had worked it out with the fireworks person to let me count down, and they said they could leave two seconds. At twelve seconds before, or I guess it was at eight seconds before—whatever there was, I went, “Ten, nine, eight, seven, six—” oh, and he lights it at two. “One, zero, Happy Birthday, Rollins!” The fireworks went off. That was the most fun. That’s the most fun I ever had. Somewhere there’s a picture of Olin with the fireworks in the background.



Fireworks at Olin Library, 1985 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

Now, the next day was the Centennial. And my phone rang about seven fifteen, and somebody said, “You know, I think it’s great that Rollins is a hundred years old. You going to ring that damn bell a hundred times?” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Well, the bells! Can’t you hear it? The bell’s ringing.” I said, “The bell?” I got in the car—I was driving a VW convertible at the time—and came up. And there was a papier mâché fox in the center of the campus, which they used to have over in the Alumni House, and somebody had gotten it and brought it out. And somebody has a picture of me carrying the fox back to my car. I put it in the car and drove it off, because we had too much going on for it to be Fox Day.

Now this is a serious comment. One of the things we had going on was the Sullivan Principles. I don’t know if you remember them or not. The issue of investment in South Africa was big on all campuses. The most vigorous protests were campuses where they would build shanties out of corrugated cardboard. The students would live in them and had signs and so forth. And our students did that here in front of Mills, and Mills of course is where the trustees were meeting. So the Friday before our Centennial, we had shanties—I’m not very proud of this—shanties in front of Mills. We had our trustees walking by them, being aware of the concern of students. And the agenda item was whether Rollins would adopt the Sullivan Principles.

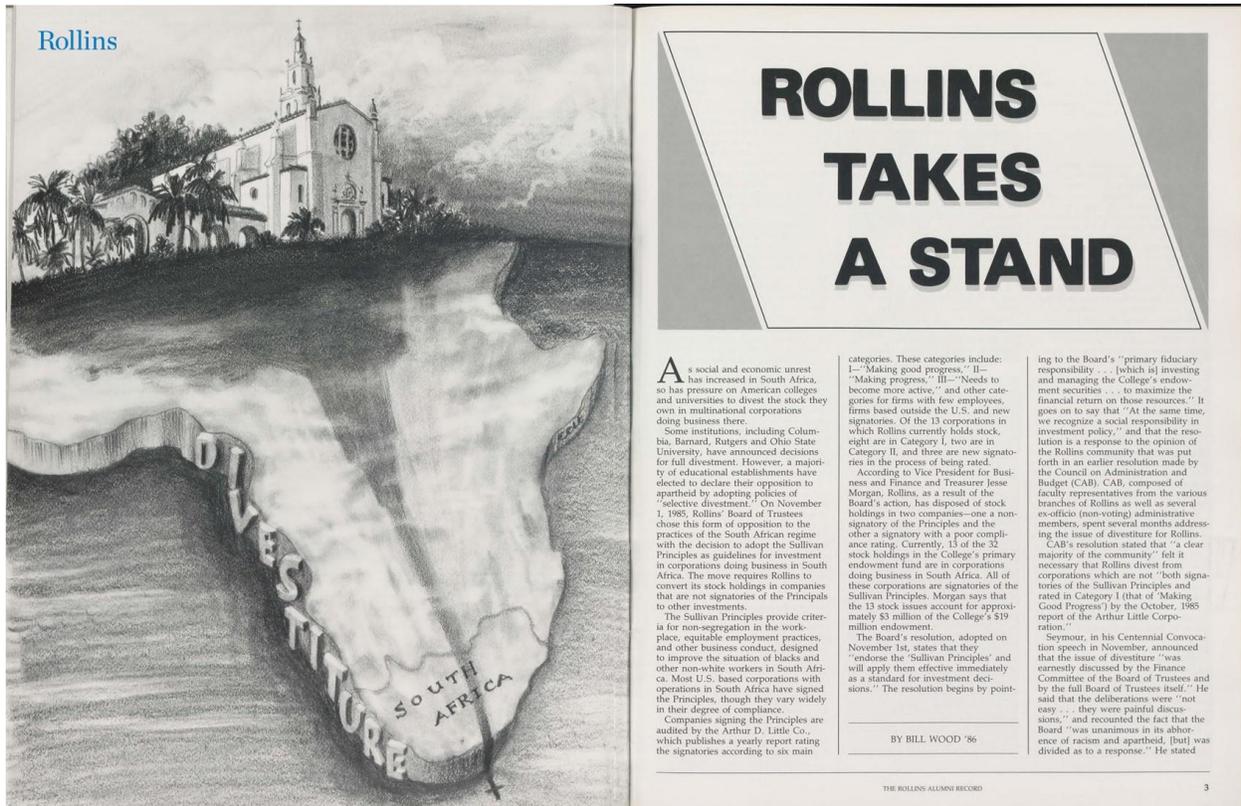
Now the Sullivan Principles—I don’t know whether he [Reverend Leon Sullivan] was a doctor; I know he was on the board of General Motors—[he] had a policy, a standard that an organization would not invest in a company that did not subscribe to fair employment, practice equal opportunity, and so forth. And there was a list of companies that were on the list, and therefore, others were not. We wanted our trustees to adopt the Sullivan Principles.

Now, this guy (indicates alumni survey), whose wife was a trustee—his wife was not very much in favor of that, I suspect. But Tommy Johnson—who said, “You let that son of a bitch back on campus”—very bright, lawyer; the only person I think in history to be editor of the *Harvard Law*

Review for two years running, and a good friend of a bunch of trustees of Pennsylvania colleges, so he knew what was going on out there; Tommy understood. And he's chair of the Finance Committee. Of all the things I've been grateful for in my years here, it is that Tommy heard me when I said, "Tommy, it's very important to me and my administration that we approve this."

I think most trustees didn't understand, but on Friday, we voted it. Friday afternoon, we sold stock in some company that was not on the list. So at least in principle, we had adopted and fulfilled the requirements of the Sullivan Principles.

I'm probably the only person around who knows any of that. And yet I've always felt that in our Centennial coming of age, that was a very important part that just never surfaced, because we were meeting trains and leading cheers and setting off fireworks. But that happened that same weekend.



The Rollins Alumni Record reports on the Board of Trustees' decision to adopt the Sullivan Principles as guidelines for College investments, Spring 1986 (*Image: Rollins College Archives*)

Now, the spring before is when we dedicated the [Olin] Library. It was on April 17, which was the anniversary of the Congregational Church's decision to found the College in Winter Park. We had Bob Wedgeworth, who was President of the American Library Association at the time and a friend of mine from Wabash; he was a Wabash graduate. He came and spoke. And a number of other people we had on the program.

But we'd had—I'm sure I've told you this. We had the problem that two weeks before—the building was done; we were waiting for the furniture. Two semis from Holland, Michigan, arrived with the furniture. It was all the wrong color. Every stick of the furniture was pickled oak; not as warm as this is (indicates furniture), but pickled oak. Somebody had written down "2D" instead of "2B" on the initial order, and it all came, and it was all wrong.

And Dave Lord [Trustee and former Associate Vice President for Business], who was here at the time, was on the phone with them. They're trying to figure out, could we could stain it? No, staining wouldn't work. Could we ship it back and get it back, because we had two weeks before the opening? No, we couldn't do that. The net of it was that we put basic furniture in; we did not put up the wooden end panels and stuff like that.

The company said, Look, we'll give it to you. We said, Look, we have a grant for this; it's paid for. This is not our problem, this is your problem. So we shipped it all back, and they then slowly replaced it.

But I got on the phone with a couple of friends and said, "If you need any library furniture, I know where you can get a pretty good deal right now, if you want some pickled oak." (Inaudible) They didn't.

Now, I'm sure I've told you: the custom is, on an event like that—I'd never done this before, but the foundation that gave the money gives the key to the chairman of the board of the institution, who says something. And then that person gives the key to the president, and the president gives the key to the director of libraries, and the director of libraries gives the key to the person in charge of maintenance. Just getting ready to go out, and Tom Wells [former Director of Physical Plant] says, "Who's got the key?" What people don't know is—this is not the same key, but the key that was passed from one person to another was the key to my car (laughs). That's the nice thing about being a magician, you know: "They'll never know! They'll never know! Tell them it's the key; they'll believe it!" So the library was opened with a car key.

DC: That's a Paul Harvey moment. That's fantastic.



The dedication of Olin Library, 1985 (*Photo: Rollins College Archives*)

TS: Well, we'd better stop. That's probably enough. I've worn you out.

DC: No.

WZ: Yes, yes. (to Prof. Cummings) Do you have any more questions?

DC: No.

WZ: Yes, I think we have been talking for more than two hours.

TS: Oh God. You poor guy.

WZ: I don't want to put a strain on you. Maybe we should continue the conversation at another time.

TS: Give it a week. I'll come in sometime without my bandage.

WZ: Yeah, we have not talked about your connection with the Winter Park community.

TS: I'd love to talk about that, and [Edwin] Grover.

DC: Yes. I'd like to reserve another time.

TS: Well, you know me; I'm shameless, so I'm at your service. Why don't we give it a couple weeks? You all pick a date, because I'm not teaching; I'm wonderfully liberated. When I'm all done—I thought I'd leave these [documents] here, and others may enjoy coming in to look at them.

WZ: Okay. I just want to thank you for your time, Thad. You are helping in preserving the history. We'll continue our conversation.

DC: Thank you.

TS: It was great fun for me.