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Interview with Fred Hicks

Fred Hicks

Rollins College

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Fred W. Hicks III '79MSCJ '80H (Photo: Rollins College Archives)

Brief Biography and Background

Fred Hicks was Rollins' dean of men and dean of student affairs from 1964 to 1969 and went on to serve the college in a number of capacities in development and administration, and as a professor of history. He was appointed acting president of the college in 1978, between the presidencies of Jack Critchfield and Thaddeus Seymour. In 1979, he was elected president of Wesleyan College (Macon, GA) and served in that role until 1983, when he was named chancellor of Coastal Carolina University (Conway, SC), where the main dining facility is named in his honor.

Fred remained connected to Rollins through his service on the museum's Board of Visitors and his generous support of the college, primarily for the museum. Ena Heller, Bruce A. Beal Director of the Rollins Museum of Art, suggests his most significant gift was the creation of The Fred W. Hicks Curatorial Fellowship, which provides in-depth training for students interested in careers in the museum field.

Interview with Fred Hicks and Wenxian Zhang

Friday, March 24, 2006

[Note: Linda Ehmen, the Cornell Fine Arts Museum registrar in 2006, sat in on this interview and is referenced throughout. The recording this transcript was made from is not available. The text below is based upon the interview and has been edited.]

WZ: Good morning. My name is Wenxian Zhang, head of Archives and Special Collections; with me, Linda Ehmen, registrar of the Cornell Fine Arts Museum. Today is Friday, March 24, 2006. We're going to interview Dr. Fred Hicks, who had been vice president of Rollins College, and with a career of fifteen years, right? From 1964 to 1979?

FH: Right.

WZ: Fred, could you share with us your family background?

FH: I grew up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Born in Detroit in 1933, the year Roosevelt became president. In my early years, I grew up in the Depression, and some of the time my father was unemployed, and my mother was a schoolteacher. My father was a mechanical engineer and inventor. In those early years, my grandmothers raised me a good share of the time. I remember my mother's family had a farm outside of Jackson, Michigan, near the little village of Rives Junction and remember the outbreak of the war, when the Japanese attacked our military and naval forces at Pearl Harbor. World War II changed a lot of people's fortunes in the United States. My father, with two children, was employed as a chief engineer. He had a deferment, as Dad was a mechanical engineer and was involved in the design and production of artillery and anti-aircraft shells for the War Department. After the war, he was employed as chief engineer for several air-valve corporations, which made equipment for the auto industry. Later he started his own company, and did well.

As to formal education: I graduated from Grosse Pointe High School and received a bachelor's with honors in history at the University of Michigan. A mentor who made a real change in my life, Arthur Edward R. Boak, was the Richard Hudson Professor of Ancient History at the University of Michigan. After graduation, I enlisted in the Army Security Agency, with service in Austria and Germany. After a year at Wayne State University, I returned to the University of Michigan and earned a master's degree in political science and history. Again, a key faculty member who made a difference in my life was Marion Siney, a visiting professor from Western Reserve, who taught a graduate seminar on the origins of World War I. I volunteered to do the research with French sources for the seminar paper, which pleased Dr. Siney greatly. Then I went on, with a Carnegie Fellowship, to earn a Ph.D. in higher education administration at the University of Michigan. Key faculty members were Algo Henderson, John Brubacher, William B. Willcox, and Allan Pfnister. They were my mentors in the Ph.D. program. I received the Ph.D. in June 1963 from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

In August I married Ann McMillan, who graduated from Michigan in June 1963 with her bachelor's degree. Ann is [now] married to Kenneth Murrah and lives here in Winter Park. We have two married children, Sara Malone and our son, Frederick. We spent a year in Arizona, where I was director of financial aid at Arizona State University and taught a history course before coming to Rollins.

We moved to Rollins College in the summer of 1964, when I was appointed the dean of men. Rollins was, to say the least, a different experience for me and Ann. It was unique, and one which has stayed with us to this day. Of all the schools I've been associated with, it's the one that had the most impact on me personally and professionally.

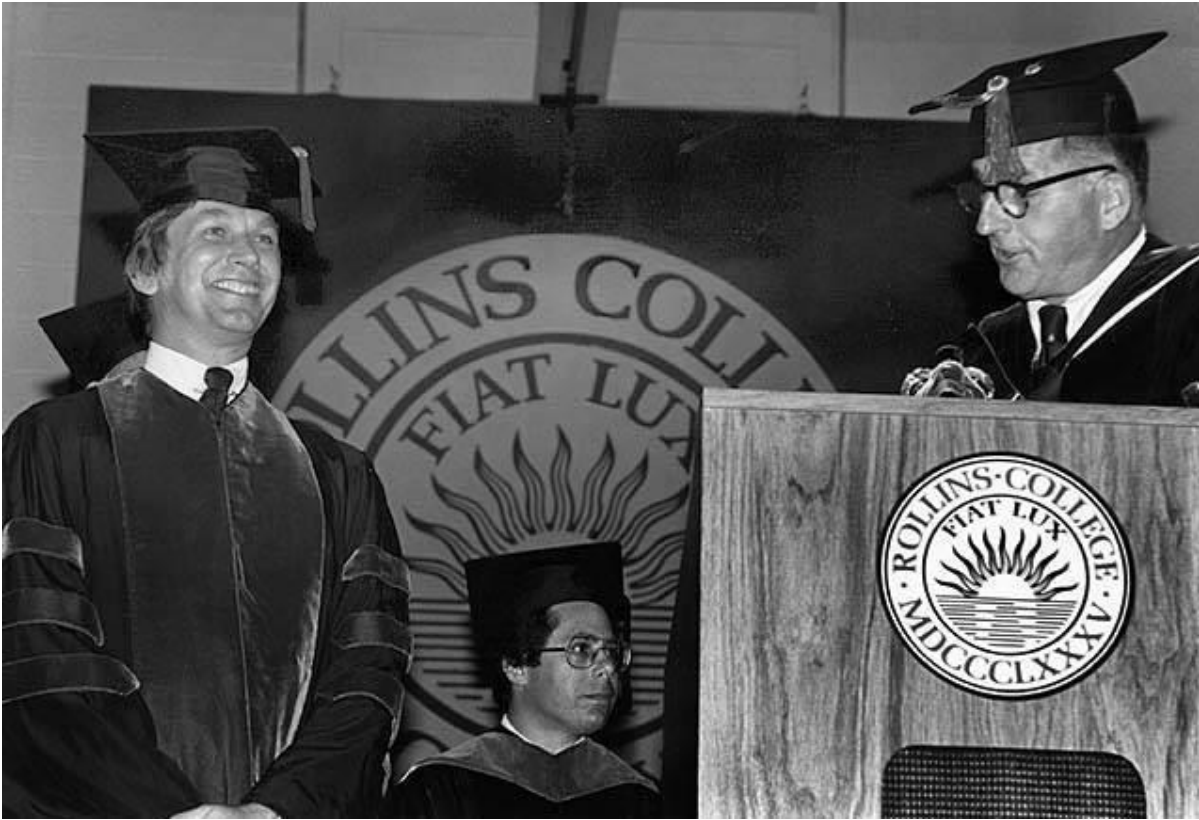


Dean Fred Hicks in 1964-1965
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

I was hired by Edwin Burdell, who had been the president of Cooper's Union in New York, and the dean of MIT in Boston. Dr. Burdell was the dean of the college, and he was the one who hired me, or recommended me to [former President] Hugh McKean. When I was dean of men, a key figure in my early days at Rollins, as I said, was Helen Watson, who was the dean of women. She remains a friend in her nineties, living at Bay Hill.

Edwin and Emma Burdell were also key influences upon me and Ann those first years at Rollins, as were Hugh and Jeannette McKean. It evolved that Hugh and Jeannette would have Ann and me with them at various college-related social receptions and similar occasions. Therefore, while dean of men, I started to move into the field of development and public relations. We would assist the McKeanes at Wind Song [their home], at the Orlando Country Club, or elsewhere. I was impressed with the decorative arts at Wind Song. I remember at their Bonita Drive residence, over the mantelpiece, a small work by Paul Gauguin. This visual impact of fine art and the gracious cultured couple that were the McKeanes were a significant influence on Ann and me.

When I was working for Jack Critchfield, I earned a master's degree in criminal justice from Rollins College. Later [former President] Thad Seymour invited me back to Rollins after I had left the college to be president of Wesleyan College and awarded me the L.H.D.



Dr. Fred Hicks (left) and President Thaddeus Seymour (right), ca. 1978
(Photo: Rollins College Archives)

At the time I was offered the position of president of Wesleyan College, I was also offered the job of associate commissioner for law enforcement for the State of Florida. One of my instructors in criminal justice was Jim York, who was the chief of police for the city of Orlando. He had been selected by Governor Graham to become the commissioner of law enforcement. He offered me the job of associate commissioner, in charge of the crime lab, the information system, and other support activities, that sort of thing. That would have been too much of a change, but I gave Jim York's offer serious consideration.

Back to Rollins College and the art collection. I understand you've been looking for information on the World War I posters and World War II posters. The posters came from [former President] Hamilton Holt. The founder of the college art collection was Dr. Holt, an amazing collector who so enriched Rollins, prior to the presidency of Hugh McKean.

I understanding you are missing two Kress paintings. These were located in the chapel [Knowles Memorial Chapel] and were stolen in the early days of the Critchfield administration. We searched whatever records we had, but had no available photographs to give law enforcement.

President McKean left the presidency around 1970. The late sixties, with the Vietnam War,

were a terrible time for the country and an unpleasant time for the college. When Dr. McKean left the presidency, I went with him as his assistant, and our offices were in what had been Hamilton Holt's house, which Dr. Holt had given to Rollins. It was located kitty corner across from Osceola Lodge, which was the winter home of Charles Hosmer Morse. The Holt House was subsequently sold during the Critchfield administration by the trustees.

The first year Dr. McKean was chancellor, we had on our office walls part of the college art collection. The Holt House was used to locate and store a goodly portion of the college art collection. I can recall, my office was as big as this room that we're in now, with paintings from the college art collection hung throughout the Holt House. The environment for the offices of Chancellor McKean was that of a grand house, finely furnished with art. It was great working there the one year I was Hugh's assistant. Hugh's office was the wonderful large dining room, which overlooked the lake. It was furnished with part of his and Jeannette's personal art collection, as well as a small portion of the college art collection. Upstairs, in every available space, including the closets, was a portion of the college art collection, items which were Hugh and Jeannette's personal collection, and a few, if I recall correctly, pieces—but not many—of the Tiffany collection owned by the McKeanes.

That was the year that I worked directly with Dr. McKean, and that's what really started my major interest in the college art collection. The rest of the college art collection was scattered throughout the campus. I had no idea of what we had. I don't think that either Hugh or Jeannette fully knew the extent of the college art collection, which had been assembled by Hamilton Holt over Dr. Holt's lifetime. Add to what had been assembled by Dr. Holt the many gifts that came to the college largely from friends and acquaintances of Hugh and Jeannette, then you begin to have an idea of the magnitude of the college collection.

Jeannette Genius McKean is not given the credit that should be hers for preserving this college. Rollins and Winter Park were largely founded by Jeannette's grandfather, Charles Hosmer Morse. For Jeannette, with the affection and esteem she had for her grandfather, and married to Hugh, who was a graduate and faculty member at Rollins prior to being selected president, the support of the college was a family matter. It was Jeannette's philanthropy that kept Rollins intact during some of its most challenging years.

Not to put too fine a point on it, Hugh and Jeannette regarded the students, faculty, and staff at Rollins as part of the family. It is difficult for us in this modern day and age to understand their view of the Rollins community. Near the end of Hugh's career as president, in my judgment, Dr. McKean was treated somewhat badly by some of the younger faculty and some students. Hugh and Jeannette certainly harbored no ill feeling as witness their continued concern, support, interest, and affection held by them for the Rollins faculty and students during their lifetime.

When Jack Critchfield became president, in his first year in office he received a wake-up

call as to the financial situation of the college. Gifts and support began to fall. Jack could not sustain to a significant extent the funds which had come to Rollins through Hugh and Jeannette's efforts. I had observed their efforts, as both my wife and myself had assisted the McKeans on many social occasions. They secured the funds for the college from their friends, and they did it in an understated way. The McKeans started the Patrons' Program. Participants were their friends from the social and business society of Central Florida and elsewhere. Hugh also started a Conquistador Program for larger donors. Support came to Rollins from Jeannette and Hugh's friends in New York and elsewhere. Winter residents to Winter Park were also participants in supporting Rollins. The science building [Bush Science Center] was a reflection of the friendship between the McKeans and Archie and Edyth Bush. The Crummer School was built through the friendship of the McKeans with Trustee Buck Alleman and his wife, Kay, who knew Roy Crummer. The people, friends of Hugh and Jeannette, who supported the college were the crème de la crème of Central Florida society and beyond.

Working that year with Hugh McKean was an eye-opener as to the extent of the college art collection and particularly to the extent of Hugh and Jeannette's art collection, in particular the works of Louis Comfort Tiffany. Hugh and Jeannette were personal friends of Tiffany's family and heirs, and of course, you know the story of how the McKeans saved what was left of Laurelton Hall. The exhibit this coming fall at the Metropolitan Museum in New York promises to be spectacular. And of course, you can see the wonderful collection of Tiffany in the Morse Museum of American Art here in Winter Park.

The two personal employees of the McKeans most involved in maintaining and keeping track of the McKean collection and the college art collection were Bruce Marcellus and Mary Ann "Winkie" Colado. Bruce was the "gofer" guy for Hugh and Jeannette when they had to move, store, or maintain their art collection, including the Tiffany items. Winkie Colado is a graduate of Rollins, I believe an art major, but with no professional museum training. She cataloged the college art collection and maintained the McKeans' art collection, with her office in the old Morse Gallery of Art on the campus. Bruce and Mary Ann were on the college payroll, paid from funds provided by Jeannette. Both Bruce and Winkie would also collect the gifts given to either Rollins or the McKeans, as well as purchases the McKeans made for their personal art collection. For instance, I can remember Bruce and Mary Ann driving to Palm Beach to bring back to the college the paintings and decorative arts left to us from the Irving and Janet Reuter estate.

It is important to understand that while Hugh was president, and without any fanfare, at the end of each fiscal year, Rollins would come up short in balancing the books. Jeannette, God bless her, would write a check, and there would go the deficit. Although I cannot attest to this, I suspect, they were assisted in this philanthropy by John [former treasurer and trustee] and Sylvia Tiedtke. John and Hugh were longtime, close friends. Rollins owes a lot to the generosity of Hugh and Jeannette, and John and Sylvia. Two great couples!

When President [Paul A.] Wagner was forced to resign, after his stormy short tenure, I was told—and after Hugh had been elected president by the trustees and faculty—Hugh, John,

and Alfred Hanna [former professor and trustee] met and decided, Hugh, you're president; John, the vice president of finance; and Dr. Hanna will have charge of the academic life and the library. I knew Dr. Hanna and his historian wife, Kathryn Abbey Hanna. Alfred or "Fred" Hanna initiated the Book-A-Year program for the support of the library. Jeannette McKean, Hugh told me, was very fond of the Book-A-Year program, and I know she supported it loyally during her lifetime.

During Jack Critchfield's first year as Rollins president, Ann and I became acquainted with Jack and his first wife, Nancy. In Jack's early years, we would babysit their two young children when Jack and Nancy were scheduled for alumni trips outside of Winter Park. During Jack's first year, he would meet with Hugh from time to time at the Holt House to keep Hugh abreast of what was current on campus. Jack also wanted to explore how he as president might move the support the McKean's had brought to the college to Rollins under the new leadership. Hugh was resistant to having his and Jeannette's friends solicited for support of Rollins purely on the basis of that personal friendship—and properly so, I might add.

I was at the age (thirty-seven) where I had a lot of energy, and frankly felt underutilized. I could only occupy so much of my time with work which would help Dr. McKean as chancellor of the college and as chairman of the Board of Trustees. The remainder of my time was spent learning from Hugh what I could about art, Tiffany, and the college art collection, and exploring related files which Hugh brought with him from his tenure as president of Rollins. Hugh McKean was a wonderful mentor and teacher. I will always treasure his friendship.

It was during that year I realized Rollins had a major challenge down the road, sooner rather than later. The college collection was scattered all over the campus and beyond. The Morse Gallery of Art was built with funds given by Jeannette as a memorial to her grandfather. It could not possibly come close to holding the college art collection. Storage areas were limited, and periodically the exhibition area of the museum held works from the McKean's Tiffany collection.

Near the end of the year, Jack asked me to return to the campus as his executive assistant. I was tasked with securing and expanding Rollins' fundraising programs. Dr. Critchfield was an excellent fundraiser, particularly with the business community and other friends of the college. Dr. Critchfield was the first to cultivate in a systematic fashion, and I don't mean this in a bad way, the Cornells [George D. and Harriet W. Cornell]. It was through Jack's efforts that funds came to Rollins for the Cornell Fine Arts Center and the Art Department, the Keene Music Building, and other major projects. Another important member of Jack's fundraising team was Jim Sheldon, who retired to Winter Park from Chicago. Jim was a successful business executive from Chicago, and before coming to Florida had secured considerable resources for the University of Chicago. Between the three of us, we intensely "mined" and cultivated the corporate community, the alumni, patrons, parents, foundations, and other friends of Rollins. Give Jack Critchfield the credit for the first organized and structured development program for Rollins. As you know, the development program

progressed after the Critchfield administration with Thaddeus Seymour's tenure as president, and reached a pinnacle of success with [former President] Dr. [Rita] Bornstein, who surpassed all of her predecessors in one fell swoop with the gifts to Rollins from Harriet and George Cornell. Incredible!

After I returned to campus in an active way as Jack's assistant, and with the addition of Jim Sheldon to the advancement team during President Critchfield's administration, Rollins, as funds became available, constructed new academic buildings, new residence halls, disposed of off-campus real estate, sold yachts that had come to the college—one of Hugh's programs—and "pumped" a considerable sum into faculty salaries and the academic programs. It was an exciting period of achievement and improvement for the college.

As the academic facilities were improved and programs expanded and new buildings added, it became a problem of freeing up the areas in which the college art collection was stored. The buildings which I recall initially [that] had portions of the college art collection included the Parsonage, the old Baptist Church (Bingham Hall), the basement and undercroft area of Knowles Chapel, the entire basement of Rose Skillman Hall, the off-campus Holt House, Casa Iberia, the old Morse Gallery of Art, the Warren Administration Building, and bits and pieces in the residence halls and other places that have slipped my mind. Intermingled with the college art collection was the personal collection of the McKean's. Fairly soon, however, the McKean Tiffany collection and other works belonging to them on the campus that were not in storage on the Wind Song property and elsewhere were removed. With the construction by the McKean's of a Morse Gallery on Welbourne Avenue, behind Jeannette's Center Street Gallery, most of the McKean's art collection, Tiffany and otherwise, was removed from the campus.

Some items remained in what I will call a "twilight zone." For instance, Hugh and Jeannette had purchased from salvagers a portion of the old Seminole Hotel, and it had been stored in the basement of the chapel and in the basement of Rose Skillman Hall. Furniture which was given to the college, as well as Oriental carpets, were also used in college buildings or were in storage on the campus. At some point, Bruce Marcellus and Winkie Colado left the college, and to a certain extent, there went the memory or history of the art collection. I am attempting to give you an idea of the extent of the challenge. The records kept by the McKean's as to the Tiffany collection and their other personal art collection were excellent, at least from what I had seen. And the college art collection started by the Hamilton Holt estate and record of gifts to the college from Dr. Holt's time, maintained by Winkie Colado, were fairly accurate, within the limits of her knowledge. There was a serious effort by the college and the McKean's to separate the two art collections, but it was inevitable there would be problems in separating some items.

At some point, early on in the Critchfield administration, Hugh stepped down as chancellor and as a member of the Board of Trustees, and concentrated on the Tiffany collection. Hugh also became a trustee of the [Edyth] Bush [Charitable] Foundation.

Soon after, the college trustees sold the Holt House property. We then had to bring the college art collection in the Holt House onto campus in space we did not have.

Two early projects for Jack were to find a campus home for the Music Department and a new facility for the Art Department. The music faculty was located off campus in Martin Hall, which the trustees wanted to sell. The Art Department was located in an old facility which had been the dining hall, before it was replaced by Skillman Hall. Rose Skillman, by the way, was a friend of the McKeans from Michigan.

President Critchfield secured the funding for a new music building from the Keene family, the Rogers family, and others; and resources, principally from the Cornells, for a new museum and facility for the art faculty. The latter presented a problem: the most obvious site for the new art museum and art teaching facility was the campus location of the Morse Gallery of Art.

Belatedly, I believe, it became apparent that locating or replacing the Morse Gallery of Art with the Cornell Museum would be a concern for the McKeans. Jeannette had a great affection of pride and love for her grandfather, Charles Hosmer Morse. And indeed, the college should have understood and been sympathetic to her feelings. At the least, Rollins should have consulted with the McKeans prior to the decision to locate the new Cornell Museum on the campus site of the Morse Gallery of Art.

It was a real problem for the college. I engineered a resolution which allowed the McKeans to take the Morse Gallery of Art name with them for the new gallery being built on Welbourne Avenue. The relationship between Jack and Hugh by this time was cold and correct. The college certainly did not need and did not want to lose the interest, affection, and support of the McKeans for Rollins. It was a close call. I took it upon myself—not as a college matter, but as a personal concern—to maintain the McKeans' interest in Rollins. I was then and am now genuinely fond of this wonderful couple.

Prior to the inauguration of the new Cornell Fine Arts Museum, I made sure one of the three galleries was named for Jeannette. One other gallery was named for Mary Knapp, a friend of the McKeans who had left her estate to Rollins. There were a number of estates that came to the college through the friendship which the McKeans had with people, not only in Central Florida, but in Chicago, New York, Detroit, and elsewhere.

I made sure throughout the time I worked for Jack Critchfield that I had regular meetings with Hugh at his office on Welbourne Avenue or at the restaurant [La Belle Verrière], which was named for a derivative of the French noun *le verre*, roughly translated as “the beautiful glass.” The McKeans owned the restaurant, near Jeannette's Center Street Gallery, and several of the Tiffany windows in their collection were

part of the ambience of this elegant French restaurant. Often, after meeting Hugh in his office, he would take me to lunch at the McKean's restaurant. In any event, I made sure that Hugh knew what was taking place on the campus on matters which were of interest to him. There was little direct communication between Hugh and Jack.

Hugh had become both a mentor and personal friend by this time. In these meetings and luncheons, we would not only discuss college matters, but also art, the Tiffany collection, and the book on Tiffany that Dr. McKean was writing. I worked very hard during the Critchfield years to preserve Hugh and Jeannette's interests in the college. It was at one of the luncheons that Hugh told me that someday I would be thanked for preserving, protecting, and conserving the college art collection. "Without you," he said, "it would have been lost."

In order to free up space on the campus, not only for the new buildings, but also to clear some of the other buildings for other purposes, we had to make some difficult choices as to what to keep, maintain, and conserve of the art collection. If Rollins had available funds, the college probably should have rented an air-conditioned warehouse and put it all in storage until we could obtain professional assistance in making the choice of what to keep and what to sell. We were under the gun, we had to do something, and so some items were sold which should have been kept. During these summer sales, we even had shoplifters appear.

When we were ready to begin construction of the Cornell Museum of Fine Arts, the old Morse Gallery on the campus was still loaded with items from the McKean's art collection. Hugh had a major problem finding space off campus for the storage of their items in the Morse Gallery, on the site of new Cornell Museum of Fine Arts. There were cross words between Hugh and Jack. This situation complicated the relationship of the McKean's to Rollins, through their antipathy towards Jack Critchfield. Hugh also never forgave Jack Critchfield for the destruction of the historic Parsonage. In hindsight, the destruction was a terrible decision. Yes, I had a major challenge keeping his and Jeannette's interests on an even keel. Yet I want it clear that Hugh and Jeannette, during the Critchfield years, never lost interest in Rollins.

In any event, the Cornell Art Center was constructed, consisting of the museum and a separate adjacent structure [that] housed the art faculty and art students. Previously, the art faculty and students had been housed in Beans (the dining hall). Since I had pushed Jack to make the facility a reality, I took pride in the result.

Then we began to move the things we had managed to preserve into the new museum. I became the first director of the museum, which became one of the many hats I wore. I continued to serve Rollins as executive assistant to the president and as director of development and public relations. As we began to move, particularly the paintings, to the museum, we found that a number of them had suffered wear and tear. Some were ripped;

others, the painting was beginning to flake. Some of the works on paper were discolored and suffered from heat and humidity damage. So I took it as my challenge, the securing of the funds needed to conserve and repair as many of the oils as possible. It was an ongoing process, which was still incomplete when I left Rollins in 1979.

With the inauguration of the Cornell Museum, the gifts of art to Rollins began anew at a fresh pace. I created the Board of Visitors to help secure funds to support the collection, as well as the activities of the museum. It was an incredible group, and I count it as a significant contribution to the advancement of Rollins.

I remember early on after the dedication of the museum, I told Jack Critchfield that we needed to recruit a director for the museum. Critchfield just looked at me and said, "You're the director of the art center," so I became the first director of the art center. Of course Hugh McKean was a good mentor, a good teacher; I had learned a great deal from him, but I clearly had to learn on the fly to be a director. With everything else I was supposed to accomplish for Rollins, with fundraising the most important of several hats, the museum and the art collection took a back seat.

Well, with the help of the Board of Visitors, and the recruitment of excellent members, we established a minimum of programs and activities. It was fortunate for Rollins that the first board as well as the successor boards have been top flight. Joan Wavell succeeded me as director. The first professional to head the museum, of course, is Arthur Blumenthal.

With all the change in facilities and programs, the destruction of the Parsonage, and the personal antipathy between Jack and Hugh, it all combined to make for a tense situation more often than it needed to be. The McKeans believed, with some justification, that Jack really didn't care about the art collection. I don't think Jack really did, to tell you the truth. Jack, as president, had more pressing priorities and interests. I think, too, that the McKeans simply viewed Jack as an outsider. Perhaps you can't succeed a long-term president without offending in some ways your predecessor. But I don't want to put too fine a point as to the antipathy between the two men.

The Casa Iberia was another problem, which Linda brought to my attention this morning. The Casa Iberia was one of Fred Hanna's favorite projects. Dr. Hanna was primarily responsible for the Latin America programs at Rollins. He had secured funds and community support for the Casa Iberia. After Dr. Hanna's death, the Parsonage, where Fred had his office, assisted by his longtime friend Kay Lehmen, was destroyed, as I previously mentioned. I think—I know the McKeans were shocked by the destruction of the Parsonage. They felt the history and heritage of the college was beginning to crumble; the heritage of the college, from their point of view, was being violated. There was one point when I felt we had completely lost the support of Hugh and Jeannette: when Critchfield cancelled the Fox Day tradition. I retrieved the Fox and returned it to Hugh McKean. Then, during the time I was acting president and after Thad Seymour was elected president, the Fox was returned to the campus. The

Fox Day proclamations written by Hugh are a work of art, witty and wise.

During those years that I worked for Dr. Critchfield, as I have said, I maintained a close relationship with Hugh. When he was in town and it was convenient for him, I would have lunch with Hugh, pretty much on a weekly basis. As Hugh developed the Morse Museum on Welbourne, and as he began to write his book on Louis Comfort Tiffany, we would tour the facility as it was developed. Often we would just chat and talk about art and Tiffany. During these talks, sometimes followed by lunch at their restaurant, Hugh rarely brought up the subject of Rollins College. However, I would initiate conversation on Rollins activities and accomplishments which I knew were of interest to him and Jeannette, such as the Book-A-Year Program. At some point, Hugh was elected to the Bush Foundation board. Over the years, the Edyth Bush Foundation has been a key part of the progress of Rollins. I did not use these conversations to patch up any kind of working relationship between Jack Critchfield and Hugh McKean. It just was not in the cards. The relationship was cool and distant. Hugh was my mentor and a personal friend, and I want that thoroughly understood. And Jeannette, one of the most gracious women I've ever met, was generous and self-effacing. I will admit that I engineered an honorary degree for Jeannette during the Critchfield administration.

There were times Hugh, after he left the presidency of Rollins, was criticized by members of the college family—college community is a better way of putting it—particularly Hugh McKean's style of being president. You have to remember, the only real president he knew before he became president was Hamilton Holt, and, if nothing else, Hugh was in Holt's image. I mean, McKean ran things as Holt ran them. And that was why I think a lot of criticism came on Hugh, because he patterned himself on Dr. Holt, and Hugh had been a faculty member during Holt's time. It always intrigued me that the faculty who criticized Hugh were criticizing one of their own. Hugh, nonetheless, always was gracious towards the faculty and student critics and did a lot of things for them that they'll never know about.

And gradually, Hugh put aside his antipathy for Jack and the McKean's support for Rollins grew stronger. The whole situation greatly improved, I am told, during Dr. Seymour's presidency.

Let me ask you now to go back and ask any question you want, either about the art collection or the college.

WZ: Okay, let's go back. Let's see—you were not the first one in your family to go to college, right?

FH: No, my mother graduated from the University of Michigan, where she met my dad. At the end of their sophomore year, they married, and he went to work at the old McCord Radiator Company in Detroit. Mom taught mathematics in high school until I arrived on the scene in 1933.

My mother, Evelyn Blair, came from a farming family. Her family immigrated to Michigan from Canada. On my mother's side I have Scotch-Irish and German ancestors. On my father's side it's German, Norwegian, Welsh, and English. They came to Detroit from Philadelphia.

WZ: So what made you decide to major in history? And tell us briefly about your teaching career as a history professor.

FH: It was in my first undergraduate course from Dr. Boak on the Roman Republic that he invited me into the honors program. In graduate school, I was a teaching fellow one year at the University of Michigan; taught two courses at Arizona State University; several courses at Rollins College; then did not teach again until I left the position of chancellor of Coastal Carolina University in 1985. I taught courses in the history of the Vietnam War, history of modern France, and courses in recent British history. I retired from Coastal Carolina University at the end of 1998 as distinguished professor emeritus of history.

WZ: So after you received your graduate degree, you went to Arizona State University. So basically all your time up till then was all in public, state universities—

FH: Right, at Michigan, during the graduate work for my M.A. and Ph.D., I held various jobs with the dean of students' office and with the supervisor of university extension centers throughout the state. One of my high school teachers at Grosse Pointe High School was Ralph Steffek—I haven't thought of that name in years. Ralph Steffek was in charge of all the extension centers of the University of Michigan, which varied from the Upper Peninsula all over the state. I also was research assistant for a year for Lyle Nelson, who was vice president of public relations at the University of Michigan. I still remember, one of the assignments which Dr. Nelson gave me was to research the background of a political cartoonist from Finland, who worked for the main newspaper in Helsinki. This gentleman was visiting the university as a lecturer and was world-renowned for his satire. Then I worked for Bud Rea, who had been the longtime dean of men at Michigan. When Bud became director of financial aid, I became one of his two assistants during two graduate years. I should make it clear that by the time I embarked upon my Ph.D. program, Dr. Algo Henderson had recruited me into the newly established Center for the Study of Higher Education through a Carnegie Fellowship.

My Ph.D is in higher education administration, received in 1963. The majority of my years were spent in college and university administration, with experience in two private schools, Rollins and Wesleyan, and three state universities: Michigan in Ann Arbor, Arizona State University in Tempe, and Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina. It was in 1985 when I became a full-time history professor.

WZ: But my real question is, what made you decide to come to Rollins, a small liberal arts college?

FH: We were only in Arizona for the one year I was director of financial aid. Ann and I went to Arizona after we married. She received her B.A. and me the Ph.D. at commencement in June 1963. We married in August. That summer, before we married, I was offered the position of director of financial aid at a college in New York, which was part of the state university system. It was my first job offer, but I turned it down, much to Dr. Henderson's dismay, and accepted the position of director of financial aid at Arizona State University.

At ASU I worked for Weldon Shoftstall, who was the dean of students. This was the 1963-1964 academic year, and the period when President Kennedy was murdered in Dallas. Dr. Shoftstall was a pleasant enough individual, but was a member of the John Birch Society and somewhat vocal about it. Shoftstall saw a Communist under every rock and wanted to impeach Earl Warren, the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Dr. Shoftstall was entirely too far right for Ann and me. So we decided on a search. President Homer Durham knew I was not happy working for Shoftstall, so he helped me in the search. I had met with Dr. Durham and shared my feelings and opinion of the situation in the dean of students office. President Durham was a Mormon, a fine gentleman, and an excellent president. So I shared with Dr. Durham what I thought of Shoftstall's politicalization of the dean of students office. Durham didn't commit, but he certainly smiled and winked. I knew that he would support me, but he did not want me to put the Shofstall problem on his plate.

Ann and I decided which states would be of interest. We knew we did not want to go back north; we had experienced too many Ann Arbor winters. We narrowed it down to public and private schools in California and Florida.

I learned that Rollins was looking for a dean of men. We did our homework and research on the college, and I sent off a letter of interest to the dean of the college, Edwin S. Burdell. The campus interview went well, and we immediately hit it off with Edwin and Emma, who would soon become close friends. Two key people who advised Burdell on my hiring were Ted Darrah, dean of the chapel, Wendell Stone in the Philosophy Department—and Paul Vestal in Biology. I later found out that they were close faculty friends and advisors to President McKean. Ted, Wendell, and Paul urged Burdell to hire me, and I know Burdell was so inclined. When I say Dr. Burdell hired me, I mean, he, Ted, Paul, and Wendell all met together, and they advised Hugh, This is the man you should hire. So I was hired on my initial visit. The most charming part of the interview was the conversation with Wendell Stone, standing looking out over Lake Virginia. It was a relaxed and pleasant time. How could one not like Rollins? Ann and I fell in love with this unique college. Ted Darrah became a close friend, and in his wise and witty way steered me through campus politics. Dean Darrah had an incredibly positive impact on the students in particular and the college in general. What a wonderful human being!

WZ: How do you view your Rollins career? What do you feel that your achievement you are most proud of is?

FH: That is a hard question. The college became personal to me and Ann. If we had it

to do all over, we might never have left in 1979. I felt at age forty-six and after my time as executive vice president, and briefly as acting president, that we ought to take on the challenge of a college presidency. In the search for Dr. Critchfield's successor, I was the in-house candidate. When I reflect upon it, it probably was just as well I was not selected. I had too much baggage from my days as dean of students during the 1960s. I believe it is difficult to become president of a school where you yourself have matured. There is too much memory, community memory, that goes into it. Nevertheless, I had significant support from the community and from the faculty. Initially the trustees elected me as executive vice president because of the success of our development activities and my participation in the community activities of Winter Park and Orlando. It also became clear the trustees wanted me as executive vice president so they could make me acting president when Jack took early leave and became president of the Winter Park Telephone Company.

At first I refused to become a candidate—in fact, Hugh McKean said to me, after the three candidates for president had been selected and visited the campus, and Thad Seymour was selected—that I should have made the committee come to me and offer me the position. This evidentially was what happened when Hugh succeeded Paul Wagner as president.

During the time I was refusing to declare myself a candidate, several members of the search committee came to me and told me I had to declare my interest. Because of my high visibility in the Winter Park and Orlando community, the committee was bombarded by letters, recommendations, and phone calls. I even think the lady who ran the liquor store on Park Avenue (laughs) sent in a recommendation to the search committee.

In any case, Karl Peters [former professor] on the search committee came to me and said, "Now, you've just got to declare yourself a candidate, we're getting all these recommendations," and I said, "No, I don't really want to do that." He said, "Oh, you just have to do it," and so I did. Big mistake. I was later told by a faculty friend on the search committee, Elinor Miller, that was all they needed to eliminate me from the final three. It was a setup. I had good friends on the search committee, and I think they did the best they could.

After Thad Seymour became president, I returned to the position of executive vice president. I don't believe Dr. Seymour was comfortable with me holding the title of executive vice president. He wanted to convert me to vice president for development. It made for an awkward year for both of us. It was clear if I was to remain at Rollins, it would be as vice president of development. It was during Thad's first year as president that I was selected to become president of Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia. Wesleyan College is the oldest college chartered in the world to grant degrees to women.

LE: Having now heard the overview of your experience, I feel that now you and I can walk together, and I'll know exactly what to show you in the art collection to sort of solicit responses from you. I think then that would have more benefit, because I'll be able to jog your memory by opening up the objects. You'll be able to fill in all my blank spaces, and I would love Archives to be a part of that process, so that we don't ever go through a time in our college's history where we don't know how something happened.

FH: The other thing that has always perplexed me, bothered me to a certain extent, are the missed opportunities. I had hoped that the new Cornell Fine Arts Museum would become a premier art museum, fully engaged in the Central Florida community and engaged in teaching and research. Physical expansion of the museum is restricted by available space on the campus. There were missed opportunities for major additions to the art collection, such as the collection of Martin and Gracia Andersen, who were close friends of Hugh and Jeannette. The Reynolds Morse Dali Museum in St. Petersburg was another missed opportunity. Hugh and Jeannette's American art collection is another example. The problem is not only available space on a small campus, but parking, as you well know. Perhaps in the end, none of these opportunities could possibly have been realized.

I believe my significant achievements at Rollins from 1964 to 1979 were the establishment of a home for the college art collection in the Cornell Fine Arts Museum and the inauguration of programs to support the activities of the museum. Secondly, I worked to expand and enhance the development or advancement programs and activities for Rollins College—fundraising, if you will. Thirdly, I sought through community service in Winter Park and Orlando to raise the profile of Rollins as a significant community resource. Fourth, a personal mission: I sought to preserve the interest of Hugh and Jeannette in Rollins College. There are many others who perhaps deserve more credit in this regard, but I did what I could. Lastly, from the turbulent times of the late 1960s Rollins graduated a number of able, gifted, and accomplished students. The critical component in the development of these fine alumni leaders was then and is now the quality of the Rollins faculty. Look at the classes from 1967-1970 and beyond. The leadership and achievements these alumni demonstrate in Rollins College and in their home communities is admirable. The best and the brightest.

WZ: Thank you for letting me record our conversation with you, and thank you for your contribution to Rollins College.