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Oral History Interview with Mr. Jack Rich

Jack Rich

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Oral History Interview with Mr. Jack Rich
Wenxian Zhang, Corey Schreck and Lily Velez
Rollins College Archives
(06/23/05)

Zhang: Good morning. My name is Wenxian Zhang, head of Archives Special Collections. With me are Lily Velez and Corey Schreck. We're going to interview Jack Rich for the Rollins Oral History project. Jack is a retired Dean of Admissions, emeritus.

Rich: Dean of Admissions emeritus, yes.

Zhang: Yes, and also the class, Rollins class—

Rich: Class of 1938.

Zhang: So Jack, could you share with us your family background, where you were born, how you grew up?

Rich: I'm a Marylander by birth. Actually, a Baltimoron, as we say. And I went to my earliest schooling was there. I was at boarding school from age nine, and then choir school, voice soprano, for five years at old Saint Paul's in Baltimore. And then went from there to four years of prep school at Saint James Boarding School for boys in Western Maryland. That meant that from age nine to eighteen, I was in a boarding situation of men and boys only. So I was determined as a senior at Saint James to go to the co-ed school. There must be some significance of having women in the same classrooms as men, boys, and so on. So I applied to Princeton and I was accepted there. It was all men in those days. And I applied to Trinity where my father had gone in Hartford, Connecticut. And was accepted with full scholarship there, which I badly needed because my father was a minister, Episcopal minister, with eight children, and hardly made enough money to keep food on the table. And so then when I was wondering what I was going to do, I thought that I was going to have to go to Trinity. I didn't want anymore of an all male world, but what else can I do?

And along comes this man with the intriguing name of Hamilton Holt, representing a college in Florida, which I'd never heard of. And he was to speak to the entire student body, so I went to that. This is in the spring of my senior year and he—within three or four minutes of his talk, I knew very well where I wanted to go to college. He described his co-ed Rollins College in Florida. It'd been co-ed since the beginning: 1885. And how he described his conference plan of teaching, where the emphasis is on learning and not on grades, and it was just absolutely fascinating. And then he showed pictures of the co-eds, and I thought, that's where I want to go to college!

So, then the tuition at that time, now this is hard to believe but it is true; room, board, and tuition at Rollins was \$1395, \$1400. And that made it one of the three highest, most expensive colleges in the country. The other two were Sarah Lawrence and Bennington. It was the only co-ed one. Sarah Lawrence then was all girls and

Bennington also. But here was this college, which very few people had heard from in Florida charging that kind of money. I knew that's where I wanted to go.

So then began the long business. It was the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the college, and I won— was fortunate, in getting one of those. They gave fifty scholarships at \$500. That reduced it what, from \$1400 to whatever. And then Dr. Holt put me in touch by correspondence with his vice president, Edwin Osgood Grover; you have a lot here on him. And he was really remarkable. And he told me about the Whistling Kettle Tea Room, the only place where you could eat out in Winter Park in those days. The total population of Winter Park then, in winter, was 4000. And the total student enrollment was just under 400. Of course, in summer, the total enrollment was zero and there weren't any, no faculty here, no office! The office moved to Woodstock, Connecticut. Long before air conditioning that was. And the town population went from 4000 down to about 1000 in the summertime. And all the people escaped to New England or the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina.

Anyway, Dr. Grover was marvelous in putting me in touch with this remarkable woman, Lucy le Boutellier, who was operating this tea room, which was located on Lyman Avenue where the new hotel is being built, where the Langford was. That was a tearoom that served toggle tote lunches and dinners. And Lucy le Boutellier was from a prominent New York family that lost everything in the stock market crash of '30-- of '29. And she came down here with her not very healthy mother and set up this tearoom with the last of what they had. And she operated with the idea of having men students at Rollins be the waiters, and that's where I got a job and worked for four years there.

Then Dr.— I had a classmate in prep school whose family had a home here. That was the Showalter family, same Showalter family which has the Showalter air service in Orlando now. Anyway, and then I got in touch with the Showalter family and they said I was perfectly welcome to live in their garage apartment. That was the days when all the houses along Interlachen and Palmer, they were—and Old New England, all those houses were built with servants' quarters over their garage. And of course, during the depression years, I don't know what— Anyway, most of the servants employed at that time were on a day basis, and lived on the other side of the tracks. And do you know, it's interesting, I get all these sides, I can't help throwing in things of interest. Do you know those people had to have the servants, the black servants, back across those tracks by sunset? And they weren't permitted on the streets at this time, walking on the streets on this side of the tracks. So you had the choice of getting a taxi to come take your cook home after your evening meal or take him yourself.

Anyway, I lived in the Showalter garage apartment, which now rents for \$1500 a month. So they gave it to me free and I walked up to college and back from college. 520 Interlachen is just beyond the biggest estate there on the right, where Canton comes into Interlachen. So I lived there for two years, at the end of which the Showalters who— Papa Showalter was a very successful banker and coal miner in West Virginia, but by 1936, the situation economically was so bad he could no longer maintain two homes. So I could no longer live there. And Dr. Holt heard about that, and so invited me to live in

his garage apartment (laughs)! And so I think I may be the only graduate of Rollins who lived all four years in servants' quarters on Interlachen Avenue, and including Dr. Holt's home, which was really quite wonderful.

So that's how I earned my meals. And so that was \$200 off the tuition and another \$200 off for room and so on. That left still just short of \$500, and I had odd jobs, always two odd jobs. In those days, Roosevelt was doing everything he could to salvage the situation. And one of these programs of NRA, National Recovery Act, was the NYA, National Youth Administration. In that, colleges could give jobs to students at, I can't believe, twenty-five cents an hour, and you could work up to ten hours a week, something like that, more than that maybe. Anyway, I had two jobs on NYA. One was putting books away in the library. And the other was being a guide in the chapel. In those days, the chapel was one of the great showplaces of Central Florida. There were tourists going through there every day, this remarkable building and all. It was the largest church anywhere in Florida at the time and beautiful; it was done by the famous architect Ralph Adams Cram. So they had student guides in there wearing a black robe from eight in the morning to six in the evening every day, seven days a week, and it's something I wish they would do today. It's badly needed. But anyway, that's— I managed somehow to get through four years of that.

And I don't know how much detail you want on that, but I was never the least bit disappointed. Of course, people in the north said, "You're turning down Princeton and Trinity to go to this college in Florida?" "Yes, I am!" In those days, where they knew about Rollins in the north, they'd kind of laugh at it, you know? Because Hamilton Holt was so far ahead of his time! You realize you go to the college that was first so-called honors quote and unquote, "honors" college, where it was here the first college, accredited college, in the United States where students did not know what their grades were. All they were told was whether they were passing or failing. And you didn't, you weren't permitted to know your GPA. You had to have a GPA recorded in the office because if you wanted to go on to grad school, they had to have that. But the secrecy of it, I don't know how they managed to maintain it. But I don't know one student who found out what his GPA was until he graduated.

Graduation was in the chapel, and then we made a beeline for Carnegie Hall, the registrar's office, because the registrar was there with a copy of your transcript and it was marvelous. I remember this great friend of mine, a classmate girl, in her cap and gown, streaming wet with perspiration and all that. This is always the first Saturday in June. And she said, "What! Damnit that guy! I worked like a dog in that course, and he gave me only a B! I should've had a—" And that kind of remark, you know. But most of the remarks were good.

And anyway, it was, that's the way it was. And, of course, to us who lived through those Hamilton Holt years, it's always been, it's been wonderful to see Rollins progress the way it has. But we wish it had gone on at the credit today of being the first of "honors", quote unquote, college in the country. Now, "How are you doing at Rollins?" "Well my GPA is such and so. I'm trying to get it up to such and so.", the talk

that goes on about grades. I'd love to come over here and eat in the dining room, but I wish the conversation could be more about what you're learning.

The emphasis was on the teaching and learning with Hamilton Holt, and he never lost, he never let us lose sight of it. And he (laughs) often called unexpected assemblies, always in the chapel where everybody could be seated, all the students. He had, his plan was the college never go beyond five hundred total. He said, "When we get to that point where so many people want Rollins, we'll take over the whole Genius property across the lake, you see? And build another college over there. But on this campus, there will never be more than five [hundred]." That was his goal.

And one of his great friends at the time was a man with another intriguing name: Stringfellow Barr, who was the one who started the Great Books program. Robert Hutchins gets the credit, but it was actually Stringfellow Barr who established the first great books college, Saint John's in Annapolis. And today Saint John's Annapolis has the same program that Stringfellow Barr set up. Do you know about that? And anyway, when they—and the same ideology at the same time Hamilton Holt said there should never be more than five hundred students here, Stringfellow Barr was saying there should never be more than five hundred students in the Great Books program in Saint John's in Annapolis. When they reached the pressure point there, they started another Saint John's College in Santa Fe, and the enrollment there is never to go above five hundred. And now they're building a third campus in California, where the enrollment will never go above five hundred. That was the idea that Hamilton Holt had, to start these other Rollins Colleges around the state that there could only be five hundred on this campus.

One of the first things he did when he came here: the college was offering master's degrees in two subjects, Music, had an outstanding conservatory in music, and English, outstanding English department. There were so many known writers; town and gown were one in those days. He, it sort of shook the place a little bit when he said he wanted to drop those two courses. What we want here— those two graduate degrees, said what he wanted here was an outstanding undergraduate school, preparing students for the best graduate schools in the country. And if they earned their AB here in English, then it would be time for them to go on to another great place for the graduate work, and same with music. In my class, every— Ten percent of the class had music degrees. Bachelor of Music. And they went on to Julliard, Eastman, every single one of them to such named places. Ferguson, Philadelphia. So those of us who remember that very well were very sorry when Hugh McKean started talking about putting in graduate programs. See, from Hamilton Holt's time in 1926 until about 1966— yes, that's a long time; forty years— there were no graduate degrees. And then once they were put in— Now this is not, I'm not downgrading what's going on here at the graduate level, I'm just telling you the history of it. And it's remarkable what Crummer has achieved in the MBA and the rating they have. And I suppose it's almost as remarkable in other areas. But to me, the tragedy of it is trying to fit all of that under a campus that was clearly adequate for five hundred students. My trying to get in here this morning, you know, it's just too, it doesn't fit its pants anymore (laughs). I don't know if that bothers students today or not, but where should we go from here? What do you need next?

Zhang: So what's your major? In music?

Rich: My? Oh no. No, no. Everybody had to take work in music. We all, every student to get the Bachelor of Arts degree, Bachelor of Science, too, that's something else Hamilton thought, should have an appreciation of music. So everybody had to take a seminar course, and it was wonderfully well done. Gosh. And it was impossible in those days to graduate from Rollins without an appreciation in great classical music. He also started the Bach festival. I'm the only person I can find still alive who sang in the first Bach festival seventy-one years ago.

And let's see, what else? Everybody had to take a writers course seminar. But then you had people like Sinclair Lewis came every year and Irving Bachellor who lived here, Ray Stannard Baker lived here, Winston Churchill the writer lived here, and they all gave talks in the writers series, which all of us students had to go. So it was impossible to graduate with a Bachelor's, and a science degree Bachelor's, Bachelor of Arts degree, without being exposed to the great literature, and to great music. And that was one of the—I really hardly knew what Bach, the name Bach meant when I arrived here. When I graduated, gosh, I was so wrapped up in the music of Bach, you know?

Anyway. I was so intrigued with the faculty and the great teachers that were here. I wanted Baron d'Estournelles' course in French civilization, which everybody seemed to want because it was so well done. I wanted Richard Burton in English. He was such a great teacher. I wanted Wendell Stone in Philosophy, because he—I did as Hamilton Holt said: "Pick your courses for the man or the woman teaching. Not so much for the subject matter, for the teacher." And in order to do that I took a general social science degree so I could reach across lines and have all these. But then, later, when I went into graduate work, I majored in modern European history. That was at Johns Hopkins.

Zhang: So what was your impression of Hamilton Holt's conference plan?

Rich: What about it?

Zhang: Yes, what was your experience with his—

Rich: Well that, as I tried to point out, it was a matter of being stimulated to the nth degree for four years at Rollins. It was enough to be here just to know the man Hamilton Holt and what he represented. Not many people realize this, because he was doing this, what he was doing here, and because it was receiving national attention in the press because he had been so prominent himself in the world of journalism. He owned, edited, and did most of the writing for *The Independent Magazine*, which before the days, was before the days of *Time*, and *Life*, and *Newsweek*, and so on. It was the only weekly news publication in America of any consequence. And the format of it was very much like *The Wall Street Journal* today. There were no photographs, but there were drawings of individuals like that, their faces. *The Independent Magazine* was well known and he

right away started *The Animated Magazine*. All these writers he knew around the world he brought them in here to, not to print their stuff, but to give their speeches.

Zhang: So you participated in several of the *Animated Magazines*?

Rich: Pardon me?

Zhang: You participated?

Rich: Oh yes, all the students did. We laughed at it, and joked about it, but at the same time thrived on it. Called it the Contaminated Magazine, or the Animated— Well anyway, what was it? Oh well. That was the most common: Contaminated Magazine. But students did the ushering. Can you imagine the Sandspur Bowl with three thousand to five thousand people in it? That's what it attracted! Of course it wasn't competing with television in those days, you know. And people came in from far away to hear it. And all the income from it went towards scholarships. And, let me see, who were some of the people here in my time? I don't know if you're interested in it or not, but it's fascinating. In my senior year (laughs), he had students— Each visiting writer had a student host and I was host to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, who wrote *The Yearling* and so on. And just at that time, in 1938, *The Yearling* had just been out less than a year and it was the talk of the world of writers, you know. And so I was very privileged to be taking her around. You met her at the train or at the bus station. There was no air travel in those days. And took her to all the different events. There was a dinner the night before; you took her to that, then took her back to her hotel. And then the next day there was a lunch at Prexy's home; I was luckily living in the garage apartment there so I looked in on, I was very much apart of that lunch. And oh, I'll tell you a story about when the Roosevelt's came, you know.

Anyway, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, she was a delightful woman and so interesting, but what very few people knew about her was if she had as many as two cocktails she started to swear like a trooper. Just for the fun of it! Not because she's angry at anything, but "You bastard, you! So nice to see you!" You know? Something like that. And, "Do you know so and so? What do you think of him? I think he's a son of a bitch," she'd say (laughter). Just in a normal conversation, that's the way she'd talk! She was wonderful (laughs). Of course the students loved her. And she and most of the writers who were here for the Contaminated Magazine would stay on the following day for convocation and then after that, seminars were set up. They were invited to special seminars where they could meet with students, and that was a lot of fun. And hers was— Of course I took her to that and took her home from that, and back to her train leaving, I guess it was bus, a bus leaving back for her home up the line. Invited us all to come see her; I never got around to doing it, but some students did. Have you ever been to her home up there? Oh, go. The typewriter which she wrote *The Yearling* on is right there on the porch where she, same old royal typewriter, you know? It's an experience. Really, a great experience to go there, and don't miss her Cross Creek, whatever it was. Called it Cross Creek. That's the name of— Cross Creek is the other lake, you know, and so on. Anyway, she's a delightful, she was delightful. And, what else about?

Oh, now when the Roosevelts came in 1936, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, okay. Of course, this was a very conservative. The residents of Winter Park were very conservative. Dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, you know, who hated the name Roosevelt, you see. So when he finally worked out the date for the Roosevelts to come in March of '36— Now remember that's just four years after Mrs. Warren had given the chapel. The chapel wasn't yet four years old, and Mrs. Warren lived here in the Virginia Inn. And Dr. Holt thought it would be a polite gesture to let Mrs. Warren know, be one of the first to know, the date. So before he released it to the press, he invited her for lunch. Guess where? At the Whistling Kettle! The only place to take her out. I was one of those waiting on them.

I can remember, just as vividly to this day, how Hamilton Holt tried to lead up gently to Mrs. Warren, who was a wonderful woman, but nobody's fool. She was as wise as they come. And he was leading up gently to the subject. She said, "Hamilton, if you're about to tell me that the Roosevelts have accepted an invitation to come here, and that you want to have the convocation in the chapel, don't forget I gave that chapel to the college not with any strings attached. It's for you to use as you see fit! So if that's the purpose of all this, you're wasting your time." And she said, "I just have one request. Don't ask me to be in town when those people are here, because I will not be here when they're in town." So she went off to (laughs) Palm Beach and took a suite at the Breakers. And most of the people left town, most of the residents on Palmer Avenue. They just didn't want to be in the same town as the Roosevelts. And when they drove in, in the car, of course the students were the opposite. The students were mad. The students were about equally divided between the pro-Roosevelts and the anti-Roosevelts because what kept the college going during the Depression, regardless of what they tell you, was the wealthy families. It was always in those days is when it became known as a millionaire's hangout, that you had to have big money to send your daughter to Rollins College, the most expensive college in the country, you know.

And so, they were— Hamilton Holt and others were doing everything they could to bring in poverty-struck students like, as I was. But it was about evenly divided. It was wonderful. At least, I'd say fifty percent of the students must've been on large scholarships to make possible their being here. It was an interesting experience all right. Well now, when the Roosevelts came in town, I was waiting on tables then at the Whistling Kettle and it was the only catering service in town. And I think there was one in Orlando, but Orlando is the other side of the tracks as far as Winter Park was considered it in those days. That was a struggling city over there somewhere (laughs). But anyway, so Ms. Lucy was asked to do the luncheon at Prexy's home. Do you know which house is his down on Interlachen? Beautiful white house, just immediately adjacent to the Methodist parking lot. Go down Interlachen on the right, you see the Methodist church on the left and their big parking lot on the right. The house, beautiful big white house next to it, was Hamilton Holt's home.

We were to do the luncheon. We'd done many luncheons so it was just in a way, just another luncheon. But Ms. Lucy had a heart of gold but she was as strict as they

come. And she wanted to hold her waiters to the same high standards she held herself. So she began a little pep talk. “Now remember, just because these are known people, you’re to give your full attention to serving them as waiters and not to be gaping at them or anything like that.” So we go over there to get the luncheon table all set up, this big long table. And I guess there were about, not more than eighteen or twenty to be there, and a cocktail period before the lunch, and a period of tea with it.

And there were Hamilton Holt with Franklin Roosevelt next to him and Eleanor in a chair across from them in front of the fireplace. There was no fire in March. Anyway, and I was busy going back and forth, okay. And (laughs) he said, “Oh Jack, come! I would like you to meet our guest!” And so I thought, there’s Ms. Lucy in the dining room staring out. And so of course I go over. And he said, “This is one of our students Franklin.” And I shook hands. And then, “This is Mrs. Roosevelt,” I shook hands with her. She says, “Oh, Jack, what are you majoring in?” And I said, “Mrs. Roosevelt, I would love to talk to you, but I have to keep busy as a waiter.” And so Ms. Lucy, you know, said that was fine. So I went on about my business, and this is the interesting part of the story. At the end of serving that luncheon, an hour later, Mrs. Roosevelt got up and came over and said, “Jack, can you tell me now what you’re majoring in?” (Laughter) And that was Mrs. Roosevelt! Eleanor Roosevelt, I don’t think there was any greater woman in the Western world in the twentieth century than that remarkable woman. And when she came back to speak later on, she remembered my name! That was when I was back as Dean of Admissions. Over ten years later! She remembered my name! Said, “I never knew your last name, but I know your name is Jack.” And I said, “Yes, it’s still my name, my nickname.” “What are you doing now?” “Oh, I’m the Dean of Admissions here.” “Oh, how interesting!” she said. Anyway, what else can I fill you in with? (Laughs).

Zhang: What about the student life then, besides the academic world?

Rich: Oh, you know the amazing thing to me about student life then, we were happy. The humor of the thirties I don’t think can be, it’s just amazing, the humor. It’s the period before the Marx Brothers, and the Stooges, and all of that. That’s the film side of it, and Charlie Chaplin and all the rest of them. But it had a life from day to day that was more laughter. And I’m not criticizing the present times, I just think that humor comes, that kind of lightheartedness, comes when you’re all suffering from the same economic situation, you know. And you do the best you can. For example, I entered as a major my stated major was art. All my life I wanted to be an architect, a residence architect of residence, when I saw Winter Park and the residences here.

Anyway, the head of the art department, a very young man named Hugh McKean, age twenty— he was just aged twenty-six. Only eight years older than I was when I entered. And he was my faculty advisor for the first two years because I wanted to be pre-architecture, whatever that is. And he said, by the second year I was visiting he said, “Jack, this is fine for you to be thinking about architecture, but you know even the best architects today, in the depths of the depression, they’re selling apples on the corner and (laughs) -- And let me see, the great architect here, Gamble Rogers did all those beautiful

homes and so on. He was out of work and along came this famous house that he built. That saved him from being completely, completely out of work. Anyway, it was that kind of situation, but Hugh McKean said, “You should be thinking about something else to do until this economic situation is more—Ninety percent of the architects in this country have no work.”

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And so that’s when I got interest in temporarily working in education. And I told Hamilton Holt about it when he asked me. Hamilton Holt attended all the athletic events in town and out of town. And when they were out of town, he’d ask some, invite some student with a date to take him to the game. And he invited me to be his driver to the Florida Southern game in the fall of my senior year, and my date. He said, “I have a date, I hope you have one too!” His wife had died a couple of years before. So off we go, and on the way there, we’re talking about, “Now you’re a senior, Jack.” And all this. We talked about things and on the way back, I talked with him about this Hugh McKean story and how he put me off, and I said, “Thanks to you, my second interest after architecture is education. I’m going to give it a try. But what I’d really like to do is take some time off and see the rest of Europe.” I’d won an award to go abroad to England between my junior and senior year, and because I’d had Baron d’Estournelles’ famous, most wanted course in French civilization, I went up to the top deck of the ship when it docked there at Shoboorne (??) and looked at France and longed to go into France, and see what France and Europe were all about. So on the way home, I did the same thing. He said, “Well Jack, don’t rule out both these things! If you want to give teaching a try, and you want to see Europe, I have a friend who, after the Great War,” that’s what he called the First World War in those days, “after the Great War, decided because so many people were, so many Americans were staying in France, that he would start an American school there. So come by my office in the morning and I’ll give you his name.” So I went by his office the next morning and got the name of Donald MacJannet, who created, owned, and operated the MacJannet American School of Paris; first American school in Europe. And he ran a summer camp in the summers. The very week I graduated, I went over for a job with him for the summer months at forty dollars a month, and he sent me a hundred dollar check for transportation to get there. And for ninety dollars I sailed on the *Normandy* and landed in, just the reverse of the usual story, I landed in Europe with a job for two months, no return ticket, and ten dollars in my pocket. So (laughs) then that begins another chapter of my life, what happened after that. And I’ve kept one foot in Europe ever since.

All this I owed to Rollins and Hamilton Holt, you know. It continues to be the inspiration of my life and I’ll never forget his address to us as freshman in the Annie Russell Theatre. By the way, when we graduated in ’38, it was a headline: “Rollins graduates the largest class.” Guess how many were in it. Eighty-four. That was the largest class in the history of the college. And it was an interesting class because of those fifty scholarships. Fifty of the eighty-four were on those anniversary scholarships because we entered on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the college. But I’ll never forget his opening address to us as freshman. He described it again, we’d all read

about it. But he described so vividly what was going on in his mind in creating this, what he called a conference plan. “It’s education by inspiration rather than by requirements. I doubt that you’ll have any required reading in any of your courses. What you’ll do, you’ll be inspired to read books.” And when I think about one course, French civilization, Baron d’Estournelles taught in such a way and referred to books like John Adams’, no Henry Adams’ *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. If you want to get the true feeling of what the Middle Ages and the gothic age is all about, read the book. Well I think we all rushed to get the book. It wasn’t required, but that’s— And then *The Education of Henry Adams* was another one that he inspired us to read. And then various books by Frenchmen, which those of us who were able read in French and others read in translation.

But at the end of giving this address to us, us freshman, he said, “Now go forth, get started, and whatever you do, don’t let your studies interfere with your education.” And that, in a nutshell, really summarized what he was talking about. And when I have a student telling me how well he’s doing on GPA, and how he got an ‘A’ in such and so on, how his courses are great, I think of this, Are these students letting their studies interfere with their education? And I hope not. I hope you’re not. But that’s what it was all about. He was definitely education by inspiration. I don’t think you can do it in times, you couldn’t launch something like that in times of prosperity. These were days when Princeton and Harvard and Yale, all you had to do was have your high school diploma and arrive on the opening day and you could go there, you see. They were so hard up for students.

Zhang: Could you tell us about your World War Two experience? You served in the navy as—

Rich: Yeah, well.

Zhang: Four years?

Rich: I got the job at the American school after working for two months in the summer. I really got it by default. I was competing with a Rhodes scholar graduate of Yale. There was going to be an opening at the school in English and history. And when I arrived on the scene at the camp, in the French Alps, beautiful, but I found this other man was there at the other end of the long chalet where I was working. And he had all this record, cum laude, Yale, Rhodes Scholar; and I was coming from Rollins College. And he had received the same letter I had: A job for the summer, and there might possibly be an opening for you in teaching history and English at our school in Paris in the fall. I thought, Well I might as well enjoy these two months and then wander, hitchhike home or something. But that was— I gave it my all and went ahead.

And then in the middle of the second month, MacJannet at that time hired us junior counselors, students mostly from New England colleges, mostly girls usually between their junior and sophomore year—junior and senior year. Had them pay their own way over there and give them pocket money and they were an enormous help and a

wonderfully attractive bunch of girls. There must have been, each summer four or five girls and only one or two boys. Well at flag raising, we had seventeen different nationalities, seventeen at the camp that summer. About a hundred campers, all together, from age six to sixteen. And flag raising on the early morning, on this early August flag raising, there's one of our camp rowboats, seemingly abandoned, floating in toward shore. So Lynn Woodrick, the head counselor (laughs), went and got another boat, while we're still at flag raising, and goes out. And then, next thing we know, he's out there discovering, not an empty boat, but our Rhodes scholar passed out at the bottom boat with his arms around this Radcliff girl, lovely, lovely girl, and empty wine bottles. Well, nothing had happened. In those days, things didn't go to the extreme, but they'd had a good night together. This naughty wonderful girl. And so, two hours later, this Rhodes scholar was on the bus headed back to Anise (??) and off to oblivion, as far as we were concerned. And a couple of days later, Donald MacJannet came to me and said, "Oh, there is the opening in our school for—" So that's okay.

And then I was there at the camp the second summer, the summer of '39, when the war started. That's a story and I won't get started on that. But it took me six weeks to get home because I stayed until we had every camper safely off to their parents or guardians. And then when I came home, I was in the naval aviation for four years. Well, three and a half years, and then on the G.I. Bill got two graduate degrees from Johns Hopkins; one in education and the other in modern—an MA in modern European history. So there's the story.

Zhang: So were you actually in the front lines?

Rich: Well, no. The thing was, you'd think with my back[ground]— Actually, I'd applied for a commission in the navy and I had to wait an unusually long time to get an answer from them. So long that I wondered whether they'd received my application. I went and inquired. They looked at the background; they said, Because you were working in Europe two years prior to the war, and during which time you visited in Germany and you were there when the war started, they're doing a more thorough investigation than they usually do to make sure you have no Nazi connections. So I was relieved to know it was in the works. So I got the commission in the naval aviation and was eager to do something about this. We all were, I mean, we were just fired up after Pearl Harbor, you know, it was just determined to make the world truly safe for democracy and human rights. And so, (laughs) guess what, after I did my basic training, they assigned me to ACI. Do you know what that stood for? Air Combat Intelligence. I went to Air Combat Intelligence School at the University of Ohio. That was a three months rugged course, and the only way I could figure out why I was assigned to ACI: 'A' standing for air, I knew nothing about aviation; 'C' standing for combat, I had never been in combat; and 'I' standing for, I wasn't very intelligent. So they assigned me to ACI. That's what, in the navy, they call Snafu. Do you know what that stands for?

Zhang: No.

Rich: Situation normal, all fucked up (laughter). So Snafu, that was one of the navy's Snafu assignments, you see. But I made the best of it, and I thought, Well this means that most of us would be assigned to naval air groups in training for carrier duty in the Pacific. There was no significant air, naval air in the Atlantic at all. So the Pacific. (Laughs) So what do they do? I do all this course, and where do they assign me? They assign me to St. Lucia, that resort island in the West Indies, you know. The reason for it, (laughs) the navy had taken over this great country club and beach front golf course and all of that, and had this temporary naval air station there. And today I think it's gone back to being what it was. Have any of you been to St. Lucia? Well you can get a room there for five hundred dollars a night, you know, it's that kind of— Anyway, that's where I was assigned. The reason for it was that we could look out fourteen miles away at Martinique. By that time, France had fallen to the Nazis. And we knew, there wasn't much publicity about the sinking of ships along the Florida coast, but it came out after the war was over, the tonnage that we lost from submarines that were refueling and based at Martinique. And why the Marines— We were supposedly maintaining this base for a great battalion of Marines to come in and go over there and take over Martinique and put an end to this. But at that time, the situation was so serious in the Pacific that they just never got around to putting enough Marines there to do anything about it. So that situation went on while we were trying to win the war in the Pacific using all the Marines that they could over there, so there never was a landing made. So that's a long story.

And my summer, long summer, there, all we had to do was fill— Well, Air Combat Intelligence, I did do a little work in translating messages that was— We were part of a British operation, really, and all the coded reports coming in were through the British office. And it was interesting, you'd go in there, and half the reports would be on what Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth were doing that day, because there wasn't anything else of any significance to report. And it was something. So I applied for a transfer as soon as I had been long enough to do it, thinking I'd get it. So they transferred me to a naval air base in Oregon, way up in the mountains of Oregon next to Crater Lake. And that's where— Well anyway, it's a long story. I had three and half years and finally got out to the Pacific at the last summer of the war, the summer of '45, after the war in Europe had been won, after the surrender there. We were sent out on a carrier. What were we going to do about the Japanese? So I experienced, in the summer of '45, July, my first experience of terrorism. And I was profoundly, we all were as profoundly shocked as you people were on 9-11. See, terrorism is ancient history to me, because to be in that fifth fleet in the Pacific and see these kamikaze planes coming in, suicide, unheard of you know, the planes were loaded with explosives and the pilot just going into the largest ship he could get through to. And we were so— Our carrier, the *Independence*, was right next to the flagship, the *Minnesota*, right in the middle of the fleet. And you could see our fleet on the horizon, all the way around, all the way to the horizon. It was enormous. But still, what would we do when there was an alert, meaning the kamikazes were coming in again? Went up on the flight deck and watch it, because you were reasonably sure that they'd never get in that far. There'd be so much flack coming at them, you know, that they would finally decide to plunge into a battleship or cruiser or whatever, out. So we'd watch them burn and so on.

But I'm telling about it in a very light touch, giving it a light touch, but I tell you, it was tearful at that time and this is terror. What can you do? How can you fight this? What can you do? You can't get them all together and persuade them not to give their lives to destroy you. So the result is I'm a great admirer of what Bush is doing. Because he may not be doing it in the way you or I would do it, but he's doing something. After all, he's in the chair of the presidency of the strongest country of the world, and the most important country in the world, depending on how you look at it. And his home, the White House, that plane that didn't make it was within a mile or so of his home. Put yourself in his position. And people say, Well he should have tried to get to the bottom of what it was all about. I said, "Was that what you would do if somebody was out to destroy your home and your country?" And so on. He did what he felt he had to do. And I don't know how— How do the majority of students feel about what we're doing in Iraq?

Schreck: They don't like it.

Rich: What?

Schreck: They don't like it.

Rich: They don't like it?

Schreck: Yeah, they're very liberal. They don't necessarily agree with what's going on.

Rich: The majority of students think he's done the wrong thing to go in there?

Schreck: I think so.

Rich: Why?

Schreck: I have no idea.

Rich: I can't get anybody to clearly explain to me why.

Schreck: I don't think they understand exactly what's going on.

Rich: Hmm?

Schreck: I don't think they understand what's going on. And the way you look at it makes sense, why he's doing what he's doing.

Rich: Of course, it's too bad we don't give more emphasis to history. If you look back and see what the birth of freedom meant in the United States, think of the tragic losses and so on. It was not an easy birth by any means. And then the birth of freedom and democracy in France, it's a devastating story. And why we think, why would

anybody think we can go in and create a democracy in Iraq without all the kind of— Just the news today. Just more, it just goes on and on and on. The French Revolution, if you ever, it took them nearly a hundred years to establish, the better part of a hundred years, to establish freedom and democracy in France. It took an awful long time here, finally climaxed with the Civil War. We weren't assured of our democracy until after the Civil War.

Zhang: That's what we're doing here today. We're recording the history for future generations.

Rich: Oh yes. But, you see—

Zhang: Now let's go back to our topic. Tell us more about when you came back to work for Rollins as the Dean of Admissions.

Rich: Well, I tell you, I enjoyed my work in education so much. I worked at private, independent boarding schools in Europe and over here for all that length of time. Well, prior to being in the admissions job here, and then again afterwards, when I left it after fifteen years, I'd thought I'd been here long enough. By that time, that was the early '60s, I felt, my letter of resignation to Hugh McKean was: "Dear Hugh, I believe I've been your loyal opposition long enough." And it was the very year they were bringing in the first MS degree in physics. And I gave him a full six months warning on that. That's why I left. And there were five or six very important faculty members who left, too. The head of the physics department, the head of the science— Well, anyway, they left because, Hugh we're not equipped to do a good job at the graduate level. And so on. Anyway that's— Now wait a minute, what was your question?

Zhang: Why did you come back to work for Rollins?

Rich: (Talking at the same time) Yeah, all right. Well then I went off to Europe because I had this other dream plan for my own children. By that time, I'd married the most beautiful girl to come into Rollins. A transfer from Vassar, ten years younger than I, she'd been in that early childhood training at Vassar, and there were reasons why she wanted to transfer here to complete her degree. And right away we had three sons, one right after the other. And I'd always had this dream plan. I thought Winter Park was an okay place to bring up girls, maybe, but for boys, it's awfully hard to bring up a son in Winter Park. Lake front property, you know, with a couple of cars in the carport and a boat there for water skiing and so forth, and have them feel— Even by the 1950s, you know, everything was so prosperous here, it was as though, Well this isn't the real world, you don't get a— It's fine to come here for college and all that. But to bring them up here— The other aspect of it was that I'd arrived after prep school classes in French, two years of French at Rollins, when I arrived in Paris as a graduate of Rollins, nobody could understand me and I couldn't understand anybody. And so I wanted to raise my sons in a world where they can see something other than affluence, somewhere where they could learn a second language.

So we moved directly from here to Switzerland, settle in a town above _____(??). We were the only English-speaking family in the town, and all three boys started their schooling there. My youngest son had his first grades, first, second, third, and fourth grades there. And my older sons, four years there also. Now let me see. Then by the time my oldest boys were ready for high school, prep school, I said, “We’re going back to the states.” “Well, why daddy!” (Laughs) You know? “Everything’s going well for us here!” And they loved the skiing, and the mountain climbing, and all their friends were speaking French. And I said, “Why? Because you’re still underage. And I’m your father, you’re born Americans, born to two American parents, and I think it’s my duty as your father to see that you receive your university preparatory four years in English in America. Now, if at age eighteen you decide you want to come back to Switzerland or somewhere else in Europe for university studies, fine. I’ll be all for it.” Said, “Okay, okay.” (Laughs)

So we came home, and the two older boys went to Holderness and Holderness had their fingers crossed and they really do our work after being out of English for four years, and the discipline they learned in Swiss schools was such they had no trouble at all. Not even the youngest boy. So anyway _____(??) first experience in classroom English, and they all graduated well and they’re all doing very well. My oldest son Jonathan is a top lawyer with Truman— Holland and Knight, the international firm here in Orlando, fluent in French. And my second son, Philip, has his MBA from here and is with SunTrust. He’s second, senior vice president over there. And my youngest son moved from here several years ago to start his own company in Chapel Hill. He’s doing very well too. All three are fluent in French and read in French for pleasure. Now, I’m off the subject again.

Zhang: No. Just tell us about your admissions work. We understand that—

Rich: Oh, admissions.

Zhang: —You enrolled Fred Rogers. He was one of your students.

Rich: Oh yes! I was, it was amazing that first, the first class I entered, fall of ‘51 graduated in ‘54. One of the first to come by was— No, wait a minute. During my first year the one that came by was Fred Rogers in his freshman year at Dartmouth. A straight ‘A’ record for the first semester and I said, “Well this is great that you want to come to Rollins. Why is this when you already doing ‘A’ work at a great—“ And he said, “Because I went to Dartmouth with three interests: one, the theatre; two, the music; and three, creative writing. And I find in looking around that all three areas are stronger here at Rollins, because they don’t really have a music department at Dartmouth.” Which they didn’t at that time. And we had the best-known creative writing professor: Edwin Granberry here, and also he said that Annie Russell Theater, he was spellbound by it. So that’s why he came here; earned two degrees, you know. Music degree and then the other degree.

Now, I made my first trip to New England prep schools and went school after school. I visited Andover, Ashford, Saint Paul's, Saint Mark's, Saint George's. And Brooke school, I remember. And when I went there, the headmaster, Doctor Ashgreen (??), said, "I've had the notice up for the week and nobody's signed up to see you." And I said, "Oh, that's okay. I hope you have a little time to talk." And that's what I did for school after school when nobody signed up. Of course, that didn't happen always. But simply because Rollins had had nobody working in admission for ten years! Nobody working in admissions at all. They just sat back and had taken what came by on the GI Bill. Anybody who had the money on the GI Bill could get into Rollins prior to my coming in here in '49. But Wendell Stone, dean of the college, realized the GI Bill was about to run out. And so he approached me about coming in to do the admissions job and as soon as I could get an office created, they had no admissions office, as soon as I created an office, which is now the treasurer's office over in the administration building, I took off with this tour of schools in New England, because we were often unknown as a referred to as the only New England college not located in New England. It had that much of a New England atmosphere about it. And the clientele and so on in the early days and the New England Congregationalist College.

Anyway, I went up there, and then one of the schools I went to, Brooke School, Mr. Ashgreen (??) said, halfway through my telling him about what was going on at Rollins, of began to describe the Annie Russell Theater, which was a far more active theater program than it is today. We would have twelve major productions a year! Now I think they have something like four. There's just no comparison to the act. And I go by that theater and see it night after night when it's not being used for anything. That was unheard of in the fifties. There was something going on in there all the time, you know. So that's another story. But, "I have a student that should be in here talking with you." So next thing I know, in comes two arms, two long arms, two long legs flying around like this, and he said, "I never heard of your college, but Dr. Ashgreen (??) wants me to talk to you." I said, "Fine, well sit down." I said, "What's your name?" "Anthony Perkins." You see? And I said, "What are your college plans? You're a senior." He said, "I'm going to fine arts school at Yale." I said, "Oh, that's certainly an excellent choice." And so we told him a little bit about Rollins and he was not particularly interested. I said, "What are you planning for your spring vacation?" He said, "Well it just so happens I'm going to be in Florida with my mother because my grandmother just retired." I said, "Well how about coming to see us?" So he came to see Rollins. Lost all interest in Yale. That's how we got Tony Perkins.

But he's not the only one in that class. Jack, John Reardon, who became a prominent, he's the one that toured the world with *Man of La Mancha* in the lead role. Who else is in that class? It just turned out to be an unusual class. Somebody else that you'd know about. I'll think about him. But it was— I hit the jackpot my first year on the job. It had nothing to do— It was just the circumstances. But anyway, it was wonderful. And I loved it. Of course, I'm the one who brought, we were the first college in Florida to be in the College Board and all that it represented in those days. It was, you'd really arrived at membership in the College Board, and the only ones in the southeast at the time were Duke, Emory, Wake Forest, and one other. We were way

ahead of everybody else in Florida. One of the first six or seven in the southeast on the College Board!

And the opposition I ran into there were people like Dr. Hannah, sort of the academic head of the college under Hugh McKean, the vice president, and other department heads. “Well we don’t want these New England colleges dictating to us what our standards are.” That kind of thing. I said, “It’s not what the College Board is all about!” So thank goodness Hugh McKean sided with me and so we got in, applied and got into it. Well anyway, that’s interesting how we did that. But then, when it was found out, I didn’t tell the list in advance, that every College Board college has to operate a testing center for the College Board test, and that meant we had to test here the candidates from the black high schools. And when that word got out and Hamilton— Hugh McKean heard that, “Who’s going to be—” I was going to be the examiner. And it was going to be in the top floor of Mills. So it was one whole open section and that’s where we were going to test them. And Hugh McKean called me in and said, “Look, if there’s any trouble that Saturday morning, you’re the one who’s going to be responsible. You led us into this.” I was so disappointed in my friend, Hugh McKean. He said, “You helped me get us into it.” He said, “You didn’t tell us. We didn’t realize this was going to happen.” And I said, “Well nothing’s happened yet.” So. I don’t know weather it was Hugh or I who— Chief Buchanan was head of the— and he said, “No problem. I’ll be there. Don’t worry, I’ll be there.” So he was there, and two black students arrived. Nothing happened at all. So we took off.

And let me see, but I had a great time in the admissions job here, but after— Of course, Rollins in those days had no sabbaticals at all. And it was an uphill struggle to bring Rollins, to raise the standards of admission. And I was proud to be the leader of that. After all, it was my alma mater. And since, it had become, like most other colleges in what it was doing, and it lost the conference plan as such. I didn’t talk about that at all because I knew Wendell Stone, the dean, was very much in agreement with me. We wished we could hang on to many aspects of it. The changing times were such that I just accepted it. It was too late, really, then to do anything much about it. So I had the great pleasure of seeing the profile of the freshman class just go up, up, up. And, you know, it’s never gotten really beyond where it was when I left it. I’m very proud of that. If you look back at the profile of the classes when I left in the mid-sixties, the profile today is pretty much the same. And, so I’m very, very proud of that. After seven years, I worked so hard that I wanted a change, and I had very good assistance in those days; two very good assistants. So I applied to Fulbright and went to Greece for a year, and that was wonderful. So what else about it, you know.

Zhang: Could you tell us about your experience during the Paul Wagner affairs in the early fifties?

Rich: Oh yes. Well, do you think we have time? Yes. I tell you, the true story of Paul Wagner will come out one of these days. And to put it quite simply, it was a situation in which the Board of Trustees, and at that time unfortunately during the Hamilton Holt years, the Board of Trustees had become a rubberstamp board. If you had

enough money or enough of a position, you were invited to be a member of the board. Not to take on any real responsibilities, but just to be part of the rubberstamp. And they didn't define it as such, but in actuality, that's what it was. And we had a socially prominent successful lawyer out of Jacksonville, Winthrop Bancroft, who was chairman of the board.

And they all were loyal to Hamilton Holt, but sick and tired of seeing him go year after year on such a terrible deficit, appealing to people, down on their knees to Mrs. Warren and this other, several others, to meet the deficit. [They] said: "This can't go on indefinitely," and they were right about that. So when they interviewed candidates for the job, they made it quite clear, the trustees under Winthrop Bancroft, I wouldn't say strong leadership, under his loud leadership, because the rest of them are just on a rubberstamp thing. But he was very definite in saying, "We're going to bring in here a president that will relieve us of this anxiety every year of the deficit! And by national standards, the faculty is at least a third larger than it should be. It has no excuse for being this large. We want the new president to come in and reduce the faculty by one third."

I know all this is fact or I wouldn't be telling you. The minutes on it were destroyed, most of the minutes on those meetings were destroyed. But that's what happened. So they brought in Paul Wagner with the understanding that one of his first assignments would be to reduce the faculty. "We want you to know this before you accept the job, because it's not going to be easy for any leader to do. And most of these people are on the faculty because they're, what were often referred to by Hamilton Holt as his 'golden personalities.'" And Hamilton Holt was so admired. The people who admired what he was doing, they were teaching at _____ (??) University or somewhere else, and said, "Gee, that sounds interesting. I want to be a part of that, where students won't be coming in and complaining a bit about the grade I gave them," that kind of thing. "Where I can teach through inspiration, and not through requirements." So he'd built up a faculty that was loyal to him and loyal to his ideas. So here the new president coming in had to face— You couldn't possibly get rid of one third of the faculty without hitting people that were loved by the students! And who loved what they were doing. So that was the story. And so Paul Wagner had the wisdom to take the very, very popular dean, the most popular classroom teacher in philosophy, Wendell Stone, who was loved by everybody. So he asked Wendell Stone to temporarily leave the position as dean of the college and be special assistant to the president in working out this dreadful assignment, this unwanted assignment. And they took from fall— Let me see. He made that, in his first year here, he assigned that. That would be in his first— he came in at '49. At the February meeting, that was the one important meeting of the year. February meeting of the board. Paul Wagner announced that he was moving Wendell Stone into the position special assistant to "take care of this assignment that you, the board, have given me." And they approved of that a hundred percent, because everybody liked and admired Wendell Stone. So to make a long story short, Wendell Stone worked on it for a year and the following February was ready to report.

Wendell Stone in the following February meeting, which was February 1951, announced to the board what they had done and the names they had come up with. They

had charts showing why so and so was contract— Nobody was being fired. This was the one third of the faculty whose contracts were not going to be renewed. And they also explained the different faculty in which they had prepared the faculty for this news. So that was, that meeting took place on Friday. It always coincided with the *Animated Magazine*. And it was more a social event. All these important decisions were made, but it was, the trustees were looking forward mostly to seeing each other and the big dinner and what followed it, and all of this and that. And so with the entire board there, including Janette McKean, the wife of the president, they voted— I mean, the wife of the man to become president, they voted one hundred percent for them to go ahead. They knew which faculty members and why are not going to be renewed. They voted one hundred percent for Paul Wagner to go ahead. So, Paul Wagner the following Monday announced what had happened, and said, “What you can expect from my office, each of you,” he said to the faculty, “will receive a letter from me. And it will be at that time that—” I’ll never forget. At the end of the meeting, everybody applauded and said, “We know how much you’ve been through,” and Wendell Stone they applauded. Great applause. And people like Ed Granberry said, “We’re with you all the way, Paul. Don’t let it be a worry to you. It had to come and we’re ready for it.” And that was a public statement he made. And they all rushed around him.

So then the letters went out, and by the end of that week, that was the Monday meeting, by Friday of that week, the students knew enough about who was not being invited back for them to just break loose in utter— Nobody expected it to be in such a knot, because the faculty had been prepared for it, but the students hadn’t been prepared for it. I mean, the students during the day were in the classrooms with these men and women they admired so much, day after day. And if you wanted one criticism of Wendell Stone and Paul Wagner, it’s that we should’ve done more to prepare the students. “We thought we had done everything we could,” and I said, “Well, how can you prepare students for something like that?” So now, that Friday it came out in the press, in the Sunday papers and so on. This enormous explosion! Students refusing to do anything until this bonanza, these dismissals as they called them, took place. Well it was front-page news in *The New York Times* by Sunday and all over the country, you see. And what was the first reaction from the board? I bet you haven’t heard this. Winthrop Bancroft, chairman of the board, in Jacksonville, resigned. Resigned! His ship was sinking; he’s the captain of the ship so he rushes to the best lifeboat and escapes. So if you read all, go in the archives and read all the press, there’s nothing, no statement from the chairman of the board because there was no chairman of the board! There was no spokesman for the Board of Trustees! So the interviewers who had come to town, they’d have to talk to whatever members of the board would speak to them. But there isn’t any official statement because there’s no official head of the board!

Anyway, I don’t want to go into that or what happened after that. But he was a scapegoat one hundred percent. Paul Wagner was made the scapegoat. And those of us who were loyal to him finally realized that there’s nothing you can do. “There’s nothing more you can do, Paul,” and it was, well anyway. I can you’re you the personnel. He was finally persuaded that there were really nothing he could do; he might as well take the, his wife into there the president’s home. I remember him saying, “Well we’re forced

to take the consolation, fifty thousand dollars, and move on. There's nothing more we can do." And that's what he did. And he did it gracefully, really. He didn't try to make any trouble for the college at all. He didn't try to make any trouble for Winthrop Bancroft. You know who he's married to now? The president of, an amazing woman, who in her late seventies is still president of Estée Lauder in New York. And they have a lovely apartment on Fifth Avenue. He's my age exactly. Eighty-nine. She's ten years younger. His first wife died while he was here, so he's now married to this remarkable woman. And they're people who, if you wanted to go look them up, they're in the phone book and all that. Dr. Paul Wagner on Fifth Avenue. And they're amazingly hospitable. And no bitterness at all. Just so interested in knowing what's happening here today.

Zhang: Okay, thank you so much, Jack. I think we're running out of time. I really enjoyed talking with you.

Rich: Yes, I did, too.

Zhang: Thank you for your contributions. We really appreciate it.