

Title of sound file Interview with Dean Joseph V. Cistulli (Retired)
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Special Note Multiple archives accompany this interview

(Track 1 begins)

JC

Now are you going to ask me questions and then I'm going to respond? How's it going to be?

LF

Yes. Feel free to talk for as long as you like, and anything that comes up, comes up. That's great, and maybe I won't need to ask too many questions. We're talking today with Joseph V. Cistulli, Emeritus Faculty, Dean of Learning and Student Development at Naugatuck Valley Community College until his retirement in, I want to say 2001, was the retirement...?

JC

Yeah.

LF

So, Dean Cistulli, I would like to start out, if you could -

JC

Could you call me Joe, from here on in? (laughs)

LF

Joe. Thank you. If you would talk a little bit about your personal history: what led you to a career in education, some of your early jobs, and early education.

JC

My father was from Italy. He came over from Italy at age eighteen. All I remember is he constantly said to me that no one ever could take education away from me. So that was one my things in my life, it was always education, education, education. From my very, very earliest years I wanted to be a teacher, always wanted to be a teacher. So when I went to college I went to Niagra University in New York, got my Bachelor's Degree there, got my Masters from Niagra also. Then I went right into teaching.

Well, in between there I went into the army, I was in the army for two years. I was in New Jersey, at Fort Dix, then I was in Indianapolis Indiana, then I came out. This was the time of...it's an interesting thing, they always tell the story about how things happened. I was supposed to get out in October one of nineteen sixty-one and I had passed, you could do such a thing as a thing called Early Release from the Army, or any armed services. What you could do was, if your profession was such that there was a starting and stopping date, you could actually ask for an Early Release, so I asked for an Early Release of September one a month early, so that I could start teaching. In the meantime I had gotten a job at Wolcott High School in Wolcott Connecticut. In the meantime, in August the Berlin Wall went up, and everyone who had a date of rank of October one, nineteen sixty-one, was extended for one year. By coincidence I happened to have gone back to September one, so I wasn't included in that October one batch, so I would have really been somewhere else at this point. Anyway I did get out of the service, and I started teaching at Wolcott High School.

It was the first senior class to be graduated from Wolcott High School when I went there. I was the senior class advisor during six years there; I was director of drama; I was in a lot of activities; I was head of the English department. And then, it was in June of nineteen sixty-seven, and I was teaching with a guy named Larry Zolo. Larry said to me in passing - - Larry was very, very involved with politics and education in Waterbury - - and he said to me, "Joe, they're starting a new community college in Waterbury, why don't you apply?" I said, "I've always been interested in the community college concept, which was that, I never thought that education would ever stop. I always thought, what happens after four years of high school? There always has to be more." So he said "Why don't you try?" so I said, "Well okay." So I got an application, I put in an application, and I got a call from Dr. Kinney's office, and he - - at the time Kinney was the dean of the graduate school at Central Connecticut State University. At the time it was Central Connecticut State College.

So I said I was going to go for the interview. At that moment, at the time of the interview, it was a hot June night, I remember that. Late June. The college had not been established yet. July one was the actual legislation that established the college. What happened was, I had three kids at the time, and my wife and I had to do groceries. So we went and we did groceries. And I had the kids in the car and I said that I had to stop for this interview too. So (laughs) I went and parked the car, and I went in to his office and I had this interview and it was at night, five or six o'clock at night. And he had the interview and he hired me on the spot.

Now this is contrary to what Marc Herzog said at my retirement, that I would make, he said, that my application says, a note from Kinney that says "He would make a very good part-time faculty member," which I think is a distinction, but in between the interview must have done something, and I was just recently reading, there was that report that they had done about the, what was it, the - - (shuffling of papers) - - I don't know if you've ever seen this, this was like a recap of - -

LF

Oh! No! What a great find that is!

JC

Mattatuck Community College the Concept Delivering Nurturing? and in it, to my surprise, I was just reading this just a few nights ago, they asked everybody who was there at the beginning and Kinney actually talks about me and he says, "I hired him all of a sudden." He didn't even know my wife and children were in the car, and we had ice cream to top it off, in the car because we had gone grocery shopping - -

LF

Melting...

JC

- - so it was melting, it was a very hot June night. So that was really how we got it, and I remember he hired me as assistant professor, and then a few weeks later I got a call "Joe you can't be Assistant Professor, they say you can only start as an instructor. Same salary. I think my salary was forty-nine hundred dollars.

LF

For the annual salary?

JC

My annual salary. And I had a Bachelor's and a Master's degree. But he said to me, "You know, the question is always why do you want to do this?" I just thought it was an exciting thing to do. So I walked out of the interview and I said to my wife, "He offered me the job," and she said, "Well, did you take it?" and I said, "I don't know."

She said, "Well, how much?" and I said, "Forty-nine hundred dollars," and she said, "Well, that's not much more than you're presently making."

The other thing he told me was I had to work nights. I can't go before 2:30 in the afternoon because there are no buildings and we're working out of a high school. And she said, "Well gee, you're going to work at night, then you'll be home all day," and I said, "Yeah, well I don't know." Then I said, "Well I asked him how many students and he said. "We don't have any students yet." Then I said to him how many faculty? And he said, "There are no faculty. You're the first one if you take the job." Then I said, "Where are the buildings?" And he said, "There are no buildings." And I said, "I'll be teaching English, what is the curriculum?" And he said, "We really don't have a curriculum; we're going to be using something from the Chancellor's office" - - it wasn't the Chancellor at the time, it was the Central Office - - "and what we're going to do is whatever you want to do." " Which is maybe the best thing that ever happened in all those years! (laughs)

So I said, "No building, no faculty, no students - - how about if the thing falls through?" and he says, "Well, take a chance." And I did, and that's it.

I still get emotional. (clears throat)

In his article here he even talks about Kay Bergin, who was also interviewed. Kay Bergin was an interesting person. She was a secretarial science instructor at a high school and she decided to take the chance also. So Kay and I were the first ones and I think Kay by the way still lives in Waterbury. Her husband was Fran Bergin. I don't know what their present status is, but that's certainly a resource. Kay is an extremely interesting person. Kay and I in the beginning there was no ...

(Track 1 ends)

(Track 2 begins)

JC

... union or anything but Kay and I decided to start a faculty senate. So we got together with other community colleges, and there were only about six or seven community colleges at the time in the state, and so we would start going as faculty members to these Board of Trustee meetings and they wouldn't let us sit at the table because we were faculty members and we had to show that we wanted a presence there. Some of our first meetings were held at the Waterbury Club in downtown Waterbury with the Board of Trustees. We actually negotiated contracts and everything across dinner tables. So it shows you the very, very beginning, there was really no place to go, nothing to do, nothing we could latch on to, we had to do everything ourselves. In fact, one of your questions is, "What were your challenges?" Well, everything was. There were no buildings, no faculty, no nothing. So that, in the beginning, well, first of all the concept was very, very new in Connecticut. In spite of having some community colleges; Norwalk had a community college very, very early and the reason; that was really an extension of their high school: thirteen-fourteen. So in Norwalk we're having the beginnings of something and there were some others in the state but it was not even a state institution yet. This was the beginning. Right after this now, in sixty-five, sixty-six, sixty-seven, sixty-eight, seventy, you're starting to get the real structure of a central office and a state institution.

So we really, the biggest challenge in the first year was "What is a community college?" We had to constantly talk about this. "Well, we're different, we're different." Today you hear so many people talking about, "You know, our students are now twenty-five to forty-five." I was just with Fran Brennan who's the former director of UConn Waterbury and he was saying to me "My students are twenty-five to forty-five," and I was saying "Fran, our students were *always* that age." So that is one very, very big thing. "What are we?" "We're an open door institution." What does an open door mean? Does an open door mean that you screen first and then you open the door? Does it mean that you open the door and everybody comes in? It is interesting that that whole thing, in fact my wife was just saying that she just saw the President's Weekly Bulletin online a few days ago and there was something about graduation rates, how we have a number of students come in but how many students leave - -?

LF

Concerns about retention.

JC

Yeah, concerns about retention. Well, I never had that concern and the people who are talking that way, this I think is coming out of a national report that's going after higher education now, and about how long it's taking students to get out of college. Well, if a student comes in at a community college and takes a course (thumps on table) and decides they don't like the course and they don't like where they're going, is that a failure? No one would say that, no, you would say, "Absolutely not." That is, you tried it and left it. You went into a grocery store, you didn't find what you wanted, you may have found something else in the meantime, or you now realize that that's not the grocery store you want to go to. So even to this day we still have some of these paradigms that people are still using and I now see the federal government using the same thing, "How many people get out?" as opposed to (phone rings) as opposed to how many people do you want to service?

LF

(She's got it.)

JC

So that was the very, very beginning, that was the biggest challenge. What are we? Defining who we were.

LF

Defining goals, objectives, mission...

JC:

Mission. We had to start with a mission statement and that alone took years and years and years. Trying to get faculty who understood the concept; trying to get administrators who understood the concept; was very, very hard thing because it was such a new concept in the state of Connecticut. Florida had community colleges many, many years earlier. Miami-Dade is the "grande dame" of community colleges. But this was a new concept. So new, that my doctoral dissertation really was trying to aim at that. My doctoral dissertation was about perceptions of legislators and administrators towards the objectives, management, and finances of public two year colleges. Because I felt there was a disconnect; we were not getting the financing we were always the last to be remembered. We were in town, people were living there and going to school. For some reason that wasn't right, you don't just live there and go to school, you have to go away to go to school, that was something else. These were all new. So my own idea was there was something there that they don't understand. My research showed that (cell phone rings) ...

(Track 2 ends)

(Track 3 begins)

LF

We're back.

JC

So really what the dissertation showed was that there was a very big disconnect. A significant disconnect. Most legislators considered a community college to be an extension of high school or the first two years of a college. As though we had to be the exact same, as if that's all there was to it. About 25% of our students at that time went on to a four-year institution, but the rest were all over the place. So this was the challenge. Again going back to the mission. What are we going to be? We're an open door institution and that meant everybody. Once you said everybody that brought in the whole remedial piece. For the first time we were talking remedial. If I showed you schedules from the earliest years there was no remedial because we were letting everybody in, because we didn't know what we were getting. But then once we started to realize market out there, we knew there had to be remedial courses. Then there was a whole issue of, "Should there be special remedial division?" I don't know where it stands now since I've left but I was always against a separate remedial division because I said to begin with, developmental students - - we started to use the word developmental instead of remedial - - developmental students to begin with, have a very low perception of themselves. To put them in a separate division, to put that faculty in a separate division, is only going to make it worse. So the only way to do it is to totally integrate it and let the chips fall. That's how it was when I left. I don't know if there's a new trend away from that.

LF

It's still the same. It's part of the Arts and Humanities still.

JC

Okay. You say you're teaching an ASD course. You would have really most likely been in a separate division. Then before you know it they would say, "Where do you teach?" "Oh, I teach in the Basic Skills Division and I have basic skills students." So you'd be totally separate. I was very much against that. That was very, very early and by the way, statewide that's what happened. Statewide we really went into the integrated approach, where we knew there were all kinds of students coming in, but they should not be separated or identified in that way.

LF

I noticed that some of the other colleges don't have an academic skills development program per se.

JC

They have reading, they have the fundamental courses, reading, etc.

LF

But they do have lower, 043, 065.

JC

By the way, yes, some even the numbers had to be sub-credit, the credit doesn't apply to the degree.

LF

Yeah, that's been an issue of debate.

JC

It's always going to be an issue; I think you're going to constantly have that problem. But that's the way it is and I think it's going to just continue to fall, depend on a lot on the personalities of the faculty at the time. Things change; it'll go all over the place. So that was really the biggest challenge, the philosophy itself.

The second big thing was now how do we get the people and how do we get the programs? What are the programs that we need? Where do we get the people for these programs? That was really a huge thing. When we started to talk about business courses, hospitality management, automotive technician, aviation science: these were unheard of. These were called "vocational." They belonged to a "vocational high school," they belonged to a "vocational technical college." My own experience had not been that. Through the years I had been accrediting community colleges throughout New England.

LF

With NEASC?

JC

For New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and in that - - I did it for both commissions: Commission for Higher Education, and the Commission for Vocational Technical Career Institutes - - I had been to over twenty community and technical colleges throughout new England and I had chaired over 15 of those. So I knew the length and breadth of this thing. In fact I learned so much from that, I never became provincial, I never, they said, "Look, you only stayed at one institution all those years." But I was all over the place and I realized it was much more than it could be.

So trying to get those programs instituted was a toughie. Even to the point where we had that fundraiser a few months ago. I said at that fundraiser how difficult it was, because the state would never give you money up front for a new program. You had to first prove that you needed the program and that you could use this program and then they would fund you. It was really tough to do. When we started Hospitality Management, we started it in the church in downtown Waterbury. They had a kitchen. The next thing was the Greek Orthodox Church was our next place where we had the next kitchen. Then the next thing was we had the portable buildings. Now, in the next few years you're finally going to get the labs that we had hoped for.

LF

For a while we went back to the Greek Orthodox Church, you know that.

JC

I know. For twenty years though we've been in the temporary facilities and those programs have suffered. The Hospitality Management, all of the Engineering Technologies, etc. all of those who needed special labs didn't have them because they were really neglected. Because philosophically, people couldn't understand what we were supposed to be. But I'd say after thirty-five years being there I think we're getting there. People are understanding that you infuse yourself into the community, you become one with the community. So getting those programs off the ground, getting the philosophy, *and* then getting an administrative staff that understood customer service, that we were in a competitive business. That we couldn't be in a situation where we'd say to people, "Well, here we are if you want us; if you don't want us, well then..." No, it can't be that way.

To the point where, as I was preparing for this material, I have this memo that I sent to the president August 2, 1978. Now '67 we started, this is over ten years later, and this is a letter to the president. Now at that time I was Dean of Community Services and Continuing Education. I started out as faculty member in English, I went to Director of Arts and Humanities, then I became Dean of Community Services and Continuing Education, then I became Dean of Instruction.

In the scope of Dean of Community Services and Continuing Ed, we were constantly having the battle, and I'm sure that Larry Smotroff, who's the dean now, has the constant problem of, he's very customer-service oriented, faculty, staff and administrators on the academic side see themselves as different in the approach. This is a memo, and this is how it started off.

(reading from memo of Aug. 2, 1978)

"Of all the unbelievable things I have had to report to you in the past eleven years at the college, the following situation tops the list. Since this division was established one year ago we have become more and more an information center for the college ... When people call this office for schedules for the fall or spring semester, one is placed in an envelope and sent to them."

(not reading from memo)

See, we never had these things that we have today.

(reading from memo)

"John Shea tells me that the Registrar's office receives double the calls for such information. Today when we requested additional copies from the Registrar's Office of the fall schedule ..."

(not reading from memo)

Which, by the way, at that time was a mimeographed thing.

(reading from memo)

“ ... we were told that people are not sent schedules; they are asked to come in and get them. Can you think of a business that would receive a call for a circular and tell the people to come into the store and get it? We do not have large circulation of fall schedules in the newspaper, or through circulars, primarily because there is not so much to offer the general public by the time such circulars are released ... When we have Level 6 people, those who make phone calls, and they are told to come in for schedule or circular, we are losing one of the most effective sources of increasing enrollment.”

So this memo shows you, even ten years later, we were still having trouble with the attitude of customer service. So the challenges at the beginning were establishing the program, getting the right faculty, and also getting people who understood the marketing device that we needed to get out there. So those were really the challenges of the early years. (sighs)

(Track 3 ends)

(Track 4 begins)

JC

The first faculty, there were only eight of us in the beginning, we used to meet for our faculty meetings in the library workroom of Kennedy High School. It was smaller than the present location we're in [household kitchen area]. We did everything from there. We did everything, we all crisscrossed.

The president was going to be inaugurated; I became the head of his inauguration committee. At the commencement the second year - - we had our first commencement in 1969 I believe - - I was the head of that commencement because there was no one else. There were just a few of us and we just had to get together. The president's inauguration was really a big event for the whole city because the city had been wanting a four-year college for years. There was a two-year college, there was Waterbury UConn, there was Post, etc. But they really wanted a four-year institution the last two years. But this was again an attempt, they thought this was the beginning of something. This is the very beginning of the seeds of the Higher Education Center. This moment was the starting to come together. The president talks about it in his inaugural address.

I did the seal for the inauguration, I made the seal. I went into the library one night and I just sat there and I went through Indian lore, and I made this seal up. I gave it to a friend of mine who was an artist, Andy Siricca, and he actually designed the seal. From that inaugural seal, that seal became the seal of the college in the first 25 years. When the merger occurred we changed the seal, but for the first 25 years that was the seal. I think the Nursing Division still uses that same seal in some of its material.

So that was the, that was one of the things. So it was, and by the way, I had letters from the president talking to me about this, etc. Anyway, as this thing started to gel, we said, "Boy we have UConn here," Mattatuck Community College was here. The name by the way, Mattatuck Community College, there were a lot of different things about that name. It was supposed to be Waterbury Community College at one point. It was supposed to be a lot of other names, back and forth; because it was regional they wanted to stay from only Waterbury, so it finally got down to Mattatuck.

We had Waterbury State Tech, Mattatuck Community College; the following year, 1968 or '69, Waterbury State Tech Institute became Waterbury State College, and Technical College. By the way, the intent was to put us both on the same campus. Now we are seeing the very, very beginning of the concept of the Higher Education Center. Dempsey, Governor Dempsey, in 1967 when the college was first thought of, said that there should be a higher education center which would combine all of the services of higher education in Waterbury, which would include not only Waterbury State Technical Institute, Mattatuck Community College, University of Connecticut branch, and Post College, all on the same campus or in proximity. That this would be the beginning of this Higher Ed Center. This concept actually became a law; and so, in 1969 - now this is where I get a little fuzzy on dates - but in 1969, we were established in '67, in '69 we had two major events. The first event was, that there was a thing called, we were awarded a thing called a "charrette." You must have heard about this before. A charrette? We didn't even know what it meant. We were told later on it was a little cart that went from place, corner to corner in France, and people would expound on different ideas and thoughts from this charrette. Everybody would come together with these ideas. So we had a higher education charrette. I was again, I was the director of that particular program. What we had to do was a week-long activities and it was at Post College because we had no facilities.

LF

Still no campus.

JC

Okay? So we went to Post College all the colleges participated in this thing called a charrette. What we were going to share, what we were not going to share, the whole concept of the Higher Ed Center. It happened that, if I recall, March 29th, it was that time, there was a, we had a very big snow storm (pounds table). It was Easter and we had a very big snowstorm. The following day we were supposed to have the first day of the charrette and we had to delay it because of snow. But that whole week was devoted to this charrette of the coming together. As a result of that, I had to make out a report and that report was really to become the legislation that would make us the Higher Ed Center. Here is that report, okay.

LF

Wow!

JC

I did that on a Sunday afternoon. I was at home, I sat down, and I simply wrote, put it all together, and that became the basis for the whole thing.

LF

This is a wonderful thing to add to our archives. Are you going to let me take it?

JC

Oh yeah, it's yours. I'm finished.

LF

I'm so happy to see this. Wow.

JC

And that became the basis of everything. From then on everything was towards getting this Higher Ed Center, and from then on we had nothing but starts and stops. Now at the time, right after Dempsey, Meskill became governor. Meskill fully supported the concept. The whole idea was there was going to be a thing called Fast Track. All the buildings were supposed to go up at the same time. This was supposed to save money, instead of starting and stopping and starting and stopping, okay?

LF

Okay.

JC

Well, they started, they got the land. By the way there were two places for the land. There was back and forth about this. Should it be in the North End of Waterbury or should it be in this land that the state owned off of Chase Parkway? So the Chase Parkway finally ended because we had the land already, it was going to be easier to develop, and that kind of thing. Downtown Waterbury, the state was going to have to acquisition buildings and all that kind of thing.

Behind the scenes we had some wonderful community people backing us. Ruth Parsons, who was a very great friend of the college in those years. She was on the Republican-American newspaper, and she supported fully this concept and helped us a great deal. Max Traurig, who was on the Board of Trustees, and then became the Chair of the Board of Trustees at the time, when I was there, he was magnificent for this whole thing. Long [Fern] Verrick, who is still alive, I believe, and who was a student at the college that I won't forget, she was important because her husband was Senator Verrick and he was also behind us getting all of this stuff.

But once we started, we thought it was all going to happen together, then started, but politics came in; so Meskill left, Grasso came in, and Grasso stopped the project. So we had a freeze. Then the first building went up. Kinney Hall went up. We had the Grand Opening of Kinney Hall. She showed up. I remember we had everything ready for her, we even had a special room for her on the second floor, slippers for her and all kinds of

things we did for her. But after that it was touch and go. We had to keep proving that we could do it.

So anyway. Now I'm going to give you these, also. This shows you, this is February 8, 1973. These are the actual plans and the square footage of the original buildings that I had to give to faculty and staff, and tell me what they thought about it. Each one of these is done by a faculty and staff member about what they needed ...

LF

Oh, fantastic!

JC

... and this finally went to the architects, and the architects used this as the basis of their square footage.

LF

This would be very, very well taken care of, I want to assure you.

JC

Here's an example of it, this is my back and forth, here's 1973 notes to Dino Iorli who was in charge of putting all this stuff together, saying this is what we need; the faculty don't like this, we don't like that, they like this, they don't like that (shuffling of papers).

(Track 4 ends)

(Track 5 begins)

JC

Now in the meantime, where are we? Well we finally had gotten out of Kennedy High School. We went to Harvester Road, which was an old bowling alley off of South Main Street in Waterbury. The president's office was where there was a strip joint. (laughing) Then the entire building itself became all the classrooms, etc. So for the first time we're starting to have day classes. We had not had those up to that time. Then the portable buildings were built up in Chase Parkway, in preparation for ... these portable buildings were supposed to be temporary, for a few years; it's now how many years later?

LF

They just finished taking them down.

JC

I know. So it shows you what temporary means. But that was all going on at the same time. In the meantime, by the way, 1968, '69 -- no, no, no, that's right -- Waterbury State Tech, we were trying to get some programming going on. It was a toughie, but it was starting to occur. Then we had Kinney Hall; then the other building was built, the science building, Ekstrom Hall was built. Then the whole middle was left empty again so we had a whole phase again.

We got so disgusted with this, that I got the students and the student senate - - now at the time, you asked one question, "Who were some of the people that you remember as students?" I remember John Connolly who is now the state prosecutor or state attorney in Waterbury? John was one of my students and also I knew that John was going places. John helped us; Mike Bears who had just come back from Vietnam, he became the student government president. He was fantastic. He was a great leader. So I said, "We've got to show people: these buildings have got to get moving." So we created a funeral. We got the t.v. coverage that we wanted. I'm sure if you went into the archives of Channel 8 I think, you would find maybe '73, '75, '77, '78, around there, where we had a funeral because we know it's the death of Higher Ed Center? Right after that we got the second building. But then we still couldn't move the governor. So, we said, "We've got to." Natalie Kass and I, now Natalie was assistant to the president at the time, she and I and a group said "We're going to go up and see governor personally, and she can't stop this." We made up this whole flyer that we were going to give to her. It says these are the things that we need. This is going to happen, that's going to happen, or we're going to have leakages and all this kind of thing. What we even did, and Joe Canaletti who was a custodian at the college who was also a baker; he made a cake in the shape of the Higher Ed Center, the way it was supposed to look. We went up to the governor's office with the cake! We got in to see her; to this day I can remember sitting on the floor in her office?

LF

A sit-in.

JC

... with plans out on the floor with the cake, and all of us talking to her how important this was to finally release the money with this bonding. It finally went up.

LF

Were there photographs of that, do you think, of that event?

JC

Of the cake and everything? I don't know.

LF

We'll look for them.

JC

But this was some of the stuff that shows you what we used. Fact sheets, trying to show where we had to save money, and on and on and on and on. For instance, this is much earlier, but later on, and we're still telling people, we're *leasing* the building on Thomaston Avenue for the Automotive Technician program. We've been spending over \$100,000.00 a year, *way* over \$100,000.00 a year, for that particular building.

LF

Just for a lease.

JC

For *leasing*. I bet now it's over a million dollars we've spent, *well* over a million dollars, on that leasing. And the building could have been - - now it's finally going to go up.

So that was this whole building process. The backdrop of the college during all this is going on, in 1967 now, is of course the big social event, which was the Vietnam War. We were born in the revolution. In '67, '68, nineteen - - well Kent State is May 4, 1970. To this day I say to the students, we actually closed the college on May 4. "Oh, how did you go?" We had no grades, everything frozen in place. "Oh, what did you do?" "You kids don't understand how intense it was," you know? So this was all going on. In fact, I have a fun thing here. This was from the students. This is the students rallying.
(reads from flyer)

"On Wednesday, October 15, 1969, fellow students across the nation will boycott classes to make a statement concerning the madness of Vietnam. We do not condemn or condone this action, but agree with the motive. Instead we have outlined a three-step program: a moratorium on all formal classes ..."

(not reading from flyer) This was from the Student Government.

... a rally to show your concern, and petitioning legislators. We invite students to take part. You are the students. We need your support."

This is from the Student Government, the three-step program.

It was a very, very exciting time. So much so that, another thing happened in 1969 beside the development of the higher ed concept. A report had come out about Waterbury. It was from the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity that said Waterbury was a highly racist community. Federal funding was involved, etc. So the college decided, "Let's be in the forefront of this thing; let's really be teachers and let's have an open forum to do all we can to let people understand what this is all about, and let's hope that everything is for the better."

Again, I was the Director of Concern for Waterbury. The whole concept was, "Be A VIP" - -a VIP, a very involved person. For one week, we had television interviews all over, talking about this whole concept of Concern for Waterbury. There's a whole book somewhere that's this thick about just that week. We had all major speakers every night. We had Ralph Nader. Remember, in 1969! we had Ralph Nader. I had to go pick up Ralph Nader, he had a speaking address at Miss Porter's School in Farmington. I went and I picked him up at Miss Porter's, drove him - - I don't think I was in a Corvair - - (laughs) I drove into the campus and packed the place.

The people protested that we were having these people come. We had protests outside of Kennedy High School, because that's where we had it. The worst one, in terms of how volatile the situation had become, was we had Dick Gregory. Dick Gregory was hot to

touch at that time. People were, we had all the veterans' organizations screaming and yelling. The president had to respond in the newspapers by saying, "Free speech is a given in this country, that's what we're all about." They wanted to prevent these people from talking in a public high school. So the president - - he made an editorial in fact, in the Waterbury paper, that said they had a right to come here, a right to speak, etc. The night Dick Gregory was going to come here was I'd say one of the most terrifying nights I remember. We were told that FBI was there; we were told to meet him right up front. In the front of Kennedy High School were pickets, people all over the place. I was frightened of any kind of violence. We waited and waited in front. In the meantime the FBI had gotten him in through another location and never even knew he was in the building. We packed the place, we had closed-circuit television in the cafeteria at Kennedy High School because there were so many people. In the middle of it all someone pulled a fire alarm. I remember walking down the hallway Kennedy High School saying, "Oh my God, what now?" Luckily it was evacuated, they all came back in, and everything was okay.

Those were the early years. It was fascinating. We've had - - Arthur Miller came to the college - - we had a forum called Uncommon Ground, where the arts shared, where we had what is common among art, music, drama; and we had Arthur Miller and his wife came, not Marilyn Monroe, we had, what's his wife's ...

(Track 5 ends)

(Track 6 begins)

JC

... name? She just died, I think. She was a poet. We had Arthur Miller...I forgot the other people...but it was really a very exciting time, the opening years, especially when we were trying to establish an identity in the community.

LF (restarting recorder)

We will start again. We're on.

JC

In the middle of all of the programming development, for degree programs, and non-degree programs, there were a lot of community services that were going on in the college. In the early years we were dealing with the Spanish Action Council; development of health programs; there was a thing called REACH program, which was adults returning to work after welfare; there was access programs; there were mobile computer programs. If you really look through a lot of the material that I'm going to give you there was an awful lot that was going on, *and* Larry Smotroff was in on that very, very early. He would also know about a lot of the programs that we were dealing with that were unique at the time; now, with Larry and all of his programming, is a way of life.

There are some unique things that happened. Well first of all, as far as advisorships, etc., I started a thing called *The Arrow* which was a newspaper. We had a yearbook at some

points. A guy named Bud Daugerty who was a faculty member, did it with me. There were a lot of trips we used to take. Tom Kmetzo and I made a float one year for the 300th anniversary of Waterbury. *Dimensions* was started by Gloria Pond. All of these were, see, the thing about me was that, as you were looking for faculty, I would always look at someone who had an avocation because if they really liked to do something as a way of life, then they would really bring that to the college, so I liked people who had other interests.

LF

Photography, filmmaking...

JC

Like Ed Nolan. He likes photography. Tom Kmetzo. Tom Kmetzo is a Renaissance person. He knows music, he does pewter, he does woodworking, he's really a jack of all trades. Linda Donohue. She was a counselor. There was a lot of diversity there. She had already been working with physically challenged students, etc. So every time I hired somebody I knew that something was going to develop. If you said you really loved skiing I knew I was going to get a ski club out of you, and that's how you get that other dimension here; otherwise, you're Anyplace, USA.

You also said what were the things that I remember, the biggest things. First of all the whole beginning.

LF

From the hole in the ground, up.

JC

When I think of the first interview. Our beginning. What. No students, no nothing, and today we're what? Over ten thousand students with multi campuses, multi buildings, huge faculty, highly qualified. All of these programs, a tremendous array of programs, that is overwhelming to me. I'll tell you, it's interesting.

Of all the things I used to love, I used to love commencement. It used to bother me no end when I would get some faculty, not, not - - the majority always were there and loved it, loved it - - there were always a few who would argue about going to commencement. I would say, "This is like preparing for the wedding and not going to it. You are part of this development and you are going to see that person walk across the stage and you're saying you don't want to go?" And I'm saying, "You have to be part of the wedding." (pounding) "You're a part of this." But commencements were always great days. Because you saw finally what was happening, you saw this tremendous outcome, you saw these first generation graduates and the parents and everyone involved with it. So I actually loved that.

The buildings going up were fantastic. The naming of the Student Center was surprising to me. The Emeritus that I got. The new building about to come up.

When the president had a major heart problem, and this was in December I believe, and then I became an interim president for three months and in the meantime the merger had occurred. It bothered me so much that, how could you say that you were an advanced technical college and this building was falling apart? How could you bring anyone in there and say "This is the latest technology." So it was really that feeling that, I called two legislators and at the time they were representatives. One was Jarjura, who's the present mayor of Waterbury and Ron San Angelo, who is I think the mayor of Naugatuck now. They spent many nights with me developing the concept of this building, and at the beginning we didn't know what to call it. We were trying to call it something that people would be forced to support it.

LF

What were some of those ideas?

JC

"Innovation Hall" was one of the early names. Innovation Hall, Technology Hall: it was all over the place. That was really a big thing.

The amazing thing too, Marc Herzog, and the Chancellor at the time, Bruce, supported it. We were actually on the Board's agenda within a few months which was very, very fast. Now that it took, ten years later and it's just starting is something; but at least it's finally going to happen. But those are the things that really stand out for me.

Some unusual things? The Vietnam War that was going on and the vets coming back, that was terrible. We were getting students in classes, they were so, everything you see in all the movies, everything you see in *The Deer Hunter*, in *Apocalypse Now*, and everything that's been portrayed, *Coming Home*. These movies showing what happened a result of the war and who's coming back - - we had it all in the classrooms, and they were disenfranchised. They were really in very, very bad shape and you really watched what you said especially with anti-war sentiment going on on campus, closing the campus at one point and everything that was going on. That was, I never forgot that, it was really a very, very trying time. Students today just don't understand. We don't have that going on right now the way that occurred at that time.

Some of the major problems that I will never forget. The worst, in terms of education: the merger was the most difficult experience. I thought, when the legislation was written, that the merger meant that we assume the Waterbury State Technical College. Little did I know that we both had to lose our identities. All of a sudden being told, "You can't have your name, you can't have that symbol, and you can't have that mascot, and... no, no you're not what you were." It was quite alarming.

The cultures were so different. I know I was criticized for saying this many, many times, but I used to call it "Mom and Pop versus Stop and Shop." I had one dean who said "I know what you're saying out there about us." And I said, "Well, that's how I feel about it." What would get me, for instance, it would be lunch time and their offices would close. In our place, you don't close. You don't put a sign you're out for lunch. You're out

there all day long, especially during lunch time when people who are working want to come in to register or something. The Mom and Pop operation just put a sign that they're coming back in ten minutes. That's how it is up at the Cape many times. People have a store and "Back in ten minutes," as if you're going to be there ten minutes later, and that was really shocking to me. I just couldn't - - but it's not only that it was the culture, even commencement. We did commencement by divisions. Then we did commencements by whoever you wanted to be. Waterbury State Tech did commencements by seniority. Every little thing; every time you turned around we were banging into a ...

(Track 6 ends)

(Track 7 begins)

JC

... tradition which was as legitimate as ours, but it was hard to take. The president and I really had, of all the times, Sanders and I really had a difficult time. He was very upset at me, many times. We finally worked it out. As the years went by and we got closer and closer to the merge, it got better. But that was by far.

I had promised the engineering technologies people that we would make this the best, and with this new building we would make them the best engineering. I don't know what's happened, and I hope that it's continuing to be in the forefront of technology; getting rid of a lot of the old stuff and getting a lot of the new in. Even the program development was a real, real big issue.

Second big thing was...I can't remember the year it happened, but it was right after the second president Pat Yarborough left, and the faculty was upset at me. I had had to do a lot of the things she told me I had to do. There was this, this, this...but the faculty had told me a number of things and they really blasted me. I kept saying to myself, "How could you do this to me, and I'm working so hard for you." It was just contradiction. Out of it, I changed my style completely. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. They gave me a real wake-up call. Something bad turned into something good. I really think I changed considerably after that.

The other thing is, I had to go through a trial. I went through a trial by jury. I had a faculty member accuse me of pushing her. It went through a full trial, seven people, the whole bit. I finally was acquitted of everything, and everything turned out okay. But those three things stood out as real things that worried me.

Sanders and I got along amazingly well, contrary to what people think. People would say, "Oh yeah, you know, he doesn't know what you're doing," but he knew everything I was doing. He's very interesting. He always treated us as if, "This is your division, this is what you do, as long as I know what's going on." It was pretty much independent. Just as you said, where you're allowed to do things. I really think in terms of creativity. You can only be creative if somebody gives you the atmosphere to create. I think he did that, he

gave me the atmosphere to create. He worried sometimes, I know that. I know that. But he always supported me when I had to be supported.

That part there. I could go on with you for days. I loved the tech-prep program. I don't know where that is right now. I always believed in tech-prep, which is the concept of you link up with the high school. I don't know where it is now. I know Gail was in charge of that program and I don't know where the federal money is that relates to that right now, but that's where it links high school students with the college and I've always thought that still was our very, very best program.

LF

Is that Gail Casper?

JC

Yeah, Gail Casper.

In terms of cultural changes that were current; my wife and I would tell you something, but this was very interesting. When I was a faculty member I used to take bus trips with students to New York. In the summer of 1968 - - I think it was the summer of '68, or '69, I think it was the summer of '68 - - I took busloads of students to see *Hair*. Remember we were in a time when culturally most of the stuff that is talked about in *Hair* was not even discussed. The *words* were not even used. Anyway, I took them. Of course we had a tremendous age range, and when we got back I started getting bombarded with letters and everything, about, "How could you take us to this show?"

LF

From the people who went with you?

JC

Yeah. And some of the women especially who went, there were things that really bothered them. One was that the guy, one of the actors, at one point takes rosary beads and sticks them down his crotch, and "How could he do something so sacrilegious?!" Of course, remember, we were dealing with mentalities then that this was *never* discussed, this was blasphemous, and, "How could you do this?" and blah blah blah blah. Even to this present day, with the issue in *The Davinci Code* of the issue of Mary Magdalene and everything else. Of course here it is, "I Don't Know How to Love Him," and she's talking about Jesus, and "How could you bring us to this thing?" So it shows you from '68 to the present, the cultural changes.

Those are the things that stick out. The development of the college, there were so many things, it was born in revolution, and to see it today really it's pretty traditional.

So that's what I remember right now. I'm sure fifty other things are going to come up. I remember the Common Core; we didn't have a Common Core; I was pleased that the faculty finally went along with the Common Core. They finally went along with degree outcomes, which we had not had. Our accreditations, I was always pleased with...

That's about it. The very, very end was the retirement party. I was worried about it. I really never liked that stuff. I was more worried that no one would show up (laughs). More than should I have it or not. I was really pleased with that.

That's it.

LF

Thank you for now. Things may occur to you. We can revisit. We can stop the tape now.

JC

There was a lot ...

I think I covered all of the major points.

(Track 7 ends)