

Oral History Interview with Father William Stewart, S.J.
Conducted by Angela Baker June 8, 1993
Transcription by Jeff Lipton, February 14, 2000

Position: Prof. of Philosophy; Dean of Studies; Dean of Arts, Librarian; Academic-Vice President

Dates associated with Saint Mary's: 1950-1997

Scope and Content: Major topics include: Windsor St. campus of Saint Mary's, move to Gorsebrook campus, academic programs, the Jesuits, extra-curricular activities, introduction of women to the University, secularization, unionization, student protests, age and ethnic background of students.

Transcript:

AB: Okay, let's start with a little bit of background information on you. Could you state your full name?

WS: My full name, oh boy. Well, William Arthur Stewart is the, I usually use only those full names though. I was also, they included Edmund in that. William Arthur Stewart who was one of my godfathers but I, its too cumbersome, all those names. So the, I just use William Arthur.

AB: Okay, what's your date and place of birth?

WS: Place of birth is Montreal, August the twenty first, 1915.

AB: And can you describe your educational background?

WS: Well, I went to Loyola High School in Montreal and college, eight years there. Then after that, a year later I worked in business for a year, and then went to the Jesuits in the fall in 1937, fall of '37. My education has been largely with the Jesuits ever since. I've done most of my studies with the Jesuits in Guelph, and in Toronto, and then I was posted down here. Apart from one year when I was away on studies in the States, I've been here ever since. You can't get rid of me.

AB: So could you describe your research interests?

WS: Well, Lonergan was my area of interest and research. Learned Lonergan who is a well-known philosopher and theologian and whom I had as a teacher for five years, and who's written all sorts of books and things. Most of my work and my writing have all been involved with Lonergan and that sort of thing. That's the area of research.

AB: When did you first come to Saint Mary's?

WS: The summer of 1950, believe it or not.

AB: And what was the school like when you first came?

WS: They were still up on Windsor Street where the present St. Vincent guesthouse is now. We were in this very small building and total college population was 188 students. I've taught a single class at the university of 210 students, larger than the entire college population was when I first came. So, you can see the growth the place has gone through. Now, there was also the high school attached because in those days they looked on, what should I say, the institution as a 7 or 8 year course. You came, if you came from grade 11, then you did the four years high school and four, or three years university I guess. It was considered more of a unit. It's only lately that the high school closed up, that we concentrated then on the college and university section. I was the ogre, one of the chief ogres that cancelled the high school because we needed the space. We had to get more room and they were using valuable classroom space in the main administration building which was all we had so something had to be done about it. So, very regretfully, we closed the high school which was an excellent school. The other schools in the city, especially St. Pat's were blamed because we were creaming off all the top students. The high school, they all wanted to come to Saint Mary's high school, that didn't help us with one of the other schools. So, we closed that in 1963, I think it was. It was limited to 100 students over the three years of the high school that we had here. But we were able to get better students from St. Pat's and some of the other schools as a result.

AB: So when did the campus move?

WS: The campus moved to the new Gorsebrook campus in 1951, fall of '51. You had to walk over boardwalks and wade through mud. The place was far from finished but they moved down. People had no ideas what it was like then. The wooden scaffolding was still around. The front of the building was finished but the sides and the rest were just concrete. No stone, no brick. That took years for that to get finished. They just had run out of money. In fact the whole operation nearly came to a halt altogether because of the money that was being spent and the Diocese going into debt as a result. But the board, I shouldn't say, the Board of Governors because we didn't have a Board of Governors then, we had the senate. What was called the senate later changed to become the Board of Governors. In those days the senate in some institutions was equivalent to the Board of Governors. This is confusing in documents because people read about the senate said this or did this, and think of it in terms of the present senate which is an academic body and controls the academic side of the institution. But the senate then was equivalent roughly to the Board of Governors though it didn't have, what should we say, more than deliberative consultive power. It wasn't a governing body in the strict sense of the word, word. It was an advisory to the president of the faculty. So the administrative structure has changed considerably.

AB: So at that time was the Administration entirely Jesuit?

WS: Yes, yes the administration was entirely Jesuit. We had a president who was also Rector, President Rector. He was Rector of the Jesuit community and President of the University.

When Jesuits came in 1940, we took over administration of the university in 1940 from the Christian brothers who had operated the place since what, 1913 or 14. They administered the place and went through the move and so on. The Windsor Street place down here to the new campus. The rest I suppose is history now that it mushroomed over the years.

AB: What were the academic programs like in those early years?

WS: Academic programs were much more.... structured is perhaps the word I'm looking for. That is, there were far fewer electives. In the Bachelor of Arts program for example, you had to do the philosophy each year and a theology each year and so on. The entrance requirements were, I think, stricter then because to get into Saint Mary's a student had to have English, history, mathematics. A science, a foreign language and so on, as entrance requirements. It made it tougher I think than what they have today where they'll accept things like social sciences, and all the other recognized subjects in a high school curriculum. We didn't recognize those, so the brand of student we got in was generally well equipped for college work, especially for arts. If they were going into science they had even other requirements regarding the science program, the courses that they had done and the mathematics. That's been, of the, what should I say, a failure. Well, failure is too hard a word, but at least the weakening of the high school programs is how they have slowly whittled away things like mathematics, natural science, and foreign language requirements to get into college. Latin, I know, is something that we expected students to have if they were going into the Arts. But, quite a change.

AB: So how did the academic programs change over the years that you were there? How many years were you there?

WS: How many, you mean how many with a degree?

AB: How many years were you at Saint Mary's yourself?

WS: Well, I started in 1950 and I was away the next year for studies in the States and then I came back and I've been here ever since. So, well, I'm retired, but there is somewhat of an affiliation with the university. I suppose as a member of the Convocation Committee and a Marshall of Convocation, but I haven't taught since 1982.

AB: So how did you notice changes in the academic program from 1950 to 1982? What changes did you see?

WS: Well, I think the most noticeable change is the requirements in the degree program. As I mentioned, you had to do an English, you had to do a philosophy, you had to do a theology, in the first years. That requirement was later dropped, but there was very little room for electives in the program. There were sort of set programs in the Arts and Commerce and Science. You had to do these prescribed courses, and later of course, because of pressure from departments and the rest of, they began to make room for more electives in the program. But, initially, you had those prescribed courses like English, and philosophy, and so on. You might have in your junior year, room for 2 or 3 electives, or

you carried an extra course or took another elective. Some people were able, is their average was good enough or high enough, we would let them take 6 courses.

AB: So what kinds of extra-curricular activities went on in the campus in the time you were here?

WS: Oh, there were all sorts of extra-curricular activities. I don't suppose any more than what we know are going on now. But you had your resident society, and then there was the Christian Life Movement its called today, the Sodality, which was a religious organization of students. The COTC, the officer's training corp., was still in operation then. You had students who would be in the naval training program, or army training program. That phased out after the war when the government stopped funding cadets and officer's training programs and so on. But that filled a good part of student life and time. And then there were the athletics, the drama, which I got involved in very early on. I suppose apart from the academic life and the games, the athletic side of it, and the societies, that was about it.

AB: Okay, let's talk about the period around the end of the 1960's when women were first admitted to the institution. What effect did that have?

WS: Well, it was met with mixed reaction. When I was in administration, I had made, taken steps to try to turn us towards a co-education, largely because there were girls who wanted to take particular courses that they could get only at the university and couldn't get at the Mount and so forth. The Jesuits had tried to get together with the Mount and had done lectures at the Mount in an effort to get them to join us. In fact, the sisters were offered a part of the campus for a building, in an effort to attract them and have them put up a new building on our campus and then it would have been a cooperative effort between the Mount and Saint Mary's. If that had happened there's no telling, we'd probably be twice the size we are today. The Mount would have none of it. The Mount was strictly for the education of women and they weren't interested in joining forces with a boy's college. I remember dear Sister Francis of Assisi, God bless her soul, some of the correspondence should have been written on Asbestos paper. It was, nothing ever came of it again 'cause they just weren't interested in a co-educational effort. I could see that co-education was inevitable or was going to come here to Saint Mary's if we were going to grow. A student came one day and said that she wanted to do courses so I found out what she wanted to do, made sure she couldn't get them anywhere else, and took her in as a full-time student. Then Eileen O'Leary, first one was Jocelyn Grasby, graduated very well and ended up in the east somewhere. Slowly, having squeezed in one or two girls like that, I got jumped on by the Arch Bishop and the President, and just about everybody else for sneaking these female types into the place.

Eventually, in '69, the place became officially co-educational because we couldn't get the Mount to move and trying to remain solely a boy's school was impossible and was hindering growth. We were always co-educational in the evening division. The evening division was started by Pat Malone who was the Dean of Studies, or Academic Vice President, as you would call it today. He started the courses in the evening division, and by accident I happened to be the first teacher to teach because the first course offered was

introductory philosophy, which was my area. So in 1952 in the fall, I taught the first evening course that was a mixed group. There were teachers and military personnel, people like that. The evening division of course has gone on and continued and done a great service to the teachers of Halifax, enabling them to get degrees and so on. But back to the co-education thing, once that was cleared, then the place started to grow slowly until now. I'm not sure what the proportion is, but there's probably as many women if not more than there are male students. I don't know what the breakdown is today. I think that certainly it's 50% if not more. You have to look at the statistics. Elizabeth Chard would probably know if they still keep such things. So that all has been a turbulent history, is maybe too strong a word. But it was never just a smooth progression because we had to fight those who opposed co-education. Many of them, the students themselves, the attitudes in those days were so different from what they are today now. The boys didn't want girls around the campus, messing around and spoiling their fun. You'd think that the boys would be all in favour of having girls, but there was a lot of opposition there. Of course once they got the girls in, they just moved from then on. That's not all that long ago when you think. It was '69/70 when the place became fully coeducational. That's only a history of some twenty years.

AB: So besides being a philosophy faculty member, what other roles have you had in the university while you were here?

WS: What other roles did I play in the university? Well, when I came to Halifax I was resolved not to have anything to do with theatre because I knew from my experience in Montreal how time consuming it is. The first four years I never went near the dramatic society or anything. Finally, one day the moderator, this is something I do know about, theatre, I just need a place. So I went down to the station and the first thing I knew, I had my coat off. So that was one aspect of my work, which was not academic, it was just helping out, especially with the dramatic production. Academically, in '59, was it '59? I became Dean of Studies, was the title they used then. The title being Academic Vice President and I held that office for, until '63 when I went out of office. It was a good period in a sense because the place was developing. We didn't have any departments so I made guidelines and set up a number of departments. You had to have three faculty in the subject field to become a department. I worked very hard to get the senate, especially, to write terms of reference for the senate. That, I provided over the first meeting of the university senate in the spring of '63. The rest again is history I suppose. Slowly, departments got built up and faculties developed, and normal university growth. Once I got out of office in '63 I went back to teaching full time along with other activities and so forth. I was one of the founding fathers of APICs, The Atlantic Provinces Inter-Universities Committee on the Sciences. When did we found that, '62 or '63? I was secretary of that organization and it's still going apparently and flourishing. So that was one department we had that was an adjunct to the university, but not a part of it. It was talk and then finally '75 or '76, I got a sabbatical year at last. I was ready for that and I went to Toronto to work on Lonergan's subject and was developing a course in Lonergan. Christmas time, or half way through the year I got this call. "We need you home. The Dean of Arts has had a heart attack. Come back and take over as Dean." First thing I knew, I found myself back replacing Dr. [Roland] as Dean of Arts and Science. It was a combined office then. We didn't have a separate Dean of

Science. I think I was Dean of Arts and Science initially. From being Dean of Arts, and the next year as Assistant Academic Vice President, and after that Academic Vice President. Acting Academic Vice President, I suppose, more accurately. I held that office a couple of years until, who was it that took over? [Jadra?] Dr. [Jadra] I think, who was in the Political Science department. He is now Academic Vice President in California. So that's about my, a brief history as the academic side is concerned. But it was enough to keep me busy. I enjoyed administration I suppose. I had been in administration more in a sense longer. About 16 of my years I was in an administrative post out of the 31 or 2 that I was active at the university. I think that, though I tried to keep one course going to keep my head in, closer to the faculty, when I was teaching and keep more to their problems. If I myself was teaching a course. I did one small advanced course, which wasn't a great load as far as correcting. Different from teaching 210 students when you are burning the midnight oil with essays and exams and that was brutal. Oh, I forgot that when I first came I was also made university librarian because I had librarian experience. When I was in Guelph, Toronto, I worked under a librarian there. So we got a gift to start the E.H. Horne Memorial Library which occupied the space now of the Engineering faculty now. That big room there. We got a gift of \$20,000 to set it up so we got that going and developed, and so on. So I was in administration as the university's librarian as well as being involved in the teaching side of it too.

AB: So the size of the university increased a lot during the years that you were there?

WS: Oh yes, it grew tremendously. I say arriving to find 188 college students and the first thing I knew it was in the hundreds and was still small as an institution goes. I forget when, well, I'd have to look back to remember how many hundred students we had. We just had the one main building, administration building there so that you met the students in the corridors everywhere. You got to know everybody by the first name and if there was a student and I didn't know I'd ask him "Who are you?" "Where are you from?" So that you got to know the people, and when there are only 600 students, it's not a far cry from 6000. Then the Burke Education Centre, we built that in '65 and worked very hard on those plans. Every light switch, we had to decide which side of the door it was going on. That kind of thing when you're looking over building plans. My great regret was that we didn't have the money to build it as we had planned it, because our budget was severely limited. We were told by the board \$600,000 was all you can spend. The quotations came and the lowest was \$800,000. We got out the carving knife and cut about a third of your building. But, Burke education centre, the end of it towards the science building, was a, what do they call that type of wall, not a false wall, but a wall that wasn't permanently solid so that if the other section of the building was built, it could be added onto the Burke building. You didn't have the money for it at the time, but however, we needed it because it wasn't too many years before the Burke building became hopelessly too small for the library. So, before the building was ever finished, the library, we had to make plans to build a library, which was '72 I think. Let's see, the Burke opened in '65 and in '72 we were starting work on the new university library. I think it opened then. I remember attending the opening, but that building was never fully finished. It could go up, I think, 2 more floors. The science building is capable of expansion. It initially was three floors and we added up to five, something like the Student Centre, which was, I think, capable of eight stories, and had

only gone to 5. So, these buildings were planned with the possibility of future development. They did add to the Science building. It was awfully messy at times. Going along with building construction and so on. I remember when we originally moved down to Saint Mary's, the carpenter said he should get a degree because he had been in so many classrooms, classes while he was working on the building. There'd be a knock on the door and in would be a carpenter to fix a window or something. You had that type of situation. There have been many, many changes and developments since.

AB: Okay, let's talk about when the administration in the '70's passed from the Jesuits and it became a secular institution.

WS: Yes, well it all began because we could see the handwriting on the wall as far as our administration was concerned. I didn't feel it was fair for the handful of Jesuits that we were becoming to control the administrative position. There were lots of good faculty people and others who could take over the jobs like Deans, and jobs like that. I was much more anxious to see the Jesuits in teaching positions than administrative positions. I wrote the Provincial about getting substitutes if we were going to continue administration and we had to have a president and so on. I was, I can't guarantee that I can give you a man that has the qualifications and abilities to be president. When you see things like that going on, we got involved [validity] in these administrative jobs which we did. I was on the charter committee for the new charter of the university and worked on that for a year I guess, or more. We got the new charter and the place was effectively turned over to the university Board of Governors, which now controls the institution.

Well, I guess that's about it. The Governors, prior to that time, the Board of Governors which as I mentioned was also the, initially the senate, the senate was more consultative and an advisory group than a legislative body. They didn't have effective power. The President did, and of course the Archbishop too because we were, really had to work along with the Dioceses, owned the place. The Arch Diocese had the financial ownership of the university. We just had the administration. We had to work together on any development and things like that. In fact, I think the Arch Diocese still owns a good part of the university now. We've been buying it back, but when the new library was being built, one of the problems was to find a piece of land in which the building could be built without having to buy it back from the Arch Diocese, because the university was in, owed the Arch Diocese \$250,000 or something more dollars then. They were hardly in a position to buy more land. I don't know today how much of the land the university's bought back of all that land, and how much the Dioceses still owns. That was part of the deal, that we would hand over the buildings and the administration and everything to the Board of Governors while the Dioceses kept the land or a good part of it for its equity because of the debt and so forth that was on the Arch Dioceses for the university.

AB: So did the nature of the institution change after that, after the transition?

WS: The nature of the institution, well its direction in many ways, yes. When you go from a direction of religious order to lay-president and lay-board of governors and so on, things are bound to change. Course requirements and so forth, well they became much more

lenient in the lines of the ordinary public institution for a university. The course requirements and the departments had to be tailored to fit what courses were needed for a particular degree. So you were doing political science, history, and so on to try to get enough courses into the program to make sure that the student had the proper undergraduate preparations. Especially in view of graduate school because we were always very conscious not just in the bachelor's degree, but students moving on to do graduate work, we had to prepare them adequately for graduate work. We never had any great problem getting our students into graduate school though, that I can remember. That was I think, well the development I'm trying to say, I suppose was gradual. The emphasis does shift a bit when you get out from the Jesuit as a religious order of administration into a lay board and the senate the same way. It took over completely the academic side of the institution. The lay board took over the financial side although it has supreme power. It can overrule the senate if it wants to. Fortunately, wise enough not to interfere in the academic side. So they've had some battles over some of the course offerings or things that the senate was doing that had come before the board but that didn't happen too often. I think it was a good division.

It took a lot of work, the charter committee. The charter was too weak. I say that even though I was a member of the charter committee. We had this advisor from Ottawa who came down and I felt that our clauses in the charter weren't much more than motherhood clauses, what they amount to. The university was faithful to the Christian tradition about what it said which can be on just about everything. I wanted a stronger position, policy statement regarding the tradition of the university and its background and its commitment to Christian education. That's all gone in effect today. The Christian principal, or whatever it is, is like a motherhood sort of clause. I felt that we should have, without being denominational, because we accepted, even way back right from the time I came to Saint Mary's, Jewish students and so on in the courses. I taught them myself and many of them, were very good students. We never required that the original Saint Mary's charter stated that way back in 1841 that no student or professor or anybody could be required to adhere to any particular religious faith. It was the university was open to all. Because of the Christian tradition and its founding fathers or people in the Arch Dioceses, there was naturally a strong Christian tradition in the place.

AB: So do you feel there is any of that left at the university?

WS: There are some professors who are, for the older ones, who still seem conscious of this but it's more talk than anything else. Right now, as far as I can see, the university is just another public institution and it would be entirely up to an individual professor to, you know, in his attitudes and so on. You can't [proselytize] in the classroom. I would be dead against that. The classroom is for information and teaching, not for converting people, or trying to [proselytize]. It's just in the general atmosphere and the way things are run that makes the difference in the place, the students and the people. If the professors themselves have a Christian attitude towards people, in their understanding, especially of the underprivileged, well, we've always been committed to disabled and unfortunate people. That was, Saint Mary's has always had that in its policy, as long as I can remember. I've taught blind students and quadriplegics. We've never had a policy that says to come to

Saint Mary's you've gotta be a Catholic or you've gotta be even a Christian. Jews in classes, and other students, so you never had any religious test in other words, right from the start. I've never tried to put it in, relying mostly on the whole notion of the place as a Christian institution, that the professors themselves would lead more by example, and their attitudes, then by any sort of direct [proselytizing]. We wouldn't want that to happen.

AB: But...

WS: Go ahead, go.

AB: You're the one we want to hear.

WS: Well, I was just saying, I know there were people that sometimes they crossed the bound one way or another. There were problems arising at times, as I know in the faculty. There was one faculty member I can recall who was only at the university for three years I think. He was saying all sorts of things in class about the Jesuits were all homosexuals and we were, saying things like that. The things he was telling the students, even the students themselves, were objecting. There's no room for that sort of thing in the classroom. Fortunately the man left and the department wanted to get rid of him. It's not always easy to do. When a man is on a tenure stream, it's very difficult to bounce him unless you've got just cause. This man was a nut. I'm convinced he was a, well we had one man I remember, Silvers, Silversmith. Very kind person to talk to. Then we discovered that his papers that he had, papers at Oxford University, a graduate and a masters, were forged, all forged. So we had to get rid of him. He was a strange bird. But this other fella was, he left, he just wasn't a good teacher to begin with. It's very difficult when you're in administration and you have a poor teacher, and we got rid of him. The other faculty members gang up on him and I know when I've had to fire faculty. I remember one man breaking down and weeping on my shoulder or in my office when I fired him. That's hard to take. I had warned him, given him a year to improve, and at the end of the year I said, "The student complaints are the same and as strong as ever and I warned you. Good bye." Oh, horrible! So you learn to take these sort of things. The odd part of it was he went down to the States this man and kept writing me letters asking for letters of recommendation for his applications. You think, having been fired by me that I'd be the last person you'd want to approach for an academic reference. I can't even think of the man's name now. Again, a nice chap and a highly cultured person but he couldn't speak English and you can't have a man who doesn't speak English teaching the students. The students complained that they couldn't understand him and I said, "Learn English or else." and he didn't so he went. An Italian professor with all sort of European degrees, and as I say, a highly cultured man. Can't have a man like that in the classroom cause you owe it to the students to give them somebody they can understand. It helps.

AB: Okay, the faculty union came about in shortly after...

WS: Seventy-two I think, the faculty union. I was a charter member as a matter of fact. And the union, many people regret the advent of the union. But again, I think it was inevitable. We were one of eight universities I think at the time, in the country, to become unionized, as a

faculty union. Because of administrative problems and so on at the time, the faculty felt their only protection was to form a union, and they did. Subsequently, of course, other universities, their faculties became unionized across Canada now. The vast majority of faculties and universities are unionized. It was very unusual in those days. People had said, "Oh, you'll have all sorts of headaches if you get the faculty unionized." Well they did, and we had all sorts of headaches as a result. I think, in fairness to the faculty and at that time I was a faculty member and joined the union. We got the faculty points across and addressed grievances and so on. It took a long time to form a proper faculty manual. Part of the problem was that the original faculty manual which was much smaller, which I had written back in 1960-61, whenever governing appointments, promotions, tenure, that was never revised. The senate made all sorts of changes and things like that, but instead of updating the manual people would look at the manual and of course, forget about a senate resolution. It was unfortunate, but we needed an updater, or some way of bringing the manual year-by-year, up to date with decisions of the board or senate that affected that. I think a lot of that trouble could have been avoided if the administration at the time had kept the original faculty manual up to date and revised it and reissued it as time went on.

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(Tape Starts)

The faculty needs some indication of procedures on appointments, and rank and the tenure and the committees involved. I had recognized that need when I was in administration back in the sixties. That's why I started a manual and I wrote to the universities all around the country and only got three universities that had anything approaching the faculty manual. McGill had regulations regarding faculty appointments or tenure, but no manual really and I forget the other two. There was very little to go on, you had to do it yourself sort of thing, compose it as it went. But I think it was very important that we did have a manual. The faculty manual has been a big help to negotiations and so on, to the faculty and the administration.

AB: Why do you say some people regret the introduction of the union.

WS: Because they said, "As soon as you get a union in, you're going to have yourself in an adversarial position. It will be the union versus the administration." and that in a part has been true. You can't have a union that is going to fight for bigger salaries, or faculty teaching loads, and so on and so forth. You can't teach more than three courses, all that came about through the faculty union, and the faculty manual and so forth. There were those who said that this will spoil the atmosphere of the place because then you're going to have faculty saying, "You know, I can't do that because the manual says I can only carry two courses because I've got two labs." Or something like that. It makes it more difficult to deal with people as far as flexibility of faculty members. This man wants to teach an extra course and the manual says, "No, you can't teach an extra course because you've already got the maximum and so forth." The faculty member teaches, as I've known some of them to do, five, or even six courses at upper level course work. Other faculty members get upset because of this. It's like so many of these changes, it has its good points, it had its bad

points. The faculty manual provided a degree of organization and protection for faculty and guidelines, but it also set limits that make adjustments and so on, much more difficult. They were less flexible. I think it's a good thing. Ultimately the, to have a union, certainly the other universities finally succumbed and became unionized as far as their faculty. I think that the union movement was as, just in the business world or industrial world, as fulfilled a function. Some think they've got too powerful for their own good but that's an opinion. I dare say some of the unions have exercised too much power to the detriments of the industry or the company, in trying to get too many benefits for their workers. At the same time, they've improved the lot of the workers and given them protection and so forth. I think it has helped the faculty at the university too. It protects them against unjust demands of administration, and what they should or shouldn't do.

But it also provides an umbrella for some faculty members that don't pull their weight. That's one of the difficulties of it but I always felt when I was in administration, particularly, you sit behind the Academic Vice President's desk and say, "What am I going to do about Dr. so and so? He's a poor teacher; he's not pulling his weight. He doesn't [inaudible]." Then you try to fire the man, even with the department's recommendation as happens, faculty up in arms, students sitting in the corridor outside. Lining the administrative office corridor there. "Oh we like him, he's a nice guy." We can't fire him and so forth. Here is the university, the universal recommendation, or unanimous recommendation I should say. The history department I'm thinking of in one instance, trying to get rid of this bird and the students.. If you are popular and liked by your students, give them all 85s or so. So that type of hassle makes life difficult. I can remember that. That you had to step over the students as you walked down that main corridor. There were legs sitting out from each side of the corridor. I don't think we've had anything like that recently. It has tied the hands of departments.

I know one department, because I was involved in it, in a sense on both sides. The department had tried to dump the man and they just couldn't do it. It was a thorn in the side of the department. They wanted to get rid of him but faculty members gang up and say no. The union closes ranks in behind them and the man is still there as a tenured professor today at the university. I know members of the department who have rued the day that he got tenure. These are difficulties that occur in any faculty. It has been more difficult, I think, to dump the incompetent professor, or poor professor. No matter how popular he is, he can garner his student's support. When your own department is against you, you think a man like that would have the good sense to resign on his own. Well, he did leave, this fella I'm thinking of. Would have saved a lot of headaches and heart aches if we had been able to get rid of him earlier.

AB: Okay, let's talk about the changes that you've seen in the student population. Well, we talked about the change from all male to a male and female. What changes did you see in ethnic origins of students over the years?

WS: Ethnic origins. Not a great many. We've always had Chinese students, and occasional Black students, a few Indians, Mi'kmaq, but they've been few and far between. It's a regret of mine that somehow the educational system in this province has not made a better

attempt to get Native peoples and Black peoples into university through their courses. You could, looking back I would say I could count on almost the fingers of one hand, the number of Natives that were at the university. Now Blacks, I don't know what the proportion would be today, but they still have a very small number. Other than the foreign student of course. We've always had some, like Nigeria and South Africa and so forth. There have always been some representation of ethnic groups there. But not as much as I would like to see in the university mix. Now that's a problem not perhaps so much for the university, but for the schools themselves to try to get more Native people and others to attend. That's a battle for the Department of Education and the rest of it. I don't know what the solution is there. Attitudes are so important and raising the economic level of the Native and Black population that still, I think, is underprivileged. It's a poor segment of the population and until you can give them a pride in themselves and the financial resources you are not going to see them crowding into the university. They are just not able to. When they do get into university, the tragedy is that, what I suppose is a cultural shock in a sense, happens to them. Their attitudes, there are very few of them who can stick it out and finally get a degree. I've seen Indian students and I've taught them and they will come a year or two years, but the number of Native Indians that have actually graduated is very small to my mind. Much smaller than it should be. The Black students too. We've had fewer American students I think. In the early days there, in the 50s/60s, we drew very heavily on students from the New England States and that area, and all sorts of Americans and they're still very loyal among the alumni. That had dried up to a good extent. In those days, they could come up here to Nova Scotia and get a major university education at a fraction of the price they could get one in Boston or wherever, New York, places like that. Tuition fees were so high. So that has meant some change I think, from the, say the 60s. Problem problems, I guess. There's problems for the sociologists and others to look into. When you're trying to upgrade the standing of native people and the Black people. I wouldn't feel competent to judge. You have your opinions of what should be done and could be done, but, or I'd like to see done. I suppose just keep working at it and try to get more of them into university. Of course, I'm a great believer in education as a way of raising your whole status in society, as a way to ultimately, to improving your lot. Without education, you remain in the, as an underprivileged group. It's only to be expected. Not that education alone is a cure-all, but it does broaden one's horizons, and gives one the ability to think for one's self. It enables an individual to stand on his or her own two feet, which is so important. Without that, you're, you have sometimes that feeling of being oppressed or lack of self-confidence and the rest of it that one has without a proper education in society.

AB: What change did you notice in the age of students over the years?

WS: Age; I don't know that there's been any change really. I think that they're coming through the system at about the same age when they come to university, 17, 18. I don't think they're any younger. I've heard professors say, "Oh, my God, students are getting younger every year." I said it's not they're getting any younger, you're getting older, you forget. I didn't, in all the years, thirty something plus years, when I was teaching, see any great change from the age point of view. More perhaps, the maturity and the sophistication. I think there've been changes that way. The students today, with television and all the other influences that are at work, are probably more sophisticated, if that's the term I should use. I won't say

educated, but sophisticated. They're more with it because television brings a whole world into them. When something happens in Somalia, or the rest of it, you see and watch it that very night. In those days, there was no television, not 'til the early 50s at least. Then it was very limited. It's been one way, I think, of educating, if I can call it that, getting through to the public media that they didn't have before. People had newspapers and they had radios. When I was there I can remember all you had was a little crystal set with a pair of earphones and then you'd fight for who had the earphone. The young people today are perhaps unaware of the vast technological advances that have occurred just in the short lifetime of somebody like myself, over the years. It's really fascinating how education has made use of these technological advances. I remember our first language lab, which we set up, first in the city as a matter of fact. You had all these machines and you could listen to tapes. The language lab, I guess they still have it at the university. And then of course, the advent of computers has changed the whole face of it. If you're not computer literate by the time you're out of college, you should be. In fact, I can remember in administration trying to persuade senate that every student should have at least one term on computer technology. Should learn the principals and binary system, what computers are all about. What they can do, can't do, so that when they sit at this silly machine they won't be taken back by it. They should have some idea of how to operate it. You're going to find computers in just about every office desk anywhere today. You've got your laptops, notebooks, and so on. I don't know yet in the university, as far as the Arts program is concerned, if they have any compulsory courses, even any optional courses that they can take or fit into their program. Did you have any choice of anything like that?

AB: Well, there was just a word processor in the English department. So I took computer assisted English.

WS: Well, even that is something. I don't, I think if you learn word processing, that much at least is the basic part of it. Everybody should be at least able to handle a word processor. Not necessarily a scientific computer. Today in commerce for example, if you can't handle a computer, know how to use or set up a spreadsheet, and business programs, I suppose they all must have to learn to use computers in commerce area, and certainly in science and engineering. My battle to inflict computers on the Arts students never won out. Of course, that was back some years ago. They've proliferated since the prices came down, and I'm sure many, many students have their own word processors today. Other televised equipment, my niece, My God, when I visited them at, last January was it, she goes down to the basement there, and she's got this machine and she plays games and does things that I couldn't do. She's 9, 10 years old and she rattles away and runs this computer and she got these games, and whatever else they do, so its part of our changing world to keep up, you've just got to learn.

AB: Have you noticed any differences in the nature of the student's family background?

WS: That's a tougher question because I'm not that familiar with family backgrounds today. I suppose it would take again, a sociologist to make a comparative judgement on families of 50, 40, 30 years ago and today's family. The family is much less a close bound unit. I think the students, they get less support from their families today, but I'm really guessing at this

because my knowledge of family life is more here say, then actual. I think it's a question of discipline in the family, then the discipline of 30 years ago when mom or pop said do this, do that, the youngster was supposed to do it and generally did. Nowadays they can tell their parents to go jump in the lake. That's the attitudes have shifted so much. Once the discipline at the home went, the discipline in the schools have gone. The stories you hear of what some teachers have to put up with today, and especially in some of the places they have to have a policeman in the school just to protect the professors and to keep order and so on. It's a sad commentary on our contemporary society. I know it's worse in New York. I have some familiarity there because my parents lived, moved down to New York years and years ago, and lived and died there. I had a sister who married and was in New York from 1930 something until 5 years ago when she died. Horrendous stories of the weapons students bring to school and the problems of teachers. There has been that whole sociological change and development in the family ties, I think have been lessened and weakened for, obvious reasons I suppose. That has made a great difference I think in the students themselves. They come out of a much looser family relationship and they've been watching that box since they were able to see I suppose. How many hours did I read that an average student spends watching television? Something like up to 5 hours a day some of them can spend. The parents find it difficult to prescribe what shows you can watch, what shows you can't watch, but the violence on television and some of them. There are studies being done trying to show a correlation between violence on the television and in the movies and the violence that we're seeing in society today. I wouldn't want to judge that because again it's not my field or area but I do suspect there is a correlating between them, as some of the studies seem to show.

AB: Okay, let's move from the students. Let's talk a little bit about the changes that you've seen in the faculty over the years you've been there. They must have, first of all, grown a great deal. How many professors were there when you first started?

WS: What was the total teaching faculty, were we 20? 25, something like that. A dozen Jesuits or so I guess. Well, at the old college on Windsor Street, there were only three lay professors named Baisley, who became Dean of Commerce, [Drinky] Ryan, who was Dean of Engineering, and Al Sabeen, in the science. They're the only three I can think of that were there when I came in 1950. Now, there were lay teachers who taught one course, part time teachers, like drafting, for example. Engineering was taught by a former student from outside and there was a chemistry course that was taught by Walsh and people like that. Speaking in terms of the permanent faculty, the full-time faculty, it has expanded as you say, it's grown and a number of female teachers as well has increased greatly. A lot more women on the faculty, I'm glad to say than there were in those days. But, other than that the, and the qualifications, we always tried way back, I know Father Malone was most insistent on people getting their Doctoral degrees and if they didn't get them, he sent them off as a rule to do graduate studies to get the Doctoral degree. That policy has persisted so, but today I think Saint Mary's university has one of the highest percentages of Doctoral professors, professors with a Doctoral degree on its staff, compared to other places. I'm not sure just of, to quote the figures now, but I know that that's true. The President in his report mentioned that somewhere in the, the highly qualified faculty Saint Mary's have. But in the earlier days, it wasn't as insisted upon because to get teachers, it was difficult because

everybody was expanding and growing. You had to scrape the barrel to find a professor. I can remember trying to hire a physics professor, that we needed back in the early sixties, I think I got nine, or was it twelve, applications, something like that. A few years ago, or was it last year or before when they tried to hire a physics professor, they got something like 90 applications. There are so many qualified people looking for jobs in the teaching world today as compared to what they were then. But, other than that, the faculty is very much like all faculty members but except as I say, the qualifications that they have today, I think, proportionately are much higher than what they had then. There were a few people who had nothing more than a Bachelor's degree and yet were still good teachers and the rest of it. But there are not that many of the staff today with just a bachelor's degree. There are very few. Gavin Boyd, I think, in Poli Sci, has only a Bachelor's degree, but it's a good one. Some of the others, the Oxford graduates, I think like Roger Cuthurn have a BA from Oxford which was turned in at the end of their two years into a Masters degree, but there just as highly qualified from my point of view as anybody with a PhD. would be because of the educational standards and the background of what the professor of any Oxford degree would have. Their requirements are so high. But, other than the fact that, as I say, there are more women on the faculty and the faculty is perhaps better qualified than ever. There hasn't been that much change.

AB: Do you think there has been any change between faculty/student relationships over the years that you've been here?

WS: That's a hard one for me to answer because again, when you've been out of the place for ten years as I've been, eleven years now. My last second retirement was [inaudible], and that's been a few years ago.

AB: What about the time that you were teaching. Did your relationship with your students change?

WS: Oh yes. That's the thing I miss in retirement was the contact with the students. I think, first of all, it helps keep you young when you're dealing with young people and your attitudes. You're much more conscious of the young people and I miss that contact with the students and among my friends today I, good friends I count for my students. The closest and best of my friends. So that I think that that contact with the students, the danger in numbers is that the contact is lost. Like the year I taught that impossible class, I said never again because you hardly get to know the students. By Christmas time I still wasn't sure of the names of everybody in the class and I like to be able to identify a student, know the name of a student, and if possible, get to know something of the background, to meet them outside of class. This is why I always held my philosophy courses down in the seminar, groups of twelve students on an average. Now, it added a little bit to the burden but in meeting the students in these seminars that you get to know them much better than when you're facing 50 or 100 students in a classroom. A seminar method I think, is helpful because you can see how a student mind operates under the, when there are just twelve of you. Questions he asks or she asks, how they respond, how they present their papers. It was a trial for students. I know one student, and I didn't find out until later why he had left the

university. He couldn't face giving a paper to his fellow students in the seminar. He was mortified and yet his father had, was Premier of the province, as I recall at the time. You think, a politician was used to making public speeches and the rest, but this young man, I didn't learn, it's too bad I didn't follow up. I just thought he was sick and then when I tried to capture the lost ground and get him back it was too late to save him unfortunately. But I do think that that's important that you try to get to know all your students. That's the one difficulty I have with the numbers. I don't know what, outside the classroom contact most professors have today. That's part of the attitude. By and large, I think most of the professors that I've met at the university today, do have a concern for students and I think they're willing to give them as much help and so on, as they can. But if you have a very large class, it does cut down on the time that you have outside of class. But to me, it's often that as I say, contact with students beyond the classroom is most important and often most meaningful. If you can get to know the students you may save a student from becoming a cropper or cropping out, or leaving the university. Some of them are slow starters and need encouragement. They have to, that can only be done through student contact. Difficult I say, too bad you can't set this hidden in a box where the machines and lights flash on and off, and then you get a print out of what the students problems are, the solution, attitudes. Everybody's an individual and has to be treated as such. The danger of numbers is that people cease to be treated as individuals and become a number, become just another cog in the machine that's grinding on. You have to keep the university from being a degree mill, however you want to term it. So there's that side of it. I think it's a [inaudible]. But I think today, because the university always prides itself on individual attention on the part of the professor, the student, that there still is a lot of that around. You could probably answer that better than I can because you just finished going through this mill. Did you find your professors were generally attentive?

AB: Yes, I found that they were accessible. You could go and talk to them if you needed to.

WS: Good.

AB: It was more difficult in the larger introductory classes, then in the higher-level classes, where you knew your professors so well.

WS: In the higher level, that's when they need less help. They form study habits and know what it's all about. You don't get those in those introductory courses, in those big courses. Where you can handle it. That's my only solution as I mentioned is having these seminars where you'd be handling roughly twelve students on an average and that gave me some opportunity to observe them more closely. Even at that, I wasn't having the contact that I would liked to have had. You post office hours and tell the students they're welcome to come and so on. But a lot of them don't, they are afraid of the professor or just can't be bothered.

AB: Okay, are there any other significant changes that stand out in your mind over the years, or any significant events?

WS: Significant event. I think we've covered most of them in terms of students, faculty, and administration. Those significant changes like from Jesuit to lay-administration. That was perhaps one of the most significant of all. The faculty union, etc. The student body, the student body now is incorporated and has its own funds and run its own finances I gather. That sort of thing. In the early days, while there was always a student president, and they didn't have the funds and the organization that they have today. So that is quite a significant change. The students are much more independent and competent today than they were in those earlier days. They had to rely more on administrative help and faculty help. I can't think of any other, there have been events along the way. A visit from somebody like the Governor-General, and a few incidents like that. In the total life of the university, they don't amount to a great deal but are significant at the time. Some of the honorary degree recipients that we've had, that have addressed the students, that have spoken to them like Pearson, Diefenbaker, the United Nation's man. He was extraordinary, a good man. I can't even think of his name now, but I can see his face. People like that I think have all had some impact on the place. Just at the recent convocation there, when they get somebody like Hanson, Rick Hanson to talk to the student body. I was impressed with what he had to say. It was well done. How did the students react, do you know

AB: Very positively.

WS: Positively, [inaudible] because he was a shining example of a man who has severe physical handicaps and yet has managed to show that he can make something out of himself and his life. I think they were all impressed. Faculty too, and those of us on the stage as well, thought how well he spoke and the message he gave to the students. I'd have to think back over the years. You'd almost have to go year by year to discover what events were of great importance. Was it a winter carnival or was it? Lots of things like that. Well, opening a new building, the building of the alumni arena rink, and just the ordinary things which now are lost in the history of the place but which are very significant, for those at the time. Opening a new library building, for example, was significant to the students and the university. Again, I suppose over the long run it's no big deal. Again, I can't single out like a, without going back. A lot of significant things but, there is no one thing that sort of leaps to mind.

AB: Is it, do you think that the university's grown [inaudible]

WS: The university is what?

AB: Grown in the community of Halifax.

WS: That's been important too and I have always thought that Saint Mary's has had a good role to play, or has played a good role in the community. We've always been conscious that we're serving not just the student community, but we're serving the community at large in Halifax. I'm glad that that attitude or policy has persisted. We're got courses now at the Trade Centre, Truro, the university outreach has grown considerably over what it used to be. At one time, we had expanded too much, with professors running up to Truro. In fact I had to call some of it off, I said, "Expansion is great and we are doing a great service to the

community, but we are killing the professors.” So I was a bit of an ogre and, the world has to be gradual and controlled and we can't decide that we're going to have a course in Truro and send somebody up there 2 or 3 times a week. But I do think the university has had a good impact in the community through its various programs. The Adult Studies Program has been very effective. The Continuing Education Program too. I don't know how much they have in the non-credit or whether all the Adult Studies in the non-credit side of the program, in what used to be the evening division. But that has had a very significant impact on the community. When I run into some of the older members that went to the university evening division or took credit courses at the university, they still hold a lot of praise for the university. [Inaudible sentence]. The part time work that we allowed was criticized [inaudible]. You can't give a degree on a part-time basis. Dr Kerr, who was President of Dalhousie saying Dalhousie would never demean itself, was the term, demean itself to offer evening credit courses. But in a very few years, Dalhousie was offering credit extensions. But for some reason, Dal, locally, and these other places, looked down on any course that wasn't done as part of a full-time program. And you know you can say, well look at what the University of Toronto's doing and this university. They weren't by any means, the first in the field getting credit or courses that were done on a part-time basis. At one time, we required that all part-time students studying for a degree had to do one residence year, 5 full courses in the one-year. I don't know how long that lasted; it was too much of a burden because a person couldn't be working and teaching. They had to give up their job in order to devote to full-time studies. I don't know that that was necessary. Today, they can get their whole degree just on a part-time basis. So the evening division has been, I think, a very influential division. I think of the number of teachers around the province, school principals, and the rest of, that got their degrees through the university would indicate the effect that the university programs have had.

AB: [inaudible sentence. Tape quality is sped up and very poor] that you would like to add?

WS: No I think you've done a good job I must say. I'm not an easy person to talk to in an interview and I've been rambling on. I'm not even coherent in my old age. [Inaudible phrase] It's surprising, I'm almost afraid now-a-days to get up on the pulpit I'm so incoherent. Well, time marches on and I'm never sorry for the good old days because I'm sure that the good old days are not my worst ones. You think in terms of the advantages and remember the good things. I have no desire to see those times return again. Time, as I said marches on and you've got to move ahead and know, you've got to look ahead. It's a mistake. That's one of the problems always of aging, in particular, is that you live in the past and I think that's fatal. Not, mind you, that you shouldn't remember all the important events and good things. You can't discard your past or you wouldn't be in [inaudible]. [Inaudible sentence] This is why I felt that working with the students in the [inaudible] because their vision is looking ahead. [inaudible] and the past in general because their whole future is ahead. You're going to look to the future. When I hear oh in the good old days, telling people when they speak nostalgic [inaudible] of the good old days that they [inaudible]. I can't think of anything else. I don't know if [inaudible].

Tape runs out at this point