

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown State University

Personal Experience

O.H. 1917

LESLIE COCHRAN

Interviewed

by

Lori Martz

on

November 20, 1997

M: This is an interview with Leslie Cochran for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Youngstown State University's 30th anniversary, by Lori Martz, on November 20, 1997, in Tod Hall.

OK. So, where did you grow up?

C: On a small farm in Indiana. Actually, I traveled considerably in my early years. I was in eleven different schools when I entered the fifth grade, and that was when my parents bought, mt mother's original farm. So, interesting enough, in the fifth grade I could not read. This was just during the end of World War II, and they were trying different approaches to reading. I was in these eleven different schools, and they found out in the fifth grade that I could not read. So it was kind of interesting.

M: All different approaches and nothing really worked.

C: Well, I was three months here and four months there and you learn to memorize. But by the time anything would have appeared, I was gone again. My fifth grade teacher noticed early when I was there that I had really good athletic skills, and the general feeling was in those days that if you were really a good athlete you could not really be dumb because you had good reactions and all those kinds of things. So at that time I was a Bluebird which was special ed. Fortunately enough, my parents then sent me to special tutoring for the next year and a half to teach me to read and get me caught up. That was kind of interesting.

M: Yes, that is very interesting. From there, where did you attend college?
[laughter]

C: From there, after the eleven schools and the first four years or five years I continued there, graduated from high school, a little class of 22. The whole high school had 100, there were about 250 in the whole building. That was K (kindergarten) through 12. So it was really a very small rural place. Basketball, baseball, and track were the only sports that we had, and I lettered in all of those all the way through school. Baseball became important to me, and I accepted a baseball scholarship at Western Michigan University and then had a half-academic scholarship and a half-athletic scholarship for the four years that I was at Western Michigan. Then from there, I got a graduate fellowship, stayed there and got my master's degree, went to the University of Minnesota for two quarters on a post-masters study, and then went to Wayne State in Detroit, where I taught in the Detroit public schools for four years and did my doctorate of education at Wayne State. So now you have got the whole history.

M: [laughter] Yes, thank you.

C: Did not even ask.

M: Thank you. I know. Those were my next questions. How was Western Michigan, Wayne State? How do you think they are different from Y.S.U.?

C: Well, I think there are some commonalities. I suppose a lot more differences. The commonalities that, when I started at Western Michigan, it was about 8,000 and grew to about 12,000. So I guess its enrollment would be about the same there. It is now over 20,000. Obviously, it was substantially different in that it was a very large residential campus which had, at that time, I would say 6,000 student living in residence halls. So the size of the institution was similar, but obviously the physical plant seemed a lot bigger because we had kind of a mini city almost around it.

M: Right.

C: There was a lot of growth and development, so I think that has always been part of my history of growth and development and those things. But other than that, I think the parallels probably are not that great. Interesting enough, Wayne State has similarities to Y.S.U. It is an institution of 35,000 and primarily a graduate institution. It has hardly any intercollegiate athletics, so in those ways it is significantly different. We call ourselves a metropolitan university because we serve a large metropolitan area. It is a major urban campus, sitting right in the heart of Detroit, and so in that regard, has many of the attendant problems that we do, except really magnified. I mean, we think we have problems in Youngstown, but this is not like downtown Detroit. And so you have a campus that is very attractive now but was growing and evolving and maturing and you had a very blighted area. In fact, the Detroit riots occurred when I was there and right near campus is where they started. Campus was protected, but it was a very blighted area, high crime area, as I said, much worse than this. So I guess that would give me an experience of that kind of an environment, even though the campuses were quite different. So there are a few similarities and obviously some differences.

I think both of them experienced, considerably, some of my attitudes and values though. Obviously growing up in a small town in Indiana was quite different. But I think it gave me some of the background, and I was fortunate with my parents and the values and working hard and those, and then going to Western Michigan and seeing a larger environment, and then really being sensitized. I think the Detroit experience really sensitized me to the real problems of our society and how it is so easy to stereotype groups of people or individuals. I simply had never had any experience with anyone different than being white middle class. And so teaching in Detroit as I did while I was doing my degree at Wayne was very influential because I came in direct contact with African-Americans and Hispanics which we called Chicanos then. I found firsthand that the color of a person's skin or their hair or whether they had a beard or whatever really was not any indication of who they were and their capability. If you lived in the city, you were poor, and you had the same values

and the same issues and problems. I think that direct experience did influence me a lot in my personal values and understanding of societal issues, and I think that is one of the problems that a lot of people have in our society today. Is they have never been exposed to those other experiences, and so they have stereotypes. And the best way to deal with a stereotype, obviously, is to experience the real heart of it. Those were all experiences very influential I think in my personal perspective and some of my own values. And then I think, too, watching those institutions change and evolve with the community obviously have influenced some of my professional aspirations and some of the things we have done at Y.S.U.

M: Sure. You mentioned that you taught while you were in Detroit. What did you teach?

C: I taught drafting, mechanical drawing as it was in those days, and that was one of my areas. My background was industrial technology originally in college. I taught drafting, and so you can see some of those skills and abilities of campus 2000 kind of perking up and people around me of how things look. I used to teach industrial design when I was in college, and so, you know, there is an art gallery out there and the plants and all this. You can see how those things have shaped who I am. Building is easy for me to understand. I have been in meetings where a lot of people did not understand blueprints. I used to teach all that. So there is, interesting enough, a lot of connection in some ways to what I do. Then, when I was in college, I taught teacher education classes but still in industrial technology and drafting and industrial design as I said. Some of those things became important to me and I think have helped me contribute to looking at this campus differently because I look at it probably with different eyes than the typical person because, even when I see an old building as my wife and I have restored here, I see more than an old building. I see opportunity, and a lot of people just say, "Oh, we ought to tear that down" kind of thing. I also had some courses in urban development and urban studies when I was at Wayne, and I think those were influential in some of the views I have towards Youngstown and our community.

M: When did you decide to go into academic administration?

C: That was an interesting process. From getting my degree at Wayne State, I moved immediately to Central Michigan which is an institution somewhat similar to I guess, sizewise and complexity, somewhere between Western Michigan and Youngstown. So it is another experience that was kind of related on this kind of chain that kind of connects in some ways. But I went there, and I had a lot of grants. I did a lot of writing, I have written probably 50 or 60 articles and four books and had, I am not sure, probably two million dollars in grants as a faculty member. That is what faculty members did, and they still do. But I found early that I had this kind of an organizational ability, could write, and was successful in

grants.

So I started managing, directing lots of projects, and I think that helped me move up at the ranks in Central Michigan, first of all, because I was doing research on kind of cutting edge topics. So when I was in meetings I was current and up to date, and I think that impressed probably some people I guess. And secondly, I was able to manage considerable amounts of money and bring money into the university. So I, as a very young faculty member, probably got a lot more recognition than a normal faculty member would have gotten. And, as a result of that, the provost who was Charlie Ping who was then later 18 year president of Ohio University. That connects back in later on, [laughter], it all weaves together in some way, when he asked me to do an assignment for him. So I did not teach a class that term, and pretty soon I was doing lots of assignments for the provost, projects and task force and so on. And then, about that time or very shortly then, I was named Assistant Dean in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, where our department was located. So it was just simply a coming together of lots of events.

So really within the first year out of grad school at Central Michigan, I was an assistant dean already doing these kinds of things just because this was an institution that was growing and there were opportunities. If you were doing things, you got opportunities. Like, you know, if the people think you do reasonably well, then you get another opportunity. Pretty soon then, the dean retired. I was acting dean. The provost, Ping, left to go to president O.U. People moved, and a year later I was a vice provost. You know, so within a very short time span that could have taken some people a whole career, in five years, I was vice provost and outranked most of the vice presidents. So it was really kind of a fast track, but none of that planned. It just happened. You know, sometimes I think that if you do well, good things happen. It is like Coach Tressel says, "If you play hard and practice, good things happen." And I think, you know, obviously something good is going to happen to you.

M: Very interesting. Now on to Y.S.U.

C: On to Y.S.U.

M: What do you think has been your biggest achievement since you have been here? How long have you been here?

C: Well, sometimes it seems like 100 years, but it is actually my sixth year. I came in 1992. The connection just before, I was recommended for the job by Charlie Ping at Ohio University. I was not an applicant. I had been provost in between at Southeast Missouri for 12 years after leaving Central Michigan, and I really did not have any aspirations or goals to be college president. And he nominated me and said it was the right kind of a place that needed the kinds of things that I enjoy doing and did pretty well. So anyway, that is how I got here.

I think maybe two things are the most significant. One is that there, at

least I think I have contributed to, there is a substantially different attitude on our campus and in the community and excitement about what we can do and who we are. When I came here, a lot of people characterized Y.S.U. as kind of being in neutral. We were not going anywhere, we were not thinking of new ideas. We were just kind of routinely going along with a lot of very negative attitude, woe is me. We had a lot of labor problems in the community, and it was not a very exciting kind of place. The enrollment had been declining and still has some. But it is more of an attitude, and so I think that we have been able to create lots of excitement and enthusiasm and the challenge of doing things. So it is really alive. Not that we are perfect, but I think the attitude is the first thing that I would say that I think that we have had an impact on. And that is really intangible. You cannot really measure it, but people talk about it. There is an enormous pride in our community about Y.S.U., and they are talking about Y.S.U. And they are excited about Y.S.U., and they have now given us, roughly, 22 million dollars in our capital campaign. And we have never gotten any money, never raised any money for the university prior to this time.

So that is one, and then the other is the financial stability, I guess I would say, of the campus. When I came, we were spending considerably more money than we were taking in, and it has taken us almost ten years to turn that corner that we have surpluses. But we were living beyond our means using reserves. The reserves at one time were 14 million. When I got here, they were two or three, and we had to make some difficult decisions. We reduced the budget by 6.7 million dollars a couple years ago through early retirement plans. We did not fire anybody, but we simply did not replace almost 150 people. In any organization, you have to be financially solvent. Otherwise, you know, things keep getting worse and you cannot do anything. So I think that those two pieces coming together to create financial stability, raising 22 million dollars to give us what I call that added edge of excellence to start the electronic campus, to expand the stadium, to buy property around the campus, to increase scholarships to our students. But that is an event. But those two things coming together, I think, have really created a different opportunity for the campus. I think those are probably the two biggest things.

The other thing that maybe is not quite as big, but I think that we have a lot of work going on that is more future oriented, and some of that because of the first two. You know, there is more vision, there is more direction, you can look that way because you are not trying to solve the budget problems today. And so we kind of freed up the system, and maybe that is just a product of those two that we just talked about new programs, new directions. In fact today we are talking about, what should the campus look like in the year 2008, not only in the physical plan, but academically? What are our student's needs? So the challenge that we have in 1998 are created because in 1988 we did not talk about those things and try to plan for them. Well, you cannot plan perfectly. So I think the exciting thing about 1998, which is just a few weeks around the corner, is that we are really talking about and starting to shape. So we are going to shape our future. Now, a lot of the future is shaped for you. But there is always

a small little part there that you can shape, so that is, I think, what we are going to be doing. So that is exciting.

M: That is very exciting. What do you think your greatest obstacles were?

C: I think, clearly, the biggest obstacle was a lack of self-confidence on our campus. We had been beat down, we had lost. Coach Tressel did amazing things in 1991, you know, with the national championship. All of a sudden there was a little glimmer. People had no idea how good we are, and that is still part of the challenge. But I think that was a big challenge for people to really start to believe, not necessarily in me, but in themselves. And he did that in football, and even today people just cannot believe that we are number one in this, or we are one of the top five in that. And I think that has really been a challenge. Part of the challenge is that you can not touch it and fix it. It is just an intangible out there. It is a wonderful community, but as we focus on this and, as you know, my wife is engaged in the community. It is a big agenda, and as we are dealing with this, we need to keep reaching out to help the rest of the community. I think that has been the biggest obstacle. I am one that believes that obstacles can be changed, shaped, and influenced. If something comes forward that you were not aware of, you deal with that, and a lot of people see those as obstacles. I guess I am a little more optimistic.

M: What a positive way to look at it. [laughter] What do you think the university's role is in the community?

C: Well, I think that we have to be a major player in our community. We have just started in the last few years to, I think, really reach out. I think the fact that we raised \$22 millions and that is still growing, is a symbol to us that the community has a great deal of pride and support and interest. And that is not just the million dollar DeBartolo gift, the Cafaro gift, and the Beeghlys'. There is lots of \$100 gifts and \$50 gifts. So the community really expects a lot of us. I am not sure if we can really deliver everything that they expect from us because I think that the community wants us to fix it and we cannot. They want it to be like it was, and it never will be! But we can help them make a difference. It is a big challenge for us. We have to be offering courses and programs in corporations in the community. We have to encourage the community to build housing around YSU. Now that they start to believe in it, they have to invest in us, and they are not used to doing that.

This is a community of wonderful people, but, as you know, it was dominated by the steel industry. So you had big steel, big government, big unions, and big Catholic church. None of those are negative, but those were very controlling elements and the values of this and really in a kind of top-down way if any one of those entities spoke. We had a highly ethnic population. Which if the head guy, not the woman of the household, if the head guy talked, this is the way it was. So you have all of those forces functioning in a

community, and the power base of all those are gone. Even though we have a very ethnic community, there is a growing role for women, obviously in the nation, but for this community. And the Catholic church is not nearly as dominating. Obviously, the unions and governments have dissipated in their power, and the steel mills are gone. But that culture is still here, and what the university is, is a different approach to the future.

And I do not think it is well understood, and people want things to happen. If there was a way for me to go out and direct it to happen, it almost could happen very quickly. But that is not our role. Our role is to help people help themselves make it happen. So it is really a challenge, and it is going to happen. But if we got this way over the past 25 years, it is going to take, I do not know if it is that long, but a number of years to restore the vitality of the community. And the community has to understand that it is the community, not the other forces that were here. So I think it is really an interesting story and I am sure in your field it is just kind of amazing. People would hear this story elsewhere, and they come here. People love it. People do not want to leave. People come here and think it is wonderful. But people love it and do not want to leave, but they are also negative about the community. And I said, "Why is that?" How could you love it and will not leave, and then you make all these negative statements about it? So it is a real complex set of values, and I think the university is a big player in shaping those.

M: That is a big part.

C: Yes, but not the only part. The community would like us to be the only part because it is easier that way.

M: It is easier to depend on someone.

C: And they are not used to accepting the responsibility that they have to shape or to influence. It is a little like the high school game that we had the other day, or even the college game, and somebody was drinking in the stands. In some communities, people will report others. Here we kind of tolerate it and turn our back. But that is an individual responsibility, as small as that may seem. You are not telling on your friends, that is a responsibility for the protection of the community. But we see it as, not as a responsibility. Just some people say, "Well, that is just the way it is." We tolerate it. So that is just a very small illustration of the challenges I think that we have for the future.

M: You have your work cut out for you. [laughter]

C: Me, and the next president, and the next president, and the next president. You go as far as you can, and I think that is the fun thing about being in a university. You are around bright, capable people, exciting ideas, and my job is simply to take some of those ideas and try and push them forward a little bit. So that is

the fun part.

M: Your job specifically with the people around you. As the president of the university, what is your responsibility to the faculty and staff?

C: It is not nearly as much power as I am sure people think I have. [laughter] Do not tell them that. Well, part of the power of the presidency comes from the culture of the people. So in that regard, I have enormous power, more than I would ever think that I have because, as we have just talked, the values of this community looks for somebody to be in charge. And even though I try to lessen those, and furthermore I am the first president that really believed in delegated authority. So the amount of direct control or supervision that I have over employees or faculty or academic programs is very limited, and the amount that I exert is very limited because I really believe that is why you have vice-presidents, provosts, and deans. If they are doing their job, that allows me to connect with the community to fundraise, to do the other things that are so important in a dynamic organization.

So I really try to focus my attention on, I do not like the word necessarily vision, but the direction, policy statements, policy directions, and then get the input from the vice-president, and have them go back and implement those in concert with whatever councils and advisory groups that we had. That is pretty difficult because the people in councils and advisory groups on campus had never had an experience of being asked to be involved. So the same challenges that are present in our community, we are learning how to do that inside our organization. While I am very visible on campus and go to a lot of meetings and walk around on campus and see students groups, if someone asked me, I will never solve the problem or fix it on the spot. And so, my job is then to redirect it into the proper channels and say, "I understand what you are talking about, but you need to talk to so and so." Even though I may know what the answer is or have an opinion that it should be another way, if I respond that way, then it is contrary to what I know is in the long-term best interest of the campus. So, in some ways, it is frustrating.

M: I will bet.

C: Being a doer, a problem solver, all my life, to step back and say, "Well, here is what I think you ought to do, Ms. Vice-President or Mr. Vice-President." But I am not going to tell them what to do. Now I can give them the context and hope that we will come together, and I think we have been together as a leadership team now for almost four years that we have had the key players in the administration together. So we have developed a real management leadership philosophy, even though it is not all written down. We have a good sense of who we are, what we are trying to do, where we are going and, you know, as a result of that, do not have a lot of arguments and big debates as to what ought to be the next step. But you have to have a good team.

The other thing is that, in the five years since I have been here now, if you could rank the top 28, I think it is 28 now, leadership positions, which would be all the provosts, all the vice-presidents, all the deans and what we call executive directors, which are like assistant vice-presidents. Organizationally, there are 28 people in those slots. All of those people are new in their job in the last five years. So we have had significant change. Now, not all new to the institution. Some have been promoted and reassigned. But what that really says, the entire upper part of the administration of this campus is totally new in the last five years which is really unusual. But, with the early retirements and the reorganizing that we have done, we have had that opportunity. So we really do have a different team together and a different philosophy. Like a basketball team, you can have great players, but if you do not have them all kind of coming together working as a team. And I think that we do, we work as a team pretty well.

M: What about students? How do you stay in touch with the students? [laughter]

C: Oh, never enough, I guess. I guess any C.E.O. would say, "I am never in touch enough with the customer." It is frustrating, there are so many layers. I never get to come into contact with the real people whether it is staff or students or faculty. I guess lots of little ways. I try to be present at athletic events and theater and concerts and plays. And you would be surprised how many times somebody will come up and say, "Well, I do not want to bother you. But did you know this?" or whatever. My secretary has a charge to get me in every building once a month. I cannot do that. We start off the year, but when I have a meeting cancelled, I will get up and walk over to Engineering or into Kilcawley and sit down and have a Coke for 15 minutes. So I try to have some of those informal ways of getting in contact.

Periodically I have fireside chats. For example, last night night at Cafaro House I met with 20 or 25 students and just listened and talked with them. I do that periodically. There are students on the board, for example, the two student trustees, and I meet with them on a regular basis, individually and them combined. Even when I go away to an away football game, on occasion that provides me in the hotel a chance to chitchat a little bit. I do not know if that is enough, but at least you get a feel for the tone of what is there. Meeting with people in the community, often students are involved or potential students are involved, so you get a little sense of that. There are some ceremonial things, but you really do not get the contact.

It is pretty hard because the pressures, I think for any C.E.O., the demands, to raise money, to be with the legislature, to be with the fundraising or corporate or to serve on bank boards or do the other things. The pressures all pull you away, essentially away from people. And that is why, periodically, Karen Green, my secretary, will sit down and say, "OK, you have got to get into the buildings again." And I think whatever your management style is, you need that little reminder once in a while to get back to the basics because the system will kind of consume you if you do not do that. So that is what I try to do, but it is

limited in the number of opportunities that you really have. If deans are more accessible to students, which I think they are. When I was a student, I did not even know what a dean did. And it was a very threatening thing if I was ever in the dean's office because I was either going to get kicked out or chewed out or something. So I think that those are just maybe more philosophical ways, symbolic ways. I think that writing things in the Jambar, being interviewed, I think are other ways. But those are pretty superficial, I think, though. You really do not come into contact. Maybe those are some of the more significant ways of being involved with the students.

M: Special programming, Campus 2000, things that the university is developing, Center for Historic Preservation. I know there is a new Environmental Studies program. Tell me a little bit about what you have in mind for these new ideas.

C: Part of my job, I think, is stimulating change, creating opportunities, and suggesting ideas. The Center for Historic Preservation is actually one that I proposed and said that I think that is an opportunity. Now, the History Department had to decide whether or not it was. Environmental Studies is one that I did not have any to do about it other than to recognize that the components were our strengths, and so there was something that you let happen. Physical therapy, a new program, is one in which I talked to Dean Yemma as I went around the campus the first six months I was here talking with everybody in their office. He was saying he thought that was an area of opportunity that we had. I said, "Well, go for it." So it happened, and that was my input there.

Now I have set up a process that we are talking, as I mentioned before, about 2008, and so people are talking about what might be centers of distinction. I have suggested, "Well, I think jazz might be." And it is one of our best things. So I think much of my role is facilitating through process, stimulating, encouraging, and at some point in time I have to make a decision about it. But usually those are easy decisions once, you know, it comes up. I think that is particularly important because in the past, essentially the university was closed. Closed to new ideas, closed to new directions. We offered a new master's in nursing this year, and it was the first new master's program in 20 years. Well, a lot of things have happened in 20 years in graduate education, but we had pretty much been in a mode of what we have is what we have, and do we need anything else, no we do not need anything else. So I think that is a lot of my role rather than the detail.

Interesting enough, how I got to this point was being the good organizer and the detailer. [laughter] Now I do not get the same satisfaction because if I spend too much time on detail, then I am not doing my job. It is a challenge because a lot of times something will come across the desk and I know how to fix it, or I know what needs to be done. But I send it to somebody else, you know, maybe giving them a suggestion or talking to them, but they are the ones that actually do it. It is a little like I rationalized when I was teaching in Detroit, way back earlier in the conversation about what I was teaching in high school. I

rationalized, and I knew that I would never have the fulfillment of classroom teaching in college as I did in high school because you have direct contact with young people and you are forming them and you can see the light in their eye, the shine. In college, you know, it is kind of this misty look out there that you students give us all. [laughter] Like you are listening, but you do not really know if they are, and it is harder to impact them.

I think that, as you move up in the organizational channels of a university or probably any other business, your direct impact is lessened, and what you have to do is rationalize your satisfactions and the rewards you get by seeing things happen or producing an environment for them to happen, rather than the day-to-day direct contact if it happened. I think that is hard. I think that is hard particularly for those of us who are doers, and many of the people who rise up are doers. I think that is a problem for a lot who never can seem to let go of that. They enjoy it, it is fun. But the more you are doing, the less that you can be focusing your energy on new directions or policy or whatever the change may be.

M: Campus 2000, is that your baby?

C: I guess I gave birth to it. [laughter] At least it was not seven of them that we are talking about. Yeah, that is an interesting one and I guess came out of a problem-solving mode. In fact, I was in this office the second or third week I was here. The director of physical plant came to me and said, "We need to make a decision about X." I do not remember what it was. And I said, "Oh, okay." And I looked at this, and I said, "I think this would be a good solution, what do you think?" He said, "That would be fine." And I said to him, "Would this be consistent with the master plan?" And he said, "Yes, that would fit in."

So, as most people know, I do not just end it then. I continue to look at options and some of my engineering and problem-solving background. So, maybe 15 or 20 minutes later, I said something 180 degrees from that solution over here, and I said to him, "Would that be consistent with the master plan?", assuming it would not be. And he said, "Yes." And I said, "I do not understand. This is over here, these are not compatible." And he said, "Well, we really do not have a master plan. We have six different planning documents that have been come up over the years, which means essentially whatever the president wants to do we can justify." This is some of that old top-down thinking. I said, "It cannot be like that. We have to have better direction." And so out of that, then I said, "Well, how much to do a master plan for the campus?" He came back and wrote me a proposal, and it was about two hundred thousand dollars. And I said, "We do not have that much money." So, as a counter to that, I proposed that we take a half a dozen of the people on campus and a half a dozen people in the community that have a direct interest in the campus, Northside Coalition, Chamber, some of the churches, and we formed a committee of about 30. We took all these old plans together and some of the things that I had seen kind of as new eyes, new ways of looking at it, and came up with the principles inherent in Campus 2000.

For the most part, it has been pretty successful. We have gotten, occasionally, a conflict in the community. But it is hard to make that much change in the community and not have conflict. I think we have not had too much. And, so, that came out of problem-solving. But, as we talked, some of my interest in visual perspective and engineering and graphics background and some of those things probably influenced a lot. So it is an area that I like to dabble in. You know, to say, "Gee, could we not fix this part up?" Or have a physical plant draw up a sketch of some different ways which we might improve because I think that is important to our community. Obviously the quality of the physical plant, but how others perceive it. So it has been a special interest to me primarily because, first of all, we have as nice a physical plant as there is in the state and one of the nicest in the country. Secondly, we have to work with the community around us and so it gives me that bridge to be connected back and forth. So it has been a high priority for me.

M: Where do you see the campus in 2008?

C: 2008?

M: Yes.

C: That is an interesting question. I think it will be significantly larger. If we can create some student housing within the next two or three years and the campus village that is being talked about and get local people to build, I think it is pretty much unlimited how many students that will be. But I think that we will be changing dramatically by 2008. I would see from contrast to maybe 1000 students who can walk to campus 3000. I see the inner part of this community evolving with new construction, not university construction, but housing around the campus, and we become the catalyst for the restoration and renovation of the center part of the city. Not the downtown part as we perceive it, but this area around here. And so I think there will be significantly new programs, and we have them in line right now. But I think that we will be a major player in this part of the state. We are a player now. Ten years ago we were not in the game. Now we are on the team, and I think that we will be a significant player, not just talking about Youngstown, Warren. I am talking about a significant player in northeast Ohio and western Pennsylvania. So that is kind of exciting.

The reason I think that is a lot of universities have peaked out. I do not know if you know anything about product cycles, but products go a certain time then they go over the hill and then maybe get changed and modified like they are doing with Barbie now. Really, it will take off in a new direction if you are successful. Otherwise it just goes and this product ends. You may have seen studies about the major corporations that were powerful in the year 1900. They are all gone by the year 2000. None of those are here, the railroads and other kinds of entities. So I think universities have a different kind of a product cycle. I am not sure, for example, if Stanford or Michigan can get any better. I mean,

they are really great universities. They defined themselves doing their things, and they do it well. We have not fully defined yet who we are, and as a result of that, I do not think we have reached our potential.

The potential here is so great because this is one of the few parts of the country, the only one that I am aware of, that for all practical purposes we have a million people. Within, I am not talking about Akron, within a 40 mile radius, there is a million people. Western Pennsylvania and our three counties. If you look at a million people, only one public state university, a million people is bigger than seven states in the country. So we are bigger than seven states if you think of it as Coach Tressel talks about the State of Youngstown. And there is only one university here. Well, even little Delaware, there are 15 universities and so the potential in this underdeveloped, uneducated community, the potential for growth in this community and the opportunity for this institution to be engaged in applied research and working with various agencies is just enormous. So I think the change in the next ten years, the physical plant will be the same, but in many ways you will say, "This does not look like Youngstown State at all." Because I do not think we will look anything like we do today. Now that is hard for people to say, "Well, the stadium will be there, yes, and the physical plant will be here." But, really, who we are and what we are doing will be dramatically different. And I cannot even conceptualize some of these things because, even in Campus 2000, what we talked about doing, we already accomplished more than we could have really hoped for.

M: Are you satisfied?

C: Well, I am never satisfied. [laughter] I just have new goals.

M: If you look back on our 30 year anniversary, are you satisfied?

C: I could not have projected in 1992 that we would be anywhere close to where we are today. I mean, I could not even visualize. I mean, we have some goals. As you were looking at YSU 2000 which probably, in terms of a document, you asked me, "What are the most significant things I have done," I did not talk about that. But, in terms of a document or event, that document of giving direction, the capital campaign, probably football successes, and three or four others may be the more significant events that occurred. And that is why, we just started the ball rolling. It is coming down the mountainside.

End of Interview