

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown Law School

Personal Experience

O.H. 983

C. ROBERT WRIGHT

Interviewed

by

Paul Carlson

on

April 21, 1977

### C. ROBERT WRIGHT

C. Robert Wright, the son of a clergyman, was born on May 17, 1923, in Lansing, Michigan. He received his primary and secondary education in the Chicago schools. He served during the war as a medical corpsman on an overseas surgical team, and also near the front lines. Wright returned to Oberlin to finish his education, and in 1948, he was the captain of the football team.

Wright graduated in 1949 with an AB degree in economics, and in 1951, he became the freshman football coach and Assistant Director of Admissions. Wright has been with U.S. Steel since 1953, and is currently the Superintendent of U.S. Steel No. 18 hot strip mill, at McDonald. Wright graduated from the Youngstown Law School in 1958, and was active in the Gessner Law Club.

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INTERVIEWEE: C. ROBERT WRIGHT

INTERVIEWER: Paul Carlson

SUBJECT: Family, early schooling, college, military experiences, law school instructions, why the school was closed

DATE: April 21, 1977

C: This is an interview with C. Robert Wright, Superintendent of the United States Steel Number 18 Hot Strip Mill, in McDonald, for the Youngstown State University Law School graduates project by Paul Carlson. We are at 427 Pamela Court, Poland, Ohio, on April 21, 1977, at approximately seven o'clock p.m.

Mr. Wright, could you tell us something about your early experiences, what it was like to grow up in Lansing, Michigan?

W: No, I couldn't, because we moved before I remembered anything about Lansing, Michigan. I think my parents moved to Detroit when I was about two or three years old. So, I have no memory of Lansing at all.

C: Okay, then you moved to Detroit and then Chicago, right?

W: Right. We lived in Detroit until I was ready to start the third grade. My parents moved to Chicago, and I was raised in Chicago. That is where most of my memories are.

C: Could you tell us something about those early experiences, what the neighborhood was like that you grew up in, or maybe, some of your early school experiences?

W: Yes. I grew up on what is referred to as the Northside of Chicago. My father was a clergyman. Fortunately--I guess you would say--I was sent to a private school, Francis Parker School. I went there from the third grade and through high school. That school was pretty well-known in the educational world. It was one of the leaders in progressive education. I had a very happy school experience there. I loved it. I had many good friends and felt that I got a very fine education. Being a minister's son, I had certain battles that I had to fight from time to time. But aside from that, it was just great. I don't have any particular . . . I am not really sure what experiences you mean, educational or otherwise. I just had a normal childhood, I guess. I think that I was extremely fortunate to go to that particular school, because our home was in a neighborhood where the public schools were not that good. I got a scholarship, which enabled my dad to send me to the private school.

C: Was that an academic scholarship?

W: I don't know. I don't think so. I think it was just because he was a member of the clergy. I never really did know why. I doubt that it was academic, though. Who would know in third grade whether I qualified for an academic scholarship?

C: Could you tell us a little bit more about your family life at that time?

W: Well, as I mentioned, my father was a clergyman. My grandmother, my mother's mother, lived with us. I had a younger sister, seven years my junior, so there was quite an age difference between the two of us. Of course, my father was tremendously involved with the church and was out practically every night. I saw very little of my father, except in church activities. I would say that most of the day to day raising of me was done by my mother and my grandmother. Other than that, I think it was a fairly normal childhood.

C: Okay, as far as your high school, how would you summarize your high school years?

W: Oh, very enjoyable, wonderful! I think I learned a lot, academically. I enjoyed athletics. I had a very happy experience. As a matter of fact, I think that those four years were probably the most enjoyable four years I have spent. They did not have the grading system. There were no A's, B's, C's, or D's. It was,

I don't even remember. It was more like "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." Then, [there were] a lot of parent-teacher conferences and that sort of stuff, but there was no pressure for grades as such.

C: In the academics then, did you have a free play in taking which courses you wanted?

W: No. You took . . . you had some elective courses in high school, but it was a pretty structured program. It all led to college preparatory work, and there was nothing but college preparatory work there. There were no vocational courses offered, but it was a lot . . . I don't know. [It was] not quite as rigid as the normal high school curriculum. You could explore different areas of science and social studies, or whatever.

C: Do you remember any of your favorite teachers or subjects?

W: Yes, many of them. In the lower grades, I can't say that he was my favorite, but I remember him more than any other [teachers]. We had Dr. Lucans, who was our fifth grade instructor. He had a PhD in literature. He was a very stern, rigid man with a little white goatee and a moustache. He required two written papers for homework every night. One [was a] written math paper, and one [was] an English paper. At the end of the week, if your papers weren't in, you came out on Saturday and got them in. It was very interesting to me, because in later years, when I went to law school, we had a professor in the law school who reminded me very much of Dr. Lucans. You, having had at least one interview with a contemporary of mine, probably could even identify him from that one interview.

C: Knool's Whiate?

W: Right. That was my, I think, most vivid memory of the lawyer classes in Parker School. In high school, I really think that I enjoyed the physical education part of [it] more than anything. I had a very close relationship with the head of the athletic department there, a man by the name of Carl Long, who I had a great deal of admiration and respect for. I did a lot of things under him. But all in all, just summing it up, it was a real happy time. I enjoyed school, and I hated to leave.

C: Did you play all the sports there, or did you concentrate on one or two?

W: Well really, it was a small school. It is a small school, so I played all the sports as the seasons went along, but football was my favorite. I did play bas-

ketball, and I played baseball. I played tennis and threw the discus, [also]. You know, not because I was that good, but just because there were so few people there, that you were able to do a lot of things that you ordinarily wouldn't have been able to.

C: I see that you graduated from high school in 1941 and then went to Oberlin, but that was just for a year?

W: Right.

C: Could you tell us what that first year was like?

W: Well, it was very different from high school. I had never seen the college. I had never been on the campus until I arrived there as a freshman. I got involved in many, many activities there. Of course, right away, I got involved in athletics. I also got involved in just about every other activity that they had. And I found out, to my dismay, that at the end of the semester, I was in too many things. I hadn't done as well in the classes as I should have [done]. I had to learn how to study all over again. Oberlin was a very difficult school at that time. It was very formal in the respect that all of the examinations were essay. There were blue books, it seemed to me, every other week. It was very rough, academically. They had a very, very high percentage of excellent high school students that they admitted. I found it hard my first year. I liked it, but I found that it was a complete change from the high school that I was used to. I wasn't used to grades, and I wasn't used to that kind of competition. So, that is about all I can say about my freshman year. I had a lot of fun, probably more than I should have had.

C: How did you choose Oberlin?

W: Well, it is a long and involved story. My father had gone and graduated from there. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Oberlin, back in 1918. Gosh, I don't remember . . . something like that. But, I had never even thought of it, really. In my senior year of high school, I had been offered a scholarship to Northwestern University, on a football scholarship. I had a couple of other schools that I was interested in. My dad wanted me to . . . he had heard that the Director of Admissions from Oberlin was coming in to Chicago to interview students, and he wanted me to at least go down and talk to that man. I did, and I was completely captivated by him. He was a terrific salesman, and a credit to the school. By the time that I left that interview, I had pretty well decided that that was the place I wanted to go to. He made it sound so good. So, I applied and was accepted, and I went, having not seen it or even looked at it, which I would not recom-

mend to a kid going to school now. I think it is worth going to look at. But, I never regretted going there. I think it was a good move. So, that is how I got there.

C: Do you think that the progressive education in your high school was somewhat . . . did it prepare you well, or do you think that it might have been detrimental?

W: No, I don't think that was the case. I think it probably did prepare me, intellectually. But, it did not prepare me for the grade competition. I felt that once I understood how the game was played, I didn't have any more trouble. But, I found out, and I really don't think that it was the school so much as it was me. I found out that you can only spread yourself so thin. I was a big fish in a small pond in high school, and could do all of these things and get away with them. In college, you have to learn to restrict yourself to . . . there are just more things than any one person can handle. I was in the choir, and then out for athletics. Then, [I was in] the YMCA and so forth, and it was just . . . I tried to do more than I could really do. It kind of snuck up on me, because, you went to lectures and you think that you are doing fine. Then, wham! All of a sudden, you get a blue book and you find out you aren't. No, I think that I got . . . I was quite able and capable to compete after I found out what was going on.

C: You spent some years in the war. Could you tell us something about those years?

W: Oh, yes. I went to Oberlin for my sophomore year. I thought that I wanted to go into medicine. I got a call from a friend of mine, my very best friend, who had also gone through Parker School with me, and who was at Dartmouth. His father was a surgeon in Chicago. The hospital that his father was, I think, Chief of the Surgical Staff at, Presbyterian Hospital, was in Chicago. They had started a unit which they called the 13th General Hospital. They were taking enlistments for that unit, with no idea when it would be called up, or if it would be called up. I went back in, I believe, early in my sophomore year. I can't remember when it was, but I signed up for this unit, because I thought it would be a great opportunity for a couple of things: to be with this friend of mine who had also signed up for it and to be in a hospital unit, since I wanted to go into medicine. By gollie, if it wasn't right around Thanks Giving of my sophomore year, that the unit got activated! I got called and told that they were going. So, I left school. I didn't even complete the first semester of my sophomore year. I was with that unit from then until the end of the war, except for when I

was overseas. I was . . . I don't know quite how that worked. I was assigned to, and volunteered for, a surgical team that was detached from the base hospital when we went out in the field. I spent about, I guess, two years on the surgical team with two surgeons and four enlisted men. It was quite an experience! Then, after the war was over, I ended up in Japan. Then, we came back to the states and I still thought I wanted to go into medicine. I went to Northwestern University for a semester. I took some chemistry and accounting there. Then, I returned to Oberlin in the fall of 1946. Somewhere in there, I decided that I wanted to get married. I didn't have any money, and I didn't see how I would afford going to medical school, so I switched my major to economics. I did get married in 1947, I believe. I graduated in 1949 with an AB in economics. Do you want me to go on?

C: Yes, sure.

W: From there, I was asked by the college to stay on after I graduated, and work in the admissions office. The following year, I was appointed Assistant Director of Admissions at Oberlin. I worked on that job for, I think, about two years. I am not really sure of that. It seems to me, like it was about two years. I loved it. I coached freshman football. The only thing that I didn't like about it, was traveling. I was away from home for a couple of weeks. Then, I would be home for a week and I would be away again, until I thought, "Well, there has got to be more to life than this," so I ultimately got to Youngstown.

C: You talked about when you were on the surgical team, and you mentioned that it was quite an experience. Could you elaborate a little bit more on that?

W: We, the surgical team, had. . . . You see the way it works, and it still does. They have a general hospital which is sort of like a base hospital that has all of the equipment and everything. They have these surgical teams that are pretty close to where the action is. I went through New Guinea just right behind the infantry. Then, [I went] through the Philippines Campaign. We, of course, had every conceivable kind of surgery. I scrubbed down on double and triple amputations, every conceivable kind--brain surgery, the whole gambit. Prior to even being on the surgical team, when I was straining for it back in the states, I worked three months in an obstetrics operating room. I assisted in delivering babies, and worked in the plastic surgery. I generally got a tremendous medical education, which was something that you just couldn't buy. It was terrific. And, it was very rewarding in a way. When I say that, I just mean that it was a varied experience,



and it was the kind of experience that most doctors don't get now, because they tend to see only certain things. Of course, when you get in a war, you get every kind of problem that there just about is, I guess. It was a real good thing, and I loved it. I liked it very much. I felt useful and like I was good.

C: Did you do the same thing in Japan?

W: No. The war was over when we got to Japan. I was over in the Philippines when Japan capitulated. Then, they sent us over to Japan. We were there for just a month or so, I think. We were there just for want to put us somewhere. Then, they ultimately shipped us back to the states. In Japan, we were just occupation troops. We didn't do anything, except fool around.

C: It must have been quite a switch to get your bachelor's in economics, then?

W: Well, I guess. You see, it wasn't hard to switch academically because Oberlin, it is not like it is now, Paul. Guys go to school now, and they just about take what they want. There are certain core courses that you have to take. But, having put three of my four kids through college now, it is so much different. When I went to Oberlin, it was required to take English composition and English literature. We had to take at least two semesters of history. We had to take at least a year of science. We had to take two years of a foreign language. We had to take--depending upon what math you had in high school--at least one year of math. All of those requirements, you had to get out of the way, and I got most of them out of the way in the first couple of years. When I decided to make my change to economics, I had just gotten done with most of the basic courses which I would have had to take, whether I was in premed, economics, art, or whatever the heck it was. That kind of a switch didn't throw me behind or anything like that. I might add that it was a dumb move now that hindsight is being used. I regret very much that I made that move. [I don't regret] that I got married. I think if I had wanted to do it, I could have gotten married and borrowed the money or something. I wish that I had gone ahead in medical school. I still am fascinated by it. My oldest son is a doctor now, so I am living my medicine vicariously, I guess. I wish I had. I think I would have done well. I think that I would have been happier than with what I am doing now.

C: Okay, I guess we have discussed your academic life.

W: Yes, and that is not all. While I was at Oberlin as Assistant Director of Admissions, I went to Colorado

State College to work on my master's degree in educational psychology. I found that to be a joke. I thought that the educational courses were a bunch of bologna. I felt that most of the people who were in the courses, who were "educators," were high school teachers who didn't care for that at all. I thought it was just a bunch of malarkey and I only did that for one summer.

C: Were you thinking about teaching at that time?

W: No, but I was in college. I just had an AB degree, and I didn't know whether I was going to stay in college, whether I wanted to go into coaching, whether I wanted to go into teaching, or what I wanted to do. I thought, "Well, everybody in the whole darn school has got a PhD, or at least a master's of some sort, and here I am with a little AB. I better do something." I thought, "I will try that for one summer." It was convenient, because we have a home out in Colorado, a cabin. My family was out there, and I just ran down the mountain to school and came back. But, it was not very good. I didn't think that it was worthwhile.

C: You must have spent quite a bit of time on the football field to have been captain of the team?

W: Well, I did. As I said, I played football in high school and I played football when I was in the service, on a service team. I played football at Oberlin until I was hurt. I liked it. It was a lot of fun.

C: Did that infringe somewhat upon your time for studies?

W: Paul, I will tell you. Yes and no. Yes, it took time that you might have otherwise have been studying. I think, too, that it taught you to organize your time and make use of the time that you had. I found--and I have seen it so many times--a lot of young fellows that don't have any outside interests, don't use that time that they might have to study, anyhow. They are out screwing around somewhere or doing something different. Really, I think it was good for me. It made me disciplined and I learned decent study habits. It made me organize my time, and it kept me out of trouble. I never had any time to do anything else. I believe that now. I am very interested in my youngest son. He's just thirteen years old. I am a firm believer in athletics. If for no other reason, for that reason. I think that if a fellow does get interested in that kind of thing--and I'm not saying that it is the only thing, but it is one outlet. If they channel their energy in that outlet, I think they are less apt to get all screwed up with a lot of other problems that young people have now a days. I encourage him. You just

felt the house shake. That is him outside shooting baskets, I think. But no, in answer to your question, I don't think the athletics interfered with my studying. I think I would have probably done worse, had I not had it.

C: How about your work experience, different jobs that you had? Let's see, you became affiliated with U.S. Steel in 1953, right?

W: Yes. Prior to that, as I mentioned, I worked for the college for a couple of years. Then, I got to Youngstown. Actually, I then left the college, and went to work for a welding outfit over in Lorain, Ohio, called Nelson's Stud Welding. A friend of mine from college had gone with them when he graduated, and had done extremely well. He was very happy with them, and he talked me into giving that a try, which I did. I only stayed with him--I don't know--I don't think it was more than three or four months. I had an opportunity to come here to Youngstown and work with a man who is a manufactures representative. So, that is how I got to Youngstown. I came to work for him. I worked for him for two years, I believe. Then, we had a parting of ways, and I was out of a job. It was right around Christmas, I remember that. I had a family then, and I started beating the bushes and didn't really know what I wanted. I know that I didn't want sales, and I wasn't sure that I wanted to get back into the educational world. I thought that I would like to try something in industrial relations. So, I went all around Youngstown and got interviews at Sheet and Tube, Wean, and most of the big plants around town. And, nothing. You know how they say, "Well, thank you for coming in and we will let you know if anything develops." It was a very discouraging time.

Then, one day, I got a call from the superintendent of industrial relations at U.S. Steel. He would like for me to come in and see him again. I did, and he said that they had a management trainee program out at United States Steel. The industrial relations department had never had a management trainee, and they wanted me to be their first management trainee. So, I gratefully jumped at the job. That's how I started out there. I was in the industrial relations department for several years. They put me through all of the different facets of industrial relations: the safety, the compensations, pensions, employment, and the labor relations. I loved the labor relations. I enjoyed that give and take, and I decided, "Well, by golly, that is what I want to get into." I looked around, and I thought, "The only way I am going to make myself noticeable over all the other guys that are in this department is if I got something more to offer, and

that I would be smart if I would go and get a law degree."

I enrolled in law school at Youngstown. I don't think I had been in the school for more than a year, and I got an opportunity to get out and into the operating department, which is a promotion out of the industrial relations department. So, I took the opportunity to leave. I thought at that time, "Maybe I should. . . . There's not much point in getting a law degree now, because I don't need it in what I am in." By then, I was into it and I was enjoying it. You hate to give up something once you start it. So, I felt that I should stick with it. I did. I moved along from one job to another out there. I have been bounced around hither and yon.

C: I kind of noticed that.

W: So, that is about the story. The reason I stayed in the law, was because I enjoyed it. I really didn't think, at the time, that I had no idea of leaving United States Steel. When I graduated and took the bar and passed it, I had some passing thoughts of how I would like to go out into law and into a private practice. At that time, I had three kids and I had a pretty good job up there. I just didn't really see how I could afford to make that change and start from nothing. That was the second mistake that I made. Sure, I have made others. I told you the first one that I made was not going into medicine, and the second one I made was not leaving United States Steel--as hard as it would be and as difficult as it would be--and set up a practice. I have subsequently had a lot of dealings with people in the legal profession here in Youngstown. I have seen a lot of them, and I am not impressed. I am impressed with anybody that has a good degree of common sense and is willing to work, willing to work, and is honest. You can make a darn good living practicing law here in Youngstown. I guess that is enough. I just think that I could have done well, but I didn't. You know, you can always look back at it.

C: Before we talk a little bit more about your days at the law school, could you by chance tell us a little bit more about your experiences working with United States Steel from after you switched from industrial relations, to the operating aspect of it? Are you still in the operations aspect?

W: Yes. I went to the transportation department as what they call an operating practice trainee. I worked at that, and became Assistant Superintendent of Transportation. Then, from there, I went up to the main office

and was assistant to the General Superintendent. In that capacity, I was responsible for a lot of the cost numbers, the variances and so forth. I didn't like that too well, because it was a job where you had no authority, you were a number jockey or whatever you want to call it. I wrote speeches for the General Superintendent and that kind of stuff, and that was about it. After a year, we got a chance to go down to the primary rolling mills as Assistant Superintendent down there. I started to learn that, and then I became superintendent of the primary mills and was on that job for ten years.

Then, just a little better than a year ago, I got transferred out of the primary mills, and went on to the hot strip mill. I had quite a bit of rolling experience. In the job, as the superintendent of anything out there, you have a lot of dealing with the employees, a lot of industrial relation problems, safety problems, production problems, and a lot of cost problems. It is just like kind of running your own business, in a way. But, there is always somebody looking over your shoulder questioning why you did this and why you didn't do that, and so forth. It is no great big story. It is just a lot of hard work and it takes a lot of time and effort. That's about it. I wouldn't recommend it. (laughter) I don't think it is a very good way of life. Your time is not your own, and if you divided your income by the hours you spent, I am afraid that the pay would be very meager. We work really, around the clock. We work on weekends. We get called in the middle of the night. In a way, it is sort of like being a doctor, in the sense that your time isn't your own. Even when you go away, leave your home, you have to carry a dial-a-page with you, so that they can get a hold of you and that kind of stuff. It is kind of a hectic life. The thing that I think is not too satisfying, is that you never feel like you are ever really accomplishing anything. no matter what you do, there is always some crisis that comes up that they wonder why you don't do better. I don't think it is a particularly satisfying existence. And, I don't mean to mar United States Steel. They have been very good to me. It's a great company. They have been very fair, and I can't say enough good things about them. Just the whole idea of working in a steel mill and leaving home at six o'clock in the morning. . . . All of our neighbors are still in bed, not even up. I come home at six o'clock at night, and they are all out in their front yard in their shorts mowing their lawns. I go to work on Saturday and Sunday, and they are all sleeping in. I look around and figure, "Well, that is kind of a dumb way for me to live." (laughter) So much for my work experience.

C: Okay, now we will go to about four years at the law school. I think first of all, I will just ask you a general question. What do you really remember, what stands out about the law school? Especially, since after the first year, you didn't really have to stay?

W: I think the thing that stands out about the law school, first of all, is the fact that the fellows that were there really were trying to learn the law. They weren't there because their parents expected them to be there. They were more mature, naturally, than the undergraduate students. And, I think, too, the fact that most of them were married and had families, and yet, were sacrificing this time to go there. That impressed me a lot. As far as the school itself was concerned, the deplorable building, I remember well. It was extremely hot in the winter and summer. There was no such thing as air conditioning or anything like that there. On the whole, I thought the instruction was excellent. Everybody that you talk to, I am sure, will remember Knolls Wyiate. He was one of a kind. I can't say that I approved of or agreed with his methods, but they were effective, and you did remember what you had to remember. And by gollie, you kept your ears open! But, there were others that were equally good. I felt that there were only, in all of the time that I went there, a couple of courses that weren't very well taught. Really, who am I to say, I don't really know. But on the whole, I thought the level of instruction was excellent.

I resented the fact that the college was not completely recognized by the American Bar Association. It wasn't that I was told; we heard different stories on why it wasn't. One was that you had to have an "x" number of full-time professors. Another one was that there had to be a law library of a certain magnitude, a certain number of volumes and so on and so forth. And ultimately, the school was dropped, I think, or stopped. I am not sure of all the reasons, but we were told, whether it was right or wrong, that school finally was abandoned, because to get recognition by the American Bar Association or whoever it was. . . . That was a recognizing body, and they said that they had to change a lot of things. They had to have a certain number of full-time professors and so forth and, as you know, if you have done research on the school, everybody there was a practicing attorney and/or judge. Except, they did have a dean, whom I believe ultimately . . . when I began, even the dean was a practicing attorney, but I think sometime in the middle of my career there, they got a man who was called a full-time dean. He did nothing but run the law school. It is a shame that it was dropped. I am sure that the reasons were mainly monetary, but I didn't know why then.

- C: Do you think that the law school was costing the university too much?
- W: I think it would have cost the university more than they wanted to put into it and to become qualified, to become certified or whatever it was that was held over their head. I think there was an ultimatum, that if this school is going to be a recognized school of law, it must have so many full-time professors. Right there, if you are talking about full-time faculty, that is a tremendous cost, as compared to getting a practicing lawyer or practicing judge, and have him teach courses and paying him some kind of pardon or something like that. Then, I think, there was something there to do with a law library, too, that they didn't have or didn't have enough of. I got the impression that this is when Howard Johnson was President of Youngstown. I got the implication at any rate, that they closed it primarily because, to keep it open and to be certified, would cost them more money than they would care to spend.
- C: Do you think there was much in the law community at the time? Do you think they were glad to see the law school closed, because they thought they were turning out too many lawyers?
- W: I really don't know, Paul. That is an interesting question, and I have no idea. Of course, at that time, the only attorneys that we were associated with, were those fellows that were instructing, and they certainly didn't feel that way, or they wouldn't have been instructing. I don't know. That may have been in it, although I don't think that would have made. . . . I find it hard to believe, that that was why the university would shut it down. At that time, it wasn't a university, it was Youngstown College.
- C: Would you be in favor of having them reopen it, to reestablish it? There were some . . . that have gone through a period, that have dropped the law school, and then they reestablished it?
- W: Oh, I think if Youngstown is going to be what they hoped or set out to be--and that is a University of some significance--I think they should have a law school. I see no reason why they shouldn't. My gosh, we are getting a medical school close by, now. Youngstown has some history there. There is certainly enough talent to draw from around here, and with the enrollment of the school, the size it is now, I think it

would be a natural. Yes, I don't see why Youngstown shouldn't have it. Akron has one and Cleveland State, of all places, has one. Yes, I think they should. I would like to see it.

C: It must have been pretty rough spending all of those hours working, and then still finding time to study?

W: Yes, that was hard. It was made harder by the fact that I had children. I scheduled my vacation from work to coincide with my big examinations in law school. I, many times, had to sit out in the car and study, because I couldn't find a place in our house. We didn't live in this house at that time, in our small house. There wasn't a place for peace and quiet with little kids, so I would go in the garage and sit in my car and study. I think it was harder on my wife than it was on me. She was trying to raise these children. I didn't see much of them. I would work all day, and then rush home and grab something to eat. Then, [I would] go down to the law school, and get home at 10:30 or so, and study until after midnight. It was just a steady routine for years and years. It was hard.

C: You mentioned Knolls Wyiate. Was there a favorite course or anything that you got more out of? You did mention that there were some courses that you . . . could it just have been your attitude towards things?

W: Oh yes, you have different things you like, and things you didn't like. He was such a different type of person. You can't help but remember him. He taught contracts and torts. Those are two of the basic courses that you get in any law school. He tolerated no questions. he would ask the questions, but you never asked him a question. He was just murder. He would kick you out of class if you were not prepared. It was most embarrassing, and it happened to me once. I don't know that I had any favorite courses. There were some that I didn't like as well as others, but again, I will say that I thought that on the whole--the course presentation and the level of instruction was real good.

C: Did you have to study hard for the bar? You probably took another vacation.

W: Oh, boy! You aren't kidding! We went up, a bunch of us went up and took this cram course up in Cleveland called Weiner-Minor. Sammy Weiner and Zellie Minor, two Jewish lawyers, were absolutely excellent. We went up on the weekends to this course for about four weeks. It was money well spent, and time well spent. I am sure that none of us would have passed the bar, had we not had that review. Because you see, it took us over



four years to get through the school. And for example, you took your basic course. Your first course there was Contracts. You finished that in--oh, I have forgotten whether it was a year or half of a year or whatever--but, it was finished early in the school period. Then really, you never got any more contracts. all of a sudden, you get in the bar and there is a whole section of the bar examination on contracts. The same is true for any of the other courses. It is not like . . . you are going in the daytime, and you get done in three years or whatever it is. It was spread out over a much longer period of time. I think that was very important to all of us. I know I was glad that I did it. I wasn't happy when I was doing it, but I was glad afterwards.

C: Do you think that you were well prepared to practice law or to set up a practice?

W: I suppose that I was as well prepared as any of the other fellows that took the bar. I had an opportunity to talk to some fellows that had come from a regular law school. When I say a regular law school, I mean. . . . I know one that came from Harvard law School, one was from Ohio Northern, and a couple from Michigan that took the bar examination at the same time. I didn't feel that they were any better prepared than I was. I think, however, if I had anything to do with the profession, that a law graduate should have to spend a year of internship the same as a medical school graduate has to, before he can go out and get licensed. They obviously learn. I rather suspect that while they are learning, they make an awful lot of mistakes that maybe some clients are paying for unknowingly.

C: Legal education seems to be . . . a lot of those well versed in legal education seem to say that you should cut out the third year. After you have gone through so many cases, the last year is really superfluous, that it is just repetitious of what you had before. And to have something, like you are saying, with an internship, get out there and do it.

W: Well, I think that would have been helpful to anyone. Now, my very best friend in the law school--and, I had a lot of good friends there, but he and I . . . . When we graduated, he decided that he would quit his job and go into a full time practice, and I decided I wouldn't. But, we thought that we could try to work together, if we could. So, he just plunged right into it. he learned, and he learned just by doing, I guess, and by making mistakes. He did very well. I think it would have been easier for him, and it certainly had been easier for anybody, had they had to spend a year with some firm or something and at least learn the ropes:

the very practical matters of how you file papers, where you go in probate court, you know. You probably knew the law better than a lawyer that had been out practicing for twenty years, but just the nuts and bolts part of it, you didn't know. Of course, I didn't go through that, so it didn't affect me. When I had something to file or something like that, by that time, my friend and I opened up an office together. When I would get something, I would try to get down and see him. We would talk it over, and [decide] if it had to go to court, and if I had papers to file, he would do it. I sort of learned by him leading me in the right direction. But how [he] learned, I don't know. I suppose somebody led him.

C: Who was your friend?

W: Chuck Bannon. He's the Common Pleas Judge now--Charles J. Bannon. We studied a lot together, and we have been very friendly over the years. He was my partner until he got elected Common Pleas Judge. I say partner, only in that we shared the same office, and anything I had, I turned over to him and we would split it.

C: Do any of the other students come to mind?

W: Father Lucas does, only because he was a very interesting man. You don't often go to school with a priest. I think he had his doctorate in philosophy at the time he went to law school. He had degrees coming out of your arm! He was born to be a student. He never did anything but study. So, he comes to mind. The other one that comes to mind is John Breckenridge, who is a black man, and who I think is doing quite well. He is over in Warren, I believe, in Warren, Ohio. He is very active in the NAACP. He is very intelligent and a good student, and I thought, a nice guy, at the time. I don't like some of the things I see him doing now, but he could probably argue me out if I saw him fact to face. He stands out. He, I thought, was an exceptional man. Father Lucas was another. Chuck Bannon [was], because he and I were good friends. We have had some pretty good students in that class. Those are three of them that I mentioned. All of them were good.

C: Okay, this will be the final area. I kind of divided it (the interview) into three areas: your background, the law school, and now in our attempt to get an overall picture of the graduates from the Youngstown Law School, we wondered if you would be willing to answer a few questions on current controversial issues?

W: Sure.

C: Okay. I have done some reading of law books, because I am thinking about going to law school, and that is why I chose this project. At least to get me thinking in a more legal way, more so than from the history and philosophy that I am taking currently. I read a book by a Common Pleas Judge. She is a judge in Philadelphia and she just published a book in 1975. It is called The Death Of Law. I will just read this one quote that she said. She says, "I see the law as a principle by which people conduct their lives as dead. The entire legal system corrodes any sense of trust or truth. It is a juggernaut laying waste lives, business and social order." Some of the specifics that she said are, when an ordinary criminal comes before our courts, she can't see sentencing this person when she knows that Agnew and Nixon are free and it upsets her that doctors can rip off the government with the Medicaid, and not get punished. Also, the FBI can do everything, and the CIA. She is kind of caught up in this situation that we are all a part of in our society. I guess, a philosophical question for you is, do we live in a just society?

W: No, I don't suppose we do. I am sure you have just lifted a paragraph out of her whole book and then tried to sum it up. That's difficult. But no, I don't think there really is such a thing as a utopian, just society. I would suspect that our society is more just than many societies, certainly less just than any idealist would like it to be. But, the mere fact that you see things that are wrong with it--with the law or with the way that the law has been administered--somebody is going to have to show me a better way to do them, or quit their harping. There is no doubt in my mind that wealth buys the best lawyers, the best services you can get. I don't think that it is necessarily bad. I am sure that there are many accesses, that there are many things that aren't good or great about our legal system, but I can't think of a better way of handling it right now, and I am more than a little bit distraught at all of the bleeding hearts in the society now. They are always worrying so much about the "downtrodden." I have very little sympathy for many of the downtrodden. I feel that they earned the bed that they are sleeping in. That is kind of a harsh way to look at things, I suppose. But I think, right now, the whole philosophy is for the government and others to take care of these poor people. And I don't subscribe to that too much. I am fed up with it. I have too many of them that work for me that want everything. They want their eight hours pay, and they want to do nothing. They want to hide from work, and they don't want to learn jobs that will enable them to advance. They will sit back and wait until the job opening comes, and then if their seniority entitles them to it, then they will get it,

but they won't lift a little finger to help out. I don't know, I just kind of branched off from the question, but I guess my answer to that would be yes. maybe it's not just, but I can't think of a better system right now.

C: What are your ideas about capital punishment?

W: I am in favor of it. I think it serves as a deterrent to crime. I think you can make statistics tell you anything you want. A good number jockey can do anything in the world with statistics. I have seen the statistics pro and I have seen the statistics con, and I don't believe either of them. I just have a fundamental feeling in my nature that it does serve as a deterrent. That punishment of any nature is a deterrent, and it is unfortunate that it has to be used. But I think that it should be reinstated. I would like to see more emphasis given to the victims of crimes. What really upsets me about the law right now is that whole pendulum and the whole emphasis, the whole strength of the law seems to be in protecting the perpetrators of crimes and seeing that they get every legal right that, by any stretch of the imagination, can be coming to them. The victim of the crime is . . . society is the victim of the crime. It is kind of left in the offing.

C: What about abortion?

W: I am Protestant. I have no strong feelings one way or another about abortion, I think it is a personal matter that should be determined solely by the woman involved. If she feels that an abortion is a way to solve her problem, I see nothing wrong with it.

C: What about decriminalization of Marijuana?

W: Oh, boy. Oh, I don't know Paul. I have mixed emotions on that. I read that, depending again of what you read. . . . I have no experience with it to start with. I haven't really been around anybody that uses it. There is some of it out in the mill, I am afraid. My common sense or my reading or whatever, tells me that it is probably no better or no worse than abuse of alcohol. However, I find it awfully hard. I don't know why. I can't answer that very well. I have mixed emotions about it. I am not really for letting it become a lighter offense, if any offense at all. I don't know. I guess really, liquor is a bigger problem than marijuana. I don't know, though. If marijuana was completely legal, maybe it might be the bigger of the two problems. I don't know.

C: Thank you for the interview.

W: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW