

UNCG CENTENNIAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Betty Hobgood Eidenier

INTERVIEWER: Cheryl Junk

DATE: March 29, 1991

[Begin Side A]

CJ: Betty, let's start with your telling me the years you were at Woman's College [of the University of North Carolina], the course of study you followed and why you chose Woman's College.

BE: Okay. I enrolled in Woman's College in the fall of 1962 and was graduated in May of 1966. I was English major, and I also got a teaching certificate. And I went to Woman's College. It was the only college I applied to, and I was accepted and I went there because my mother had gone there—and also my aunt.

CJ: Would you state their names for me?

BE: That was Margaret Stallings Hobgood [Class of 1933] and Nell Stallings [Class of 1936]. And I always knew that was where I was going to college, so I just went there.

CJ: All right. You lived in the dormitory?

BE: Yes. I went to Hinshaw as a freshman, and then I moved into Moore because the dorm—what do you call it?—residence hall advisor, I guess you'd call them—the woman who lived in the dorm—Lucy Allen was her name. That's not her name—Lucy somebody—was a friend of the family, and I wanted to be in her dorm.

CJ: And she was in which dorm?

BE: She was in Moore.

CJ: Moore. Okay. That was your freshman year you lived—?

BE: No. That was the sophomore year, and I was in Moore sophomore, junior and senior year.

CJ: Talk a little bit, if you will, about what you expected to find when you got to Woman's College and what you did find. Compare the expectations with the reality, if you will.

BE: It was pretty much the way I expected it to be with one exception. I expected it to be a small

community of close-knit women who were very much interested in women having a chance to do anything that they wanted to in the world. And it was a happy place for me because of that, because I found that the students and professors were very much in favor of women's rights and women being outspoken on issues and being able to find that there were no doors closed. The one thing that took me aback was that when I got there as a freshman, Cotten Dorm was completely made up of women from Charlotte, freshmen from Charlotte. And they seemed to have more spirit than everybody else and seemed to be sort of a clique unto themselves. And I was disappointed in that because there was only one other person from my high school who was at Woman's College, and it was hard for me to find friends and become—feeling a part of the small community, as opposed to the greater community.

CJ: When did that begin to happen and how did it begin to happen—that you did feel, begin to feel a part of the bigger community of the school?

BE: When I was a sophomore, I decided to become an English major and was in classes, generally, with the same people and got to be friends with them. And also I became interested in student government and worked in different committees of student government.

CJ: Can you outline those if you remember them?

BE: Initially, I was a dorm representative to the student legislature, and then I was elected the president of student legislature, which was vice president of student government. And that was at the time that the "Speaker Ban" [enacted in 1963, restricted appearances of Communists and other radical speakers at state-supported campuses] was being put forth by the legislature in Raleigh. And because I had made speeches in student government, there were people who wanted me to speak opposed to [against-ed.] the Speaker Ban, and we had on campus a forum, we called it. The president and vice president of student government from North Carolina State [University] and UNC [University of North Carolina] at Chapel Hill and Woman's College all met together above the bowling alley across the street from the college at State and—

CJ: In Raleigh?

BE: In Raleigh. —and had a conference together to decide what we would do about the Speaker Ban. And we decided that the people in Raleigh would march on the legislature since they were there in Raleigh and that the people at Chapel Hill would—being men, being more free to march on campus and cut classes and have general riotous behavior—[both laugh] And people at Woman's College, being the academically oriented and mature sort of people that we were, would have a forum. And so we invited Senator Edwards [?] and Senator Phillips [?] to come, and they and I and a professor, whom I will not name, debated the Speaker Ban on television. It was run on UNC public television, and they—we were in Elliott Hall and the place was packed. It was nine o'clock on a Sunday night, the way I remember it, and we outlined our positions on it.

And afterwards Senator Edwards was just about mobbed by girls who went up on stage wanting to talk to him. He was speaking in favor of the Speaker Ban. Senator Phillips and the professor and I were opposed to the Speaker Ban. And as I recall, the professor

didn't have very much to say, nor did Senator Phillips, and it ended up being mostly Senator Edwards and myself who were doing most of the talking. And after that, the—everybody on campus knew who I was, so it was easy for me to go places and find people that wanted to do things with me.

CJ: Would you, for the sake of the tape—I know what the Speaker Ban was, but would you outline what the bill—what the provisions of that bill were?

BE: The provisions of the bill said, essentially, that no one who was a Communist could appear on any university property. And that, to us—we were highly concerned about that—meant that—like the Russian ballet could not perform because they were Communist.

CJ: Didn't it also have a clause that said that no one could have spoken at the university, anyone who had ever in their life taken the Fifth Amendment [part of the Bill of Rights, protects witnesses from self-incrimination]?

BE: That's right.

CJ: Okay. That was part of it?

BE: That was part of it.

CJ: Did it—what happened to it? Did it pass?

BE: It was repealed. I think it passed and was repealed. I can't remember now. Whatever happened only lasted for a few months, and Senator Edwards—I wrote a letter to Senator Edwards afterward and complimented him on appearing at such a hostile atmosphere and maybe—and told him I'd enjoyed being with him. I was just being honest, but I was just using good manners. And about two weeks later I got a call to go see Chancellor [James S.] Ferguson. And I thought I was really in for it then—didn't know who was getting after me. And Chancellor Ferguson invited me into his office and asked me to have a seat and told me that he had a few questions for me. And what he wanted to know was what I had said to say to Senator Edwards in my letter. So I told him what I'd said, and he smiled and shook my hand and said that Senator Edwards had come to see him personally and said if there were students like that at the university that he wanted to do anything he could for the university and what could he do. And he was one of the main supporters of the university after that.

CJ: Oh, my word. That's quite a story. That's a wonderful story. You mentioned Chancellor Ferguson. That's kind of a good lead in to a question I was going to ask about role models on the campus. Who were your primary role models on the campus and why? Or were there any?

BE: Yes, there were. We had sister classes, so the Class of '68—some students in that class tried to be our role models, if you want to use that word for it. They tried to make things easier for us.

CJ: Was it still the freshman-junior, sophomore-senior pairings like back in the old days?

BE: That's right. That's right.

CJ: Okay.

BE: And the people who were sophomores—juniors (corrects herself)—when we were freshmen—were our sister class, and they tried to help make things easier for us, and they did. And it was in little ways like saying that you didn't wear knee socks downtown in Greensboro. You had to shave your legs and put on hose if you were going down into Greensboro. This is the days when you weren't supposed to wear pants. You had to wear skirts.

CJ: There was a dress code on campus?

BE: There was a dress code, right. And if you wore pants, you had to wear a raincoat over it so nobody would see that you were wearing pants. And you couldn't wear shorts around. And knee socks were very popular because if you wore knee socks and a skirt, it was almost like wearing pants. Not quite the same.

CJ: But they had to match, if I remember correctly.

BE: Yeah. Yeah. They had to match. And then there were some professors that I really respected and enjoyed. And all the professors that I wanted to be like, even though I was afraid of them, I guess Robert Stephens [English professor]—Professor Stephens is the one that I would call my real role model on campus. I was in honors English with him as a freshman, and he was always very gentlemanly and kind and remembered my name and still remembered my name at the tenth reunion when I went over to see him. He just said, "Hi, Betty," like it was just yesterday that I had seen him. But he showed me that there was a proper way to act and a proper way to act academically so that you wanted to use good sources for your material and you wanted to take care in how you said what you said.

CJ: Any particular women that stand out to you?

BE: Amy Charles [English professor]—always for English majors—would be a person who would stand out, I think, as being someone who would expect you to know what you were talking about and to say it well.

CJ: You were at Woman's College for two very significant, national social events and one very sig—well, two very significant events in the life of the campus. You were there for—during the time President [John F.] Kennedy was assassinated [November 22, 1963] and the time that the—a lot of civil rights unrest was going on, although it was—you came there two years after the initial sit-ins in Greensboro, but those are the two national things. And then on the campus, you were there in the first decade after they admitted blacks and in the first two years after they admitted men. So if you could comment on any or all of those events and how they affected you?

BE: Wow. [both laugh]

CJ: Yeah. Twenty-five words or less. Take your time.

BE: Oh my, let's see. Well, first of all, President Kennedy being shot; that occurred when we were freshmen. No, that occurred when we were sophomores. I was thinking of the Cuban Missile Crisis [October 1962 confrontation among the United States, Cuba and the Soviet Union over the installation of nuclear missiles in Cuba; generally regarded as time in Cold War when nuclear conflict was most possible] when we were freshmen.

CJ: Talk about that, too, if you want to. [laughs]

BE: Yeah. We hid in the basement of the dorm and were all scared, and nobody could call home, and we were furious.

CJ: For the Cuban Missile Crisis?

BE: For the Cuban Missile Crisis, right. Yeah. That wasn't nice.

CJ: Were you afraid there would be nuclear war?

BE: Yes, we were. And there were great debates about whether Greensboro would go first because it was where all the railroad lines went.

CJ: Oh, how awful! How awful!

BE: It was not nice. Of course, part of the reason it was not nice was because we were down in the basement, which was not a nice place to be.

CJ: Did somebody order you to go down there?

BE: Yes. We were ordered to go down there.

CJ: How long did you stay down there?

BE: I can't remember. I know there was a television down there, and I know that we watched President Kennedy on television. And I know that we had curfews, you see. We had to be in the dorm at 7:30 [pm] and lights out at 10:30 [pm] when we were freshmen. And I know when it came time for 10:30 lights out there was this great anticipation that we would be allowed to stay in the basement. Things maybe were not as bad as we thought. But we had to all go upstairs and go to bed, but, of course, nobody ever went to bed. We went upstairs and turned our lights out and looked out the window, which was a pretty stupid thing.

CJ: Watching for a mushroom cloud?

BE: Watching for a mushroom cloud or whatever.

CJ: Oh, wow. Oh, my.

BE: Not much sleep that night. No, I was in the library studying when Kennedy was shot and my roommate, who was a track runner, Sue Thompson, who ran for the Maccabean Olympics in Israel for the New York team, came running up all the way from Moore [dormitory] to tell me that Kennedy was shot. And it was pretty quiet in the library. I hadn't noticed very much that people had emptied out, but I was in there pretty much alone, and she came in making all this noise, and that was typical of her not to obey rules. And so I, at first, was upset with her, and then she made me understand that he had been shot, so we went rushing back to the dorm and turned on the radio, and everyone was just glued to the radio.

It was a—the effect of the assassination, I think, on young people at the time, was to make more people aware of Kennedy's words about "Ask not what your"—you know—"country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." And made people really want to volunteer. At least the people that I was friends with felt a social obligation very strongly and then coupled with that was a feeling that perhaps our parents were right and we were overly zealous in our enthusiasm for social reform.

But there was a breaking with the older generation, too, in civil rights. At UNCG was the first time I'd ever met adults who were pro-civil rights because I came from a small eastern North Carolina town where I did not live among prejudiced people. The people I lived among were very caring people, and I did not grow up in a prejudiced family, but there were people who were careful about what they said because they had to live in this community and did not always say exactly everything that was on their minds. And at UNCG I met adults who didn't care what other people thought and who would say what was on their mind, which was—took me aback to hear, for example, someone who would be in favor of violence or be in favor of some kind of forced desegregation as opposed to using time and debate to work things out.

When I was at UNCG, I volunteered as a tutor at Dudley High School, which was then a junior high school and it was not very successful. What we did was get a bunch of college girls to go over to the junior high and were supposed to tutor these middle school kids who were all black. And they didn't have any school work on their minds. I had this one guy who I was supposed help with his spelling lesson, and I'd call these spelling words out to him and he could spell about half of them and the ones he couldn't spell, he wasn't interested in studying and wanted just to talk about what was playing at the movies and so on. So I thought maybe it would help if I got a larger group and two or three of us went together with our kids. And so we tried that and that didn't work much better, so our attempt at some kind of community work there was personally not successful to me. Now that I'm a teacher I understand what was going on, but at the time, you know, I didn't understand why they didn't want to learn while I was there. So I really wasn't able to help them learn.

And there were some marches downtown while I was there—civil rights marches and also the freedom of speech, anti-Speaker Ban marches. But I pretty much was not involved with that. I went as a representative from the university to meet about fair housing in Greensboro, and we heard a presentation by a black man who was the, I guess, the HUD [United States Department of Housing and Urban Development] representative. He was the man in charge of public housing in Greensboro. And he was pretty pessimistic, and I was

not moved to do anything except go to a couple of meetings about that, so I—and report back to the university. So although that was an awareness of mine, it didn't affect me personally.

In the dorm, I was friends with some of the black students who lived on the same hall with me. As a matter of fact, one of them who did not continue at UNC at Greensboro, but went somewhere else to finish school, is now one of my friends as a teacher. She and I work together every day, and we don't say too much about those days because they were not particularly pleasant days for her, which is why she left. One of the girls told me that she was really irate that when dorm assignments came that it was assumed that black girls would all room together.

CJ: And weren't they also put on the ends of the halls?

BE: No, not in my dorm.

CJ: Not in your dorm. I have it on authority from some blacks who were there themselves in other interviews that they were put on the ends in the guest quarters at other dorms.

BE: Well, maybe so. In Moore, they were just on the hall.

CJ: On the regular hall in the regular dorm? Not segregated at all?

BE: No.

CJ: Well, they were in other dorms.

BE: As a matter of fact, my senior year one of the black girls roomed with a white girl, which caused some eyebrows to be raised. But—

CJ: Was that the first integrated pairing like that?

BE: It may have been. I don't know if it was or not. That would have been in 1965-66 and that's—I mean, that's just the way it worked out. They were friends and wanted to room together and that's just the way it worked out.

CJ: But all of the black—it was assumed that all of the black girls would room together.

BE: Yes.

CJ: And what were the dynamics between black students and white students on the campus?

BE: The—I think most of the white students avoided the black students. The black students I knew I knew through student government, working with them in student government and from the dorm and from classes. But I never had any social engagements with them other than dorm get-togethers. Some of the students that I knew, black and white, who did get together, got together off-campus, it seemed to me as opposed to on-campus activities, like

going out to eat and that kind of thing.

CJ: Did they sit—all of you all sit together in the dining hall?

BE: I don't remember.

CJ: Okay. I was going to ask you—

BE: I mean, there were only a handful of black students when I was there.

CJ: That's what I was going to ask you. Do you have any idea of the number?

BE: I don't. There were maybe four or five in my dorm, and that's—I'm not at all familiar with the number.

CJ: Oh, okay. Not as many as fifty or not?

BE: Probably not. I don't know. I tell you what we were more concerned about than blacks—and also my roommate was Jewish, and so I got in on some of that Jewish clique stuff too, which was not very nice. But the main concern was the men on campus. Golly, we hated—absolutely loathed the men on campus.

CJ: Tell me about that whole process because you were there when the decision was made from on high, and you were there when it was implemented and—tell me all about that.

BE: When I went to Woman's College, to me, it was like going to Wellesley or Smith [women's colleges in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and Northampton, Massachusetts, respectively]. I mean, it like going to a really superb women's school. And I'm glad that I went there because I did get a superb education and I did get the reinforcement of being a woman. I have friends who went to other schools who didn't get the opportunities that I got because it was assumed at those schools that men would be the ones that represented the campus and student government at meetings and so on. But the feeling was, and I think it was justified, that if men were admitted and we became just another part of the university, that Chapel Hill would get all the money, that we would not get the money that otherwise would be coming to us, that the academic reputation would sink. As a matter of fact, one of my friends hauled a sink out onto the campus and put it in front of Aycock Auditorium with a sign in it saying, "Our reputation will sink." She wanted to haul out a john and say, "Our reputation was flushed down the drain," but she wasn't strong enough to get the john out there, so she made do with a sink. And there was a feeling that, "Why change something that was good?" and if men wanted to go to college at the University of North Carolina, they could go to A&T [North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, Greensboro]. They didn't have to come to UNCG.

CJ: Or Chapel Hill or State.

BE: Or Chapel Hill or State, yeah.

CJ: Okay. What happened—were there organized protests?

BE: There were organized protests like marching on the chancellor's house. I understand that now the chancellor has a sign up that says, "Admittance is by invitation only."

CJ: Appointment only.

BE: Appointment only. Okay. Well, we made no appointments. We would just go over there and mill around with our little signs.

CJ: It was Chancellor Ferguson?

BE: It was Chancellor Ferguson, and then it was Chancellor [Otis A.] Singletary before Ferguson.

CJ: What happened?

BE: Nothing. They—we would be told that we shouldn't trample on the flowers. [laughs] And the decision was basically made in Raleigh.

CJ: Did he come out and talk to you, either chancellor?

BE: Chancellor Ferguson ate in the dining hall. Chancellor Ferguson was very accessible.

CJ: He's the one who had the cat named, "Black Cat?"

BE: Yes.

CJ: So when men came, what was it like, and did you have classes with men, and what were people saying? Were they grumbling about it or did they accept it or what?

BE: I had classes with men. If a man were called upon to give an answer in my class and the professor wanted anyone to expand on his answer, no one would. We tried to give them the silent treatment.

CJ: That was deliberate?

BE: That was deliberate. In student government, there was one man who was a representative of the day students. They elected a man and he generally was voted down if he proposed anything, and if he made a speech, people would find that opportunity to go outside and smoke a cigarette or something. It was—people were not very nice. We had a junior class show called, "The Male Came Lately." It was written by Leah Jane Farinetti, I think. She went on to Nashville [Tennessee] to country and western music. She was very talented. And the show was about men coming to campus and part of the debate was how traditions would change on campus. And the show was not a mean-spirited show. The show actually was

pretty upbeat and was an attempt to try to welcome men to campus and to try to get people through watching this theater they would come more acceptive of changes that would take place. But part of the show—when they're talking about traditions, they were talking about how the college song would change. It used to be "our sisters," and that would change and so on. And that was partially a joke because Leah Jane had set the college song to the tune of "Ghost Riders in the Sky," and whenever the Class of '66 sang it, we always sang it to "Ghost Riders in the Sky," while everybody else was dancing along to the regular song. So we were already making fun of tradition.

But there was always a Daisy Chain. Do you know about Daisy Chains at graduation?

CJ: Yes. I do.

BE: There was always a Daisy Chain, and one line in the play was that maybe instead of having Daisy Chains, now we would have Pansy Chains and that was supposed to be this very shocking line in the play. We thought surely the administration would throw it out, but they didn't pay any attention to it at all.

CJ: So your major efforts at protest didn't help? How did dynamics change at the university while you were there with the admission of men?

BE: There were so few men admitted when I was there that it didn't change very much. When I went back to our tenth reunion in 1976, there was a man who was president of student government who made the welcoming remarks, and I'm afraid the Class of '66 hissed when he was announced. And it's—it was bitter. It really was.

CJ: So the—how would you characterize the general attitude of the women you knew by the time you graduated?

BE: I think people had pretty much decided that the reputation of the university was less when they were seniors. One last test that we did, which—I mean, all these things were so silly looking back on them—so we had to choose who our graduation speaker would be. And we all got together, and we had this long, involved harangue that went on for hours and the people who prevailed said, "Listen, if this university has the reputation that we have been led to believe that it has, and if admitting men and changing it from Woman's College to UNCG had not had any effect on the university, then anybody in America ought to be glad to come here and make a graduation address, right?" So we will invite Jackie Kennedy [wife of President John F. Kennedy] to come make our graduation address. [both laugh]

CJ: Eminently logical, right?

BE: Right. Right. So the manners of inviting graduating speakers is, or was, that whoever the senior class chose had to be invited and that you could not invite anyone else until that person had said that they could not come. So we insisted that they invite Jackie Kennedy. And they did invite Jackie Kennedy, and she didn't reply and she didn't reply and she didn't reply until finally we were told that we were being completely unreasonable and that we just

wouldn't have a graduation speaker unless we did something about it. And so we said, "Okay, we won't have a graduation speaker." And that just wouldn't do, and so they found a friend of a friend of the chancellor's wife, I believe it was, to agree to give the graduation speech. And then the members of the Class of '66 all got together and decided that our reputation as a university was indeed as poor as we thought it was and that this was only proof of it, and therefore that we would all be impolite when the graduation speaker made his address.

CJ: It was a man?

BE: It was a man, yes. But, of course, we were not. We sat there very quietly and—

CJ: Chickened out?

BE: Chickened out, right. [both laugh]

CJ: I have a couple of factual questions I want to ask you before I lose them and then I want to move on to something a little more substantive, but—than my factual questions. This has been very substantive, but I'm afraid I'll forget these. Did you have to take a special entrance examination to get into Woman's College?

BE: I had to take just the SAT [Scholastic Aptitude Test], but not a special exam.

CJ: Okay. Okay. What was the other—okay, I'll get back to that later. I've lost the second one. I'll think of it in a minute. The third one had to do with the climate between blacks and whites on campus. I wanted to go back and pick up something you said. What would you say was the reason that the white students avoided the black students? You said they avoided contact with them pretty much.

BE: I think for most white students, the avoidance of black students was a cultural difference in that they felt uneasy. They didn't know of anything in common that they shared.

CJ: Didn't know what to say?

BE: Didn't know what to say, yeah. For example, in the newspapers, Rosa Parks [African-American. In 1955 she refused the request of a bus driver that she give up her seat for a white passenger. This sparked the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott.] and all this busing was very much in the news. I think Rosa Parks—I think that was before then. I get my time mixed up. Anyway, riding or not riding on buses was in the news. And I asked my friend who was black, who was from Durham if she had ever been asked to move to the back of the bus. And she said, "I've never ridden on a bus in my life." And I said, "What do you mean?" And she said, "I have a car. I go in the car wherever I want to go." And that was about the first that it had dawned on me, though of course, you know, it's absolutely obvious to me now, that the black students at UNCG were probably as wealthy or wealthier than everyone else. But the small town I came from the black people were not as wealthy as white people and would have ridden on buses and not have gone in cars, that is if we had

had buses. They had pick-up trucks and old beat-up cars or else great big Cadillacs, but not regular cars.

CJ: I want to touch just a little bit on rules and regulations, especially with regard to smoking and drinking. What were the regulations about those two things, and then any other regulations you want to comment about.

BE: When I first got to Woman's College, you couldn't smoke, and then it was changed to you couldn't smoke while walking on campus. But you could smoke in a smoking area, and I protested in legislature because you could smoke in legislature; that I just didn't like the smoking in legislature and when I was the president—the vice president of student government, the president of legislature—there was no smoking in legislature just because I asked people not to. But at the same time, I offered in a speech to the legislature my opinion that the rule that said you couldn't smoke while walking on campus didn't mean that you couldn't stop on campus and smoke a cigarette and put it out and then continue to walk. And people did that. People put on their shorts, put on their overcoats, went outside, walked along, stopped, lit cigarettes and smoked and talked and put them out and then kept on walking. It was like way to get around all the rules. There was no drinking when I was on campus. You could drink off campus, but you had to be able to sign in. And if you had trouble signing in, then you were dealt with by the authorities. And the people who manned the desk were people who usually got paid for it. Sometimes they were volunteers, and there was some controversy sometimes about whether or not they allowed other people to sign other people in.

CJ: Okay.

BE: I know there was some drinking that went on and also some drugs, marijuana, that went on in the dorms just because I happened to have been aware of people in my dorm that did that. There was a medicine cabinet, you know, with a mirror on it that, in some rooms because the dorm wasn't very well built, you could just lift the whole thing out of the wall and you could stash your marijuana or booze behind that and then set it back into the—

CJ: Stash your hash. [both laugh] My goodness. Good grief. People are ingenious, aren't they? Good grief. To your knowledge, did cigarette companies give out free cigarettes on campus?

BE: Not that I know of. I have never smoked, so I wasn't interested in that.

CJ: Okay. Let me clarify something just a little bit because I want to be sure I understand this. There was no smoking at all, even in dorm rooms, when you came?

BE: When I came. Now when I came as a freshman, freshmen could not smoke at all, even in the dorm rooms.

CJ: Oh, okay. Could sophomores, juniors and seniors?

BE: Maybe—they may have in other dorms.

CJ: All right. What about at your dorm? Could upperclassmen smoke in their rooms?

BE: See, in my dorm, when I was a freshman, there were only freshmen. There were freshmen dorms.

CJ: Oh, excuse me. Okay. Okay.

BE: On the quad where there was Shaw and Hinshaw and Cotten and whatever those other dorms are—those were all freshmen dorms.

CJ: Oh, okay.

BE: They were all freshmen, and they had two juniors who were the house advisors and then a grown person who was the dorm mother or whatever.

CJ: Was the honor system alive and well?

BE: Yes.

CJ: Tell me how people regarded it.

BE: I think people were respectful of it. It was run by students, and I got hauled in front of honor court once for not signing out before I went home for the weekend. If you were a freshman, you had to sign out and in every time you went off campus. I neglected to do that and phoned when I got home and said that I'd forgotten to sign out, but because I hadn't actually signed out, I had to go to honor court. And when I went, my junior house person went with me and it was all very pleasant and the students listened to my case and listened to my reasons and then they assigned me something—house arrest or something. I forget what it was. Couldn't go anywhere for several days. Had to be in my room at 7:30 [pm] or something like that.

As far as cheating on tests or plagiarism or that kind of thing, we had to sign a pledge on exams for some teachers, some professors. But I wasn't aware of any cheating or plagiarism that went on. When I was an upperclassman, I was more attuned to the honor court because usually I was friends with some of the people who were on the honor court, and we would eat together and so on. And they would never talk about it. It was very serious with them, and they would not say who was before them. It was all private information. And occasionally, they would mention to me that they had had to recommend to some—that someone be dismissed from school, but they didn't make the final decision. The chancellor did.

CJ: So what was the hierarchy, the structure? First you had hall board for each dorm, and then go on up for me. How did it work?

BE: I'm not sure. I know you had the dorm hall board, and I know you had the honor court. Whether there was anything between that, I don't know.

CJ: Honor court was higher than hall board?

BE: Honor court was the highest. Honor court—there was an elected student government position as the judge of the honor court. And—

CJ: Were the judges—so the judges were elected?

BE: The judges were elected. They were students, and they met, I think, in the basement of the faculty building or the Alumni House or maybe in the administration building. There was a room that they had that was a very private place, so that no one supposedly could see who was going and coming from honor board. It was all very professional.

CJ: And the chancellor had the last word in all cases or just expulsion cases?

BE: I'm not certain about that. I don't think any minor cases like forgetting to sign out when you go home were called to his attention.

CJ: Yeah. That's true. Tell me about the campus traditions that were alive and well when you were there. You've mentioned the Daisy Chain, and you've mentioned the sister classes. I have one specific question about sister classes. This is what I was going to ask you before. Did your junior class sisters write to you in the summer before your freshman year—kind of an introductory letter—or had that gone by the board by the time you came?

BE: I got a letter from my sister.

CJ: You did? Okay. So talk about other campus traditions, if you would.

BE: Well, let's see. The freshmen arrived a week earlier than everybody else, maybe three days earlier, and we were taught some campus songs. We had to learn the school song by heart and the colors and cheers and so on. And as a reward, though it actually was a punishment, we all were put on trolleys, buses, and taken over to the parking lot of Kenan [Football] Stadium in Chapel Hill where the freshman guys from UNC met us in the parking lot for a party. And that was a big deal to go over there and party around with these guys. Everybody was told that they had to wear skirts and high heels and stockings. And people spent hours on make-up and doing their hair and so on, and we got over there and here were all these old scruffy guys wearing whatever they wanted to wear. [both laugh] Great party. It was just all out in the parking lot. It was a big disappointment. But at that party you were supposed to arrange for a date for the game, the football game. And so everybody went around and made their dates for the football game. And then, I guess, transportation was provided for the football game too. I can't remember.

CJ: You were bused over to Chapel Hill?

BE: We were bused over to Chapel Hill for the first home football game. And—

CJ: That was of the consolidated university system?

BE: The consolidated university system, right.

CJ: Yeah. Right.

BE: Then we had Rat Day, which all the freshmen were rats and had to do what the upperclassmen told them to do—carry books and get down on the ground and put their noses on pennies and all sorts of things like that.

CJ: A little hazing ritual?

BE: Little hazing rituals, right.

CJ: If you didn't, there was a Rat Court, right, that tried you and found you guilty if you refused?

BE: Oh, was there a punishment? I don't know.

CJ: There used to be in the '30s and '40s.

BE: Yeah, I don't remember anything about that because by the time I was an upperclassman, there was no more Rat Day, so I didn't get in—in fact, it might have been the last Rat Day when we were freshmen or the year after that.

CJ: Well, that's important. I've not heard anybody else say that. So you think maybe '62 or '63 was the last Rat Day?

BE: I think so.

CJ: Somewhere around in there?

BE: Or at least when I was an upperclassman, there was no Rat Day.

CJ: What about class jackets and class rings?

BE: Yeah. We had class jackets in the class colors. I've still got mine.

CJ: What are your colors?

BE: Green and white.

CJ: Green and white, okay.

BE: And our sister class was like white and green, I think. It was sort of like inversed.

CJ: Oh, I see. What were the four classes' colors, if you remember?

BE: I remember a gray and a kind of a purple, maybe. I'm not certain.

CJ: And you got the class jackets, which year?

BE: Sophomore year you got your class jackets, and then junior year you could get a ring. And you would pay a fee, so you would get a yearbook every year; and you got your subscription to *The Carolinian* [campus newspaper] and to the *Coraddi* [campus literary magazine]. All of that was thrown in.

CJ: Did they still have those literary societies? I believe those had gone out.

BE: No. There were no literary societies. And there were no sororities. That was illegal to have sororities on campus.

CJ: Right. Right. The chapel—was there required chapel or was there a chapel service of any kind?

BE: No. There was not a required chapel. There was required assemblies. We called them mass meetings, and they were required. And they were required for freshmen. The auditorium was not large enough to hold everybody, and so they checked on the attendance of the freshmen and did not check on the attendance of the upperclassmen. Though everybody—

[End Side A—Begin Side B]

CJ: We were talking about mass meetings and taking attendance for freshmen.

BE: Yes. Freshmen had to sit up in the balcony, and attendance was taken. You had rows assigned according to your dorm and seats assigned according to your room number. And so you had to be there.

CJ: It's pretty well—it's pretty easy to take attendance based on that. You had a seating plan.

BE: Yeah. That's right. And you had to stand when the seniors came in, which was hard to do 'cause from the balcony, you couldn't see where the seniors came in.

CJ: You were in the nose-bleed section?

BE: Right.

CJ: Did you have marshals?

BE: Yes, there were marshals.

CJ: How were they chosen?

BE: They wore white dresses. They were chosen by academic average. People with the highest averages were the marshals.

CJ: It had ceased to be a popularity contest? Because in the '30s and '40s it was a popularity contest. The most beautiful girls were often chosen marshals. They wore white dresses; they had—what—gold sashes that said "marshal" on them?

BE: Yeah. That's right.

CJ: Gold and white. The school colors were gold and white? The class flower—the school flower was the daisy? Correct?

BE: That's right.

CJ: The school motto intrigues me. The school motto was "Service." How much a part of your life, you and your peers' lives, was that motto before you came to campus and did that change when you were on campus? Was it a conscious orientation towards service by the administration and propaganda about it? Or, you know, what was that like?

BE: I'm not certain because since my mother and my aunt went to Woman's College, I had the feeling that this was a place where you were expected to use your capabilities to serve other people. And I found that emphasis to be there in things like going out to Dudley or protesting the Speaker Ban or the marches downtown at the public library or all sorts of different ways. The campus was very much community involved. And to me, that was just the natural way things were supposed to be. I can remember singing the words to the school song, "Service we shall give," and people rolling their eyes, but I think that's because we just thought it was kind of a dippy song. [both laugh]

CJ: "Deep graven on each heart," if I remember the words. Any other traditions that come to mind?

BE: Well, I'll probably think of some after you leave, but not right now I can't.

CJ: If you think of any, just interrupt me.

BE: Oh, well, the Daisy Chain, yeah. The sophomores—I think it was the sophomores—would go out and make the Daisy Chain for their sister class and then—

CJ: The seniors.

BE: The seniors. And then those people—I can't remember if it was certain people or if just anybody that could stay—it could have been marshals or it could have been dorm representatives—I'm not sure how they were chosen—would go to graduation—actually, the day before graduation, I think—for the class day exercises and carry in the Daisy Chain and have it there for the seniors to march through.

CJ: This was very long. It was two rows, right?

BE: Right. Right.

CJ: For the seniors to march through?

BE: Two long rows of ropes intertwined with ivy with daisies plugged into it.

CJ: How beautiful.

BE: And we would—we got on the buses really early in the morning—

CJ: You did it?

BE: Yeah. We did it. And went out. There was this man. I have no idea who this man was who always was the one that knew where the daisy field was and had been in charge of this, you know, since the flood or something. And we all piled onto this school activity bus and went out to this field and picked all these daisies and came back and made this daisy chain, which they then, I think, put in the cooler of the cafeteria or something overnight and then the next day, we'd put on our pretty white dresses and held the daisy chain for the seniors to march through.

CJ: Did you still—was graduation the same day as Class Day then or not?

BE: I don't know.

CJ: Did you still then, after graduation, lie [sic] the daisy chain on the ground and make it into the year of the graduating class?

BE: Right.

CJ: Like they did. That's neat. Then that was true for your class too?

BE: That's right.

CJ: You had that?

BE: We had a daisy chain to march through.

CJ: What did the graduates wear? Caps and gowns or dresses?

BE: Caps and gowns.

CJ: Caps and gowns.

BE: Well, on Class Day you would wear a dress, which was supposed to be a white dress. I made mine. I was so proud of it. I made my own graduation dress.

CJ: Oh, that's neat. Tell me a little about life since Woman's College and how your education has influenced you since then—the legacy of it.

BE: The legacy of it. I went immediately from Woman's College to Duke University [Durham, North Carolina], thinking I was going to get a PhD in English or at least get as much as I could before I stopped going to school. And I was called into the office by one of the English professors, who said to me, "Don't go to Duke unless you will get at least a master's degree because if you go from Woman's College to Duke and you quit before you get your degree, then they will not accept anyone else from Woman's College because they are prejudiced against people from Woman's College. And they tell us that they don't like to accept graduates from Woman's College because they will not finish but instead will quit and go to work or get married. And so you have to finish." And so I went to Duke, and I met my husband while I was there and I did get married while I was there, but I made sure that I finished even though it took me two years instead of one year to get a master's degree. And I had to go to work before I finished, so I did all my classwork in two summers, a year and two summers. and did my thesis during the year while I was working and graduated in two years with a master's degree. And there were times that I wanted to quit and I knew I couldn't just because I had promised I wouldn't. That's probably the greatest sacrifice I've made for the university. But it worked out fine for me.

When I started teaching, I found that the methods of teaching that I'd learned in English education classes at UNCG were far superior to what was being used in the public schools in North Carolina where I was teaching and that people did not understand why I was doing what I was doing. And I have lived and taught long enough to see the effective teacher training program come into being for all teachers in North Carolina, and it is exactly the same thing that I learned when I was at UNCG. The kinds of people that I meet in my work who have gone to school at UNCG, I think, are more outspoken as women and are—share some sort of camaraderie of knowing that women can do anything they want to do. I find that—well, I really do—I am involved in a lot of service and whether that comes from the university or not, I don't know. And when I first started teaching, I taught in an all-black school my second year of teaching. I was one of three white people in the school, and I think I would not have had courage enough to do that had I not met black students at UNCG and gotten to be friends with some of them. So, yeah, there's been some influence. You want to stop that while I get rid of this dog?

CJ: Okay. We were talking about women being confident of their potential to do anything they wanted to. In your opinion, how did that confidence match up with what actually happened to women after they left Woman's College? What kind of patterns are you aware of regarding career versus marriage and family and career and marriage and family? What kinds of paths did people pursue? And did they give up their careers as soon as they had their children or what kind of patterns emerged, if you know?

BE: I do know. I'm president of the class and so have been involved with what happened to the alumni in my class. There are a few alumni who waited a long time to get married. And—

CJ: Few or a few?

BE: A few. There are few or few and a few. Those people had their careers, and they got married and tended not to have children. They continued their careers and were pretty financially stable. Most of the people in the class got married and had children and if they had jobs, they were jobs like teaching—jobs that allowed them to have time with children—traditional jobs. I know a few of my classmates who are doctors or radiologists or people of higher management level positions, and they have tended not to marry but to pursue that as a career.

It's really hard—as our class gift gave a scholarship to the university and there was some misunderstanding so that it didn't grow for a while because when the Development Office made a ruling once they were going to merge it with other scholarships and we didn't make any contributions to it, specifically because we didn't think it existed, but then this year, we found out that it still exists. And so as our class gift for our twenty-fifth anniversary—we've been trying to build it up. Well, our initial expectations of how much money was out there were totally exaggerated from how much has come in. We've collected more than any other class in our position has collected, but when I talk to my classmates about how much they can give, most of them have two or three children who are in high school or college and they are, if they are working, are the second income of the family and just are not in a situation to give any money. So that I think what you see is that as soon as people hit the job market, they found the traditional jobs unlike today when they can move just about anywhere in what they're doing.

CJ: And marriage and family—I don't want to put words in your mouth—but, were marriage and family still considered to be a profession in themselves? Raising children, was that still part of the—?

BE: Marriage and family was what was expected. As a matter of fact when I went to college, my father told me that he thought I should major in home economics because the women should learn to do that kind of thing. And see, my father's never been wrong. He was absolutely right. His reasons were wrong, but his advice was very good. If I had majored in home economics, then I would be in the position today to be in some higher management positions in design, in industry and so on because now home economics is not even called that anymore. They've renamed the whole department. I forget what they call it now. It's some high-faluting—

CJ: Domestic management.

BE: Yeah, something like that. [both laugh] Had nothing to do with houses, right? Nothing to do with raising families but is on this really higher plane, and he was absolutely right. He was a man ahead of his time. He just didn't know it.

CJ: You didn't know it. [both laugh]

BE: Right. And I was told, you know, you can major in anything you want to major in as long as

you get your teaching certificate because you'll always have a job if you get your teaching certificate because no matter where your husband goes in his work, you will be able to find a job as a teacher. And that was just the idea.

CJ: Yeah. I understand. Is there anything else? Any other memories or any other comments you want to be sure to make before we end the interview?

BE: Well, there was a very special person on campus that I have not mentioned, and you'd asked me earlier about role models and this man was not really a role model, but he really influenced the campus. And that was Randall Jarrell [poet, literary critic, children's author, essayist, novelist, 11th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress]. Randall Jarrell was a poet, and he was not a well man and had to go into the hospital and died while we were on campus. And Fred Chappell [English professor, author, poet] took over his classes and finished them up for him. But Randall Jarrell had a little yellow sports car, and he had a tennis racket that was strung with yellow gut and he wore his tennis whites. He had a bright yellow towel and was like Europe come to campus, you know. California come to campus. He was just a real bright spot and was a hope to me, and I think to a lot of other people that there was something that was not drab about life. And when I was first in his class, it was very popular for people to wear brown and black and dark colors like dark green. And he got after us one day and said, "No eighteen-year-old should wear brown. Why don't you wear bright colors?"

CJ: He was poetry? Poetry class?

BE: Poetry class, right. And he tried to get us to be a little bit more creative—well, a lot more creative and enthusiastic about life than we were. And he was really a bright spot because, you know, you have a lot of old maid ladies on campus that were a pretty gruesome sight. [both laugh]

CJ: Still. There still are.

BE: It was nice to have him there. And I think because of him, also, there were Robert Watson [English professor, architect of master of creative writing program] and Fred Chappell.

CJ: He's still there. Yeah. And he is beloved. Did you take—you took a poetry class with Randall Jarrell?

BE: Yes.

CJ: Did he succeed in livening everybody up and making them more creative?

BE: I think so. His classes were at times very strained because we realized that he was not well at the time and so we would liked to have, perhaps discussed things more than we did. We pretty much just sat there and listened to what he had to say unless he asked us a question.

CJ: Did you attend the memorial service when he died?

BE: Yes.

CJ: What was it like?

BE: I don't remember a thing about it. I really don't.

CJ: Okay. What was the feeling among those of you who had had him when he died?

BE: There was a great deal of controversy over whether he meant to kill himself or not. And people would say that he did and other people would get very angry and say that he did not. We just missed him.

CJ: Yeah. Yeah. You're the second person who has mentioned the tennis outfit. I'm really glad to know that. Anything else you can think of that you'd like to say?

BE: Anybody tell you about the tray riot in the cafeteria yet?

CJ: The tray riot? No. Tell me about that. That sounds good.

BE: Well, when I first went to UNCG, the cafeteria food—you had to eat at the cafeteria. You'd already paid for it. The food was absolutely awful, just awful. And they decided to change management somehow, and they got this company named [ARA] Slater [Food Services]. And there was a manager of Slater that we called the undertaker. [both laugh] He was a very tall, thin man who wore black suits, and we were sure that he was out to poison us. But anyway, he was in charge of trying to make things better, and he put in a salad line and tried to spice things up a bit. And we were still displeased, and one day there was a tray riot. And I don't know who organized it. I have my suspicions who organized it, but I don't know for sure. And we went to class one morning, and all over every board in the whole campus was written "tray riot" and the name of the cafeteria. Which one it was now I've forgotten and the time. And so I went with my roommate and some friends to that particular section of the cafeteria. We usually ate in a different one, but we went to that one that day. And at that particular time, people picked up their utensils and started banging on the tables and just made a lot of noise. And then got up and left and that's all there was to the tray riot. But what it meant was, you see, there were these rollers and you were supposed to take your tray back and put your tray on the roller for it to be taken into the place for the tray to be cleaned.

CJ: Yeah, when you're through eating?

BE: When you're through eating, right. And it just meant that the people that worked in the cafeteria had to pick all the trays and put them on the rollers instead of the students each having done them. And they didn't mind because they were work-study students and they got paid extra for the extra time that it took them to do it. And that was not too hard on them, but as a result of the tray riot and some other protests, the cafeterias were completely refurbished with new furniture and food and so on. You were given a choice as to what you wanted. You still had to eat there because you still paid for it, but at least you had a choice.

CJ: So it produced results?

BE: Yeah. It produced results. Yeah. But of course, actually, what really produced results was Chancellor Ferguson insisted on it.

CJ: Why did he insist on it? Do you think he was influenced by the student protest?

BE: Yes. He was very open to what the students wanted, yeah.

CJ: Okay, well thank you very much. This has been wonderful. Anything else you want to say before I turn off the tape?

BE: I don't know. There's more I could say. I have a lot to say, but I guess just one more thing, thinking about the library. I haven't mentioned the library yet. The library at that time was only two stories tall and had a third floor that was—you had to get to by a key from the elevator.

CJ: Oh, yes.

BE: And go up into this caged area where the rare books were. And once I had to do a report, which required me to look at Samuel Johnson's [English author, essayist, author, literary critic, biographer, lexicographer] dictionary, which was up there. And so I was taken up by a librarian, and she opened the cage and locked me inside the cage to do my report and told me what time she would be back for me. And that was my access to that material. And when I got to Duke and went to the rare book room at Duke, which was this lovely Elizabethan room with all these books and all you had to do to get one was just to ask Mrs. Tavernese—would she please get it off the shelf for you. And you could sit in this elegant surroundings and actually spend as long as you wanted to doing it. It was just a joy.

CJ: I remember Inge Tavernese very well. I was working at Duke Library when she was there.

BE: She's a wonderful woman.

CJ: She was.

BE: I think while I was at UNCG, I did not realize how bad the library was. I hope it's better now.

CJ: Oh, it's much better now. They have the rare books accessible in the Special Collections and you can--have you been in the Special Collection?

BE: No, I haven't.

CJ: It's a beautiful room, and you can go and ask, and they'll let you sit and look at it. And have you seen the new tower in the new library?

BE: From the outside. I haven't been inside.

CJ: Well, third floor main now is all art books—art and music.

BE: How wonderful.

CJ: It's a lovely place to study. And you don't have to get locked in or locked out. [both laugh]
Well, thank you again.

BE: Well, it's been fun.

CJ: Okay, thank you.

[End of Interview]