

UNCG CENTENNIAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Jane T. Mitchell

INTERVIEWER: Linda Danford

DATE: November 29, 1990

LD: Dr. Mitchell, can you tell me when you came to UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro] and in what capacity?

JM: I came in 1958 to teach in the Curry Laboratory School or Curry Demonstration School [elementary, secondary public laboratory school on campus]. I taught two years of Spanish, two years of French, and I began—I think it was my second or third year here—a foreign language in the elementary school, which was French. And it was so successful that we later hired another teacher who began, who taught in the flex program, and then I took over the middle grade—junior high, as we called it then—and did the high school. And what was interesting about the Curry Laboratory School—I think they called it the Curry Demonstration School more—was that each semester I had two student teachers. They didn't have a full semester or full-time student teaching, and they would just teach two classes. So they would—I had one student teacher in the two French classes, and one student teacher in the two Spanish classes, and I seldom taught. [laughs] I got the classes started in the fall and maybe again at the beginning of second semester, and then most of the time there were student teachers in those classes. Although you would do demonstration classes for them or sometimes teach with them, or—. But it was so funny because I remember it was Woman's College [of the University of North Carolina] when I came, and so these young women who were teaching would walk across campus in the morning. They had to go to classes the rest of the day, but they'd walk across in the morning in their real high heels, all dressed up to do their teaching and in makeup. And then later on, they would take those off and go back and be a real student. I guess maybe it was more difficult to be a student teacher then because they really didn't know which they were. They were—two hours of the day they were teachers or tried to act like teachers, and then the rest of the day they had to be a student again; whereas now, we expect them to go into the schools and be a teacher all the time.

LD: Full time, right away.

JM: Full time.

LD: Who was it who hired you?

JM: Well, I saw a lot of people. Herbert Vaughan [Jr.] was principal of the Demonstration School and also taught in the School of Education, taught 381 by the way. He mainly taught me how to do blue sheets, which is the way they kept records in the schools then.

But I saw him—but he couldn't—he had to approve me. But then I went over and had a conference with Dean [Mereb] Mossman [Department of Sociology and Anthropology faculty, dean of instruction, dean of the college, dean of faculty, vice chancellor for academic affairs]. And I'll never forget that because it was late in the year. I mean, it was already August, and I had a post back at Greenbrier College for Women in [Lewisburg] West Virginia, but I really needed to make a change, and this was—I had never done anything like this before. I had never trained to work with teachers or be demonstration teacher for those who were going to teach. But I did have my master's already then. And I remember Dean Mossman saying to me—I was worried about leaving the school where I was with such short notice, and she said something to the effect that she thought it was always easier for institutions to yield or give, bend, than for people—that we had to look out for ourselves. So I remember they didn't offer me as much as I thought I needed to make the move and everything. So we were staying at a Journey's End Motel—I think that's still out there, but it's not Journey's End anymore. It's just in the middle of—. Do you know where it is?

LD: Steve [husband] and I stayed there once when we first came to Greensboro.

JM: Did you? [laughs] Well, anyway, I was out there, and I had just about made up my mind. They just didn't offer me enough. I couldn't make the move for that, and I thought, "Well, I'll call him one more time." So I called him, I said, "You know, Mr. Vaughan, I just don't believe I can make the move for that. It's not worth my while." And he said, "Well, what would you need?" And I said, "Five thousand [dollars]." [laughter]

LD: I won't ask you what they offered you. Doesn't that sound funny? 1958.

JM: That's right. And that was more than I was making.

LD: Amazing.

JM: Yes. So that shows you how salaries have improved.

LD: What were you teaching at Greenbrier? Foreign languages?

JM: That was interesting too. Yes. A junior college had two years of high school and two years of college. And I went there—I remember the woman who came to see me to try to talk me into teaching there taught Bible and English. And they needed a Spanish-English teacher when I went, and so I taught the Spanish, and she said, I said, "Well, I'm not trained to teach English." And she said, "Well, you speak it don't you? And you've had some English classes, haven't you?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "You can teach it, and I'll help you." So that's what I began with, and then at the end of my first year there, he said he knew I was French, preferred to teach French, and the French teacher left. He said, "You can have all the French, and there will be no English, if you can find a Spanish-English teacher."

Well, I remembered that my roommate at Mary Baldwin [College, Staunton, Virginia] had majored in English and had had a lot of Spanish, so I called her in

Greenville, South Carolina. She was working in a bank. And I said, "Ethel, have you ever thought of teaching?" And she said, "Well, I had thought I might give it a try." And I said, "Well, why don't you do it now?" [chuckles] And she gave them two weeks' notice, and she came. And she didn't like it because there were a lot of parents from Latin American countries who sent their children there. The Greenbrier Military School was there, so they sent the boys there and the girls to Greenbrier College for Women, where I was. And so I had to help her make her lesson plans. I guess that was sort of my introduction to working with other teachers. So we sat every week we'd sit down and plan, and she said, "But they can speak better than I can." I said, "Ah, hah, but you know more grammar than they. And so we'll do grammar, won't we, Ethel?" So we did. But it worked out very nicely. And I think I mainly wanted to get away from West Virginia when I came to North Carolina, and my cousin had gone here. And I had always heard good things about The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It was, I had always heard, not maybe the largest, in the South women's college. And I knew that a lot of women came here from New Jersey and from the East, from a lot of places.

LD: So it had a reputation outside the South?

JM: It did. It did. Yes. It was an outstanding school, and it was—. Another thing I remember, was when Hunt, [North Carolina] Governor [Jim] Hunt, perhaps when, yes, he was governor when he came to speak. I've forgotten what the occasion was that he came to speak. But I remember his saying that nobody had to give him an introduction to Woman's College. It was already UNCG, but he said Woman's College. He says, "I learned all about it at my mother's knee." So I think in North Carolina, all of the—you know, they wanted to send their daughters here. They knew they had a good thing. And so the farming families, the best families, they sent their daughters here. And I think New Jersey and other places realized that it was a good thing too. When I came, I think one of the strongest departments was the Department of Physical Education. You know, Ethel Martus was head of that department and had great respect all over the campus and the state, certainly the state and beyond. But I remember their saying, "Well, you know, the reason physical education gets anything they want is that if Ethel Martus wants something and the legislature is meeting, she just gets in her car and drives down there and lobbies." Of course, you couldn't do that now. So I was pleased when—I was the one who was on the honorary degrees committee when it came up for her to get her honorary degree [in 1989].

LD: The interviews that I've had with people—it has come out that there were a number of very strong women on this campus in positions of authority.

JM: Well, for example, in the Department of Romance Languages, there was [Dr.] Meta Miller when I came. And she was very—well, I started to say she was very feminine. She wasn't, but she wasn't masculine either. I mean, she wasn't that kind of woman that we have today who feels like she's got to be sort of manly or use some of men's language or something to prove that they are strong enough to hold a position as head or something. She was proud to be a lady. She was a lady, that's what I want to say. And at the same time a very good department chair. I came, and I was in the School of Education—of

course, that's where the Curry Laboratory—Demonstration—School was, and yet, she made me feel a part of the language department. If she had dinners for the language department, she included me.

And I remember one of those dinners—she lived over here on Walker Avenue with, oh, with the woman in the history department. I want to say [Vera] Largent. Maybe it was. Largent. And she invited some of the members who had retired in the department, if they were still around. And one she invited was Miss [Augustine] LaRochelle, and I don't know if you remember her or not, but she was an interesting figure in the romance language department because after she retired—she'd always wanted to learn all these Spanish dances, cha cha cha, and all those. And so she went to Arthur Murray's [dance studio] and took lessons, and she was so good that her—she and her partner, much younger than she, went to New York, and they won dance contests, and she would give programs around and do the samba, and the cha cha cha, and the rhumba, and all of these wonderful things. Well, anyway, at one of Meta Miller's dinners for the department, afterwards we'd usually just sort of sit around and talk. And Miss LaRochelle, her head would go over, and she'd always, not snore, but you knew she was asleep. And then another woman I remember who was here and was nice to me when I came in the Spanish department was—oh, gosh, I never thought I would forget her—Helen Cuddy [?]. And she invited me and another new woman in Spanish that year. Eleanor, Eleanor somebody. I'm not coming up with names very well. But the people in the language department were very outgoing.

LD: Was it a largely female faculty in '58?

JM: I'm trying to think. [James] Jim Atkinson came that year, and he's still there. [William] Bill Felt was there. I'm trying to name the men. There were more women. There were more women than now.

LD: Do you think there was a conscious effort made to bring more men in?

JM: Oh, yes. I understood, and I think this was more than just rumor, that when we did become UNC Greensboro that—. Who was dean then?

LD: It was still Mossman, I think.

JM: It was still Mossman. But an effort was made—in fact, strong pressure was put on the women who were heads of departments to step down and let them bring in a male. You know, they laughingly said—Clarence Shipton left the School of Education after he had gone to [University of North Carolina at] Chapel Hill to work on his doctorate, and he was asked to work in administration or in student affairs or something. He became that first year that it was UNCG, "Dean of Man." We used to laugh because we had so few male students at first. And so I think the effort to get more men in visible positions was to draw more male students here.

LD: Did it cause hard feelings on the part of the women that stepped down?

JM: Some. Yes, some women—Meta Miller certainly would never—there again, she was too much of a lady to create a fuss, but I'm sure she felt it. But she was getting older. She retired a few years later. But it would have been nice, I think, if she could have had her last three years or something.

LD: In those days the heads of departments stayed on somewhat longer than they do now.

JM: Yes. It wasn't this five years and out. I think it's because the stresses are so much greater.

LD: Do you think it's better to have a limited term of—?

JM: Given today. Then, that was okay. But one thing that I thought was unfortunate with Meta Miller is—you know those little small offices they have in McIver [Building]? She was put—they used to share them because it was a bigger department, so there were two, often, in those little offices.

LD: Where could you get two in those little offices?

JM: Well, often you would just cram in two desks, and you'd have a desk. That's about what it was—maybe a desk and a file cabinet or half a filing cabinet. And she was in there with some sort of young man and—. There were a lot of younger faculty members, and these men would sort of come in there and sit around and chew the fat. And often she couldn't work there or—I understand that there was a little—she never said anything, but that there was—you know how young people are. They come in and they're not—they don't really consider the older faculty person who's been there. But Mrs. [Annie Beam] Funderburk [Class of 1916] was also in that department. And Ruth Shaver [instruction and methods supervisor, School of Education; professor of romance languages] was there when I came.

LD: Is she still living?

JM: I think so. And she did the job I did at Curry before I came. She'd been in the armed services, and when she—as I understand an interpreter during the war or something. And so when she came back, I think she first came and took the position at Curry and then went over to the romance language department.

LD: What about the School of Education? They never had a woman dean did they?

JM: I think Lois Edinger [professor of curriculum and instruction] maybe one summer acted as dean. Not since I've been here. I've been here through—Dean [Kenneth] Howell came the same year I did. And then—

LD: When was Kane?

JM: [Dr. Robert] O'Kane. Then came O'Kane. And then [Dr. David H.] Dave Reilly, and now we have [Dr. A. Edward] Uprichard. So I've been through four deans.

- LD: I think it was Lois Edinger who told me that there had never been a woman. And she thought it was kind of a pity. She must not be counting her summer.
- JM: Well, she may not have had any kind of appointment. It could have been one of those things where she just said, "Well, you know, if anything comes up, I'll take care of it until so and so comes on board," or something like that. So she was probably not very official. No, we had a—we did interview a woman before Uprichard came. Remember, we did that search for two years or maybe longer because the first year we didn't come up with anybody. So I think maybe even another search committee, and we kept looking until we got one. And he really is a go-getter. Top notch. I think we're fortunate. I'm glad we waited.
- LD: That's good. I want to go back to ask you about Curry. When—were you still teaching there when the schools closed?
- JM: Well, no, that's funny. I guess we knew it was coming because O'Kane was probably brought there, "Make it work or make it pay for itself or—." It was expensive. Laboratory schools, I understand, are extremely expensive, and it's kind of like the home ec[onomics] cafeteria that we all liked. I guess they didn't have money to update it. It wasn't making money. It lost money, so they had to close it.
- LD: I was sorry to see that go.
- JM: Yes, I was too. But I guess I knew it was coming, but a guy had already—I had the [scholar exchange program founded by Arkansas Senator J. William] Fulbright in '64-'65, and the following summer I said, "I can't just let that, all that wonderful French I've learned, go to waste." So I really—that following summer went to Chapel Hill with the idea that I would take some courses. And you can only do that for so many summers before they say, "You've got to declare for a degree program." So I went ahead and declared for the PhD. And I must have gone the summer of '66, '67, '68, and then it was time to go for your year residency. And so I had already talked with Dean O'Kane, and I said, "You know, I want to—is there any way I can have sort of a year, a leave of absence?" And we talked, and he realized and I realized that—I think we knew then it was going to close.
- LD: Phased out.
- JM: Be phased out. And I said, "I realize the job that I have won't be here," but I said, "In the time that I've been here, I'd rather—I think I've made a reputation for myself and I like what I'm doing, and I would hate to give that up." He says, "Well, we would like to have you back, and we certainly have a half-time job for you, if romance language—if you'd like to apply there for the other half." So the year that I was at Chapel Hill, I applied—I don't remember—something like that, I wrote a letter to George McSpadden [professor of romance languages], and I said, "O'Kane says there's a half-time job there, and I would like to come back," and that's what I told you. And while others at Chapel Hill were wondering, "Where—how can we find a job? Are there any jobs about?" and all this. He

wrote me back, and it just seemed to be a *fait accompli*, just very easy. So that's when I came as the—on the joint appointment. And that has had its *advantages* and *les inconveniences*.

LD: Yes. And I want to ask you about that later. Do you remember exactly when the school finally did—?

JM: Well, the year I was at Chapel Hill was '60—, I think it was '69-'70.

LD: And that was the last—that was it for the Curry?

JM: Yes. Because when I came back there was no Curry. There was no high school. See, they had phased the elementary—no they had phased the—that was when they phased the high school out. They had another year or so of just the elementary, and they brought in a fellow named [Dr. Bryce] Perkins [director of Curry School, professor of education] and he was to make it go or close it. And he tried a year or two, and then they closed the elementary later. So the high school closed first.

LD: When you first came, wasn't Curry in the same building that you—?

JM: No, no, no, no, no. It was the Curry Building where it is now. It was not refurbished as it is today.

LD: It was originally—years before it had been somewhere else, but it was already in the Curry Building.

JM: Well now, as I understand from [Elisabeth] Lib Bowles [Class of 1950, professor of education], as you go into College Drive, it's right there where that bell is now.

LD: Oh, I thought it was down where the Petty Science Building is.

JM: Well, now you check that with Lib.

LD: I'll ask Lib because I talked to somebody who had gone, who came here—whose father was in the economics department, and she had come here in the '20s and had gone for two or three years to the school.

JM: Well, they would know. You know somebody else you might want to talk to is Jane Kimmel [Class of 1946]. Her father [Herbert Kimmel, education professor] taught there, and she went there. She lives over here on Camden Road. She's a retired biology teacher. She might give you other insights as a student there and as the daughter of a faculty member there.

LD: What about hiring? Do you think hiring was much more informal back in the '50s and '60s?

- JM: Oh, yes. Lib and I and several others often talk now, as we are on committees to look for new faculty members: We couldn't be hired today. No, the criteria they use and the standards are much different. And yes, it's more formal. I think of necessity. You know, we have the officer there being sure we take care of minorities and that they really get a fair shake.
- LD: Do you think the system really does work? I mean, when you actually look at who gets hired?
- JM: Are you talking about minorities now?
- LD: Well, I mean the system is designed to make sure that you—that it is opened up nationally. I just wonder whether word of mouth still and friends still do make a difference. I'm not asking you to implicate a particular—
- JM: No, no. Mereb Mossman. They said she had quite a network. If she needed somebody, she'd call somebody in California, another dean or something, and say, "I need a professor of—." And she could just hire them. There was no search or anything like that. I tell you one thing this probably does. I think, like in the romance language department, we still have a heavy component of people who got their doctorates at Chapel Hill or maybe Duke [University, Durham, North Carolina]. Duke and Chapel Hill. And I think it enriches a department if you've got people from diverse institutions. So the national search probably was intended to do that too. I think that's good. That's healthy. And I think it's worked awfully well in the School of Ed[ucation]. We really had a—if you—I couldn't guess where all the degrees were from over there. So that experience, I noticed it most when we brought in some new people last year, and we were looking at our doctoral program, and both of these young ones would come in and say how it was done at their institution. And I'd never thought about it being done any other way. So you need that.
- LD: I think that's true. Let me ask you again about Mereb Mossman. How would you—when you were talking about styles of female leadership. What kind of style—?
- JM: I never really understood her, but I used to see her at the beauty parlor, and she was gracious and friendly and lovely, and yet on campus and in meetings she was hard. And I guess, maybe, often opinionated, and she certainly had—there were a lot of female faculty that objected strongly to Mossman Building being named after her.
- LD: Really? For specific reasons or just—?
- JM: Well, I don't think that—I think they did think that she was the one that forced a lot of women chairs to step down. And they resented that.
- LD: It's all something of a paradox. You know? Well, I have gotten the impression that she has her strong fans and her strong detractors. People that she brought here are quite—tend to be quite loyal to her. But she does sound like something of a one-woman show.

- JM: But you know, even Dean O'Kane and I thought we were supposed to be doing searches then. He had his—there were ways that he could bring in his friends all the same. I don't know whether I should say this on the tape or not, but for a while there we had what we called the Harvard [University, Cambridge, Massachusetts] Mafia at the School of Education. [chuckles] And, indeed, I understand they met and sort of planned strategy about how they were going to conduct things, and finally the rest of us got smart too, and we planned a little strategy before we would go to meetings and vote.
- LD: What were the issues that were being debated at the time? What were the important issues in the School of Education?
- JM: Well, I remember that a lot of the—well, the Instrument of Governance—it seemed like we were constantly redoing it and fussing over it. But I remember when Dave Reilly was dean in some of the meetings, they said—it got so heated, that we said, "Well, we're going to have to proceed by *Robert's Rules of Order*." And I think Reilly studied up on them; he had to in order to—. And finally later after all that feeling sort of subsided, somebody said "Well, we can—let's go by the rules of gentlemen or something like that." But what were the issues? There were underlying issues that I might not even have known anything about.
- LD: But there were no great hard feelings?
- JM: But another thing that—you're going to think I am naive, Linda, but another thing that I didn't realize they were doing—they, the Harvard Mafia, wanted to—and they weren't all from Harvard by the way—. [laughs] They wanted to control pretty much the doctoral program, and I think they—. The doctoral program we have is a—it wouldn't—I think that anybody coming in from the outside and looking at it—. In fact, we had people look at our doctoral program, and the thing they criticize is that it's—there are really no standards that everybody has to meet, that it's too individualized. But that's the way they wanted it designed.
- LD: And that was the result of [unclear]?
- JM: And they always saw that they were a large, a majority, certainly, on the entrance committee that interviewed doctoral candidates. And they would get first pick of the ones that they wanted to work with. "I'll take that one, and I'll work with that one." And then they would recommend that these doctoral students take their colleagues' courses. And so it took me a long time to realize that. I would never tell anybody. I may have come to it by the time I talked with you, but I would never tell anybody that I was going to teach 633 next semester, and that would be a course she should take. I thought, "Well, this is a mature student and he, she, will look at the class schedule, and if this is something that interests him, her, he'll take it." But they saw that their classes were full. Finally, I learned that, and then I had no compunction whatsoever now saying, "If you want your degree, and you're going to work with me, you better take 633." I'll say it nicer than that. I'll say, "It's the only course in the School of Education, if you're a language person, that really is directed to you."

- LD: That pretty much describes it, though. What was I going to ask you? Oh.
- JM: I'd sort of like to go back to what—you sort of put me on the spot—what were the issues in the School of Education? Surely, it was more than—it was—it seemed to me like—now as I think about it, it was a question of power. Who was going to make the decisions? Were we going to, sort of, just be, obey the state department, as it handed down its rules about what it wanted teachers to have, or were we going to—. Oh, I know one of the big issues is whether we were going to close the undergraduate program—that comes up every now and then, and just have a doctoral program. That's been tried a couple of times.
- LD: And they were in favor of doing that?
- JM: O'Kane would have liked to have done that.
- LD: Close down the undergraduate program? Because it was, because of the lack of demand for it?
- JM: You can understand how much more prestigious it would be to teach only doctoral students. And we always argued that the history of this institution was it was a teachers' college and a strong undergraduate program in liberal arts, not just in teacher education. In fact, that original teacher education program was really more in arts and sciences than it was in education. For a long time there was a limit on the number of hours of education a student could graduate with. And gradually, opened up—it opened up, and each time it opened up, people in arts and sciences would say, "They're going to take more hours. They've got six more now, and they're going to fill them and then they'll want six more." And they thought that hours of education were just a waste. And they wanted to control them, and they did for a number of years. I mean, they, meaning—there are a lot of dichotomies around a university. And so the College of Arts and Sciences—in fact, [Dr. John Philip] Phil Couch [French professor], with whom I shared an office for a long time, up until the time he retired, he always spoke of them as "They, across the street."
- LD: That's unfortunate that there was that—
- JM: Yes. Well, I think there's more opening up now than there's ever been. Maybe this dean—I think he's certainly respected throughout the campus, and the Deans' Council and so forth. And what with this whole accreditation process that we're involved with now, we have to involve all the schools who have teacher ed programs, and they begin to realize that many of their students are going on to be teachers and so they—.
- LD: Well, it's a real focus of attention right now. What is Uprichard's attitude about the undergraduate program? He's not in favor of—
- JM: Well see, fortunately his background is teacher ed. So many of the others have been administration or counseling or something else. But he's in our department. Ours is the biggest department, Pedagogical Studies and Supervision. And none of this—I think he

comes from Florida, where they must have had a strong undergraduate program and maybe he even believes, like many of us in this department, that it's the undergraduate that might help build the graduate program.

LD: Steve and I both went to strong undergraduate institutions, and I don't know that I think it is that much more prestigious to teach—

JM: You mean graduate?

LD: No, I mean we went to strong colleges that did not have graduate programs. Actually at Dartmouth [College, Hanover, New Hampshire] there is quite a debate going on right now whether Dartmouth is actually going to become a university.

JM: Oh, no. I wasn't saying that. I was saying that I thought that the fact that we had such a strong undergraduate program would help feed into the graduate program.

LD: No, I think that's true. But you did say that you thought some people might think it was more prestigious to teach graduate students. And I don't know that I think that that's necessarily true.

JM: Yes. I don't think it's true either. I've been one of the ones who's always favored a strong undergraduate. In fact, I've always taught perhaps more undergraduate than graduate work.

LD: Plus, I feel like we're overburdened with administrators.

JM: Oh, I do too. They have grown over the years. We had one vice chancellor for years. I don't know how many we have now.

LD: Oh, I think there's at least a dozen. At least a dozen. Can you talk a little bit about what it was like to be shared between departments?

JM: At first I thought it was wonderful. I could do—what I liked about it was in education I was it. I was the foreign language education department, and I could do what I wanted to. And then over in romance language, there were some constraints because everybody has to teach the beginning, the intermediate. And you have to do—you have to compromise on which books you're going to use and approach that you're going to use and all that. So there were some constraints. I felt like a visitor for a while in the Department of Romance Language. Education always seemed my home because I had spent ten years there prior, being just in the Curry School. Gradually, as I was allowed to teach more upper level courses, I began to feel more and more a part. Also, I coordinated the 101-102 for a number of years, and then I coordinated the intermediate, and then when [Dr.] Roch Smith [French professor] was chair, I introduced a course for TAs [teaching assistants], and I still give that. When I introduced it with Roch, I was released a course, so that I could teach this one-hour course for TAs and supervise the TAs. Now I just teach the one-hour course as an overload. You know, times are hard. Times are tight. At least now,

though, I teach it prior to their beginning to teach. Like I'm teaching it this semester, and they'll begin teaching next semester. Before, I gave it while they were teaching, and so it lent itself to my going in and supervising.

LD: I know that you've experienced in the Romance Language Department some resistance to pedagogical techniques, and do you find that's still pretty much the case? Are you making progress?

JM: You know, it is some resistance. That's not what most of the professors are interested in, even though all of us have to teach mainly 101 through 204.

[recording error]

LD: Dr. Mitchell, you were saying that the members of the foreign language department aren't always that interested in current pedagogical techniques.

JM: I think you have to remember that they're trained—they wouldn't like that word, trained—[LD laughs] that they were, that they chose to study literature, and I think that most people who do that want—they aspire to teaching literature, lecture-type courses. And I don't mean to say that they're not interested in being good teachers because I daresay most of them feel like they are. They're lecturing and maybe have picked up a few other techniques that work for them, but down on the lower level, I think, is where the problem is. I kind of laughingly say that audio-lingual came and went, and the department never went audio-lingual because there seems to be a feeling—and I can't quite put my finger on it—that I learned it without audio-lingual or without the new proficiency movement, and why can't students now. They want it to continue being taught the way they learned it. And we have made some progress during the last fifteen or twenty years.

And, of course, it's my job to read the—to stay current in what's going on, the priorities, for example, in language teaching for the nineties. And I'm the only person on faculty who attends the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL]. Everybody else in romance language would attend either SAMA or MLA. And that—I think it all goes back to nationally. There was at one time just the Modern Language Association. And there was this group of teachers, linguists, and education people who were interested in the teaching of foreign languages. And so they broke off and formed American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages. And there's always been a feeling in romance language departments about the dichotomy between language and literature. Language is less. Literature is more. And pedagogy is even below linguistics or language.

LD: So you'd say verbal proficiency, then, is not considered to be a goal?

JM: Well, we state it, but we don't want to spend a lot of time learning things that will help get us there. I remember several years back, when ACTFL first started its oral proficiency testing movement, you could get a grant to go the University of Texas [Austin, Texas]

for, I don't know, a week, two weeks, and learn how to do this oral proficiency testing. But you were supposed to—the way it was written, they wanted an institution to send two people, one in French and one in Spanish. And so I approached a number of people there to see, in Spanish, to see if they would go if I went. I couldn't find anybody interested enough to go. So I went ahead—you had to send off a tape like we're doing now in French, and I did an interview with Francois [unclear], and I sent it off, but I really didn't expect to get chosen because I was one rather than a French—Spanish team. Now a team from Davidson [College, Davidson, North Carolina] went. But we have had this year—[Dr.] Roberto Campo [professor of romance languages] came, and he got all these proficiency workshops started, and yet there's still—he told me the other day he thought there was more anti feeling now about the proficiency movement than before we had the workshops. So I—there is an effort. [Dr.] Mark Smith-Soto [professor of romance languages] has tried to have to have a coordinator for the lower level courses to bring some conformity and some unity to what we're doing. And we're trying to do joint exams again, and we meet a little more regularly.

LD: This must have an effect on the students who are going out into the public schools to teach the foreign languages. Where are they getting their proficiency?

JM: Well, if we pay any attention to Krashan [?] they are hearing a fair amount of French in the classrooms or Spanish. We did have a number of native speakers in the department, and so I don't think there's just one way to learn a language. I think if they are really interested in it, they can learn it.

LD: Is there a feeling that if the students are really serious they are going to have to go and spend some time speaking it in the country?

JM: Those are our better students, those who've been. Or we did have some who were not bad, if they come up with four or five years of high school. It takes a long time to learn a language.

LD: Are they coming into college right now from high school with any verbal proficiency?

JM: Some more than others, yes. They're very timid, though. They're new in college; they don't want to be foolish or make a mistake in front of their peers, but some of them are not bad. I remember the first year that we had the placement test again, and we had some students who placed out of it. And we had some of the professors telling them to go back and take 204. Well, the whole reason for the placement exam was to get them to work at the proper level, a higher level. They always want to work at a lower level. But so now, we had them working, going in where they belong and were proud to be there, and then you had a teacher who would get them and say, "You know, you really don't know grammar well enough. You need to go back to 204." And that sort of undid the whole idea of the placement exam. And they would come to me, and I'd say, "Oh, no. You belong right where you are. I admire you for being on this higher level. You just stick right in there. Don't you dare go back to 204." And the [North Carolina] Teaching Fellows Program [supported by four-year scholarship, then required to teach in North

Carolina public schools], we've had a number of people learn languages there.

LD: I've been very impressed with some of the people I've met in that class.

JM: Yes. Three of mine in Latin have been Teaching Fellows.

LD: What broad trends and changes can you see in the student body? You've been here a long time. For good or ill.

JM: I'm going to first talk about minorities because they've been after us, the General Administration and so forth, to have more blacks.

LD: In the teaching?

JM: Not so much in the teaching, but in the student body in general. And when we first started having black students, they came in—and I can't remember whether this was the '60s or late '60s or '70s, somewhere in there. They were—many of the black students had chips on their shoulders, and I can remember their saying, "I missed the test. I want to take it tomorrow." Rather than, "I'd like—when can I take it?" like I would have liked them to. So I've seen a change in either the attitude of the black students who come—maybe they're more accustomed to being in integrated schools, and so they don't demand things as much as they used to.

LD: So you think integration was not necessarily a very smooth—?

JM: No. I don't think it was very smooth.

LD: Because I've had people tell me it was a very imperceptible process.

JM: Well no. I noticed it—I had been seeing—I had student teachers always, even when the high schools were black. Dudley [Greensboro, North Carolina] was black, and I had student teachers there. They might be white student teachers, but I had them there. And over in High Point as well. And so when I saw some of the black students here, I wanted us to have more actually. And then I taught some of them in class and saw this kind of demands they were making. "It's my right to have this test tomorrow." That was surprising to me. I had not expected that. And—but now, if it's around, I don't have those students, or I don't detect it at all. So I don't know that there—it was smoother here, certainly, than at Chapel Hill.

LD: What was going on at Chapel Hill?

JM: Well, see, when I was a doctoral student down there, I had to go through picket lines to go into the cafeteria. I don't know what all of the things that they wanted.

LD: There was a cafeteria workers strike, wasn't there. That was what you were—you must have been there during that.

JM: It seems to me it had to do with minorities as well. Whether the black—

LD: Well, maybe the cafeteria workers were all minorities. But I'm pretty sure that was a campus worker strike because it was in '68.

JM: Was I down there in '68?

LD: Not too many people who have—not too many people have mentioned it, but I was told that that was one of the events—

JM: There was. That's right. There was a cafeteria strike, and there were a lot of minorities.

LD: There was something going on. UNCG also had some little, you know, ripples from that event as well.

JM: But I seem to remember when [Dr. James] Ferguson was chancellor, there was something that had to do with minorities other than the workers' strike, and now I wish I could remember what it was, but—I don't know if there were demands for a black society or black studies or—but in the early seventies that was going on a lot of places.

LD: What about war protests? Do you remember any war protests on campus? Vietnam [War]?

JM: I remember that more downtown. I remember reading about it in the papers being down at the post office or somewhere like that. Doesn't mean that students and faculty members weren't involved.

LD: But not too much going on on campus?

JM: Not that I recall.

LD: No classes being cancelled or buildings occupied?

JM: No.

LD: What did you think of Ferguson? I have heard people say that he was quite a diplomat and that he—

JM: Well, you know, he was a southern gentleman, and he brought that quality, I think, to the campus and to the faculty meetings, even when he—I thought it was so sad when he stepped down as chancellor and came back into the history department. They asked all the different departments over in arts and sciences, "Did they have an office, a spare office, anywhere?" They couldn't find an office, a place to put the former chancellor who was coming back into the department. I don't know what—he finally did get one, but I don't know whether nobody wanted him or nobody seemed to—it seemed like he was going to come back without a place. But he was just always a gentleman, and—

LD: Of course, McIver is such a sardine box.

JM: Well, see, I remember about McIver when it was built. Now I told you I came here when Dean Howell did, and that first year, they asked a number of teachers in the Curry School if they would proctor the—I guess it was the National Teachers Exam. And so he was going to give it in a room—Howell was going to administer it in a room down, I guess, where Weatherspoon [Art Gallery] used to be, down sort of in the basement in McIver, and Howell's wife, Wilma, was going to take it because she wanted to become a principal or a teacher in the Greensboro city schools. So she was there.

LD: Let me turn this over.

[End Side A—Begin Side B]

JM: Wilma Howell was there, and I remember going in. It hadn't even been approved, totally, for people to move in to it, and we were already meeting in there with all these teachers.

LD: Oh, so it was a fresh new building?

JM: Yes. And so that must have been '58. So there were—we had to step over some wires that were on the floor. They had cardboard over them, boxes, brown pasteboard over them, and Wilma came up and said to Ken Howell—she says, "I hope you will announce that you had nothing to do with this or that you had no idea that this building wasn't ready for occupancy and you're not responsible." But I doubt anybody noticed it. They were nervous about taking the exam.

LD: She was afraid somebody might trip over the cords?

JM: Yes. So McIver must have been built, what, '57 or something, and opened in the fall of '58 sometime. Not the beginning of fall '58, but sometime in the year. [Editor's note: McIver opened in 1960.]

LD: Were people unhappy with it from the very beginning?

JM: I think so. I think so. You know, looking at it from College Avenue, all of that front design, it didn't fit in.

LD: Not to mention that the acoustics are terrible.

JM: The acoustics are terrible. They're constantly painting it. They just can't keep it in good repair.

LD: And the offices are minute.

JM: And the air conditioner doesn't work. It's either too hot or too cold, and the offices are

minuscule. And, well, it's just not a pleasant building. Maybe the best thing to do is raze it and start over.

LD: Actually they are going to, but it may be a while before—it's after the new student activities building and the new student union and probably one or two other projects.

JM: I'm sure.

LD: It's back there somewhere. What about quality of students? How have you felt about the quality of your students over the years?

JM: See, that's another thing that's bothered me, that I don't like about—. My foot's caught—about some of my friends in romance—can you help me? [laughter]

[recording paused]

JM: I've forgotten where we were.

LD: You were talking about quality of students, and you said some of the people in the romance language department think—

JM: No. Well, they'll even say out loud so that our current students can hear—if we had the caliber of students of Duke or if we had the caliber students of Brown [University, Providence, Rhode Island] or so forth, we could do such and such and such and such. And I really don't think that the problem is so much our students' work. I would guess that three fourths or better of my students work and go to school. And I never shall forget when Alain Robbe-Grillet [French writer and filmmaker] was here for a semester, Roch Smith and Tony Fragola [professor of media studies] brought him here, and he taught the course, and I audited the course.

And I remember the—oh, near the end of the course, the students—they were mainly teachers who teach all day and come to this course in the evenings. And he had asked them some questions, and they couldn't answer them. And on stuff that they had supposedly had read, and he says, "Well, if you all aren't going to read the material or study this, why did you take this course?" And they said, "You know, we teach all day and then try to come to this. We do the best we can." And he said, "Well, if you can't devote full time to it, I wouldn't bother. I wouldn't do anything if I couldn't do it right."

And I think we have to realize that we are a—whether people like it or not, we are a regional university. And we got a lot of people who work and come to school. In fact, the majority work and come to school. And so it's not that they're dumb, it's just that they're overextended. And so, maybe we have made some adjustments over the years. I had in my—I hope not in my undergraduate classes, but maybe in some of my graduate classes, you make it so that they can do the work at other times than when they are there. And I still like for graduate classes to at least hit the library, know where it is and require them to do something there. I don't see how they can how they can get the most out of

their graduate program if they don't. The quality of students—it looks like I've talked around it.

This Teaching Fellows Program has been a blessing. I've had the opportunity to work with a number of them. That's brought in some very—but you see, there again, we've done such wonderful things for them that we've really made them feel special. We've had special classes for them. We've told them how wonderful they are, how neat they are.

LD: Do you think they're happy with this program?

JM: Many of them are.

LD: Maybe you should elaborate a little bit for the tape on what the Teaching Fellows Program entails.

JM: Well, what was the name—It was John Dornan's foundation. It was a group of businessmen who got together and formed this foundation. They came up with the idea of paying for quality students to become teachers. And they were given five thousand dollars a year to pay for their education, and, in turn, they would teach for four years. [Editor's note: Program was developed by Public School Forum of North Carolina, and legislation passed by North Carolina General Assembly in 1986 to begin it. John Dornan founded the forum and was executive director.]

LD: That's the requirement—that they'd be willing to teach for four years? And they also have to pass certain, or meet certain qualifications?

JM: Well, the criteria to be in the program? They have to be in the upper part of their classes. I don't know upper what. That's why I didn't say it. And make so much on the SAT [scholastic aptitude test], and they're higher quality students scholastically. But we've done a lot of other things for them. In the summers, John Dornan's program takes them all over the state to visit schools from Murphy to Manteo. And we had special speakers for them all the time. And they're—this is interesting—they're required to attend—there are a number—but they give a lot of other things. I can't believe all they do, the Teaching Fellows. They're out tutoring. They're doing volunteer service all over the community. I just have no idea what all of them are doing. But Trina [?] and the others who are in charge of that Teaching Fellows Program keep bringing in things at that meetings, telling them that we want you—you owe the community and North Carolina. And so they bring in people who talk about what kind of volunteer work is needed; volunteers are needed to do things in North Carolina, in Greensboro. And what's needed by way of tutoring in the schools. And so they're really quite active. And see, they don't have to work. In fact, I don't think they're allowed to work; they're not. And that makes a huge difference. So the other students, if they didn't have to work would—

LD: Although some of my better students are the ones—are the students with jobs, particularly older students.

- JM: Yes. There was a fellow who came to see me the other day, and I asked him if he was going to work. And he says, "You know, if I don't work, I don't use my time well." And I understand that.
- LD: I think some of the students I have who are least mature are living on campus and may be partying a little too much. But I think that we've made adjustments in the introductory Latin class. We don't cover as much material as the textbook. Well, it's the textbook that we're using, which is from Michigan. They have a class—their literature class meets four days a week. Ours only meets three. But they're also dealing with a largely resident population. And they're giving more homework and requiring more outside of class.
- JM: About the quality of students, I was going to say a while ago, I talked with Mary Ann, one of my former students who teaches at Wake Forest [University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina] now. They teach their language classes five days a week. Well, naturally they can make more progress, and it seems like their students are better. I think three day a week, and some of our courses are two, that's just no way to do a language. Language—the best language courses I've taught have been in the summer when I have them daily.
- LD: Yes, I think that's really true. And it's a handicap, but it's felt that not much can be done about that. Three days a week is pretty standard.
- JM: Right. And I asked Mary Ann—I said, "Isn't that— isn't there a difficulty about scheduling?" And she said, "Well, no. They know just—they know that they're going to take it at nine o'clock [am] every Monday, Monday through Friday, and then they plan their schedule otherwise around that."
- LD: But she can't have as many students working. I mean, she can't have very many students at all working at Wake Forest, does she?
- JM: Well, they have about as many in their language department as we do.
- LD: No, but I mean, have outside jobs.
- JM: Oh, no. No, no.
- LD: The scheduling is a whole different story when you're talking about outside jobs.
- JM: And, of course, we have to offer—we offer many more night classes, and at times that will meet working students' needs. I guess the quality of students is different. I'm not going to say not as good, but it's different from when it was Woman's College because we did have students living on campus who didn't work, who just came to school. That was their job.
- LD: And it was the place for women to come in North Carolina, whereas there's a lot more competition now.

JM: And a thing I have noticed is—I'd like you to check this out. I don't believe since it's been the University of North Carolina, UNCG, rather than Woman's College, have we had a woman president of student government?

LD: I don't know.

JM: I don't believe so. And you see, I have always read that the minute they become coed, the women no longer occupy the higher offices. They don't come out with as strong a background and being leaders, nor do they speak out as much in class. Now that's true. They don't. The fellows do, but the girls don't speak out as much. And it's not just in French classes or language classes, where they're prone to be inhibited anyway. It's in other classes too. I have noticed that.

LD: That's true. But I don't think there's any way that you can prevent that step from being taken. I think that it was going to go coed.

JM: Well, what was it? One of my old Teaching Fellows, freshman, came in the other day, and she said something about what she needed was a man to do so and so. I said, "Don't you dare say that." I said, "We're liberated." And so I wonder if even though she could be a leader, I wonder if she will run for anything.

LD: I wonder how liberated we are. [pause]

JM: No, it bothers me so much for older students. I guess I'm thinking of one in particular now, but one of the Teaching Fellows married before she finished college. And I see that that's made a difference in her involvement in the university. Can't control that.

No. I've enjoyed being here, and I want to say one more thing and maybe that will be all you want. But about holding this joint appointment. I said at first it was what I really wanted, and over the years, it's gotten to be, instead of half and half, three fourths and three fourths, you know. [LD laughs] And I really—I told a friend the other day or just recently that I feel like I've served on a lot of little committees, neither—especially romance language doesn't trust me totally. I'm a pedagogue. And I remember going to a faculty meeting once when we were voting on a new curriculum, and one of the members of the romance language department said to me on the way over, "Are you with them or with us?" And I didn't see it as a—you see, we are a university, and I never saw myself as being one or the other. I thought we were together. It was a—so in later years, I have enjoyed it. Well, I think it's—I would have liked to have served on more elective, big committees. And I couldn't because I was so involved in all the little underground—not underground, but low—coordinating 101, I had to be involved in coordinating meetings, and I had to be—I did well to get to the romance language meetings, most of them, and to the department meetings and it was all—

LD: Because you were going to two sets of meetings?

JM: So then I couldn't get to the College meetings or often the School of Education meetings, so they didn't see you as being involved up there, and so I just—I tended to things that

just helped me do the work I had to do. So I think in that sense, somebody else might have handled it differently. If I were really the big, ambitious type, I might have just have attended the College and the School and forgot these little ones. But I couldn't operate that way. So that's the disadvantage, the meetings and to try to balance. "Am I really doing half here and half here?" You know, to work in the Department of Romance Languages, the salaries are lower. So I've always taken a cut because of that joint appointment.

LD: I didn't know that.

JM: When I went to Mark Smith-Soto to complain about the raise—not this year—I'm quite happy this year. Last year, he said, I said, "My salary has always been less over here." And I said, "I am the lowest paid associate professor in Education or in my department." And he looked it up, and he said, "Well, you're one of the highest paid over here."

LD: That may be one of the other reasons why there's some feeling of stress between the romance language faculty. You know, if you perceive that they're being paid more across the street—. It's like there's a lot of—

JM: Well, and they're doing a lot more granting, grantsmanship, if you want to call it that. I mean, I hate to think, not hate to think, but I like to think of all the money that's coming in the School of Education through grants. And I don't see that many in—I hear of very few people getting or even applying for grants in romance language.

LD: Is there as much research going on in romance languages?

JM: Well, the School of Education is a school. It's much larger.

LD: I know, but research is supposed to be going on everywhere.

JM: I'd say less.

LD: Less?

JM: That's another thing. I think Chapel Hill, for example—people who supervise student teachers are—they have quite a crew of clinical professors. And I have found it difficult, as has [Dr. Ernest] Ernie Lee [School of Education faculty], as has [Dr. Elisabeth] Lib Bowles [Class of 1950, School of Education faculty], and [Dr.] Lois Edinger [School of Education faculty] did, to do a sufficient amount of publication and supervise student teachers because of the time involved. [telephone rings]

[recording paused]

LD: I'd like to thank you for the interview. It was very enjoyable.

JM: You know, it's fun to talk about your own experiences.

LD: I think it's a nice opportunity.

JM: And it's nice to reminisce a little bit.

LD: Well, thank you very much.

JM: Enjoyed it.

[End of Interview]