

# JIM BALLENGEE

March 28, 1996

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Mame Warren,  
Interviewer

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the 28th of March, 1996. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with Jim Ballengee.

I'm intrigued by you. I haven't done a whole lot of homework about you, because everybody says you're going to tell me lots without my even asking. The thing I'm most intrigued by is that you did not have the undergraduate experience here. You went to the law school only. Is that right?

**Ballengee:** That's correct.

**Warren:** And yet, your devotion seems to be quite singular and quite extensive. So tell me why you are so devoted to Washington and Lee.

**Ballengee:** I have the view that it changed my life more than anything else. It enlarged my horizons. Sydney Lewis says the same thing, coming to Washington and Lee, because she was here as an undergraduate, as well as law school.

My mother said, "Your experience at Washington and Lee did more for you. It enlarged your vision, your ambitions, whatever, put you in such a much better position." Because I'd gone to a little country Methodist—even the Methodist disowned you at the time—a little college in my hometown in West Virginia that went broke and had to move to Charleston. The Methodist Conference decided they could not support two, and they had West Virginia Wesleyan, and so they gave up on this little school, then called Morris Harvey.

**Warren:** Boris Harvey?

**Ballengee:** Morris Harvey, named for a gentleman, M-O-R-R-I-S, and now called the University of Charleston, which causes confusion with Charleston U., which I think is in Charleston, South Carolina. But it was there in the town library and was supported by some people who were active in the Methodist church. You can't say that you were self-taught. There were some superb faculty people, nothing compared, though, to the competition.

What happened to me at Washington and Lee, I guess, is really part of it, and maybe the law school, being such a step above just an undergraduate degree from a college that almost folded up in recent years, like just happened at one that helped put me through law school. My wife had taught at then Southern Seminary. Well, actually she had a contract to teach in Rockbridge County School System, so I guess we'd have had support because she had a good job at Southern Seminary.

**Warren:** Did she come here with you?

**Ballengee:** Yeah. We got married halfway through. She graduated from college in '47, and I was going on to what was then three years in two-year program year-round at law school after the war. Everybody was trying to play catch-up, and we went constantly. I took a few days off, we got married in June of '47, which she had graduated from this same little college in West Virginia, and we moved here out in what was then Hillside Terrace, which is now, it's across from where the Elrods used to live, that hillside there. I can't think of what you call it, group of Quonset huts. A great many people, some of whom you may have interviewed and know, started their married life there.

**Warren:** Is it Davidson Park?

**Ballengee:** No. Davidson Park was on the other side of the town, across the bridge, over where the fraternity houses are and the hospital and all now. This was just right out the street here, not very far from here. You go out past that lumberyard and it's up

the hill, not Preston Street, but maybe the next street, White or Preston, one of those going up the hill.

**Warren:** There were Quonset huts there?

**Ballengee:** Oh, yeah. There's something else there now. A park, maybe. Is there a city park? Frank could tell you. *They were like Quonset huts. They were prefab sort of, three units in a building. You had an icebox. You had to put the sign up for the ice man to come and deliver. This was '46, '47, '48, and beyond that for some time, in fact. You only paid \$50 a month. It was for GIs and part of the GI Bill. It was a great way to start married life. You had no money, but nobody else did, either, and lots of work to do, and yet in a wonderful atmosphere, compared to what we'd just been through everybody had in the war, particularly. Not that it wouldn't be nice anytime, but it was especially so then, I think. All of that combined, I guess, to – you know.*

**Warren:** So when you were here, the law school was in Tucker Hall.

**Ballengee:** Yes, it was.

**Warren:** That would be very different from being over there in Lewis Hall.

**Ballengee:** I'm afraid you're exactly right. It was really fully a part of the university. I joined a fraternity. I served on the Executive Committee. The seniors sat out in front on cane chairs in front of Tucker Hall. We were like a fully integrated institution law school, one and all together. It's somewhat different now. I had a son who went to undergraduate school here and a son-in-law that went to law school here, so I've seen in different times both those. Of course, those two things helped sharpen my interest and love for Washington and Lee, to come to see your son graduate and then to see a son-in-law in law school. My son-in-law is a Dartmouth graduate, but as soon as he married into our family he needed the Washington and Lee experience.

**Warren:** You straightened him out. [Laughter] Well, tell me more about Tucker Hall. You're the first person I've talked to who was in law school at Tucker Hall, and I just would like to know more about –

**Ballengee:** God, it makes me feel much more ancient than I think I am.

**Warren:** Well, it wasn't that long ago. It was only '77 that the law school moved over there, so you could have done this not all that long ago.

**Ballengee:** Well, Walter Dudley, the father of Bo Dudley – I don't know whether you've seen his –

**Warren:** I've heard the name.

**Ballengee:** Walter was a longtime board member here, very close. He was in the firm that Bob Huntley went to, named partner in that firm. Walter and I both were sick over the fact of what they turned Tucker Hall into. *No more magnificent room than the library at Tucker Hall was ever on this campus, in my view. It was just lovely. It was like the reading room in the New York Public Library or the Atheneum in Philadelphia, beautiful tables with these little lamps on them. And they put rats in there, now computers. They've changed, they've done everything. It was awful. They desecrated. It's like going to Moscow and St. Petersburg and seeing what the communists did to great churches, turned them into some kind of pedestrian thing.*

Nobody liked that, but everybody loved Lewis Hall and what that did for the law and the law alumni. But Tucker Hall, it was still a very small law faculty of the old guard that are pictured on the wall over there, except Dean Moreland had died, but Dean Williams was the dean and Charley McDowell and Johnson and Light and Laughlin were, in fact, almost the entire faculty.

Actually, in those days we took what I would call a liberal arts course in law. There was none of the things that they study today, such as environmental law. There was no moot court. There was none of the extracurricular activities of going over to Alderson to help prisoners or to help the homeless or to, you know, get involved in everything. We studied, as had always been the tradition, using the case law system, which started at Harvard, and everybody, when you went back to your hometown or wherever, you probably didn't know how to get to the courthouse door, or where it

was, even. The practical aspects you learned, in fact, in an apprenticeship or an internship or residency in a law firm later. That has changed considerably, as you can tell from what you see that goes on over there now.

**Warren:** So there was no moot court at the time?

**Ballengee:** Oh, no.

**Warren:** Because I found references to it back in the 19th century. I wonder if that was because of the war.

**Ballengee:** During the years right after the war, there was none. There was no consumer law, no environmental law, none of this super specialties. Some people came in part time and lectured on tax law, but basically you were taught contracts and torts and criminal law and few other agency standard subjects in law school—trust, wills, and estate, future interests, all of that, all of the pretty much standard things.

I was later in two law firms that were very small, but the senior partner in each of those was a Washington and Lee undergraduate and law school graduate, in my hometown in West Virginia, a typical five-man, in those days, law firm. You called it a five-person firm. It would have a West Virginia University graduate, a University of Virginia graduate, a Washington and Lee graduate, you know, some sort of balance, in the same way that you had a couple of Democrats and a couple of Republicans in a small town, too, to balance it out.

So I've always just had close ties. And then I did some work as a class agent for a long time, and then my son came here. Then I was elected to the board, and then my son-in-law, and all those things. Everything, starting married life here— not everything in my life has centered on this place, but everything that happened here related to this place has been very good in my life, and I've felt a great obligation. So that's why I have that kind of interest.

**Warren:** I don't want to skip away from your time here, but you've just said something I'm very intrigued by, the idea that your law firm, your first law firm, had two other W&L men.

**Ballengee:** Well, that's not what had got me there at all, although I had a nice letter of recommendation from Dean Williams, who was the dean, and they were looking for somebody. The second law firm I was in – when I got called back in the Korean War, the first firm I was in brought in two sons of partners, and in a small firm, I decided and they decided that I better look around, but they told me I could stay as long as I wanted, which is when I came home in '52. But I changed, and I got an offer, by coincidence. Almost every law firm in Charleston probably had a Washington and Lee graduate someplace in those days.

**Warren:** Well, it's quite a network out there, the Washington and Lee network.

**Ballengee:** Oh, yeah. I live in an area where Princeton, Penn, Harvard, and Yale, and particularly Pennsylvania and Princeton around Philadelphia, there are old-boy school-tie networks that are absolute superbly stronger than ours, although incredibly in Philadelphia we've got Gerry Lenfest and myself and I. M. Scott, who was on the board for many, many years, and a couple other people that had been very strong and very active here. With Gerry's help particularly, our share in the last capital campaign Philadelphia looked very good, compared to the size of Richmond and Atlanta and other alumni chapters.

**Warren:** It seems to me that that network has served the Washington and Lee community so well on so many levels, especially for new graduates going out and trying to get settled into the world. It seems like there are open arms waiting for them almost anywhere they want to go.

**Ballengee:** I'm sure that's true. I don't think that's especially unique to Washington and Lee. I know we have statistics that could show we've got more CEOs of companies than any [unclear]. Yale probably has more than anybody, but you look at it on a

number of per-student basis, we came out number one in a couple of studies, I guess the Commerce School and some other things. Many of those are family companies, people that I know well and served with on their board. I don't know, there's more of that.

I don't want to downplay the networking thing. There's no question about it's important. I just called on a firm called Rittenhouse Financial in Philadelphia. A man named George Kadell [phonetic], whom I happen to know, owns it all and started it, but his CEO is a Washington and Lee man, two or three other people there are Washington and Lee men. I'm sure once that got started – you know, that's the way it goes, and they all seem to be doing very well. I didn't know any of them were Washington and Lee people there when I first went out there.

**Warren:** They're everywhere.

**Ballengee:** Yeah.

**Warren:** Let's jump back to your days here on campus. How did you choose Washington and Lee?

**Ballengee:** Where I grew up in West Virginia, everybody sort of admired Washington and Lee, and I can't specifically tell you why. Morgantown, where my sister went to school, the state university, it just didn't have the cache, I guess. It was too much still a hillbilly school, in my sense.

I thought, when Dean Gilliam admitted me into law school here from this little college in Charleston, that I'd made a quantum leap, not necessarily socially, but in reputation. Everyone in West Virginia knew about John W. Davis, who was the most famous West Virginian, and any educated person that read knew that he had gone to W&L and that he was the Democratic candidate for president, even though he got swamped in 1924 terribly. And there were other people. Governor Holt, who was on the board, and Mr. Fitzpatrick in Huntington, who was a rector when I was a student here, was the senior partner in a major and leading law firm in Huntington for railroad interests.

It was a choice like UVA, which I didn't know much about at all. I did write and get the catalog for Harvard and considered that. But when I drove over here and Dean Gilliam said he would take me – and, of course, he was dean of the college, the undergraduate school. I never saw anybody in the law school. That's the way the system worked. Frank and others could tell you more.

**Warren:** Really? I didn't realize that.

**Ballengee:** Some people call their class Dean Gilliam's mistake, but Dean Gilliam was a wonderful man, and that's why he is honored here in so many ways, as he should be, I think, because there's so many stories like mine. This little place I'd gone in West Virginia, I didn't think I had enough credentials, but it was obvious, maybe because of war service or because W&L needed to recoup after being almost shut down. During the war, they took a lot of people, there's no question about that. After I got here and saw who everybody else was, I didn't think Dean Gilliam had done anything really exceptional accepting me, because he'd accepted a lot of people. But I nevertheless appreciated it, because I at the time would have understood if he had said no.

I can't give you a specific reason. It was difficult to travel in those days before interstates out of West Virginia, and just until recently you could come east and west across Route 60 or ride the Chesapeake and Ohio and go to near Lexington – Clifton Forge, Covington, Charlottesville, Washington, or Cincinnati, where the mountains are such trying to go north and south to Morgantown and other places made it very, very difficult. That didn't influence me in any way.

Washington and Lee played West Virginia in Charleston every year a big football game back in the thirties, maybe even well before then, and there were just a lot of people from Charleston that had gone to Washington and Lee that I knew, and I'd always admired the school and most of them. All of that, I guess, was the reason that I came here.



**Warren:** Can you remember when you first arrived here to go to school? Can you describe what it was like for you?

**Ballengee:** I could tell you exactly what it was like for me. I roomed with a man named Bob Smith, who was also from Charleston. He's maybe retired now, but he's been a judge in Kanawha County in West Virginia, in a little house out here. And then immediately I moved and got a room in what was until recently Dick Sessom's house. I think Dean Sullivan lives in it now, where you make the turn onto Jackson Street.

*The approach to learning the law was a whole new discipline for me, a whole new way of thinking, and I started so slowly, I wasn't sure I was going to make it. It was a struggle. I had done well, but not against much competition in this little college that I went to, and had a very good grade point average. But the first year in law school, it was tough, the first semester almost a mystery. Even real property, one Dean Williams course with an agency, they were over my head.*

*But gradually, every term I did better and better and better, and particularly in Charley McDowell's course in contract and later Dean Light's, who was not the dean then, in torts and constitutional law. I grabbed on to all those instantly and did very, very well and ended up either first or tied for first in the class with Stanley Sacks and Dan Wells. I guess I was always a late bloomer, as you would call it, child of yours now, that didn't do well at first. It took me a while to catch on, but once I did, it was as though I had two speeds, full ahead and dead stop. I couldn't get through that barrier in the beginning. It was a whole new way of learning, the case system of teaching law, very different than the way you had done things before chronologically in history or whatever.*

**Warren:** How about the social life at Washington and Lee and in Lexington? Where did you say you lived?

**Ballengee:** I lived just up from the post office a block, about a block from the post office, in a rented room.

**Warren:** It was a room.

**Ballengee:** Yeah. Of course, this was the — you know, you go back and read Robert E. Lee's statements. He expected this town and gown sort of thing to help support the town.

That's been a strange thing that John Wilson and I debated, and I can remember talking with Bob Huntley, why we couldn't get more students to come to basketball games at night and to be on the campus at things. We really had no student union. We really had no dorms. The tradition was that you came and lived in Graham-Lees the first year, you lived in the fraternity house the second year, and you went out in the county and rented an apartment or someplace with a bunch of other kids the second and third year.

That goes all the way back I guess to Robert E. Lee, and even my son said to me, when I was on the board and we were considering we had to do something to bring them back in, he said, "Dad, don't change it. You've got a constitutional right to move out and have an apartment someplace." And Bob told me that.

We finally did — and coeducation, in part, caused this — did Gaines residence center to get more. But even still there are — fraternity life was important then, but living out in a room someplace was not unusual. Then I lived in these apartments, sort of Quonset huts or prefab kind of — looked like they were made out of wallboard or plywood, not round like a Quonset hut we were used to in the war.

But the social life was the fraternity life and football games and dances, the usual opening sets, Spring Set, Fancy Dress, all the kinds of things that you always had, and still to this day. I watched Haley Barbour the other night at Mock Convention getting up calling it the greatest party. I thought, "Oh, my God, the faculty will be worried about this and that kind of publicity that all we're known for is a party school."

**Warren:** Was there a lot of partying when you were here?

**Ballengee:** I've tried to think back. I have a couple of pictures of my wife and myself going to dances and parties at the Sigma Chi house. Of course, by that time I was an old married man, compared to many of them.

**Warren:** Well, that's what I'm wondering. Since so many of the students were veterans and a little older than students are today, was the social life changed by that?

**Ballengee:** No, I don't think so. I don't think it was much different. Everybody was very serious that we had lost three years out of our lives and we had to play catch-up, and so we got married and we started having children and we got a professional degree and got in the world to make money and play catch-up for all we had missed. We were thankful we'd survived when so many had not.

But I don't think it meant that we partied any harder. I think maybe we studied and worked harder than they had the years right before the war, that this was very important, that if you didn't get it up here, take it away from here with you, you're not going to survive in a highly competitive business world at all whatever you're doing.

I had only had one problem. Because my wife taught at Southern Seminary, my fraternity brothers said, "You're the perfect chaperon." I can recall we were going to Lynchburg to play VPI, and we took a couple cars, maybe three. Jo got in one with all the girls from Southern Seminary, and I went with the guys. We drive up to the top of the first mountain on the way to Lynchburg, and they swapped cars, and I'm suddenly alone with my wife and nobody else. We're chaperoning and I didn't see them, so I had little lecture to these guys. I said, "Hey, my staying in law school is dependent on my wife keeping her job, and this is the last time we're chaperoning you without some Honor System pledge from you guys. We're not doing that anymore, because I can't lose track of that."

So you're right, we were a little older, obviously, if they looked upon you as a chaperon, but I didn't think I was that much older. When I graduated from law school, I was twenty-five. I got out of high school at seventeen, and a couple summers I

couldn't find a job so I went to summer school at this little college that I went to. The Air Corps actually sent me to Clemson for a little bit, and I claimed credit for that. When I came back, I really went through college in three years and law school in two years. And I was going to work so I didn't think we were that much older.

**Warren:** You accelerated the whole thing.

**Ballengee:** Yeah, we did.

**Warren:** You've mentioned your fraternity several times. Did you take your meals at the fraternity?

**Ballengee:** No.

**Warren:** Why did you join a fraternity? What did that offer you?

**Ballengee:** Well, a place to go and play bridge in the afternoon and do other things. I don't think we went through a regular rush. They sort of came and asked me. I knew some people in my hometown who were Sigma Chis. I liked George Coyle.

I'll tell you, the first summer – I know why now. The first summer I was here, George Coyle, his father owned a big department store in Charleston. He had gone to Washington and Lee, his father had gone to Washington and Lee, his brothers. All of them were Sigma Chi.

George was dating Julia Holt, Governor Holt's daughter, who's been his wife now for forty-six, seven years, whatever, and my wife, current wife, was in Charleston, and one other, Bill Craddock [phonetic], who was also Sigma Chi. George had a yellow Packard convertible, and every weekend, despite those terrible roads over Hawks Nest and mountain, we would chip in and buy him gas and we'd all go home. We'd get there late Friday night and come back Sunday at noon, take some books to study. Well, you've got to be young, of course.

**Warren:** That's quite a drive. It's a drive today to go that far.

**Ballengee:** Even today, on 64 you could do it quickly, but in those days. We didn't do it actually every weekend, because a couple times the girls came over here, particularly in the fall, when George was going to summer school and a lot of people were.

They were Sigma Chis, and they said, "You ought to join." This was all this summer. So I went down, and they took me right away as a pledge, and I went through – they had limited initiation from the four-year kind of thing, I guess, although I went through what everybody else did at the time, and I enjoyed it. I did take a lot of meals there, till I got married, which happened in June of '47. I didn't join until the fall of '46. It wasn't very many months from that. But we had parties, and Jo and I could go and other things, big dance at Roanoke and things like that, the Hotel Roanoke. It was an active life, I guess.

**Warren:** Can you remember the theme of Fancy Dress the first year you were here?

**Ballengee:** No, I don't, I really don't. I've looked at so many of them through the years since.

**Warren:** Do you come back and attend?

**Ballengee:** No. We may next year because the Washington Society is going to be. I'm not a great dancer.

**Warren:** Oh, well, you don't have to be. It's a social event.

**Ballengee:** Oh, no, of course, for that, you're right.

**Warren:** There's a lot of promenading going on.

**Ballengee:** Yeah.

**Warren:** So what do you come back for? What are the events that draw you back now?

**Ballengee:** Of course, for twelve years, every board meeting, every Executive Committee meeting, every special committee meeting. Nine years of those years I was the rector, and we had any kind of meeting, particularly during the review and decisions over coeducation, which was major.

Well, before that even, right after I became the rector, Bob Huntley called me and told me he wanted to talk to me, and I had a hunch. I said, "Bob, I just took this job. I don't want to chair a search committee for a new president."

He said, "I'm going to come and talk to you."

He and Evelyn came and spent the weekend with us, and he and I sat up and talked most of the night. I think Bob felt he'd done all he could do for Washington and Lee, and he had done so much. So then that put me in the position of chairing the search committee, which ended up bringing John Wilson here.

But we had numerous meetings all one summer over in the law school, when nobody was around much and it was out of the way, and we brought candidates in. I was the CEO of an oil service company, a New York Stock Exchange company. We had a jet plane. We kept it in Houston. I used it all the time. They would come up and get me and bring me up here Weyers Cave or whatever or to Roanoke.

I can remember once with Tom Anderson, who was a wonderful graduate from Houston, older, even older than I, and I was going to Houston on business and he was going home to Houston. The candidate we had I think was from Southern Methodist, so we were going to drop him off in Love Field in Dallas. As we in the committee had interviewed him, he seemed fine to me. By the time we got to Love Field in Dallas, I'd crossed him off my list. I didn't ask Tom whether he had or not.

*Tom was a wonderful guy. He was dead set against coeducation. He was by then a trustee emeritus. A very interesting story. The Monday after we took the vote here, I called all the trustees emeriti to try to explain to them why we had done this. His line was busy. I left word. So he called me back and he said, "I'm sure you're wondering why my line was busy, and I've got to admit this to you. I was talking to the admissions office at Washington and Lee about my favorite grandniece."*

*I loved it. Here was one of the leading – in fact, he'd been chairman of the nominating committee when I was put in the rector. She's since, I think, just graduated from law school.*

*She graduated from undergraduate school and went off and did something and came back and went to law school, I think.*

**Warren:** *That's a wonderful story.*

**Ballengee:** *He and Walter Dudley and a couple other trustees had written me a special letter getting close to coming up for a vote that we should put it off for two years, three years, whatever, make a concerted effort to try to build up the quantity and the quality of the applicant pool for the undergraduate school, all male still, and try to really put an accelerated effort into improving all of the things that the faculty was concerned, and we all were concerned about.*

**Warren:** *What kinds of things?*

**Ballengee:** Well, the fact that we were losing so many people who wouldn't come here because it wasn't coed. We were getting 1,500 applications. Bill Hartog, who was here and went through all this, could give you this chapter and verse. To fill a class of 400 freshmen, out of 1,500 applications he was taking 1,000, accepting 1,000. Now, that's two out of every three that come in. No selectivity. Today he's getting 3,600, 3,700. He's taking 800 or 900 to fill the same class. Now, it's not quite Stanford or Harvard, maybe. You get to turn down more valedictorians than you take, but it gives you great selectivity.

There were a great many very bright fine young men that wouldn't come here because the place wasn't coed, so we were losing all them. Obviously, we were losing half the world in all the bright young women that *couldn't* come here. My two daughters. My son came here. One of my daughters went to Swarthmore, one went to Berkeley. They got a wonderful foundation for life, good education. And I don't know that they would have come here, considering, but we were missing. I'm certain that everybody – it was tremendously controversial.

I only made one big mistake in this, which I blamed on Frank and Farris. This survey – has Frank told you about this?

**Warren:** You tell me.

**Ballengee:** All right. They were persuaded we had to survey all the alumni. The University of Virginia had done this when it had gone coed. They sent out however many living alumni they have. Let's assume they have 100,000 living graduates. They only got back 3,000, 4,000. We had 16,000 living alumni. We got back far more than that. We got back 8,000 or 10,000 out of 16 saying, no, you don't want to do that. That's a mistake to go coeducational. Then, of course, many people resented the fact that, "We told you you didn't want to do it, and you did it anyhow."

Now, we had kind of a saving catch clause in there. If the board, in its discretion or wisdom or whatever, earnestly believed that the future of the school depended on doing this, would you trust the board to do it, and a majority said yes on that, so we had to fall back on that. The power was in the board. It wasn't required that we have a referendum, which everybody thought we should. I went along with that and regretted it, and, of course, then it was easy to pick out Frank and Farris and say, "Hey, you're the two guys that recommended this." [Laughter]

**Warren:** Take me into that room that day, the day of the decision.

**Ballengee:** The vote?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Ballengee:** I made a little list, in fact. I'm sure Frank's got this written down someplace. There were two trustees that I knew were against coeducation who could not be present. I allowed them to vote by phone anyhow. Our bylaws, unlike modern corporations, did not allow a meeting by phone. If you're not here, it's the same as the honorary degree. You've got to be here. I knew they were – one even from Ireland, who wanted to be on the record as voting against it.

The problem was, there are twenty-five members of the board, but Tom Wolfe, who'd just agreed to come on the board, had not attended a single meeting where we had gone through all the pros and cons, because he wasn't a member of the board then. He was very new, and he didn't come to this special meeting on July 14th of '84, I guess.



**Warren:** He did not come to that?

**Ballengee:** No, he did not, but he had not participated in any of the discussions, the studies, or anything else. So we had twenty-four people to vote.

I was persuaded that, of the twenty-four, if it came out 13-11 or something like that, so close, that even though the bylaws said a majority carried the day and that this was a decision the board itself could make, which it had done on going coed in the law school without a whimper, which it had done this far in the South by admitting blacks without a whimper, which it had done with some protest of cutting out any athletic scholarships.

I even wrote a letter, remember, protesting that because of some well-known people that had done so much for Washington and Lee that never would have gotten here if they hadn't come on a football scholarship. "Famous Amos" Bowen is a great example of one, from West Virginia. So the board had done many, many important things here without getting anybody's opinion, and, for all I knew, by a close vote. But I did not feel anything this momentous should carry by a very, very narrow vote.

So I arranged with S L Kopald, who was an advocate for coeducation who was a development chairman, that if the vote came that close, very narrow – we didn't define narrow, but certainly one or two or something like that – in favor of coeducation, one of us – I asked him, since I was presiding, to make a motion to reconsider. In Robert's Rules of Order, only a person who voted for a motion could ask for it to be reconsidered. If you voted for against and lost, you couldn't say, "Hey, let's bring this up again." But if you voted for it, you could ask that it be reconsidered. And then I would rule on that, and we would all vote the other way and then turn it down because it was so narrow.

At the beginning of the morning, just as we were gathering, Chris Compton, who's on the Supreme Court of Virginia still to this day, wonderful, wonderful trustee, was very much opposed to coeducation. He was very articulate and kind of a big, tall

great hero, had been a great basketball player when we were in school here. He was an undergraduate and I was in law school. He said to me, "Jim, this should not go by the rules of a strict majority of one or two."

I said, "I agree." I don't know, I suppose I might even have agreed on three-fourths.

He said, "It ought to be a two-thirds vote if it changes, if it carries."

I said, "Agreed. Fine."

So I announced that he and I had discussed this and that we would put it to a vote, but in order to change from our current status of being an all-male institution, it had to be at least two-thirds voting in favor, so that if anybody abstained or voted nay, then that would count and go against out of the twenty-four.

Then I let everybody go around the room in a counterclockwise place to say their piece, how they felt after they had heard everything and believed everything, which made John Wilson next to last and me the last speaker. And then when we voted, I went the other way around. Instead of a show of hands or secret ballot or anything, everybody had to speak up, and without "fear or favors," it says.

It went pretty way the way I thought. I guess there were a couple people maybe in question. Cal Thomas, who is from Hartford, announced at the time that he had been awake all night trying to decide, pacing back and forth out in the Keydet General, that he couldn't make up his mind.

But it came out 17 to 7, and there were very few surprises to me in that. Maybe Jimmy Gallivan, who was fairly new on the board, but had been elected by the alumni association, which happens every other year. He felt that he was duty bound to represent the alumni, and their referendum was against it, so he voted against it. I don't know, it may well have been his conviction, also, that it was the wrong thing to do.

All of us agreed that, whichever way it went, we would together to make it a success no matter what, and afterward John Wilson and Chris Compton – no, I don't

think Chris Compton. I'm trying to think now who it might have been. Oh, Edgar Shannon. Edgar Shannon was a tower of strength. He had been president of the University of Virginia at the time it went coeducational. He knew everybody in the academic world. He was chairman of our committee on academic affairs. He was invaluable when we had the search committee picking John Wilson, because he knew everybody in academia and he could call any provost and say, "Tell me about this person." He could get confidential information through his contacts the rest of us could not. Edgar Shannon and John Wilson and I, and maybe Chris Compton also, did a kind of press conference making the announcement.

*I think, compared to what I've seen other places, I predicted the same thing would happen here that happened there. My friends who are Princetonians around Philadelphia, they were dead set against it. The minute Princeton went coed, they started sending their daughters.*

I really believe that we gained as much or more in alumni support than we lost. For example, Steve Miles, my successor as the rector, had really not shown any interest in Washington and Lee at all. I'd never seen him. I never knew him, never heard of him. The minute we went coed, his daughter came here in the first class, and he began coming and showing interest, and we learned about him and got him on the board, and now he's been the rector for six years, since I stepped down. So if we lost a few people, maybe, who got unhappy over the fact that it's not exactly like it was when they went to school here, the net gain was tremendous in alumni support.

That's not counting everything else. The faculty was very strongly in favor of doing this, and the reputation we've gotten through the admissions process now. The concern was that there were people that really thought that we would get a group of strong-willed feminists a la the Seven Sister colleges and expressed it like, "It's going to ruin Washington and Lee, its reputation. You're not going to get any of the pompon girls or cheerleader types."

It turned out we got exactly the same kind of young women we'd always been getting in men, the same background, the same kind of families, the same interests, very bright, competitive on the SATs and grade point average, very strong, and it's worked out wonderfully, I think.

**Warren:** We need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Ballengee:** Well, Frank had it all down. It's a critical thing. Although he is so generous in trying to share with me and some others, John Wilson was the driving force that brought this about. Bringing him here as president –

**Warren:** That was my next question.

**Ballengee:** Well, how would you phrase the question?

**Ballengee:** Well, my question to you is, I've never been to a board meeting and I'll probably never go to a board meeting. Who leads a board meeting? Do you as the rector or does the president? What are the dynamics of that? He was pretty new at that point, John Wilson, right?

**Ballengee:** Oh, yes, he was.

**Warren:** So how did he figure in as a player?

**Ballengee:** The rector sets the agenda, but the president is the chief executive officer, the CEO. Now, the way I saw that, in the two New York Stock Exchange companies of which I was the CEO, I was the chairman, president, and CEO, and then you didn't have to worry about who's going to set the agenda and present the accomplishments or the problems or the opportunities or whatever to the board for discussion and decision.

The president is here every day. The board meets three times a year, usually here on the campus. During a big campaign, they're often off in other cities, Houston, Philadelphia, wherever, as they have been. Bob Huntley was a very strong president, and so is John Wilson, and I'm confident John Elrod, whom I've known since he came here, will do the same. You need that. He's here every day.

The president is, in effect, chairman of the faculty, and the faculty, to me, is so critical. I've been the chairman of a big hospital and of this university, and in the bylaws in both cases the board has the final say. Technically that's true, but unless you had a great medical staff or a great faculty, you're not going to attract any students, you're not going to have any kind of institution at all.

You need the highest quality here in teaching, because we're not a great research-oriented institution, but the relationship of student to teacher to teach a thing, and John Wilson and every president we've had, I think, has brought that quality of the respect of the faculty, wanting to strengthen the faculty, and John Wilson did a particularly good job of that. But he saw immediately this admissions problem, heard from the faculty and others.

The board had discussed coeducation a couple times before. I don't know that it ever came to, I don't think it ever came to a vote, but it had been on the minds of people because it had been happening at many places that everybody admired. There were concerns about what it would do to the wonderful women's colleges all around us, which it didn't hurt at all, in my view, or I think in most people there. And there were concerns about the alumni support, but in my judgment we gained maybe two people back for every one we lost who was upset over the coeducation.

But John really – and still to this day, I haven't attended a board meeting for a while, but I'm sure that the rector presides, but he turns it over to the president to make reports, who will delegate to as each of his deans, the dean of the college, the dean of the law school, and the dean of the commerce school, to report, sometimes through the academic affairs committee, on admissions and statistics and particular aspects of it. After all, this is an academic institution. What we're about here is teaching. That's the critical part. The president still, I guess, he's the chief executive officer, and you turn to him in every case. Then the board goes home and doesn't come back for months.

Now, there are committees. There are some committees where you have a lot of specialized strength. The investment committee, you've got people from Tom Broadus to Rupert Johnson that help run great big companies and invest millions for other people. So when you look at the endowment here, you look at the financial part.

I've been on lots of what I'd call outside boards and I've administered charitable institutions, those that you could take a tax deduction if you give them money, and institutional accounting is different than the P&L statement and a normal business statement. But both Bob Huntley and John Wilson were superb, sort of their own chief financial officers, even though we had very good, and still have today, financial department. They understood the audit function, understood the budget function very well. I'm sure John Elrod does, too, and had a lot of experience. It's a little different in an educational institution than in a business, but not that much.

**Warren:** Going back into that room on that day, which I think is such a dramatic event, when that decision was made to go with the two-thirds vote, was there any dissension on that? Did anyone feel that that was not appropriate?

**Ballengee:** I said Chris Compton and I had agreed on that, and I guess we were sort of recognized as leaders of the two factions.

**Warren:** About John Wilson? Did you talk it over with him?

**Ballengee:** I don't recall that I even—I must have. I know I would have said to him, "John, if this goes very narrowly, Kopald is going to make a motion to reconsider, and many of us who voted for coeducation are then going to vote against it, and we're all going to pledge to get together and work on it." I'm sure I told him that.

But, you know, you kind of caught the. I had taken a count in my own mind from the days before, and I was pretty sure that we had enough, and I think I did a quick mental calculation. I think I knew we could two-thirds, and maybe why I agreed to that so quickly without any great discussion. I didn't try to bargain Chris to 55 percent or 60 percent. Sixty-six and two-thirds was fine.

The question I've always had in mind, suppose he had said three-fourths? Could I have done that?

**Warren:** Wouldn't quite have done it, would it?

**Ballengee:** Well, no, it wouldn't have. It would have taken 18, one-fourth of 24 is 6. It would have taken 18. But there might have been one more vote out there if we'd had that, you know. Maybe you needed what they call a whip in the Congress and Senate stirred up to get one more vote, I don't know.

**Warren:** It seems to have been a very charged experience.

**Ballengee:** Oh, it was revolutionary, 200 years plus. That institution was 200 years old in 1949, and here a few more years, to make such a sea change, change the whole perception of everybody like that. The students rose up against you. Somebody put "No Marthas" up on old George, up on top of Washington.

They only did one really clever thing, which encouraged me. You've heard of this clever thing that kids at Cal Tech do, change the scoreboard in the Rose Bowl by some computer magic from long distance and put up some message that Cal Tech is playing MIT or something. They don't even have a football team. But some of the kids here somehow found out and got a copy of the inaugural speech John Wilson had made when he was sworn in as president of Wells College, an all-female college, in which the thrust of his speech and the drive entirely related to why you don't need coeducation. They reprinted that and sent it around to all the board. It was done by students.

I said to John, "You're going to have to explain this. This is your speech, pal. I'm not touching this." But what it does show is, that we've got great kids here. Anybody bright enough to dig that out. God knows I never would have thought of going back and looking at what you said that many years ago.

**Warren:** Isn't that clever.

**Ballengee:** It was very clever. There were some nasty things said, lots of letters to answer things. I was so proud of the fact that, hey, I'm not really worried about this

student body. Even if this doesn't go through, these kids are going to be able to handle things. It looks all right to me. It's great. A little anecdotal, I know, but it was great fun.

**Warren:** Oh, no, that's what I'm after, those anecdotes. So what happened then? Tell me as it unfolded over the next couple of years.

**Ballengee:** The whole committee, they went around and studied everything, from Colgate, which had some problems, and others, whether you put up more lights, do you put separate dorms. It turned out that the Warner Center was easy to divide in women's locker room and men's locker room and other things. And you're starting with a school 1,500 to 1,600, and you only took about 100 the first year, I think, out of 400, maybe more.

Anyhow, it got to the point pretty quickly where we're still at 1,000 men and 600 young women. If you went way down in the number of young men, then you don't have a football team or a lacrosse team and other things. So you did it over – the prep school that my son is the college counselor in did it over twelve years. They started in kindergarten and every year added to the class, till they got to the full thing.

So it took a long time to get enough people to have a girls cross-country team or swimming team, to do all of that, and it just worked splendidly from the beginning. The number of applications almost immediately overwhelmed everybody of young men and young women who wanted to be here. And there's no question, I suppose the women in the first year class come from pioneer stock. They wanted to be in that first class.

**Warren:** Tell me more about that.

**Ballengee:** That is an internal matter of Bill Hartog and the president. The board doesn't participate a lot of that. You cannot. The decision has got to be made on the basis of what's best for the university.



Now, we have had always had a policy that sons and now daughters of graduates and residents of Rockbridge County, and I suppose maybe in some minority situations, do not compete in the regular pool, but it's got to be demonstrable that they can do the work. I think that's true of almost every college that I know. Even then, you turn down lots of prominent donors and alumni, the sons and daughters of, and it's very, very difficult.

I went through this with Bob Huntley with Robert E. Lee IV's son, Robert E. Lee V, and how do you do that? Bob went to see him and said, "We're never going to turn down anybody named Robert E. Lee V, Bob, but this is the wrong place for you to send this boy," and told him why and explained. That young man went to Hampden-Sydney and did well. He's a coach, I think, now. I see Bob once in a while, and he tells me how proud he is of his son. Roger Mudd's son. Bill Brock, who's in the Cabinet, Bill Brock told me it was the finest thing we did, the right thing.

But some people get very, very bitter about that, you know, and some of them have been five generations of Washington and Lee. We exacerbated that part of the problem when we went coed, because of the number of applicants went way up and the number of spots are still the same. In fact, we reduced the young men, so it made it doubly difficult when we did that.

But the board can't interfere with that. You can write letters. I would not write a letter about any young person unless I knew him, saw him, interviewed him personally. It doesn't do me any good to write Bill Hartog and say, "Hey, this kid's got wonderful parents." He will immediately write me back and say, "Jim, we're not admitting the parents."

He used to kid me. In fact, I kid him. What he did, I recommended some people, and they kidded over there, my batting average was 0 for 17 or something like that. What Bill was doing was, I think, turning down all kinds of people that I might have recommended and then that gave him this leeway with everybody else on the board.

He would say, "Hey, I've already turned down Jim's guy, who is much better qualified than yours, and he's the rector. I cannot take yours." I said, "You're using me as a ploy. I want you to stop doing that."

So I wrote him about a young man that had a two handicap to be his partner at golf and he could beat everybody else around here, which is one of Hartog's loves, and he took him right away. So I kidded him then what he was doing. It's a doubly difficult thing.

**Warren:** I understand that you couldn't really participate in it, but you did watch. What did you see happen when those girls started coming here?

**Ballengee:** Well, I saw the grade point average and the SATs going up. The campus didn't look a lot different. There had always been girls from Sweet Briar. My son married a Sweet Briar girl, typical kind of thing that you came to Washington and Lee and you met a girl from Hollins or Sweet Briar, any number of people on the board and others that I know, and my daughter-in-law is a Sweet Briar grad. So there were always girls around. Now they just didn't have to drive down the road to Hollins or over the mountain to Sweet Briar or Hampden-Sydney or some place.

I had sort of on the periphery seen it at schools around Philadelphia that I knew well and watched Bryn Mawr. I live in Bryn Mawr. Harris Walford, who was president there for a long time, is a good friend of mine. He appointed me on a committee to look at some of their financial problems which they had were serious and I belong to their library and Haverford College library, because if you send them a small contribution, then you get to use the library.

I had watched it. It started so slowly here in the numbers, you know, socially changing. Just now getting around to the sororities, for example. There weren't enough for that to happen. I've been off the board now six years, or it will be six years in October. I still try to watch it. The place's reputation, if you look at not only the *U.S. News & World Report* and all those kind of things, it's got superb, but so many other

places. And the law school I look at particularly. I just wrote Dean Sullivan about a couple young men there. One of them is the same one that had the two handicap that Hartog took. He's been out as a graduate and been working at KPMG, Pete Marwick [phonetic], as a CPA. Now he's decided he wants to go to law school. He's a fine young man. I'm proud of him. I don't know why he wants to live here seven years. He was here four years, and he wants to come back three more and do it.

**Warren:** I like that expression, a seven-year man.

**Ballengee:** They use that a lot. Yeah, you hear that a lot. That gives him higher credentials, greater weight.

**Warren:** So we're only starting to have seven-year women. We probably only have less than a handful.

**Ballengee:** Yeah, of course.

**Warren:** Were you here for the first graduation that included women?

**Ballengee:** No. I rarely came to graduation. Graduation has always been a president's tradition. He is the speaker and he awards the degrees. The board never participated much, at least in my time that marks graduation.

I proposed somebody for an honorary degree, and I was on that committee as long as I was the rector. And then they made me write this citation, which I did, and I came with him and his wife and went to the dean's dinner the night before, which was wonderful and delightful. It was a glorious time, and I enjoyed it very much.

But basically, I did not ever come to graduation. I was here enough, it seemed to me. That was an academic function, and that belonged to the parents. Of course, I came to my son's graduation, my son-in-law's graduation. And my daughter, who graduated from Swarthmore, after three children went back to Bryn Mawr and got a master's. I just went to that graduation not long ago. Now I'm getting ready to start with grandchildren. I've done my share of graduations, I guess that's it.

**Warren:** You've mentioned your son coming here a couple of times. Tell me about that, being a parent and having that be a possibility for your child.

**Ballengee:** I was very pleased, of course. I don't know how much influence—I hope that he made his own choice, and I think he did. We traveled around and we looked at Davidson and we looked at a number of schools in Ohio, like Denison. He'd gone to Haverford school, which was a good prep school in suburban Philadelphia, next door to Bryn Mawr almost, which they're all day schools now. In earlier time, they had boarding students. The school my two daughters went to, Baldwin was a preparatory school for Bryn Mawr and Haverford was a preparatory school for Haverford College.

He made his own mind that he join Sigma Chi. I guess he's very much like me, I don't know. I tried to get him to go to law school and told him I'd getting running my business and start a practice, and I'd bring in the clients and he could do the work. He had no—and neither of my daughters. I tried that on both my daughters and did not succeed. My son wanted to be a teacher. He got his master's degree, and he loves being a college counselor. He's been in three schools. He was out in La Jolla for five years at a magnificent place called the Bishop School.

**Warren:** What a nice place to be.

**Ballengee:** Oh. I visited there as much as I could. It's absolutely lovely.

**Warren:** I'll bet you did.

**Ballengee:** But I kept hoping. He had three children I couldn't see that often. I kept hoping somebody in Atlanta or Boston would offer him a job and he'd get back on the East Coast, but, lo and behold, Penn Charter [phonetic], which is an old, old another Quaker founder school, like Bryn Mawr and Haverford and Swarthmore offered him the same job in Philadelphia, and he moved back to Philadelphia. I regained three grandchildren there, and it's great.

I came to all the parents' day things, my daughter's when I could, especially my daughter at Berkeley at that time. I had a lot of business on the West Coast, so I'd get

through at L.A., I'd go up and spend a weekend with her in San Francisco or Berkeley and I went to the functions. That was, I guess, a troubling time for parents, although most of the real problems at Berkeley had sort of calmed down by that time. But as a parent, that far away from home and what you read about it, it wasn't like Washington and Lee or Swarthmore, although at Swarthmore the president of the college dropped dead in his chair in his office while besieged by a bunch of students in the sixties taking over his office. So even the Quakers, that can happen. It wasn't just Berkeley. The sixties were a terrible time. Every place must have been. I'm glad I survived what I was doing.

**Warren:** When you came back as a parent, did you find that you were among many other parents who were alumni?

**Ballengee:** Oh, yeah. Of course, you can look in the alumni magazine at the end of each year, their fathers and grandfathers standing behind them in the pictures. I think Washington and Lee has done a great job in continuing to accept sons, and now daughters, of graduates.

**Warren:** I find those photographs very touching when I see them.

**Ballengee:** They absolutely are. I brought a granddaughter here this summer. She's going to be a rising senior next year. She's a senior in prep school, and she is looking at a lot of places. I don't think Washington and Lee, living in Philadelphia, if they look at a small college, they look towards Williams, Amherst, Wesley, in that direction more than the South. But she's going to look at Emory and Richmond, and that's going to be tough competition. I don't know, since her father went here and I went here, I don't know whether she might want to do something on her own. I don't want her just to go down there and see that name Ballengee up on the wall there, "Too much will be expected of me." Being the oldest child in my family, I suppose that may be a problem for her, and I'm going to understand.

**Warren:** And it's not exactly Smith. It's not like she can pretend she's not related.

**Ballengee:** No, that's true. But I'm going to understand if she decides to go someplace else. But I've got eight grandchildren, so I figure I may get lucky and one or two of them I don't know.

**Warren:** My guess is, at the rate you're going, you'll be around for great-grandchildren, too.

**Ballengee:** Oh, I don't know. I hope. I'm seventy-three now, and I don't know. I've had thirty-some years of rheumatoid arthritis, which I've had lots of orthopedic operations and replacements. Even Frank will tell you, the way I used to walk, I've had remarkable improvement, sort of remission and doing well.

**Warren:** That's great.

**Ballengee:** It is great.

**Warren:** That's wonderful. Well, I know you've had a long drive today, and I know you're probably ready to relax, and I feel like I've gotten wonderful information from you. I can already see it on the page. Is there anything more you'd like to talk about?

**Ballengee:** No. If I think of anything, I'll drop you a note. *I've always believed in the theory that John Wilson always proclaimed, that life is like a relay race. Our predecessors carried the baton, and now it's handed it off to this generation. I strongly believe this. I probably first heard Dr. Gaines say this, starting with the importance of George Washington's gift to every student here. This place was here and ready for me when I came here in 1946, with the wonderful buildings, this beautiful, incomparable setting of the front campus and the colonnade, to walk down that every day, just absolutely inspiring and gorgeous, and a great faculty and a great program, because people worked and gave money and gave of their time and their talent and their treasure and all, and I did nothing. I just came here as a hillbilly kid out of West Virginia, matured a little bit because I'd been overseas in the infantry. But that is the clear obligation for me and those in my generation to do the same thing for the next generation and the next generation. Every generation owes its dues, and sometimes that's difficult to get across to people.*

I know it's strange. My wife and I have had this discussion. I think we ought to be giving more money to this little college in West Virginia we both went to. It's where we met. She's a strong advocate that it's wasted, that we ought to just keep giving it to Washington and Lee, that you know you're going to get more bang for the buck here, this is going to do more good, it's going to help. I said, "The poor little kid struggling in the mountains over there, they're never going to get anyplace."

She might be right about it. In fact, we have done substantially more here than we have for that place, and I suppose it'll continue, because for a while I thought it was going to fail, I thought it was going to fold up, and nobody wants to start pouring money into a ship that's on its way sinking. I see it as more of a moral dilemma than she does. She's pretty clear-eyed about this, and her vision of what's going to be useful and helpful and where it's going to do some good is that this is the place, and she may be right.

**Warren:** You have a pretty sound investment here.

**Ballengee:** There's no question about that. We've already got a big investment of son and son-in-law and all our years of friendship. In recent years, we've taken every trip, many of the trips the alumni college thing, which has cemented things over again. Like I'm getting ready to go early next month with Rob to Jerusalem, Petra, Iman, and even Damascus, and then we're going to England in the summer.

**Warren:** Oh, may I carry your bags? I would love to go that trip.

**Ballengee:** Our oldest daughter, the Berkeley one, married an Englishman that lives down in Somerset near Bath, and we have two grandchildren there that have wonderful English accents, truly delightful. So we're going to even stay some time and spend a week with them.

**Warren:** Oh, that's wonderful.

**Ballengee:** It will be great, I think. I first went there in 1944 on the QE-1 with 14,999 other troops, a little different than sailing on the QE-2 today. With all their problems

and mad cow disease now and everything else, everything that my life centered on that I like, literature and law and language, all came from what you could probably call the mother country to many of us here, I guess. I've been there many times since more than fifty years now.

**Warren:** My husband and I keep going back, and every time we say, "We really ought to go somewhere else." But why? We love it there so much.

**Ballengee:** Well, I can't think of anything else. It's obvious, you go over and look at that benefactors wall and see the people that have [unclear] – Ernie Williams and Gerry Lenfest, the Lewises. They're so wonderful. Both of them served on the board with me, never once ever said to me, "Jim, you ought to do this for us because of what we've done." I tried never to forget. They were our largest benefactors for many years, and now I've paced a little, but I think that's important.

**Warren:** It's a wonderful family here, and I'm really getting a lot of pleasure in getting to meet these people.

**Ballengee:** Well, I think the integrity, too. The admissions process is such that Bill Hartog and his group, maybe with some influence from the president and the dean and others, really make those decisions.

I know once I was in a difficult thing. There was a young man whom I had never met, but I knew his father well. His father had been president of the American Bar Association, as a young man had worked up through the ranks in Tampa, Florida. He was a real overachiever, and so was the boy's mother. The boy I guess kind of rebelled against that, and in a prep school, out of 220 kids, he was like 210. But his SATs were sky-high, I mean way up there, like 1400 or something like that. His father was known to everybody, a couple of our leading trustees in Atlanta. Lewis Powell knew me well, called me. I'd worked with him in the junior bar when we both started out.

Bill resisted this from the beginning, saying, "We're not a remedial institution. We're not here to straighten that kid out, Jim."



Then I remembered Dean Gilliam's favorite thing – the thicker the file, the thicker the boy. That meant the more letters that came in from the board is a part of it. The father flew up here, had a terrible flight, got the plane canceled, finally got in in the middle of the night, came over, and Bill Hartog wouldn't even see him, put him off to somebody else to interview him. He's a very important guy in Tampa.

John Robins, who's on the board now, I told you had this same experience. I don't think the father will speak to him. I've never heard from the father since then. We turned the kid down flat. I think Bill Hartog was exactly right. I don't think he's turned out to be anything.

There's some of them – I don't know how he does it. My son, who went to Washington and Lee, is a college counselor. He had a young man that we turned down flat and Davidson took, and I think my son would agree, we should have turned him down, even though he's now president of the student body at Davidson, probably a great kid. The father was atrocious in writing letters criticizing [unclear] and everything. Maybe Davidson takes more at-risk cases or something, I don't know. It's a whole mystery to me how you've got three times as many fully qualified people that you can handle, how you pick.

**Warren:** It's not an enviable job.

**Ballengee:** He doesn't want well-rounded kids. He wants a well-rounded class. So he needs a couple cello players and he needs a great lacrosse player and he needs an editor for the newspaper and he needs a few other things to try to get the classes well rounded.

A big problem now – I don't know whether you've heard this, but this is between us and the board, is this question of whether you should have a sex-blind admissions policy or stay at this 1,000 and 600. My friend Pat McPherson, who's president of Bryn Mawr College now, said to me, "Jim, you should have done that a long time ago, and you'll have more women than men."

I said, "That's what everybody's afraid of."

**Warren:** What do you think on that subject?

**Ballengee:** I haven't studied any of the — it all came up since. We were pretty clear in the beginning how gradually we were going to do this and what we were going to work up to, and we're at that point, 600 and 1,000. That was the objective. It's maybe like Frank's Zen Buddhism or whatever he was quoting, "You achieve success when you arrive where you're supposed to arrive, whether you realize it or not," and we're at that point.

There are some people on the board that think it ought to just stay that way, I know, and I know they've voiced it to me that they're going to be very happy if that changes. I think if you change it, I don't think it would end up much different. I think Bill Hartog can control that. He can do it the way he — these days, I watch this closely, because my son being a college counselor, what he does with all of his recommendations and how he goes to these meetings with Hartog and others. They have the really good prep school for college counselors and really good colleges. I think they get off and play golf and things, to tell you the truth. Now, they have a big thing. They meet up in New England and discuss these things between themselves.

But I think these days, with the increase every place in the early decisions, Bill has his class fixed with the early decision, and then he's got his wait list at the end. It looks like a science better than booking hotel rooms and airplane tickets. How do you come out never too many and never too few? If you have too many, you don't have housing for them. If you have too few, you ruin your budget. You've got to come out right where you want to come out every place. It's a very tough thing.

I probably would be very conservative and hold on to the way it's — because it's going so well. You don't kick around with great success here.

**Warren:** Yeah, but they tinkered ten years ago. *You* tinkered ten years ago.

**Ballengee:** Exactly right. Exactly right. You put your finger right on the point. You get older and you get much more conservative. I can remember when I was young I would push what money I had in the middle of the table, and if the deal fell apart, I knew I had lots of years to make it up when something came along later. But you don't have that later. You're exactly right about that, probably would. But I don't know that going to sex-blind admission—I think Bill can do that now, except I guess the board has said to him, "We want 600 women and 1,000 men." Mostly what the board has said to him, "We don't want more than 1,600. We're going to keep this place small and keep the student/teacher ratio." You can balance a budget easily by taking 2,000. You could increase the class size a little bigger without adding any faculty, with adding any chairs in many of those classrooms or any other facilities. Some dormitory rooms or something you might need or housing, and you could really enhance your budget. I've seen some schools do it that way. But the board was firm. Part of the secret of this place, the charm of the place is the size. One time I can remember we said we want 1,600. The 1,601 student that comes here this next year lives with the Hartogs; the 1,602 lives in Lee House with the president.

**Warren:** That's great. Thank you so much.

**Ballengee:** I've ran long enough. Thank you, Mame.

[End of Interview]