

LEA BOOTH

January 17, 1997

—
Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is January 17, 1997. I'm in Lynchburg, Virginia, with Lea Booth. Did I tell you this was Mame Warren? I don't even remember, I'm so excited to be here.

Booth: Class of '40.

Warren: Class of 1940. But my first question to you is how did you decide to go to Washington and Lee in the first place?

Booth: Well, Mame, I went to high school in Danville and was the editor of the high school newspaper. I got interested in journalism. I had a marvelous journalism teacher there, Mrs. Hill. Oh, she was great. She used to teach at Columbia University Journalism School in the summer, summer school. That's how I got interested in journalism.

My father had come from Richmond. We moved to Danville when I was an infant. My father's boyhood friend was Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman, you remember, who was the biographer of General Lee. I was in Richmond with my dad, and he took me by to see Dr. Freeman. He said, "Douglas," he said, "this boy wants to go into journalism. Do you have any advice for him?"

And I'll never forget, Dr. Freeman said, "Well, Gus (my father's nickname), he might as well peddle peanuts on the street corner as try to get into journalism without a college degree."

And my father said, "Well, what do you recommend for him?"

He said, "Well, how about Washington and Lee? They've got a first-rate journalism school there. How about going to Washington and Lee?" And that, Mame, is really what stimulated me to go to W&L. But I worked a year after high school. This was while I was working. I worked a year after high school in several jobs, including a job on the Danville newspaper. After what Dr. Freeman said, "Might as well peddle peanuts on the street corner," I went on to W&L, and it was the best decision ever made – no, it was the second best decision I ever made in my life. The first, of course, was marrying Mary Morris. But I had a marvelous experience. I mean, this couldn't have been a greater experience for me –

Warren: Tell me about it.

Booth: – than going to school up there. Well, I don't know. It was just a great bunch of guys, and I got involved in various campus activities. The first thing was to go to work on the *Ring-tum Phi*, the student newspaper. I played basketball and baseball my freshman year, and I joined a good fraternity where the food was delicious. It was a wonderful experience.

Warren: Can you remember your first impression, the first time you saw the campus?

Booth: The first time I saw the campus was the spring before I went there. An alumnus named Leroy Hodges, who was in the tobacco business in Danville, had just graduated up there about a year or so before that, took me up there one weekend to look at the school. We stayed in his fraternity house, which later became my fraternity. We looked all over the place at everything.

My high school record was not the best in the world, I mean academically, it really wasn't. But the superintendent of schools in Danville was my father's close friend, and he wrote Dean Gilliam a letter and begged him to accept me for admission to W&L, and it was on the basis of that that I was accepted and on probation. I was taken in on probation, with the proviso that I had to make at least a C average the first semester to stay or they would kick me out.

Warren: Go ahead. Tell me anything.

Booth: Well, I think I had – excuse me, this sounds so immodest, awfully immodest to me, but I think I had something like two As and three Bs, or three As and two Bs, or something like that. I don't remember. But I remember that Dean Gilliam was shocked, and I made the Dean's List my first semester. I was on probation until then. But I worked my "uh-uh" off. I remember we would stay up. I was rooming with Dick Boisseau from Petersburg, who became an all-American football player at Washington and Lee. Dick and I would be up half the night studying. We lived over in Graham dormitory on the fourth floor.

My father had given me an old L.C. Smith or Underwood typewriter to take to school with me, because I'd learned two-finger typing, and I could type my essays and things. One night Dick was asleep, he had gone to bed, he was asleep, and I'm sitting over there across the room typing, bang, bang, bang. He just couldn't stand it any longer. He got up, grabbed my typewriter – he was strong as a bull – grabbed my typewriter and threw it out the window from the fourth floor of Graham Hall. He threw the typewriter, and it landed in the street, there's a street that runs up by the dormitory. Oh, Lord.

Warren: Well, that wasn't very kind.

Booth: That was one of the most memorable events of my freshman year. [Laughter]

Warren: I dare say.

Booth: What Dick did to that typewriter. But he's still a dear, dear friend of mine.

Warren: So how did you decide which fraternity to join?

Booth: Well, I was invited to a couple of others, the Beta House, which is next door. But I had stayed up there, see, as a guest, that spring before when Leroy Hodges took me up there, so I was partial. I was bid by the Kappa Sigma fraternity, but Bob Spessard, whom I'd known – he'd played basketball at Roland High School and I'd played basketball with them, well, especially the all-American basketball players at

Washington and Lee – was rushing me for Kappa Sigma. And I loved it. It was a grand fraternity, but I said, “Oh, Lord, it’s way out here on South Main Street, and I have to walk in to school and then walk back to lunch and walk back for baseball practice and walk back.” I said, “I know I’ll never be able to afford an automobile.” By the way, in those days, I think the tuition at Washington and Lee was \$275 a year. “And I know I’ll never be able to afford an automobile, so I couldn’t join Kappa Sigma, and I joined PiKA.

It was very convenient. After our freshman year, we lived in a fraternity house, and it didn’t take you five minutes to get to class. You could just walk up the hill past Lee Chapel. But I think there were something like nineteen fraternities at Washington and Lee, and all of them were good. It really was a fraternity system, but what an asset to the university because it provided dormitory space for hundreds of students.

We didn’t have any upper-class dormitories when I was in school. Lees Hall and Graham Hall were both for freshmen. Upper classmen lived all over – if you didn’t live in the fraternity house, you lived all over town. That’s why I joined a fraternity, to have a place to eat and sleep. Our board was a dollar a day and twelve dollars a month for a room, and, gosh almighty, think of what it must be now. Oh, boy.

But, anyway, it was a good fraternity system, although I never got active in fraternity politics or campus politics. I stayed away from politics, because I worked on the *Ring-tum Phi* all through, until – I think in my junior or senior year I got a job as a student assistant in the news bureau, doing mostly sports publicity, working in the news bureau, and was paid for it.

I was paid enough to pay for my tuition, something like fifty dollars a month – I mean pay for my room and board. I think I got fifty dollars a month as a student assistant in the news bureau. A fellow named Carter, Dick Carter, was the publicity director and then he was also assistant professor of journalism. I was majoring in

journalism under Tom Riegel, who is one of my role models, a marvelous teacher. There has never been a greater journalism teacher than Tom Riegel.

Warren: Why was he so good?

Booth: He was just so incisive and direct, and he would bring up these interesting subjects and give us interesting things to write about. His course in the law of libel was one of the great journalism courses in the nation. It was terrific. I still remember some of his lectures in the law of libel. They had some marvelous teachers there. The faculty was just utterly superb, they really were. Frank Gilliam, who was the dean of students, was my first English teacher. He was a hell of a good English teacher. Then Dr. Shannon, whose son Edgar was in school with me – you know Edgar became president of the University of Virginia, great guy, still a good buddy. Dr. Shannon.

All of us had to take one of the science courses. I had had chemistry and physics in high school and didn't like either one, so I took geology. Dr. Marcellus Stowe was head of the geology department, and he was nationally prominent, Dr. Stowe was. I think when World War II started, the federal government hired him as the head of the Mining Division or something to produce – anyway, he was very productive in World War II. But all of my teachers were just absolutely superb.

Warren: No one has ever talked to me about Frank Gilliam as a teacher before. What was he like in the classroom?

Booth: He was good, good. The other day I found – and when I went to work, when I got out of the navy after the war, after having won the war in the Pacific single-handed, I went to work at Washington and Lee, you know, running the news bureau for a while. Dean Gilliam and Mrs. Gilliam were just like parents to me. I feel utterly devoted to them. Washington and Lee was a great school then. Jimmy Leyburn came in there as academic dean. It's hard to really evaluate the school objectively for me because I'm so prejudiced about it. It was just a perfectly marvelous school.

Warren: Well, I'm not looking for objectivity here. I want your subjective opinion about all this.

Booth: Well, it was the greatest thing that ever happened to me, and then later to marry a Sweet Briar girl who had six generations of her family, beginning with Augusta Academy, I was the only person in my family, in the Booth or Lea – or the Lea family, that went to Washington and Lee, but my wife had all these. When our twin sons were graduating in 1980, they were the seventh generation of Mary Mural's family to attend Washington and Lee.

Warren: Well, that's quite a record.

Booth: One time my son George was walking across the campus, and Jim Whitehead, who at that time was the college treasurer, said, "George, what do you hear from home?" George said, "Lots of advice." [Laughter]

Warren: I really like hearing about the teachers who were important to you, but I know one person who had a big impact on you was Cap'n Dick Smith.

Booth: Oh, marvelous guy.

Warren: Tell me about him.

Booth: Well, he was my baseball coach. As I said, I worked in the college news bureau my junior and senior years doing sports publicity, and that's how I got to be close to Cap'n Dick. But I played on varsity baseball my senior year, and that's when, that story I showed you, about breaking up Porter Vaughn's [phonetic] no-hitter. Porter Vaughn went directly to the big leagues after he graduated from the University of Richmond – and breaking up his no-hitter. Typically, after each game I would go up to the Western Union office on Main Street and write up the game for the Associated Press. It would be wired by Western Union. But I would play in the ball game and then cover the game for the Associated Press, for the newspaper. That was a unique situation, I'm sure. I'd go up there hyping, glorifying, Lea Booth, the General's "rangy first baseman," and that article about breaking up Porter Vaughn's no-hitter.

Two or three years ago, Porter Vaughn found a clipping that had been in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and sent the clipping to me. I called him up, and I said, "Porter, what you don't know is I wrote the story."

But, anyway, Cap'n Dick was a father figure to me, he really was. I remember when I went in the navy, they were going to put me in a security job that required top-secret security. I later was in radio detection in the Pacific. Before they would give me clearance to do that kind of work in the navy, they had to investigate me, and the place they went to investigate me was Cap'n Dick Smith. I mean, I was passed and then went on with top-secret work in the navy because of Cap'n Dick.

Warren: What was he like as a person?

Booth: He was just jolly. He was a jolly guy. Like when I knocked down the line drive and swallowed my tobacco and it made me sick, he'd say, "Go back there and stick your finger down your throat, Lea." But the great story about Cap'n Dick, we were playing— who was it we were playing? University of Michigan, I think. These Yankee teams used to come down south in the early spring to take advantage of our warm weather. By the way, I remember we opened the season with Ohio State and went about two innings, and they had to call the game on account of snow, in Lexington.

I remember Yale came down there, and Ohio State, University of Michigan. Anyway, we were playing Michigan. Charley McDowell, who is a legendary newspaper columnist and TV commentator, Charley was one of the great guys. Charley's father was a law professor there, and his lovely mother, she ran the law school. But he was our bat boy. The Michigan pitcher threw a ball that got through the catcher, and the ball rolled to the backstop. Charley McDowell, the bat boy, was walking along, and he reached down and picked up the ball. Here's the Michigan catcher frantically coming to chase the ball because there was a Washington and Lee runner on third base. Then our runner came in and scored from third base because our bat boy was holding the ball.

The Michigan coach, who had been a big league pitcher – I think his name was Fisher, I'm not sure. The Michigan coach came over to Cap'n Dick, our coach, and said, "Cap'n Dick, that runner has got to be sent back to third base." He said, "That's interference. The rule book would say that's interference."

Cap'n Dick said, "What do you mean, interference?"

He said, "Well, your bat boy picked up the ball."

Cap'n Dick said, "My bat boy? What do you mean? I never saw the little S.O.B. before in my life." [Laughter] That's the kind of simple of humor he had.

When I worked there after the war, he and Mrs. Smith used to have me up for dinner. He was, again, another father figure to me. He and Frank Gilliam, Tom Riegel were father figures. Of course, Dr. Gaines, he was a legend there. Oh, boy.

Warren: Oh, tell me about him.

Booth: Well, every time he opened his mouth, something – by the way, I had the pleasure of taking a course in philosophy there. It was an elective my senior year, and the title of the course was The Bible as Literature. Dr. Gaines taught the course. So we got to hear him lecture three times a week. He was a tremendous teacher of religion. He was world-famous. He was indeed. Why? Because of his marvelous speaking talent. He just was a good image and front man for that school. He enhanced the school's image, indeed, nationally. I'm sure he did, and a good man to work for. See, he hired me – he's the one that hired me after the war. I came back and worked for about four years, and then was granted a leave of absence when I was invited to be the chief clerk and staff director of the Administration Committee in the House of Representatives in Washington.

Warren: Let's not leave your student days quite yet. I'm not ready to leave those yet.

Booth: Let me say this. I was granted a leave of absence to take this job in Washington for the experience that it would give me. It was 1950, and I was to come back to Washington and Lee. You'd better check the minutes of the trustee meeting when I was

granted a leave of absence, because I'm still on leave of absence, and I'm thinking about coming back. Scare John Elrod to death. Scare John Elrod to death when he heard that I'm still on leave of absence and might come back.

Warren: That's great. [Laughter]

Booth: By the way, I like him. He looks good to me.

Warren: We all do.

Booth: I think they picked a winner. I think he's a winner. I really do.

Warren: We are all really fond of him. There are certain things that are uniquely Washington and Lee, and one of those things is the Mock Convention. Did you participate in the Mock Convention?

Booth: Mame, only as a delegate, as one of the Virginia delegates to the convention. I had no leadership role at all that I recall. I don't recall having any. But I did have to have publicity, and I covered the Mock Convention my senior year. I covered it for the Associated Press. You saw the picture—I don't know, there's a picture in one of those scrapbooks. That's right. You'll find it in one of those scrapbooks, of our press table there. Here I'm in there with another W&L student and the manager of the Western Union Office. We sent our stories by Morse code. That's how modern we were.

But the Mock Convention was nationally known in those days. I don't know if you knew this, but I think it was a convention in 1924, when something like the hundredth ballot at the convention that they chose—who was it—John W. Davis, as the nominee, and he was a W&L guy, you know. But the W&L boys, I think they've erred only twice in the history of the Mock Convention, is that right?

Warren: They've been pretty good.

Booth: This year they had it on national television. I think it's given W&L a lot of national visibility. Don't you think so?

Warren: Oh, absolutely. I had a marvelous time myself.

Booth: Well, here's to the generals. God bless them.

Warren: Absolutely. Absolutely. Another uniquely Washington and Lee thing is the Fancy Dress ball. I'm sure you've got some memories of that.

Booth: Oh, Lord, yes, all those beautiful girls there. In those days, the dances at Washington and Lee, the formal dances, were quite glitzy. I mean, they were quite formal. All the students were required to wear tuxedos or tails, white tie and tails. They had the best big-name bands. They had the nation's foremost name bands there, like Kay Kyser and Benny Goodman and Eddie Duchen. I don't remember all of them. But they were wonderful affairs.

By the way, you wouldn't think of taking a girl to a dance in those days without buying and taking her an orchid corsage or gardenias or something. All the girls were all dressed up, and it was truly formal.

Warren: We're going to take a little break now. [Tape recorder turned off]

Okay, you've just shown me a note about the Assimilation Committee. Tell me about it.

Booth: Well, back in my day, we had a freshman Assimilation Committee to indoctrinate us in the traditions of the campus, one of which was we all had coats and ties always. The only ones who could get by without wearing a coat and tie, you had to wear a monogrammed sweater, for winning a monogram in athletics. Then you wouldn't have to wear a coat and tie. But freshmen, up until Thanksgiving or Christmas vacation, freshmen were required to wear a beanie cap, these silly little caps that we had to buy there. It was so stupid. There was an Assimilation Committee of seniors, the nastiest guys on campus. I came back from a weekend, I'd gone home for a weekend and came back, and I'd lost my beanie cap when I had gone away. I came back and was going to class on Monday morning without the beanie cap, and I got caught for not wearing my beanie cap. So here's this card mailed to me on November 7, 1936, addressed to Mr. Lea Booth, Lexington, Virginia. It was still delivered to me. I don't know how. You notice a postcard cost a penny then. It says, "Having violated the

traditions of Washington and Lee University, you will be at the meeting of the Freshman Assimilation Committee on the third floor of Tucker Hall Monday night, November 7, at 7:30." And it's signed by the secretary of the Assimilation Committee.

Warren: What happened?

Booth: Tucker Hall was the Law School. What happened was I got up there and they said, "'You were seen walking across the campus without your beanie cap on. Booth, take down your pants."

This really is true. I said, "What?" And they got a wooden paddle, and I mean they beat me until it bled, beat me bloody. I remember the name of the guy who did it. I'll never forgive him as long as I live. To this day, I still have some trouble because of it. But it was the worst form of hazing you ever saw. And they beat me with this wooden paddle because I didn't have on my beanie cap going to class Monday. That was disgraceful.

Thank God that Washington and Lee doesn't have an Assimilation Committee now. The Assimilation Committee would call you up for any violation, of not having a coat and tie, or not having a beanie cap, or whatever you did, you see. I'm not going to give you the name of the secretary who signed it. He was not the one that beat me. The one that beat me was a prominent football player there. I'll never forgive him. But that was the only memorable negative experience I can recall at Washington and Lee. I loved everything that happened to me up there except that.

Warren: Was that a typical punishment?

Booth: I guess. I don't know. But the guy who beat me, if he'd used a little paddle, maybe, it would have been all right. But I mean he beat me. I had to lean over, and it was on the third floor of the law building, and he just beat the hell out of me. I ought to look him up in the alumni directory and see if he's still living. I remember his name.

Warren: Go back and get him, I think.

Booth: That's why I have a new directory. I'd like to have him apprehended and brought to court for, not sexual harassment but whatever kind of harassment it is.

Warren: During lunch you all told me a story that I just really want to get about a trip across the mountain and some students being stopped by the police.

Booth: Well, the story goes that these students were driving over to Sweet Briar for their dates at Sweet Briar. One of them was Pat Robertson, who was the son of Senator Willis Robertson from Lexington, and the other one was Fred Vinson, who is the son of the Chief Justice of the United States, and the other one was Robert E. Lee IV, Bobby Lee, a student there. They got stopped for speeding. The state trooper stopped and said, "All right. Show me your identification cards. What are you doing?"

So Pat Robertson pulled his out, and he says, "From Lexington? Are you related to Senator Willis Robertson? Is Senator Robertson kin to you?"

Pat said, "That's my father."

Then to Fred Vinson he said, "Young man, what is your name?"

He said, "I'm Fred Vinson."

He said, "Fred Vinson. That's the name of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court."

Fred said, "He's my father."

And he looked in the backseat at Bobby Lee and he said, "Well, I suppose you're going to tell me that you're Robert E. Lee." [Laughter]

Warren: Great. That's wonderful. [Laughter]

Booth: That was the story. All three of them, I think they went to school together. Three good guys. Fred Vinson was a damn good athlete. He played on the baseball team, basketball, too, I think. Bobby Lee was a very good guy.

I remember I was a PR director there, and I got a call from *Life* magazine, saying they understood that General Lee's great-grandson was in school there. I said, "That's right."

"Well, we're going to come there, and we're going to send a photographer to get a picture of him." And they did. I think it was in *Life* magazine. I haven't got it, but I think they got a picture of Bobby Lee, not a big story, but about his having enrolled in his great-grandfather's college.

Pat Robertson. I remember Pat Robertson and Charley McDowell and Dr. Bean, chairman of the History Department, another darn good professor, those three and the other urchins in Lexington used to hang around a drugstore across the street from the State Theater. I've forgotten the name of it. They used to hang out there all the time. Pat Robertson, now look at him. But they would loaf around that drugstore in those days.

Charley McDowell and I keep in pretty close touch. We're still good buddies. By the way, Charley Mac—I hope that the alumni magazine is going to do something about this. I want you to talk to Brian Shaw about it. I've got the program that was given out—

Warren: I was there, too. That's where I came up and met you.

Booth: Oh, that's right.

Warren: I introduced myself to you there.

Booth: The alumni magazine is going to do an article with Charley. Charley Mac is a credit to that school.

Warren: I gave them Andy McCutcheon's remarks. I got a copy of his remarks.

Booth: I thought Andy did a grand job.

Warren: Didn't he do a marvelous job?

Booth: Oh, he was the best one of the speakers.

Warren: I thought so, too.

Booth: He was the best.

Warren: I thought so, too.

Booth: Didn't he tell a story about the little S.O.B. [unclear]. Andy did a dandy job. We went up there together. Stewart Brown, in Richmond, invited us, and we rode in a

chartered bus to Washington. We had the most delightful evening. No strain at all. I mean, Stewart Brown picked us up. We stayed with our son George in Richmond. He came and picked us up. He took us down to the chartered bus, and we got on the bus. The bus parked in front of the National Press Club. It was just a perfectly arranged occasion. The whole thing was just utterly delightful.

Warren: It was very nicely done. Another person I noticed when I was looking at your yearbook, who was a classmate of yours, was Sydney Lewis. Were you friends with Sidney?

Booth: Oh, sure. Oh, gosh, if you interview Sid, ask him to show you his first paycheck.

Warren: Tell me about it.

Booth: Well, Bobby Hobson, Louisville's premier lawyer, Bobby Hobson and I were roommates in the PiKA House. Bobby used to come over here to Lynchburg. He was courting a Randolph-Macon Woman's College girl. Just about every weekend he'd stop by Doyle's Florist Shop here to buy a flower to take to his date at Randolph-Macon, so he got to know the Doyles. Well, Bobby arranged for us to be – Doyle, he, and I were Doyle agents on our campus to sell flowers for the dances. You wouldn't dare take your girl to a dance at W&L without sending her a corsage. So we had a monopoly on the flower sales, you might say. Doyle Florist provided the flowers, and they'd bring them over.

We had an agent in each fraternity house. Each fraternity house, they would take the orders, a student, they'd take the orders and turn them in to us. We'd take them over to Lynchburg, they'd fill the orders and deliver the flowers in Lexington. Our agent in the Phi Epsilon Pi House was Sid Lewis. We would pay the agents 20 percent of the gross. They would get 20 percent of the amount of the sale. Sid – I found this check six or eight years ago in some old stuff. I had the whole set of checks from this experience drawn on the Rockbridge National Bank. We had a little account there to run our florist business from. This was, I think, our senior year. And I found this check

made out to Sydney Lewis that I had signed. Eighty cents. Eighty cents was twenty percent of the sale of a four-dollar corsage. He sold one corsage for four dollars, and he got an eighty-cent commission.

Well, several years ago, I showed this thing to Ross Millhiser, who was on the board at Washington and Lee. Ross was President and CEO of Phillip Morris and was on the board, the W&L Board of Trustees. By the way, his son, Tom, I think is on the law school board now. And Ross said, "Oh Lord, give me that thing." He took it to New York and had it laminated and put in a plastic block for a paperweight. And there was the check, Rockbridge signed it on the back, Sydney Lewis, eighty cents, signed Lea Booth. It said "Doyle Florist by Lea Booth."

Several years ago, I showed it to Frances, Frances Lewis, and she said, "Oh, we'd love to have it." I think Sid's got it now, probably on his desk right now.

Warren: That is great.

Booth: It's his first paycheck he ever got. And to think that Lea Booth gave him his first paycheck.

Warren: That's great.

Booth: I remember that when Sid was organizing Best Products Company, Dick Boisseau, who was my freshman-year roommate, Dick said that Sid had come to him and asked him would he like to buy some stock in this new company he was organizing. He said, "My God, Lewis, any company you can run I don't want any stock in." We'd joke. We all got along.

Sid was on our freshman basketball team. He had an eye condition. His eyes were not very sharp if he didn't have on his glasses. We'd say, "No, Sid." He'd be dribbling up the floor, and we'd say, "No, the goal is this way," and then we'd point to the goal. You know, just needling him. Sid was very popular in our class, very popular. Everybody liked him. A lot of fun. He's always been a lot of fun, as you know. Just a

dandy guy. And I'm not surprised that he has been one of Washington and Lee's most benevolent supporters. God bless him and Frances. They're great.

We see Sid at the beach. We just drop by there. He has a lovely house at the beach. We just drop by to say hello every summer. Before his health went down, he'd have dinner parties with all these celebrities, and they'd always invite us to them. He and I, we were pretty close friends.

Warren: I like them very, very much.

Booth: They're great.

Warren: I'm really intrigued with this florist business, the idea. I noticed in one of those pictures that all the girls were wearing corsages. Tell me about these fancy social events. Did they happen very often?

Warren: We had the fall dances. The dances usually would be a two-day affair, Friday evening and Saturday evening in Doremus Gymnasium, with a big-name orchestra. Fall. Then Fancy Dress Ball would always come at the end of the first semester, and then spring dances, then finals, in connection with graduation, finals. They would always have these big bands there. As you saw in those pictures, everybody was beautifully dressed. Boys were always in tuxedos or tails. I still have – down in our basement there we have these old clothes stored, I've still got my tails down there. I haven't worn them in years.

You'd always send your girl a corsage for the dance. The girls would stay in the hotels, or some professors would take in the girls. There were some homes in Lexington that would take the girls in for the weekend, who had come as our guests for the dances. There were some beautiful, beautiful girls there in those days. The dances were just great. At Fancy Dress, you always had this figure. We'd rehearse the figure and all, my senior year. It was a replica. It was supposed to replicate the first Kentucky Derby Ball. Jack Watson from Richmond was the president of it that year, and I think he represented the governor of Kentucky. I was Colonel somebody, I don't know who. It

was my horse that won the Derby. I think the first Kentucky Derby was in something like 1875. I can't remember.

They were beautiful dances. You saw some of those pictures. They really were. But the orchestras were always so enthusiastic. I remember Kay Kyser especially. By the way, he was from North Carolina. I think he went to the University of North Carolina. He had the well-known College of Musical Knowledge's nationwide network radio broadcast. And Benny Goodman. I remember Paul Whiteman was there once.

After the dance, we went to the Southern Inn. After the dances, you'd go out and have your breakfast. We were sitting in the Southern Inn, and Paul Whiteman came in. Charley Eaton, who was a national champion or Southern champion wrestler, grabbed Paul Whiteman by the shirt as he came in and he said, "Look here. You never played *The Washington and Lee Swing*. You didn't play *The Washington and Lee Swing*."

And Paul Whiteman said something like, "Well, what is *The Washington and Lee Swing*?" And Eaton, I think, punched him. I've forgotten exactly, but I have some mental image of what happened there.

But we had the big ones. I remember when Benny Goodman was there at the peak of his career, staying in that awful old Mayflower Hotel out on South Main Street. It's not a hotel now, is it?

Warren: No, it's a nursing home.

Booth: Benny Goodman stayed right there. I was secretary of the Dance Committee, secretary-treasurer or something, and booked the bands, which was easy. I would just call the Music Corporation of America in New York, and they would book them for you. It was no hassle, no trouble at all. It didn't take any time. But that's how I happened to meet Goodman, because of my position on the dance board. I think I was secretary.

Warren: Yes, you were. I've got it down.

Booth: Goodman said that he had heard of Natural Bridge, so I picked him up at the Mayflower Hotel and drove him out to Natural Bridge. He was a very gracious gentleman.

I went to New York to work the following summer. He had me over. And our apartment, a little apartment my sister and I rented, was only about three blocks from Benny Goodman, and he had us over there for a rehearsal. The Budapest Quartet were rehearsing in Goodman's living room, rehearsing for a concert they were going to give. But I never saw him again. We were not close buddies.

Warren: Let me ask you a question. Did he play *The Swing*?

Booth: Oh, Lord, yes. All the bands would that would come in there.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Booth: Well, I mean they were always – no, I mean, *The Washington and Lee Swing* was probably the most prominent, widest known college song in the nation, along with maybe the Yale "Boola" song and the Navy's "Anchors Aweigh." But it was – you know, it was written by a Washington and Lee guy. Was his name Robbins, or what was it?

Warren: I can't say it off the top of my head.

Booth: Anyway, it was written by a W&L man, and all the bands would always play it. It's a good dance tune with the right rhythm. Put it in the right rhythm and you can dance by it.

By the way, I think Robbins finally got it copyrighted, because other colleges were stealing it. I know they were taking it and using it and adapting their own lyrics to the melody, making up their own lyrics. I think Cornell was one of them, I'm not sure. But, anyway, he got a copyright on it, I believe. But still, I know there are still high schools that use it. It's a great song, isn't it?

Warren: It sure is. I was walking down the hall the other day, and I realized I was whistling it. I said, "Oh, Frank, I've gone off the deep end. I'm whistling *The Swing*."
[Laughter]

Booth: [Singing] I don't know, something like that, "roll old Sweet Briar on the side." Roll old Sweet Briar on the side." My memory bank just broke. Can you imagine that I'm having trouble remembering the lyrics to the Washington and Lee Swing?

Warren: Everybody knows them in their hearts.

I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: Was there anything else you'd like us to talk about, being a student? I'd like to move on to the return of Lea Booth, unless you have something else you want to say.

Booth: If you turn it off, I'll tell you.

Warren: Tell me exactly –

Booth: Turn it off, and I'll tell you.

Warren: Tell me what this Lynchburg Citation means. What is the Lynchburg Citation?

Booth: It's just somebody who has done something significant for the school or for the local chapter, but it's usually given to somebody who we think is a great asset to the school. Dr. Joe B. Craddock [phonetic], he's a local alumnus. My God, he was active. I mean, he'd go and recruit for students, and was the leading physician in this town. Everybody loved him. He was just – everybody loved him.

And Sydney and Frances Lewis, obviously. And Rupert Latture, because he was the longest-serving person on the staff. Jimmy Leyburn, the dean. Cy Twombly, the very successful coach. These are people who – you can have that, that's a copy.

Warren: Thank you. Let's get back to when you returned to Washington and Lee after the war.

Booth: I don't remember. Did I go back? I don't remember.

Warren: I think you did.

Booth: Really? [Laughter]

Warren: Well, you went back to work. So Frank said the question I need to ask you is how on Earth you got so much publicity for this little school in Virginia.

Booth: I don't know. I must have some contacts around the state. The leading newspaper in the state was the *Richmond Post*, that's the *Richmond News Leader*, and the sports editors of both of those papers were good friends of mine, and the managing editors. I got to be friendly with the editorial people, so they just wouldn't turn us down. When we sent them a story, they'd print it.

At this Hall of Fame banquet in October this year, it was mentioned that Washington and Lee football had gotten the National Oddity of the Year Award a couple of times. Well, I don't know how, but Hugh Fullerton was the national sports editor of the Associated Press, that means head of the whole nation. He and I, I don't remember how we got to be buddies. I remember he came to visit us in Lexington one time. One summer I can remember sitting out in the back yard and making mint juleps for him. I don't know. but we got pretty good visibility in those days, Mame. I can't tell you exactly why. I tried to butter up all the newspaper people that I had to deal with.

Here this morning, I haven't opened it yet. Here's a letter from Carlton Bowen [phonetic], who's a retired editor of the *Roanoke Times*. He calls upon me, and we still keep in touch with each other. And Chauncey Dern [phonetic], who is the sports editor of the *Richmond Times*, that's my dear friend, we became great buddies. I was a pallbearer at his funeral. He would send reporters and photographers all the way to Lexington from Richmond to our sports events up there.

I don't know how. I can't answer your question, except they were all so wonderfully kind to us. I guess because we tried to be kind to them. I remember the *New York Times*, they used to pay me for — [Tape recorder turned off] I remember during the Bicentennial, a story I did, and I got a check for ten dollars. They paid me. But every now and then the *New York Times* would pay me for a story I'd done. Ten

dollars. But I don't know how it happened. It's been too long for me to recall what techniques, if any, we used to get all this publicity.

I remember we were the first Virginia team ever to play in a major football bowl. When we went to the Gator Bowl, it was the season of 1950, and we played January 1, 1951. It was tragic in one respect. Walter Michaels, who was a star fullback and then became a National Football League head coach, Walter Michaels had appendicitis. After we had gone to Florida to train for the game during Christmas vacation, Michaels developed appendicitis, and they had to rush him to the hospital. I took him, as a matter of fact, to the hospital. The coach had me take him. He didn't play. Gil Bocetti said he was the greatest quarterback in Washington and Lee history. His father died while we were down there, and he had to leave the practice. He was really stressed out by his father's sudden death. So we lost a game to a team that we should have beaten, University of Wyoming.

But we were the first Virginia team. And they asked me, the Gator Bowl Committee – by the way, some of our alumni helped to boost W&L's stock in Jacksonville to get us down there. One of them was a fellow named Pritchett [phonetic]. I remember. I can't remember all of their names. But it was our Jacksonville alumni chapter had a great deal to do with our going to the Gator Bowl. I can remember the chairman of the Gator Bowl called me and asked me would I be willing to set up a press and radio – that was before TV – press radio hospitality quarters in the hotel for all the sportswriters from all over the nation that came for this, and we did.

I called Smith-Bowman [phonetic] Distilleries. They manufacture Virginia Gentleman. And, you know, it's run now by – W&L people run it, you know, Jay Adams and Bobby Lee, Robert E. Lee. I think they are the heads of Smith-Bowman. Frank Parsons could tell you, but I'm sure it is true. So I called Smith-Bowman. This was before they went to work for them. I talked to Mr. Bowman, and I said, "We're going to

try to play in the Gator Bowl game, and I'm in charge of hospitality for the press, and I'd like to take some Virginia Gentleman whiskey."

They said, "We'll be glad to, we'll donate the whiskey, but how are you going to get it?" He said, "You've got a tax problem, you know, on the stuff." I forget the details of it. Anyway, it was legal. The way he did it was perfectly legal. Crossing the state line with it, that's what it was. He said, "Mr. Booth, how are you all going?"

I said, "The whole team is catching a train in Richmond to go to Jacksonville. We'll bus to Richmond and then take a train." So I called and told him exactly what train we were going to be on.

We got to Richmond to catch the train. I boarded the passenger car, and some conductor said, "Is there a Mr. Booth in this crowd?" He said, "We've got some whiskey for you here." And there were three cases, three cases of Virginia Gentleman whiskey put on the train for us to take to Florida. I've got downstairs now – I don't know if I can find them – we got letters from all over the United States complimenting this good Virginia whiskey from the sportswriters that hung out in the hospitality room. The Bowl reimbursed us for all the expenses. Virginia Gentleman whiskey was a real hit, and now it's amazing that that company is owned and operated by Washington and Lee people.

I think I sent Bobby Lee or Jay Adams – I believe I made Xerox copies a year or two ago of those letters that I still have from the sports editor of the *Denver Post* and the Cheyenne paper and papers from all over the country were there, thanking us for the delicious Virginia whiskey.

Warren: That's great. Do I understand that Steve Miles was –

Booth: Oh, Lord, yes. Let me tell you that story. They called me up from Jacksonville and said, "The University of Wyoming is bringing a queen or princess to the game, and we want Washington and Lee to select one of its students to be the prince, the prince of

the Gator Bowl." And I didn't know who to get, so I went to Dean Gilliam, and Dean Gilliam said, "I think maybe you would want to take Steve Miles."

So sure enough, with Dean Gilliam's help – I don't know that I even knew Steve as a student, because I was on the payroll, I wasn't a student anymore. So we enlisted Steve to be the prince of the Gator Bowl. He went down there, and he and the princess from the University of Wyoming didn't hit it off well at all. I think he terrified her and she terrified him. But, anyway, he was indeed the prince of the Gator Bowl. In those days they had a student from each school be introduced at the half-time, you know, to get some visibility. And here Steve is now – is he Chairman of the Board of Washington and Lee?

Warren: He just retired as rector of the board.

Booth: Well, I haven't seen him in many, many years. If I did, I'd call him Prince Miles. If you're ever in touch with him, call him Prince Miles.

Warren: I will, now that I know.

Booth: Please do. He will wonder, "Why in the hell did this come from?" I wonder would he know what we're talking about. Steve was a good fellow. He was a handsome young man. That's why Dean Gilliam picked him, I think, because of his looks. I don't know. But anyway, he was the prince of the Gator Bowl. [Tape recorder turned off]

They used to have something put on in Doremus Gymnasium called "W&L's a-Poppin'" because there was a great Broadway hit called "Hell's a-Poppin'." It was "W&L's a-Poppin'." It was a cute show. We had a one act play, and I helped to write the one-act play. I think Roger Mudd had the lead role in it, I'm not sure. If he denies it, don't cuss me. I just can't remember. I think Roger had it. It was a burlesque on the college physician, Dr. Reid White, who was a hell of a good guy, by the way, my dear friend when I worked there. A student came in. Dr. White had a nurse, I forget her name, that everybody knew. The students used to go to his office. He took care of the whole crowd. This student played, I think, by Roger Mudd, I'm not sure. came in, and

the punch line was, after examining the student, Dr. White says, "Nurse So-and-so," whatever her name was, "Nurse So-and-so, go get him some of that new miracle drug, bicarbonate of soda." That was the punch line. [Laughter] But it was fun. The students staged the whole thing, and it was called "W&L's a-Poppin'." I don't know how long it lasted or how many years it went on. They don't have anything like that now, do they?

Warren: Not quite like that. Not any variety show, nothing like that. But they do do a number of productions at the Lenfest Center, but they're real straight drama. As far as I know, that's all they do.

I wanted to talk about the things that went on during the Bicentennial year. I know there was a commemorative stamp and there were, I assume, a lot of convocations.

Booth: A lot of convocations with prominent speakers. I remember one speaker was — what was his name — oh, Lord, from the University of Chicago, who was one of the pioneers in the atomic energy — I'll think of it in a minute.

I remember one of my jobs. See, there wasn't any air service there. Lord, what was his name? But one of my jobs was, I ran the transit service. Some famous speaker would come in to lecture at W&L, and we'd have to pick him up on a train over at Clifton Forge. Our railroad ran through Clifton Forge. That was as close as you could get on a through train, I mean coming from Chicago or someplace like that. So I used to have to drive over there and pick up these people and bring them back. I remember driving back with this famous physicist, he was internationally famous. I wish I could — I'll think of it. I was just delighted to hear him say when we were driving to Lexington and chatting, he said, "I really wanted to see Washington and Lee. I hear it's a great undergraduate school. To this day, my greatest joy in life is teaching undergraduates." And here he was, this world-famous scientist, teaching undergraduate students. He said that was what he enjoyed in life most of all. What was his name? He was a speaker during the Bicentennial.

We had several prominent speakers, I remember, none of them in Dr. Gaines' class. I'd rather hear him than any of them. Like Dr. Harold Willis Dodge [phonetic], the president of Princeton, was there. All I can really remember about it, though, is lectures, the convocations and things, and I can't remember the other events related to the Bicentennial. I just don't remember. I'm sorry.

Warren: And how about the stamp? You said that you went and got yours postmarked that day?

Booth: Well, yes. They did have an envelope, and it had written on the envelope, it had a little etching of the school, "first day of issue." So it became a collector's item if you had the postmark for that day, and I've got one here. I don't remember what day of the year it was. April something, I think. Do you know when it was?

Warren: I think it was April 12.

Booth: That book you had a minute ago would show it. April 12. They were postmarked in Lexington with that date on it, and that made it a collector's item, you see. First day of issue.

Warren: And did everybody do that? A lot of students?

Booth: A lot of people did. I bet a lot of them did. I'll bet there are a lot of those things around. But it was thrilling to be the first college in the nation ever to have a stamp commemorate, it was. That alumnus in New Jersey, he is the one that deserves all the thanks. What was his name again?

Warren: Roy Grimley.

Booth: Roy Grimley. That's right.

Warren: He made it happen.

Booth: Remember that the movie that we made of the Bicentennial was the first movie of its kind ever made by a college in the nation, too.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Booth: Well, you'll have to get it and look at it. It shows classes, and shows Dr. Gaines speaking, and all the aspects of the school. I remember it seems to me like Fred Perry, the tennis coach, is in it. It was only about fifteen or twenty minutes, the length of it. They showed this thing, I remember, four or five years ago at some function. I think we have a VCR sitting up here. Frank can tell you all about it. You ought to look at it.

I remember the photographer who came there to work with me was a man named Chapman, and he was the one that took all the pictures. I remember one he took, we flew over Lexington and he shot the picture of the campus from above. Of course, Dr. Gaines is in there. That was produced at the Bicentennial and is still extant. I hope you'll go and look at it.

Warren: I will. Absolutely.

Booth: Mame, if they can't find one, I'm pretty sure somebody gave me one recently, within the past four or five years.

Warren: I'll find it. I can track it down. You mentioned Fred Perry. Tell me about Fred Perry. What was he doing at Washington and Lee?

Booth: I was a student assistant in the news bureau. I think that's when it happened, or was it after? Was it while I was a student, or while I worked there that Fred Perry came?

Warren: I can look it up.

Booth: Anyway, he came in the office and said that his father was the head of this Associated Tennis Sports Association. It was a voluntary thing. I mean, it wasn't a paid job. He was the head of a local committee that put on the Fox River or Fox Valley Tennis Tournament in Wisconsin or Minnesota. Wisconsin, I think, where he was from. Fred Perry, who had been the world's greatest tennis player, of course – I mean, Perry won Wimbledon three years. He would have won on and on and on, except in those days all the tournaments were amateurs only. No professional could play in it. They changed the rules years later. So Fred had to quit playing the circuit when he turned

pro, because some prominent sports promoter – I've forgotten who it was – offered Fred \$50,000, which in those days was like a million today, to turn pro and go on tour with Bill Tilden and I forget who else, and play exhibition games all over the country. Until that time when Fred went pro, he won Wimbledon X times, several times. He won Forest Hills, and Australia. I've got a Fred Perry book up here that's got all the information.

So this guy, Hugh Strange, I think it was Hugh Strange, came in the office and said that Fred Perry was unemployed in the spring and fall, that he was a tennis professional at some country club down South in the winter. I forget what he was doing in the summer. And said that he was available and wanted something to do. So he asked me if I'd go with him over to see Cap'n Dick Smith. So Hugh Strange sold Cap'n Dick on this idea because Fred said he would come for expenses. He didn't want any salary. Well, at that time the tennis coach was a chemistry professor – some professor. He just did it on the side. We didn't have a full-time coach. Just think, he was one of the two or three most famous tennis players in the world. Don Budge [phonetic] was one, too. Tilden and Perry and Budge. He was willing to come to W&L and coach the tennis team. Fred is British, you know. His father was a member of Parliament, by the way.

So Cap'n Dick said, "Yes, we'll give him \$200 for the season," I think. Anyway, Fred accepted and came on, and he had just divorced, I think. He was between wives. He stayed at the Dutch Inn. You know where it was, across from the Episcopal church there. You know, we mentioned it a while ago. He stayed there. He coached the tennis team in the fall and the spring. Then he came back and was doing it again after the war, I think. Fred went into service during the war, went into American service, not the British. Then came back and coached there again after the war. And it was just great to have this world-famous tennis player coaching there.

To help get a little extra money, Fred would have somebody like Bill Tilden or other professionals would stop off, and we would book exhibition matches for which

they would get paid. I remember they came over here and played at Oak River. We went to the Country Club of Virginia in Richmond. He played an exhibition at the University of Virginia. We booked all his exhibition matches for him to increase his income. So Fred really got to love Washington and Lee, he really did. He got an honorary degree, you know. He had his honorary doctorate. Fred was given an honorary degree. I would write him up. He and I became the closest friends, really. I've got his book up there. He autographed it with this luxurious, complimentary message to me. We got to be buddies. When I worked in New York for the United Press, I remember Fred took me out to Forest Hills, and that's where I witnessed his defeating Don Budge for the national professional championship or whatever it was.

So when Mary Morris and I got married, we wanted to honeymoon—in those days, Fort Lauderdale—that was long ago—Fort Lauderdale was a delightful resort place in the summer. Now it has grown and boomed, you see, but it was just a charming little place. We decided that was where we were going on our honeymoon. Fred was the sports director and tennis professional at the Boca Raton Club in Florida. I called him, and he arranged our honeymoon, got us a little apartment in Fort Lauderdale.

Then later on, after John Wilson came there, I think it was John Wilson came, and John is a tennis fan, and John was the one that arranged for Fred to get an honorary doctorate degree at Washington and Lee, and Fred was just delighted by it. He really was.

We were just so distressed when he died last year. His wife, Bobbie, a lovely British lady, we still communicate. Bobbie spends half her time in England and half at their home in Florida. Fred—God, imagine having a world-famous tennis player there to coach an undergraduate tennis team.

Warren: It's quite remarkable.

Booth: It was, indeed. But I think the guy responsible for it was Hugh Strange. I wasn't. All I did was take Hugh over to Cap'n Dick's office and tell him what the proposition was. I was not responsible for Fred's coming here.

Warren: Another remarkable person who was there in that time period was Dr. Leyburn. He came in 1947. Do you remember when he arrived?

Booth: Yes.

Warren: What was the impression people had of him when he got there?

Booth: Well, he was single, and we all wanted to—I had a girl picked out for him. It was Mary Monroe Penick. But we couldn't get Jimmy—he was a confirmed celibate. He was just a charming, delightful guy. He was very talented. He was a good pianist. Did you know?

Warren: I've heard that.

Booth: Good pianist. I took him out to play golf at the Lexington Club one time, and he wasn't much of a golfer. We had to borrow a set of clubs for him and all. I remember he got his hands blistered and ruined his tennis playing for about two weeks, because he had blisters on his hands. But he was just a fine, scholarly academician. I think he got along well with the faculty. He was just a superb person, he really was. I forget what his connection was. He didn't go to Washington and Lee, but what was his connection there? I don't know.

Warren: Well, his middle name is Graham. I wondered if he weren't the Graham family.

Booth: I think that's it. I think that was his connection. But he was, as I say, a born celibate. He called me in his office one day and said, "Lea." By the way, he was a very active member of the board of trustees at Mary Baldwin College. He was very active in the Presbyterian Church and at Mary Baldwin in those days. I don't know if it's still a Presbyterian school. He called me in and said, "Lea," he says, "we need somebody to teach journalism at Mary Baldwin. I've got you in mind."

I said, "I can't teach journalism at Mary Baldwin and keep my job at Washington and Lee."

He said, "No, all you do, you go about one afternoon a week."

I said, "Is that all?"

So sure enough, he got me employed at Mary Baldwin, and it enhanced my financial situation, and got me a job over there at Mary Baldwin teaching journalism. I'd go and I'd teach four hours, from four to six in the afternoon and from seven to nine at night, commuting, driving my little Plymouth back and forth to teach over there. So he got me a job over there, and I enjoyed it. It was fun. Nice girls. It was a course in fundamentals, you know, who, when, why, where, and what, the lead factors in any news story.

He just is a grand guy that everybody liked. You'd see him at parties, like Mary Monroe Penick, who was a charming lady, lived – White Street, 104 White Street, I remember. Mary Monroe used to give these delightful parties out there. She was a single lady. She was the choir director and organist at the First Presbyterian Church. We used to see Jimmy out at all of her parties and all, but we couldn't get him interested in getting married.

But then he left. I don't remember the circumstance. He left with a good image. I mean, there was nothing wrong. I don't recall. Where did he go from Lexington?

Warren: I think he retired to a farm somewhere.

Booth: In Maryland?

Warren: West Virginia, I think.

Booth: I thought it was in Maryland.

Warren: Maybe it was. I'm not positive.

Booth: But having named the library, I wished they could have named it the Leyburn Library before he died, because he would have been so thrilled by that, and he deserved it. He was a superb dean. Everybody seemed to like him.

Warren: There is one other person whose name has been mentioned a lot today that I would love to hear about as a student. Can you tell me what Frank Parsons was like as a student?

Booth: Well, really, I'm sorry. I'm devoted to him now. I just think he's a grand guy. Frank and I have become really good buddies. After all, we gave him a Lynchburg Citation because of my friendship with him. But I don't remember Frank as a student, barely. Vaguely I remember his being there, but I did not know him as an undergraduate.

Warren: Oh, I thought you were implying that you had.

Booth: No.

Warren: I misunderstood you.

Booth: No, I'm sorry. I didn't. I mentioned that he's a great guy, he really is. I think he was a real asset to that school. So is Jim Whitehead. I think both of them are. I hope you'll agree with me.

Warren: You know I do.

Booth: But I feel so guilty that I don't see the Whiteheads hardly at all anymore. He and I were the closest friends. You know, really I'm the guy that put Washington and Lee in touch with him.

Warren: Well, I'll tell him you said hello. I see him every once in a while.

A big honor that came to you this past year was an induction in the Sports Hall of Fame.

Booth: Well, they're going to change the name of it now. It's going to be called Hall of Shame. Hall of Shame.

Warren: Tell me what that meant to you.

Booth: Well, it meant a lot to me. Honestly, I mean this sincerely. I'm not being superficially modest, but I don't think I deserved it. Well, it did say I led the baseball team in hitting one year and best batting average. I played baseball there for all the

years I was in school. But I think it was given to me, I believe, because of my work in publicity, as the publicity director over there. That's the only reason I can think of. There was a citation that tells about it. But I didn't think I deserved it. I really don't. I was flattered. Charley McDowell came down and presented me. Were you there?

Warren: No.

Booth: Charley Mac was my presenter. That was fun. His talk about Lea Booth was utterly charming. I've got a recording of it here. I can't play it. Mary Morris has to run these things. She'll go down there and get it and play it for you. It was just delightful.

I was allowed two student assistants. I had two student assistants when I was running the news bureau, and I hired Charley Mac to work in the office. That's how we got to know him. After he went on up to Columbia and did some graduate work at Columbia, he came back and wanted a job on the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, I had good connections with the *Times-Dispatch*. The managing editor, whose name I can't remember now, was a buddy of mine. I called him up and told him about Charley Mac and I said, "He worked in my office. He's going to be a super journalist, and he wants to go to work on the *Times-Dispatch*."

This guy says, "Send him on down here. We'll interview him."

So he went to Richmond. After he got back, I called him up. After he got back I called up my Richmond buddy – what the hell was his name – the managing editor of the *Times-Dispatch*. I called him up, and he said, "We can't hire that youngster. He's too brash." He said, "He'll get the newspaper – he'll get us in trouble."

I said, "What?" I don't know what kind of interview Charley had. But I said, "All right. If you don't, he's going to work for the *Washington Post*, and he's going to beat your brains out. He'll scoop you on all the stories. He'll beat your brains out." I argued with him about it. Of course, Charley Mac, to this day, gives me all the credit for starting him on his career here, you see.

What was the question you asked me? I'm telling you more than you wanted to know.

Warren: No, you're not. No, you're not. We've twisted around. I was asking you about the Sports Hall of Fame.

Booth: Oh, yes. I mean this. Really, I don't think I deserved it as much as the other people who've gotten it. I have been the presenter three times. Cap'n Dick Smith, they asked me to be his presenter when he was inducted posthumously. And Bob Spessard, the All-American basketball player, they asked me to do him. And Dick Boisseau. I showed you Boisseau [unclear]. I did the presenting. I think of those people being in there, and they're putting me in there with them, I'm not in their class. I'm really not. I just don't—I don't know. Anyway, I'm delighted. I'm flattered to death by it, but I just don't think I'm in the class with the ones that I have been with. Now, some of the others they've put in there in recent years, I don't know how they've gotten in there. I think they deserve it less than I do. I'm not going to call their names. But when I think of the early ones—Fred Perry ought to be in there, you know. He really should. There's somebody else. Oh, yes, we're working on that. Howard Dobbins. I promised I was going to try to help him get nominated for it, and I've got—damn, I'd better get busy about it.

I was on the committee that started that thing. Frank Parsons arranged that. Frank had them put me on the Hall of Fame Committee. I protested so much the name of it, that I think it made everybody mad and they kicked me off. I haven't been on it in years. But they called it Athletic Hall of Fame, and I cussed Mike Walsh about that the other day. Mike is a grand guy. I really like him. Do you know him?

Warren: Not really.

Booth: Well, he's a superb fellow, he really is. He needles me about this. But how can there be an athletic hall? The term "athletic," you look it up in the dictionary, you can't use that as an adjective for Hall of Fame. It ought to be Sports Hall of Fame, or

Athletics', plural, Hall of Fame, the Hall of Fame for those engaged in athletics, but not those who are engaged in "athletic," singular. There's no such thing as an athletic hall. See my point?

Warren: Yes, I do.

Booth: It ought to be plural or else call it Sports Hall of Fame. I think they ought to call it Sports Hall of Fame.

Warren: It makes sense to me.

Booth: You'll tell them.

Warren: I will. I will. I'll pass it on. There's one question I like to ask everybody who went to Washington and Lee, and I get a lot of different kinds of answers on it. What did the Honor System mean to you?

Booth: Everything. We had no such thing as an Honor System in high school, and we were indoctrinated in the Honor System at Washington and Lee, and it was just superb. But, honestly, I never saw anybody cheat. I never heard of anybody cheating or robbing or anything when I was in school. I thought it worked perfectly. I really think it was one of the prime assets of that institution, was to have a workable, effective Honor System. I just think it's great. I don't know if it's still as effective now as it was in those days. I have no idea. But we used to have these meetings for the freshmen, you know, lecturing to us on the Honor System and what it meant and how you had to abide by it. We had to sign pledges on all of our papers that we turned in, on any tests you took, any essay you wrote, "I pledge on my honor that I have received no help." There were some violations when I was in school, but very few. And they'd get kicked out. They would be expelled. I think it's a great asset to that institution. I may be in the minority. I don't know.

Warren: Oh, no. No, I think it's something that's very widely cherished.

Booth: Well, it meant a lot to me. I'd never experienced anything like that before. And who has, coming out of a public high school? We didn't have anything like an Honor

System. I don't remember whether I cheated in high school or not, but I damn sure did not cheat in college.

I remember once when I wrote a theme, had to write a theme in Dean Gilliam's English class about something, and plagiarized a part of it out of something, but I went to him and told him that I'd done it, so I got by with it. I just think it's a marvelous thing, I really do. I wonder how the faculty feels about it.

Warren: Firm believers. Firm believers.

Booth: Great.

Warren: I see my light flashing, and I have one more question, so I'm going to quickly pop in one more tape. Okay?

[End of recording]