

# Robert E.R. Huntley

May 14, 1996

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Mame Warren,  
interviewer

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the fourteenth of May 1996. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with Robert Huntley. We were just talking about Rupert Latture, and I remember him so well; he was a constant presence just outside your door.

**Huntley:** Yeah, he was, and my predecessor, Fred Cole. He was in the same role for Fred that he did for me. But it wasn't his role for me that was significant, he had an enormous institutional memory as well as personal memory of all the students and faculty who had ever been here during his very long years at Washington and Lee. He loved people and, of course, he was devoted to Washington and Lee so that he was able to make people, both those who were living and working here then and students here then, and those who had ever been here, feel at home at W&L in a way that almost no one else could do.

He greeted freshmen every year, I'm sure for twenty-five years, when they came in. He knew virtually every student on the campus, both present and past, and made them feel that it was very special for them to be here. He was invaluable in many ways, but that's the main one that I remember about him.

**Warren:** What did he teach?

**Huntley:** Political science. He retired before I became president, a good while before. Then Fred Cole asked him to serve in this special role as, I suppose, an assistant to the president, I believe we called him, not something you would ask many to do. He had a second career, is the main one I remember, is his second career. I didn't actually have him as a teacher, so I can't comment on that. But his second career lasted a long time because he lived to a ripe old age, as you know, and he was sort of part of the institution that's very much missed. He would've been fun to talk to, if you would've been able to get to him. I always was hoping that someone would

do an oral history while Rupert was around to talk.

**Warren:** As far as I know, no one ever did.

**Huntley:** No one ever did.

**Warren:** It's such a shame.

**Huntley:** No one ever did. He was one of the founders of ODK, which you know was founded here back in the—you'd have to look up the year, but probably 1915 or something like that. He's literally part of the institution's history. And, as I mentioned earlier, Bill Pusey, he would have been equally interesting to talk to. So I'm sorry you didn't get a chance to talk with him, and, of course, Jim Leyburn. I miss those people. But you're right, in the earlier comments that the most distinctive feature about Washington and Lee is its people, now and in the past, I think.

**Warren:** When you think back, who were those really important people to you? Let's go all the way back to when you were an undergraduate. In fact, where did you come from?

**Huntley:** North Carolina.

**Warren:** What drew you to Washington and Lee in the first place?

**Huntley:** Well, my brother had been here, but that just pushes the question one step further back, I guess. My parents had been friends of the Gaineses. Dr. Gaines was president of Washington and Lee for a quarter of a century, which I'm sure you have read, and was president when I came here. My parents knew Dr. Gaines before he came to Washington and Lee as president. He'd been president at Wake Forest College in North Carolina, and my father was an alumnus of Wake Forest, my mother was from the town of Wake Forest. The college was then located in the town of Wake Forest, it's now located in Winston-Salem, as you know, but in those years it was located in Wake Forest.

They came to know the Gaineses personally while the Gaineses were in Wake Forest, and became friends, and I suspect that was the—I knew the Gaineses from my childhood. Our families took summer vacations together when we were all children, when their children and my brother and I were—you know, we took vacations together, so we knew them from years, and I'm sure it was that relationship that attracted my brother and then me to come to W&L. Most folks from North Carolina go to North Carolina, as you know. [Laughter] They go to one of the North Carolina schools.

**Warren:** Had you been on campus before you started here?

**Huntley:** Well, yes, we'd been up to visit my brother, who is four years older than I am, went up to visit him on some occasions while I was in high school, and I had been up to the Gaineses once or twice. So, yes, I'd been on campus. It never occurred to me to go anywhere else. I never sought to go anywhere else, to either undergraduate or law school. So it was automatic, it seemed. [Tape recorder turned off.]

**Warren:** So you mentioned President Gaines. Tell me about him.

**Huntley:** Well, he was an extraordinary man, as I'm sure others have told you. He had the most winning and winsome personality and manner of anyone I've ever known, and not referring just to his public speaking for which he was so well-known and about what you must have heard, an orator of the kind that we don't have anymore, that no one has anymore. I don't mean, we, Washington and Lee don't have anymore, I mean that don't exist anymore. But apart from his public presence, he could enter a room and everyone in the room would feel at home and part of the group instantly, immediately, right that minute. And that's a rare talent I'm not sure I've ever encountered to the same degree in anybody else.

He also had a powerful intellect and a great devotion and vision for Washington and Lee. So he was a gripping personality. No one who ever knew him would ever forget him. And so was she, his wife Sadie duVerne, a delightful and beautiful lady who complemented his personality. He was a grand person. I knew him as a child and then when I came back here as a student. He was president when I came here to work. So I knew him in all three capacities, right until the time he died. I saw him the day he died. So they were grand people, and I was devoted to them.

I came back here to teach, in large part because of him, or in part, certainly. Dean of the law school in those days when I came back to teach was Clayton Williams, another marvelous character in Washington and Lee's history, who had taught me, of course, when I was a law student. I had no intention whatever of teaching. The thought had never really crossed my mind. I was practicing law in Northern Virginia with a firm, a good firm in Northern Virginia, enjoying it. I had been there about a year, only about a year, and Dean Williams called and asked if he could come by and see me, and came by to see me and asked me if I'd consider coming back to teach. That was the first time the thought had come to my mind.

It seemed an exciting thing to me, just instantly knew that's what I wanted to do, and it was in a matter of a few weeks thereafter I agreed to come back and did that year, teach in the

law school. Then I stayed on to the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. [Laughter] I had no intention of doing anything other than teaching, no intention of becoming an administrator, no expectations. No desire, actually, to become administrator. Those things just happened as time went on. But I enjoyed the teaching enormously. Those were very happy years, all my years here were. Teaching years were wonderful. I taught for ten or so years and then ended up in administration, just as circumstance turned out.

That's sort of, I think, one of the characteristics of Washington and Lee's past, I suspect, its present, that most of the people who held the positions, the academic positions and the dean positions and so on at Washington and Lee, were there as an incident of their teaching. Very, very few of them, I'm trying to think if there were any, were seen primarily as administrators.

**Warren:** I think Leyburn came to be the dean.

**Huntley:** Well, yes, he did come to be the dean, but he was not seen primarily as an administrator, at least not by the students, and I don't know that he was by his colleagues. Leyburn's greatest strength was his teaching, while he was dean. I'm sure he would have placed his teaching on a higher level of importance than his administration, certainly he did. Too bad he's not here so you could ask him, but I know that's what his answer would be. So he did come back, he was brought back by Gaines to be Dean of the University, only Dean of the University I think we'd ever had. You might want to check that, but I think that's right.

But he taught. I had him. He taught me the first year he was here, which I think was 1948. I was a sophomore undergraduate student. He taught me in his basic course in sociology, which was a wonderful course. I was gripped by him. Everybody was, whoever had him as a teacher. So I remember him mainly as a teacher, then subsequently as a friend after I came back to teach, he was still here teaching. He was no longer dean. He remained many years after he was dean. I don't remember how many years he was dean now, but a decade perhaps. Then went to full-time teaching and brought in strong faculty in his department, and he was responsible for bringing strong faculty to other departments while he was dean. He was an extraordinary person.

But all of those people, Leyburn specifically included in that group, saw their highest mission as their relationships with the students and with other faculty, from a teaching perspective. Perhaps that wasn't unique to Washington and Lee, I think that was a more common characteristic of colleges in those days than it is now, across the country, but I think



Washington and Lee had, and has, preserved that perspective to a greater degree than most have. I can recall having to talk people into taking dean positions. That was rarely seen as a step up. [Laughter] It was seen as an obligation and a duty, and that would have been the view that Pusey would've had of the job, Bill Watt would have had of the job. Are you going to talk to Bill?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Huntley:** Well, ask him.

**Warren:** I will.

**Huntley:** That Atwood would have had of the job, that even the dean of students, I believe, Lew John, would have had of the job. Again, he thought of himself primarily as a teacher. He's here, you can ask him that. Did that mean that they were not as expert as managers as they would have been had they been professional managers? I don't know. I don't think so. I think they had to sort of learn the management job as they did it, but they were bright fellows and, I guess, didn't find that to be too tough a study, especially since their objectives were to facilitate the lives of the people around them, as distinguished from elevating their own ambitions, and if those are the objectives of the people who are running the institution, it tends to make management easier, I think. I believe that's continued to be the attitude of the people who work here now, best I can see.

That's why when you talk to alumni and others who've been here, I think you'll find it true, almost invariably, and you need to talk to them, and you will, I'm sure. You have talked to some alumni, but you're probably not going to talk as many as you can. I've talked with thousands of alumni over the years. The thing they nearly almost always remember first and speak of most emphatically is their relationships with the other students and the faculty. The communal spirit in the place, that's what they think about first. They'll add other things, but that's the first thing, for those who like the place. Now, of course, there are always those who didn't. In most cases, those who didn't, didn't because for some reason the personal relationships didn't work for them. And I'm sure there were such—I know there were such people. But for the majority, the community was a special place which they had never seen before and have never seen since. This is what explains the depth of their commitment to the school. It's what makes it possible for us to live in the style to which we've become accustomed.

**Warren:** Having just experienced my first Reunion Weekend, I know exactly what you mean. It was a remarkable scene.

**Huntley:** It is. And if you look at just the most tangible output of that sentiment, it is the financial support of the school, because, as I'm sure you know, the vast bulk of the school's funds has come from individuals, ordinary human beings who went to school here. The vast majority of it has come from them, all through the years and still does. Although while that again is probably not unique, it is extraordinary. Washington and Lee is not, for the most part, institutionally financed; it's personally financed. And from a practical point of view, one of the good results of that is that no single person or institution has a claim on the school. The school is not beholden to any organization or institution or person or group of people by reason of finance. So it provides enormous opportunity for independence in the true sense of the institution.

One of the curious things about Washington and Lee's early history, I think, is that it never formally affiliated with any organization, even with the church, which, again, I believe, probably is unique, if you go back to the early years of the schools that were in existence in the colonial days and the immediate post-colonial period. State universities, for the most part, hadn't come along. They all were essentially church-related. Washington and Lee, of course, was founded by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the Valley of Virginia, but was never affiliated with a church or any other organization.

So the devotions of the alumni is a fortunate thing for the school, it truly is. But that's the thing they mention first, the personal relationships, I think.

**Warren:** You know, one thing I'm curious about is the students, and because my concentration has been on alumni, I haven't really talked to that many present-day students, but those that I have already seem to have that sense of obligation.

**Huntley:** Yeah, I think that's right.

**Warren:** Was that true when you were a student?

**Huntley:** I talk with them, too, and I found that to be true. Yes, it was true.

**Warren:** When you were a student, how did you come to that realization?

**Huntley:** Well, I really don't know. It sort of seeped in. I don't think anybody ever gave a speech to us telling us that we were obligated. If anybody ever did, I don't remember it. Even Gaines, with his oratorical ability, I don't recall his ever giving a speech to the students saying,

"Now, listen here young fellows, you're obligated." If he did, I don't remember it. So it wasn't something explicitly taught. I'm sure they're not now. But it does, and again not for all of them, of course, but for a substantial percentage of the students, they leave here feeling that they've inherited something from the past and they owe something to the future both financially and otherwise.

There are down sides to that, the down side being that alumni are very thin-skinned about Washington and Lee. They think it belongs to them. They don't think that in a literal sense, but they think they're entitled to a view on what goes on here.

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

**Huntley:** Well, they do, for the reasons we've already mentioned. So when things occur that they don't like or that they do like, they're outspoken. And, of course, they can only be so well informed. No matter how close they are, their level of information is not nearly as good as that of the folks who are here all the time. So sometimes they have reactions to Washington and Lee's this-or-that action that is not well informed and is emotional. Other times, though, they bring a viewpoint to bear on a problem that you would have otherwise overlooked. There's some advantageous to being remote enough from the daily grind to have a special view about it.

So the people who run the school, the presidents and others who run the school need to understand that, and they do understand it. I give Gaines a lot of credit for that and for having developed a relationship with alumni that is healthy. They don't run the school, but their attitudes about the school are taken quite seriously, and a lot of effort is spent to communicate with them in ways that I think are generally good. But, as I say, it has both sides. Alumni do—you can sense that at the Reunion Weekend, they have a proprietary as well as an emotional interest in the institution. I guess that's good. Everybody else here does, too. The faculty and the present students think that.

**Warren:** And the people who've just come on board, like me. I already care a great deal about this place.

**Huntley:** One of the interesting things is, of course, again, there are exceptions, but rarely, so rarely that I could name them on the fingers of one hand, though I shan't, can I recall anyone's leaving Washington and Lee whom we wanted to remain. Now, there are some exceptions, but they're rare. Most folks who come here to work want to stay, and a lot of folks who come here to school want to stay, which the size of the town of Lexington doesn't permit. [Laughter]

**Warren:** I remember when I first moved here in 1977, being very impressed at how well educated all the carpenters were.

**Huntley:** [Laughter] Philosophy majors at Washington and Lee, that's right.

**Warren:** Sometimes you had to remind them to pound the nails.

**Huntley:** That's right.

**Warren:** They were always thinking about what the nails were thinking about the operation.

**Huntley:** Oh, dear, you're quite right.

**Warren:** So let's go back to your undergraduate days.

**Huntley:** Well, I was an indifferent undergraduate, an indifferent student, not a very good student. I had a marvelous time here. I was probably a little slow to grow up. I came to school here when I was just barely seventeen. I'd just turned seventeen. The average age of the student body in 1946 was probably, I'm guessing, probably twenty-two or three. Well, see, World War II was just over and the returning veterans constituted the majority of the student body, three-fourths of it, I guess. So it was an unusual time to be a seventeen-year-old on the Washington and Lee campus. It was a marvelous time. I had a wonderful four years, lots of friends, whom I've still got, and I managed to learn something in the process, despite an indifferent approach to academia. I had some great teachers, Leyburn and Pusey, for example.

**Warren:** Who else?

**Huntley:** Who eventually managed to stimulate even an intellect as dull as mine. Bill Jenks was teaching here then. He retired recently, a marvelous teacher. Steve Stephenson was a brand-new young teacher. He'd just started in 1946, died a year or so ago, I guess. A German teacher. My math professor was Livingston Waddell Smith, great mathematical mind and a wonderful character. The faculty was populated with characters. It probably still is, but we tend to think of characters from our own past. Smith was just a marvelous character.

**Warren:** Why was he a character?

**Huntley:** Well, he was a brilliant mathematician and most of us certainly weren't, and he tolerated us, but not always willingly. In class, I recall he would send you to the board to work out a mathematical problem or whatever, and would allow you to get to a certain point, say you were stuck, and you would say, for example, I can recall him saying, "Mr. Huntley, what's the sign there, is it a plus? Is it a plus?"

"Yes, sir, it's a plus."

"Hell, no! It's a minus!" [Laughter] There were many legends about Smith throwing erasers. He would throw erasers out the window. He would throw erasers and once he threw one out the window while I was there in his class. He would vent his spleen at the students in that way, but a wonderful teacher. Winter Royston taught me math, also. He's still here, still alive.

**Warren:** Who's that?

**Huntley:** Winter Royston. He's right here in town.

History department, if I were to mention Dr. Jenks and Dr. Crenshaw, taught me. Dr. Bean, W. G. Bean, was a wonderful teacher, a great style about him. "Now, you want to watch this man. He going to merge," meaning "emerged". That meant in the early days of a history course, he would want to identify the people who would be important through the remainder of the course. "You want to watch him. He gonna merge," is what that meant. Wonderful teacher.

I'll tell you somebody you ought to talk to is Roger Mudd. Have you talked to Mudd?

**Warren:** Not yet. We're going to talk in the fall.

**Huntley:** Ask Mudd about Dr. Bean, for example. There's a lot of stories about Dr. Bean. Dr. Moger, I mentioned him, wonderful history professor.

I was an English major, and as I say, eventually an intellect as uninterested as mine was, was able to be stimulated by an English teacher. We had some wonderful English teachers. The heads of the department were Drs. Flournoy and Moffatt. Fitzgerald Flournoy was Washington and Lee's first Rhodes Scholar. You can see his picture over there on the wall in the library of Rhodes Scholars. He was a professor of English, but principally Shakespeare and latter-day drama, also, but Shakespeare was his—I always thought Flournoy believed himself to be Falstaff. I never had any actual proof of that. He was a grand figure and a marvelous classroom performer and spoke in stentorian tones. I remember the students using him at Fancy Dress from time to time, would ask him to be the caller, to introduce the couples as they would come down the aisle, because of his wonderful way of speaking.

He was an exciting teacher, absent-minded, almost to the nth degree. I recall on more than one occasion his beginning to teach the wrong class, within the classroom. He would begin on subject A, when, in fact, this was the class on Subject B. We'd begin on Ibsen when it was a class on Shakespeare or something. He would usually catch himself.

**Warren:** Did anyone ever have to remind him?

**Huntley:** Once or twice. Although also once or twice, no one ever did, and he went right through teaching the wrong subject. [Laughter] He was a marvelous character. He was not great on student names. He never knew my name, although I was an English major. He knew me, but he didn't know my name. In fact, I'd graded papers for Dr. Flournoy. I guess it's true, I bet it's true, though I don't have any way of proving it, this is the only instance in the school's history when we had graders. That would be quite contrary, you see, to the Washington and Lee philosophy of teaching, and that was done only because of Dr. Flournoy, who was such a prized member of the faculty and sort of got away with things others might not have got away with.

He would not grade, so the story was—this is the story we as students thought to be true. I have no reason to think it wasn't true. He would not grade sophomore survey English papers. The survey course that was then taught to sophomores was a required course, and he opposed the teaching of a survey course in anything. He felt that to be impossible to do. He opposed requiring anything. So for two reason he didn't think that course offering was good. but he had to teach it because there weren't enough professors of English for him not to. Every student in the student body was going to take it, so he had to teach it, but he wouldn't grade the papers. So the department hired a senior English major each year to grade the sophomore papers for Dr. Flournoy, and because Dr. Flournoy had them graded for him, then they were graded for other members of the department in the sophomore English course, too. That was my job one year. My senior year, I was the grader. I graded the sophomore English papers. Presumably he would look them over before he awarded the grade. I don't know if he did or not.

I'd be in his office—I'd use his office as a place. He rarely used it in the evening. I had a place where I would sit, it was quiet, to grade papers. And every two weeks there was a test given in the English survey course, and I had to grade the tests. There were themes. Every other week there was a theme or something to be written. I had to read those. He'd occasionally he'd come in the office when I was sitting there grading, and he'd look at me, clasp his hand to his heart like this, "Oh, yes, Mister...Mister... Don't tell me. Mister...Mister." Finally he might get "Huntley" out. When I came back to teach, he welcomed me, but he still couldn't remember my name. [Laughter] He was a wonderful teacher. Those are among the teachers that I remember.

And of course, the dean of the students was Frank Gilliam, whom you must have heard a

lot about.

**Warren:** Not really. I'd love for you to talk about him.

**Huntley:** Well, he's one of the great characters in this school's history, I would think. I think that's the reason why you need to talk to more alumni than you've shown me in your list, because the majority of the alumni of that period would remember Gilliam as one of the most important figures in their lives. He knew all the students, literally knew all the students. He learned every student's name before they enrolled, by hard study, before he'd ever met them, by reference to their pictures and their names. He used to study their names and pictures so that every student, when he entered Washington and Lee, was already known by name by the Dean of Students. And from then on out, he knew all the students in the student body by name and called them all by name when he greeted them, and continued to know them by name for the rest of his life and the rest of their lives.

So he knew by name literally every alumnus who had been to Washington and Lee over a period of twenty-some years, every one. He not only knew their names, but he knew about them, what their backgrounds were and what their needs were like and he knew what their weaknesses were and where you could help them. He was available as a wise resource to any student in the student body at any time. Not all students took advantage of that, but a lot did.

I was talking with a friend who was staying with me over the weekend, Merrill Plaisted from Richmond, who was a student here just after I was. His recollection of Gilliam—Plaisted came here from Maine, from a small town in Maine, had never been here before, was a stranger to the area, and, of course, no one else in the student body came from his small town in Maine, if indeed, from Maine at all. His recollection of Gilliam was his ability to make his years here good ones. Very touching.

So Gilliam was a wonderful dean of students. He could be stern when need be, but the main feature of his personality was one of standing by to be helpful. He was still dean of students when Leyburn came as dean of the university. Those were Dr. Gaines' latter years, and Dr. Gaines was not as active in his later years as he had been earlier. He'd been present for twenty-five years, twenty-some years, and by the time Dr. Leyburn came, Dr. Gaines had already been president for twenty years, I guess.

So, much of the administration of the University occurred between Frank Gilliam and Jim Leyburn and, to a lesser degree, but to a significant degree, nonetheless, the then treasurer,



whose name was Earl Mattingly, whom you must have heard something about by now.

**Warren:** I've read, but I haven't heard.

**Huntley:** Mattingly was the treasurer and kept a firm grip on the school's limited finances, and they were quite limited. He parceled out the pennies carefully over all those years. The three of them were sort of a triumvirate in the years between Leyburn's arriving and Fred Cole becoming president in 1960.

**Warren:** Were you involved in sports?

**Huntley:** I was on the crew, which we no longer have, in my junior and seniors years as was, incidentally, Roger Mudd. He rode the sixth position, I rode the fourth position on the varsity crew. We rowed on the James River, a course which no longer exists because VEPCO, the power company, for whatever reason, decided to get rid of the dam that made it possible to row on the James in those days. You couldn't row on the James anymore and you couldn't use it as a course. That probably explains the fact that the sport is gone. But I had a marvelous time on the crew. We did fairly well. A lot of fun with it. We had a coach named Anderson, whom Mudd called the Mad Swede. You just ask Mudd about the crew team, he'll have marvelous stories for you on that.

**Warren:** Great. Okay, I will.

So how did an English major decide to go to law school?

**Huntley:** That's not an unusual combination. I think the Law School, certainly when I was a law teacher, always felt that undergraduate majors in the humanities were the ones we preferred to get. So that was not an unusual combination in law school following an English major or history major. How did I decide to go? I don't know. I was out for four years between undergraduate and law school.

**Warren:** And what did you do in that time?

**Huntley:** If you recall, there was a war going on then. While that seems to have been forgotten by most folks of your age, the draft in 1950 was every bit as comprehensive as the draft had been in 1941. Everybody, unlike the Vietnamese draft, which was selective and, I think, flawed for that reason. The Korean draft was analogous to the World War II draft and every warm body, every warm male body, had to go into something. Again, we've seemed to have forgotten now, but it was then thought that we were at threat of major world war. It happily turned out not to have been the case. So all of us had to go into something.

I joined the navy a couple of months after leaving Washington and Lee, just short of being drafted into the army, and spent a bit more than three years in the navy and then came back to Washington and Lee the following fall, the fall of '54.

**Warren:** So you came back to old Tucker Hall.

**Huntley:** Oh, sure, yeah, of course.

**Warren:** Tell me about old Tucker Hall.

**Huntley:** Well, it's right there now, as you know.

**Warren:** But it's a very different building then it was then.

**Huntley:** Yeah, it's a different building. It was a lovely building.

**Warren:** In fact, I saw some pictures yesterday, I'd never seen the interior before yesterday. I'd love it if you would describe what it was like.

**Huntley:** It was a lovely building. The central core was a large library, reading library. Of course, it would be small by comparison to the present law facility or law library, but it was okay by the standards of that time, and then a lovely, comfortable and welcoming building to be in. As you know, the old building burned in the thirties. Have you ever seen pictures of that building?

**Warren:** You can tell me about it.

**Huntley:** I don't remember it. It was before my time. It's about the only thing you can think of that's before my time. I don't remember it, but it was as ugly as a mud fence. In fact, it looked somewhat like a mud fence, or lime fence. It was a large limestone building, quite incongruous with the rest of the campus. It burned in the—I've forgotten the date now, late thirties, and was replaced with Tucker Hall, named after John Randolph Tucker. But it was a marvelous building, had big, very comfortable classrooms for teaching. The classrooms in the present law school are modeled after it. They are more modern in appearance, but their configuration and appearance is similar to the ones in the old Tucker Hall.

**Warren:** I didn't know that.

**Huntley:** My first office was in a corner of the basement of Tucker Hall. In fact, that's the office I had, I guess, until I became dean. I may have had one year in one of the main floor offices before that, perhaps. I believe I did. I was in an office in the basement and next to me, shortly after I came—I came back when Clayton Williams was dean, as I mentioned. Dean Williams retired as dean when he reached the age of, I don't know, sixty-five or seventy, and

was succeeded by Charlie Light, who was one of my favorite people, and another person it's a shame you can't talk to now. He was here for many, many years. He was a law professor and dean. He was twice dean, in fact. He was dean after Clayton Williams, and then I became dean in 1967, late in '67, I was made president early in '68. So my daughter says I was dean for a day. I succeeded Light, then when I became president at the beginning of 1968, the beginning of the second semester of 1968, late January of 1968, Charlie Light had to step back in as dean during the time we searched for the dean who became dean, Roy Steinheimer. Charlie used to say he was the only man he knew who succeeded his own successor. [Laughter] He was a wonderful person, one of my closest—good teacher, great classroom performer.

**Warren:** Tell me about him.

**Huntley:** Well he would pace the platform. The platforms in Tucker Hall, the teaching podium was a long platform which was raised about a foot above. Most of the ones in Lewis Hall are that way. A long desk that the teacher sat behind. I mean, six feet long. Charlie Light would pace back and forth on that platform. I recall on one occasion he paced so hard, he fell off the platform. He'd get so carried away with his comments and his lecture. He taught torts, which is a basic freshman course, and constitutional law, were his primary specialties. He was a wonderful teacher. All the law professors were.

Clayton Williams was a wonderful teacher. Old Charlie McDowell, I say "old" to distinguish him from his son, who is about my age, I guess that makes us old, was sort of the third person in that trinity over there at the law school in those days. Charles Laughlin came in a little later and was a welcome addition to that group. They were a wonderful four men. Then they found a young man named Bill Ritz, who turned out to be a wonderful teacher. And others, there were others, but those were the ones that stand out. All those men taught me and all those men then were there when I came back to teach, and all those men were still there when I became dean, which is sort of an unusual relationship.

That was true, of course, with Bill Pusey, for example. Bill Pusey taught me and then I came back and taught here while he was the head of the Department of German and then he became dean under Fred Cole and remained as dean at my request for several years after I became president. I was never able to call him anything but Dean Pusey until I had been president for several years, and he finally one day said, "Bob, we've got to stop this. I call you Bob and you call me Dean Pusey. We've got to get passed that." [Laughter] So I finally did.

But I was never able to call Clayton Williams anything but Dean Williams, or Dr. Leyburn anything but Dr. Leyburn; I was never able to bring myself to do that.

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

[Begin Tape I, Side 2]

**Warren:** So tell me about going to law school here.

**Huntley:** Well, the experience was not unlike the undergraduate school experience. There were close relationships with the faculty. The law absolutely fascinated me, I'm sure by reason of the skill of these professors who delivered it in such a way as to make it a fascination, a fascinating discipline. So I worked a great deal harder. I was older, four years older.

As I said earlier, when I was an undergraduate student, I was really just a boy, and the four years of undergraduate years were years in which I grew up, which, of course, is one of the things that happened in undergraduate school, one of the things that Washington and Lee allows to happen, and one of the special features of this school, which always is understood, I'm sure this is still true, that things must be managed in such a way as to afford the students that measure of self-determination and freedom which is requisite if they're going to grow up, recognizing that if they don't grow up now, they may not ever grow up. So one of the features of a school like Washington and Lee is its willingness to tolerate students who are growing up, and its desire to help them do that. That's why they remember these personal relationships. When young men, as it was in those days, grow from boyhood to manhood, they're likely to have some impression about the features of that experience.

Now that, of course, was different by the time I got to law school. I had grown up by then. I had been out four years in the navy and I was, I suppose you would say, more serious of purpose in terms of career orientation and objectives and goals. So I worked a lot harder. I was fascinated by the subjects that I was taking. I enjoyed it thoroughly, the academic experience, the law. The legal academic experience was an exciting one for me, which is why I was anxious and willing to come back, wanted to come back and teach when Clayton Williams asked me to do it. I enjoyed teaching greatly, more than anything else I've ever done, I guess. I enjoyed teaching.

**Warren:** How do you suppose they recognized that you would be a good teacher?

**Huntley:** Oh, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know that they did. I just don't know, but they knew me well. Again, the feature of the law school, like the undergraduate school, there

were not that many of us and they had many, many discussions with me individually, each professor, on the subjects, and they knew not just from reading exam papers, they knew from discussions, not just in class, not even primarily in class, but in sessions in their offices and elsewhere, they had been able to form an opinion about everybody there. For right or wrong, they formed the opinion that I'd be able to teach, and they were certainly right in terms of my enjoying teaching. It was an exciting experience for me, it really was.

**Warren:** What did you teach?

**Huntley:** Well, the law school was small in those days, so that one needed to have some flexibility in terms of what he teaches. So I began as a junior professor, and I taught the courses least desired by the other professors, which in that day were probably creditor's rights, which is bankruptcy, not exactly a catchword around the house, and agency, a kind of a stepchild that's not even taught anymore.

**Warren:** What is agency?

**Huntley:** The legal relationship that's established between a person and someone who works for or is commissioned by that person to do something. Employees are agents.

**Warren:** What would that be called today?

**Huntley:** It would still be called agency, but it's consumed, subsumed under other headings now. The same principles would be taught, they just won't be taught in a separate course. It's not organized that way anymore. We haven't done away with agency, we've just done away with the course named "agency."

So I taught that, and then I taught in subsequent years, I taught secured transactions; that would be things like mortgages and stuff. Then later on I taught contracts, which is a basic course, of course. Over the years, I actually, from time to time, in the absence of another professor, I'd teach anything. Because if a professor went on leave, you picked up and taught his courses. So I taught lots of other subjects. Those were the main ones I taught—contracts, creditors' rights, secured transactions.

**Warren:** A lot of variety.

**Huntley:** Yeah, that's right. That's right. But I loved it.

**Warren:** So who else came in as law professors while you were there teaching?

**Huntley:** Well, both Andy McThenia and Lewis LaRue were hired with my input. They were hired either just before I became dean or just after I became dean, I really can't recall. But I was

active in the process of recruiting them. They are two who are still here. So I mention those two.

**Warren:** Why did you recruit them?

**Huntley:** Well, I guess for the same reason Williams did me. I thought they were—well, Andy had been to school here. Lewis LaRue—Lash LaRue, they call him—had been to undergraduate school. I had not known him. He had gone on to Harvard to law school. Andy had gone to undergraduate and law school here. I knew him well. I sought Andy, and Andy, I believe, suggested I talk to LaRue, which I did, and I was impressed with him. They're both here now, senior members of the faculty.

Then, of course, Steinheimer came as dean. I was responsible for finding and hiring him. He was marvelous. You ought to talk to him, if you can find him.

**Warren:** I did.

**Huntley:** Good. He was wonderful, a wonderful dean, and brought a dynamic grasp to the job that we badly needed. The law school was in transition then, as all law schools were, and we were specifically. We needed to do many things in the law school to improve and enlarge the curriculum, as well as the building, and find strong faculty and strong students, and Roy did all those things beautifully.

**Warren:** How did you find him?

**Huntley:** Well, we had a long search going on. As I said, Charlie Light came back to be dean during the search, succeeding his own successor. We searched for a long time. I had talked to lots of potential candidates and was not overwhelmed by any of them, really. There were several who were perfectly okay, but I hadn't really been gripped by any of them.

One of the members of the faculty, I think it was Charles Laughlin, asked a friend of his, who was himself a major figure in the teaching world, in the legal scholarship world, if he had any suggestions to make. Not a person here, the man was at another institution. And he said, "Well, have you talked to Steinheimer at Michigan?" He said, "You ought to talk to Steinheimer at Michigan. I don't think he's looking for a position, I know he's not, but if you talk to him, you might be able to prevail upon him."

So with that suggestion, I called, I just called Steinheimer, I didn't know him. I just called him and asked him if he would be willing to talk to me. He did and we got on, got along with each other immediately, and he came to see the vision of what could be done with this law

school and had the ambition to want to do it. He came here and worked very, very hard and just did an outstanding job as dean. He was dean the entire time I was president. He left the deanship shortly thereafter, not because I left, but because his retirement age as dean had—I was here for fifteen years, and Roy became dean about a year after I became president, and he was dean for probably fifteen years. Then he continued to teach here after. He's a wonderful teacher. And again that was partly—at Michigan he was not an administrator, he was a teacher. He had done some assistant administrative work, but he was primarily a professor. He never taught me, but I know what the students' thought of his teaching. He was a wonderful teacher. He continued to teach until just a couple years ago. A very dynamic classroom performer and extremely effective administrator with a very firm understanding of what needed to be done and an ability to get it done.

**Warren:** I was really almost overwhelmed by his personal touch that he brought to the job.

**Huntley:** Yeah, well, that's right, he did, and that fit in here so well, you see. I suspect that's one of the things that attracted him about coming here, was that he knew his personal involvement would be valued. The law students who were here during the years he was dean, any of them will tell you, if you mention the law school, I'm sure he's the first thing they will mention. Not as dean so much, just as Steinheimer.

**Warren:** And that he probably personally brought them there.

**Huntley:** Sure. He did. He went out on the road and recruited all these students. Law schools were very competitive in those days. Law schools were competing vigorously for students in those days to a much greater degree than now. Things have changed in that respect now nationwide, but in those days, the number of students seeking to go to law school was smaller than the number of spaces in law schools that were waiting for them, different from today. The law school here had not been a rigorous recruiter, ever. Roy had to start from scratch on that score. He visited the undergraduate campuses all over the United States every year, dozens of them personally. And for ten years, the freshman class, he would have talked to every freshman before they applied; practically everyone, anyway. So they were, in a sense, his students.

**Warren:** One of the things that I was most interested in was his concern for diversity in the law school. Want to talk about that?

**Huntley:** Well, you're correct. He was concerned to have a diverse student body in every



sense of that word, and he succeeded in doing that, which was a doubly difficult task because I say he was—well, I don't know whether it was doubly difficult, but it was a doubly important task, because, as I say, he was beginning from ground zero, but he succeeded in bringing students not only from all institutions, but from all walks of life to the law school. They were all good students. He didn't recruit weak students. Roy was very demanding in terms of academic performance and other performance. So he did a great job, he really did.

**Warren:** The other monstrously important thing that happened to the law school in that time period was the new building.

**Huntley:** Oh, yeah. Well, they had to have the building. There was no way. It was either a new building or shut down the law school.

**Warren:** Why?

**Huntley:** And while it was never debated in those terms—you'll find no record of any debate that suggests that those were the two alternatives—but in my judgment, they were the two alternatives. The building was too small. The law school itself, the student body, was too small to support the curriculum it needs to have. The size of a school, I think most people misperceive the function of size in a college or university, including, I think, most college administrators. But the law school, with 100 to 120 students, simply could not support a modern law school curriculum. It could support the curriculum of the thirties, the forties, in which the number of courses to be taught was manageably small and much more analogous to the kind of teaching that occurs in a humanities curriculum, for example, but the necessary addition of courses and more detail courses in law was a function of the growing role of law in American society.

Again, whether you applaud that or whether you decry it, it was a fact, and if we were going to teach young people to be effective and powerful lawyers and powerful in the sense of their abilities as lawyers in American society, we had to embark upon an educational plan that would allow that to happen or cause that to happen. It could not have happened with the size curriculum and the size student body and the facility that we had at that time. It just couldn't happen, in my opinion. That was my opinion. I told Roy that when I went to hire him, and he agreed. So he knew what the objective was, and he knew it was either a make-or-break objective. You either got it done or you shut it down. He might not have put it in those terms to you, but believe me, those are the terms in which he and I understood it, and that the

possibility of shutting it down might have occurred was realistic.

The existence of a law school in a small undergraduate college is an anachronism, an anomaly, anyway. You know why it exists. Law was an undergraduate discipline at the time. That's why it was, for all those years, called a bachelor's degree. It was an LL.B., you know. Law was essentially a discipline that was analogous to the other disciplines taught at what we now call undergraduate colleges. That term was not used in the same sense in those days. At the time that Lee bought Brockenbrough's itinerant college into their itinerant law school into the college, that would not have been perceived as an incongruous thing to do. It would not have been perceived as bringing in a graduate discipline to an undergraduate school. It wasn't thought of in that way.

But then it grew in its importance in the curriculum. It was lucky enough to attract very important early legal figures from the American legal world, John Randolph Tucker, notably so. I mean, the most dominant figures in the American legal world, some of them, several of them were here, came here. So the school—and again you could say that was by accident, I don't know if it was by accident or not. The same features that attract people to Washington and Lee now attracted them then and they came, and the Law School grew into a professional division of the institution, a professional graduate division of the institution. Again, not something one would have thought of doing if writing on a clean slate. You don't write on a clean slate. Nobody's ever found a slate that was clean, that everybody's trying to write on.

So we had a law school and we had a good law school. We had a law school with a good reputation and strong alumni and a long history. The question of whether or not it had a future, that was the question. Does it have a future? And it could've been answered either way, it really could've. And Roy and I thought it ought to be answered affirmatively, or at least we ought to give it a fair shot. [Telephone interruption. Tape recorder turned off.]

That was Director of Admissions Bill Hartog, lining up tomorrow's golf game. [Laughter] Since his job of filling the class is about over, he can now take off a little bit and play golf. I hired him, incidentally. That was a good day's work. He's been very, very good, Hartog.

**Warren:** Let's talk about him later. Let's keep going with the law school.

**Huntley:** So it was a job that had to be done, and the attracting of students, the attracting of faculty, and the design of the building and the curriculum, all that had to be done, and we got it

done. Roy was dynamic and we worked on it a lot together. We got it done. We were fortunate enough to get it done.

**Warren:** Well, I presume the gift of the Lewises—

**Huntley:** Oh, well, absolutely, the gift of the Lewises is what made it possible to have the building.

**Warren:** How did that happen? Take me through that.

**Huntley:** Well, I guess like most of the gifts that have been made to Washington and Lee that I know about, they happened without much pre-planning. If you haven't talked to the Lewises, you ought to. They can tell you, give you a perspective on it that will be different from mine, although I don't think it would be much different.

But Syd Lewis, whom I didn't know at all, except I may have met him, I didn't know him, had that same feeling about Washington and Lee that we described earlier when we talked about the students. He felt that Washington and Lee was like an extension of his family. He had gone here to undergraduate school and to law school, and he felt it was an extension of his family. I didn't know that. I didn't know him well enough to know that. Syd and Frances had been fortunate to have found a business which provided them with substantial amount of wealth. And early on, as soon as that became true, as soon as it became true that he had substantial personal estate, apparently, I now know—I didn't know then—apparently he and Frances decided they wanted to start giving away money, and I think the first thought that occurred to him was that one of the earliest things he wanted to do was to identify what he could do for Washington and Lee.

So he actually got in touch with us. Again, that's not unusual. That's not unique. He got in touch with us to let it be known that he'd like to have someone suggest to him things at Washington and Lee that could be done. We were just beginning the planning process which underlay the development program of the seventies. We had not announced any such program, had not even identified all of its elements. We were just in the process, Steinheimer and I and others, just in the process of laying out the rudiments of the law school's needs. That was also true of other areas, it wasn't just the law school. There were a number of other things. There were lots of needs. That was just one of a large array of things that had to be done in a short time period.

I told Sydney that. I went over with him and Frances the sort of shopping list of things

we believed were going to be necessary, wasn't able to put price tags on any of them at that stage. I thought perhaps at the outset their interests might be in the arts, and we needed, among the other needs, were needs there in the arts.

I think my first suggestion to him was that he consider a gift towards a professorship or some other need in the arts. I don't believe, as I recall, that I even quantified what I hoped he would be able to do, but I certainly didn't have anything in mind like the gift that he finally made, in terms of that size, nor did I know that his interest would be the law school. He hadn't told me that. But among other things I had laid out for him what the needs of the school were that we identified, in general, and the law school was among them, though one of only perhaps a dozen things that I told him about.

So he got back in touch with me through his attorney, to tell me that he would like to consider the law school needs. So I got together a sketchy outline of the law school's needs, both the building and endowment, the endowment equivalence to the university that would be thought of as supporting the law school, and shared it with them. Roy and I shared it with them. Both of us saw them on all occasions, I think both of us saw them.

Not long after that visit, Sydney got word to me through his attorney that he and Frances had decided to give seven million dollars, which was then thought to be the price tag of a new law school. That was the number that I had given him as an estimate, at his request for the new law school. And he subsequently made that nine, the other portion being an addition to endowment. He just called and told us that's what he was going to do. They are marvelously generous people, and they have been generous to the school since, of course. They've given money to the school since then. They've given lots of money elsewhere, too. But a lot of gifts occurred spontaneously like that. None as large as the Lewises', however.

**Warren:** When I was asking about women who've been important to Washington and Lee, I've heard that you're the man to ask. You could tell me about Miss Parmly and Mrs. duPont.

**Huntley:** Oh, well, lots of women have been important, not just those, but I mean another interesting feature, it seems to me, of Washington and Lee's past, the past that I knew, is that the alumni spouses, who in this case were always wives, obviously, were not uncommonly as supportive of the school as their husbands were. Now, whether they were not given any choice about that or what, I never knew.

**Warren:** I think that's a fascinating phenomenon.

**Huntley:** Frances Lewis, for example. Ask Frances. She obviously didn't go to school here, and Frances and Sydney make their decisions jointly. I think she subsequently became a trustee, but one would not have guessed that in 19—whenever it was that were talking—1969 or something. So it isn't just the women who happen to be able to make big individual gifts, but the spouses of the alumni who come to be devoted to the place, and still are, I think.

Mrs. duPont was the first woman on the board. The second woman on the board was the spouse of an alumnus, Teen Martin, whose husband, Jim Bland Martin, was a devoted alumnus of Washington and Lee and no doubt would've loved to have been on the board, but was devoted to his wife, and was not, therefore, in any way offended when it was she whom we put on the board instead of him. You can ask him. He's still alive. She's dead, I'm sorry to say.

**Warren:** Who is this?

**Huntley:** Her name was Teen Martin. His name is James Bland Martin. I don't know what his condition is, you'll have to find out from Farris. But I think he would be someone you could talk to. She came on the board as a spouse. She was a spouse and she came on the board. She didn't come on the board as a spouse. She was a good trustee.

Mrs. duPont I never knew as a trustee, of course. I came to Washington and Lee on a duPont scholarship. I met her when I was a freshman. In those days Dr. Gaines had Mrs. duPont at the president's home, had her receive the incoming freshmen whom she had supported, and I met her when I was a seventeen-year-old boy, in the front lobby of the Lee House. I remember that. She was a gracious, stately lady. I never knew her well, personally, though she was still around when I became president. I saw her, but I never had a chance to know her well. Dr. Gaines was very close to her, of course. A lot of good stories about Mrs. duPont. One of my favorites Jim Whitehead could tell you.

Are you going to talk to Whitehead?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Huntley:** Well, you'd better, because he's marvelous. There are so many people you can talk about in Washington and Lee, and Jim is one of those whose story ought to be told, too. He was treasurer many of the years, the first ten years that I was president. Being treasurer of Washington and Lee in those days was not an easy task since we didn't have much money. A treasurer's job is always easier if you've got some money. Jim was the right man for the job at that time. He has a marvelous story. He came here in development, in the same year that I did,

in 1958, at least three people whom I can identify, one of whom lives next door, Bill Washburn. Are you going to talk to Washburn?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Huntley:** He and I and Whitehead had all arrived here at the same time in 1958, Washburn as the assistant alumni secretary. Whitehead as a development guy, I've forgotten what title, and Huntley as the law teacher, and we came to know each other casually very quickly and then later on, of course, both of them became very close friends and still are.

Whitehead has a marvelous story about Mrs. duPont. He and Celeste assisted the Gaineses in entertaining people, including Mrs. duPont, and they lived in that beautiful old antebellum home that's on Main Street, one of the oldest houses on Main Street, on the corner of Randolph and Main, or Jordan and Main, I forget, anyway. Beautiful home which they had furnished beautifully, but the plumbing was quite old. Have you heard this story?

**Warren:** No.

**Huntley:** I wasn't there, but Jim is the one to tell you about it. The plumbing was ancient, it was 19—you know, 'teens' plumbing. Have you ever seen plumbing where the flushing mechanism of the tank is suspended above the toilet and it flushes by gravity, when you pull a chain the water runs down a pipe and flushes the toilet? Well, the plumbing in this old house, which the Whiteheads had not, by then, had the money to restore nor repair or renovate, well, Mrs. duPont was there and went to make use of the plumbing facilities, and when she came out, she was drenched. Her marvelous coiffure was draggled and her beautiful pearled gown, whatever, was soaking. According to Jim, she didn't flinch at all. She went right through the evening as if nothing had happened. Never called attention to it. What had happened is the thing had overflowed, the tank that was suspended from the ceiling above her head had overflowed and drenched her. But Jim said she never lost her dignity for a moment.

**Warren:** Oh, my God, what a story.

**Huntley:** He tells that story more humorously than I can tell.

**Warren:** What a great story.

**Huntley:** You ought to talk to Jim. He's got a lot of things to talk about.

**Warren:** He's very high on my list.

**Huntley:** He'll be fun to talk to, too. You'll enjoy that.

**Warren:** Who was Miss Parmly and what's her connection?



**Huntley:** Miss Parmly was introduced to me by an alumnus in New York City who worked for one of the banks. This happened frequently, but not always turned out this well. He said that he hoped I would find time when I was in New York to go by and see a lady whom he knew, only because her estate was in trust with, or being managed by, this bank that he worked for. He asked her permission. She let him know that she was in quest of objects of charity, and he said, "Well, I've got one in mind." [Laughter] So she knew he was going to mention her to me.

So I called her, of course, and set up a time to see her in New York City, and we got along very well. I explained to her all about Washington and Lee, and by that time we were well along into the development program, so we identified pretty clearly what the needs were, and we were perhaps maybe half way down the road to seeing it actually achieved. Her father had been a prominent physicist at CCNY, in the days when CCNY was a premier academic institution. As you may know, until the past couple of decades, CCNY was as difficult an academic institution as there was in the United States. Many of the great brains of America, especially American science, came out of CCNY, and her father was professor of physics there, which I think was really an important position. He had also patented something, and I've not got it straight as to what it was. He invented and patented something back in the early years of the century, from which he made a lot of money. That's where the money came from.

Miss Parmly was born and raised in Manhattan, one of the few people I've ever known who was born and raised in Manhattan and who remained on there until her dying day. But she had become disenchanted with CCNY. I should say this differently. CCNY was such a totally different institution, she no longer felt any identification with it. She wanted to find a way to honor her father, and we needed lots of things, but we needed endowments more than anything else at that moment, and I told her that. I suggested to her that we'd be honored if she made a gift to our facility and we'd honor the gift by naming the building in which physics is housed after her father, even though we would not, in fact, be spending the money on that building. The building was there. We just called it the new science building in those days. She understood that. She was very bright. She spoke several languages fluently and was a delightful person.

She came down here and visited several times, but she didn't come down here to visit until after she had made her mind up about giving the money, incidentally. But she came down



here and visited. The faculty liked her and the faculty would entertain her. She was a very entertaining person. This really became sort of a second home for her. This place was an adopted institution place where she was, I think probably in some ways, a lonely person in Manhattan. She loved it. But she had made up her mind about the gift before she ever visited here.

**Warren:** How old was she?

**Huntley:** I would guess at the time she made the gift she was in her late sixties, probably.

This was a long time ago, so money was worth more per dollar than it is now. She asked me to come by and see her, that she'd made up her mind about the gift. I had never given her an amount. I was going to take her to lunch. She had a place where she liked to go to lunch that I'd introduced her to. I went by her little apartment first. She said, "Let's get this business over with first." She got out her pocketbook. In there was a little folding checkbook, the kind that ladies carry in their pocketbooks. And she undid the checkbook and wrote out, by hand, on a tiny little check, the check for—was it a million and a quarter, a million and a half dollars. I recall that the zeros went down the side of the check, she couldn't get them all on, and she said, "I've never written one this big." [Laughter] But it worked, it cashed. And then we went to lunch.

She came down after that and became increasingly enamored of the school after she'd made the gift, and indeed she'd never led us to expect that there would be any more money, nor did I expect that there would be. There was, as it turned out. She left another substantial amount in her estate when she died, I don't recall it now, but a couple of million. She loved it here. She just thought it was the greatest place she'd ever been.

**Warren:** So when she would come to visit, what would happen?

**Huntley:** Well, we entertained her at home. We kept her in the Lee House, of course. The faculty would take her in hand and go off on campus with her and have little parties for her that I didn't even go to. I didn't have to be with her every minute. Or Evelyn would entertain her. But the faculty would take her, and she thought they were marvelous. And they liked her, they genuinely liked her, so it wasn't necessary to set up anything.

Another feature of the school, as Evelyn could tell you, faculty spouses thought it was natural for them to entertain visiting firemen, and I guess they still do and they do so.

**Warren:** Well, I'm just delighted to get that story, because I've heard all kinds of silly stories

about Miss Parmly. It's nice to hear the truth.

**Huntley:** Let me tell you a story about Miss Parmly that you might not have heard, which is really of historical interest. This is of hard historical interest, as distinguished from the soft historical interest of the oral, or the kind of conversation I've been giving you. This is an absolute fact, unvarnished truth.

I asked Miss Parmly, after I'd known her for a visit or two, if she'd ever heard of Washington and Lee before meeting me, because a lot of people haven't. It's a little school. And she said, yes, she had, in her childhood, heard of Washington and Lee through a friend of her father's. She said she recalled a friend of her father's talking about Washington and Lee in her presence when she was a child, perhaps twelve-year-old.

I said, "Well, who would that have been?"

She said, "His name was Doremus." Well, lo and behold, it turns out to be the same Doremus, and she knew the story. She's telling me this now with no prompting from me. This is not a case of my prompting her recollections. She said the story he told her father in her presence was the story of coming to the Washington and Lee campus and being greeted by an anonymous student and shown the campus and treated with hospitality and warmth. He'd never been anyplace where that happened before, and he went back to New York and he left us—was it \$8 million? It was like that, it was a lot of money. That was just a whole lot of money in the early years of the century. He didn't visit again. She knew that story from the man himself. She heard him tell her father that story.

The reason that's of interest is because that's a legend around here of long standing, which no one has ever credited as necessarily being true. Dr. Gaines loved to tell that story. Well, it just didn't have the ring—it had the ring of the kind of thing that one would sort of embellish with, you see. But it turns out to be, this is—if that's not independent verification, I don't know what is. She heard the man say that, and she told me that with no prompting on my part, about this story. She remembered that from her childhood, that's how she remembered Washington and Lee. So you could say that anonymous student who wowed Mr. Doremus also indirectly wowed Miss Parmly a half century later. Isn't that amazing?

**Warren:** That is amazing, because, you know, I've done a great deal of reading of those early years, and even right around the time of the Doremus gift, the story isn't straight. There are stories that are inconsistent. One may be true or the other might be true, but they can't both be

true.

**Huntley:** Right. This was her story which she heard from him and never heard from anybody else, and thought she was telling me for the first time. Then, of course, when I told her that had been a legendary tradition down here, she was pleased.

**Warren:** That's the ultimate small world story, isn't it? Big money, small world story. I'm going to pop in another tape.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. It's the fourteenth of May 1996. This is tape two with Robert Huntley.

**Huntley:** They're embarrassed when it doesn't, as if you were going to their home, and there were years when they couldn't afford to make it look good. There really were. Couldn't keep the grass growing and they were acutely embarrassed in those years. We just couldn't do anything about it.

**Warren:** When would that have been?

**Huntley:** Oh, when I became president, that was true. The campus was ragged-looking and we couldn't afford to make it—it wasn't anybody's fault. There just wasn't enough money to keep it. You understand that at that time we were borrowing money every June to make the payroll through to September.

**Warren:** No, I don't understand that.

**Huntley:** Well, okay, it's easy to do if you just get the financial records out and look at them. [Laughter] The endowment of the school was like fourteen million dollars or fifteen million, and we were broke. So things had to give, that had to give.

**Warren:** Let's start to talk about that period. One thing I found out in my quick research this morning is that you had a leg up when you came in as president. You were secretary of the board for a couple of years.

**Huntley:** Well, yeah, that didn't really mean anything much, but, yeah, I was. Fred Cole asked me to help him out on one or two assignments—I was teaching at the law school—one or two assignments that were legal or quasi-legal in nature, and got to know me and asked me if I were to assist him in relationships with the board, which I, of course, did. I think he eventually formalized that by calling me secretary to the board. I'd been doing that for a while before I had any title involved.

**Warren:** Tell me about Fred Cole. I really don't know anything about him.

**Huntley:** Well, that's unfortunate that you don't, because Cole was president for eight years here, and I think he was one of the most marvelous men that I ever knew. He was soft-spoken, quiet, even timid, and therefore, except by the faculty who were here then, and they will remember him with praise, but the alumni don't remember him terribly well, because he didn't ever succeed in establishing a close relationship with many of them; some, but not with many. The strengths he brought, academic strengths he brought to the faculty, were important. He was a marvelous, marvelous president, I thought.

I did not want him to resign when he did. He did because he had concluded that he was not the right man for the job at that time, and I thought he was wrong and told him so, but he was determined. He had great devotion for the school. He loved it more than anything else he had ever done. So it wasn't for that reason that he left. He just didn't think it was a job he could do.

**Warren:** Where did he go?

**Huntley:** He went to run a library organization in Washington that was funded by the Ford Foundation, called the Council on Library Resources. He ran that until he retired at age seventy, I suppose, and died a few years ago. His widow is still living.

**Warren:** And I understand he has a son.

**Huntley:** A son, Taylor.

**Warren:** A couple of people have mentioned his name.

**Huntley:** He was a wonderful guy, just marvelous, I thought. Frank has vivid recollections of Fred Cole and could share those with you, Frank Parsons, and Farris and Jim Whitehead, and Sid Coulling.

**Warren:** So at the ripe young age of thirty-eight, you were asked to fill Dr. Gaines' shoes.

**Huntley:** Well, I don't think it was put quite that way. [Laughter] No, it wasn't.

**Warren:** Sitting here listening to you talk about Dr. Gaines, it occurs to me that that's what you were doing.

**Huntley:** No, I didn't think of it in that way. Actually, it was Cole I was succeeding and not Gaines. I thought very highly of Cole. It was a real humbling experience. I was on the search committee, which probably the records would reveal, the Presidential Search Committee.

**Warren:** What does it mean to be on a search committee?

**Huntley:** Well, that means you've got to go out and try find somebody, to develop a list of possible people who you'd like to have as president and who you think the faculty and board will accept. It was a difficult time to seek a president for Washington and Lee.

**Warren:** Why?

**Huntley:** Well, the school was not in robust condition financially. The reputation was still good, but it was not an easy time. I don't exactly know how I came to be suggested, because I was not present when that occurred. We were talking with other people, the committee was, interviewing people and trying to find people. And in some way, I really don't know. Some members of the committee, other than me, eventually talked to the board, and the committee was still in process of trying to find somebody when the director of the board called me in late 1967, probably November or early December of '67, and asked me if I would consider.

**Warren:** Who was director then?

**Huntley:** Huston St. Clair, marvelous person and a strong Washington and Lee family from West Virginia. A medical doctor who didn't practice medicine. His family had been in the coal business and he'd been on the board for many years, and his father before him. He was rector during the first several years that I was president.

**Warren:** So what was it like getting that call?

**Huntley:** Well, it was startling. I didn't anticipate that. I hadn't aspired to be dean of the law school, certainly not to be president. So it was a matter on which Evelyn and I had several weeks deciding whether to do it or not. But I knew, because I had been close to the situation, that the job to be done was going to be kind of hard sell to a new president from outside. So I concluded that maybe it was a duty I needed to do, and that really was the way I thought about it, because the main thing I liked to do was teaching. If I had wanted a different kind of career, I would have stayed in law, which I believe I could've succeeded at, and was doing all right with, so it was not a job I felt ambitious to have. But as I said earlier, most of the administrators of Washington and Lee never had the ambition to be administrators, and that was true. But I never regretted doing it. It was a marvelous fifteen years, which is several years longer than I expected it would be. [Laughter]

**Warren:** As you say, it was a very difficult time.

**Huntley:** Well, all times are. They're just difficult in different ways.

**Warren:** It seems like it. One of the things that seems obvious to me with historical

perspective that was happening at that time was the issue of integration.

**Huntley:** True. That's right.

**Warren:** Can you talk about that?

**Huntley:** Sure. It was happening, and I had been active with Fred Cole in discussions with the board about reaching the decision that the faculty would be the agency that would determine admissions at Washington and Lee. That understanding was confirmed by the board during Fred Cole's presidency.

**Warren:** What's the distinction you're making there?

**Huntley:** The distinction I'm making was that it was not the Board's role to determine who's admitted to Washington and Lee.

**Warren:** And had it been in the past?

**Huntley:** No, as far as I know.

**Warren:** You just wanted to clarify it?

**Huntley:** Exactly. And that had been confirmed by the board, I think an important step for Cole to have taken, because it made it clear to the board mainly that they knew that this issue was the admission of black students and Fred did not want an after-the-fact suggestion from the board or any member of the board that the decision as to whether or not to admit black students was a board decision. So, in effect, the board made the decision without ever passing a resolution that the institution was not closed to black students and that the faculty would decide whom to admit, though I don't think you'll find that in any board resolution. Maybe you will. I don't think so, because there had never been any resolution to the contrary, as you just noted by your question. There had never been any suggestion that the board did control admissions. There was nothing in the record of the institution indicating that the institution would not accept black students, nothing anywhere in its history. No resolution that they wouldn't. So a resolution that they would would've have been gratuitous. Nevertheless, it was wise that there be a consensus among the board that that was the fact, and that Cole got accomplished. It was one of the things that he asked my assistance with in those years that I was secretary.

**Warren:** And how did you assist?

**Huntley:** I just explained it to the board in those terms.

**Warren:** In one-on-one?

**Huntley:** Yeah, one-on-one, as did he.

**Warren:** Was there resistance?

**Huntley:** No, no, there wasn't resistance. Among some of the older board members, there was reluctance, but no resistance. Reluctance may not be the right word. There was trepidation about what this would signify, about how successful we could be in having black students who would succeed at Washington and Lee come here—trepidation that was well placed. That's a legitimate concern, still is. But we felt it had to be faced and attempted, and then we did begin to admit black students, to seek black students who would want to be admitted, and then to admit them as aggressively as we could in the years that followed.

**Warren:** How do you think it worked out?

**Huntley:** I think it worked out as well as I suspect we could have expected. There were fits and starts and some false starts and some failures, so the course wasn't a smooth one, but we were fortunate in finding a number of young black men who wanted to come here, of which number a substantial percentage succeeded. Of that substantial percentage, a number of them are avid alumni of the school and did absorb the devotion that the white students had had about the school. It was a tough time for them.

**Warren:** Why?

**Huntley:** It required a lot of courage on their part. Well, why not? They were in a community of a previously all-white community, a school with the names of the guys who fought the Civil War at its masthead. What could have been easy about that? And whether or not they were caused to feel it, they obviously were going to feel some extent of alienation, and all of them did. All of them did. I think there are no exceptions to that. And I think to the degree it succeeded, I believe it did, it did because people here were anxious to have it succeed. And I think it's for the same reason other things at Washington and Lee seem to work, eventually. If it didn't work at first, we just kept trying.

I think the black students, even those who felt alienated, even those who continued to feel alienated, and some did, I think even those knew that most of us here were anxious for them to succeed and did all we could to help them succeed. There was certainly many hours of conversation with them, and they learned to come to us with conversations and also learned to accept negative answers when we couldn't do things they wanted done.

**Warren:** Do you have any examples of that?

**Huntley:** Well, I can recall early on, the ideas that were so prevalent in those days, I guess still



are, of having separate living quarters. Well, that was just not something we were going to do, and I explained to them why I thought that was wrong. They didn't do that. They could and, of course did, form social organizations that were separate. That was something they could certainly do, and did do. But separate dormitories and separate curricula, those ideas were so prevalent in those days, were bound to arise here. I'm not sure that any of them wanted that, but they were discussions we had to have. I know those young men to this day, the ones you mentioned and others. Some of them come by to see me occasionally.

I'll tell you a story. I guess it was successful. A modest success, I guess it was, I'd describe it as. Modest success from hard work.

**Warren:** I'm intrigued by your making reference to the masthead, that General Lee is the name of the place.

**Huntley:** No black student ever mentioned that to me, incidentally. They must've thought that, but it was never mentioned to me.

**Warren:** I was flabbergasted by Eugene Perry saying that's one of the reasons he was attracted to the place because he read a lot about Robert E. Lee.

**Huntley:** Well, no black student, while I had complaints from them about many things, many of the complaints justified, some of them not justified—that was also true of the white students, I might add—I never had a black student, even when they were, for one reason or another, outraged, I never had a black student ever express to me any resentment about the Lee heritage. I had some of them, as Perry apparently told you, refer to that heritage favorably. I never had anyone express resentment about it, nor was there even days when it was popular to demonstrate, you know, in those days when people wore their hearts on their sleeves and usually on sign boards, no one ever had a demonstration that would have protested Lee. Now, you would've thought that might have happened. Looking back at the 1969-'70 period, you might have thought that somebody would've done that. No one ever did. I'm glad they didn't, because I don't know how I would've handled that. [Laughter]

**Warren:** That would've been pretty tough, wouldn't it? That would be pretty hard.

**Huntley:** With Lee's recumbent statue lying behind the podium at Lee Chapel, it's amazing to me that that never happened. I don't believe they, any more than the others at Washington and Lee, think of Lee primarily as a leader of the Civil War battles. That's how history thinks of him, but that's really not the way he's thought of here.

**Warren:** Tell me what you mean.

**Huntley:** Well, he's thought of here for his years as president and for the attitude he brought to the place, which is the attitude that has been perpetuated, I think, over the years. The personal involvement. The Lee letters. Have you read the Lee letters he wrote? He knew all the kids. He wrote letters back to the parents about them and everything. It was his personal touch. And, of course, he never dwelled on the Civil War. He wouldn't talk about the Civil War. He had put that behind him. As he said in the letter he wrote to his wife shortly after he arrived here, he hoped the Lord would spare him to do something useful with the years he had left. And that's the way he saw it. So he saw the pinnacle of his career as the years he had here, which were not related in his mind to his years as General Lee, and somehow that must have seeped through to the students, black and white.

**Warren:** I think it did. I think it did.

**Huntley:** I'm sure Perry wouldn't be thinking of Lee, when he thinks of him favorably, wouldn't be thinking of him as the guy who ordered Pickett's Charge. [Laughter]

**Warren:** What he's talking about is the tradition of honor.

**Huntley:** Right.

**Warren:** Which he knew a lot about before he ever walked on the campus.

**Huntley:** Of course. And they do. Those are the things that people remember of him. The distinctive figures of Washington and Lee, in my judgment, are severalfold, and most of the folks who worked here know and even articulate them and work hard to preserve them.

It's a combination, not necessarily in this order, it's a combination of a large, very large liberal arts curriculum, as large a curriculum as you would find at the undergraduate level at major universities, coupled with a small student body, small enough so that the students can, and do, know each other and can, and do, know their faculty, not just the sub-cliques in which they find themselves, but the whole group, know each other personally and feel a sense of responsibility for each other, or can at least do so. It can occur that they can develop a sense of responsibility for each other. It doesn't always, but it's small enough that it can. So, small size, small in that sense.

Free choice. A wide measure of free choice among this large curriculum, across this large curriculum. Not totally free choice. A choice that is channeled into various directions by wise faculty, but within those broad ambits, a wide measure of choice. In other words, a school

that does not have to subsidize its curriculum by forcing students into certain corners of it. That requires some balance in terms of administration, to have a curriculum that's this large and have it populated by a small student body, because all parts of the curriculum may be populated just because you're going to have it. Faculty are not going to remain, even if you pay them, if they don't have students, and good students. So if the curriculum is going to be large and demanding, the students need to populate that curriculum, and if you have to force them into its corners in order to populate it, you've lost one of the features I'm describing. So it needs to have that balance.

Then the fourth element is the element of which the honor system is a premiere condition, the sense of trust and community that exists in the group. Those four elements are what makes the school distinctive and what is difficult to find anywhere else, not impossible, I don't suspect, but difficult to find anywhere else. Those four elements are why students want to live here, and they'll tell you one of those four things. If you go talk to them, one of those four things is what they'll hit on, sometimes all four of them. But those will be the reasons that they like it.

And those that didn't like it, of which there are some, usually will be something relating to one of those four areas that caused them not to like it. They couldn't identify with the honor system, not necessarily because they're dishonorable, but they didn't like the thought. They saw that as something different than what it is, or their own personal circumstance was such that they did not succeed in relating themselves to the community, or they chose badly within the curriculum and did not, as it happened, get the kind of advice they could have used, or didn't seek it. That's one of the features of this school, is that advice is available here from anybody, but it's rarely forced. I used to tell the freshmen this as emphatically as I could, and again and again during their freshmen year, and some don't remember it: faculty and others here are available to advise students at almost any time on curricular or non-curricular matters, but rarely do they force the advice. Rarely does a faculty members seek out a student and say, "You know, you really made a bad choice there." That again is part of the process of—they've got to grow into men, not be grown into men. And so the students who don't seek advice and make mistakes, which, as a measure of your freedom, you can make, may have a bad experience. So it doesn't suit everybody, but it suits, I think, the majority of those who come here.

So that's about all I know about the place. [Laughter]

**Warren:** That's certainly succinct. You know what you're saying there, especially towards

the end, makes me think of what an incredible contrast it is between this institution with the white columns and the other institution next door and their point of view.

**Huntley:** Well, yes, it's a contrast, but there are similarities, I suspect. It's, of course, small, develops a devotion and a sense of community among its students by different means from what we do.

**Warren:** Did you interrelate with VMI very much?

**Huntley:** Yes. I was very, very fond of the superintendent who was there most of the time that I was president, Bud Shell, General Shell, who was one of the most marvelous, I think, just a wonderful man. I don't know what his physical condition is now.

**Warren:** I think they're failing, both, a little.

**Huntley:** Did he talk to you?

**Warren:** I haven't attempted to, but that's a really good idea.

**Huntley:** He would be interesting to talk to.

**Warren:** That's a very good idea.

**Huntley:** He would have a view of Washington and Lee that would be interesting to know.

**Warren:** That's a really good idea.

**Huntley:** But I thought he was just one of the wisest men I ever knew, and I should tell you that during the early years I was president, I sought his advice on more than one occasion, and he gave good advice. During 1970, when the students were parading around here like a bunch of lunatics from time to time, Shell was a good source of counsel for me. Not many people know that.

**Warren:** Tell me about that.

**Huntley:** Well, I talked to him, I knew him well, and I talked to him about it. He was very wise. He was not [unclear] military school. But his view was, if we remained open but firm, open but firm, firm in the things that really mattered, the final things that really mattered, that the students would, in due course, recognize the value of that position. He was right.

**Warren:** Let's go back to 1970.

**Huntley:** Let's don't. [Laughter]

**Warren:** Oh, come on.

**Huntley:** Well, it wasn't all that bad. It was an interesting time. Watershed years, I guess. I'm not exactly sure where the water shed to, on either side of the watershed—watershed just for

the nation, I mean, and, I guess, in some ways for the school, but the students had somehow had come to the—and I won't attempt any sociological analysis, but had somehow become alienated in many cases from their families to a greater degree than I ever saw before or since.

**Warren:** What do you mean?

**Huntley:** Well, just specifically that. They were not relating to their families. I recall we had to keep the dormitories open during the holidays because they wouldn't go home, for example. So I mean it literally. Not just here, lots of places. Washington and Lee seemed to them, again the sense of community and a sense of the importance of the place to them. I said it earlier the alumni had a downside. There was a downside where the students were concerned, too.

So they, in a sense, were ambivalent about Washington and Lee. They had a love/hate relationship with it, some of them did at that time. And of course they were upset about the things that the students were getting upset about then, about the Vietnamese War and other things they saw as unjust. They had the kind of passion that youth always has, I once described as deep convictions lightly held. That's true of youth. Each passion is more significant than its predecessor and they don't necessarily last long. Some do and some don't, but this is part of the process of growing up. This is way the mind and the intellect and the emotions develop.

Young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one are a potent chemical force. [Laughter] And that had been ignited, to a degree, by the events occurring nationally and internationally. And by whatever sociology goes before that, the years since World War II and the things that had occurred in American society that caused youth to feel less close to their families, all those things coalesced in the late sixties and early seventies, here and elsewhere, and surfaced in terms of unrest and demands for this or that concession, as they saw it, by the school and so on.

But we got through it well. I think we got through it well because the faculty remained staunch in both senses of the word. They declined to give up the institution's autonomy to the students, the curricula of autonomy to the students, they declined it. They would've declined to give it up to the board, too, but they declined to give it up to the students, and at the same time remained open to the students. So they didn't feel alienated from the students, even though in some cases students seemed to feel alienated from them and remained opened, and the conversations that could and did occur, could occur here, couldn't have occurred at a school any larger than this or with a different background. It just wouldn't have happened. It just couldn't

have happened.

**Warren:** What kind of conversations?

**Huntley:** Endless conversations about all the issues that were bothering them. I mean, you'd sit up for hours. Nobody would ever cut them off. Everybody had all the time for them they wanted, as they always had. Eventually good sense prevailed. Not all the incidents of that period were good and not all the outcomes were good, but on balance it was good. The school retained its sense of purpose, and the students agreed with that eventually.

So it was an interesting time. I don't think of it with any bad thoughts. A lot of those students who were here, I knew most of them, a lot of them who were here then I see regularly now. The class of 1970, I guess it was. The reunion two years ago, the twenty-fifth, and I was very honored, they established a scholarship in my name.

**Warren:** Well, now if that isn't flattering.

**Huntley:** A six-figure scholarship in my name. They said they gave me so damn much trouble that they owed it to me. [Laughter] I said, "Well you certainly did."

**Warren:** What goes around comes around.

**Huntley:** Yeah. So they were interesting times, but we got through that.

**Warren:** Were there any personal vignettes, personal things that happened? It's such a huge historical time. But on the personal level.

**Huntley:** Oh, well, lots of them, yeah. I remember, for example, living in the Lee House, the kids had various camps amongst students then. It was even difficult for me to keep track of which camp was which sometimes, although I knew them all. And this camp would sort of distrust that camp, and one group of students was of the view that another group was likely to be violent. None of them ever was violent. And they wanted to sit on the front porch of the Lee House. They came to the Lee House about eight o'clock one night, rang the doorbell. Evelyn went to the door, and he said, "Mrs. Huntley, we thought we should let you know that several of us are going to be sleeping out here on your front porch tonight, because we think that maybe some of these other kids out here need watching."

So Evelyn said, "Well, I don't think they need watching, and it's going to be a cold night tonight. It's going to be frost tonight. We're going to have frost." It was early May and we were going to have frost like we did last night. She said, "I think you're going to freeze out there. It doesn't make any sense."

They said, "No, ma'am, we think we're going to stay out here."

She said, "Well, if you're going to stay out here, I'm going to leave the front door unlatched. You see the geranium sitting here? If you see it frosting, set it in the front hall."

[Laughter] True story.

**Warren:** She had her priorities straight.

**Huntley:** And we left the door unlocked to the Lee House, in the middle of the nation's—sure enough, the students put the geraniums in the house during the night. They remembered that story when that kid graduated that year. He said he couldn't believe that. There we were worried about the fate of the world and Mrs. Huntley told us the door was unlocked and put the geraniums inside.

**Warren:** And were they still there in the morning?

**Huntley:** The students?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Huntley:** Yes, they were. They were still there in the morning and probably for a day or two thereafter. They were camped all over the front lawn. They were literally camped on the front lawn. All over the place.

**Warren:** Tents?

**Huntley:** In some cases, tents, yes.

**Warren:** It must have been a little bit like the Civil War starting up again.

**Huntley:** Yes, it was. It was. And in the middle of that, we had alumni reunions. Imagine an alumnus who hadn't been here in fifty years, for example, coming back and looking at the front campus, here are these kids running around looking like savages, dressed in the ways which you may be able to remember students liked to dress in those days—I mean, you know, bare from the waist up and no shoes, and with tents pitched around the campus, growing scraggly old beards and long hair and so on. And you can imagine what the alumni returning thought of that. But we survived that too, you see. They forgave us. [Laughter] Right in the middle of alumni reunions occurred right in the middle of that period.

**Warren:** That must have been really dramatic.

**Huntley:** It was less dramatic then it sounds to tell about it.

**Warren:** It just sounds like you've got a cast of characters. There must have been drama.

**Huntley:** Well, there was. Actually it was good that the alumni were here, because that gave



them a chance to talk to the students, and we facilitated that, because they weren't nearly as savage as they looked, you know. They weren't savage at all. So we facilitated the alumni talking to them and they went away with a much better feeling than they would have had if they'd only seen pictures, which a lot of them didn't see anything but pictures. So it was probably good, on balance, that we had a big group of alumni here, who were able to go back home and say, "It's really not as bad as it looks."

**Warren:** So let's talk about these "savages." That was something else that happened during your tenure, your presidency. Conventional dress went by the—

**Huntley:** Well, yeah, it had already started to go before I became president. It had become less and less conventional.

**Warren:** How did that happen?

**Huntley:** The year before that. It didn't happen overnight.

**Warren:** And it isn't a university thing.

**Huntley:** It never was. It never was.

**Warren:** Explain that to me.

**Huntley:** Well, it never was. I don't know when the custom began. There was a custom. But you need to put it in time, in perspective of the times. When I was a young man, for example, coming along, when I was a boy, a child, my father never came to the dinner table without a coat and tie. Rarely went out of his room without a coat and tie. My grandfather probably never went out of his room without his coat and tie. So that normalcy in a civilized community was, for most people, unless they were in physical labor at the time, was a coat and tie. That's probably how the custom began. Again, they thought they were growing into men, they might as well behave like men, and that's the way men behaved in those days. It no longer is. I mean, I don't put on a coat and tie to go to dinner and I ain't got one on now. But that wouldn't have been true at the time I came here.

So the custom started and then the custom was enforced by the student body. It's not the way it began, it's just the way it ended, really. The student government had a conventional dress understanding and had a committee called the Assimilation Committee, which would punish students—they made them wear beanies or something—who didn't dress conventionally, in the years after World War II. This is mainly after World War II when the conventional dress Assimilation Committee would have been quite active. Conventional dress had been around

long before that. I'm not suggesting that it occurred then, but the enforcement of it was probably more rigorous after World War II than in earlier times.

The prevalence of the custom of dressing like that was always changing, and it would have already been true by the mid-fifties, that you would see students occasionally without coats and ties, whereas you never saw that when I was a student, unless you were actively engaged in an athletic endeavor. You never left your room without a coat and tie, never. I never did, unless I was literally going out on the crew or the tennis courts. But that had already begun to change.

Then the emphasis came on enforcing it, as always happens when something is changing, you know. Then the emphasis came on the enforcement techniques. Well, it obviously was not something the University was going to enforce, never had, and I was not about to make conventional dress analogous to the honor system. The University doesn't enforce the honor system either. But I was not about to suggest to the students that I thought they should treat conventional dress as they treated the honor system, because I didn't believe that. I thought it would be fatal to the honor system, or at least dangerous to it, to burden it with that false analogy. They weren't enforced in the same way, incidentally. Conventional dress was not enforced by the Executive Committee, which is the group that enforced it. And slowly it just slowly petered out over a period of a decade, I would say.

**Warren:** I was intrigued by an article in the current alumni magazine, an interview with Larry Boetsch, the new dean, who says that he can remember going off for a year in Spain his junior year and coming back, and conventional dress was gone. For him it happened in one year.

**Huntley:** But it really didn't, though. It didn't. It happened slowly over a long period of time. I saw it happen over all those years.

**Warren:** Do you think something was lost or gained?

**Huntley:** Oh, I don't think anything was gained. I suppose something was lost in the communal sense that we referred to earlier, but I'm not sure that that it was anything significant. I think it's important that students concern themselves now about how they look. I don't like to see them now looking like ragamuffins, unless they're required to look that way, which I don't think they are. I don't think it's helpful to one's own psyche to dress like a barbarian unless you are a barbarian. I don't think it helps. So in that sense, I guess, something's lost, but I don't think most of them dress like barbarians now. To a degree they do, I think that's bad. To the

degree they dress conventionally, that is in the way that the conventions of the time suggest civilized people dress, then I think that's fine.

To me, at least, the method of dressing should not be a statement. I believe there are better ways to make statements than by attire. I think conventional dress, at one point in its evolution, was not a statement; it was the way one conventionally dressed himself to live life. There are different ways now one dresses himself to live life, and that's the way they ought to dress, I think. I don't know, I never thought clothes make the man. I think that's true of conventional dress or highly unconventional dress. Neither one makes the man.

We went through a period in the sixties and seventies when students thought clothes make the man. They didn't think it was conventional clothes that make the man; unconventional clothes made the man. And it didn't either way, you see. Dressing like you're impoverished does not make you poverty-stricken, nor does it imply any real empathy with those who are.

**Warren:** Good point.

**Huntley:** So I dislike that talk. Polonius' advice to Laertes was badly flawed, and as you recall from reading your Shakespeare, Shakespeare painted Polonius as a trite old fool. And all of his advice, everything he had to say, Polonius' advice to Laertes is wrong, including what he had to say about clothes.

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

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

**Warren:** One of the other things that I believe was suspended during your time was Fancy Dress.

**Huntley:** Well, it wasn't suspended, they just quit having it. It petered out and then it was redeemed. It was revived.

**Warren:** Was there a sadness to that?

**Huntley:** Well, yeah, I would say, although, again, when things peter out, it's less sad than when they're shot. Fancy Dress had been a rather unsuccessful event for several years prior to its—

**Warren:** Oh, really.

**Huntley:** Yeah, it really had, because it didn't work very well. During that time period, students were not as interested as they had been earlier and probably are now in carefully laid

plans for large celebrity weekends. That sort of thing was not popular in the early seventies. That's when it died out. I've forgotten when. I've forgotten the years, you'll have to look it up. And I've forgotten when it was revived.

**Warren:** I think it was '70, '74, something like that.

**Huntley:** But it was a mere shadow of its former self before that.

**Warren:** So when it came back, did it come back full force?

**Huntley:** Well, it came back anew. No, it didn't come back as it had once been. It came back as a new creature. And as a new creature, it better suited the times than we live in now. You couldn't bring back the dance sets of the forties and thirties.

**Warren:** Oh, wouldn't it be fun, though?

**Huntley:** It would be fun, but you couldn't possibly do it. It would be an act to try to do it. Fancy Dress, when I was a student, was a three-day dance set, three days, three nights and with two different bands, sometimes with both bands in the same night. I mean both Dorseys, for example. Both bands, real bands. Bands that don't even exist now. You couldn't get them now if you wanted to; they don't exist.

We had two bands, one for Thursday night and one for Saturday night and two for Friday night, and dressed formally all three nights, one night in tails, one night in tux, and one night in costume. To revive something like that today would be silly. You might put it on as a play once, but you couldn't sustain it as a tradition.

There were four dance sets in those years, all formal. Dance set in Opening Dances, there was Fancy Dress, Spring Dances and Finals. The other three dances were two night sets with big bands. You couldn't do that today. As I say, it would be kind of silly if you did.

So Fancy Dress is not what it was. That's not to say it isn't good. They still dress fancy and they still have a nice party.

**Warren:** Do you ever go now?

**Huntley:** I have been. I haven't been in the last several years. I never missed one when I was here.

**Warren:** I think it's a great party.

**Huntley:** It is.

**Warren:** I went to my first one this year and had a fabulous time.

**Huntley:** It is, it is a great party.

**Warren:** Well, speaking of parties, one of the things I remember most when I lived here in the late seventies is fraternity parties.

**Huntley:** Yeah. Well, they had them and I suppose they still do.

**Warren:** Tell me about your relationship with fraternities.

**Huntley:** Well, generally my relationship with fraternities was good. We had troubles with various fraternities from time to time, and still do, I guess. I thought, on balance, fraternities served a useful purpose for those who joined them. I didn't think they should have an exclusive hold on the social life of the school. I thought we ought to try to afford the students who didn't belong to fraternities some social alternatives, and that we've attempted to do. But I was never opposed to fraternities, and knew them well. On balance, I think they performed well. They provided support for students. The good fraternities provided support for students that they needed, social support as well as other kinds of support, and the bad ones didn't.

And all of them were sometimes good and sometimes bad. They were fraternities in cycles. Fraternities went in cycles. X fraternity might be good for three or four years and not so good for three or four years. I'm sure that continues to be true. I don't have any present view of how well they're run, but they probably still serve a useful purpose.

They fell into disrepair physically, and mainly that occurred in the sixties and seventies when everything else fell, when the students ceased to take care of things. It wasn't all the students' fault. Some of it was, a lot of it was. The houses were very old physically, of course, and the school really couldn't afford to own them at that time. So as the houses fell increasingly into disrepair, it's a vicious circle, the sense of pride in them fell into disrepair, and it was hard to refurbish. But they've done a marvelous job with that. The Fraternity Renaissance program, seems to me, has been very successful. John Wilson's Fraternity Renaissance program, I'm very complimentary of the way that's worked.

**Warren:** Would anything like that have ever been possible during your administration?

**Huntley:** Oh, yeah, sure, but we hadn't gotten to the point where we could afford to do that. I think it was the right thing to do. I really do. It seems to be working.

**Warren:** It sure seems to be. Those places look like show houses now.

**Huntley:** They do. They do.

**Warren:** And, of course, the other thing that was talked about a lot during your administration was coeducation.

**Huntley:** Yeah, it certainly was. I guess we had two formal studies of it and more than two semiformal ones, deciding both of them to remain, for the time being, at least all-male. The major reasons I think we decided to stay all-male, I've already touched on, were financial, plus the desire to retain those four features I referred to, one of which, you remember, is size.

The most difficult feature of coeducation, I thought, was going to be retaining the small size of the school, which would require both fortitude and money. I'm glad to say they've seemed to me to be able to do that so far. The school is larger, sixteen hundred as distinguished from perhaps thirteen hundred, but I think it's still within the scale that allows the teachers that I described in my earlier description of the four features of Washington and Lee that I think are distinctive, none of which, you remember, was gender. Those same four features could be found in some all-female schools, incidentally. But I think those four features are vital, and if any one of them has to be sacrificed, it will make a substantial difference. Washington and Lee would lose the characteristics that make it distinctive.

So if coeducation was going to occur in a context that compromised one of those four, then it would have been a mistake, but I think eventually we reached the point where that wasn't true, and clearly the correct move for Dr. Wilson and the faculty to have taken when they did take it, and it seems to me to have been done very, very well. The women students whom I've talked to, and graduates, seem to me to be as caught up in the mystique of the place as everybody else.

**Warren:** They fit right in, don't they? It's remarkable. It's like they found another corner of the cloth and just kept cutting.

**Huntley:** One feature of coeducation today as distinguished from what might be true, let's say, thirty years ago, is that women now more nearly tend to take a wide array of courses in a large curriculum than they would've done in 1930 or even 1950.

One of the features of the school that I described to you is a student body that populates a large curriculum, a small student body that populates a large curriculum. Some earlier enrollment patterns in the forties and so on would've implied that women didn't do that as clearly as men. They do now, the reason being that they have opportunities for uses of education that are greater than they were in those days. So that the need to populate the curriculum can occur with a mixed student body easier than it could've and still retain its small size.

When you can't populate the large curriculum, the temptation, there is only one of three things you can do: you can cut the curriculum; you can subsidize the curriculum—that is to say, force students into it, which is never going to work for very long—or you enlarge the student body. Those are the only three things you can do, and all three of them have serious disadvantages, financial disadvantages and, more important, community disadvantages. But I think the school has reached a point financially, and society has reached a point culturally, where it looks to me like it works very well.

**Warren:** Would you have liked to have been part of the coeducation change?

**Huntley:** Yeah, I would've liked to have been. But I'd been president long enough. Fifteen years was long enough. Longer than I had thought I would be president. I always maintained when I took the job that I would stay only long enough to achieve an identifiable set of objectives and then get out. I've seen presidents remain in the position too long, and I was determined not to be one of them if I could help it, and it took fifteen years. I had hoped to do it in ten or twelve. I took fifteen years to get to a point where I thought it was a stopping point. You've got to find a stopping point. You can't walk off in midstream. It took fifteen years to get to what I perceived to be a stopping point. Most of the things I had thought had to be done when I became president had either been done or abandoned. In most cases they had been done, and it was a good place for me to stop.

**Warren:** I don't want you to retire quite yet. I want to pursue the coeducation just a little more.

**Huntley:** Sure.

**Warren:** There was that major study done.

**Huntley:** There were two studies done.

**Warren:** Why do you think it didn't happen at those times?

**Huntley:** I think for the reasons I've given you. I think I gave you the reasons.

**Warren:** Do you think there was just too much resistance from the board?

**Huntley:** No. I didn't recommend it. Don't get the idea that I was striving to get the school to go coeducation and the board wouldn't let me. That's not true.

**Warren:** That's what I want to clarify.

**Huntley:** Well, I can clarify that for you right now. I didn't recommend it.

**Warren:** Okay. It wasn't the right time.



**Huntley:** I didn't recommend it. The faculty well knew that. They haven't told you otherwise, have they?

**Warren:** No. No, no, no. I just want to hear it from you. I just want to make sure that question is asked in that way.

I'm still not going to let you retire yet. I want to talk about, as an entity, the grand capital campaign that you oversaw. That has to be a crowning achievement.

**Huntley:** Well, I don't know if it's a crowning achievement. It was just a chore that had to be done. We had good people to do it, to help do it, and a generous constituency, which, once informed of the level of need, over a long time period—you can't inform people overnight about such things—once convinced that the need existed, started stepping forward to meet it. It takes a long time for those things to happen. You can't wave a wand and make them happen overnight, but you can start the momentum going and develop a habit, develop the conviction. The basic conviction about the importance of the school was already there. What was lacking was any understanding by the alumni the school needed them. That's what they didn't know. You have to go tell them.

**Warren:** How do you go about doing that?

**Huntley:** You just go tell them.

**Warren:** Go to the chapters?

**Huntley:** Go tell them. Time and time and time again, go tell them.

**Warren:** And are you going to the chapters, the same groups, are you going to individuals?

**Huntley:** Both. You're going to both, chapters and groups, and you're sending faculty. Lots and lots of the faculty went out, frequently at my request or Bill Washburn's request or Farris Hotchkiss' request, to see alumni, and we developed increasing programs to get them back on campus.

**Warren:** What kind of programs?

**Huntley:** Well, we made bigger deals out of the reunions than we used to, and then we began, of course, the Alumni College events during those years. They were much smaller then, but that's when they began. We would find ways to get them back for any occasion we could, and they responded—again, slowly at first. It takes time to develop these things. But we went out on the road a lot.

**Warren:** Did you have a role model in doing this, or was this the Washington and Lee way of

doing things?

**Huntley:** No, I didn't have any role models. It was just a job to be done. It was easy to see what needed to be done.

**Warren:** You didn't study how Harvard had done it, or Princeton?

**Huntley:** No, I still don't know how they did it.

**Warren:** This was the Washington and Lee way of doing things?

**Huntley:** No, I didn't study any role model.

**Warren:** Because it seems very unique. It has a feel of being a singular way of doing things.

**Huntley:** I just don't know the answer to that. There just didn't seem to be any other way to do it but to take it on, head on. Just like, for example, we were talking earlier about Roy Steinheimer in the law school and the students, you just take it on head on. If you need students, you go find them. You can't sit back and wait for these things to cure themselves.

The alumni responded in time to the needs they began to see existed. And because they shared the conviction that the school required, the school had these characteristics I've described to you, used to tell them that, too, they agreed with that and they wanted to see it perpetuated and they treasured their own experience and wanted others to have that experience. Eventually, enough of them came forward to make it possible, and the momentum is good. It looks to me like the momentum is good on that score. They do come forward.

One of the things that occurs to me for a person who is president of Washington and Lee now, I think we have a magnificent president in John Elrod. I think the board showed great wisdom and courage. I say courage for the following reason. The school is so strong now, by the time the president to succeed John Wilson was being sought, the school was so strong because of the things that had happened before and because of the strength that Wilson brought to the school, that they had open field on who could be president. I don't know that, I wasn't part of the committee, but I know the world well enough to know they could have gone outside Lexington and hired any one of dozens of people.

An easy course for a board to take, it occurs to me, in a situation like that, and in some ways one that's good for the board's ego, is to go out and try to find some prestigious name from elsewhere just to demonstrate the visibility and the strength of the school. That must have been a temptation. I don't know that it was a temptation, but it must've been. But I think their wisdom in staying home and choosing Elrod was great.

But it occurs to me that a person becoming president of Washington and Lee now, as John had just become, has a whole different set of issues from those that faced me or, indeed, to some degree that faced John Wilson. Those that faced me, to a large extent necessity dictated my agenda, and my job was to turn necessity into virtue, and that's a lot easier. When your range of choice is limited by circumstance, it's sometimes easier to make the choice. The present generation of those running Washington and Lee had a far wider array of choices than I had, than my predecessors had, and probably than John Wilson had in all the terms we can think of—in terms of the size of the school, the curriculum of the school, the objectives of the school, the vision of the school, and so on. They have a wider array of choices and, hence, a much more difficult job than the one that faced me.

**Warren:** An interesting point.

**Huntley:** Really much more difficult, in my opinion.

**Warren:** That's an interesting point.

Well, I have worked my way down my list, and I've taken up a lot of your morning.

**Huntley:** That's all right.

**Warren:** Is there anything more you would like to say?

**Huntley:** No, I don't think so.

**Warren:** Was retiring difficult?

**Huntley:** Well, yeah, sure. Sure, it was, but it was the right thing for me to do. I thought so then and I think so now. I was still a young man, I thought, when I retired, but your level of enthusiasm for a job of that kind is hard to sustain for an indefinite time period, and needs to be there every day if you're going to do it right. It's an unusual job. Not the hardest job in the world, I don't think. It's not as hard as a lot of jobs I can think of. It's certainly not an unpleasant job. You certainly work with the finest and best-intentioned people. But it required that you maintain a sense of mission and enthusiasm daily, with lots of constituencies. And that's just not something you can do forever. When you've become aware of the fact that you're not doing that, then you'd better quit before anybody else becomes aware of it. And that's what I tried to do.

John Wilson will put that much more eloquently than I did. I bet you he would echo a similar thought, because he was president at the time, twelve years, clearly a very popular man, at the height, the ascendancy, of his popularity. So why did he quit? I'm not asking you to

answer that; I'm asking rhetorically. My guess would be for something like the same reason that I just stated, although I'd say more eloquently put than I did. Elrod will reach that stage, too, but not, I hope, for a very long time.

**Warren:** He seems pretty happy with himself.

**Huntley:** Well, he is, but you see, you can see the enthusiasm he brings to the mission, and that's what you've got to have. If you can, as president, find it possible to step out at the very moment when someone like Elrod, or in my case, like Wilson, can succeed to a happy situation, if you can leave a happy situation for a successor who can bring a new level of enthusiasm to the job, then you've done the ideal thing. I feel like I did that, and I think Wilson did, too.

**Warren:** I think Washington and Lee is very fortunate in its presidents.

**Huntley:** They're lucky. Lucky to get them when they got them. It's possible that I was the right person to do the job at the time I became president. Certainly Wilson was at the time he became president. I think Elrod is. It's also possible that none of the three of us would've been very good if switched around into other slots in that three-decade period. It's entirely possible that any one of the three of us would've either failed or been less successful if we'd switched roles, which is back to my guardian angel theory, that Washington and Lee's always had a guardian angel that bails it out whenever it gets in trouble.

**Warren:** Thank you so much.

**Huntley:** You're welcome. You're welcome.

**Warren:** This has been an honor and a privilege.

[End of interview]