

SALLY WIAN

April 9, 1996

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Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with Sally Wiant, in the Lewis Law School at Washington and Lee University. Today is April 9, 1996.

I think we should start with a basic question. Why did you come to Washington and Lee in the first place? What drew you here?

Wiant: I was drawn here because I was invited and pursued to interview for the position of—I don't even recall what it's title—I guess assistant librarian. The university had decided to improve the law school. As I understand, the American Bar Association had had a relatively recent accreditation reinspection and found the university lacking in many regards; among them, that the building was inadequate, the collection was below the minimum standards, there was not much of a library staff, there were no women in the student body, and the university set about to improve the law school. I believe this inspection may have taken place in the late sixties.

The university hired Roy Steinheimer, who had been associated with the University of Michigan and was a leading scholar in the UCC. He had come to be dean. It was he who built the faculty, who, with Bob Huntley, built this building, and built the library. Those plans were just in their early stages when I was recruited to come to the university .

I came for an interview. I had read about the university , but the impact of no women really did not hit until I was on campus for the interview. Nonetheless, the then librarian, Peyton Neal, and Roy Steinheimer talked me into taking the position as

assistant librarian. Part of the negotiation included law school. The deal was that I would go to law school for six years. It would be good for me, it would be good for the school. Because we had no evening classes nor summer school, it was going to take me six years, going part time, working as a full-time assistant librarian, working on building the library collection and working on the library aspects of building Lewis Hall.

Warren: Help me with years. What year did you arrive?

Wiant: I arrived in August of 1972.

Warren: Were you one of the first women to arrive at the law school, or were you the first?

Wiant: Well, as far as students, I had several other classmates.

Warren: But you were the first year, all of you?

Wiant: All of us were in the first year. Most of my other classmates had some association with Washington and Lee, a father, a brother, a grandfather, etc., who had come to this university, and they knew of the university and its reputation and were drawn, and were fully aware that they would be among the women in the first class of students that had women. This was nothing I set out to do; this is just something that happened to me fortuitously.

Warren: Tell me about those classmates and that they did have connections. Was there a feeling among them of being pioneers, among all of you, of being pioneers?

Wiant: I would say, yes, there was. Anytime that there is a change so significant as that to a university with the history and the traditions that this one held dear, you would have to be adventuresome to agree to be part of that first class. Although I think there were many trials for us, our classmates, in particular, were more like older brothers who looked after us very carefully. There were clearly students in the upper classes who did not welcome our joining the university, but I would venture to say that the majority of my classmates were very protective of us, and although we encountered

some difficulties, I think the next couple of classes of women had far more trouble being assimilated into the university than we did. I guess, in part, we were so new that no one quite knew how to think or respond to us. Once the newness wore off, things were not always pleasant for the women in the law school.

Warren: What do you mean? What happened?

Wiant: Well, there was certainly the impression among the women that there was a quota of women, and when the law school moved into Lewis Hall, the women were still so few in numbers that it was very difficult to have collegial relations. By that time the newness had worn off and there was very little of the normal social exchange between male and female students. Sometimes very unkind remarks were made.

It was very difficult to deal with certain aspects of the university, particularly the gym. Nothing had been done on campus that would acknowledge that there were now women on campus. The campus was still dark, the security was still a problem. In the old law school, even rest room facilities had not been thought through. The campus health facilities had made no plans for women's health issues. So all of those kinds of things led to a rather chilly environment that didn't change for a number of years.

Warren: Would you be willing to share, or do you remember, specific unkind remarks?

Wiant: One classmate in particular had gone to Wellesley and was a strident feminist and was constantly the butt of jokes, but I cannot specifically recall any other than she was someone that students loved to taunt.

The problems with the gym were very real. The university administration and, more particularly, the athletic administration told us that we could not swim in the large pool because that was used both for classes and for competitive swimming. That was clearly understandable. We were also precluded from swimming in the small gym, which at the time was available to anyone who would swim with a buddy.

Traditionally it had been the practice that swimmers wore no suits. That didn't seem, to me particularly, or some of my classmates, to be a problem. We had decided that were

we permitted to swim, that we would simply wear suits and if the males chose not to wear suits, that was fine. The University argued that there was no access to the pool other than through the men's locker room. Of course, that's been changed simply by adding a door. That was just one more front that was put to dissuade us from using the athletic facilities.

Then we were told that we might embarrass undergraduate men if we were to be swimming at the same time they were swimming. It seemed to me, as somebody who was paying an equal amount of tuition and that was part of the services, that these facilities ought to be made available to us as well. It took the better part of two years before we were allowed access to the swimming pools.

Warren: Amazing. I remember hearing a story about Ann Unverzat.

Wiant: Ann Unverzat, I believe, was the first woman faculty hired by the law school. She came to us from practice in Wisconsin. I believe her law degree is from Stanford. Especially bright, capable woman who had an unusual zest for life. She was an extraordinary colleague, as both my first woman law faculty member and a good friend. She brought to us this enthusiasm for the law and an awareness of the role that women could play in the law, and was quite a role model.

She did stand Lexington on its ear when she became involved with one of her students whom she ultimately married, and moved to Cleveland, where I believe he has been in practice with the same firm since they left the university, and she made the decision to become a mother and be able to stay home and rear her children.

Warren: Lucky children.

Wiant: Lucky children.

Warren: Wasn't there a story related to her in the gym, some breakthroughs that she made in the gym?

Wiant: I don't recall any stories that related to her. Among the most vocal in the battle with the gym was a woman who was in the class following me, whose name is Toni

(now) Datos [phonetic]. She was particularly vehement in her battle with the gym, to be able to swim there. But I don't recall any stories about Ann in the gym.

Warren: Shall I tell you?

Wiant: Yes, yes.

Warren: What Barbara Vandegrift told me, that Ann was frustrated because at that time they did your laundry for you, they washed your gym clothes.

Wiant: Yes.

Warren: And Ann was frustrated because they wouldn't wash her gym clothes, and the excuse they finally came up with was that they were afraid that the hooks on her bra would get tangled up in the mesh bags and ruin everything, tear everything apart. You know how your bras ruin everything in the laundry all the time.

Wiant: Yes, yes.

Warren: And when she finally understood what the issue was, she came up and she said, "I promise I will hook my bra before I put it in the bag." And they lost their argument, and that was the end of that, and they did her laundry from then on.

Wiant: They used to do mine, but their machines have "scalding hot" or "off," and I typically chose just to take my own laundry after that.

Warren: Easier that way.

Wiant: But speaking of laundry – and I don't know whether the laundry service is still offered, but the University Cleaners, who has been around and servicing students with their laundry and dry cleaning needs for I don't know how many years, when I first came, was offering a laundry service, and every year I would get this letter addressed to me, since I was an adult and on my own capacity, so the letter was not going to my parents, addressed to me, with clearly a feminine name, where the letter would then go on to say, "Your son," and then offer the services for sheet and towel services so that "your son" would not have to worry about those aspects of his existence in the university .

Invariably, the Alumni Office would write to "Mr. Sarah K. Wiant." Once word processing was here, at least memory typewriters, it seemed to me that the university could have, at the very least, achieved a proper style of address now that it had women members of the alumni group.

Warren: How long did that take to rectify that? Years, I take it.

Wiant: Years. Absolutely years.

Warren: That's an interesting story. When you first arrived, you were still in Tucker Hall.

Wiant: Still in Tucker Hall.

Warren: Take me through Tucker Hall. What was Tucker Hall like?

Wiant: It was so crowded that we all virtually lived on top of each other. There were books everywhere. Even adding a piece of technology, which by then was a required piece of technology, a photocopier, was a major event.

The building had one of the first central air-conditioning systems that had ever been designed for buildings in the South, as I understand. When the building was first opened, the system was turned on and the system nearly shook the building off its foundation and was turned off. The entire core of this building was comprised of this massive air-conditioning system which, in the total years of the building, never worked. The law school so desperately needed space that they tried to figure out how to remove that system and recapture some of the space. This was prior to the decision that they actually were going to build a new building. It was finally that fact that forced them to build the building.

As faculty were added and as the classes were expanded in Tucker, I believe my class was seventy-six in number, so the total student body was approximately three times that. There simply wasn't space, and as we added books, we moved into the house that had been [James G.] Leyburn's house, did some terrible damage in attaching bookshelves to the wall of that lovely old house, dividing the rooms with just the most

minimalistic of dividers. The Law Review was essentially in the kitchen that had been the slave kitchen, and every space was used.

Essentially there were classrooms on the third floor, and the large classroom was the Old South Room, which by the end of the day, on a hot day, it had had all the air breathed. The sound of the lawn mowers on the front campus was constant, and the faculty member, whoever it was, had to speak above the lawn mowers into this very warm room, without air-conditioning, and these giant black wasps. This was the room in which Roy Steinheimer taught and for all his years in Tucker taught the Uniform Commercial Code. He normally taught that at eight o'clock in the morning.

Tucker was frequently by dogs, many of whom would go to class, knowing exactly when class began and almost to the minute when class ought to be over. These dogs would go over and sit by the door, announcing the end of class. They were more regular than the bells on the chapel.

During those early days, it was the period of time in the country where "Laugh In" had captured the attention of college campuses, and throwing pies in the face was something that was not at all uncommon. On one occasion – and it was a class taught by Charles Laughlin, who had taught here for thirty-five years, had taught labor law and had taught evidence, and his Football Theory of the Burden of Presumptions and Persuasions was just legendary, and whether or not he was teaching that specific topic the day a student, who was president of the Student Bar Association, was called to the door, out of class, and a pie was hurled in his student's face, and the meringue or whipped cream, or whatever it was, not only got all over the student and all over the books that were shelved in the middle of the hall, and this beloved professor stood there with absolute amazement on his face. Why anyone would want to be called out of his class, two, why anyone would want to be called out of his class to be struck in the face with a pie, and he was so discombobulated that he could not finish the rest of the class.

There are wonderful tales of Charles Laughlin. As I say, he taught here for thirty-five years, and even up 'til his death, although he had retired from active teaching, he still was interested in the law and was always willing to sit down and discuss some new point of law or to help someone think through a difficult issue. He probably, of all of us who were then ready to move into the law school, had more recollections about Tucker Hall, and in leaving Tucker Hall, we did a candlelight vigil at which Charles Laughlin spoke and reminisced about what it was like to be in Tucker Hall. It was an extraordinary moment as we all filed out with our candles.

He, unlike Mrs. McDowell, who said that she would never step within the walls of Lewis Hall, Charles willingly moved over to Lewis Hall and even taught in Lewis Hall, and on the occasion of his last day of teaching, the students hosted a champagne party at the end of class and toasted him in the classroom for all his years of service to the university .

Warren: Oh, what a lovely story.

Wiant: I presume there are some good tales in the alumni magazine of those two events.

Warren: Mrs. McDowell said she would never come over here?

Wiant: She did, and I believe she was true to her word, that the law school she knew was Tucker Hall, that's where she had served, that's where her husband had taught, and that's where she had been secretary to many deans, and, in fact, as stories go, she admitted many students in the course of her many years of service.

Warren: Tell me about her.

Wiant: An extraordinary woman, just full of life, full of tales, full of mischief, and with extraordinary affection for generations of students who went to law school in Tucker. She was secretary, as I say. On occasion, she was dean of admissions. She was mother, she was confider, she was the taskmaster. She sort of did it all.

Warren: When you arrived on the scene, were you stepping on her territory at all?

Wiant: I wasn't. At least I never had the sense that I was stepping on her territory. I mean, not only had I no desire to step on her territory, but she was bigger than life. There was no possible way I could. She was someone who was always teasing me and keeping up the spirits when the tasks seemed daunting, to try to do all of those things and still go to school and still do it in the capacity. She was always there with a kind word or a funny story, racing back and forth across the hall.

She was always there ready to watch – among the longstanding traditions was the fact that students would while away the hours attempting to flip pennies into the glass globe of the chandelier which hung in the main hall of the law school. And riding herd on the dogs as they came and went, and anyone else who came and went, that she would keep up with.

Warren: So one of the things that strikes me most about Tucker is that it's "over there" and Lewis Law School is "over here." Tell me about that dynamic, about what it was like to have the law school be on the main campus as opposed to being more separated.

Wiant: It meant the law school felt like it was more a part of the university, not just in that we were there in the law school, we could see Lee Chapel, we could hear the chimes. Faculty regularly held court by leaning against the white columns and tutoring not only in the classroom, but extending the class, and our relationships with the faculty on the colonnade, but many of the students in the law school were seven-year men. In fact, that was relatively common that someone would progress from the undergraduate school directly to the law school. Although we've not had in recent years, the university had a program that you could do law school in a three-three program, and there were many students who were doing that, too.

So there was more of a sense of being part of the campus by being there. We all took our breaks at the coop, and at the appointed hour, en masse, for our evening break before the coop would close, we'd trek down for our last cup of coffee or Coke or thick milk shake, trekking back, visiting along the way, doing all the things that

undergraduate students do as being part of the campus. It is not only a geographic gulf, but it is a political gulf that divides the law school, and for those of us who actually know what it was like to be on the front campus, we continue to make a concerted effort to go over, to spend time with our colleagues on that side, to understand better the problems that are facing the entire university , rather than the problems that are unique to the law school.

Some newer members of faculty, I think, would prefer that the divide be even more strongly delineated, that our interests are different than the undergraduates', and it plays out in a lot of ways, not the least of which are faculty salaries, not the least of which are the fact that for us to compete on a national scale with our peer group, which in some cases is the same peer group that the undergraduate campus competes with, but it does bring some other pressures. And the emphasis on faculty writing, I think, is probably stronger on this side of the campus and came much earlier than the emphasis for scholarship on the front campus, and that plays out in different ways: more secretarial support, computers arrived in the law school earlier than they did in other academic buildings. So I think there are those who think that more separation is better for us, that as we have fewer and fewer seven-year-people that are alums, are probably going to be more willing to support the law school than the university as a whole when it comes down to the competition for dollars.

Warren: That's interesting. Yes, that makes sense. Getting to that decision to build this building over here, was this the only location possible? I guess there truly would not have been a site over there that would have been possible. Was there any sadness involved with the decision to come over here?

Wiant: The decision to build the building on this location was made before I joined the university , or if it was not, I was not part of it. There was clearly sadness about leaving the front campus. Our first year in the building, not only did we have the sadness that comes with a separation from the rest of the campus, but we had not grown to our full

capacity, so that we were few in numbers, rattling around in this magnificent palace. Before, we had been thrown together regularly for conversations. Now the faculty were on the top floor and the students on the bottom floor, and no one was talking to each other.

We had a window of time where the growing pains were significant and where the Student Bar Association and the dean's office tried to develop ways where we could recreate that sense of community that had been such a part of Tucker. It began in small ways—coffee and doughnuts on the main floor outside the moot courtroom, because that was neutral space, to try to bring us together.

Warren: Did that work?

Wiant: It began to work. The Student Bar Association was always a very important part in the aspects of social existence of rural America, and the Student Bar Association began to hold Friday afternoon keg parties on the front terrace, in order to provide yet another opportunity where faculty and students would come together, and then instituted the softball league, where the students play each other all spring, and the winner of the playoffs then plays the faculty. That tradition to this day continues, with the dean's obligation generally to serve as umpire and to make sure that the calls go in such a way that the faculty will not be resoundingly defeated.

Warren: I was about to say, you didn't mention that the faculty was practicing all spring.

Wiant: Oh, no. The faculty may practice, and for a while there were so few of us that we were allowed to bring in ringers, but now we have enough of a complement that we can field a team.

Warren: That sounds like a great tradition. You're speaking of the keg parties. One of the things, when I first moved here, the law school had just opened, and everyone was talking about "the party" associated with the opening of this building.

Wiant: Oh, the party!

Warren: I notice we have an artifact. I presume that's *the* artifact itself?

Wiant: It is *the* artifact.

Warren: Tell the story.

Wiant: When the board of trustees announced that it was going to build this building, Justice [Alexander Marrs] Harman, who was a justice on the Virginia Supreme Court, was traveling. I'm not sure whether he was in England or Scotland. But he decided that he would recreate the scene that had been created by Jockey John Robinson when the first law school was built in the location where Tucker now sits, and Jockey John Robinson had had a barrel of whiskey, which was placed on the front lawn of the university, and which was shared with all members of the university community and the townspeople. Now, the part of the story that wasn't recreated, thankfully, is that the townspeople and the university people got so unwieldy that an axe was taken to the barrel and the barrel was destroyed. That part was not recreated in the dedication in 1976.

Warren: So we do have an artifact.

Wiant: Yes, we do have an artifact. We do have the barrel. Evidently importation restrictions would not allow the barrel to be shipped full, so that all of the Scotch – and this is malt Scotch, single malt Scotch – all of the Scotch had to be bottled, shipped over, the barrel shipped over, and all the bottles then dumped into the barrel. Well, that in itself was a problem. Then we had to figure out what we were going to serve this Scotch in. Well, the original tradition that was served in little tin cups, and it was among my job to buy all the little tin cups that could be procured, and that number was somewhere in the range of above three thousand. Suppliers like L.L. Bean and Eddie Bauer and camping stores had little tin cups, and we bought them all. All that were to be had, we bought.

Then the architects designed a label which had the outline of the – there's one over on the shelf – the outline of Lewis Hall, and the library staff, among all of the

envelope-stuffing, would then take breaks from envelope-stuffing of all the dedication brochures and all these invitations, to affix the labels to the tin cans so that we would have plenty of appropriate cups in which to sip this Scotch and toast the dedication of Lewis Hall, and we did do that with great fanfare. I don't recall how many people actually showed up for the dedication, but it was an extraordinary crowd and it was a wonderful time. The remaining Scotch was rebottled.

Warren: There was remaining Scotch at Washington and Lee? They didn't finish it off?
[laughter]

Wiant: They didn't finish it off. Well, some of this may have been bottled prior to, and I believe that Jim Whitehead still has somewhere in his possession a full bottle of the Scotch with the label. Two years ago, an alum came to call, bringing me two treasured rare books and a bottle of the Scotch with about an inch of the Scotch remaining, which is up there on that shelf. So that is part of the Lewis Hall Scotch, and there may be a small amount left, but as I say, I believe Jim Whitehead still has it. I think it should be in my care and keeping, but whether or not I ever get that bottle remains to be seen.

The barrel was then put into the tunnels of Lewis Hall, where it was lost for quite some time, and last year – yes, last year, 1995 – I was asked if I could find the barrel anyplace in the university, and I did find it, and all the pieces were there. Of course, it had completely collapsed. I was worrying about where I would find – I've forgotten the name of the individual who creates barrels, the word.

Warren: Yes, there is a word.

Wiant: There is a word and it's not coming to me at this moment. I finally decided that I could ship the pieces, lacking any other thing, I could ship the pieces to Williamsburg and have them repair the barrel.

Warren: Great idea.

Wiant: In the meantime, before I did that, I thought I would ask Clyde if there was any possibility that he thought he could put the barrel, given that we didn't really know

how it went together, but I thought I probably had all the pieces right there, did he think he could put the barrel back together so I could put it on display, and I should have known that that was the place to start, because the answer was of course he could.

Warren: Who's Clyde?

Wiant: Clyde works, and has worked, for buildings and grounds for I don't know how many years. He can build anything, design anything, refinish anything, and he just did a marvelous job of putting the barrel back together, so it is now on display in the Rare Book Room of the law library.

Warren: When I arrived here, those little tin cups were everywhere. That was one of the things that just seemed to be everywhere in this town. Every country home I went to, there was piles of them everywhere, so it was legendary already.

Wiant: It was.

Warren: And it hasn't been that long since it happened.

Wiant: And now they have disappeared, and mine had disappeared, too, although again it was through the generosity of this individual who brought me the Scotch, who also brought me – actually, mine had disappeared because I gave my personal cup to the Law School Archives, because we had not been able to save a cup.

Warren: I think we should get a photograph of that for possible inclusion in the book.

Wiant: That would be fine.

Warren: Are there any photographs of the event? Sally would have been covering it, wouldn't she?

Wiant: I believe Sally would have been covering it, and I feel absolutely certainly that there are photographs. I feel absolutely certain that the alumni magazine had an article on that.

Warren: It would be nice to have people actually holding the cups.

Wiant: Holding the cups, yes, with the Lewises and with Justice Powell.

Warren: Speaking of the Lewises and speaking of Justice Powell, tell me about Sydney and Frances.

Wiant: We could not be more fortunate in our benefactors, not only through their extraordinary generosity in giving us money to build a building, but more than that was the freedom and the encouragement to build the best possible building that we could build to meet the program that we would like to have here at the law school. Essentially those were their instructions, and while they were very pleased and would offer their comment if asked and their advice and counsel if we wished, they didn't tell us how to do anything. They just said, "Here it is." The only request that I am aware of that they made was that they be allowed to select the portrait artist, Jack Beall, and that the portrait hang in a prominent place. And other than that, they said, "Here. We want you to do what you think needs to be done, and we don't want to dictate to you how that ought to be done."

Then Frances, through her own generosity, gave us additional money that became the endowment for the Frances Lewis Law Center, which is a wing of offices that essentially has become the intellectual heart of the law school. It is that program that funds our individual scholarship and our research assistants and that encourages writing of articles and books and provides us the funding and the opportunity to think about law reform in its broadest sense. So that they truly have been a guiding light for the law school, but not a directing light. They have been there through their support and encouragement. It's been wonderful.

Warren: Did he attend the law school? Was he a seven-year man?

Wiant: No.

Warren: He was just an undergrad, right?

Wiant: Then he went on to Harvard and got an MBA. He may have gone for a semester. But when he came to speak at graduation – and we've long had a tradition in effect. I secretly yearn for the return of that tradition, in spite of some wonderful

speakers, and the tradition was that we didn't have graduation speakers, that we had ample opportunity throughout the academic year to invite speakers, that graduation was an occasion to focus the attention on our graduates and that the president usually made remarks and the dean made remarks.

But about ten years ago, we instituted a tradition of having law school graduation speakers, and some have been absolutely extraordinary, and among the best was Sydney Lewis, who said to us something like, "Graduation speakers are supposed to congratulate the graduates on their accomplishments, so congratulations. Graduation speakers are supposed to also..." and he had this little litany of things that graduation speakers were supposed to do, and then he got to the main part of the speech, and it went, "Graduation speakers are supposed to leave the graduates with a few words of wisdom, so here they are. Now go get an MBA, a degree that you can do something with." (laughter) Well, it was the right amount of encouragement, congratulations, and levity and brevity. It was an extraordinary speech. After you sit through speech after speech, it is true, you very rarely remember what any speaker has to say, and he was among the many who had something to say that was memorable and was just a delight.

Warren: That's great.

Wiant: They don't come to visit us nearly as often as we would like, but regularly we try, through the director of the Law Center and the dean, to visit them.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: You were going to tell me something about Frances and the art.

Wiant: It's not so much the art, it's the Lewis Powell Conference Room, which is essentially the dean's conference room. Until just a couple of years ago, this room had chartreuse velvet chairs. Clearly someone had failed to look at the color of the fabric in that room, let alone under the particular kind of lighting. These were like vibrant frog

chairs, and everything else, the architects had designed custom pieces of furniture for the library, the circulation desks, some of the stacks, the end panels, pieces of furniture, so everywhere in the building you'd see oak, and the classrooms. The architects worked to pick the colors of wood that would blend with bricks that were custom baked to be the size of an antique brick. The mortar has a special formula so it would look like old mortar instead of new. The builders had bought bricks for the building that were unacceptable; that's why Lexington has brick sidewalks. And we had to have the bricks all baked for the law school.

So here this extraordinary attention to detail so that the bricks would be the color and the size and more closely parallel the front campus, and that we have columns over here, albeit they're giant modern square columns, to parallel again the columns and the red brick, all this very careful attention to make this building be a twentieth century building, but still keep some of our tradition. And we had someone on the board of trustees who had a furniture company, and the top floor has some lovely pieces of furniture, I do believe, but they're not quite as complementary when you put a lovely piece of walnut in a wood in a room that's paneled with English white oak.

How and who picked these chairs, I will not know. Frances Lewis looked at them and said, "Perhaps they will wear out very quickly." That is the only comment she made about anything. (laughter) And, unfortunately, they have not worn out.

Warren: Probably nobody wants to sit in them. (laughter)

Wiant: They have worn like steel. They have just within the last couple of years, when we finally made the building a smoke-free building but for a smoking lounge, the chartreuse chairs moved to the smoking lounge and the dean finally got new chairs for his conference room.

Warren: Wait a minute. I don't know this brick sidewalk connection. Tell me this story.

Wiant: It's my understanding that the builder had purchased all these bricks to build the law school, however many, and I know some place in Frank Parsons' files there is a set of statistics – and I may even have it in my files – about how many bricks went into this building. But as I understand – and you may have to confirm that – I had always understood that those bricks were found to not be acceptable, and the builder – this was the Bicentennial. Lexington finally had some money for a facelift. We had never had money to tear down buildings, so we now had money for facelifts, and historic easements were put into place. The wires were put below street, and as they were doing that and leveling the streets, it became apparent that it was time for new sidewalks, and they decided to use some of these bricks, maybe all of those bricks, and the law school ordered custom-baked bricks to be the size of an antique brick. They were custom made for us in this color.

Warren: These bricks that are now on the Lexington sidewalks, were they donated?

Wiant: No, I think the local community, the shop owners, purchased enough bricks for in front of their place, so everybody literally came out ahead for what could have been a disaster. I think that's true of the bricks. I do know that these were custom baked for us, and I do know that the formula, because I have the mortar formula. When I had to cut a hole in the wall of the courtroom to install cameras, I went through five bricklayers before I found a cosmetic bricklayer who could actually, with the formula, match the mortar and put those bricks back in so that there would be room enough for this camera to pan. It's very hard to match them. It's very hard, as beautiful as this is, when anything wears out or you need to add something, to go back to this company. These chairs are incredible, just incredible.

When we had an oversized class, when the reputation of the law school was just beginning to soar, we had a very large class, and the students all received letters offering them a spot in the next class, but, of course, then it became very prestigious to come here, so they all came. We then had to decide that every student would have a

desk and an office space or a carrel, but not both. So, for instance, Law Review, who historically had a desk in the Law Review and a carrel, now only got desk in the Law Review. We still needed carrels.

Dean told me to find out, to get – I had to have ten more carrels. I went back to the company who had custom-designed these carrels for us. We had had several companies build mock-ups, and the students got to rate them, while we were in Tucker, all these decisions about how you want to live within the building. A company, Buckstaff, in Wisconsin, got the contract to build the carrels, and designed the final carrels that had the best of each one of the mock-ups. So when I went back to try to get more carrels, when I found out how much they were going to cost, which was, without wiring and without chairs, now over nine thousand dollars a carrel, and they even share a wall in between, I went to the dean and said, "We're only going to have these students for three years. I have a plan. You'll buy each one of them a compact car, a computer, and a modem, and they can just drive around for their law school." Needless to say, we didn't buy ten more from them.

Once again I got building and grounds to come in and build the closest replica that they could build, and squeezed them in. Now I've dismantled some of them, that we're now down to the size that we've been.

Warren: You've mentioned a couple of times Lewis Powell. I think we ought to spend a little time talking about Lewis Powell.

Wiant: What an extraordinary man. When one says "southern gentleman" and one conjures up all the good things that go with saying someone is truly a southern gentleman, he is the personification of that. What extraordinary good fortune I have had to know him personally, not just as an alum, but to work with him in a different way. A fine legal mind, to be sure. But it's his sense of fairness and his sense of the responsibility that comes with some of the rights that we have been accorded, and to impress upon the members of his firm and all those with whom he's worked, what

obligations come with being allowed to be a member of the legal profession. Then it's just his exceptional good graces. He does have a sense of humor and a sense of warmth and caring that we hold him – probably, I think without any question, he's probably our most esteemed alum, certainly living alum.

Warren: How often does he come here?

Wiant: He has not been here since the Powell dedication. I think his health keeps him either in Richmond or Washington, D.C. I try to visit him in his chambers at least a couple of times a year. In recent times he has suggested that he is not traveling to see his children; they now all travel to see him.

Warren: Tell me about the Powell dedication. How did that come to be and what was the event?

Wiant: The event was one of those that, upon reflection, was most of what you would like it to be and you hope you never have to do it again. When the decision was made that the papers would come here, then we had to do what we said we would do in providing the kind of space and servicing the collection that it would have gotten had it gone to National Archives or to the other collection of papers. The arguments for it being here is that for us it would be one of a kind and it would get such attention the likes of which it would never get as being one among many collections of Supreme Court justice papers.

The down side is that we are remote, and that for a scholar doing research on that period of time, a scholar would have to travel several places, that the collection would not be together for historical purposes. That was philosophically troubling to me, but it was a call that was not necessarily mine to make, and once it was made, it was mine to carry out as best we could.

We had the good fortune of being able to use the same architects, so that the building is hardly distinguishable from the current building. The University did decide it had to scale back its efforts and the archives were filled pretty much the day

we moved into it, so that opportunities to expand are very limited, and that's a bit frustrating.

It was quite some time before, even though we had the building and we had a few of his papers, he had made his entire collection of papers available to his biographer and we could not take any of them until the biography was done. So it was quite some years before we actually got the papers and were able to actually begin serious work on them.

The dedication itself was planned for the first part of April. We set it then because we thought it would be beautiful and it would be warm, and Justice Powell does not want to be cold. In fact, he dislikes cold so much that a design requirement was that we be able to heat his office to ninety degrees, which required an additional heating system, which meant that we had to do the worst design possible, which is put pipes over the archives themselves. Well, once you do that, then I had to have designed yet another system, because not only did we have the problem of fire and fire suppression, but as bad as fire is for papers, water is equally bad, if not worse, so we had to have a water-sensing system designed.

The additional problem for all of this is that having done all of these things, all under the Powell, the formal offices and the archives, not too many weeks before the dedication, the dean came down to look, and we had Powell's office fairly completed, and it was on that side of the building. The dean had just had a conversation with Powell, who expressed how much he was looking forward to sitting in his office and looking out on the football field where his son had played football. With that tidbit of information, I was directed to have all of the furnishings taken out of one office and put in the office on this side. This side was marginally smaller than the other office, and all the valances and the drapes, etc., had to be recut and rehung, all of which was more or less being done, and then ten days before the Powell dedication, the dean comes back, and at his earlier instruction, the scholars' office had not gotten full cosmetic treatment.

He had wanted the offices to be starkly different, and upon looking at them, he decided they were entirely too stark and that inadequate furniture had been ordered for the Powell Suite. I had had the plasterers come in to fill in the holes where the valances had been removed, the office repainted, I'd had to call and say to the architects and the interior people, "The dean wants more furniture and now wants drapes and blinds in the other office." No lamps had been ordered. Nothing. "And I am here to tell you that in ten days (I never looked at the bill) he told me to do it." So I did it.

The interior person came down and said, "You have fifteen minutes to select fabric that goes with all these fabrics in this other office and the fabrics in the front. If you can have this selection made from these by 1:30, you will have your drapes." And someone who has a furniture company sent a furniture saleswoman. She said, "Okay, if you pick some chairs in these fabrics, you can have your chairs." It was extraordinary on the part of some master craftsmen.

At five o'clock the night before Lewis Powell was coming, buildings and grounds was in, and some other people were in, hanging the new set of valances and drapes, whereupon this guy said, "Lady, if you were going to do this, why did you have us come in and fill all those holes and paint?" "I don't want to hear a single word out of you. The story is too long to tell, but those must be up by tomorrow and we're wasting time with you talking." And when the chairs came I had picked from a little tiny piece of fabric, and I thought, "Well, I'm going to be on the job market if when I take this black plastic wrapping off these chairs are not going to work." But they worked.

Warren: So does he use this office?

Wiant: He was here, he used it for dedication, and then he's simply not been well.

With dedication we decided that no less than another grand party would be acceptable, and this was in April, the last month of school, the week when all first-year had a brief due, and the dean decided, and the University decided, that the dedication dinner would be held in the main reading room. We had boarded up and moved all

these books several times because we had no place to put them in storage and we could not do without them during the construction, so they had been returned the last month, the previous month, finally to the place where they would sit in the main reading room, and the books had been, returned to the shelves, because we had to move, for insurance purposes, all the books compacted up so they would not be directly under the construction. We moved them back, we put them things in the main reading room, and because it was the time of the year – every book had to be moved out of the main reading room, but not sent to storage.

On Friday afternoon, every stack had to be dismantled and seating for 350-plus set up with special tables and chairs in the main reading room. Scott Beebe had to build special lighting. I had to find a string quartet to play, and we had a nine-course dinner, with red wine, on brand-new carpeting in the main reading room, only to have to have all the shelves and the books back on the shelves by Monday so that the students could continue with class. It's an event I never choose to do again. It was very – and yet it was splendid.

Warren: I hope you were able to enjoy yourself.

Wiant: Lewis Powell had come here to play baseball and he didn't make the team, and for favors that evening we had Lewis Powell baseball, with his signature on the ball, and a baseball card, but with his court statistics on the back rather than baseball statistics. And he was so touched. All of his children were here, and Chief Justice [William] Rehnquist was here, and all the powers-that-be were here, and a lovely, amazing dinner on the scale of toasting the building itself was recreated for an event not to be forgotten.

Warren: That's a lovely story.

Wiant: And while he was exhausted, you could tell that he had a sense that his university had done well.

Warren: Sounds to me like you did well.

Wiant: I thought I was going to go crazy.

Warren: What year was that? When did that happen?

Wiant: I guess that's about six years ago. I can figure it out. They sort of run together.

Warren: I'm sure.

Wiant: I will figure that out.

Warren: Let's talk about presidents. When you arrived, Bob Huntley was president?

Wiant: Bob Huntley was president.

Warren: He certainly has a strong connection to the law school.

Wiant: Very strong connection.

Warren: Let's talk about Bob Huntley.

Wiant: To talk about Bob Huntley, I have to tell you a story about John Wilson and how my colleagues reacted to John Wilson, who I think is just a wonderful man and an exceptional president, a president that would equal Bob Huntley but for very different reasons.

Bob Huntley is a first-rate lawyer. He acts like a lawyer, he talks like a lawyer, he plays like a lawyer, and he jokes like a lawyer. The law school knew how to relate to Bob Huntley. He had been in the law school and had taught in the law school and, I think, had been dean at least a little short window of time in the law school, and then had gone to the presidency. He and Roy Steinheimer were a pair. They flew around in Roy's plane, Roy having the name of Sky Dean. They visited law schools to see what they wanted to do; they flew to Buckstaff to see what the furnishings were like; they flew to places to look at the technology that should be put in here. Both of them were just penultimate lawyers and they made decisions.

While we had, clearly, a dean of a college who was involved, the real running, I think, of the university – yes, there was a board of trustees, but Bob Huntley has a personality that just could fill a room, and if there was any left, Roy had a personality that could fill the room, and together they were just a formidable pair and were able to

make decisions that were the right decisions, but also helped people come about to the view that it was the right decision.

Bob Huntley managed to keep the university going through the Vietnam years without having the university suffer destruction, was able to bring about a capital campaign for the university that so desperately needed money and needed to restore its building that had not been looked after, and build the law school, and do all of that, and he made commitments that he was going to keep, and I feel absolutely certain that one of those commitments was that the university would not go coed while he was president. That was an assurance in return for money to keep us going. I'm not sure whether he personally believed – in fact, I would be quite surprised if he didn't personally believe that the decision to go coed when we did was the right decision. He just had a commanding personality and, as I say, with the other one.

So when John Wilson assumed the mantle of the presidency, very literary figure, very different background than Huntley, John wrote to the faculty this memo that went on for probably a page and a half. Well, maybe it was a letter that he wrote to the board and shared with the faculty, about what it was like to sit in his office and look out over the state of the university and see the sun setting on Liberty Hall, you know, the peals of laughter and the cheers trickling over from the lacrosse game, etc.

Well, the law faculty just did not know what to make of this. (laughter) We were used to memos that said what they had to say and said it in a paragraph or less; that was it. Here comes this lengthy, very literary letter that goes on about sort of all things that we in the law often hold in abeyance. The law school just puzzled, not reacting very well, and thought, "How will this man ever be able to do for the law school what Bob Huntley had done for the law school?" Although the presidencies were very different, the law school thrived, continue to thrive and continued to become better and better known and be a much stronger law school. It was certainly John

Wilson's commitment to make sure that the jewel in the crown, so to speak, remains the jewel in the crown.

I never personally knew Bob Huntley as well as I knew John Wilson, but most of my time I was in a junior capacity and was a law student, so I didn't go to the same series of events where I would have had the occasion to know Bob Huntley in quite the same way. You need to talk to Uncas [McThenia] about Bob Huntley and talk to Roy about Bob Huntley.

Warren: I certainly intend to do that. I'd like to talk a little bit more about Steinheimer and your appreciation of him and the role he played.

Wiant: I think that with the exception of just alum who just one did not get along with him at all, I would venture to say that for most alums, Steinheimer was almost godlike. This most imposing, impressive man, sort of impressive on every front, he knew what good law schools were supposed to be and he had a faculty here, some of them an older faculty, and then he brought in some then younger ones who had never taught anyplace, so had no idea about how schools were supposed to run. He kept a lot of decisions close to the chest. He made them. He might have asked for advice, but you didn't make the decision; they were his and he made them and then you sort of carried them out.

He had an expression that you invariably got, which was, "My hands are tied," and no matter what it was you wanted, you'd walk into his office and you dare not get on his side of the desk, you just dare not. I mean, there was always this barrier. He'd turn around to the credenza behind him and he'd pull out this drawer. I never knew what was in that drawer. He'd look in the drawer. I often thought it was an accounting sheet about how much money we had left to do whatever, but he'd look in the drawer and he'd turn around and say, "My hands are just tied on this one." It didn't matter what—curricular kinds of things, money kinds of things, changes.

In many ways he was like a very firm father figure, but also very warm and caring. The students loved him, adored him. He individually flew around and recruited them, and he has even to this day an exceptional capability where he just knows names, and it's almost like this giant Rolodex will be in his head. I saw, for some alumni weekend, somebody who had not been back in fifteen years and who was standing behind me in the line, and I turned around and it was somebody I had known well, who had, in fact, been in recent years at that time one of the first law students who had managed to be head of the entire campus. This was a Cornell graduate, a Jewish kid. We didn't have very many, and they had kind of a hard time in Tucker. This was not your Oxford cloth, khaki and blue blazer, although he clearly knew how to wear that if he chose; he chose to wear overalls and a bandanna. Fifteen years gone, several moves.

Standing behind, I say hello to him. Roy's in front of me in the line. Roy turns around, looks at him, you can see shuffling of the names, and it's like, "Well, Mr. Schwartz, how are you? Now, are you still practicing with—" and it means he had followed every one of those moves and knew exactly what kind of law he was practicing and where he was. I never saw him grope for a name, unlike our last dean, who laughs about this, too, Randy Bezanson, who just was not at all good with names. I mean, he would forget the name of his research assistant and just not know students, with sort of all the other deans knowing every one of them individually, by name, what they were doing, where they had done this. When Roy would write a letter of recommendation, that was it. He had all these contacts.

Warren: So when you say he flew around and recruited people, how did that come to be? People would apply and then he would decide, "This is somebody I want"?

Wiant: Or he would go to law fairs and then talk to students who would show up and be interested in. And sometimes at some places there would be lots of schools, fifty, seventy-five schools, and students would just walk around and pick up catalogs and

things, and he'd stop them or they'd stop to talk to him, and by the time they got through talking, they were persuaded this is where they wanted to come, and if they were ones that had applied and he was really going after, he would fly to wherever to go see them.

Warren: That must have been very seductive.

Wiant: He did that with capital campaigning and calling on people and getting money for this building. Yes, yes, and when you meet him, you will find that this man has a magnetism that is just –

Warren: I'm looking forward to it.

Wiant: We teased a lot. He looked like a twin of Nelson Rockefeller, and especially when he was in the dean's office, and they were about the same age. He had played football for Michigan, I think. I mean, he had a chest like this. He selected these amazingly – and I found out years later that he had them custom-made. I just thought he bought these coats because he was so broad-chested that you sort of had to take what was there. Students just cut up about his outrageous sports jackets. And the minute summer hit, he took off the coat and tie and he wore a shirt, usually unbuttoned. We called him Belafonte-heimer, not to his face. And he'd roll up his sleeves and he smoked Camels. He and Mrs. Mac smoked Camels – unfiltered Camels.

Warren: So you didn't have a no-smoking policy in the building at that time.

Wiant: Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. We didn't have the no-smoking policy until Dean Bezansom left the dean's office, because he smoked constantly, but not Camels.

Warren: You've mentioned Uncas McThenia. The other day you called him the conscience of the law school. What did you mean by that?

Wiant: He is our conscience when we're really struggling with difficult social and cultural issues or ethical issues. I don't know how many years ago, a lot of years ago, a lot of years ago, there were some personal crises in his life and he turned to the church, which evidently had not been a part of his life. I mean, he was always a good,

thoughtful, caring man, but he thinks about issues in different ways and forces us to think about some of these issues in different ways, and he has a great love of the University, a seven-year man, and somewhere in there he went off and got a master's of geology at Harvard, I think, but has come back and has had this long association.

He can tell some wonderful stories about – I think it was maybe Martin Luther King [Jr.] that he invited to the university to speak, and had to uninvite.

Warren: Ooh, now, there's a story.

Wiant: Yeah. There's some very interesting stories about our race relations on campus.

Warren: How about here in the law school? How has that evolved here?

Wiant: We have struggled. We have really struggled. There are so few minorities, although we worked very hard on getting minorities in the law school, but it has not been easy for them. They still are isolated. We still, after all these years, have only one minority faculty member. We may be recruiting in the wrong spots people who are strong enough that we would like to have here, but not people who are willing to move to rural America. We've not been very successful in that, and that's made it harder for students.

A handful of years ago, we had a very, very unpleasant situation where a poster in the carrel of a minority student was defaced with just really ugly epithets. Randy was in the dean's office and, I think very appropriately so, wrote a letter to each one of the law school community saying, with no uncertainty, that this type of behavior will not be accepted. While we never really found out who did it or why, I think his very strong immediate stance gave some assurance to minorities that we do believe they're an important part. But it's been a very long time, just a very long time, and we still haven't got very many, and it's still a hard row to hoe. I wish I could be prouder of us in that regard.

Warren: Well, it's true university -wide, I think. There are very few black faces. That's the one thing I do find odd about this place. It's out of my usual realm of experience.

Warren: You also mentioned Hal Clark the other day.

Wiant: Ah. Hal Clark, Sr., who is a graduate of the university, has had a very fine career in law, was on the board of trustees through several occasions in which the issue of coeducation was debated, and he was not supportive of the proposition and was estranged from the university for a while after the decision was made.

Warren: Undergraduate or law school?

Wiant: Undergraduate. His son, who is also a lawyer, was a classmate of mine, and his daughter-in-law is also an alum of the school, who was absolutely outrageous in her behavior as a student, and his son was capable of doing anything, a very bright young man, studied all the time, never played. In fact, Hal Clark, Sr., would come and say, "Can't you make him stop working so hard?" We tried but were not very successful, and here was this unlikely match of this woman who would say and do anything, who wrestled in pink Dr. Dentons, the only woman who wrestled in the law school wrestling league, just did and said anything, two extremes attracting and making a wonderful happy marriage, and they are coming back for their reunion this particular year.

So I think Hal was not as opposed to women in the law school; that really wasn't changing—I may be putting words in his mouth—wasn't changing really the dynamics of the university, particularly once we were over on this side of the campus, but to change the other things about the university he found very troubling. He was a very loyal alum and has returned to the fold and still does a great deal for us, gave us Classroom F in the Law School, a very generous gift, and has entertained and really made plans for all kinds of other avenues of effort on the part of the university.

Warren: I guess that was why his name stood out to me, this idea of coeducation in general. I think that's a very interesting implication that Bob Huntley had struck a deal about coeducation. Is that your opinion or do you really think that that's factual, that he had struck a deal that it would not happen in his tenure?

Wiant: It is really my opinion. It may be stronger than my opinion. You might get Roy or Uncas, and I think if you got either one of them, it would probably be enough of a confirmation to say that's true. Frank might be able to confirm that, too.

Warren: So what was your eye-witness account of the coming of the women of across the way?

Wiant: We were here. There was nothing that could be done about it, and the university was not going to do anything about it that would make it any easier for us to be here, in a capsule.

Warren: But I'm talking about on an undergraduate level.

Wiant: Oh, on an undergraduate level. On an undergraduate level, I think the University made a valiant effort to try to do this right. They studied things that ought to be studied ten years earlier. They made changes in the university that ought have been changed whether or not we added women: more lights on campus, more security, improved health services. But they went the steps to think about how young women's eating patterns differ from young men and why that would be an important consideration; thinking about whether there ought to be changes in the curriculum; going to extraordinary efforts to add, in a very fair way, women to the athletics program. We didn't even have enough women to fund X number of teams, and if we were going to continue to play as Division 3, we had to have X number of teams. Well, just because you've got women here, and a hundred of them, didn't mean that they were all going to want to do anything, let alone all at the same time.

I think the University really tried to change those things that needed to be changed and tried to provide a welcoming environment, even though there were a great many faculty, and some to this day, who I think would prefer that there be no women here, tried to create the kind of environment in which learning could take place and would take place, and that these women would be assimilated. Yet I still hear the young women say they won't do certain things because they're so fearful of being

ostracized, that it's really troubling. Just as I think we have made great strides, I will find out that we've made very little progress at all.

Warren: What kinds of things?

Wiant: Well, for instance, for the coeducation anniversary, the Women's Forum had teeshirts prepared to sell. They were too afraid to put the sign up on the table saying they were selling coed teeshirts, for fear that they would be ostracized by primarily the fraternity system. And they won't speak out. I think some of their reticence to speak in class is perhaps less than it was, that it's become commonplace for the women to do well in class and be willing to speak, but in anything that would set them apart as doing other than the female parallel of what the guys are doing, they don't want to become involved or associated because of—

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

Warren: This is Mame Warren. This is tape two with Sally Wiant, April 9, 1996.

We were just talking about the jewel in the crown.

Wiant: The jewel in the crown. Well, obviously that expression comes from the title of a book, but as it relates to us, it comes from one of our early Frances Lewis Scholars and resident, Vic Rosenbloom, who is a senior faculty member at Northwestern. He knew John Wilson before, and became reacquainted while he was here. Vic had been president of, I believe, Reed College.

Warren: Oregon.

Wiant: Oregon. Which was about the same time that John Wilson had been president of Wells. We were looking for—I think this is about the time that Roy had agreed to stay one more year in the deanship so that there would be a strong dean in the law school while John Wilson was in his first year in the presidency, so that not both the president of the university and the law dean would change at the same time. But Roy was clearly ready to retire from the rigors of being a dean. Most law deans now turn over every 3.9 years. Roy had been a dean for fifteen years. That was in the era when

law deans did last longer, but we were beginning this new era of deans that stay in the deanship approximately five years, and we were looking for a new dean.

John Wilson was talking with Vic Rosenbloom about law schools and legal education and searching for deans, and how law deans were different than deans of colleges, and we collectively were having a conversation when Vic was pointing out to John Wilson that the law school was the jewel in the crown. Very few universities in the country, particularly those that are primarily undergraduate liberal art colleges have law schools, let alone a law school with a national reputation, let alone the special kind of things that were happening in this building, and what that meant as far as how a president looking for a new dean and working with a law faculty to find a new dean, how important it was for the university to maintain the jewel in the crown, and that sort of stuck with us periodically.

Warren: It's lovely, and it's what makes us a university .

Wiant: It is what makes us a university .

Warren: It is the jewel.

Wiant: Yes, it is what makes us a university and builds our reputation in circles that we would otherwise not be known.

Warren: It's a lovely title. I really encourage you to use that as your title of your chapter.

Wiant: Sounds like a good plan to me.

Warren: I wish the title of the whole book would come about so easily.

Let's continue with this theme of coeducation. Did you get involved at all personally in bringing the undergraduate women in? Was your opinion solicited personally?

Wiant: I was appointed to sit on a number of committees that looked at varying kinds of things, and then a committee that met very regularly, sometimes about weekly about eight o'clock in the morning, so I was involved in that capacity. I was often invited to

participate in interviews as we were beginning to build a women faculty on the front campus so that they would have a sense of talking with someone who had been here and what it might be like were they to join the University , so I was involved in that way.

As far as actively involved in the admissions of coed classes, I was not.

Warren: Who would those faculty members have been, who came as a result of those interviews?

Wiant: I'm trying to think. Some have come and gone, like Isabel McIlvain and talked regularly with Jean Dunbar in sort of early stages. There was a woman in the English department who was a James Joyce scholar and who actually started the foreign film institute. I'm trying to think about women who have been here. I was on the committee, but that was years later, that rehired Barbara Brown and persuaded her to return to the university . I'm just trying to think of some names of people who I—

Warren: I don't think of anybody who's been here a long time, other than Pam and you.

Wiant: And Nancy Margand.

Warren: I don't know her.

Wiant: Nancy Margand is a senior woman faculty member in the psychology department, and she came after. She may have been on the faculty before I finished law school. I don't remember exactly when Nancy came.

Warren: Right. Yes. She has been here, so she's been here longer than coeducation. Way longer.

Wiant: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Very much so.

Warren: You told me a really lovely story that I particularly liked, last week, about your graduation.

Wiant: Oh, yes. Well, graduation from Washington and Lee I think is more special than graduations from most places, to begin with. I mean, it is a very personal event and we're small enough so that you can really feel a part of something. I had not gone

through graduation for my master's degree, a large university where the School of Whatever stands up. I had announced to my parents that I would be delighted if they wanted to visit me, that I wasn't going to do that. So having deprived them of that graduation, I did say that I would do as much of the graduation ceremonies as they were feeling so inclined, and that included graduation dance the evening before, which was a formal event. I don't know when we stopped doing that.

But I think probably the most touching event was for me to cross the podium to receive a congratulations from the president and my dean, and then be met by Jim Phemister [phonetic], who came from the faculty side where the faculty were seated, and to be escorted from the ranks of the students to join the faculty, where they had saved a seat for me. That was very heartwarming for me, and I think the pleasure that it gave my parents was particularly touching. That was a high point.

Warren: It is for me, just hearing it. Jim Phemister also said something that day.

Wiant: Oh, he did. He pointed out that with my agreeing to join the faculty and with that moment, I had now doubled the number of faculty women in the law school, and that was yet another occasion to celebrate.

Warren: And indeed that must have made a huge difference.

Wiant: You know, by then we did have a number of women students. I don't know what our percentage was, but it was probably approaching 30 percent, if not more, and to still have such a weak presence on the faculty, and the faculty became very active and had as its goal to try to hire some more women to join our ranks. We've been very successful in that.

Warren: Is there anybody in particular you'd like to highlight there?

Wiant: Well, let's see. Sort of early-on colleagues and had for a while, Joan Shaughnessy is another one who has such a presence among us. She is this petite person with this little tiny voice, who is so thoughtful and has such insights and sensitivity and can bring some of us to agreement or at least to an understanding of

very different positions, and who is next year to move into the associate dean's office as our first associate dean in the law school. We've, of course, had Susan Palmer, who was one of our graduates and editor, the first woman editor-in-chief of the Law Review, who went out to clerk and practice and then chose to return and become dean of admissions, a position that she's exceptionally well suited for and does a splendid job.

At the time Shaun came, we had another young woman, Toni Massaro, who really helped me come to a better appreciation of some feminist positions. She started the local NOW [National Organization for Women] chapter, she raised awareness in the law school, she raised awareness in the community, and I actually think it was through her initial hard work and her bringing me along that some of the way was paved for some of these changes to later come, to come in a much smoother way than they might otherwise have been implemented.

Warren: Would you be a unique person in that you went through law school here already knowing what your career path was going to be?

Wiant: I don't think of myself as unique.

Warren: But has anybody else done that? I didn't realize that you came here knowing that you were—I thought you had come as a law student and stayed on as the librarian.

Wiant: No, I had gone to library school to be a librarian. When I finished law school, I really struggled with what I wanted to be. Did I want to change careers and become a practicing lawyer? I looked and thought about that quite hard and decided, no, that's not what I wanted to do. I didn't want to leave the academy. Then I tried to decide, well, did I want to be a librarian or did I want to be—I mean, I decided I was going to be a lawyer librarian, but then the question became, and did I also want to be a professor. That was very rare to find individuals who were law librarians and who were actually teaching substantive law.

I first went out and gathered a number of offers to be a librarian, and turned them all down. Then I decided that I wanted to be a teaching librarian. I was not sure

whether – Washington and Lee was in the process of interviewing, and I was one of the candidates, and I didn't know how I would come out in the running, but however I came out in the running, I wanted them to do a full-fledged search. I wanted them to look at other candidates. If I was the one they wanted, I wanted them to make sure that that was the case before they offered me the job, and I also wanted to be sure that if this is where I was going to have my career, that I needed to know that.

They made the offer to me and I was still trying to decide among a couple of other offers, and my mentors, some within the building and others without, said, "Why would you leave? You're going to have opportunities at Washington and Lee that aren't going to be available at other places perhaps for a long time, perhaps never, and they like you and you like them and it's been a good match, so why would you leave?"

Warren: What opportunities?

Wiant: Oh, opportunities at other schools in other locations.

Warren: What opportunities were for you here?

Wiant: To build a collection, because the law school had burned in the thirties and everything had burned with it, and the University had not invested much in its library. It was significantly below minimum standards in the early seventies, and although we had spent money, it was building a collection to match a curriculum program; it was building a staff; integrating media; using new technologies to improve teaching; the opportunity to teach substantively, which is something I wanted to do; support from the dean's office, support and encouragement; become active at the national level. I think those are things that other places don't have that.

There was so much to be done here. The faculty and students had not had the kind of collection and service that they ought to be able to expect, and I think if you were to ask them, yes, there are more things that they would like us to do and we're now ready to do them, but I think if you ask sort of what they think about the library, it's resoundingly supportive. In order to do that, yes, it takes money, but it takes more

than money. Lots of places have had money, but not the freedom to work with your colleagues and your staff to build something that's right for the place, and that just doesn't come along very often, and it is here. It's not just in the law school; I think that's one of the reasons it makes the university the place that it is.

Warren: Have you ever thought of leaving?

Wiant: Oh, several times. Even resigned. When I had resigned, I had gotten engaged and my fiance was in research in New Mexico, and although he had interviewed the year before and had been offered a job at VMI, I was not ready to marry him, and he wasn't going to take a job, thankfully, at VMI and move to Virginia if I was not going to do this. So then when I finally decided I was going to marry him, he had another offer from VMI, but it was not in his field and it was really not one he could take, and I thought, well, there are far more opportunities if I move back West.

So I had resigned and I had told Roy, but also because of the timing when all this happened, I said I would stay. This was the spring, and I would stay through the summer and through the next fall, and I would teach everything that I'd agreed to teach the next year, but in the fall, so that those classes would be covered and he would have ample opportunity and the school would have ample opportunity.

I had told him this, and the next day I got a call from him saying, "President Wilson wants you to call him," which I did, and John said – no man in the university had ever said to me, "I'd like to come over and talk to you." I was forever endeared to him. I would have gone over to the president's office in the blink of an eye, but he said, "I'd like to come." And then the next thing that left me absolutely dumbfounded, he said, "When would it be convenient for you?" And I thought, in all the years that I've been at the university, no one had ever asked when it would be convenient. There weren't any women. You just got used to it.

So he came over, offered his congratulations on my engagement, had learned a remarkable amount about my fiance, who had taught at Virginia Tech and had been an

outstanding faculty member there, so he didn't know him personally, but he had managed to find out a lot and knew this was the kind of person he wanted to rebuild the engineering department, and although he did not tell me that, the only thing, after discussing my personal plans and my professional plans, he exacted a promise from me that I would persuade Bob to talk to him the next time Bob came to visit me, and I agreed that I would be willing to do that. Through those conversations, he managed to talk Bob into leaving the University and me into staying and destroying my letter of resignation.

So a couple of occasions and more recently in the last couple of years, Cornell was trying to talk me into talking to them, and in a very blizzardy trip in Minneapolis, where I had gone for a meeting of the West Law Advisory Board, Bob persuaded me that I hated gray, that I didn't function in gray, even though it would have been a chaired professorship, and I finally came back and called and said, "We're wasting my time and your time and our energies, because I cannot live in Ithaca, New York, even though I am exceptionally flattered that you would have come after me to try to talk me into doing this." And there have been a couple of other times, but there's always something that's drawn me back.

Warren: It's a very nice place we live.

Wiant: Yes.

Warren: And is Bob happy here?

Wiant: He loves teaching and he's good at it. He misses the research so that sabbaticals are really critical for him, and he just spent last semester at Clemson doing research. Major universities with first-rate engineering departments and, of course, when he was at Tech it was that, but the state has just decimated that school, the part that he didn't like was raising all the funds to support graduate students, and that's probably very difficult in this environment, so he sort of gets the best of all worlds here.

Warren: I think we all do. Thank you, Sally. Is there anything more that we haven't covered that you'd like to get on the tape? I've crossed everything off of my list.

Wiant: No, not that I can think of. Roy's not going to know this, I don't know whether Uncas is, and whether you may have to find out from maybe Lash Larue or Joe Ulrich, we need some stories about "Skinny" Williams.

Warren: I've got a few tiny mentions of him.

Wiant: And "Red Eye" Johnson and some of those maybe war years or immediately post war years.

Warren: These people have been alluded to in other interviews, but I haven't gotten real good stories about them.

Wiant: And I don't know whether Uncas has heard this. Charley McDowell might be able to tell some stories about them, but a chapter like this has to have some. Those are the people, as the Steinheimers and the Huntleys of this couple of generations, and if it's predominantly twentieth century, those folks still need to be in.

Warren: And I will be interviewing people who went through the law school at that time, and I will really be coaxing those faculty stories.

Wiant: I only have old records about them, and photographs, the portraits, and we've just had a couple of them restored, so they'd be in good shape to be photographed, I think.

Warren: Good. Good. Thank you. I think you've got a lot to work with here.

Wiant: I hope so.

Warren: I assure you.

[End of interview]