After World War II, university extension centers and public junior colleges preceded the establishment of noncomprehensive community colleges and industrial education centers in 1957. In the establishment of these institutions and the passage of enabling legislation and funding for the industrial education centers in that year is the earliest beginning of the community college system in North Carolina. The decision to build and maintain these centers grew from the great need for education beyond the high school, a need that was not being met by North Carolina’s public and private colleges and the desire to provide the state with a well-trained workforce to support the new industries being attracted to the state. Throughout their development and operation, the industrial education centers would be at the center of a controversy over how best to accomplish these goals. Yet their success in opening doors of opportunity to the state’s disadvantaged adults and vocationally inclined high school students laid a foundation for the development of a system of comprehensive community colleges in 1963.

With the election of a new governor, Terry Sanford, and the passage of the Omnibus Higher Education Act in 1963, the vision of a comprehensive community college system became a reality. The growth of the new system was phenomenal, especially in the turbulent era of the Sixties. The number of colleges doubled and the student population increased over 400 percent from 1963 until 1970. By 1970, the final year in our study, the value of the community college system in providing greater access to higher education for all residents of North Carolina was well established and recognized by the state’s leaders and citizens alike.
A VISION OF AN OPEN DOOR:
THE ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

by

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BIOGRAPHY

Joseph Warren Wescott II was born the second child of James W. Wescott and Delores P. Wescott in Bolivia, North Carolina on July 19, 1959. Educated in the public schools of North Carolina, he graduated from South Brunswick High School in 1977. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in history with honors from Wake Forest University in 1981 and was enrolled in the graduate program in history on full fellowship from 1982 to 1984. After service as an officer in the United States Army, he entered North Carolina State University where he received a Master of Science degree in higher education administration in 1998. Wescott graduated from Wake Forest University with a Master of Arts in history in 2000. He is employed by Duke University and also serves as the pastor of Town Creek Christian Church. He is a member of Phi Alpha Theta history honor society and Phi Kappa Phi honor society. Listed in Who’s Who in America in 2005 and 2006, as well as Who’s Who in American Education and the National Chancellor’s List in 2006, he currently resides in Durham, North Carolina.
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We have often reminded ourselves and informed other people that we have incalculable undeveloped resources in North Carolina, in our streams, our forests, our mines, our quarries, our soil – that Nature has been most bountiful, so that our undeveloped resources invite men under the pleasantest conditions to productive industry. And so they do. But there is one undeveloped resource more valuable than all these, and that is the people themselves.

Walter Hines Page
INTRODUCTION

Educational analysts and historians, particularly those who have attempted to tell the story of the birth of the community college in the United States, have proposed several theories explaining the motivations behind the establishment of these institutions. Some, such as Zwerling and Park (1974), Pincus (1986, 1994), and Brint and Karabel (1989), have suggested that these schools were a means of tracking students with lower socio-economic status and measured academic ability into terminal vocational and technical programs, or as Brint and Karabel describe it, the bottom track of higher education’s segmented structure of internal stratification. Others such as Dougherty (1994) have argued that the birth and expansion of the community college movement in America can be traced primarily to the promotion of federal, state and local leaders, often to meet the demands of business for a well–trained workforce. However, most scholars agree that these institutions were molded and influenced by the social changes taking place in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, and indeed it was during this period that the community college movement began in North Carolina.

The community colleges of North Carolina came into existence during a time of far-reaching social, economic and technological change and expansion. This dissertation examines the community college movement within the state of North Carolina, from the authorization of the first community college study in 1950 until midway the Robert Scott Administration in 1970, the triumph of the progressives in state politics. It examines the establishment and expansion of the community college system within the context of the
social, economic and political developments affecting the state. An accurate understanding of the forces for and against the development of this new system is necessary to explain its development. It is my hope that this investigation will shed some light upon the spectrum of political and educational opinion present within the state, while providing a foundation upon which to assess the influence of this new system of education upon the growth and development of a state rapidly pushing its way into the New South.

Several forces, from the educational elitists bent on protecting the university from those whom they saw as ill-prepared to industrial leaders seeking to staff their expanding mills, sought to influence, mold and at times, oppose outright the plans for the community college system. These forces played a significant role in shaping the early growth of the colleges and their changing mission. Furthermore, admission to the colleges was offered to men and women of all races and socio-economic backgrounds. Despite the fact that reactionary forces within the state were seeking to shore up the system of de facto segregation which was left behind after several Supreme Court decisions, progressive political leadership was successful in dismantling much of de jure segregation. Though birthed in this turbulent era, the colleges were never segregated.

The community college system in North Carolina is the result of competing visions within the state. How these founders overcame political opposition and socio-economic barriers and successfully created a new system of education that offered access to higher education throughout the state is the primary focus of this study.

The conception of the community college system is found in the creation of the industrial education centers in the 1950’s. Operating as part of the public school system, they were materially different from regular public schools in that their primary mission was
to offer vocational education to adults at times and places convenient to them. As a result they established the important precedent of meeting the needs of students heretofore unmet in North Carolina’s system of higher education. In addition, the basic concepts underlying the industrial education centers served as key principles for the evolving community colleges. In other words, these institutions were the cornerstone for today’s community college system.

The first chapter is devoted to documenting the need for community colleges, as well as discussing events on the state and federal levels that encouraged or inhibited their establishment. It also examines the policymakers behind the development of the industrial education centers and the planning and promotion that took place on behalf of this new experiment in education. Further, it analyzes the forces in the political and educational establishment that sought, at different times, to control or even derail this new educational initiative. The discussion concludes with the Community College Act of 1957. This chapter and the two that follow incorporate in new and original fashion research from the author’s master’s theses from North Carolina State (1998) and Wake Forest (2000).

The second chapter focuses on the early growth and development of the system, beginning with the General Assembly’s appropriation of funds and ensuing study of the need for industrial education centers, which led to the opening of the first center in Alamance County at Burlington. It ends with the election of Terry Sanford as governor in 1960. This section documents the important role played by the centers in educating the state’s citizenry, while discussing the forces that stood in opposition to the new system.

The third chapter examines the final triumph of the vision of the open door (comprehensive community colleges) and their far-reaching success in bringing education and job training to citizens throughout North Carolina during the Sanford era. It discusses
the tremendous growth of the system as well as the metamorphosis of the IECs into comprehensive community colleges. It concludes with the merging of these centers and the community colleges with the passage of the Community College Act of 1963, which provided for their later maturation, first into technical institutes and then community colleges.

The fourth chapter begins with the election of Dan Moore as governor and documents what the ensuing conservative reaction meant for the community college movement in North Carolina. During this administration, careful controlled growth continued under the leadership of Epps Ready, Director of the Department of Community Colleges, and Chairman W. Dallas Herring and their allies on the State Board of Education. This was the era when safeguards such as formula budgeting became a reality.

The fifth and final chapter examines the first months of the Scott years and examines how the return of the progressives to government in North Carolina shaped the system in the opening years of the seventies. During this period, the system began to take its final shape and the opportunity of an open door to higher education and a better life became a reality for all North Carolinians.
Chapter One

The Vision and the Visionaries

Where there is no vision, the people perish...

(Proverbs 29: 18  KJV)

Dallas, his vision, came to see the public schools and then the community colleges as a way of reaching out to the non vocal people of North Carolina, the inarticulate people, the poor people of the state, the isolated people of the state, the women of the state, people who had in their chest the desire to improve, but didn’t have a way. Dallas championed that cause.

Raymond Stone (1997)

Community colleges have forever changed the face of higher education in North Carolina. The community college system enrolls over 800,000 students, many of them African Americans, single mothers, Hispanic Americans and those who cannot afford more expensive educational options (North Carolina Community College Fact Book, 2005). Although the founders could not have foreseen the far-reaching changes that the system would help bring about, certainly they were not oblivious to the changes taking place in this turbulent period of the state’s history and were motivated to prepare for what would yet come to pass. Foremost in the mind of some policy makers was the desire to create a system that would be accessible to all people.
William Dallas Herring, Chairman of the North Carolina State Board of Education and a member of the Governor’s Commission on Education Beyond the High School, wrote to Chairman Irving Carlyle on July 11, 1962:

The people are hungry for education. How else can we explain that in the space of three years we are reaching 25,000 neglected young people in the Industrial Education Centers whom neither the church nor the State was reaching before? No one has compelled them to enroll. They have enrolled because they need education for economic survival in an economy that is changing more rapidly than our ideas about education are changing (personal communication, July 11, 1962, Herring Papers).

The industrial education centers (IECs), to which Herring referred, were a fascinating attempt to respond to a radically changing economy of North Carolina and to meet for the first time the educational needs of the neglected and forgotten. Thousands of citizens, young and old, were being displaced from the farms and agricultural jobs where they traditionally scratched out a living. The few jobs available to unskilled laborers, such as those offered in the textile industry, paid limited wages. In addition, rapid and extensive social change brought about new demands for education and training for women and minorities. By serving this student population—whether old or new— the IECs became the foundation and future financiers for the fast moving expansion of higher education in the 1960’s and 1970’s.

After World War II, North Carolina remained primarily a rural state with an economy in which agricultural enterprises played a major role. In 1940, 33.6% of North Carolina’s workforce was in agriculture and most resided in the eastern part of the state (United States Census, 1940; Flowers, 1992, p. 73). Yet the rapid growth of industry stimulated nationally
by World War II greatly affected North Carolinians. This industrialization, combined with technological advancement and societal disruption, brought about demands for change.

The war effort had required a tremendous amount of manpower. Approximately 258,000 men and women from North Carolina had served in the Army during the war. Another 90,000 served in the Navy and 13,000 in the Marine Corps. Some 4,088 of these men were killed in action and never returned home. Many of those who did, returned to North Carolina with “war brides” from other nations or parts of the United States and these women contributed to a more urbane attitude throughout the state. Many thousands of these North Carolinians also came home determined to take advantage of the educational opportunities afforded to honorably discharged veterans in the new “G I Bill of Rights” (Powell, 1989, p. 417). Many wanted to improve their home or adopted state. As William Friday, former president of the University of North Carolina, remembers,

This generation had a sense of morality, commitment and honor. You learn these things when you are deprived yourself. You learn them when you go through a war where there’s death. Where everything you do is to kill and destroy and to tear down, for a good reason to be sure, but your whole orientation is that way. When you’ve got all that behind you and you’re lucky enough to get home, you’re different. Not from any ego sense or in any vain sense, but you just know if there’s something to be done, you’re going to have to do it. (personal communication, January 14, 1999)

To prepare themselves, veterans returned to North Carolina and turned to the state’s public and private colleges for the training that the federal government would now fund.
Unfortunately, institutions of higher learning throughout the state were unprepared to accommodate the resulting upsurge in college enrollment.

R. Greg Cherry, North Carolina’s governor, urged leading state educators in 1946 to study the enrollment crisis. He appointed a steering committee and charged it with the development and implementation of a plan to ensure opportunities for a college education for all qualified applicants. The committee recommended the development of off-campus university extension centers at the freshman level. The plan was approved and in the fall of 1946, twelve centers administered by the Extension Division of the University of North Carolina opened. In November the North Carolina College Conference (NCCC) approved the centers and lent them its support and sponsorship. The following year, 1947, saw the addition of sophomore courses at those centers which needed them. Simultaneously, however, C. E. McIntosh, the Assistant Director in Charge of the College Centers for the University Extension Division, assured the NCCC delegates that “when student applications become normal, college centers will have served their purpose and, of course, should cease to exist” (Segner, 1974, p. 8). McIntosh’s statement proved less than prophetic. The centers' influence extended far beyond their closing in 1949. Three became public junior colleges (Wilmington in 1947, Greensboro in 1948, and Charlotte in 1949) and they all served to emphasize the need for higher education facilities in North Carolina (Lochra, 1978, p. 31).

This need sprang not only from soldiers and sailors returning from battlefields abroad, but also from the widespread changes in the North Carolina economy alluded to above. These changes occurred in a state that was amongst the poorest in the nation. In 1949, according to a 20% sample reported in the 1950 census, 65.6% of white families made less than $3000 annually. The numbers for non-white families were even more
unsettling. Over 90% made less than $3000; and of those reporting, 27.1% made less than $500 a year. The percentage of persons employed in agriculture remained high (24.9%). And of those employed in manufacturing (27.9%), the greatest number remained in textile mills (14.7%) and furniture and lumber/wood production (5.7%) (United States Census Data, 1950, p. 33-34).

To understand what these figures meant, especially for rural North Carolina, one needs simply to keep in mind that, in 1950, more than 30% of all farm families earned less than one thousand dollars annually. Among non-white farm families, which is to say black and (considerably fewer) Indian, 60% earned less than one thousand dollars (United States Census Data, 1950; Flowers, 1992). The course of economic events, combined with racial discrimination, would force an even greater percentage of North Carolina’s minority population to consider either changing careers or moving away.

From 1930 to 1950, 220,000 African Americans left North Carolina and headed north (Crow, J. J., Escott, P. D. & Hatley, F. J. 1994). Indeed, from 1939 to 1954, more than a million left southern farms for greener pastures elsewhere (Flowers, 1992, p. 46). Thousands of Whites also joined in this migration. In a speech to the North Carolina Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association in 1960, State Board of Education Chairman Dallas Herring pointed out that during the 1950’s, over 40% (323,822) of the natural increase in the state’s population “left us for greener pastures. It is as though the whole population of Charlotte and Greensboro had pulled up stakes and moved away” (1960, Herring Papers).

Many of those leaving came from the farms. The rising cost of farming combined with declining revenues forced farmers, whether tenants or owners, to look elsewhere for income. Cotton prices were so low compared to everything else that by the mid-to-late
1950’s all but the few farmers able to plant vast acreage had stopped growing it. Cotton sold for $200 a bale; it cost $150 to produce and stood a better than even chance of being lost in the field. Corn rarely brought more than $1.50 a bushel, either in the 1950’s or early 1960’s, but it cost less to grow and was less a burden than anything else, so farmers planted as much as they could. Finally, because tobacco allotments were fixed, it was difficult to increase the amount under cultivation without incurring the cost of renting or purchasing someone else’s poundage, if it could be found. Higher labor costs and rising prices meant that what an acre of land could produce was worth comparatively less and less. More and more acreage was, therefore, necessary to make a living, even though the more land a farmer tended, the more hands he needed to tend the fields (Flowers, 1992, pp. 40-47).

The advent of mechanization only worsened the plight of small farmers and farm laborers. The mechanical tobacco harvester single-handedly transformed the growing and production of tobacco in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, just as the cotton gin had revolutionized the agriculture of an earlier century. The effect on tenant farmers (white and black) was profound. As late as 1959, close to one-third of all farms in the state were operated by tenants. By 1964, only one-fourth of these farms were operated by tenants. And from 1955 to 1969, the number of black tenant farms decreased from 25,000 to 3,500 (Flowers, 1992, pp. 55, 59). As Dallas Herring, who resided in the East in Duplin County, saw only too well, “The age of the mule is gone. It is the age of science. The people must be given the chance to learn what this new age means for them and they must have the education they need to make the transition” (personal communication, 1962, Herring Papers).

Others, not necessarily in agriculture, found themselves trapped in low–paying, dead-end occupations. Throughout the state, but especially in the Piedmont and West, the stunted
futures of entire families were tied to the textile industry. Victoria Byerly (1986) remembered,

I had been a happy child living in my grandmother’s house in the Amazon Cotton Mill village, but when I was seven years old my family moved to another town. Though my mother continued to work in the textile industry, we moved to a neighborhood where I came in contact with people who were not mill workers. It was at this point that I began to feel ashamed of my background because I realized how poorly mill workers lived. We used outhouses instead of indoor toilets; we lived on beans and potatoes; we wore different clothes; and when the heels came off our shoes we hammered the nails down and went on wearing the shoes. In the mill village, where everyone lived this way, I had never thought anything about it. I didn’t even know we were poor. But when we moved, I felt surrounded by people who seemed incredibly wealthy and who made me feel terribly inferior because of the clothes I wore, the way I talked, and the food I ate (p. 6).

Life was often hard for the children of textile workers and their opportunities were limited both during and after school. Crystal Lee Sutton of Graham, North Carolina recalled, Daddy always talked about education. He got real upset because he said that it didn’t look like none of his children were going to graduate. So I was the first to graduate in 1959. The only reason I finished school was because of Daddy. I hated every second I went. I even hated study hall and lunchtime. I hated it because of the way the teachers treated the working-class kids. I resented that, because I didn’t feel like we
could help what our parents did and I wasn’t ashamed of my parents (Byerly, 1986, pp. 202-203).

Sutton went on to say that she had really wanted to be a beautician, after graduation, but, “the nearest school was in Raleigh and I just knew Daddy couldn’t afford to send me because I would have to have a place to stay, so I gave up the idea” (Byerly, 1986, p. 203).

The development of local education centers and colleges easily accessible to North Carolina citizens would change that circumstance. North Carolina had a long history of meeting education needs at the local level. Historians such as William Link (1992) and James Leloudis (1996) have documented the important role which local support played in public education in North Carolina and throughout the South.

This idea of communities meeting their own need for higher education through their own resources (or with limited state involvement) was not new. Nationally, the concept of public junior colleges (the precursors to the industrial education centers, technical institutes, and community colleges) had a history dating back to the turn of the century. In 1900, the University of Chicago, under the able leadership of William Rainey Harper, began awarding the Associate of Arts degree to those students completing its two-year “junior college” program. The following year, 1901, saw the addition of this junior college program to the high school program in Joliet, Illinois. The result was Joliet Junior College (Lochra, 1978, p. 17).

In 1910, the second junior college was established in Fresno, California (Dougherty, 1994, p. 115). In California, the public junior college had Dean Alexis F. Lange of the University of California as one of its most eloquent spokesmen. He and others saw the need
for broadening the curriculum to include vocational and technical training. He wrote, “The junior college cannot make preparation for the University its excuse for being...The junior college will function adequately only if its first concern is with those who will go no further, if it meets local needs efficiently, if it trains an increasing number in vocations for which training has not hitherto been afforded by our school system” (Lange, 1 September 1917, pp. 465-479). In the years that followed, occupational education rapidly expanded in many junior colleges. This was encouraged by several factors. Unemployment during the Depression necessitated training for new jobs as they became available. Increasing mechanization of production, especially during the Second World War, required workers with higher levels of technical skills. Finally, as early as 1917, Congress had passed legislation such as the Smith-Hughes Act stressing vocational education (Thornton, 1960, pp. 52-53).

The Smith-Hughes Act grew out of the efforts of the Wilson Administration on behalf of vocational education. In 1914 President Woodrow Wilson appointed a commission which discovered that too many youth left school to enter low-grade skilled and unskilled industries that provided little or no opportunity for better wages or for promotion to a more desirable job. Those few adolescents who rose to success did so in ways that were wasteful to them and to industry. After repeated prodding from President Wilson, and a final lobbying push from the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Congress provided federal grants for vocational education through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. The act stipulated that participating states set up a state board to administer programs provided. And the act made available federal monies, to be matched by the state or local communities, to pay the salaries of teachers, supervisors, and directors of agricultural subjects, and teachers of trade, home
economics and industrial subjects, and in the preparation of teachers” of these subjects (Latta, 1990, pp. 11-13). Over the next three decades, the federal government nurtured vocational education programs through regular, albeit small, grants of aid. It was not until 1946, with the passage of the George-Barden Act, that the next expansion of aid occurred (Latta, 1990, pp. 11-13).

In the meantime and partly as a part of the expansion of higher education, the junior – or two year – college movement continued to expand. By 1940 the number of junior colleges had risen to 610 and enrollment stood at 236,162 students. California had the most schools with 64, but North Carolina had 25, most of which were private church-related institutions (Lochra, 1978, p. 21). The 1940’s were a pivotal decade for the junior college. During this period, the transition to community college took place. As mentioned earlier, the GI Bill provided the financial means for enrollments to grow dramatically. In addition, a new initiative at the federal level, the Truman Commission, provided the conceptual foundation for the industrial education centers and the community colleges (Tollefson in Baker, 1994, p. 76).

The Truman Commission arose out of private hopes and personal politics within the Truman White House. As the war ended, Donald Kingsley, an important advisor to the President, began discussing postwar educational needs with his staff. He suggested to John Steelman, a conservative assistant to the President, that President Truman appoint a commission to study higher education. Although the resulting council was evenly divided between public and private representatives, some National Education Association leaders thought that public education was not adequately represented (Kerr in Goodchild and Wechsler, 1989, p. 500). However the charges have never been substantiated. The
chairman, George F. Zook, was president of the American Council on Education (ACE) and a recognized friend of junior colleges (primarily private in that era). The report, published in 1947, made extensive use of the term “community college,” thereby recognizing a change from the purely transfer function of the junior college. In order to accommodate students’ needs, the report recommended the establishment of a large number of community colleges throughout the United States (Gleazer in Baker, 1994, p. 18).

Early in the body of the report, the Zook Commission pointed to statistics from the U. S. Bureau of the Census which showed that “the educational attainments of the American people are still substantially below what is necessary either for effective individual learning or for the welfare of our society” (Report of the President’s Commission, 1947). In 1940, less than 16% of 18-21 year olds were enrolled in college. And in 1947, almost 17 million men and women over 19 years of age had stopped their schooling at the sixth grade or less. In that same year, over two-thirds of 18 and 19 year olds were not in school. The commission concluded, “These are disturbing facts…. We cannot allow so many of our people to remain so ill equipped either as human beings or as citizens of a democracy” (Report of the President’s Commission, 1947). The Commission went on to suggest,

The American people should set as their ultimate goal an educational system in which at no level – high school, college, graduate school, or professional school – will a qualified individual in any part of the country encounter an insuperable economic barrier to the attainment of the kind of education suited to his aptitudes and interests…The time has come to make education through the fourteenth grade available in the same way that high school education is now available… To achieve this, it will be necessary to develop much more extensively than at present such
opportunities as are now provided in local communities by the two-year junior college, community institute, community college, or institute of arts and sciences. The name does not matter, though community college seems to describe these schools best. (Report of the President’s Commission, 1947)

The commission foresaw that these colleges “will have to carry a large part of the responsibility for expanding opportunities in higher education” (Report of the President’s Commission, 1947).

Community college proponents were quick to respond to the challenge. Massive expansion occurred in states such as California along with the implementation of entirely new systems in states such as New York. Moreover, the eastern and southern states began to catch up with the plains and western states. A spirit of optimism and increasing aspirations came with an expanding postwar economy (Tollefson in Baker, 1994, p. 76). It was a spirit that animated and guided a prominent educator in North Carolina, Clyde Erwin.

Clyde Atkinson Erwin had attended school as a boy in Charlotte and Waco, North Carolina and had been a student at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 1915-16. He had served as a classroom teacher, principal, superintendent, and as a president of the North Carolina Education Association as well. In 1934, he was appointed by Governor J. C. B. Ehringhaus to succeed the late Arch T. Allen as state superintendent. He would serve in that position for eighteen years, easily winning re-election each time he was a candidate (Powell, 1986, p. 164). A gifted speaker, Erwin was tireless in attempting to expand educational opportunity for all of the state’s citizens. In December of 1946, prior to the publication of the Zook Commission report, Erwin asked the State Board of Education to
“consider and ponder” the establishment of community junior colleges. Erwin argued that such institutions were needed to balance senior college enrollment and make it possible for parents to save tuition and residential expenses for their children. He also felt that while such institutions would allow more youth to gain a college education, these would have to be more flexible institutions, which could meet educational needs as they developed (Lochra, 1978, p. 29).

In the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (1946-1948), Erwin advocated the establishment of post-secondary institutions on the junior college level. He recommended that Governor Cherry appoint a study commission to make recommendations on education to the 1949 General Assembly. He wrote,

In view of these facts, I believe the time has come when we should give consideration to the establishment of several State-supported institutions on the junior college level. California has had a system of junior colleges for several years, and a number of other states provide this type of institution. The development of such a program in North Carolina would contribute balance to our system of public education. It would make it possible for parents to save on college expenses, which are rising, since many students could remain at home and attend such an institution. The State would save in that fewer dormitories at State institutions would be needed. And many students not now receiving any college education would have the opportunity of obtaining the basic two years college training ordinarily offered in all senior colleges.

It is the business of public education to meet the needs for education whatever those needs may be. We have come to the time when we have got to consider the need for greater educational facilities. I recommend, therefore, that a commission be
provided to study this whole field and report its findings to the next General Assembly for such action as may be necessary and desirable. (p. 9)

The State Education Commission was authorized by the 1947 General Assembly and Governor Cherry appointed its members early in 1948. Although its stated purpose was to study and make recommendations concerning the entire public school program of North Carolina, one of its 16 committees, the Secondary Education Committee, stated in reference to community colleges:

North Carolina now (1947-1948) has twenty-one junior college centers associated with the University. Only two of the junior colleges are public in the sense that they are partially but substantially supported out of public funds under school district management. In an increasingly technological age, … at least half of the youth who complete the high school could with profit to themselves and the community pursue advanced studies for another two years (Report of the State Education Commission, 1948, p. iv).

In late 1948, the formal recommendation of the entire commission was published. Even though it fell short of recommending a state system of community colleges (because it felt the schools should be locally supported), the commission did suggest:

Provision should be made, therefore, to authorize the establishment of community colleges to be supported by local funds in communities where they can be established without handicapping the regular program, when enrollment (a minimum of three hundred students) is large enough to ensure that work can be offered at an economical cost, and at centers which are logically located to serve the particular area with a long

The immediate result of the State Education Commission’s recommendation was that two bills were introduced in the 1949 General Assembly to appoint legislative commissions to study the community college. Both failed to get out of committee. Erwin, however, did receive authorization to name a community college study commission. In 1950, the Superintendent made his commission appointments. The members of the commission represented a broad spectrum of the business, legislative and educational communities (Segner, 1974, pp. 39-41). Allan S. Hurlburt, head of the Department of Education at East Carolina Teacher’s College, now East Carolina University, was chosen as director and thus gave his name to the Commission and its report (Mayberry, 1972, p. 36).

The Hurlburt Commission divided itself into several sub-committees to study specific areas such as philosophy and organization. These sub-committee reports, after modification and approval by the full committee, became a part of the final report. Over the next two years (1950-1952), the Commission centered its efforts on the region within a twenty-five mile radius of Goldsboro to conduct a survey to determine the state’s need for a community college system. State superintendents and instructional supervisors from other areas were asked for their opinions as well (Segner, 1974, pp. 39-41).

While the committee conducted the study, North Carolina supporters of the community colleges and technical schools continued to voice their ideas about the need for these types of institutions. L. H. Jobe, an early supporter of Erwin’s ideas of a state system of community colleges and editor of the *Public School Bulletin*, wrote in November of 1951,
North Carolina needs a number of two-year publicly supported community colleges. Such colleges could very well be supported jointly by state and local funds, with perhaps a minimum tuition charge…. Four-year colleges, in the main, train for the professions – engineers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc. There are many students who do not wish to enter a profession, but at the same time, feel the need of further preparation than the average four-year high school gives…

A community college would provide curricula of a terminal nature for [students] who desire training for vocations which require only two years for completion – business, trades, technical jobs, salesman, etc. Such a college would also provide courses for adults who would like to change their vocations, or to add to training received on-the-job. The support of such an institution from the point of view of the student would be less in that he would commute to and from his home. Thus the plant would be less expensive than an institution where board and room are provided to a majority of students (Jobe, 1951, p. 3).

Likewise, J. Warren Smith, Director of Vocational Education in North Carolina from 1946 to 1960, supported the establishment of community colleges for the purpose of vocational training. In May of 1952 he urged,

Publicly supported regional vocational-technical schools are needed in this state to provide effectively those types of training which are not feasible in our present organization. For the rural boys and girls … there is no provision for instruction leading to the development of technical skills except that taught in the farm shops, which is for those boys who plan to be farmers … Because of the rapid changes toward mechanization in farming, it must be recognized that probably not more than
half of the rural boys and girls now living in rural communities will be needed on the farm. For these rural and urban boys and girls who at present do not have available to them the specific vocational courses they should have, some suitable type of school should be provided (North Carolina Public School Bulletin, 1960, p. 12).

In October of 1952, the Hurlburt Commission published its report, entitled The Community College Study. The first state publication to be concerned solely with community colleges, the report advocated a statewide system of tuition free, comprehensive community colleges. The first seven chapters of the report defined the nature, purpose, organization, and plan of implementation for the system in North Carolina. The report stated,

The purpose of the community college is to offer educational services to the entire community, and this requires of it a variety of functions and programs. It will provide education for youth of the community and it will serve as an active center for adult education… [It] should provide curricula and services of the following types:

a. A two year academic program …
b. General education program …
c. Terminal courses for vocational, vocational-technical and semi-professional training …
d. In-service training to help people already employed …
e. Leisure-time education and services, especially for adults.
f. Educational opportunity for school “drop-outs” to help them overcome their educational deficiencies (Hurlburt, 1952, p. 8).

The report went on to state that this instruction should be accomplished through local initiative, responsibility and control and with a very low cost to the student. (It was
suggested that students should not be expected to pay more than $50 per year, and the remaining cost would be split evenly between the state and the local district.) However, the study was careful to point out that no institution should be awarded to an area unless it had demonstrated its initiative and commitment to the community college concept by “donation of the initial plant site” (Hurlburt, 1952, pp. 10.) The study then concluded by outlining a plan for the 1953 General Assembly to follow to “authorize the creation, establishment, and operation of [a state system of] community colleges” (Hurlburt, 1952, pp. 10, 33).

The Community College Study was a reflection of the views of Clyde Erwin and his consultant, Allan Hurlburt. They both viewed the system as an upward extension of the public school system through the fourteenth grade. They saw the community college as a means of alleviating such statewide socially stigmatizing circumstances as a high illiteracy rate and a low percentage of college-age youth actually enrolled in college. Strongly influenced by the report of the Truman Commission, the Hurlburt report embraced the idea of almost tuition free community colleges with comprehensive curriculums that would provide for a wide variety of student needs. A major reason for the low tuition recommendation was the “economic barrier” which both commissions saw as the greatest single deterrent to a college education for youth who might otherwise profit from it (Segner, 1974, pp. 50-51).

Representative Roy Taylor of Buncombe County, home to North Carolina’s first public junior college, set out to remove that financial barrier. He was a graduate of Buncombe Community College and on March 3, 1953, he introduced in the General Assembly a bill which provided for the establishment and operation of community colleges under the supervision of the State Board of Education. The bill also permitted school
administrative units or parts thereof to consolidate for the purpose of establishing and operating the colleges and allowed the voters of the district served to approve special taxes to support the school (House Bill 579, Journal of the House).

The Taylor Bill, or House Bill 579 as it was then designated, emerged from the Finance Committee with a favorable report on March 19 and was referred to the Education Committee, which also gave it a favorable report on April 10. All looked well, but the bill was not to survive. Opposition to the innovative measure was led by one of the members of the Education Committee and a prominent supporter of private higher education, Roger Kiser of Scotland County. He felt that this new system of community colleges would hurt enrollment at North Carolina’s private junior colleges. In 1957 most of these schools were affiliated with various Christian denominations and this helped to rally further opposition. Kiser insisted that the bill would “kick out of existence the church-related colleges in North Carolina” (Segner, 1974, pp. 53-55). Kiser and other opponents of the bill also questioned whether the state could afford such a system of colleges. Since public education was segregated, Kiser pointed out that whenever one college was established, “You’ll have to set up two of them” (Segner). Kiser and his supporters were persistent and vociferous in their opposition, and although it passed its second reading by a slim margin on April 13, one week later the vote against it in the House was sixty-two to forty-two. The bill was dead (Segner, 1974, pp. 53-55).

One of the major and amazing reasons for Kiser’s success was his ability to enlist the support of representatives from the rural districts of North Carolina. According to the Raleigh News and Observer (21 April 1953),
Led by Scotland’s Roger Kiser, the House last night killed the ‘Community College Bill’…. Kiser arrayed representatives from sparsely populated areas on his side by holding aloft the threat of future State contributions to support the community colleges. And on the acid test, the small towners snowed under the legislators from populous New Hanover, Mecklenburg, and Buncombe…. Then the chips went down in the third reading. Kiser won a thumping victory. (Segner, 1974, p. 56)

Various reasons have been advanced for the defeat of the Taylor Bill. Two of the most remarkable are 1) the voiced concern over extravagance and 2) the predicted harm to church-related colleges. Other reasons advanced by historians and contemporary participants in the battle have been the untimely death of Clyde Erwin in the summer of 1952 and the lack of, or lukewarm, support from the governor’s mansion. This vacuum of strong state educational leadership at such a critical time hampered any progressive change. In addition, the issue of segregation hampered any new educational ventures (Segner, 1974, p. 57; Lochra, 1978, pp. 34-35; A. J. Bevacqua Papers, 1971). Regardless of the actual combination of reasons, the state of North Carolina would now wait a decade before a system of community colleges could be established. There were some, however, among them a classically trained coffin maker and an innovative unelected governor, who were unwilling to allow the status quo of unmet educational needs to continue in North Carolina.
Chapter Two

The Hodges Years: Laying the Foundation

“He who hath a trade-hath an estate.” Benjamin Franklin
(Quoted on a sign in front of the Burlington IEC)

“And the greatest achievement was when we opened the door to the people who worked with wrenches and trowels, hammers and saws, the tools of working class people. Universal opportunity for education as far as they could go.”

William Dallas Herring (2005)

On the second day of August 1956, two men who envisioned radical change in North Carolina’s economy and educational system met in the governor’s mansion in Raleigh. One was Luther Hartwell Hodges, punctual, precise, the 58-year-old former lieutenant governor who became governor upon the death of William Umstead less than two years before (W. Herring, personal communication, February 14, 1987). The other man, whom Hodges had appointed to the state school board in 1955, was William Dallas Herring, a slightly built, classicist of 40, who was already beginning to make an impression in the field of education. As Ed Rankin, the governor’s private secretary, recalled, “Dallas Herring was always around (during the Hodges administration). Very prominent and highly respected, he and Hodges hit it off immediately. They both were businessmen and they could talk the same language” (E. Rankin, personal communication, June 4, 1998).

By 1956, Herring had long been active in politics and advancing the cause of public education. Having graduated with honors from Davidson College in 1938, he returned to
Rose Hill where he quickly became president of the family business, Atlantic Coffin and Casket Company. Less than a year later, at age 23 he was elected mayor of Rose Hill, the youngest mayor in the United States that year (Mayberry, 1972, p. 29). Appointed to the Duplin County Board of Education, a position he had not sought, he found that he immediately disliked the board’s method of serving primarily as a rubber stamp for the superintendent’s decisions. He stressed more involvement and creative leadership by laymen, and was soon elected as chairman of the Board (Herring, personal communication, February 14, 1987).

Luther Hodges was a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and had risen rapidly through the ranks of Marshall Fields to become vice-president of the textile company. Retiring after 32 years of service, in 1950 he took a position with the Economic Cooperation Administration as chief of the industry division in West Germany. After working there and in several consulting roles, he decided to enter politics and ran for lieutenant governor. He handily defeated three other candidates in the primary and went on to win the general election by a margin of more than two to one. He was sworn into office in January of 1953 along with William Umstead, the newly elected governor (Hodges, 1962, pp. 7-16).

Unfortunately, Governor Umstead did not like Luther Hodges and seldom confided in him. As Ed Rankin, who served as private secretary to both, recalled,

They were not close at all. They came from different parts of the party. You have to remember that William Umstead was deeply experienced in North Carolina politics…Mr. Hodges had spent his life in textiles… He didn’t really have much background in the Democrat party, all the functions and things, and didn’t have any
interest in it. He just wanted to serve and he sought votes wherever they were. And some of the votes he sought were people who were actively working against Umstead. And so as a result, when Mr. Umstead was elected, he was very friendly to and he had a great respect for Luther Hodges, but he was not close to him. …There was basically a politeness or basically coolness… (E. Rankin, personal communication, June 4, 1998)

Another of Luther Hodges’ early frustrations came in the area of education policy. As lieutenant governor, he served as chairman of the State Board of Education. He took “his position very seriously and he was not impressed with the way things were operating. The state superintendent of public instruction …tended to use the State Board of Education as just a sounding board. Here’s what we’re going to do and then you approve it. Hodges didn’t buy that at all” (E. Rankin, personal communication, June 4, 1998). When Governor Umstead died unexpectedly in November of 1954, Luther Hodges was in a position to “purchase” a very different future for the state (E. Rankin, personal communication, June 4, 1998).

A moderate, in comparison with other southern governors, Luther Hodges oversaw the desegregation of the public schools and the expansion of higher educational opportunities. The former business executive and Marshal Plan administrator surrounded himself with a capable staff and focused attention on industrial diversification. However, changes in the educational system were required if his plans for the state were to be successful (Bass and De Vries, 1976, pp. 229-230).
Dallas Herring had asked for the appointment with the governor on this steamy summer afternoon in 1956 to tender his resignation from the State Board of Education. On the way to the meeting, he stopped by the office of a friend, Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction Alan Hurlburt, formerly of East Carolina Teacher’s College, to discuss his intentions. Herring explained that he felt that he could accomplish more in education by resigning his position in Raleigh and returning to Duplin County to work with the Citizen’s Committee for Better Schools on the local, and eventually, the state level. Hurlburt did not discourage him (W. Herring, personal communication, April 3, 1997).

Governor Hodges did. At the meeting, which was scheduled after the Board of Education session, Hodges asked Herring to explain his reasons for wanting to resign. He gently explained that he had grown tired of such activities as road trips to determine if anyone was cutting timber on land belonging to the state. Indeed, on one such trip he had gone on with State Superintendent Charles Carroll and Board Member John Pritchett, he spent the better part of a day in search of Hell and Purgatory Swamp. He saw such trips as doing little to advance the cause of education in North Carolina. He went on to tell the Governor about the vibrant bi-racial citizens’ movement in Duplin that had resulted in increased county appropriations for school buildings and the successful consolidation of fifteen schools. Herring also described his continuing experience with the National Citizens Committee for Better Schools and how he felt this organization, working through the people, would eventually effect positive change (W. Herring, personal communication, April 21, 1999).

As the conversation continued, it turned, as it often did with Governor Hodges, to a discussion of the governor’s efforts to bring in new industry to North Carolina, from overseas
as well as from northern United States. Herring commended Hodges for his leadership, but went on to say that “it seemed…he was asking the impossible to bring in all these new industries to the state and expect the people to walk off the tobacco farms and go to work in the electronics plant without any instruction in what it’s all about” (W. Herring, personal communication, April 25, 1997). Hodges, in turn, expressed his exasperation over the fact that he had never been able to obtain the cooperation of school leaders in such a training effort. He recalled that when he was with Marshall Field he wrote a training manual for textile workers and tried to get the local schools to establish a vocational training program without success. The two men then discussed the need for improvement in the public school curriculum, which both agreed had been neglected during and after World War II. Hodges told Herring that if he would remain, “I’ll get you some help on the board” (W. Herring, personal communication, April 25, 1997).

The August meeting proved to be only the beginning of a long and successful partnership, which would bring about radical changes in vocational education and eventually higher education in the state. Herring recalled later:

Luther Hodges and I understood each other and we hit it off. … We could talk business to each other. We were tired of the political and educational language and the reluctance to do anything about anything. Study it and never do anything about it. Hodges found in me a man who was impatient to get something done. I found in him a man who wished he had someone to help him get something done. So we agreed. We moved… (W. Herring, videotaped interview, February 2, 1998)

Actually three new Hodges’ appointees who would come to share Herring and Hodges’s vision were sworn in on the board that same month. They were Charles Rose, an
attorney from Fayetteville, Charlie McCrary of McCrary Hosiery Mills and Barton Hayes, a textile manufacturer from Hudson. These men shared Herring’s desire for a more progressive board and two of them shared his alma mater, Davidson College (W. Herring, personal communication, April 3, 1997). They, like Hodges, were convinced that the recruitment of industry and the education of the labor force were directly related, and extremely important, practical methods of raising the state’s per capita income. They would be joined in the years that followed by such men as Charles Jordan of Duke University and Guy Phillips of the University of North Carolina. All would support Herring in the new venture to train industrial workers in North Carolina (Segner, 1974, p. 62).

Everyone in the state’s educational leadership did not look with enthusiasm on the new educational effort. Early and unanticipated opposition came from the author of the 1953 report, Alan Hurlburt. He was opposed to Dallas Herring’s enthusiastic support and encouragement of Governor Hodges’ interest in the vocational training centers because he thought Herring was selling out the comprehensive community college idea. He felt that a system of community colleges was much more crucial to the state. He said later that “Dallas pointed out to me that for political reasons there was no hope of getting the community college system and there was hope of getting the industrial education system. I yielded to his political acumen” (A. Hurlburt, personal communication to Lena Mayberry, November 22, 1971).

Others critical of the plan could be found among the membership of the newly formed State Board of Higher Education. Created by the 1955 General Assembly, acting on the recommendation of the 1953 Higher Education Commission, the Board was charged with ending unnecessary duplication of curricula among North Carolina colleges as well as
formulating plans for the predicted explosion of enrollment in higher education. The legislature hoped it would coordinate the higher education interests of the state as a whole (Report of the Commission on Higher Education, 1955, p. 3).

The Board of Higher Education held its first meeting in June of 1955. Governor Hodges encouraged the Board “go reasonably slow in the beginning” and that the objective was “to obtain as good an educational system as possible and secondly, to do it as cheaply as we can” (Segner, 1974, p. 17). The agency was made up of nine members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the General Assembly. No member was to act as the representative of any particular institution. At that first meeting, D. Hiden Ramsey was elected Chairman. He proved to be an avid supporter of traditional college education and equally suspicious of post high school vocational training (Segner, 1974, p. 17).

Soon after his election to the chairmanship, Ramsey began advocating the development of tax-supported junior colleges, which he and others referred to as “community colleges.” He stressed the monetary savings that would result from having these schools provide the first two years of college training. Speaking to the Charlotte Rotary Club in the spring of 1956, he stated:

The single advantage of such institutions is that they provide college training at the lowest possible cost to the state and to the student…It is a demonstrable fact that students attend an institution in direct ratio to their proximity to it. Does the state have any responsibility to organize its system of higher education in such a way that colleges are brought within the geographic reach of its youth? (North Carolina Public School Bulletin, May 1956, p. 1)

Chairman Ramsey felt that it did. However, he was joined by the Board’s new
Director, Harris Purks, in his belief that that responsibility did not extend to vocational and technical training. In the August 1956 meeting of the Board of Higher Education, Purks suggested that the state should not support as higher education “any additional vocational or occupational training program which cannot be clearly defined as higher education….” He said that there was already too much emphasis upon vocational education and that this type of training constitutes a “phase of education which is subject to over production” (Must be true colleges, 1956, p. 18).

As a result of such thinking, the Board recommended to the 1957 General Assembly a measure which provided for a state-wide plan of organization for academically-oriented public junior colleges which did not encompass vocational training. The legislature complied with the recommendation and the erroneously named “Community College” Act was passed virtually without opposition. Although it provided for substantially more state aid for the existing public junior colleges (Asheville, Wilmington, and Charlotte), it required them to relinquish their administrative bonds to the local school boards and to be governed by a local board of twelve trustees under the supervision of the Board of Higher Education. Furthermore, the act provided no financial support for vocational and adult education programs. Finally, the support provided by the state was severely limited. Fees at the public junior colleges came to be greater that those charged at either the University of North Carolina or any of the other four-year state colleges. As a result of this flawed legislation, the growth of public community colleges was extremely slow and by 1962, only two colleges had been chartered under the 1957 law (Biennial Report for 1957-1959, 1959, p. 13; Biennial Report for 1963-1965, 1965, p. 14).
One member of the Board of Higher Education who was not pleased with the possibilities of the 1957 Community College Act was its most junior member, William Dallas Herring. Appointed to the Board in June of 1956 by Governor Hodges, he soon took issue with Ramsey and Purks over the place of vocational training in the state’s educational system, especially in the community college curriculum (Minutes of the North Carolina Board of Higher Education, 29 June 1956). On April 16, 1957, he wrote to Gerald Cowan, an officer with Wachovia Bank and Trust Company and a member of the State Board of Education:

Thank you for the clipping about the new metal-working plant interested in Black Mountain and the possibility of training the personnel needed. This was such a good case in point that I sent the clipping onto Governor Hodges with a letter about it. I feel we absolutely must do something about the need for training an adequate labor force as our industry grows—and I am not talking about the kind of piddling that goes on in our agriculture shops. … On the Board of Higher Education I have been plugging for this type of training in the community colleges, but I have gotten nowhere there either (personal communication, April 16, 1957, Herring Papers).

The young board member would have more success in his efforts with the State Board of Education, but not without having to overcome the initial disinterest and suspicion of some senior members. After returning from his meeting with Hodges, Herring began to focus much of his efforts on vocational training. Hence, it was the Board of Higher Education’s Community College Committee and the State Board of Education’s Committee on Professional Services that conducted a joint study of the technical training problem in North Carolina. They first accepted J. Warren Smith’s recommendation to request $1 million
for the program. After State Superintendent Carroll insisted that twice that amount was needed, they increased the request to $2 million. Early on, Herring feared the proposal would be derailed by opposition forces. On February 11, 1957 he wrote Guy Phillips and shared his fears that some were attempting to derail the proposal. He reported,

Brower (Chairman of the Board) is sick again, so Pritchett and Carroll took the whole Vocational-Technical School matter away from the Committee on Professional Services, to whom Brower had assigned it, and appointed a committee consisting of Gill, Carroll, and Douglas to draw up the legislative proposals to govern the $2-million appropriation for this purpose which we have requested. I am sure this was planned. The whole proposal came from us, Governor Hodges and the Board of Higher Education. Dr. Carroll seemed to oppose it at first, but later insisted that Dr. Smith’s recommendation of $1 million was only half enough. And now we have three men who were not really sold on the program to write the proposal for the legislature. Since I have said this much, I might also say that the Governor did not want the public schools to have anything to do with this program until I told him that we would personally follow up the matter and try to get the initiative in the department which is needed. Dr. Smith fully understands this, for I have talked to him and to Dr. Carroll with my customary frankness about it. … (personal communication, February 11, 1957, Herring Papers).

Two days later, February 13th, Herring wrote to Edwin Gill, state treasurer and a member of the new committee handling the vocational centers, warning him,
I personally discussed this matter with Governor Hodges and tried to incorporate his wishes on our proposal. Dr. Carroll’s views, in my opinion, do not agree in certain substantial parts with the rest of us … I do not favor an expenditure of this size if all we are going to get is simply more of what we already have. We need some realistic revisions that will result in an up-to-date program that will fit these students for gainful employment in industry (personal communication, February 13, 1957, Herring Papers).

Two months later, the vocational training proposal was still bogged down in committee. Herring complained to Gerald Cowan in April, “I have been trying my best to get some action on both boards about this, but Mr. Pritchett side-tracked me by giving the matter to Carroll (and we have heard nothing more from it since then.)… I hope he [Governor Hodges] will help us out with this, because I know he wants the job done” (personal communication, 16 April 1957, Herring Papers). That help would prove critical.

The proposal was sent to the General Assembly, but immediately ran into trouble. Many state legislators shared Herring’s concerns that they would get “simply more of what we already have (inadequate vocational training),” and the result would be a waste of the state’s money (W. Herring, personal communication, February 13, 1957, Herring Papers). Therefore, on May 16, 1957 the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee voted to delete the vocational training center money from the budget. Two members of the committee Representative Watts Hill, Jr. of Durham and Richard Long of Person County, however, felt that the training centers might be needed. They alerted Governor Hodges, who in turn called Dallas Herring. Herring went to Raleigh to discuss the proposal with Hill and Long. As he recalled later, they went to the Sir Walter Hotel and over dinner, Herring explained at length
the need and plans for the training centers. When he left Raleigh at 10 o’clock that evening they had reached an agreement to attempt to get a conditional appropriation of $500,000 to the Advisory Budget Commission. The commission would retain control of the appropriation until the State Board presented an acceptable proposal, at which time the commission would turn the money over to them. The sub-committee liked this idea and the appropriation was approved (W. Herring, personal communication, February 14, 1987).

On May 23, 1957, Senator Long introduced a bill to provide for the allocation of funds for the area vocational schools. Strongly endorsed by the Governor and supported by the Department of Conservation and Development, the bill (SB 468) passed its second and third readings easily and was ratified on June 12, 1957 (Journal of the Senate, 1957; Segner, 1974, p. 66; Hodges, 1962, pp. 187-188).

Events during the summer only served to strengthen Herring’s concern for, and commitment to, industrial training. Also, changes in the State Board’s leadership served to strengthen his position. First, the requirements of the Community College Act of 1957, as previously mentioned, doomed occupational and vocational training in those institutions. On July 1, 1957, Herring wrote to L. H. Jobe, editor of the Public School Bulletin:

I have felt that the ideal solution to the needs of these students (those with vocational aptitude) lay in a development of the community college program, which can have a good academic program as well as the occupational and avocational courses which most of these students need. The Board of Higher Education has given grudging acknowledgment to this thought, but the control measures adopted by the General Assembly at the instance of Mr. Womble, in my considered judgment, will serve to
discourage any enlargement of the non-academic program. I regret this exceedingly (personal communication, July 1, 1957, Herring Papers).

The loss of vocational training in the new community colleges only served to emphasize the importance of the plans for the new vocational training centers. In August of 1957, Dallas Herring was elected Chairman of the State Board of Education (Minutes of the State Board of Education, August 1, 1957, Herring Papers). In that position he could influence more substantially the direction and action of the Board. Under his leadership, events moved much more rapidly.

After the favorable action by the legislature and its departure from Raleigh, the State Board of Education spent the next nine months in intensive planning for the vocational training center proposal. On July 4, 1957 a special committee of the State Board handpicked by Herring, the Committee on Terminal Education, met in Raleigh with Governor Hodges and interested legislators. The Governor encouraged the committee to develop a sound, up-to-date proposal for the education of present and prospective trade and industrial employees, including mature high school youth. He also endorsed the Board’s request to establish a panel of leading state industrialists who would serve as an advisory committee to help fashion the proposal. Meanwhile the Board moved forward in the establishment of uniform salary schedules and certification standards for teachers of industrial subjects (Minutes of the State Board of Education, Herring Papers).

Despite the fact that Carroll was asked to choose a professional panel to advise on the area technical schools, it was the Industrial Advisory Panel, meeting with McCrary’s committee, which influenced the centers' development (W. Herring, personal communication
to L. Spikes, August 1957, Herring Papers). On August 9, Herring wrote to the Governor and explained his plans for the panel and the needs study:

The meeting with our Industrial Advisory Panel was most interesting and helpful. I think it was significant that everyone felt we are not doing enough here and that our future industrial expansion depends in large measure on both the amount and quality of the instruction we do provide. Everyone felt we must expand our program ... . It is significant also that all of these gentlemen stressed the importance of a good, sound foundation in mathematics, English, and the sciences (personal communication, 1957, Herring Papers).

Events during that summer further ensured the presentation of a successful proposal. Herring began working closely with Wade Martin, the ambitious and energetic assistant to Murray Thornburg, State Supervisor of Trade and Industrial Education. Martin was convinced the program would succeed only if "committeemen will take a selfish and specific view of their personal manpower needs" and suggested the advisory panel include men who were mid-level managers (personnel director level) as well as plant owners and top executives (personal communication to W. Herring, July 1957, Herring Papers). Two weeks after the July 5th Board meeting, Charles McCrary and Wade Martin joined Herring on a tour of the trades and industries program in New Hanover County. Afterwards Herring was even more convinced that Martin possessed both the vision and vitality to head the new program. He wrote Hodges that the State Board had decided that Martin should head the Trade and Industrial Education section (personal communication, August 9, 1957, Herring Papers).

After the forced removal of the present director, Murray Thornburg, who was suspected of sabotaging the T & I program due to union sympathies, Wade Martin became
By then, the study the General Assembly had requested was winding down. It had involved a statewide survey conducted by industrialist and educators to ascertain the state’s specific needs concerning vocational training schools. During that time, Herring drafted the proposal for the new institutions and suggested that they be called “industrial education centers” or IECs. The name, like the concept itself, quickly caught on (A. Martin, personal communication to W. Herring, December 13, 1957, Herring Papers). The State Board was to vote on the completed study along with a corresponding proposal to be made to the Department of Administration at its next regular meeting (Segner, 1974, p. 67).

Prior to the December meeting of the board, Herring mailed a confidential copy of the proposal to Governor Hodges. By way of explanation, he wrote:

You are aware, of course, of the close study I have given to this matter myself for the past six months. I therefore want you to have an advance copy of the statement I have prepared for the Committee to consider, although it may differ in some respects from the one to be presented to the staff. …For this reason I hope you will not mention that I have written such a statement and given you an advance copy when Charles and I confer with you Wednesday. Perhaps he has more confidence in what Dr. [J. Warren] Smith will be able to do than I have! (personal communication, November 30, 1957, Herring Papers)

The proposal, along with the study, was approved by the State Board of Education on December 5, 1957 (Minutes of the State Board of Education, December 5, 1957). The proposal set forward the purpose of the program “to provide instruction in the subjects listed below at three or more locations in the state – under administrative supervision of the local
boards of education and the State Board of Education in buildings provided by the local community which may or may not be separate from the high school building” (Industrial Education Center Proposal, 1957, Herring Papers). The courses listed were 1) basic machine shop training, 2) maintenance, operation and construction of electronic equipment, 3) drafting and blueprint reading, 4) sheet metal work, 5) welding, and 6) other programs such as instrumentation, quality control, and tool and die-making, the equipment for which may be moved as needed into any area of the state. The classes would be open to adults and advanced high school students (Industrial Education Center Proposal, 1957, Herring Papers).

The proposal recommended that all of the $500,000 appropriation be used for equipment, personnel, and instructional supplies. The appropriated money would be used as a “challenge fund” to encourage local school units to establish centers. Facilities were to be supplied by local school units or districts which succeeded in obtaining an IEC. The allotment of funds to the school districts would be based upon: rate of industrial growth in the community, industrial employment, trainable labor supply, job opportunities, community and local industrial interest, type of courses needed in the area, interest of local school officials, and evidence of financial support (State board adopts plan, 1958, p. 1; N. C. education board OK’s, 1958, p. A-3).

With the board’s approval and the governor’s enthusiastic support, the IEC program moved forward. Soon after the meeting, Wade Martin wrote to Herring, “I think the tremendous possibilities of offering a realistic program is sinking in everywhere, and it is only 18 months until we can look for a supplementary appropriation, providing the present pattern follows a course of wisdom and careful planning” (A. Martin, personal communication, December 13, 1957, Herring Papers).
Herring, Martin, and the State Board closely followed such a course. By the spring, the locations of the centers had been determined, and the resulting proposal had been submitted to the Governor and the Advisory Budget Commission. The IEC program was formally approved on April 11, 1958. The plan called for the establishment of seven Industrial Education Centers during the school year 1958-1959, which would be provided with over 2.5 million dollars in facilities by the local school boards in the areas. The seven sites chosen were Burlington, Durham, Goldsboro, Greensboro-High Point, Leakesville, Wilmington, and Wilson. Most of these early centers were located in the Piedmont because that was where the most urgent demand for training existed. Eleven other centers were granted approval by the board, pending appropriation of monies by a future General Assembly, for the biennium 1959-1961. They were Asheboro, Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Gastonia, Kinston, Lexington-Thomasville, Newton-Hickory, Raleigh, Sanford, and Winston-Salem (Segner, 1974, pp. 68-69).

The centers were to be operated as a part of the public school system and administered by the local superintendents and boards of education. According to regulations published by the State Board, local boards could only gain approval and funding by giving “evidence of need of a program by certifying to the State Board of Education the needs as determined by an occupational survey” (Regulations Governing the Establishment of Industrial Education Centers, 1958). The proposal would include evidence of sufficient financial support, prospective industrial interest, and a projection of enrollment that met requirements. No district received a center unless it could demonstrate a need for at least 15 persons a year in each occupational field represented in the curriculum. To insure job opportunities for graduates, the regulations recommended that there be approximately 150
local craftsmen or technicians in each occupational area related to the curriculum. Reflecting the influence of the Hurlburt Study of 1953, no tuition was to be charged and the centers were to operate with an “open door” entrance policy (Regulations Governing the Establishment of Industrial Education Centers, 1958).

Not everyone was pleased with the program, or the location of the centers. Just days before the proposal to the Advisory Budget Commission, Hiden Ramsey sent a copy of a state map upon which he had marked the counties gaining the early centers. He dashed an angry note across the top, “Really is any comment appropriate and I refer, of course, to the map showing the locations of the vocational education centers approved by the “State” Board of Education. The program, as implemented by these decisions is, of course, dead. It is so stupid, so unrealistic.” Herring quickly replied, “Let me hasten to assure you, with regard to the Industrial Education Centers, that you have been very badly misinformed.” He then outlined the careful and meticulous planning and program that led to the original centers being situated primarily in the Piedmont. He then concluded,

Now I know that you and I are not in complete agreement, fundamentally, as to the importance of vocational education. Our disagreement is cordial and friendly and I trust that it will remain that way, unless we can resolve the difference. It would take too long, and would try your patience too much, for me to repeat the arguments in behalf of terminal education below college level. But I would like to make it clear once more that I personally advocate it for two reasons: the needs of ‘terminal’ students are just as genuine and just as legitimate as those of academic students and, secondly, we cannot do a good academic job in the high schools in a one-track, artificial situation under which we pretend that terminal students should be reading
MacBeth, taking more of the teacher’s time and talent than the gifted, when, as a matter of fact, those students need instruction in the fields in which they are gifted, as a supplement (not a replacement of) to the academic courses they can get. If we differ on this, then we must, but we shall do so with the same spirit which prompted you to send me that wonderful prayer (personal communication, April 7, 1958, Herring Papers).

Dallas Herring knew that he and Ramsey would never agree. But he refused to be untrue to his vision. He felt that the industrial education centers would one day provide the medium for instructing both MacBeth and metalworking. As he had written to Sidney Chappel, superintendent of Wilson City Schools, earlier,

We can … turn our attention to building up the Industrial Education Centers so that after they are securely settled in good programs we may gradually introduce other vocational courses and then some basic academic courses of a terminal nature. Following this it will be only a step to introduce college-level academic programs of a junior college character and then we will have community colleges after the national level (personal communication, April 1958, Herring Papers).

From April 1958 until September 1959, Wade Martin, Charlie McCrary, Dallas Herring and others worked feverishly to ensure that the new industrial training program was successful in every way. Those involved with the program sought equipment and instructors, set up curricula and centers, and solicited support in political circles and private industry.
In addition to Burlington, the State Board of Education had given its final nod of approval on April 3, 1958 for the fall opening of five other industrial education centers in the state. The $500,000 provided by the 1957 legislature would be used to equip the centers. The local units had agreed to provide buildings valued at $2,268,000 and equipment valued at $150,000. The centers furnished an advanced curriculum in trade and industrial subjects supplementing the regular high school instruction, but still considered below college level. Money to provide teachers came from the state’s regular vocational education appropriations (Industrial Education Centers, 1958, p. 30; School site in Guilford, 1958, p. B1).

Originally Wade Martin had announced that the Guilford County center would receive the largest single appropriation. He said that Guilford’s rate of growth had impressed the State Board when it was evaluating sites for the new program. Because of the wide variety of industries in the area, the initial planned curriculum included more courses (12) than any other center. These included Quality Control, Industrial Electronics, Draftsman, Knitter Fixer, Auto Mechanics, Instrumentation, and Machinist with Tool and Die. However, the Guilford Center was originally housed in the old county tuberculosis sanatorium building at Jamestown. As this was not a new structure, it would be displaced by Burlington as Martin’s flagship institution. (Industrial Education Centers, 1958, p. 30; School site in Guilford, 1958, p. B1; Subjects for the Six Proposed Industrial Education Centers, Memorandum, 1958,).

The other centers originally approved to open in 1958-59 were located at Durham, New Hanover, Wayne and Rockingham counties. The governor and budget officials, including prominent legislator, J. C. Eagles, added a seventh, Wilson, when it became known that sponsors in the county would provide $168,000 for a building to be ready for use in
September (School site in Guilford, 1958, p. B1; A. Martin, personal communication to J. Eagles, April 28, 1958, Herring Papers).

The curriculum established for the first seven centers reflected the vision of the founders that the schools would meet local needs. Thus the courses offered were based on the needs surveys which the districts submitted to support their request for an industrial education center. Even though the schools often taught the same courses, such as Industrial Electronics and Instrumentation, they also offered courses unique to their area. For example, both the Guilford County IEC and the Alamance County IEC (Burlington) taught Supervision and Auto Mechanics; but Guilford, which included High Point in its service area, offered courses in Wood and Metal Furniture and Upholstering. The New Hanover IEC, which was in a coastal county with little heavy industry, offered instruction in Marine Diesel Engines and Carpentry - Millwork. Rockingham IEC offered training in Construction Trades and Textiles and Goldsboro IEC (Wayne County) proffered Radio and Television Repair (Subjects for the Six Proposed Industrial Education Centers, Memorandum, 1958). Thus the centers were established at the very beginning upon the principle of basing their course offerings on community needs.

In seeking to equip the new centers adequately, Martin and Herring once again demonstrated their mutual willingness to use innovative methods. They were alerted by Colonel Preston Melton of the United States Department of Commerce that more than 14,000 machine tools stockpiled during the war were to be released through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) on a loan basis to train young people. Realizing that quick action could result in the industrial education centers gaining up to three million dollars worth of excellent equipment, including sorely needed expensive machine shop and
electronic equipment, they sent a telegram to Governor Hodges, asking him to contact Congressmen Carl T. Durham and Alvin P. Kitchen. These men were members of the House Armed Services Committee and thus in a position to help with the acquisition. Herring also contacted L. K. Alderman, a friend from Duplin County who was in Washington as administrative assistant to Congressman Graham Barden, to solicit Barden’s assistance (A. Martin and W. Herring, personal communication to Luther Hodges, 4 May 1958; W. Herring, personal communication to L. Alderman, 5 May 1958). It soon became obvious to the state leaders that it would be best if representatives from North Carolina went to Washington to meet with federal officials. At the invitation of Chester B. Lund, Director of Field Administration for the U. S. Office of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), Herring, Martin, and McCrary went to Washington in July. Seeking to accelerate the machine-tool surplus property program in North Carolina, and to explore the added possibility of borrowing equipment from the Industrial Reserve, they met with officials of the U. S. Department of HEW, U. S. Department of Defense, and with members of the North Carolina Delegation in the Senate and House of Representatives (A. Martin, personal communication to C. McCrary, 17 July 1958, Herring Papers). The day after the trip, July 22, 1958, The News and Observer reported Chairman Herring as saying that Chester Lund had praised highly the state’s proposal for industrial education centers, promising “machine tools and other equipment with which to start seven industrial training schools in the state this fall” (North Carolina vocational plan is praised, 1958, p. 3). As then aide to Congressman Barden, Congressman David Henderson recalled, “Congressman Barden, working with Senator Dick Rutherford of Georgia over on the Senate side and his colleagues in the House, was able to get the military to begin to move some of it [to North Carolina]. Stored away in the mines of
West Virginia, some of it [the surplus equipment] had never been used” (D. Henderson, personal communication, December 2, 1998).

After returning to North Carolina, the men continued to work through state and federal officials to obtain the needed equipment. They even retained the services of an attorney, Vincent Tolino, to explore the legal angles of the transfer of the surplus property to the centers in Charlotte and Winston-Salem (C. McCrary, personal communication to W. Herring, November 8, 1958, Herring Papers). By year’s end, their request was approved and North Carolina became the first state to receive equipment on loan from the Department of Defense. Governor Hodges announced the approval in December. The result was that over one million dollars worth of machinery was now available to equip the new centers (Tool loan is approved, 1958, p. 12A).

As the centers prepared to open in temporary buildings in the fall of 1958, plans continued apace to build new structures. In Durham, however, racial tension threatened to derail plans for a new center. On August 20, 1958, Watts Hill wrote to Dallas Herring:

As you can see... the only way that we can have a successful bond election in Durham is to continue to operate vocational centers for students on a segregated basis in our local high schools. On the other hand, the only way that we can get the $350,000 Industrial Education Center bond passed is with the support of the Negro community which means operating an integrated center for adults only. ... If it is possible, or if there are not overriding reasons which would make it inadvisable, it would also be extremely helpful to receive a statement from whoever is appropriate to the effect that operation of the Center for adults alone on a basis which would admit Negroes is not in conflict with the Pearsall plan [The state plan that provided a means
for local school districts to choose to remain segregated in spite of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown.*] (personal communication, Herring Papers).

Before concluding his letter, Representative Hill asked Chairman Herring for the names of those in charge of the other Industrial Education Centers so that he could call them and determine what they were doing about the race issue. In response to this request, Herring called Wade Martin’s office in Raleigh to discuss the matter and found L. E. Spikes, Superintendent of Burlington City Schools, there. Spikes attempted to call Watts Hill and then wrote to Herring stating that the school people in Burlington discussed the new program with “the Negro leadership prior to obtaining the Industrial School Center” (L. Spikes, personal communication, August 26, 1958, Herring Papers). They agreed to use the facilities together, though due to the nature of the courses offered and job opportunities, the actual number of African American students enrolled turned out to be very small. In the end, the Durham Center, along with the others, accepted the State Board’s policy decision that the program would be operated on an open door basis. This was to some extent a product of limited funding as much as it was that of changing social policy. As L. E. Spikes wrote to Herring, “I do not believe that your board could take responsibility of financing the present school in the white school, and in the colored high school plus the Industrial Center” (personal communication, August 26, 1958, Herring Papers).

When the industrial education centers opened on schedule in the fall of 1958, most opened in temporary facilities, such as armories and other abandoned state buildings, while bids were being let on new buildings to be constructed. The Rockingham County Center was typical of the new institutions. It began operation offering training in Carpentry, Technical
Drafting, Electronics (Radio and Television Servicing) and Machine Shop Practice with an enrollment of 143 students in pre-employed training. Eighty-two students were enrolled in continuing education for supervisors (“upgrading training of a supervisory nature”). The supervisory training classes in Human Relations, Textile Cost Control, Textile Chemistry, and Textile Electricity were held in the conference room of Fieldcrest Mill General Office Building and sponsored jointly by the Center and Fieldcrest (Rahn, 1958, p. 2).

Each program of instruction offered at the centers had clearly defined qualitative standards. After completing the prescribed course of study, each student was awarded a certificate indicating the specific kind and quality of his achievement. Since most students had purchased required hand tools by the time training was completed and were available for immediate employment, industry enjoyed the availability of a pool of skilled workers soon after a course of instruction was completed. In fact, after completing technical training, students were provided with a complete and accurate report of local job opportunities to assist in job placement (Rahn, 1958, p. 2).

Immediate response to the new program was ecstatic. In the first year of operation (1958-59), the industrial education centers enrolled 6000 students. This was almost one-half of the total enrollment in the various types of trade and industrial education programs in high school in North Carolina during the previous school year (1957-58) (Progress Report: North Carolina Community College System, 1958-1971, October 6, 1971). These students helped make 1958 a record year in industrial development in North Carolina. That year, 423 new or expanded facilities opened, representing a record investment for those facilities of $253,074,000. This expansion provided for 21,757 new jobs and an annual payroll of $72,633,000. This represented an increase over 1957 of 32.48 % in investments, an increase of 34.06 % in
jobs available, and a 35.23 % increase in payroll (State Board of Education Brief Submitted to the Joint Committee on Appropriations, 26 March 1959). These increases in turn fueled demand for trained personnel and increased support for financing and expanding the new system.

Wade Martin further encouraged this expansion by using the new Burlington IEC as a place for promoting the new program and demonstrating the possibilities of continued state and local financial support. By September of 1959, almost 1000 students were already enrolled at the Burlington Center, which boasted 12 full-time and 19 part-time teachers. Classes ran from 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. with courses offered in machine shop, auto mechanics, sheet metal, welding, knitting, machine fixing, industrial chemistry, and other related subjects. The curriculum was arranged to meet current and anticipated industrial needs in the Burlington area. The school year itself consisted of four consecutive three month quarters beginning in September (Patton, 1963).

Close cooperation between the centers and industry was evident as well. At Burlington, officials with both the Western Electric Company and Kaiser-Roth praised the new educational endeavor. An official with Kaiser-Roth was quoted as saying that his company expected “to derive far reaching benefits from the industrial education center. Training in looping, seamless machine fixing, industrial maintenance, machine shop, and supervision will not only help develop skills for people going into hosiery for the first time, but will enable present hosiery employees to qualify for higher paying jobs” (Patton, 1963, pp. 268-269). In fact, throughout North Carolina industries demonstrated their interest in the new program by donating $107,000 in new equipment and promising $53,000 in additional equipment. This included sizable equipment donation from knitting machine manufacturers,
auto and tractor builders, and other major equipment manufacturers (Patton, 1963, pp. 268-269).

Student response to the new program was enthusiastic as well. Even with basic eligibility requirements set to assure student success, student interest in the program continued to grow. At the Wilson Center, some students commuted as far as 100 miles to attend classes. Demand at Goldsboro exceeded all expectations and Director Marshall said he had never “seen such a craving for knowledge” (Patton, 1963, p. 267). Statewide enrollment in the IEC program nearly doubled in the second year of operation (1959-1960), increasing to 11,000 (Progress Report: North Carolina Community College System, 1958-1971, 1971). In early 1960, Director Wade Martin told The News and Observer,

It’s hard to believe, but the State’s industrial education program is already larger than the programs of both the University of North Carolina and State College. Everywhere a center has been constructed the demand for courses has been greater than the supply. … Already we’ve offered 105 trade, industrial and technical courses – ranging from auto mechanics to tool making. And the response has been good to all of them (Segner, 1974, pp. 73-74).

This growth was accomplished prior to the additional centers opening.

As early as January of 1959, Dallas Herring had suggested that adult literacy classes should be organized in connection with the new industrial education centers. Another example of attempts to expand the curriculum occurred in May of 1959, John Hough, Superintendent of Leakesville City Schools, requested that their industrial education center be allowed to offer a course in commerce. He projected that immediately upon offering the course, they would have 40–75 students enroll (Adult illiterates, 1959, p. 4; J. Hough,
personal communication, May 1959, Herring Papers). Although Hodges and others were uncomfortable with it, the idea of expanding the instruction beyond straightforward vocational/technical training was already spreading.

The new Burlington Industrial Education Center was the site of a major celebration for the vocational educational establishment in North Carolina on September 30, 1959. On that day two hundred state officials and other guests came to Burlington to tour the new center. Erected at a cost of $1,000,000, the Burlington IEC was the first of the seven new centers to open that fall. All of them were designed to train students in the technical and vocational skills needed to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by North Carolina’s rapidly expanding industrial economy. However, when the Burlington IEC opened, it was obvious that a large portion of the initial appropriation had been spent there (W. Herring, personal communication, April 15, 1999; A. Bevaqua, personal communication, November 30, 1998). Martin had gambled on spending so much at Burlington in the hopes of reaping a rich reward of support from state political and educational leaders and assuring a solid future for industrial education centers and vocational training in North Carolina.

Wade Martin helped to escort visitors through the local center and Dallas Herring presided at the luncheon at the Alamance Country Club. Speakers included Charles F. Carroll, state superintendent of public instruction, and Charles W. McCrary, chairman of the State Board of Education’s Committee on Terminal Education, who introduced the Governor. In his keynote address, Governor Hodges praised the new program at length and outlined its development, organization and operation. He then pointed out that for a long time the state had needed an improved program of industrial and technical education. Workers
needed to be adequately trained if the state was to continue to expand industrially. Referring to the thousands of young people available to meet the need for this industrial expansion, he stated:

These people are in effect being denied a place in the economic revolution that is taking place in North Carolina – simply because up to now no adequate facilities have been made available to help them through this transition. All our efforts to develop a balanced economy and bring greater prosperity to the citizens of this state will have gone for naught if we fail in our responsibility to supply the means by which our people can adjust to the changes. I think it has been dramatically illustrated in the early stages of our industrial education program that the people of North Carolina are eager to meet this challenge. Those of us here – as leaders in education, government, and industry – have a responsibility to see that the people are given this opportunity. (Patton, 1963, pp.263-265)

He concluded his remarks by questioning whether the state was ready to derive maximum benefit from the IECs and industrial development. He stated that the only means of doing so was to establish industrial education centers throughout the state of North Carolina. He pointed out that in addition to the seven centers already in operation, eleven others were planned. In order to activate and equip these additional centers and provide needed support for the existing seven, the State Board of Education had requested $1,491,000 for the current biennium. Although the Advisory Budget Commission had approved the amount in full, they had made it subject to a vote of the people in the bond election for capital improvements to be held in less than one month. Hodges encouraged those in the
audience to work for approval of the bond issue on October 27 (Price, 1959, p. 10; Patton, 1963, pp. 273-274).

Hodges also spoke of the success that the Department of Conservation and Development had experienced in attracting new business to the state. He pointed out that while nationally, in the face of recession, 17.4 % less had been invested in new and expanded industrial facilities, North Carolina registered an increase of 32.5 %, representing some 423 new plants and expansions, providing 21,757 new jobs (Patton, 1963, p. 272). Part of this success was due to the creation, by Wade Martin in 1958, of the nation’s first customized training program, now called New and Expanding Industry Training, which offered free training programs for businesses which made a commitment to build or expand in the state (Lancaster, 2002; Wilkins, 2005). (This highly successful program would survive with little change, unlike the IECs, long after Hodges left Raleigh.)

Response to the meeting and the new programs throughout the state was very positive. On October 10, 1959, Herring wrote to Hodges:

The 1950’s are rapidly drawing to a close. It has been a decade of tremendous progress … but the watch word in education for the new decade ahead will be quality in education … Consider what we all witnessed at Burlington the other day at the opening of the new Industrial Education Center. Here is a new program of high qualitative value that came about, because a few people had the vision and were willing to accept your leadership. It is, without doubt, the most significant step forward in quality education that we have yet achieved and it is just beginning. It will grow. In fact, the problem here may well be to hold the growth down, so that quality
will not be sacrificed, since it is becoming such a popular concept (personal communication, Herring Papers).

The future would prove Dallas Herring correct in prophesying that the program had only begun and that it would grow. On October 27, North Carolinians provided the capital for that growth through an affirmative vote on the bond issue. And earlier that year, their representatives in the General Assembly had officially authorized and designated the industrial education centers as a type of vocational school which would be administered by the State Board of Education and local boards of education. The law, as approved, stated that the IECs would have as “their primary objective the provision of that phase of education which deals with the skill and intellectual development of individuals for entrance into, or (to) make progress in, trade, industrial and technical jobs” (Progress Report: North Carolina Community College System, 1958-1971, 1971). Funded and with its purpose codified in state law, the future of the new program was secured. Events in the political arena, however, would assure not only the expansion of the new system but its final metamorphosis into the system envisioned by men such as Herring and Hurlburt.

The Democratic primary of 1960 consisted of four strong candidates. Malcolm E. Sewell was Attorney General of North Carolina and was supported by Governor Hodges. John D. Larkins was Democratic National Committeeman and a former chairman of the state Democratic Executive Committee. I. Beverly Lake, former Assistant Attorney General and former Professor of Law at Wake Forest College, was a conservative and a segregationist. Terry Sanford was a state senator from Cumberland County and former state campaign manager for Kerr Scott’s senate campaign in 1954 (Mitchell, 1966, p. xxiii; Drescher, 2000).
With the support of a broad based coalition which included the Scott family and the "Branchhead" leadership (supporters of former Governor Kerr Scott), Charles A. Cannon, W. Willard Barbee, and O. Max Gardner, Jr., Sanford was generally acknowledged as the front runner. As such, during the first primary, attacks centered on him. Sanford built his campaign around the concept of quality education and frankly admitted he would raise taxes if necessary to pay for the cost. Sanford’s message appealed to state voters with the result that he led the field of candidates in the first primary with an 88,000-vote plurality and Seawell and Larkins were eliminated (Mitchell, 1966, pp. xxiii-xxiv; Sanford, 1966, pp. 16-17).

Race emerged as a key, but divisive, issue in the second primary. Sanford’s theme during the second primary was: “Let’s not close our schools, let’s improve them.” As such, he appealed to many educators and educational leaders, not the least of whom was Dallas Herring. Herring actively supported Sanford during his campaign. In fact, early on he had told Governor Hodges that “he (Sanford) was for education and so I will support him” (W. Herring, personal communication, March 4, 1996). With that support, combined with others, Terry Sanford won the second primary with a 76,000 vote majority on Saturday, June 25. He went on to win easily the general election in the fall (Mitchell, 1966, pp. xxiv-xx).

Shortly after his election as governor, Terry Sanford appeared before a regional meeting of educational leaders hosted by the Southern Council for Better Schools, the North Carolina Citizen’s Committee and the School Boards Association at Chapel Hill. There he was introduced by Chairman Herring, who referred to him as the “Happy Warrior of education in North Carolina.” In turn, Sanford began his speech by re-appointing Herring (the first announcement of an appointment in his administration) to the State Board of
Education. He stated, “Dallas Herring has brought imagination and vision to the needs of public education and leadership equal to the finest in the history of our State. As we go into this New Day of achieving quality education second to none, North Carolina cannot do without Dallas Herring” (Mitchell, 1966; D. Herring, personal communication, February 15, 1990; Herring to be retained, 1960, p. 1).

Sanford went on to specify that Herring would continue to serve as Chairman. As such, the World War II paratrooper and the scholarly businessman would work together to bring to fruition a new day in North Carolina education.
Chapter Three

THE SANFORD YEARS: OPENING THE DOOR TO A NEW DAY

*My faith always has been that the people of North Carolina are ready to go—ready to make this New Day of opportunity a New Day of achievement.*

*Terry Sanford* (1960)

*Terry Sanford was an activist governor. Terry Sanford believed that government could and should be used to meet the needs of people. And he believed that all it took was leadership and telling the people what they already knew, since it would better their lives. So he took this beginning that occurred under Governor Hodges and ran with it, so to speak. And it was during his administration, there was considerable expansion of the system.*


Terry Sanford’s election as governor meant that the private dreams and public ambitions of many educators in North Carolina moved one step closer to reality. Sanford refused to be bound by tradition. He insisted that it must become a stepping stone to change instead of a stumbling block to innovation. In his first major speech after his election, in which he announced Dallas Herring’s reappointment, he outlined his educational program for North Carolina. He told his enrapt audience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill that he had chosen “quality education as the rock on which he would build the house of his administration” (Mitchell, 1966, 97). He went on to say, “If appropriate education is to be available to a degree that our full potential of human resource is developed, then we need to expand community colleges and industrial education centers...” (Mitchell, 1966, 97).

In their third year of operation, the industrial education centers were continuing to expand. They enjoyed the support of most private, as well as public, organizations. By December of 1960, private industries had donated $385,000 to the industrial education center program (*North Carolina Public School Bulletin*, XXV, 1). In addition, a number of
corporations had sent representatives into the schools to serve as teachers or in advisory
capacities (Knox, 1961, 1-C). Public support, especially among high school graduates and
adults needing continuing education training remained high. Enrollment in the 1960-1961
school year reached 18,000 (Progress Report: North Carolina Community College System

Rapid growth and enthusiastic support meant new challenges for those overseeing the
new system. Chairman Dallas Herring wrote to Charles McCrary,

There are several questions now coming to a head about the curriculum of the Centers
…. I am of the opinion that we ought to call in our Industry Advisory Committee and
insist on having some professional school people join them. We must know where to
draw the line consistently in the interest of the whole program …

There is the danger that public enthusiasm will run away with this program.
In a way, that is what happened to the public schools in general during the 30’s and
40’s. Physical education, handicraft “art,” field trips, etc., etc., moved in on the basic
subjects, so that there was little time to teach the things that mattered most. Perhaps
all of this was good and such a thing has its place, but the system bogged down,
because no one took care to establish some basic policies guaranteeing that there
would be no infringement on the time of the core subjects of reading, mathematics,
history, science, etc. Let’s don’t let that happen to the Centers.

I think it would be well to let competent industry representatives say to us,
“Here is what industry wants and needs most in the way of instruction of its
employees.” Representative school people could say, “Here is what we believe to be
the training needs of the individuals in light of these industry job opportunities.”
Your committee (Committee on Terminal Education), could then weigh these reports and eventually establish the priorities and, if after study it is thought best, the cut-off points (bottom and top) which ought to apply. (personal communication, 1960, Herring Papers)

The dichotomy, which existed between the needs of industry and the needs of the individual, would continue to plague the development and growth of the system. Herring and Martin would lead the struggle to ensure that the training offered remained technically advanced and relevant to the needs of the student, not just to the desires of industry. Martin wrote to Herring in 1960 complaining about a course in textiles being offered at Burlington. He said that they would offer it as a compromise with industrial needs, but it was not the type of course they would teach on a continuing basis (Herring Papers).

The number of institutions within the IEC system likewise grew. Much of this growth in the rural areas of the state occurred as a result of the extension center program. On December 9, 1960, Dallas Herring wrote to Charlie McCrary about the new extension class in auto mechanics being taught in Rose Hill on a cooperative basis by the Duplin County Schools and the Goldsboro Industrial Education Center. Seeing firsthand the great interest in the class, Herring wrote to McCrary that he was in complete agreement with the idea of extension classes from the Industrial Education Centers wherever there was a “proven need for instruction at points too distant for adequate transportation” (personal communication, 1960). He reported that he had already discussed the idea with Gerald James and he thought the program was practical and should be put into effect. As for the reason for doing so, Herring stated:
I have long been troubled about the problems of the “displaced persons” of rural North Carolina – the young men and women growing up on our farms, whom the farms can no longer support, but who have absolutely no technical training for employment elsewhere. In my county alone we have had a net out migration in excess of 2000 during the last ten years, in spite of the fact, that we now lead the State in agricultural income. They have left us because our economy would not support them. … Our obligation to these young men all over North Carolina must be met. The question is: how shall this be done? Most of the rural counties, which are too remote from our 18 Industrial Education Centers, cannot justify the establishment of full-scale Centers, at least at this stage of their development. Yet this instruction, or parts of it, will be needed. I hope the Goldsboro-Duplin County experiment will show us whether it is practical to manage an extension class on a cooperative basis such as this will be. I see no reason why it cannot be done. (personal communication, Herring Papers)

Charles McCrary agreed that it could be done. At the January 4 meeting of the Vocational Committee, the first item of discussion on the agenda was the extension programs. It won strong support and in February of 1961, the State Board of Education voted to allow extension unit courses to be taught where there was a need for instruction, but where the areas could not yet meet all of the qualifications for an IEC. The three general qualifications that the board required for the establishment of an extension unit were 1) at least fifteen qualified students, 2) a satisfactory local building, and 3) the ability of a sponsoring IEC to provide the necessary instruction and equipment. Explaining the new program to the press, Chairman Herring stated,
Some people now live too far away from a center to drive there easily. Under this plan we can take the courses to them. Let’s take Currituck County, for example. If the people there demonstrated the need for a course in, say, automobile mechanics, we could send an instructional unit to teach the course. The courses would be taught only until the needs of the community were met (Segner, 1974, p. 79; Industrial Education Centers of North Carolina, 1961).

The extension plan of the Industrial Education Center program primarily aided residents in far eastern and western counties. The plan became a means of helping citizens in the lightly populated rural areas of the state. Extension units were operated under an agreement between the board of trustees of the sponsoring IEC and the local board of education where the course was to be taught. The extension program spurred the growth of the system, as some of the units later would become industrial education centers in their own right. Indeed, later Herring would state (personal communication, July 2, 1999) that he invented the term “extension unit” in order to “throw the bloodhounds off course. They (the units) were embryonic industrial education centers.” From 1960 to 1962, the State Board authorized four extension units and two new IECs. In the west, they were Ansonville (Anson), a unit of Central Piedmont, and Isothermal (Rutherford), a unit of Gastonia. In the east, the Pamlico extension unit was sponsored by the Goldsboro IEC (Wayne County). In Duplin County, the James Sprunt extension unit began operating under the sponsorship of Goldsboro (Wayne County) IEC. Pitt and Rowan Counties were authorized to start new IECs as well (Progress Report, 1972, p. 2; Progress Report, 1969, p. 2).
As the system grew, it continued to rely on flexibility and innovation to expand in the face of limited appropriations. Dixon Hall, first president of James Sprunt Community College, recalled:

The old days were different. For example, H. K. Collins, former president of Durham Tech, drew up the floor plan for his first building and supervised its construction. Department heads in those days were known to teach 40 hours a week as well…. In my day, I would go out to the tobacco field. When the cropper came to the end of the row, I’d ask him if he had thought about going to school next term. Also, during that time, our Boards of Trustees were made up of “hard-core industrialist”- people from business and industry (personal communication, November 28, 1998).

Anthony J. Bevaqua remembered how the extension unit in Duplin County began. He said that, like most units, it started very small. The new programs began “not in big buildings, but in churches and prisons… you name it, whatever” (personal communication, November 30, 1998). He recalled:

The first occupational program they had, the welding program, they had in some sort of small basement. If I had gone down to inspect it, I said that I would have immediately shut it down, because it was such a mess. They didn’t have any ventilation system. But they had guys in there who were welding. They were getting jobs. They were going to Norfolk; they were going down to Wilmington. They were going everywhere getting jobs (personal communication, November 30, 1998).

John Tart, the first president of Johnston Community College, remembered some of the problems that came with the system’s expansion:
I had a secretary and a business manager; those were the only people I had. That was the college. And we certainly had not done any planning. We hadn’t had the time to. We had one hundred and twenty-five people wanting to take electric wiring. I had one teacher. And we went out and we found more teachers. And those students, well it took probably two weeks to get the teacher, kept coming back. They were patient. I remember, one night we had, I’m going to say, twenty typewriters and there were twenty students sitting in the chairs at the table with the typewriter and there was twenty standing up beside the typewriter. Each one of them saying, “That’s my typewriter.” I walked in there and they said, “We have a problem here. Everybody wants these typewriters.” Well, we got another night scheduled and took care of them (personal communication, November 2, 2004).

As the system expanded into new communities, the curriculum expanded to meet the new needs. In 1961, Durham added a program for training dental technicians and Goldsboro added a three-phase program for poultry field men. The curriculum grew throughout the state to include six major types of programs. They were machine operators, craftsmen, technicians, supervisory training such as job relations and cost control, upgrading classes for employed adults including color television servicing, and trade preparatory classes such as carpentry and pipe—fitting (Segner, 1974, p. 81). Ned Delamar recalled what happened at the Pamlico extension unit and at other sites:

They were training people to be welders and bricklayers. These were some of the first classes. Then we began to move along and we saw the need for fire service training. Other programs or classes included new industry training, supervisor development training, electric line safety training, and seafood occupation training.
That was one of the big ones, learning to pick crabs and filet fish, net making and mending, and marine technology. It began to move. Governor Sanford saw how much it was needed when he came in (personal communication, November 23, 1998).

Terry Sanford had promised to make the advancement of quality educational opportunity the hallmark of his administration and he kept his word. In his inaugural address, he stated that North Carolinians must be willing to pay the cost of providing “the quality of education which they need to keep up in this rapidly advancing, scientific, complex world.” Sanford went on to say “quality education was the foundation of economic development, of democracy, of the needs and hopes of the nation. This is no age for the faint of heart” (Mitchell, 1966) Sanford came to believe that one of the best ways to accomplish this would be by emphasizing and financing what he came to call “in-between education.” In his first budget message to the General Assembly, Sanford referred to the “nineteen industrial education centers which are contributing so much to the industrial growth of our state.” He went on to ask for $763,000 to pay for additional equipment for the IECs (Mitchell, 1966, p. 6). The Governor felt that the industrial education centers and the community colleges (more properly referred to as public junior colleges prior to 1963 in North Carolina) could best meet this need for job training and education. Some were coming to believe that they could better meet this need if they were combined in to one system.

At the meeting of the Vocational Committee of the State Board of Education on January 4, 1961, the fifth and final item was a report by Wade Martin and Gerald James on their observations of the California system of community colleges. This report grew out of James’s trip to California during the week of December 5, 1960 to attend the American Vocational Association Convention in Los Angeles. At the invitation of the State Director of
Vocational Education in California, he went out a few days in advance of the meeting along with eight other state directors of vocational programs. During those eleven days, James studied the California Junior College System. He determined that these colleges were analogous to the combined Industrial Education Centers and Community Colleges in North Carolina – in other words, comprehensive community colleges. As such, he stated in his report:

> It is my basic view that the combination of area vocational programs and community colleges in North Carolina could be accomplished with great ease at the present time while both are just beginning. We certainly see a need for both in North Carolina. Can North Carolina afford two additional systems of education – area vocational programs and community colleges? … Now while both programs are in their infancy appears to be the time to examine our basic philosophy, objectives, and projected ways and means (personal communication, 1960, Herring Papers).

James’s prescient question was more aptly phrased than even he realized at the time. Contemporary events at one small eastern North Carolina junior college, combined with the faint-hearted and frustrated reaction of the chairman of the Board of Higher Education, were conspiring to overtake his report and force the examination of all of higher education in the state.

The February 1961 meeting of the North Carolina Board of Higher Education was in an uproar. Wilmington College (one of five public junior colleges) was petitioning to be granted senior college status. Wilmington had first requested such a change on November 21, 1960 when William M. Randall, its president, had written to Harris Purks, Director of the
Board of Higher Education, and asked for the approval and support of the Board in conferring the Bachelor of Medical Technology (BMT), a four year degree. This led the Board of Trustees of the college to expand their considerations and to seek full senior college status (W. Randall, personal communication, November 21, 1960, Herring Papers).

At the February meeting, the Board of Higher Education found themselves confronted with a request for the change in status, supported by a detailed and comprehensive thirteen page report entitled, “Blueprint for a College.” It included plans to seek enabling legislation from the state legislature to 1) amend the Community College Act to remove the two-year limitation in the definition of a community college (Section 2a (2)), and to extend the power of the legislature to appropriate operating funds for courses in the senior college (Section 7a). The report went on to suggest that at the next general election the additional tax of two cents per one hundred dollars should be sought from the voters of New Hanover County. It concluded, “This state and county legislation is all that will be required to enable the county to proceed” (Blueprint for a College, 1960, Herring Papers).

Major L. P. McLendon and many on the Board were frustrated and fearful of where such action would lead in the future. Would other community colleges, such as Charlotte in the West, join in the rush to four-year status? The Board remained in session until late afternoon without adjourning for lunch. Finally Dallas Herring suggested to Chairman McLendon that the idea had merit, but was premature. He recommended that the Board propose to Governor Sanford that he announce plans to appoint a formal study commission to take a look at education beyond the high school, specifically the community colleges. They could then ask for delay in any further decisions affecting the organization of higher education in the State. McLendon and others on the Board liked the idea, as did Governor
Sanford when McLendon and Herring went to see him. He agreed to appoint the commission (W. Herring, personal communication, September 11, 1984).

Chairman McLendon hoped to get the Board of Higher Education to appoint the commission and thus effectively control its outcome. When Dallas Herring learned of this, he hastened to pen a letter to Governor Sanford, which he sent to Raleigh by Robert Carr, a legislator, on Sunday, February 19. He urged Sanford to reserve the right, either to make appointments to the study commission or, to approve the appointments to be made by the Board of Higher Education. He confided to Sanford that Major McLendon had only reluctantly agreed to have representation from public school leaders, who had a vital interest in the community college program. He concluded,

If we had made the right decision with regard to policy in this field in 1957, some of the serious problems now coming up probably would never have arisen.

I hope that you yourself will give the study committee a well-defined policy directive as a guide for the study. You have every right to exert leadership of this kind and I, for one, desire very much to follow you and to help you in any way I can (Herring Papers).

With this letter, Herring decisively outflanked McLendon and McLendon’s mentor, Hiden Ramsey, the former Chairman of the Board of Higher Education. At his press conference the following day, Sanford announced that he had asked the State Board of Higher Education to suggest names of educators who should serve on a committee to work out a long range state policy for extending the community college system. Questions which needed to be explored, according to the Governor, included whether the present community college law is adequate as an “instrument of policy; what should be the relationship between
two year schools and the non-degree granting units of the expanding Industrial Education Center program; what should be the standards in determining need for additional two-year institutions, and what should be the relationship between two-year institutions and four year institutions?” (Segner, 1974, p. 86)

Later that year, Dallas Herring and William Friday met with Governor Sanford to recommend commission members. With the exception of two members, Sanford followed their recommendations; in September he announced the members of the commission. Formally named “The Governor’s Commission on Education Beyond the High School,” it came to be referred to as the Carlyle Commission, after its Chairman, Irving E. Carlyle, a powerful attorney from Winston-Salem (R. Stone, personal communication, March 19, 1997; R. Stone, videotaped speech, June 4, 1999). Dallas Herring, who was appointed, would work through the commission to fulfill his dream of a comprehensive community college system that was initially envisioned when the system of industrial education centers was established.

Although they continued to grow rapidly, 1961 was a pivotal year for the centers. Two major setbacks occurred in the areas of personnel and funding. First, the new state system lost its innovative and energetic director to its sister state, South Carolina. Wade Martin was courted by the South Carolina governor, Ernest F. Hollings, who wanted to establish a system of Industrial Education Centers similar to the one in North Carolina. In fact, groups from South Carolina toured the Burlington Center. Martin was particularly vulnerable because of his low salary, a fact that had concerned Herring for some time. As late as December 1960, he was writing to McCrary that Martin’s salary must be increased at least 5% to $10,105 (personal communication, Herring Papers). It was too little and too late.
In July, in the midst of tremendous expansion and continuing triumph, Martin submitted his resignation effective September 1 to become the director of South Carolina’s New Advisory Committee on Technical Education. His new salary was $14,400 (W. Martin, personal communication, 1961, Herring Papers).

Upon receiving his letter of resignation, Herring wrote that he deeply regretted Martin’s decision to leave, especially at a time when their careful planning and work “revealed considerable opportunity for service of unusual importance” (personal communication, July 18, 1961, Herring Papers). He continued:

I think I regret more than anything else the fact that you will not be here to enjoy the full fruit of your labor when these institutions will be junior colleges and thus full participants in the wonderful system we have dreamed of…

We certainly have not rewarded you well, but you will come to know, if you do not already know it (and I suspect you do), that the best reward is the knowledge that you have rendered service of enduring value to thousands of people of whom perhaps a majority do not even know your name (personal communication, July 18, 1961, Herring Papers).

Herring summed up his distress to Martin by stating that he felt as if there had been a “death in the family” (personal communication, July 18, 1961, Herring Papers). Later however, he would confide to Gerald James that the loss of Martin to South Carolina was not totally bereft of future benefit. He wrote, “Whether he realized it or not, I do feel that Wade did not have his heart in this and he (perhaps subconsciously) actually considered this broadening of the curriculum a threat to the industrial courses or his leadership. I say this
without meaning to be critical of him. Let’s just say that it was difficult for him to adjust to this obvious need” (personal communication, August 26, 1961, Herring Papers).

No successor to Martin had been picked and Gerald James oversaw the IEC program until Ivan Valentine came from the Burlington Center to take the post (Martin Gets South Carolina Post, 1961, p. 10). Neither James nor Valentine possessed Martin’s unique blend of vision and vitality, nor did they enjoy the close working relationship with Chairman Herring that Martin had cultivated.

The second major setback occurred when the state’s citizens soundly defeated a bond referendum for capital improvements for the community colleges. Unfortunately, legislators had attached amendments to the bill covering many miscellaneous expenditures, up to and including toilets for Mount Mitchell. Another reason for the rejection may have been the amount of money that taxpayers had already spent at the local level. For example, both Pitt and Rowan counties had authorized, by huge margins, bond issues to build their industrial education centers. Herring wrote to John Sanders, the secretary of the Carlyle Commission, “I feel so blue this morning after the defeat of the bond issue that I am not sure just what to say to you about our plans in higher education. I trust that we will get over this defeat and will be able to win a victory eventually.” Herring saw in the new commission a chance to fight for greater educational opportunities for the boys and girls of the state (personal communication, November 11, 1961, Herring Papers).

Herring was determined to influence the commission to establish a system of comprehensive community colleges built around the Industrial Education Centers. At its first meeting on 29 September 1961, the commission divided itself into seven working committees and named a chairman for each. President Leo Jenkins of East Carolina College
chaired the Community College and New Colleges Committee and Major McLendon chaired the Development of a System of Higher Education Committee. In March of 1962, the commission established a special study group on community colleges composed of these two committees. These committees had reported on February 23 that a professional survey team should be appointed in order to make recommendations concerning community colleges. This ad hoc committee, dubbed the College Survey Committee, was composed of Director William Archie of the Board of Higher Education, President William Friday of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Director Bonnie Cone of Charlotte College, President C. Robert Benson of the College of the Albemarle, President Glen Bushey of Asheville-Biltmore College and President William Randall of Wilmington College. (Segner, 1974, pp. 93-95).

The College Survey Committee met seven times between March 8 and June 6, 1962. During that time, several consultants advised it. These included Duke professor Allan S. Hurlburt, who while at East Carolina authored the Community College Study of 1953, James L. Wattenburger, director of community junior colleges for the state of Florida, and C. Horace Hamilton, Professor of Rural Sociology at North Carolina State College (Segner, 1974).

Hamilton had conducted a large number of sociological studies, most of which dealt with aspects of rural life such as tenant farming and health. The author of fourteen books and monographs by 1960, Hamilton had once stated that he was mainly interested in “getting facts into the hands of people who can get things done” (Segner, 1974).

In the fall of 1961, the Carlyle Commission and the Board of Higher Education requested Hamilton to make a new study of enrollment projections for North Carolina
colleges and universities from 1962 to 1980. The study impressed both commission and board members, and in early 1962, they asked Hamilton for a detailed study of the entire state, by counties and areas, to determine the possible need for additional tax-supported institutions. This study entitled, *Community Colleges for North Carolina: A Study of Need, Location, and Service Areas*, was published in September of 1962. It documented an enrollment crisis in higher education and pointed to the need for state and private institutions “to move rapidly toward an expansion of educational facilities, if the needs of the state for the next eight to ten years were to be met” (Hamilton, 1962, p. ii). In the face of a growing population of college age youth and the growing industrial needs of the economy, the study pointed out that North Carolina’s 58 colleges and universities were not distributed economically or conveniently in terms of either geography or population. For example, six large metropolitan counties claimed twenty-six of the fifty-eight colleges and four other counties had one college each. Sixty-six counties did not have any colleges at all (Hamilton, 1962, p. 25).

Hamilton suggested in his study that the best and most economical way to meet this burgeoning need for additional college facilities would be through community colleges. He stated that the “establishment of community colleges is an effective means of increasing the percentage of high school graduates going to college and of lowering the cost of education for those who can commute to college” (Hamilton, 1962, pp. 17, 37). Hamilton’s in-depth study identified 26 areas in the state as possible locations for community colleges with a 400 plus enrollment potential. These 26 colleges would serve a total population of about 1,981,000 people. Their outreach and influence would be even greater if community colleges were established in ten additional areas having 300 plus enrollment. Thirty percent of these
students would not otherwise have an opportunity to attend college (Hamilton, 1962, pp. 17, 37).

Hamilton’s study proved to be a major factor in shaping the community college suggestions of the College Survey Committee. Irving Carlyle, chairman of the Governor’s Commission on Education Beyond the High School, later referred to it as a “monumental job,” and it proved critical, not only to the committee’s final recommendation, but to defending that recommendation long after the commission’s work was completed (Segner, 1974, pp. 95-96). The study also served to spur further expansion. After the study was presented to the Committee and became public, many communities named as potential college sites began lobbying for a school of their own. William Archie’s office was besieged by requests and letters, which he duly forwarded to the State Board of Education. These communities included New Bern and Lumberton. (Herring Papers, 1962).

Dallas Herring was undeterred in his devotion to the cause of expanding the educational opportunities for high school graduates and adults. Throughout 1962, he labored to have a community college system established, and he came to enjoy the support of not only powerful political leaders, but most of the media as well. On January 22, 1962, he pressed his position in a paper entitled “Are Technicians People?” which he circulated to members of the Carlyle Commission. In the paper he pointed out the fantastic growth of the Industrial Education Centers. He stated that the schools were reaching over 22,000 individuals. As of the date of the report, there were twenty Industrial Education Centers in various stages of development (Herring Papers).

Herring went on to suggest that the state had a duty to provide educational opportunities for these students, which would meet their “total needs” at a cost they could
afford and at locations within their reach. To do this he recommended that changes in state policy be made to allow the State Board to develop a post high school level general education program to meet the needs of these students. He also felt the Board should be given full authority to develop a system of credits and degrees for graduates of two year programs offered by the Industrial Education Centers, and the authority to cooperate with existing state institutions of higher learning in making extension courses available in the Industrial Education Centers. Other recommendations involving administration, tuition, and standards and curricula were made as well. Herring concluded:

We do not need and we do not want a society of technicians who have no sense of values in the realm of the humanities. We do not want a society of specialists who are unaware in a meaningful way of their larger responsibility to humanity, the State and themselves. But we do need specialists at the technician level. The important point is that we must not make them automatons for technicians are people. They are human beings with human needs and responsibilities. The fact that they wear blue collars and come from less privileged economic groups has nothing to do with these goals, except to underline and reinforce the need for an intelligent and humane policy with regard to them. (January 22, 1962, Herring Papers)

The press agreed with Herring’s views on the need for comprehensive community colleges that would meet the total needs of students. The Raleigh Times, the Winston-Salem Journal, the News and Observer, the Greensboro Daily News, and Charlotte News all favored the community college proposal. The Asheville Citizen was typical when it declared, “In addition to eliminating a lot of expensive dormitory costs, this is a basic reason
[convenient location] why North Carolina needs a number of good community colleges strategically located. The small colleges reach the people” (Segner, 1974, pp. 102-104).

Not everyone eagerly anticipated the development of a community college system created by the merger of the industrial education centers and existing community colleges. Chief among these opponents were private college educators who felt the community colleges would be a threat to their schools through unfair competition for prospective students. Horace Hamilton had foreseen this concern and devoted a portion of his study to allaying private college fears. He asserted that although the establishment of new community colleges would have some effect on the enrollment of existing colleges, both public and private, junior and senior; the impact would be mitigated by the rapidly increasing enrollment in all types of colleges. The competition between public and private colleges would be primarily on a statewide basis, as it had always been. In important ways as well, they were different institutions serving for the most part, different populations (Hamilton, 1962, pp. 41-43).

Educators such as Budd Smith, President of Wingate College (Baptist), and John B. Bennett, Dean of Brevard College (Methodist), disagreed with the Hamilton report. Both thought that private colleges would be seriously hurt by community colleges. Harold Cole, executive secretary of the Baptist State Convention’s Council on Christian Education warned that a community college system would “greatly imperil the private and church related junior colleges. Many of these fine private colleges will be forced to close their doors in the face of insurmountable competition on the part of tax supported institutions” (Segner, 1974, p. 114). In referring to the Carlyle Commission’s work, he fumed that the state should “refrain from the imperialistic policies that will force them out of existence” (Segner, 1974, p. 114).
concerns and those of Smith’s would be amplified by a young media executive in Raleigh. Jesse Helms, Vice President of News, Public Affairs and Programming, with WRAL – TV, warned in a Viewpoint broadcast that fall:

Governor Sanford and his associates have not even begun to prove their case [for establishing a publicly supported community college system]. They have not really presented much of a persuasive argument for it. They have advanced an idea, undoubtedly with the best of intentions, but one based on shaky premises at best. This is as good a time as any for our legislators to remember North Carolina’s motto which urges us to be rather than to seem. It is not enough to “seem” interested in advancing higher education; it is imperative that we “be” sure of what we are doing. It is important that we know the difference between ballyhoo and benefit.” (Viewpoint broadcast)

Dallas Herring was certain he knew the difference. In a letter to Irving Carlyle and in an article published in North Carolina Education, he eloquently and passionately stated the case for the new system. He began by recognizing “considerable opposition” among some of the private junior college leaders to the system of comprehensive community colleges. This opposition did not surprise Herring, (after all, it had been the death of the 1953 effort), and he did not take it lightly. He called it a “modern expression of a historic argument” reaching back to the beginning of the twentieth century (personal communication, July 11, 1962, Herring Papers).

After complimenting the church colleges on their wonderful efforts on behalf of education in North Carolina, and pointing out that he was a product of such a school
(Davidson), Herring went on to argue that a system of community colleges would neither damage nor retard “any worthy educational effort” (Personal communication, July 11, 1962, Herring Papers). Instead, it would actually reinforce and encourage the growth of all existing institutions because it would bring thousands into higher education who would not otherwise go to college and send a substantial portion on to existing private and public senior institutions. Beyond this fact, Herring warned:

The State must educate. The State must be educated. The alternative is slavery – economic, cultural, social and political servitude. The choice is between ignorance and enlightenment on a vast scale. If we do not double our enrollments we will double our poverty. If we double our poverty, we will double our dependence upon others and when we do that we give up that much of our freedom. The churches have no right to ask that we place a straight jacket on public higher education in order that we may preserve the status quo at so high a cost in human value. (July 11, 1962, Herring Papers)

Referring to the 25,000 students being served in the industrial education centers, Herring stated that they had enrolled because they needed education for economic survival in an “economy that is changing more rapidly than our ideas about education are changing.” He asked, “Is technical education alone adequate for them? Are they not also legatees of our nation’s grand concept of freedom? Are they not also inheritors of all that is great and good in Western Civilization? Shall we not teach them some of the humanitarian values that have made our country great?” (Herring Papers)

Herring was certain they must. Yet others, and not just churchmen and their educational leaders, were not so sure. They, including some faculty and administrators at the
state’s college’s and universities, were concerned with the quality of liberal arts instruction that these students would receive in the new community colleges. An editorial in *The News and Observer* cautioned that community colleges might compromise their academic standards. The editor warned:

Nothing could be more tragic than that slip—shod, second class institutions be established with the support and approval of the State of North Carolina. Certainly a fraud would be perpetuated on the hopes of youth if the graduates of the two-year community colleges were not well qualified to enter the junior classes of established North Carolina colleges and universities. And all State-supported higher education in North Carolina would be degraded if the State four-year colleges were permitted to lower their standards to accept poorly prepared community college products (Editorial, *The News and Observer*, 1962, p. 4).

Chairman Dallas Herring, President Bill Friday, and Governor Terry Sanford sought opportunities to speak to university faculty and trustees and to allay their fears. In their eyes, the system was necessary for those that the university often turned away and essential for the state’s economic health. As Terry Sanford later stated before the University of North Carolina Faculty Club in Chapel Hill, North Carolina needed a system of community colleges, “which will provide adult education throughout the State, which will give opportunities to those who would otherwise not have them and will take some of the pressure of numbers off the Consolidated University” (T. Sanford, speech, January 8, 1963, Herring Papers).

At its June meeting (June 22, 1962), the Carlyle Commission unanimously adopted the community college report of the College Survey Committee. This document, which
became a part of the final report issued in October, advocated a system of low tuition, comprehensive community colleges, which would be administered by the State Board of Education. That system would be composed, initially, of the twenty industrial education centers and the five (so-called) community colleges (Segner, 1974, p. 96; Progress Report: North Carolina Community College, 1971, pp. 1-4).

In a speech in Fayetteville at his alma mater, Methodist College, on November 15, 1962, Terry Sanford explained his plans to emphasize high quality education at the college level. He began by stating that North Carolina must say to its young people, “If you have the will and the skill, you can go to college” (Mitchell, 1966, p. 296). His North Carolina Master Plan for education beyond the high school was based upon the comprehensive report, which the Carlyle Commission had turned in to him some weeks prior. In referring to the Industrial Education Centers he said,

   We already have in our state the community college concept and we have the industrial education center concept, having tried the former on a limited basis and the latter on a rapidly expanding basis. We know how these work, what they can do, whom they will reach. … This then will be our plan. One system of public two-year post high school institutions offering college parallel studies, technical –vocational-terminal work, and adult education instruction tailored to area needs, subject to state-level supervision by the State Board of Education, and advised by a proposed State Community College Advisory Council (Mitchell, 1966, pp. 296-297).

Thus the marriage of the Industrial Education Centers and the public junior colleges was announced with the requisite rejoicing and weeping by both sides. Neither institution would remain the same, but in the eyes of Sanford, Herring, and others like them, such
change was necessary “to provide enrichment for the lives of those who otherwise would be passed by” (Mitchell, 1966, p. 297).

As the Carlyle Commission study was completed and made its way from the governor’s mansion to the floor of the General Assembly, the Industrial Education Centers continued their spectacular development and expansion, creating greater access to education for students in North Carolina. It was a role that they would continue to play even after becoming, first technical institutes and then, comprehensive community colleges in the new system.

By late 1962, the IEC system had grown to include 20 institutions, the original 18 plus the new Industrial Education Centers in Pitt and Rowan counties. In addition, four IECs were operating units that soon became centers in their own right - Anson, Isothermal, James Sprunt, and Pamlico. Altogether, the industrial education centers enrolled 25,800 students in the 1961-1962 school year and 35,000 in 1962-63 (Progress Report, 1971, pp. 1-2). In the 1962-1963 school year 3,240 students completed two years training and entered career fields such as Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Electronics, and Mechanical Drafting and Design (IEC—Educating for Industry, 1962, pp. 1-2). In most areas, industry was anxious to hire the new graduates, and jobs or promotions awaited them.

Although the Carlyle Commission recommendations would assure the continued operation and growth of the Industrial Education Centers under a new name (first as Technical Institutes and then as Community Colleges), there was no assurance at the time that the important new legislation would pass. Referred to as the Act to Promote and Encourage Education Beyond the High School (or the Omnibus Education Act of 1963), there were fears among commission members that government leaders would give in to
mounting pressure to avoid changing the IEC system and thus restrict its growth. The commission had made 61 recommendations for improving higher education, the majority of which were contained in the section entitled, “Comprehensive Community Colleges.” These institutions would be governed by the State Board of Education and administered through a professional Department of Community Colleges. A seven-member non-professional Community College Advisory Council would advise the State Board of Education (Wiggs, 1989, pp. 12-15).

The Carlyle Report, as opposed to the 1957 Community College Act, stipulated that a district could be composed of more than one county, thus opening the door in many areas that otherwise could not support a college. Land, buildings, and maintenance cost would be borne by the local government; equipment, furnishings, and libraries were to be funded by the state. There were two areas that proved to be sticking points with some after the report was made public 1) selected Industrial Education Centers were to have college parallel instruction added, but only with the approval of the State Board of Education, and only after local interest and need were demonstrated and 2) these institutions were to be administered by a local board of twelve trustees, subject to the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education (Wiggs, 1989, pp. 12-15).

Early on some Commission members were concerned that Governor Sanford was uncomfortable with the idea of combining the Industrial Education Centers and community colleges. On September 24, 1962, Herring wrote to John Reynolds, a fellow State Board member, that he was glad to have his support of the Community College – IEC concept, especially since Epps Ready and others had confided in him that the Governor was lukewarm about this provision of the Carlyle Commission Report. He complained that he had written
several letters to him urging him to support them, but he had not replied to any. Herring stated:

The Governor said frankly that Governor Hodges had been pressuring him to refuse to go along with us on the Community College-IEC idea. He of course takes credit for originating the IEC idea and he did support it, but the idea came from us. I told Governor Sanford that I was never able to get Governor Hodges to see that the IEC students were entitled to some general education. He replied that he was strongly in favor of giving them general education, but he felt that Hodges had a point when he said that the comprehensive institution might have the tendency to lower standards in the college parallel work and raise the IEC standards too high. I told him that I didn’t feel that this was at all the case and that in my opinion some of our IEC courses were just as high as much of the college parallel work being done in the senior institutions. He gave me the impression that he had an open mind on it and would be willing to listen to reason… (personal communication, September 24, 1962, Herring Papers).

Neither Hodges’s nor Herring’s fears would be realized. Students from the Industrial Education Centers were already beginning to prove the worth of their education. Within days of his letter to Reynolds, Herring had received a letter from Salvatore DelMastro, director of the Wilson Industrial Education Center, enthusiastically recounting how one of their students, Robert Collins, had “knocked the lid off” the college entrance exam for freshman entering the School of Education at North Carolina State. Herring was delighted and immediately saw an opportunity to press his point with Governor Sanford about the quality of the IEC courses. He wrote to Dean Durwin Hanson of the School of Education at North Carolina State asking that he forward him a copy of the documentation for, as he
wrote, “I think it would help me to convince him that our recommendation is correct if I could point out to him that we have achieved this kind of excellence so early in the history of the IEC movement” (S. DelMastro, personal communication, September 21, 1962; W. Herring, personal communication, September 25, 1962, Herring Papers).

Sanford, at the prompting of Herring, Reynolds, Bonnie Cone of Charlotte College, and others, became a staunch advocate of the IEC-Community College merger. As Herring had foreseen, Cliff Blue, Speaker of the House, and Robert Humber, a powerful state senator, and much of the political leadership of the General Assembly quickly saw the value, politically, and otherwise, of the new education system. Indeed, in those communities, which Horace Hamilton had suggested as potential sites for new community colleges, enthusiastic support was a foregone conclusion (W. Herring to J. Reynolds, personal communication, September 24, 1962, Herring Papers). By November 20, Herring was able to write to Bonnie Cone thanking her for her support and telling her that the Governor had endorsed the Community College Proposal completely and was firmly behind the Carlyle Commission recommendations (personal communication, November 20, 1962, Herring Papers).

On February 7, 1963 Governor Sanford gave his Biennial Message to the North Carolina General Assembly. In his speech, he outlined four objectives in higher education, which summarized the Carlyle Commission recommendations. They were 1) a better definition of the university, 2) greater cooperation with the private colleges, 3) enrichment of the program at all state colleges and expansion of the university to include campuses at Wilmington, Charlotte, and Asheville, and 4) to establish under the Board of Education, in conjunction with the Industrial Education Centers, a system of comprehensive community colleges. To support his request for the new system, Sanford’s Budget request contained $1
million dollars to make a modest start on the new system in the next two years (Mitchell, 1966, pp. 64-65; Wiggs, 1989, p. 15.

On February 20 the Joint Appropriations Committee began discussion of the proposed system of community colleges. Two Republican members of the Committee suggested that private colleges should be invited to give their views of the changes. Dallas Herring, appearing before the Committee, assured them there would be no competition with private or church related colleges. Irving Carlyle of Winston-Salem, among others, was invited to appear before the Committee to discuss the proposal (Community college questions, 1963, p. 3).

It was not the private colleges, or their supporters, however, that posed the greatest obstacle to the bill’s passage in the end, but a group of public school superintendents and their supporters on the State Board of Education. These men wanted to retain control of the Industrial Education Centers in their districts and felt that if they did not, vocational education would be harmed in their schools and redundant programming would occur.

As the IECs had developed in certain districts, a disproportionate emphasis had been placed upon high school vocational training to the neglect of adults for whom the system was originally established. Reid Ross of Fayetteville, Herrick Roland (and later, William Waggoner) of Wilmington, John Hough of Reidsville, Woody Sugg of Gastonia, and Craig Phillips of Winston-Salem had emphasized this type of training in their IECs at the expense of the adult education component, and in total disregard of the terms of the contracts that the State Board of Education had with their administrative units which clearly required that the IECs were for adults (B. Hayes and W. Herring, personal communication, March 4, 1996; W. Herring, personal communication, July 1999). These superintendents could not bear the
thought of losing control of the schools. In addition, there were members of the State Board of Education who shared former governor Luther Hodges’ concerns that the addition of general education courses to the Industrial Education Centers would compromise instruction in the industrial arts and cause the schools to lose their focus on vocational training. These members included Charles McCrary, influential Chairman of the Terminal Education Committee, Charles Rose of Fayetteville, and at one point, Guy Phillips of Chapel Hill. Dallas Herring forestalled a direct challenge at the Board meeting by meeting privately with Phillips. He later recalled,

McCrary and Rose went out to have lunch together after the morning session. Guy Phillips, who was crippled by arthritis, went down to the snack bar in the basement of the education building. Aware of the simmering rebellion afoot, I sought out Guy. Finding him eating lunch, I sat down at the table with him. I reminded him that the Governor was firmly behind the proposal to merge the two systems and public opposition by Board members at this stage would only serve to embarrass him. Besides, I had the necessary votes to counter the opposition. Phillips agreed to support the measure at that point (personal communication, July 6, 1999).

Nevertheless, the opposition among the superintendents grew and solidified. Herring, always one to keep the Governor fully informed, wrote Sanford on March 22 that a “minority of superintendents, who had IECs in their units, were disturbed about the Community College Bill. Although I. E. Ready had talked with them, he was going to meet with them in Raleigh at Fred Smith’s office on March 25 in an attempt to explain the advantages of the
proposed system. He confided, “I am confident we can hold them in line” (personal communication, Herring Papers).

In Herring’s eyes, the March 25 meeting was a success. He was able to persuade most of the superintendents of the value of the new system to their communities and the state at large. He wrote to Guy Phillips giving him a complete report of the meeting. He stated, “I think that Reid Ross and one or two others are the only diehards in this whole matter and that with the reassurances that I gave them … we may expect this matter to die out without too much trouble” (personal communication, March 28, 1963, Herring Papers).

Unfortunately, Herring had underestimated his opposition. Still unsatisfied with the bill and Herring’s reassurances, Reid Ross, William Waggoner of New Hanover, Fred Smith of Wake, John Hough of Leaksville, and others requested a meeting with Governor Sanford to explain their opposition. At the meeting, they again pressed the case that the changes would be harmful to vocational education in their units. Unknown to them, Sanford had earlier contacted Dallas Herring, who sat in an adjoining room out of sight, and heard their complaints through the open door. At the conclusion of their presentation and discussion, the Governor thanked them for sharing their concerns. However, he said that Herring was in the next room and he was going to defer to his judgment about the matter. The superintendents left the office surprised and somewhat chastened, resigned to the fact that the Industrial Education Centers would now become a part of the new system of community colleges (W. Herring, personal communication, July 6, 1999).
Gordon Greenwood, Ned Delamar, and 23 other representatives introduced the Omnibus Education Bill in the House as House Bill 140 (Wiggs, 1989, p. 15). It easily passed the House. Delamar remembered:

We all thought it was a great thing. … Gordon Greenwood, who had the bill, Hugh Johnson, and I. We sat close together. Gordon Greenwood was right across the aisle from me, Hugh Johnson sat right in front of me, and Ed Wilson was just over the way. We got together and we got a bunch of signers and we sponsored the bill. Clifton Blue was the Speaker at that time and we had it all lined up with Dr. Robert Lee Humber over in the Senate (Humber was chairman of the Senate Committee on Higher Education)… So while they were arguing about the name change of State College, we got the bill passed. (N. Delamar, personal communication, November 23, 1998)

The Bill was subsequently ratified as Senate Bill 72 on May 17 and was scheduled to go into effect July 1, 1963. After it was passed by the House, and its eventual implementation was assured, Herring wrote to Sanford (personal communication, May 13, 1963, Herring Papers), of the new legislation, that “it marks without doubt one of the major turning points in our educational history, an event which historians in distant times will cite as the beginning of what at last we may hope to call a true system of education.” He went on to commend Sanford and other political supporters of the bill as worthy of the gratitude of all those “who desire to see the State reach out in a meaningful way to all who have the ability to learn” (personal communication, May 13, 1963, Herring Papers).
The State Board of Education expressed its great satisfaction with the new legislation in a formal proclamation, specifically singling out the section of the law dealing with community colleges by stating,

All parts of the new blueprint are important and significant, but the State Board of Education especially welcomes the opportunity afforded to develop a system of comprehensive community colleges, technical institutes and technical education centers; and it is convinced that this new system, adequately administered and supported, will enable the State to improve its economic, cultural and social life in a way not otherwise possible (North Carolina State Board of Education Minutes, June 1963, Herring Papers).

To ensure such administration for the system, the State Board named Isaac Epps Ready as state director of the new system. Isaac Epps Ready had graduated with honors from the University of South Carolina and went on to secure a doctorate in education from New York University. He had served within the Department of Administration for five years, overseeing the Curriculum Research Study. As Ben Fountain, former president of the system remembered him:

He was a very scholarly kind of man. My mother taught school with him before she was married and before I was born, in Rocky Mount. He was superintendent in Roanoke Rapids and I went up to talk to him as a young man about getting a doctorate. He did not encourage me. He was one of the few men that had a doctorate. … Then he went on to Raleigh with his curriculum study commission and was active in the effort to draft the community college act. Became the first director
of the system. Just a fine scholarly gentlemen (personal communication, January 11, 2005).

Ready and Herring worked together to oversee the development and expansion of the new system of community colleges in the remaining years of the Sanford Administration. In addition, in June of 1963 the Community College Advisory Council was established to advise the State Board. Herring appointed Allan Hurlburt, now at Duke University, to chair the new council. Other members of the sixteen-person body included William Friday, Bonnie Cone of Charlotte College, Howard Boozer, assistant director of the State Board of Higher Education, and C. C. Scarborough of North Carolina State. The new council was responsible for recommending solutions to the State Board to such questions as “How should an open door admission policy be defined?” and “How can the Board equitably recommend expenditure of the $2.5 million expected to be available as general fund surplus on July 1, 1964?” (North Carolina Community College Advisory Council Minutes, 1963, Herring Papers)

As planned, the industrial education centers became a part of the new comprehensive community college system. In fact they were the primary institutions around which the new system was built. Only two “community colleges” operating under the 1957 Community College Act, Mecklenburg College and the College of the Albemarle, came under the control of the State Board of Education. (The other three, Asheville, Charlotte and Wilmington, became four year institutions.) Altogether, the State Board was responsible for 29 institutions. (Wiggs, 1989, pp. 15-17).

The State Board, acting on the recommendation of the Community College Advisory Council, established a policy for the transition of IECs and technical institutes to community
colleges. Now the industrial education centers could begin awarding two-year associate degrees and be designated by the State Board as technical institutes. College parallel instruction programs were authorized in the institutes, which led to their status as comprehensive community colleges. The State Board decided to allow each IEC to apply for approval as a technical institute and subsequently, a two year curriculum (the IECs were restricted to a twelve month curriculum). And in at least one case, Wake County, approval was denied until a capable president was employed (W. Herring, personal communication, July 1999).

By the end of the Sanford Administration, the community college system was comprised of 11 community colleges, 12 technical institutes, 6 industrial education centers, and 5 extension units. In other words, in just 18 months, the total number of units in the system had increased from 25 to 34 and the number of comprehensive community colleges had increased from 2 to 11. Furthermore, during 1963—1964, over 70,000 individuals enrolled in the institutions for short or full-time training. Also plans were afoot to offer a two-year registered nursing program, if the necessary legislation could be secured from the General Assembly (Wiggs, 1989, pp.36-37).

However, a gubernatorial election would once again intervene to change the political atmosphere and give pause to community college leaders and their supporters in the government. Though Terry Sanford’s anointed successor, Richardson Preyer, was poised to pick up the Sanford mantle of quality education; a quiet, thoughtful and conservative judge from western North Carolina, Dan Moore, was preparing to stride onto the political stage. In so doing, he would reinvigorate the hopes of the private institutions and church related
schools while requiring that the community colleges closely reexamine their growth and their goals.
Chapter Four

THE MOORE YEARS: MORE NOT LESS

The only valid philosophy for North Carolina is the philosophy of total education: a belief in the incomparable worth of all human beings, whose claims upon the State are equal before the law and equal before the bar of public opinion, whose talents (however great or however limited or however different from the traditional) the State needs and must develop to the fullest possible degree. That is why the doors to the institutions in North Carolina’s System of Community Colleges must never be closed to anyone of suitable age who can learn what they teach. We must take the people where they are and carry them as far as they can go within the assigned function of the system.

William Dallas Herring (1964)

Understanding the problem of poverty is not enough. The undereducated must be educated; the hungry must be fed; people who are full of despair must be given new hope; and a new road must be paved for the lost.”

Frank Weaver (1968)

“Stated briefly, my administration will seek to give the people of North Carolina honest, efficient, and economical government” (Mitchell, 1971) With that statement, spoken at his inauguration on January 8, 1965, newly elected Governor Dan Moore simultaneously described himself and the government that he would seek to provide North Carolina during the next four years. He went on to state, “I do not contend that we are a high tax state, but I do contend that our taxes are high enough and should not be increased” (Mitchell, 1971). The Governor went on to use the term “total development” twice in his speech, thus intimating that he planned to place equal emphasis on all services and departments of state government, none would be favored over the other (Mitchell, 1971, pp. 3-9). It was obvious to the careful listeners among the state’s educational policy leaders, especially those in the community college system that the largesse of the Sanford years was over. As Ed Rankin (personal communication, October 15, 2004), director of the Department of Administration under Moore, recalled, “One of the things that he was hell bent on, he said that I am going to look
at all of it. I’m not going to be the education governor. I’m not going to be the roads governor. … I will look at the whole of North Carolina and he did.” According to Rankin (2004), educators and the community college people no longer had an “in with the king.”

Terry Sanford had tried to crown his successor and ensure that his legacy would continue. Former Governor Bob Scott (personal communication, November 9, 2004) recalled that Sanford supporters held a semi-secret meeting at the old Holiday Inn next to Interstate 85 for the purpose of determining whom “they would get behind and support for the next governor of North Carolina.” Terry Sanford attended, though he donned a hat, raincoat and sunglasses to do so. The attendees were led to believe that they were being asked for advice, but actually the decision had already been made. As Scott recalled,

Finally somebody said, “How about Judge Richardson Preyer?” Well that, you know, sparked some supportive conversation from Bert Bennett and a few other key people. So they said, “Well let’s get him in here and talk with him. We’re here in Greensboro and he lives in Greensboro.” Well, it wasn’t five minutes before he got there and I knew he lived across town. So he had to be in another room, down there. And they brought him in and anointed him as the candidate. And I turned around and looked at Lauch Faircloth and I said, “What do you think, Lauch?” And Lauch says, “He’ll never make it in eastern North Carolina.” And he was right. He did not. He may have eaten as much barbecue as anyone else, but he didn’t talk the talk and walk the walk. (R. Scott, personal communication, November 9, 2004)

Opposing Preyer was I. Beverly Lake, representing the right wing of the Democrat Party. But the moderates and many of the conservatives in the party wanted someone in the
center, who was neither liberal nor reactionary. Someone to slow the pace of change. And in Dan Moore, most felt they had their man.

Born in the town of Asheville and a graduate of the University at Chapel Hill, Moore had served as a superior court judge and was renowned in the west for his fairness, honesty and deliberate pace. Philosophically aligned with the conservative, established wing of the Democrat party, his name was mentioned early on by his friends in the mountains as a potential candidate. Moore finally reluctantly entered the race. Most political observers and most of his opponent’s supporters refused to take his candidacy seriously. He borrowed the money from the bank to start his campaign and his family made up most of his key staff in the early days of the campaign (Mitchell, 1971). In addition, it did not help that Moore was not a public speaker. Ed Rankin (personal communication, 2004) remembered, “In the early days of his campaign, when we listened to some of his recordings, John [Hardin, fellow campaign worker] and I said, ‘Oh God!’ … I mean he knew the language, but he could not speak well.”

But to those who opposed Richardson Preyer, but could not support Lake, he was their only hope. “Snow” (Lewis) Holding, a politically active young Democrat and prominent banker (with First Citizens) gravitated toward Moore. To Holding, Lake was frightening and Preyer represented more Sanford–style innovation paid for with taxpayer dollars. Rankin stated:

He got his crowd together and said, we are going to help this man. And one of the things they did was to call a rally of Moore supporters from around the state and have them come to Raleigh. They rented a bunch of buses and brought in busloads. Well, no one knew how it was going to turn out. … Snow and his boys went to work and on
that night they had busloads rolling in from all over North Carolina to support Dan Moore at the big event at the hotel and it was highly successful. That really rejuvenated the campaign.

Moore went on to place second in the first primary on May 30, 1964 with 257,872 votes to Preyer’s 281,430. With Lake eliminated, Moore could count on many of Lake’s supporters to vote for him in the run-off. To the chagrin of Sanford and his supporters, some of whom tried to play the race card by suggesting Moore sought the black vote, Lake supporters voted for Moore in record numbers (Dan Moore asks support, 1964). Moore defeated Preyer in June by over 180,000 votes. He went on to defeat Robert Gavin in the fall by a similar margin, thus securing the governor’s mansion for the conservatives (Mitchell, 1971, pp. xxiv).

State Board of Education Chairman, Dallas Herring, like many Sanford supporters, had strongly and openly backed Richardson Preyer for governor. After it became obvious Moore would be elected, he sent a letter to Epps Ready on June 16, bemoaning Moore’s conservatism and expressing fear that progress in education could be endangered. He warned that his support of Preyer might result in his loss of the chairmanship and concluded:

I certainly intend to take a strong stand for continuing our present course [of expansion] even if I do not remain throughout the term as chairman. We could become the focus of liberal sentiment in a hold-the-line administration. If we do, we certainly must keep the issues, rather than the personalities, before the people. In either event, this job will require the utmost of us. (personal communication, Herring Papers)
As an example of the type of cost conscious activities in which they might engage, Herring suggested to Ready that the department begin work on an in house publication, *The Open Door*, which might serve to make the public more aware of the value of this new system of education.

As mentioned earlier, the governor’s inaugural gave Herring no cause for comfort. But most startling to him and other community college supporters were the comments which the Governor made in his first budget address to the General Assembly in March of 1965. During that address, Moore stated that, in view of limited tax resources available to the state, the General Assembly should objectively appraise all budget requests and prioritize those which could be funded at the present time. He went on to say

As only one example, I would cite the community college program as a major area of activity which deserves your careful appraisal. Satisfactory progress appears to have been made in the new Department of Community Colleges. The General Assembly, however, must determine the rate of acceleration and development in this new field of state–financed education beyond the high school. It would be well to reexamine the original concept of the community college program with reference to geographical locations, needs to be met, and the arrangements for state support. We must not overlook that North Carolina has forty–four private and church–related colleges which offer many educational resources that should not be duplicated by state–financed community colleges.

I should like to emphasize that I believe in the value of a sound, carefully planned, well–financed community college program. These institutions, along with existing private and church–related schools, can expand the reach of our educational
system to many additional students and help take the pressure off our state–financed, 
four–year colleges and the university (Mitchell, 1971, p. 43).

Obviously the fiscally conservative governor meant to look closely at the system’s 
expansion and private colleges and universities had a friend in the governor’s mansion.

Dallas Herring was alarmed by what he read in The News and Observer the next day. 
He was even more certain that tight days lay ahead for the fast growing community college 
system. He recalls that same week; he drove to Raleigh to see State Treasurer Edwin Gill. 
Herring considered Gill, also on the State Board of Education, to be an ally and he was 
known to have the Governor’s ear. He was surprised to learn that Gill had actually written 
that part of the speech for the Governor. Concerned that the system was growing too fast, 
resulting in needless duplication of programs and the waste of precious state revenue, Gill 
suggested the community colleges as one place where better efficiency could be realized in 
the future. Herring recalled, “Gill and I didn’t fall out about it. He understood and respected 
my concerns that this was my baby and I was taking care of it. … I told him you watch me 
and I’ll take care of it. And Governor Moore won’t have anything else to worry about” 
(personal communication, March 7, 2000).

Edwin Gill became one of the staunchest supporters the community colleges had in 
the new administration. Herring deftly courted his favor. He had his two field men, Ned 
Delemar and Ed Wilson, arrange for Gill and Herring to visit Wayne Tech. The State 
Treasurer could thus see firsthand the work that the technical institute was doing. On the 
trip, Herring pointed out that the schools were teaching more contact hours in vocational 
technical training for industry than they ever had before. Furthermore, he pointed out to Gill 
that, “You know as a scholar yourself that if these people can’t read and write, they can’t
progress. So we’ve got to teach them” (W. Herring, personal communication, March 7, 2000). The State Treasurer returned to Wayne Technical Institute in May of 1966 to give the graduation address and to remind its students that “we must not forget that you cannot educate only a part of a man or a woman. What is done here affects the entire person and has its influence upon your total hopes and dreams” (Remarks of the Honorable Edwin Gill, May 22, 1966, Herring Papers).

Even as he won new friends for the system, Herring was intent on gaining a measure of control over the system that would safeguard it in the future from such concerns as those voiced by the Governor and the State Treasurer. He had already grown concerned about the inequitable distribution of community colleges in the state. Also, there was no sense in the way that salaries were set. Some directors of extension units made two to three thousand less than other, later arriving leaders. The business manager of Sandhills Community College was making more that the State Controller, A. C. Davis. And in some cases, the growth of extension units or new colleges was uncontrolled. As Herring (personal communication, March 7, 2000), “They were growing like weeds in a barnyard hit by a little fertilizer. It needed to be, not muzzled, but put a harness on. … Russell Swindell created the one (extension unit) in Pamlico, I didn’t even know it was down there till I went down to address the graduating class. I went down and they were all in the schoolhouse waiting for me to give out the diplomas. That’s the God’s honest truth. That’s how informal it [the growth of the system was] was.”

Herring and the Board of Education demanded that the department look closely at the growth and distribution of colleges and funds across the state. In October, the Department
shared its findings with the Board. The results indicated that there were indeed some inequities.

The staff of the department had divided the state into three regions—east, central and west. They found that roughly 34% of the total population resided in eastern North Carolina, 51% in central North Carolina and 15% in the west. Yet, not counting extension units, the east claimed only 8 institutions (technical institutes and community colleges, whereas central North Carolina had 15 and the west had 6. The distribution of funds was even more disconcerting to Herring and others like him from the East. By 1965, the full time equivalent enrollment (FTE) of the system was 13,268. Of that enrollment: 42% were enrolled in the east, 50% in the Piedmont (central) and only 8% in the west. Yet, the Piedmont enjoyed over 66% of the equipment purchased since 1958. Most telling of all, the amount of money spent per FTE was much higher in both the mountains and the piedmont. It was apparent to Herring and others on the Board that the East was not getting its fair share (Regional Distribution Charts, 1965).

With the facts now out in the open, Herring directed the Department staff to come up with a formula to determine how appropriations would be shared among the school. He suggested that they take the line item budgets and add up all the sheets for the whole system. Then by taking the FTE for each institution, they could come up with a formula. He told them, “We are going to have an equitable distribution of funds whether you like that region of the state or not. We’re not going to pay more in Pamlico than we are in the Triangle. We might pay a little more in a metropolitan region…” (personal communication, March 7, 2000).
Initially, there was resistance to the change. Herman Porter (personal communication, 28 April 2000), assistant director, remembered that prior to this time, an institution’s budget was determined by a process of negotiation between the college president, his business manager and the department, with Director Ready having more or less the final say. Herring felt that the staff of the Department, even Ready, were reluctant to lose this power. He remembered:

There was obstinate resistance in the Department to any kind of control by the State Board. We didn’t know anything about it (funding and the system), they were the experts. … I began to hear from various members of the staff that they were opposed to it. Ready wouldn’t argue with you, but I could tell that he was upset by it. Taking the authority away from him. He had been a benevolent monarch. Now that would change, the distribution of funds would be done by the rule… Ready didn’t like it. Once during that time, he left for a two-week vacation, in a huff about it. We didn’t have words about it. It didn’t matter what he thought about it. I was determined that we were going to have it (personal communication, March 7, 2000).

During the rest of the winter and spring of 1965, the Department worked on the formula. Herman Porter (personal communication, April 28, 2000) recalled:

That was night and day. We would work on the formula, working on the paperwork. At night we would meet with people. A. C. Davis worked on the formula. I even remember in the midst of the formula development Dallas came to Lane Street one Saturday morning… We sat down there in the library, Dr. Ready, myself… We decided how much the supplies would be, how much travel allocation, details, details, details… That was awesome.
Herring had stayed in touch with State Treasurer Gill, assuring him that they were preparing rules for a fair and equitable formula budget plan whereby growth could be controlled and directed toward legitimate goals. Partially based on this, and Gill and the Governor’s support, the Legislature made the appropriation for the system (personal communication, March 7, 2000; W. Herring, The Community College System, September 11, 1984, B-2). Herring then asked the Department to make a report to the Board at the July 1966 meeting. He and some members of the Board were not totally surprised to learn that they were not successful, and did not feel that they could devise a formula that would work.

Herring recalled:

I said well in that case, this is July, I asked for a motion from the Board that instructed the Controller was not to spend any “B” Budget money, that was the expansion money, in any institution until we have a formula. I called the committee to meet with me after the Board meeting. They had the formula; they just didn’t want to put it in effect. We froze the money… None of the new money for increased funding was to be spent by any institution or by the Department. … Herman Porter, Gerald James and four or five of the staff people came down here [Rose Hill] to see me one night following this between the July and the August meeting [of the State Board] 1965. We went up there in my library, had a little table in there, and we spread the papers there and on the floor and I listened to them patiently. They went on to tell me why it was not feasible to have a formula budget. It just could not work and would result in all kinds of inequities. … I knew how to add two and two and was not born yesterday (personal communication, March 7, 2000).
Herring and the staff worked at a feverish pace for the next few weeks and at the next regular meeting of the Board in August, the formula was adopted. The money was released. Now funds were allocated to each institution based on an equitable and adequate amount in each line item of the appropriation which was determined by the institution’s full-time equivalent enrollment of the previous year. The Board invited personnel, institutional and departmental, to keep them informed of any hardships that might occur with the new system (W. Herring, personal communication, March 7, 2000). They also created a standing Formula Committee to review the formula and make suggestions for its improvement. Its members represented both large and small institutions from all regions, including Dixon Hall of James Sprunt Technical Institute, Salvatore DelMastro of Wilson County Technical Institute, and Richard Hagemeyer of Central Piedmont Community College (Wiggs, 1989, p. 85).

With a new system in place to assure more equitable funding, the support of both Edwin Gill and Governor Moore was virtually assured. Also the Department set about telling its story to leaders and citizens alike. The first issue of *The Open Door* was issued in 1965. It, along with future issues, attempted to illustrate and explain the great need for the new system of community colleges and technical institutes. The first issue included an article on the various academic programs, one reviewing how Central Piedmont had become a supplier of workers for the Charlotte labor market, and another on the use of learning laboratories in the new institutions. The issue also included a human-interest story, the first of many to be shared in the publication, about a mother from Fayetteville who had returned to school to better her life and that of her family. In that issue, Epps Ready (1965) stated the goal of the new system, “Any person who is eighteen years old or older, whether he is a high
school graduate or not, can find in one of these institutions an educational opportunity fitted to his ability and his needs.” Herring, in his inimitable style, challenged readers,

During this century, North Carolina has consistently accepted the ideal of universal education, but it has not always supported the ideals which would make an education available on equal terms to all of its people. Possibly the cost of such an ideal is prohibitive. But the cost of our failure to provide, and the failure of individuals to achieve total education far exceeds the cost of the ideal. … So let us tear down the fences and open the golden door – not with vengeance or with malice, but with determination to achieve the goal of total education. (The Open Door, 1965, Herring Papers)

With the support of the new administration and the General Assembly, the growth of the community college system continued. In 1965, new technical institutes had been approved for Cleveland, Craven, Haywood and Robeson Counties. In fact, in his radio and television address on January 5, 1966, at the end of his first year in office, Governor Moore pointed out that four community colleges, two technical institutes, an industrial education center and thirteen extension units were added to the system by the 1965 General Assembly. This was possible, in part, because the legislature had appropriated a record budget for the public school system of $528 million for the biennium, $106 million more than was spent in the previous two years. He stated, “Our programs for education beyond the high school have been broadened and are being made available to more and more citizens… Now training is available to practically every citizen of our state at the forty-three institutions that make up the system” (Mitchell, 1971, p. 227).
The second year of the Moore Administration (1966) proved a record one for the new community college system in many ways, with developments that would prove critical for the future expansion and health of the system. First, Dallas Herring and his supporters, by courting Edwin Gill, by developing the formula and promoting the system through the press and in-house publications, had won over Governor Moore. Tim Valentine (personal communication, October 5, 2004), the Governor’s legal counsel, recalled:

Dan Moore had a lot of confidence in Mr. Gill and I think Mr. Gill became indoctrinated with community college enthusiasm somewhere in the Moore years. And his office was in Capitol, right across from the governor’s and they visited back and forth. Edwin Gill was instrumental in interesting Moore in the system but as I recall he became a fervent adherent, and during his administration, the program was expanded.

Moore certainly wanted to commend the personnel of the system for their work while encouraging them to continue to focus on vocational training. On April 26, he invited the leaders of the system to Raleigh for a luncheon. Ben Fountain (personal communication, January 1, 2005) recalled:

He invited all the presidents for a luncheon at the mansion. One of the few governors who ever did anything like that, I mean all of them. We had lunch at the mansion. … I can see him now standing there, where we were sitting around in the governor’s mansion and talking to us in very positive manner and letting us know that he supported what we were doing.

The Governor reminded the community college leaders that their institutions were uniquely equipped to meet the technical and vocational training needs of people who were
beyond high school age. But he went on to say that this includes “removing those basic and high school level educational deficiencies of adults that keep them from succeeding in technical and vocational studies” (Moore Asks Schools, 1966). Such thinking left the door open for other courses than just vocational and technical training in the colleges.

Chairman Herring certainly agreed with the Governor on the role of the community colleges. Speaking to the trustees of the North Carolina community colleges at a meeting in High Point on May 11, 1956, he echoed Governor’s sentiments when he stated:

Vocational and technical training, therefore, must remain the major emphasis of the Community College System so long as these tremendous statewide needs exist. We cannot make the change to an industrial economy without this effort. There is no other place to which the people can turn for such training.

But vocational and technical training alone will not be enough, for it is not machinery that we are changing and adapting for industrial production. Our students are human beings – not machines – and they have humanitarian needs as well as vocational and technical capabilities. Thousands of people in the State’s work force cannot even read and write the English language. Thousands have not graduated from high school. They cannot fit themselves for these new roles with this basic kind of education. Our task must include the correction of these deficiencies so long as they exist and there must be no reduction in our effort here.

The goal of the Community College System must be as comprehensive as the needs of our students are. If this is not understood, then it is our duty to make it clear, so that it will be understood. We must support policies which will open all of these doors to all of the people who can walk through them with any degree of promise to
themselves and to the state. (W. Herring, personal communication to the trustees, Herring Papers)

The Adult Basic Education enrollments continued to increase exponentially in the colleges and technical institutes. In the second issue of The Open Door, published in the summer of 1965, Monroe C. Neff had predicted that by June of the next year, enrollments would more than double the 19,157 adult basic education (ABE) students in the program. By August of 1966, the State Board voted to approve receipts for ABE in the amount of $1,398,505 under the Economic Opportunity Act representing 40,000 students enrolled in the ABE program. Tens of thousands were being taught to read and write and this critical role would account for much of the growth of the colleges and make yet another strong argument for their expansion throughout the state.

Another event during the fall of 1966 would prove critical to the future leadership and staffing of the community college system. For sometime now, Chairman Herring had been concerned about the training and experience of community college personnel. In fact some years back, Andy Jones, director of the Department of Administration during the Sanford years, had remarked to Herring that the community college system needed to have better trained persons, especially deans and administrators, and that Board of Education “needed to get a hold of that problem and create a program that would help” (W. Herring, speech, February 17, 2005). Realizing that the exponential growth of the system only amplified this need further, Herring approached the U. S. Department of Education in 1966 and secured a promise of $150,000 to help fund a program to train community college leaders. He decided to seek help in the university system. He approached administrators at both Chapel Hill and Charlotte and was turned down in both cases. Finally, that fall Herring, accompanied by
Monroe C. Neff and H. B. Monroe from the Department of Community Colleges, went to see Edgar Boone at North Carolina State. They asked him to design a program for the professional development of community college personnel, particularly presidents, deans and other administrators. Boone agreed to do a proposal providing for an internship program that would provide promising students from the system with instruction and experiences, which would allow them to go back into the system and provide “the kind of informed and well–trained management that the institutions desperately needed” (Fearing, 1979, p. 17). Herring recalled later, “I tell you the truth, in fifteen minutes we agreed on it. He took it over and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life” (W. Herring, speech, February 17, 2005). The friendship and partnership formed that day would last well beyond the internship program it spawned and would greatly influence the new system.

It was estimated that at least 150 community college administrators held master’s degrees in various fields that would allow them to pursue advanced study leading to a doctoral degree in areas of administration, supervision, and curriculum development in adult education. In addition, there were over 300 deans, directors and presidents who could benefit greatly from in – service training. The five-year proposal that Boone submitted to the North Carolina Board of Education was approved, with an operating budget of approximately $1 million. Over the course of the next five years, the department at N.C. State would confer 123 advanced degrees: 89 Master of Education, 16 Master of Science and 18 Doctor of Education degrees. Enrollment in the fall of 1968 had increased to slightly over 300. Herring later referred to the program as “one of the most fruitful investments of the tax dollar that I know of in education” (Fearing, 1979, pp. 17 – 19.)
Enrollments in the community college system continued to soar. In the 1964–65 school year, the closing days of the Sanford Administration, student enrollment in the system (unduplicated headcount) had been 79,117. In his second *Year End Report to the People*, which was broadcast by radio on December 30, 1966, Governor Moore reported that twenty-seven of the forty-three units in the community college system had building programs in progress to meet rapid enrollment increases. He went on to say that the system had also developed a stronger program for training the employees of new and expanding industries that year. Enrollment in the community college system was about seventy percent occupational, including training for sixty-nine industries. Ten percent of the students were in the college transfer program. Twenty percent were adults in elementary and secondary level programs (ABE) who never finished public school (Mitchell, 1971, 328). Indeed, by the end of the 1965–66 school year, over 151,000 North Carolinians had enrolled in the new institutions, an astounding increase of over ninety-one percent over the previous year (Progress Report: North Carolina Community College System, 1971).

In 1967, the population of North Carolina would surpass 5 million for the first time in the history of the state. This statistic only served to underscore the importance of the community college system to the growing state. Education was to be the major emphasis for Governor Moore in his budget recommendation to the General Assembly that year. The public schools, the community college system and higher education received about 73 cents of every general fund dollar that the Governor recommended (Mitchell, 1971, xxix – xxxi). Indeed, by the time that the General Assembly adjourned, Technical Institutes had been approved for seven more counties—Bladen, Edgecombe, Halifax, Martin, Montgomery, Nash and Hertford (Progress Report: North Carolina Community College System, 1971).
The legislature had also appropriated over $43 million to expand the system, a 63% increase over the previous session. Six new extension units were to be opened; Wayne Technical Institute was to become a community college; and extension units in Craven and Beaufort counties would become technical institutes. Indeed, with this expansion, 85% of North Carolina’s high school graduates would now be within commuting distance of one of the systems forty-nine centers. The result was the increase in enrollment was equally impressive that year. In the final spring quarter alone, about 80,000 students were enrolled in the community college system. (Mitchell, 1971, p. 374).

The years of the Moore Administration saw not only the expansion of enrollments and institutions, but also the beginning of an attempt to address the needs of those students interested in training for a four-year college degree. As Herring recalled, “We started bootlegging the liberal arts and sciences into the technical institutes and community colleges during the Moore administration” (Herring, Interview by Jenkins, 1987, p. 47). It began in the western part of the state where travel could be especially difficult. Holland McSwain, who was president of Tri-County Tech, told Herring that “these mountain people are so far away from Western Carolina [University]…” Herring responded, “They won’t go to Western Carolina. Well the thing for us to do is to take Western Carolina to them.” Herring remembers that Governor Moore was at first uneasy with liberal arts in the technical institutes, but when assured of the need, he approved the addition. As Herring pointed out, “Hodges wouldn’t agree to it, Sanford opened the door… but it was really Moore who said go ahead with it” (Herring, Interview by Jenkins, 1987, pp.47 – 48). Possibly the fact that Moore himself hailed from the region played a role in his decision. Nevertheless, at the June
1967 meeting, the State Board of Education for the first time approved a general education curriculum at Caldwell Technical Institute in Lenoir.

Also that summer, *The Open Door* reported that Joint Committee on College Transfer Students, which had been meeting for over two years, was moving forward with plans to get colleges in North Carolina to accept community college students. Representing the N. C. Association of Colleges and Universities, the State Board of Education, the State Board of Higher Education and the North Carolina Association of Junior Colleges, the Joint Committee sought articulation agreements which would result in a commonly accepted program of general education in the first two years of study that would involve no loss of credits or time when a student transferred at the end of his sophomore year. Obstacles to the committee’s success included quotas by five senior colleges and acceptance of only one year of work by two others (Wiggs, 1989, p. 68). Regardless of the obstacles, students were beginning to see the community college system as a door to the senior colleges. For fall 1966, the five community colleges that were in full operation sent 148 transfer students to North Carolina’s senior colleges and universities. By the fall of 1968, that number had increased to 629, an 85% increase over the previous year. Interestingly enough, in that year, the community colleges received 852 student transfers from the senior colleges and universities and private junior colleges (not counting those transferring into Central Piedmont Community College) (Progress Report of the Comprehensive Community College System, 1969, p. 75).

By the end of 1967, Governor Moore would report to the people of the state that the community college system had added a total of 7 institutions that year, bringing the number to fifty. More than 166,000 people were taking advantage of the programs offered in the
schools and provisions were made for further expansion of the programs offered to include practical and registered nursing programs and numerous new occupational training programs. He stated, “There is opportunity within this system for any who will take advantage of it” (Mitchell, 1971, p.437).

The growth of the community college system continued apace till the end of the Moore administration. By September of 1968, there were over 200,000 people enrolled in the system and forty-three institutions were in full operation (Mitchell, 1971, 512). Speaking at the Manpower Conference in Raleigh called by Governor Moore in 1968, Dallas Herring reminded his audience of the importance and success of the community college movement. He pointed out that in the ten years since the first IEC opened its doors, over 309,000 jobs had been created in the state, 175,075 in new industry and 133,930 through the expansion of existing industry. Had the necessary occupational training not been provided, such a record of economic progress would have been impossible. From 1958 to 1968, over 318,000 individuals had received occupational training in the new institutions. This number did not take into account the thousands who benefited from the general education courses (Total Education, 1968). It was a record of which Herring and Moore were justifiably proud.

By the end of his term, the Governor had become one of the strongest supporters of the community college system and saw its development as one of the greatest achievements of his administration. He would state with pride:

I cannot over emphasize the importance of the community college system to higher education. Tremendous progress had been made during my administration in expanding this system. There are now fifty technical institutes and community colleges in the system, one within commuting distance of about 90% of the people,
but what is now being done through this system is only a sound beginning of what must be done in the years ahead. The “open door” policy is no longer enough. There must be a reaching out and recruiting effort made by the community college system, and programs must be broadened and developed to meet the needs of a progressive people and a growing state” (Mitchell, 1971, pp. 528 – 529).

Moore’s conservative nature may have kept him from mentioning one other fact. During his administration appropriations for the community colleges had increased almost 400 % (Mitchell, 1971, pp. xxxii).

Lieutenant Governor Bob Scott had decided that he would run for Governor. A friend of community colleges, Scott faced J. Melville Broughton in the Democratic Primary in 1968. Tall and dignified, Broughton represented the conservative wing of the Democrat party so naturally many of Dan Moore’s people gravitated to him. On his left, Scott was opposed by Reginald Hawkins, a Charlotte dentist who was the first African American to seek the office of governor in North Carolina. Scott (personal communication, November 9, 2004) remembered,

I had Melvin Broughton, Jr., the son of a former governor, who was conservative and had the heritage of the conservative wing of the party. And on the right [left] we had the liberal Dr. Hawkins, Reginald Hawkins from Charlotte, who was a black dentist, well-spoken, impressive, good talker. And so I was in the middle of those two and I made it my campaign strategy to literally be in the middle and crowd the others over on the left and right shoulders of the road.
The strategy worked and Scott went on to win the primary by 337,368 votes to Broughton’s 233,924 and Hawkins’s 129,808. Although Scott was about 26,000 votes short of a majority, Broughton realized that he probably would not pick up enough of Hawkins’s supporters to win. He chose not to ask for a second primary (Mitchell, 1974, p. xxxiii).

In the general election, Scott faced Rocky Mount businessman and one term Congressman, James C. Gardner. A critical element in Scott’s success was the support of Dan Moore. According to Scott (personal communication, November 9, 2004), “Dan Moore supported me strongly. He raised money for me. He had dinners at the governor’s mansion with business people, asking them to support me and so on.” Scott defeated Gardner by less than 100,000 votes, 821,000 to 737,000. At thirty-nine, he became the youngest North Carolinian elected governor in the twentieth century (Mitchell, 1974, p. xxxiv). And with his victory, community colleges had a proven friend in the governor’s mansion who would ensure that the gains realized during the Moore Administration would not only be permanent, but would serve as a platform for greater expansion in the future.
Chapter Five

THE FAR PLATEAU: LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

Let the timid, the fainthearted, the foot-draggers, the “do—nothings” be forewarned. We are going to make progress in this administration. There is work to be done and we are going to get on with the job. In the tradition of others who have borne this great responsibility – Luther Hodges—Terry Sanford—Dan Moore – we too will point to the far plateau.

Robert Scott (1969)

We are convinced that we are doing a good job and we have the facts and figures to prove it, but as we progress from year to year, we must keep one salient point in mind – total education of all the people.

Epps Ready (1970)

The newly elected governor, Robert W. Scott, was no stranger to the North Carolina Community College System. Having served on the State Board of Education for the past four years as lieutenant governor, he had gotten to know members such as Dallas Herring and Barton Hayes, and shared their views on the value of the system to the state. Community colleges were to have his strong support while he was governor and later, he would serve as president of the system. However, during his administration, he was concerned that the system not stray too far from its focus on workforce preparation. Even during the hard fought election campaign in the fall of 1968, his opponent Jim Gardner had suggested that, “We must re-establish our priorities in North Carolina as our vocational and industrial training is woefully inadequate to prepare our students for this technical age” (Candidate Cites, 1968, p.7). Also at the time, G. L. Howard, director of new industry training in the Community College Department, left to take a similar position in Florida, but not before warning, “It is almost impossible for a man who is a community college president to wear both hats – academic and technical” (North Carolina Training, 1968, p. 1).
In view of these criticisms and others, it is not surprising that the issue was very much on Governor Scott’s mind when he made his first speech to the North Carolina legislature on January 22, 1969. He stated:

In the technical institutes and community colleges, greater emphasis should be placed on vocational opportunities. Programs should be broadened in this area. They should be developed in coordination with occupational education in the public schools. And this training should be made more relevant to the economy of the state. The emphasis should be on the skills demanded by industry, especially the better paying industrial and service jobs (Mitchell, 1974, p. 17).

Scott had already noted that the fifty institutions “have grown rapidly”, enrolling over 189,000 in 1969. He challenged the legislature when he said, “It is through these institutions that we can make a greater effort to reach more people – both adults and high school graduates (Mitchell, 1974, pp. 16-17).

Actually the community college system was already leading the way in vocational training. Since the first industrial education center had opened its doors ten years before, some 318,000 people had been trained to fill 309,005 new industrial jobs created across the state (W. Herring, November 27, 1968, Herring Papers). That training was continuing according to a 1968 federal report released in January. The federal government listed North Carolina as tied for third place among the states in percentage of employed workers enrolled in trade extension courses offered by the community college system and the public schools. In 1968, there were 34,480 students enrolled in those courses (State high in trades, 1969, p. 1). In response to the criticism and the evidence of success, the State Board of Education reemphasized the role of the community colleges in industry training by adopting a new
policy statement at its March meeting emphasizing that the desire to create more and better paying jobs had been a major consideration in the establishment of the community college system. The policy stated that the Department of Community Colleges would work closely with the individual institutions to prepare legitimate training programs, tailor-made for each industry. However, regular curriculum and extension programs would remain oriented to the long-range and “broader educational needs of the student” (North Carolina State Board Minutes, 1969).

During the first two years of the Scott Administration, the community college system continued its rapid growth. New programming included training geared to meet the needs of local government personnel with courses entitled “Human Relations Training for Municipal Personnel” and “Supervisory Development Training for Public Works Department Laborers.” Meanwhile to encourage further development of general education programs, Director Epps Ready was given the power to approve the general education curriculum programs for all institutions in the community college system. Furthermore, the colleges also began awarding the Associate in Science degree to graduates in such pre-professional college transfer programs as optometry, pharmacy, science and veterinary medicine (Wiggs, 1989, pp. 85, 88).

Institutions in the system not only continued to offer new programming, but also began to enter into new partnerships with local municipalities and businesses. For example, Wayne Community College had begun offering instructional programs relating to air science occupations and technologies. This led to the Wayne County Airport asking the College to take over the management of the airport. The result was that the County Commissioners agreed to underwrite the college, and the college in turn, managed the airport and integrated
the management into its training program (North Carolina State Board of Education Minutes, June 1969).

Four additional technical institutes were established in 1969 in Henderson, Johnston, Person and Vance counties. The technical institutes in Caldwell, Onslow and Pitt counties became community colleges. The result was that by the end of 1969, there were sixteen community colleges and thirty-eight technical institutes either operating or approved. The system now had an institution within commuting distance of almost 97% of the state’s more than five million people. Governor Scott said, “This fine training program is going to the people. It is for them. It is their golden opportunity for meaningful and rewarding employment in the future” (Mitchell, 1974, p. 233).

The year 1970 would see the first formal marketing efforts directed at the general public. Plans were finalized to produce a fifteen minute film depicting the system as a whole, from which color slides could be made for use by the Department of Conservation and Development for attracting new industry. Other plans included a fifty-two week series of fifteen minute public service programs to be broadcast by radio and packets of four or five thirty-second spot announcements emphasizing the economic advantages to be realized from education. These were distributed to radio and television stations at regular intervals. Finally, a series of programs concerning educational opportunities for women in the community college system was prepared by WRAL – TV along with several programs involving taped interviews with community college personnel (North Carolina State Board of Education Minutes, May 1970).

In the east, exciting plans were afoot to make transferring to a senior college much easier for community college graduates. East Carolina’s president, Leo Jenkins, met with the
presidents of the system’s 41 community colleges and 13 technical institutes. Jenkins called for agreements that would allow full acceptance as juniors at East Carolina University any graduate from any institution within the community college system. Some presidents such as Robert LeMay of W. W. Holding Technical Institute of Raleigh, suggested that would either lower ECU’s academic standards or change the vocational emphasis of the technical institutes, a continuing concern. In fact, the Advisory Budget Council, responding to concerns that the technical schools might have designs on becoming junior colleges and eventually regional universities, reissued Chapter 115 –D of the Statement of Purpose in the community college law, which read:

The major purpose of each and every institution operating under the provisions of this Chapter shall be and shall continue to be the offering of vocational and technical education and training, and of basic, high school level, academic education needed in order to profit from vocational and technical education… (Technical institutes wary, 1970, p. 1).

Further, William Turner of the Department of Administration reminded colleges that vocational/technical funds should not be diverted for academic programs. He instructed that future budgets were to be prepared and presented in such a way that the amount of funds devoted to technical and vocational education and those for college level training were to be shown separately (Tech Institutes Not College Bound, 1970, 3).

The community college intern program at North Carolina State continued to show tremendous progress and growth. Indeed by 1970, the program had awarded 28 doctoral degrees and 28 masters degrees, and 15 doctoral degrees and 28 masters degrees were due to be awarded within the next six months. In addition 72 local staff members were currently
pursuing degree programs, and over 1500 administrators, faculty members, or staff had participated in conference activities or workshops. As stated in *The Open Door* (Spring 1969), the intern program was providing graduate education, in-service education, as well as research and development for “North Carolina’s burgeoning community college system” (Wiggs, 1989, pp. 99-100). The newly renamed Department of Adult and Community College Education had become the major supplier of professional development and training for personnel within the system and as such, it would continue to influence and mold the thinking of system leaders for years to come.

The year 1970 witnessed not only further change, but was significant also in that it saw the passing and retirement of two of the key leaders from the system’s early years. First, A. Wade Martin died of a heart attack on October 20 (A. Wade Martin, 1970, p. 7D). Dallas Herring (personal communication, October 21, 1970) was very upset at the news of Martin’s untimely passing (he was only 50) and wrote in a letter to a friend, “No man so clearly left his mark on education in our region, or so soundly shaped its future course. I am deeply sorry to know that he is no longer with us, but I know that the spirit of what he stood for will last and will touch the lives of tens of thousands in a way no one else could.” In closing, Herring challenged Martin’s followers, “I know that you will do as he would want you to do – guard and protect the investment he made of his life by spreading his influence for good throughout the South in the new system of education he did so much to initiate” (W. Herring, personal communication, October 21, 1970).

On December 31, 1970, I. E. Ready retired as director of the Department of Community Colleges, a position he had held since 1963. Ready stated just prior to his retirement, that “in his opinion, the biggest achievement of the community college–technical
institute program to date is the tremendous acceptance of this program by the people of the state.” Speaking of the man who Governor Scott once jovially referred to as the “daddy” of the system, Dallas Herring wrote:

The opportunity for total education is now a reality in North Carolina. The public schools, technical institutions and community colleges are in reach of everyone… no one has excelled Dr. I. E. Ready in patient understanding, in philosophical commitment or in persistent dedication to the opening of these doors of new opportunity for the people of North Carolina.

In thinking back to those early days when we began the curriculum study, the citizen’s committee movement and the industrial education centers, I am led to wonder just what would have happened if Dr. Ready had not come along at the right time with the right philosophy and the right temperament to help in these important and decisive events. … Those who write the history of these tumultuous times undoubtedly will conclude that the measures taken, which so much involved Dr. Ready’s personal leadership, were pivotal and binding on the state’s future in such a way that the schools were not only saved, but expanded and improved even as disaster threatened them (Herring, 1971, p. 3).

Ready would not have much opportunity to use the new golf clubs presented to him by the North Carolina Occupational Directors’ Association or to sit in front of the color TV given by the staff of the Department of Community Colleges, because upon retirement he became a professor in the Department of Adult and Community College Education at North Carolina State University. Ready served in that position for much of the next decade (E. Boone, personal communication, February 17, 2005).
The community college system had changed greatly since it was formally established by the North Carolina legislature in 1963. All institutions that had been industrial education centers prior to that year had become either technical institutes or community colleges by 1970 and new institutions had been added. Fourteen institutions referred to themselves as colleges, 39 utilized the term “institute” to describe themselves and one – Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute – insisted that it was both. In Fiscal Year 1969-1970, the full–time equivalent enrollment in the system had increased to 47,836, an increase of 615 % over the 7,781 recorded for FY 1963-64. Student enrollment had grown from 52,870 in 1963-64 to 293,602 in 1969-70, meaning nearly 6 % of the state’s population attended one of the system’s institutions. Sixty–three percent of the students were able to attend local institutions in their own counties. Another 23 % went to institutions in adjacent counties. Only 8.2 % of instate students had to travel further, and only 2.7 % were from out of state (North Carolina Community College System Report, 1971; Mitchell, 1974).

The demographics of the student population had also changed greatly. In 1963, the great majority of students were white, male and enrolled in occupational / vocational education. By 1969-70, minority (non-white enrollment) was 21.9 %, over 60,000 students. Female students accounted for almost half of the student population, 49.2 %. Of the total student population, 2,171 transferred to in-state senior colleges and universities, 25 % of the students to private institutions. (Despite the concerns of some about the college transfer function increasing at the expense of vocational technical training, less than 5 % of the total student population were enrolled in the college transfer program) (North Carolina Community College System Report, 1971; Progress Report, 1971).
To bring about this expansion of education in North Carolina, the state and federal government had invested (along with student tuition fees) a total of $36,251,294 in 1969-70, up from just over $4 million ($4,074,962) in 1963-64. (This is a major investment of which the state could be justly proud, viewed in the context of the original $500,000 appropriation voted for the industrial education center program in 1957.) At the local level, expenditures had increased during the Ready years from $603,898 to $4,789,639, an increase of 793 %, and strong evidence supporting Ready’s statement that the people strongly believed in and supported their local community colleges (North Carolina Community College System Report, 1971).

Equipment and books had increased as well. As of June 30, 1970, major equipment totaled $18,467,928 system wide, of which 71 % was in occupational education equipment and 24 % in general administrative equipment. Two percent was for adult education equipment and only three percent for college transfer. Books, tallied separately, had a valuation of $3,523,940 system wide at an estimated cost of $8.50 per book. By 1970, there were approximately seven books for each student in the system (North Carolina Community College System Report, 1971).

During those early years, the curriculum had expanded dramatically as well. As mentioned earlier, when the community college system came into existence, there were only eight curricula in occupational areas. By 1969-70, that number had reached 150 separate areas of occupational study. They included areas such as health occupations, engineering technologies, welding, data processing, auto mechanics, marine technology, and art and design. In 1970, new programs were still being added. A course in technical illustrating was offered at the Technical Institute of Alamance, recreation technology at Southwestern
Technical Institute, and hospital plant maintenance at McDowell Technical Institute (Community college –technical institute program, 1971, pp. 4-7). Other new programs started in 1970 included a program in inhalation therapy, which grew out of an educational partnership formed by Durham Technical Institute and Duke University Medical Center. In that program, students took their academic courses at the technical institute while the clinical sessions were held across town at the medical center. Durham Tech also began a new program in opticianry, which was planned in conjunction with leading opticians, ophthalmologists, optometrists and educators. The Gastonia Gazette discussed the change in the curricula, highlighting environmental engineering courses at Fayetteville Technical Institute and predicted that colleges in the seventies must be prepared to “accept women in educational programs that were once considered in a man’s domain” (Herring, 1970).

As Herring and Ready suggested, the Sixties did see the dream of an open door to education and opportunity become a reality for the people of North Carolina. So much so that when Bob Scott gave his “Year End Report to the People of North Carolina,” he too would point to an enrollment in the community college system of 295,000, which reflected a 22 % increase over the previous academic year. Further in 1970, the Person Technical Institute had opened its doors and Caldwell and Onslow Technical Institutes had become community colleges. Fourteen of the fifty-four institutions in the community college system had completed major capital improvements during the year and sixteen others had initiated such capital projects. He stated with pride, “During the year a federal official who works with junior colleges across the country stated that North Carolina’s system of community colleges and technical institutes ranks among the top five in the nation” (Mitchell, 1974, pp. 344-345). With well over 95 % living within commuting distance of a community college or
technical institute, the impractical dream of access for all to higher education, which had been a vision for some, had become a reality for most people in North Carolina.
Community colleges in North Carolina faced many of the same challenges and criticisms that they did across the county. Serious challenges to their credibility and continued existence centered around questions about the quality of instruction, competition for constrained government funding, and accusations that they were diverting or derailing dreams of students instead of enhancing their economic or social status. In 1968, while speaking at a conference for North Carolina Community College System personnel, Dallas Herring reminded the audience attendance, “We were told in 1957 that it was an impractical dream; that it could not be achieved; that we could not get the teachers and administrators; that the counties would not put up the buildings; and that, even if all these things were achieved, the people would not enroll in such schools” (Herring, personal communication, 1957, Herring Papers). And yet by 1972, the final year of the Scott Administration in North Carolina, 387,279 people were enrolled in the 56 technical institutes and community colleges in the system. One hundred and seventy-one different vocational and technical programs were being offered, and at least 95% of the population of North Carolina were within commuting distance of an institution. During the four years ending June, 1972, the colleges and institutes trained 37,323 individuals in the job skills needed by 537 new and expanding industries. More that 180,000 adult citizens were taught to read and write and 62,000 adults completed their high school education (Clay, R., Murray, D., Ragan, S., & Wilder, R. Jr., 1974, pp. 31-32).

Today, four decades later, many of the same problems and political obstacles confronted by the educators in the beginning of the community college movement remain.
The need for up-to-date equipment—and its inherent costs—make the teaching of vocational courses prohibitively expensive compared to liberal arts instruction. Funding constraints remain uppermost in leaders’ minds as they consider new programs. For example, at a recent meeting of the North Carolina Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges, President H. Martin Lancaster pointed to enrollment increases in the system that had exceeded 30% in the past six years. “If we are to sustain the progress we have made,” he stated, “our first priority must be the growth of our system. The system is asking for nearly $15 million to address higher enrollment in the fiscal year that begins July 1” (Bonner, 2005, p. B4). And the battle between supporters of college parallel courses and hands-on industrial training within the institutions continues. These continuing controversies, among others, bring to mind the counsel of Roy Larsen, who wrote of education in the 1950’s, “Today the backdrop has changed. But the problems are still with us. And the same actors read essentially the same lines. We find today the same autocratic traditionalists, the same lethargic men of good will” (Page, 1952, p. 13).

Yet these present challenges in no way detract from the great truth that in creating the community college system, men and women of vision reached out in a substantial and significant way to those who had been denied opportunity and advantage. No doubt it was to prove an advantage to the growth of industry. No doubt it paved the way politically to power and prestige for others. But neither is there any doubt that for the displaced sharecropper, the mill hand in the midst of the stretch-out, the newly single mother and her children, the child of poor and poverty bound parents in rural North Carolina, it provided a means of advancement and a new door of opportunity neither occluded by cost nor out of reach because of distance. As Mrs. Moore of Duplin County stated about her two oldest boys,
“Without Wayne Community College (formerly Goldsboro IEC) they couldn’t have gone to college.” Or as one female high school graduate of the late Fifties from Faison remarked later, “If James Sprunt had been going when I got out of school, I could have gone. I know I could, when I worked at Kenansville” (Flowers, 1990, 97-99). But then there was no James Sprunt Community College, no University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and no East Carolina University. Only the tiny teacher’s college at Greenville existed. In 1960, there were only 29,272 students in all of state-state supported higher education. For every 100 North Carolinians who began public school, only 5 would go on to graduate from college (Herring, 1992).

Today, the North Carolina community college system, with its 59 constituent institutions, is ranked the third largest in the nation and enrolls over 800,000 students. A recent study of the socioeconomic benefits generated by the system in North Carolina found that students enjoy an attractive 18.6 % annual return on their investment of time and money in the system and that the state enjoys a savings of over $184 million due to improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment and crime (Christophersen and Robinson, 2004). As distinguished educational leader and recent Ready Award winner, Thomas Lambeth (personal communication, September 29, 2004) stated,

The decision to create the community colleges was one of the most successful public policy strategies that we have had. Economically we are still not where we want to be. But we would be in a lot worse shape if we had not had community college system. If we had depended on the system as it existed before the community colleges, we would not have the ability to go back and give a second chance to so many. We would have lost so much of that generation…
But they were not lost. As Dallas Herring remarked of those who helped establish the community college system, “their education taught them to be dissatisfied with things as they were. For them the world is not good enough. The boundaries of knowledge and beauty were too limited. The old frontiers were too close and confining” (Herring, 1992). Theirs was a vision of an open door, a new day, a total education, and a far plateau of progress and success.

And today thousands walk through the open door to more education, better opportunity and new lives. The average North Carolina community college student today is more than thirty years old, employed, and female (Bailey, 2005). Diane Johnson, a single mother of four, is somewhat typical of students today. Losing her job in manufacturing, she entered the medical assisting program at Central Carolina Community College while working part time to care for her children. She graduates in April and is already employed in a physician’s office. She stated, “My community college changed my life drastically. I now have a passion for life, I have a job.” As State Senator Walter Dalton of Rutherford County stated recently, “The Community College System provides opportunity, affordability, accessibility, and versatility … to our citizens interested in higher education and lifelong learning” (Community colleges change, 2005, p 10). The key word is accessibility. Without colleges like Central Carolina, within easy commuting distance, students with little training or education would find themselves with drastically fewer options in the present and little or no opportunity for advancement in the future. But the open doors of the North Carolina Community College System have changed for all time not only the economic landscape but the lives of the people of our state.
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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS
JW: Ned, let’s begin by setting the stage of your life. Tell me some more about your family, your background, and your experiences, both in education and in the military.

ND: I was born July 10, 1920, which makes me 78 years of age. I was born here in Oriental and had one brother two years older than I and he died at the age of 47. And our home burned up in 1944. We were all in church one Sunday night (when it burned). And I went to live temporarily aboard a boat, worked on a boat. Of course, it was in the Depression. We had a beautiful old Southern type home, had winding stairs. ... Had a big grand piano, my Mother was a musician and my Dad was a singer (?). He attended NC State in the early 1900’s. We were a musical family and I played the violin. We were a very close knit family. We used to gather round the piano and sing hymns. We were a very religious family. Our home burned. My brother and my mother rented an apartment in the old hotel. It was in the midst of the Depression and my Daddy worked at A T Griffin Manufacturing Company in Goldsboro, which was a big saw mill and they made boxes and such as that. I finished high school in 1937 and I had four years at C and CTC, Service and Community Training Camp in the horse drawn field artillery. ... working with the regular army. I went off to school. I played music; I played the violin and sang. And Mrs. Carol (?) was instrumental; I received a scholarship to the Chicago Conservatory of Music. Of course, I worked at Lawson YMCA and I worked, washing dishes, started off at twenty-tow cents an hour. Getting away... I always believed in education. I came back in 1939 and my brother and I went into business together. He had finished business school and we had a good business. To start with it was a
service station and store. Then he got married and in 1940, I went in the regular army and when war broke out, I was a sergeant. I think I’ve already told you my military background, we discussed that earlier today. I went back to school, the University of Richmond, after the war. I was married in 1946. In 1948, our first son was born. We had three children, Ned, Dennis and Mary Ann. … (Discussion of Delamar family history here) … I was called back to active duty in the Korean conflict and when I returned home, I went to several schools during that time. Some part time work at the University of Maryland, the Army Engineer School at Ft. Belvoir, VA, the Finance School in at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, the Quartermaster School and Food Service at Ft. Lee, Virginia, and I was appointed to the legislature during the 1955 session. Our representative, due to the illness of his wife resigned and the Democratic Executive Committee of this area appointed me to fill out his unexpired term, which Governor Hodges at that time appointed me.

JW: And that was fifty?

ND: That was the latter part of fifty-five. In (19)56, I went to the special session along with Hugh Johnson from Duplin and there were four of us, I attended the special session and the Pearsal Plan, Governor Hodges, it was a stopgap due to the integration thing at that time. And I came back and I didn’t intend to run anymore, I just was trying to do a civic duty, but I did run and I won and I served ten years. Served with Ed Wilson, whom I had met in the Korean Conflict. And both of us had something in common. He was a combat infantry man and from North Carolina and so was I. And we hit it off, even though he outranked me, he was a lieutenant colonel and I was just a first lieutenant at the time.

JW: I wanted to ask you, you mentioned the Pearsal Plan, that was a special session that they had to vote on that?
ND: 1956. It just lasted a week. But it was hot. It served its purpose. It was a delaying action until we could get our people and get our schools ready to start integration in North Carolina. And I think it served for a good purpose. At that time I believe, Dr. Dallas Herring was appointed by Governor Sanford [Hodges] as chairman of the State Board of Education.

JW: He had also served on that commission, too.

ND: Right. From then on, I used to listen to Barton Hayes, and Dallas Herring and some of the members of the State Board when they would come to Raleigh. Dallas would drive us in his Packard automobile, he could see real well at that time. They would meet, they would all usually meet in Hugh Johnson’s room or Dallas’s room and they would talk vocational and occupational education. And I’ve told you before, I think, in my other…, about Governor Hodges said that North Carolina was not going to be a predominantly agricultural state and people had to come in, had to be trained coming off the farms and had to be trained to learn to earn and become tax payers. He said the climate’s right. He says, “We’ve got good people here. They’re going to move. We’ve got a good tax base. They’re going to move and we’ve got to have some method of training them. So they started off with an appropriation, the first appropriation was for the technical institute of Alamance, I think was $500,000, which brought in Westinghouse, Western Electric, and other different companies to be trained. And it proved to be successful. So they decided that they had to have, as Dallas often said, “We came in the back door with these institutions.” And we started what was called industrial education centers (IECs) and the Boards of Education of counties had to go along with it. And Pamlico County, which I come from, we were one of the first, due to Russell Swindell. He was working with vocational education, the State Board of Education at that time. As Dallas said, “We’ve got to put the sawmill up where the timber is.” So we
were the smallest in the state, but it is just as important for Pamlico County to have an institution as it is for one in Mecklenburg or Greensboro or Raleigh or any of the other places in the state with a big population. To be within commuting distance. So it was a beginning. It started off with classes, we started them off in old school buildings, and prison camps, old hospitals, anything we could find; even downtown offices were rented. One place an old fire department. Anyway we were successful and they were training people to be welders, brick layers, and that was some of the first classes. And then we began to move along and we saw the need for fire service training. That was one of our first programs, because the insurance division was not able to handle all of the fire service training in the state. And they only had at that time eleven instructors and it took a long time to get around and train all of those volunteer fire departments and at that time we had about 1,100 in the state. Now I think they have around 1,500. So there had to be a method to train them, so we started fire service training under Keith Philippe, the first director of the fire service training and he worked under Russell Swindell and then later, that was at the industrial education center and then he worked as …, we started to grow and we had to have instructors and they had to be trained. Curriculum had to written. And on each one of these programs, fire service training, new industry training, supervisor development training in industry, electric line safety training, which we worked with all electric cities, rural electrification, they needed to be helped, North Carolina School of Telepathy over in Sanford, and telephone safety training. Did I name seafood occupation training? That was one of the big ones, learning how to pick crabs, filleting fish, making and mending. Marine technology, it began to move. It began to get compliments. So they decided, Governor Sanford, he saw how much it was needed when he came in, and the legislature supported, they had what was called the Carlyle Commission,
which you’re familiar with and Dr. Herring served on that commission. They came out with the report and they decided to introduce legislation to start the community college system. Russell Swindell, I was already sold and interested in what these industrial education centers were doing in North Carolina and I could see a big future. I forgot to mention nursing training and we had such a big fight with the State Board of Nurses. They thought they should come out of places like Duke University and the University of North Carolina. But it’s already been shown that nurses that come out of community colleges have higher scores and do better work than some of them that come out of East Carolina University. That’s just an example, but that was one of the programs. We saw the need and the legislature had already seen the need from the experiment of the Technical Institute of Alamance and these industrial education centers. That gave us something to work with, to make it possible. I was already interested in it and Gordon Greenwood in the 1963 session was chairman of the Higher Education Committee and Ed Wilson was chairman of the Education Committee. I believe he was chairman in that session; he was chairman during one of the sessions I served in. We all thought this was a great thing. Ed had been a vo-ag teacher and a graduate of State College, State University. While they were arguing the name of State College, we introduced the bill. Gordon Greenwood had the bill; Hugh Johnson and I we sat, Gordon Greenwood was right across the aisle from me. Hugh Johnson sat right in front of me and Wilson was just over the way. We got together and we got a bunch of signers and we sponsored the bill. Clifton Blue was the speaker at that time and we had it lined up with Dr. Robert Lee Umber over in the Senate. He was the chairman, I believe, of the Education Committee at that time. I believe he was, I may stand correcting on that, but he did a tremendous amount to get this legislation through. So while they were arguing about the
name change of State College, we got the bill passed. Russell Swindell was about to worry
himself to death. And Ed Wilson said, “Go on home Russell, we’ll get this thing through,
quit worrying so much. Russell would say, “How many votes we got? How many?” You
know how he was…I’d say, “We’re gonna make it. Don’t worry about it.” And it passed.
JW: This was the Carlyle Bill?

ND: That’s right. The one that Dr. Herring helped write. OK, what happened after that.
There was not too big of an appropriation, I forgot, maybe 88 million (?) or so much to start
the system. You know equipment had to be bought, you know the way it’s worked out, we
have one of the best systems in the United States. The counties have to furnish the buildings
and they have to furnish the electric power and so forth. A lot of the equipment the state
furnishes. But we had a good system, as you know. Dallas Herring sent Wilson Woodhouse
and I to other states like Virginia to see how their system was and we found out that by the
appointments of the Board of Trustees at each institution (four are appointed by the county
board of education, four by the board of commissioners and four by the governor), that they
could pretty well tell what the people wanted and could see the need of what kind of industry
needed to be trained in that area, that city, that town or that county. And so it began to catch
on. And all the legislators wanted one. And I started to working with them in 1964, I was so
interested. I did not run for another, I never was defeated in the office. Before the Korean
conflict I served on the town board of Oriental. Actually it’s a lot easier serving in the House
of Representatives in North Carolina than it is serving on a local town board. (Laugher)
Because you were facing people every day that were wanting this and wanting that. Well we
would do, Ed and I traveled up and down the state, all over the state from Elizabeth City to
Murphy. We helped get them started, tell them what was expected of them. Formed
committees to do a feasibility study to see the need for that area. What kind of industry they thought would be coming in there. As I said, we started off any way we could. Some started off at new buildings. Some of the places like Lenoir Community College got a $500,000 appropriation. Those that were already intact, Asheville-Buncombe, I think, the College of the Albemarle, there were three or four that they already had; they were given a $500,000 appropriation. I stand to be corrected in that, but anyway the money was put to use and it amazes me now to see and to read in the paper that we have over 800,000 students, around 800,000 students enrolled in North Carolina. And it has meant so much to this state; it means so much to new industry. The times are changing and I hope that our future legislatures will give us the money to buy new equipment, because it’s needed. Times are changing. We didn’t even know what a computer was back in 1961 or ’62, 1965 and so on. But all these things, I want to impress upon you the area coordinators. And I brought this out in the other tape that you can get. The area coordinators help build this system. They were people that were experts in their own fields. Like a fireman, fire service training; like a law enforcement trainer, former chief of police or former SBI or FBI. The seafood people, former captains of trawls, fisherman, the food service, hotel or motel management, hospitality folks, people like Red Ballentine in Raleigh who had Ballentine’s Restaurant. He was the director at one time of the hospitality program. And we hired Hal Miller (?) to take his place. Red wanted to go back into the restaurant business. He had one in Durham and one in Wilmington and one in Raleigh. But he decided that he wanted to go back out to Cameron Village, so he … He did a good job for us and then Hal Miller took over and he did a superb job. He’s still with the system, he’s retired I think, but he’s still affiliated some way with the system and the board of trustees, he does some work for them. I can name so many people. But these early
coordinators, though they were all experts in their own field. But they played a tremendous role because they went from, they had one institution as their home base and uh…but they traveled at least to eight or nine institutions. They had to visit classes and they helped the directors with continuing education. They set up classes and helped get them started. Helped bring in the expertise that was needed in that particular field, because they had the contacts. They were good will people too, they had the personality. I’ll give you an example, George Huffstadler (?), he was the fire service coordinator and later he became electric lines… He had been a chief petty officer in the Navy, electrical lines service training. He had a good personality. We had people like … I could name so many of them that went from place to place. And they knew what was going on and they knew what their needs were. And they would tell Ed Wilson and I and Dr. Herring, we would tell them and members of the Board of Education and they would try to get them some help, get them some funds, some money. During all of this, we were doing all of this work, besides when the legislature was open. We were wearing a lot of different hats. And I worked in the legislature. That was almost my full time job when it was in session. Of course, Legislatures didn’t last as long then as they do now. I hope that that will change. I don’t think they should be that long. If they have the proper leadership in the legislature, they could certainly get through by July or June. When I went to the legislature, we got $1800 a session and $12 dollars a day expenses. Now that’s probably the difference. If we cut down on their funds a little, of course they claim that they need more. And we were over in the old state capital, and we didn’t even have an office. When you wrote a letter you would have to call a secretary in from a pool and sit down at your desk and dictate the letter to her. That’s how it was. Thad Eure, said in the 61 session and Joe Hunt, from Greensboro, was Speaker
of the House. (Jim Hunt may be distantly related.) And he’d motion to me, he’d say, “Boy, it’s hot. July. I’ve got a bill drawn over there for adjournment, resolution for adjournment.” He said, “You go over there to Wade Bruton, attorney general, and tell him to send me that resolution and when I give you the nod, you get up and introduce the bill out of order.” And it was about three o’clock and it was hot and the air conditioners were not working in the old Capitol. And he nodded. I stood up and said, “Mr. Speaker.” “The gentleman from Pamlico is recognized.” At that time Mr. John Kerr and Mr. Roger Kiser and John Hargett were having an argument about a day care bill from Greensboro. And Joe Hunt was from Greensboro and I think he wanted it to stop right then, he didn’t want it to go any further. People was sitting in the gallery up there. He says, “Gentleman is recognized.” “Mr. Speaker, I would like to send up a little resolution.” “Send if forward.” And Mr. Kerr said, “Mr. Speaker, you’re out of order.” Hunt beat his gavel and said, “I’m not out of order, bring the resolution on.” “I request it to be read, sir.” And it was a resolution to adjourn and I think everybody in the House was tickled to death, maybe even John Hargett, he was chairman of that Welfare Committee, and so we adjourned the next morning. We stopped the clock and we sine die the next morning. So Thad Eure often said, “Ned you had the distinction of introducing the last bill in the old Capitol Building.” And people would say, “What was that?” The bill to adjourn. (Laughter) So with that I’m going to adjourn, unless you have some more questions. (Laughter)

JW: Well, I do have just one more. You’re a World War II veteran, how did that experience in World War II affect you when you came back to North Carolina? Did it make you want to do some things differently? Some people have suggested that that experience made them want to make some changes?
ND: Well not right at that time, because I went back to school at the University of Richmond. Then later on I became a member of the town board. Actually the only good thing about being called back to active duty was getting off the town board. Because I didn’t particularly like the people saying I want this, need this. The water’s all over the yard and the streets need paving, so many problems, little nit picking things. It was really, I began to see when I got in the legislature, after I came back from Korea, that I saw a need. There had to be a change in North Carolina. That was when I realized it. And I became interested after serving my first session of the legislature, that I became interested in occupational and vocational education. And also I was interested very much in that. I was a volunteer fireman, a lot of people don’t know it but I sponsored, did a lot of the leg work for the Fireman’s Pension Fund in North Carolina, which I had ninety-three signers with the help of Captain Gibson out of the Charlotte fire department. I was one of the three volunteer firemen that served in the legislature. And the state auditor Henry Bridges was behind this bill one hundred percent. And they had to go to school, see, in order to qualify and that’s the reason why we had this fire service training. Now we have about 385 fire instructors in North Carolina and they’re working it through the community college system. …Most of the fire service training is done right at the local level and some of them have their own fire training grounds. … Wilson was the first fire training ground and George Huffstader helped get that started under Mr. Del Mastro, when it was a technical institute. So I saw the need though and I began to see more need of training. And I believe also in the college transfer program. Now I told my ambition in life when I reached the age of sixty…, I wanted to come back home and start my own business, which I did, but I also had a field commission from First
Sergeant in the Infantry and those drills we had, we were having children, it helped to pay some doctor’s bills.

JW: You mentioned the need for vocational training, but…

ND: People who had never been able to make a good living. I did a follow up story, Dallas, Dr. Herring asked me to do that. I had a business down here and there was a black man who came in and we called him, Sonny Boy Wooden. And he got his check; he worked for a sawmill over in New Bern. And his check was for $40. He worked all week. And he had about four or five children at that time, he had five. It took about half of it, to pay for the food that he got. He would buy a twenty-five pound bag of flour and things like that. “I just am making it, Captain Ned,” he would say. And I said, “Have you ever though of going to school?” “I ain’t got time, I got to work.” I said, “Well you can go to school at night up at Pamlico IEC. And they’ve got a welding program up there. Why don’t you look into that?” And so he did. He went up and took the welding course and it lasted about a year. And he got a job with Brown and Root. Later on he was making with overtime, $600 to $700 a week. And he put all his children but one through college, one didn’t want to go. And he thanked me so many times. I went down with Nancy Duckett, who wrote “The Open Door” at that time, success stories, and they wouldn’t let me go in at Weyerhaeuser, where he was doing some work, but he came out. We had to put the hard hat on and he told his story, and Nancy got a picture of him and it went all over the state. He’s retired now, got all of his children educated and he lives in a nice brick home. But he couldn’t have done it if it hadn’t been for the industrial education center, which later became a technical institute working under Lenoir Community College. We were a satellite of Lenoir Community College and so was the IEC. And later... well we are now a community college. Well it is just as important,
like Dallas said, for a small institution, and Bob Scott has said the same thing. Bob Scott said one time that some of them wanted to do away with Pamlico and put it in with Craven. But I tell you that they would have had a fight on their hands. Because the people down here they love that college, though it is not as large. But it’s growing all the time. More people are moving here … a lot of people have moved here from all over. I still believe in the community college and hope it continues to grow. And I think under the leadership of Martin Lancaster, I’ve known him since he was a page in the General Assembly… he understands what the community college system is all about and I predict that one day that maybe after eight or ten years, he might want to run and I think he would make us a great governor.
Interview with John L. Sanders at Chapel Hill, North Carolina on 24 September 2004

JW: Mr. Sanders, you’ve had a long and distinguished career in higher education in North Carolina and as a friend of Dallas Herring, I am somewhat aware of that career. How did you get involved in higher education in North Carolina and what do you consider some of the highlights of that career?

JS: I came on the faculty of the Institute of Government in the fall of 1956. So that was my first working relationship beyond the student stage and most of my career was spent in the service of the Institute of Government, thirty-three years altogether with a gap of five years when I was vice-president of planning for the university. My involvement with the subject at hand began in 1951-52 when Governor Sanford set up the Commission on Education beyond the High School, the Carlyle Commission as it was generally known, and I was Secretary and Staff Director (I was in charge of the staff.) So I worked at that till 1962 and that Commission’s work led to a report, which among other things dealt with the community colleges and the industrial education centers and proposed merger of the two into one system. At that time there was six or seven community colleges, which were collegiate, college parallel institutions, essentially municipally sponsored institutions – Asheville, Wilmington, Gastonia, Elizabeth City, and one or two others... Charlotte – and there was also the industrial education center system, which was burgeoning. It was the view of a number of people, including Herring, that we had two systems emerging along parallel tracks. The industrial education centers needed to get more liberal arts education for the benefit of their students and not be solely technical institutions and the community colleges were taking on more technical work to give their students more vocational advantages. So the logic was, put
the two together and have one unified system, making a more economical and productive scheme out of it with primary support, state support, for operations and local, county, support for facilities, so that is where that system and in that form, originated. It was still under the management and supervision of the state board of education at that time and it wasn’t until 1981, when the board of community colleges was established, that the community college control was transferred to that board. At that time I served as a member of the community college commission chaired by Governor Sanford, president of Duke, that brought about that policy change. So those were my two engagements with the community college system, in 1962 and again, about 1980.

JW: Was that pretty much a full time position, secretary to the Carlyle Commission?
JS: Full time for most of the year.

JW: What kind of impact did the Carlyle Commission have on higher education in this state and I thinking here primarily of the community colleges?

JS: I think it had a substantial impact at that time. Governor Sanford endorsed that part of its report and the legislature carried it out. There were some other recommendations that had significance at the time, though in time … particularly having to do with the resources of the university and the way those resources would be employed. One of the concerns of the commission was that the State not undertake to create several research universities. Concentrate doctoral research in the university as then constituted (three campuses) and then define the mission of the other institutions in relation to that. One of the features of the legislation which the legislature adopted was to enable the university to add additional campuses as time and circumstances would justify. And one action taken in response to that opportunity was the creation of the University of Charlotte, and then later Asheville and
Wilmington were added. Those three institutions had been local community colleges and they were, as a result of the recommendations of the Carlyle Commission, upgraded to degree granting four year local institutions, but they were very shortly folded into the university system. So they existed for a very short time as independent four year degree granting colleges.

JW: In the Carlyle Commission, who were the behind the scene powers, working behind the scene to bring into being a comprehensive community college like we have today?

JS: As I recall Dallas Herring was a member of the Commission and Mr. Carlyle himself was interested in that, he was not just an impartial head of the commission. He was a lawyer in Winston-Salem and a civic leader of major proportions. L. P. McLendon of Greensboro, a lawyer there and a member of the university board of trustees and an active lay leader in education. Bill Archie, who was then direction of the Board of Higher Education, not a member of the Commission, was quite helpful to the Commission. Epps Ready, head of the Industrial Education Centers in the state and he was helpful as a resource. It’s been a long time and I haven’t had occasion to think about that list of players, but those are people who come to mind as important participators in the process.

JW: Was there a close working relationship between Dallas Herring and Bill Friday?

JS: Yes…

JW: Obviously you’ve worked with the educational leaders in this state and when you look back on those years, especially the two times, you worked with the community colleges, who stands out?

JS: Well Herring clearly. Ready was important, he had been an old school man and he was highly respected. Those are the people who come to mind.
JW: Was there opposition to the community colleges?

JS: I don’t think so. I don’t recall that there was. Everybody accepted them as a necessary and productive way of training and educating people for a workforce for the state. And so I don’t recall that anyone felt that his interests were being jeopardized by them.

JW: I know that there was some concern later about the colleges taking on instruction in the liberal arts. Did anyone foresee that or have any concern with that?

JS: At the beginning as I recall very few of the community colleges saw themselves as preparatory for higher education, though they might make such education available to people who couldn’t go to Appalachian or State for those first two years. Later there were occasional complaints in the legislature that all the community colleges wanted to become junior colleges. They were afraid that they would forsake their technical/vocational role. I never saw that as a real threat but it was certainly one that was thought about. But by now, I am told that all of the community colleges have a college parallel program and that is thought of as an appropriate role for them. I am not aware of any curtailing of their vocational or technical training as they have become more college like. I have no reason to follow the programs of the colleges personally, but that is my impression. More people realize the value to the community of having institutions in the local communities where someone can get two years of college and then if they like it they can move on to a senior college.

JW: Was there any concern among the smaller private institutions, colleges, that the community colleges might pose some kind of threat to them?

JS: I didn’t see it myself. I assume it was there. There were then six or eight junior colleges, only one left now, but there were several then. And they probably felt more threatened by the availability of low cost colleges to which students could go in lieu of going
to the private colleges. Their opposition would have been privately exerted and not in public protest.

JW: The administrations that I am primarily focusing on are the Hodges administration, then the Sanford Administration when you had this tremendous expansion and then the Moore administration, which evidently was somewhat more conservative than the Sanford Administration…

JS: I recall that Governor Moore consolidated and stabilized a number of initiatives that Governor Sanford had taken in a fairly aggressive way. Moore made sure that those initiatives that were rightly undertaken were financed in a stable way to provide for continued success.

JW: Well, please tell me more about that because there are some who might view the Moore years as a conservative backlash, and yet I haven’t found that yet in my research. Instead there seems to have been a more cautious approach.

JS: Well, I really can’t be more particular about it, because I don’t have the details, but my impression at the time was that Governor Moore was a more conservative person than Sanford was. Sanford was a great person for taking initiative. He had a lot of bright people around him who came up with ideas and if he thought they were politically feasible and would be good for the State, he was prepared to go with it, even though it meant short term financing and a provisional arrangement. The School of the Arts is a good example of that as is the Governor’s School and community colleges. And then the question becomes how do we keep this enterprise going for the long term and financially support it. I think that is where, primarily, the Governor Moore Administration performed useful work, not in innovation but in stabilization.
JW: Did you know Governor Hodges? What was his view on community colleges?

JS: I don’t recall him speaking of them privately, but his public position was that they, especially the industrial education centers, were important to training the workforce in North Carolina to serve industry in the state. The program of systematic state financial aid to community colleges began during his Administration, as I recall. They paid for each credit hour taught and that was the state’s way of financing the community college according to the performance of the college. The state didn’t have any management authority over them; they were strictly local enterprises…Charlotte, Wilmington, Asheville and several other places. Then as a result of the Carlyle Commission’s recommendation in 1963, it was decided that the state would put more money into programs… the basic scheme was you (local government) pay for buildings and we’ll pay for programs. Similar to the original means of financing the schools, the state provides programs and the county provides facilities.

JW: Anything else that stands out about Terry Sanford?

JS: One aspect of Sanford that I don’t think has been adequately appreciated is that he surrounded himself not only with regular types of guys to take care of the political aspect of the office, but he recruited a lot of bright, initiative taking, intelligent people such as John Ehle and others who where capable of seeing opportunities that most of the rest of us didn’t see and they would sell them to Sanford. He would buy them and then he would provide political support for the enterprise. Like the School of the Arts…John Ehle worked out the details … He was not afraid to surround himself with people who were smarter than he was in their particular area. He was not a modest man and he figured he could at least carry his end of the transaction. He respected their expertise and took advantage of it.
JW: So when Moore came in, he worked on stabilizing and consolidating these programs. I know that there was concern during the Moore years, there was concern over how community colleges were spending money…

JS: Yeah.

JW: They actually did the formulae in those years.

JS: Do you remember Ed Rankin? Does that name mean anything to you? Ed was involved… He had been secretary to Governor Hodges and he worked with Governor Moore as well. He would have insight into these funding issues. He lives in Concord in Cabarrus County.

JW: How about the Scott years?

JS: I don’t have any recollection with respect to the community colleges. His big thrust was in respect to the reorganization of higher education, 1971-1972. I don’t have any specific recollection in regard to Bob Scott at all.

JW: Well, would you refer to him as being more progressive than say, Governor Moore?

JS: Yes.

JW: You mentioned the work in the 1980’s with the community colleges. Tell me about that work.

JS: There had been talk for some time about taking the community colleges out from under the State Board of Education and setting them up with their own administration and oversight Board. But nothing had been done. And then the General Assembly about 1980 decided to do it and they went ahead and got the legislation providing for a separate Board for community colleges. They called for a commission to study how to make it work and Governor Hunt appointed me a member of that commission along with 15 to 20 other people.
That commission worked for several months Governor, then President of Duke, Sanford was the chair and we worked out the powers and membership of the Board.

JW: So that was when it was taken from the State Board of Education and moved over to this separate Board.

JS: Yes.

JW: What was it like to work with Dallas Herring?

JS: Well no one ever doubted his commitment to education, both the public schools and community colleges. He had less involvement in the university, because that wasn’t his territory. He had no personal connection, he had gone to Davidson. He was highly respected. I don’t recall that he tried to dominate meetings … but he was very persuasive and wanted things to be made better for the citizens.

JW: Was he very active politically?

JS: I think so, but I didn’t see that. I didn’t hear that in his speeches. He never ran for anything, other than the local school. And I have no idea what he may have done by way of political contributions or candidates that he supported.

JW: One of the things that I did was that I indexed his papers and they are now at the DH Hill Library in Raleigh.

JS: I assume he was the sort that kept everything… every draft.

JW: Yes… every draft and it is an absolutely fantastic collection.

JS: Did he ever write much himself? Other than an occasional speech.

JW: He never did. He did publish a collection of his speeches, but that was it. I think it’s sad that Dallas never set down and wrote his autobiography…

…
JW: Anyone else that comes to mind that you might say, “Joe, you need to go and talk with this individual if you are going to work in these year, for they might can give you a different view or different information. Just so you’ll know, I am supposed to meet with Tom Lambeth next week.”

JS: Yes, Tom would be a good one. He was involved in the Sanford years and has been involved in education, at least peripherally throughout his career. I can’t think of anyone else right now, but if I do, I’ll let you know. I might suggest that you get in touch with Roy Parker, Jr. in Fayetteville. He was working with the News and Observer at the time. He is retired now, but he would have recollection of that period, especially the Hodges administration and probably Moore as well. He could talk about the transition from one administration to the other.

JW: Great, that would be helpful. When you look back over the history of the NC Community College system, do you see any mistakes that were made?

JS: I am not really in a position to say. Whether there are too many institutions or too few, I can’t say. Fifty-seven, fifty-eight, I believe Gastonia is about to be dismantled as a separate textile institution there, so fifty-eight. Maybe more than we need, but then many of them have extensions in other counties, so whether it could have been more efficiently organized with fewer base institutions having branches, I just don’t know.

JW: I know that one of the things that have been a concern recently is the lack of state control…

JS: Well, because of the way they originated and grew up, they are really local institutions with some state oversight. It is not a unified structure in the sense that the university is and it
is important to understand that they are organized on very different principles. I don’t know whether that is likely to be altered or how it would be altered.

JW: It might be interesting to look into the amount of funding coming into the institutions from different levels of government today compared to the 60’s and 70’s might be interesting and telling, but I haven’t done this and it’s not part of my story, I guess. Any other observations about this fascinating period of NC history?

JS: Nothing off hand, but I’ll think about it. As you talk to others and you want to get together again, I am certainly available to see you.

JW: Thank you.
Interview with Tim Valentine at Nashville, North Carolina on 5 October 2004

JW: My work is on the creation and development of the community college system in North Carolina, and my mentor, Martin Lancaster, told me that I needed to talk with you.

TV: Well he is an outstanding man and a good friend and I think it is such a shame that he was rejected by his home folk in that upheaval in 1994 because I think there are many many more completely honest politicians than the general public wants to admit. Now I know we all have a constitutional right to bitch about politicians and I wouldn’t want to do anything to interfere with that. But Martin was, because of his innate ability and training and his legislative experience in Raleigh, a very effective congressman. Many people in the State don’t realize this, but it is my impression, if my memory serves me right, that when he was elected in that freshman class, he was elected “freshman whip”, of all the people elected to Congress that year. That is quite an achievement. He worked hard and was respected and then to have homefolks turn on him…

JW: It was a real loss and I was glad when it became public knowledge that he was going to become president of the community college system. I knew that would be good for the system and he has been very effective in getting the funding that the system needed and in overseeing it. But let’s talk about your career and your involvement, especially that period of time when you worked in the Moore Administration in North Carolina.

TV: I was a graduate of the Citadel and got my law degree from Chapel Hill. I never thought of myself as among those people who were around Governor Moore when he made policy decisions, except for the last half of his administration. I was by far the youngest man around him and always thought of myself as a liberal, though I know it is a bad word today
and I don’t agree with the present day connotation. I was more liberal than anybody else around him. His key advisors during the campaign and administration were people like Joe Hunt, the former Speaker of the House, from Greensboro, and Joseph Branch, from Enfield, who was the man who got me involved with Dan Moore. People like Edwin Gill, who was State Treasurer, Hathaway Cross, who was a lawyer and mainly a lobbyist, and the Holding boys; Robert Holding and Snow Holding, who were the people who were in the beginning much involved. I attended the meetings. We had monthly meetings and we would get that group together at the Executive Mansion in a big circle. But I started out as his legal advisor. I worked in his campaign as what they called eastern manager. But I was primarily responsible for his dealings with his key supporters and also working with other things. At that time, the Governor’s office appointed all the notaries public in the state, and there were a lot of functions having to do with paroles and pardons handled entirely within the governor’s office. So I was involved with those things. In that time, the General Assembly met every other year, and looking at things now, life was much simpler then. Joe Branch was his legislative counsel for the first General Assembly, which is the one in which the Governor reigns supreme. Branch was appointed to the Supreme Court and then I became his legislative counsel for the Second General Assembly. I then began to have more of an opportunity to talk with him about policy and what his vision for the state was… what he wanted to do and what he didn’t want to do. But I have some recollection of what he thought about the community college system from the discussions that I was in on and my impression …. Well, I didn’t always agree with him. For example, in the election process, there was Dan Moore, Richardson Preyer and Beverly Lake. Dr. Lake was eliminated in the first primary and so many of Dan Moore’s supporters wanted him to move closer to Beverly
Lake’s position. Thought that was a mistake and told him. I remember very well and he asked me to stay with him. I thought that he was a middle of the road person and that was the way he was elected governor. To my way of thinking I would have preferred for him to be a little closer to the left than to the right. With Beverly Lake we came as close to having a campaign where the racial issue came to dominate, since Dr. Graham’s Senate race, when Smith made race a factor in the campaign in North Carolina for the first time in many years. So it is my impression, that at the beginning he was perhaps lukewarm towards the community college concept. I served in the General Assembly when Luther Hodges was governor and Hodges had an opportunity which few governors, at least up to that time had. That is, he served one full term and part of another term. Which gave him a very comfortable feeling as a governor. He was lieutenant governor and them Bill Upmstead died and then he was elected in his own right as governor. And I think he felt, though he had a reputation of being a very conservative businessman, the state needed a community college system. So it is my feeling that that is where it started. Incidentally, Luther Hodges, I don’t know if people still kicking can tell you this from personal knowledge, but he is the only elected official or public servant with whom I ever been involved, who was involved in a campaign and after the campaign was over, he had a surplus and he refunded part of the campaign contributions. I remember as a young member of the General Assembly, dutifully sending in my fifty bucks or so, which would have been a lot of money back then and therefore… maybe not that much. But after he was elected in that campaign, very easily, sometime after that I got a check in the mail for the part of the fifty dollars that he had not used. Rather than maintaining a chest he went back and prorated every contribution, at least he did mine and I assume he did everybody else’s. So he was the man who started it and
Moore was a strong university man, which incidentally is why the university in this state is as strong as it is. It has always floated above political discord and it is also my recollection that Dr. Ready and then of course, the man from Rose Hill, Dallas Herring, was one of the creators and fathers of the community college system. Dan Moore had a lot of confidence in Mr. Gill and I think Mr. Gill became indoctrinated with community college enthusiasm somewhere in the Moore years. And his office was in Capitol, right across from the governor’s and they visited back and forth. Edwin Gill was instrumental in interesting Moore in the system but as I recall he became a fervent adherent, and during his administration, the program was expanded. I don’t know how significantly. I do remember a footnote that to me bears some importance, and I don’t know who else knows about this, but according to my recollection, there was going to be one community college for Nash and Edgecombe County and it was to be in Rocky Mount. I was in the governor’s office at the time and was in these meetings and I helped see to it that that didn’t happen. I think that is justified in some cases, but not in this area, Nash County was a county of sixty thousand or so people in population, so felt that there should be two community colleges, one in Edgecombe and one in Nash. And now there are 58 in the state. And there was a time of course, when there were community colleges and technical institutes and they were different animals. The first community college was in the Piedmont, I can’t recall exactly where, but wherever Dallas Herring and Dr. Ready wanted it to be.

JW: Tell me about Dallas Herring. Was he very active in those years?

TV: I didn’t know him that well, but he was the person in the state who was “Mr. Education” at this level, which was somewhere between the high school and the four year college. And a very energetic individual who was not only a person who had the reputation
of being somewhat of a scholar, but he was also a good politician. And I think that any history of this phase in North Carolina’s history, he would be a leader. Now people like Ned Delemar and other… Russell Swindell was one of the early leaders. My first term in the General Assembly was 1955. I was twenty-eight and there was one other person there… I set beside Russell Swindell, A. B. ‘s father and I remember that when he got up to go out to the latrine or to smoke a cigarette, he would say whenever he left, in that Harnett county brogue, “Valentine, look out for “Hard” county while I’m gone.” And he worked for the system for a long time.

JW: Tell me, what were some of Moore’s concerns about the community college system?

TV: I think it needs to be said, that Dan Moore was not what historians would refer to as an innovator. I admired him greatly and he was to a large extent, my political mentor, because he gave me opportunities to serve at the state level and he seemed to appreciate my contribution. In life, whenever you find somebody who appreciates you, you made a friend. It goes both ways. He was twenty years older than I was. When he was elected, I was thirty-eight and he was fifty-eight, which was an old man to a person my age. He seemed to be easy going and was very smart, much smarter than people ever gave him credit for. Following his term, he had been a superior court judge, and he was on the Supreme Court and did a great job there. But I never viewed him and I don’t think he was the kind of person to look around and say, “What unusual can I do?” He was a conservative individual and as I said, he saw education beyond the high school as far as the state was concerned as the responsibility of the greater University of North Carolina system. And the community college concept was relatively new and I don’t know, that would be an interesting thing for you to look at ….when did it first start … and I have always been given
to understand that we one of the first ten states to have the system. So I never detected any kind of animus toward the system … any sort of thing that made him think that this was a threat to the status quo or to business interests. Bear in mind that North Carolina has been ruled by, and I think this is somewhat unfortunate, the business interests in this state for years and years, since the trade movement was destroyed in the Gastonia strikes in the early part of the last century. I am not saying that there is anything necessarily sinister about that for I believe that business is what has made this country great. But I am one of the people who believe that business needs always to be regulated and regulated severely, because the lessons of today’s activities, the bigger business is the more apt it is to turn on the citizenry and become a creature of prey. But Moore was from the business/conservative background and though I don’t think he had any particular animus toward the community college system, the usefulness of it had to be demonstrated. Bear in mind that this was at a time when we were becoming accustomed to great sociological changes and when civil rights where passed by Congress and the schools were being integrated. I just think that this [community colleges] were not high up on his list of things that he thought the state should spend money for.

Now talking about Dan Moore, he was not a “moss-back” person by any means. And I believe that his administration has come to be viewed as one that was paternal. Dan Moore’s administration is the one that broke the back of the KKK in North Carolina by putting the power and prestige of his office behind efforts which were calculated to say to that group that you are not welcome here and so on. I know I am wondering around, but for example, Joe Branch became interested [in community colleges] and Joe Branch had a lot of
influence with Governor Moore. Branch became interested for many reasons, one of which was to make sure that one of those first institutions was in Halifax County. (Laugher)

JW: Right. It is amazing how that played into the expansion of the community college. People in power would say, “Wait a minute, this is here to stay now and I want one.”

TV: Right. And let’s face it; it gave every community a college. And a college indicates development. A college indicates prestige. Rocky Mount suffered for years and years because Atlantic Christian College was in Wilson and not there. I don’t mean they went around moping about it, but it stuck in their craw that Greenville had a university and even Wilson had Barton College (formerly Atlantic Christian). So when there was a statewide contest to determine where the Presbyterians would locate a new college, which became Saint Andrews in Laurinburg, Rocky Mount had a big effort in that and it failed, but from that came North Carolina Wesleyan. And so a college, even a technical institute, is big time. Some say that Mr. Gill was invited to address the commencement of one of the earlier technical institutes and that is one of the reasons that he became interested in this.

JW: What did you do after the Moore Administration?

TV: I went back home and minded my own business and never had any idea of being involved in politics again. I just thought that that phase of my life was over. Now I was hired by the Board of Administration only for the first six months by understanding with him because I had a law practice and I had a growing family and I needed to be back down here making a living. So I was there for six months and I never expected to be his legislative counsel. Before I became legislative counsel, I was just a paid member of his staff… seems like the salary was $8000 or maybe $10000 a year, if it was that much. But in the second part of his administration, when I became legislative counsel, I was paid pretty good for that.
I became party chairman at the same time, and it was too much really. You know how far it is from here to Raleigh, and I remember going to Raleigh, sometimes two times in one day. Go up there to attend a meeting and then get back in my car and come back down here and we didn’t have 64 four laned then… come here and try to do something in the law office and then get in my car and go back. So I was out of it completely after Moore and I didn’t have any expectations of getting back into politics until L. H. Fountain decided to not run for re-election and there was a great ground swell in this area for Valentine to run for Congress. There were three people I think, who came to me. (Laughter)

After that I was elected to Congress and served from 1982 to 1994, twelve years.

JW: What was the difference between Sanford’s choice, Preyer, and Dan Moore? What was going on there?

TV: Well then North Carolina was a one party state. The Republicans were just beginning to make inroads in that time. During the Dan Moore years, Jim Gardner was elected to Congress. Jim Gardner defeated Harold (sp.) Cooley who was from this town and who had served in Congress thirty-two years. So things were beginning to change. Broyhill had been elected to Congress from that district and Charlie Jonas from the Charlotte area was the first Republican to be elected since Reconstruction. So our fights were within the party and Terry Sanford was from the liberal wing of the party and Dr. Lake was ultra-conservative and I like to think of Dan Moore as being in the middle, a moderate. But Terry Sanford was a strong governor and Richardson Preyer was the candidate of that wing of the party and in the later days, Sanford took to the radio to endorse Preyer and to urge the electorate to support him. Incidentally, I didn’t know Judge Preyer. He had been a federal judge but I came to admire him as one of the truly great North Carolinians. Richardson Preyer was a great and good
man. But they were political adversaries, I wouldn’t say political enemies, but it came close to that I suppose. There were the Moore people and there were the Preyer people. And seldom the twain would meet.

JW: What were the major differences between the two camps?

TV: Well, I think that Preyer and Sanford were regarded in that wing of the party more as innovators. They were concerned more with civil rights matters and the regulation of business and industry than would be more conservative folks. Sanford, we’ve lost sight of that, was recognized during his administration and after that, as one of the top governors in this Union. I think Luther Hodges and Terry Sanford were to a large extent responsible for the reputation that this state gained as being a leader in the South. I remember sometime back during those years there was an article in either Time or Newsweek magazine, the whole point of which was how North Carolina had surpassed and replaced Virginia as the leader of the states in the Southeast. And people like Terry Sanford, Luther Hodges and Frank Graham, the University of North Carolina system and a feeling of progressive enlightenment, which pervaded people of that philosophy and which I shared, at least as I said earlier, I saw myself sharing (though I guess we seldom see ourselves as others see us. Certainly amongst those people who sat down with Dan Moore at that Executive Mansion at those meetings and who talked with him on occasion, I certainly felt that I was much more liberal than anybody else who had his ear. But Terry Sanford, soon after the sociological changes that I have alluded to, the civil rights movement, changes in the school system and the end of segregation and so on, Terry Sanford, instead of boasting and using inflammatory language and digging deeper into those old trenches, formed what was known as the Good Neighbor Councils. He began to reach out to African Americans, to people who were then
called Negroes or most places around here, “Nigra,” instead of the other N word. Which was the Southern pronunciation of Negro; we just didn’t know how to say it. So it was as simple or as complicated as liberal and conservative. Although the liberal North Carolinian has never been, in my opinion, anything near in philosophy the liberal from Massachusetts or from California. I remember as party chairman, we used to hold the National Democratic Party at arms length. In the convention in 1968 in Chicago, which incidentally was the only one I went to, it cured me; that was when they had the so-called police riot. And what a mess that was. The credentials committee, they challenged our right to even be in the convention, that is, the delegates that we sent from North Carolina. When I was party chairman, at national functions, they would send word down here to bring some “national Democrats.” And back then, national Democrats meant a delegation that was liberally salted with black folks, African Americans. Well we survived that; we got over all of that. I think, in this state, by and large, and learned that if we dealt fairly and reasonably with our fellow black human beings that the sun would still come up in the east and set in the west. Some of the major problems that we feared were going to come about never did, but they were supplanted by others that did occur. I thought that our African American neighbors would move closer to life as we saw it, we being white folk. I never realized that to such a large extent, the reverse would be true. That society would move back toward, in entertainment, in music, in modes of dress, would move toward them… but I am supposed that that is another story.

JW: Well you mentioned the black community and there is of course, a large component of that community that makes up community college enrollment. In those early years, did anyone ever say that this is a way of bringing education to these folks to…do you recall anything like that?
TV: I don’t recall that being a major concern. I really don’t. And I think that it should have been.

JW: Well the system was never segregated formally…

TV: That is correct. As far as I know, it was not. Now in the beginning, when Hodges was governor, Brown v. Board of Education was decided. I had just been nominated, that was 1954. That was when the State had the Pearsall Plan. When I was in the General Assembly there was a special session, I think in 1956 or 1957, to adopt the Pearsall plan. How were we going to change to accommodate the black folks as co-equals was very much a part of public thinking in this state?

(Break)

JW: Well when you were talking about the differences between Sanford and Moore and yet how Governor Moore continued to support the community colleges and they continued to grow.

TV: Yes, I think so. The things, which propelled North Carolina forward, continued to grow. In those years, under Luther Hodges Administration, the Research Triangle Park came into being. That happened when I was in the General Assembly. I wish that I could say that I had a part in that, but I did not. And it was envisioned by Luther Hodges and the people around him such as Davis, the Chief Executive Officer of Wachovia Bank, was in on the development of the Research Triangle Park, which they initially envisioned as a for profit institution. But it quickly was changed into what it is today. But Governor Moore was very much interested in the development of that. He was very much interested in protecting the integrity of the university system. See there was this little thing that came up in there that came into being in the latter years of the Terry Sanford administration called the Speaker Ban
Law, which somewhat polluted the operation for awhile. Most of Moore’s adherents, his friends, his advisors, were people who thought the Speaker Ban Law was a good idea. Of course, it was not and that caused him privately, a lot of sleepless nights as to how to deal with that. Eventually, it was settled by the court system but that was a kind of unfortunate blip during the Moore Administration. He will be portrayed in history as the man who supported the Speaker Ban Law and I think that is unfortunate, because I don’t think that was were his heart was. But the State continued to make progress. I alluded earlier to the fact that the KKK was virtually smashed during his administration. It had a presence in the State that had been tolerated by politicians, at least to some extent. So I think that he became, at least in my eyes, like Eisenhower, a father figure, not a great innovator. You were not going to get from Moore, the school of arts and sciences and other things of that kind. You were not going to … he was not going to rock the boat to that extent. But the North Carolina symphony prospered as did like things. I am perhaps partial to him, but I do believe that his administration toward the end of his four years was seen as somewhat different than it was at the beginning.

JW: Do you see any mistakes that were made, looking back now, with the benefit of hindsight. Or things that you would have done differently?

TV: I can’t think of anything that comes to mind especially. I prefer to think that if I had been governor, I would have been more of an innovator. But I don’t know if I would have. I think the leadership of the state needs to be viewed with the time in our history and the things that occurred, in mind. We were tearing down some old taboos that had to do with the mixing of the races and leaders can only get out so far ahead of those people that they are attempting to lead. There were many people then and some unfortunately now, seem to think
that most of the sorry, uneducated, dull people were African American. I think more people have come around to the view that there are sorry Anglo-Saxon folks. There are ugly Anglo-Saxon folks. That bad has no racial boundaries. That stupidity has no racial boundaries. Those who felt that if you were required to sit in a restaurant that served black people, you’d fall over dead. There would be all kinds of events that would overtake us and ruin our lives if we gave black people fairer treatment. And the Moore Administration took place right in the middle of all of that. I think that dealing with those changes dominated that administration to a larger extent that historians may be looking at it from this vantage point may be willing to concede. It was a different and a difficult era. The State did not blaze with the prosperity that it has now. The Research Triangle Park was not then what it is now. The reputation of this state was not what it is now; I mean the good part of it. The State was not crisscrossed, bisected, from east to west and north to south with a first class highway system. I wish we could find some ways to pick up the damn trash on the side of the road, I wish our leaders were more concerned about that. But it was in many ways not the same place. I think, in many ways, that Dan Moore did a good job, a credible job. As for the community college system, I don’t know that there is anything, I can’t point to anything. But I say again, never heard it discussed that much. If I could be allowed an editorial comment, I would say about the system. And I think these things are happening. I would like to see the system get away from good old boyism and cronyism. We have here in Nash community college, Ms. Johnson, an outstanding young lady who came from this system from Florida. Kathy is her name. The conventional wisdom was, when it came time to replace Reed Parrot, who had done an outstanding job, that somebody in that little group would step up and take his place. And I think from time to time the system needs to remember its history and its roots, but
from time to time it also needs to go out and bring in new blood. And also other systems and other states would benefit from a reciprocal arrangement. I think the system needs to be more careful, and maybe this is intuition or the thoughts of an old man, but it needs to be more concerned about delivering on its promises. That is, when people go into the community college system to get a GED, they need to be sure that it is what it purports to be. Not just have students come in and flop around and then give them an open book test to pass. It needs to mean something. These things need to mean something. And the caliber of instructors needs to be monitored. They need to pay attention to that. You don’t need to go out and get just some plumber to teach plumbing to folks at night, you need to get the best plumber that there is around. You don’t need to go get somebody to teach police procedures and find the sorriest chief of police in the sorriest one horse town in the county, who doesn’t know his ass from deep center field, to teach that course. Now I am not saying that they have done that. But they need to be careful about those things. It should never become a dumping ground. It should mean business. It should be there for people who either can’t go to college or don’t want to go to college. And college is not for everybody. All men and women are not created equal. They are endowed with certain inherent abilities that vary. And it is important to have somebody who knows what he is doing, somebody who can do that right, such as this man pouring the asphalt in my driveway. If they can do it right, they are going to be successful and are going to make a good living… a better living than professors, researchers and lawyers. (Laughter)

JW: In my work, I look at the Hodges, Sanford, Moore and the Scott years. Tell me about any experiences that you might have had with Bob Scott? How was his outlook different than Moore’s?
TV: I don’t know that it was all that different really. Bob Scott was a good friend of mine and I was party chairman at the time that he was running in the primary against Mel Broughton, who was thought to be Dan Moore’s candidate. But I was always partial to Bob Scott. In fact as party chairman I was supposed to be neutral. I remember, one of the great slip-ups as party chairman, there was a meeting in Alamance County and he was there. I was on the program and I referred to the Scott candidacy as not necessarily a bad idea. And some newspaper reporter picked it up and it was all in the papers, “Has Valentine endorsed Scott?” And I remember thinking, “Goddam, what’s the old man going to think when he reads that!?!?” So my preference sort of slipped out from time to time. Kerr Scott and my father were good friends. In fact, Kerr Scott appointed my father to the Supreme Court in 1951. He was defeated in the primary so he didn’t serve much over a year, but there was always this relationship with the family. So we were Scott folks. But I don’t know that by that time there was really that much difference between the factions in the party. By that time we were moving more into a two party status. By that time we had the federal voting rights act. Black people were able to vote without local restrictions or discouragement of any kind. So it was a different time and it was becoming more Democrat and Republican. But as far as having the great personal knowledge, I didn’t because by that time I was back down here in Nash County trying to make a living and support a wife and four children. Had no intention of going back into politics.

JW: What do you see as the hallmark of the community college system? Do you think it has opened doors to folks who didn’t have doors into education before?

TV: I think that it has. Oh, yes indeed. I think it has definitely. You can see the influence in the hospitals in the state, the nurses, the nurse’s aid and so forth. Of course, I am a person
who believes the hospital hires too many folks. You can’t take a nap without somebody coming in there and poking at you. It has become in so many instances, it seems, a make work proposition with hospitals. Of course, the dentist office, it is not the dentist who cleans your teeth, but it is his dental assistant [dental hygienist] who cleans your teeth, who was educated in one of these community colleges. Now there are a few things that have happened who have caused people to raise their eyebrows from time to time. It seems that the community colleges have been involved in teaching people to play tiddly-winks and things of that kind. But of course, there is a place also for a night class in flower arranging. There are places for that sort of thing. If I had a criticism it is one that I have already alluded to. You must be sure that you do not become a Mecca for mediocrity. That it is not just a place for somebody to go to get a job. It is not there to provide employment for people. It is not there to be a place for a person who has served twenty years in the armed forces and is drawing his pension before he is forty years old, to go and get a job. It is a way for people to … but you can say the same thing about anything. But with the money that is being pumped into the community colleges, I mean that they should always strive to do the very best that they can. Now the very fact of the physical plants in these areas is an asset. Nash community college is not the worst or the best, but it is quite a place. There is an auditorium and it is available for all types of public functions. And that is good. The impact on the community of the payroll that comes through there is something that did not exist before the community college came to town. And Rocky Mount can now boast of two colleges.

JW: Right. As we look at the development of the system, both during and before the Moore administration, was there opposition to these schools that you knew of or sensed?
TV: Oh yeah, I am sure of it. I mean I can’t name anybody, but there were people around Dan Moore. And I know that there were members of the General Assembly that would take the attitude that “we paid for the public schools and we support the magnificent university system, what do they expect that the government come in and lay something in between.” And in this state there are always going to be people that are going to be opposed to anything that is regarded as progress just for the hell of it. Sometimes I think we have more than our share of that type of folks in this state. To some people, when the system was created … and again I think this can be a plus or a minus, there are so many people in our state, who want to see how it is going to work in New York or how it works in California. I would like to see my state, I felt that way then and I do now, be more in that class of state that is the innovator, that provides information to be used by the rest of the country. Of course there are always folks who say, well we don’t know how that is going to work and we don’t have the money and we can’t get the money and well that is true of almost everything.

JW: Was there any opposition from the private schools [colleges] to this system coming in?

TV: Well I am not aware of any… though I am sure that there was. I am sure that type of opposition would have been limited to unimaginative minds, because the best example of what I am trying to say, I’ll get to it in a minute, that they were not able to understand that if you advance education anywhere you advance it everywhere. For people to become aware of another form of bettering themselves mentally is bound to help that existing private institution that has been there a hundred years trying to convince people that you need what we have to offer. I always go back to this example from World War II. I was drafted in 1944, and you didn’t have an option, everybody was signed up for National Service Life Insurance. As I recall they deducted from my little pay, seven dollars and something a
month, for ten thousand dollars of life insurance. And you could carry it after you left the service. The insurance industry raised hell about the government providing life insurance, when this started. And it was the best thing for the insurance industry because it made people conscious of life insurance, for Christ’s sake. And it made a man think that he was special, especially after he got back and had children. I am doing something to protect my loved ones. I think I’ll do more. So I think that the community college system has been a spur to education generally. Yet in North Carolina, we mentioned Halifax County awhile ago, the literacy rate, I mean the people who can’t read, approaches that in third world countries. The same thing is true in Edgecomb County. I think the community colleges have a mission, have a duty and responsibility, along with others, the public schools and the private schools and the whole system, to address that problem. As long as it is allowed to exist, then none of us will have done our complete duty. When I was in Congress, I had at least one editor of a newspaper in my district, which included Halifax county, Edgecomb County and Nash county among others, who came to me to talk about the high literacy rate in his county and was concerned about the loss of circulation of his newspaper, for Christ’s sake. So as long as that problem exists in this state, the leaders need to be conscious of emphasizing every phase of education. As one wise man has been quoted as saying, you can judge a civilization by two things. One is how they handle the burial of their dead. And the other is how much illiteracy they tolerate. Now around here we do a pretty good job of burying the dead but sometimes we don’t do such a hot job of educating folks. And that is where the community colleges really come into it. And that goes back to what I said a while ago. If you are going to instruct a person who dropped out of high school and all of a sudden, one day realized that what people were saying to him is true, that you have ruined
your life and handicapped yourself as if you had cut off a couple of fingers from your right hand. They run into that stone wall and they go running back to somebody to get a high school diploma, then they should be required to measure up. Not just listen to a few lectures and given a test and the book with the answers to it.

JW: Right. Now you were in Congress how long?

TV: Twelve years. I served under Reagan, Bush (George the First) and then Clinton.

JW: What was the highlight of those years?

TV: I would have to say the highlight of my career was constituent services… I feel like I made a contribution on the Science Committee, where I was a subcommittee chairman. On public works, I think we succeeded in remedying a situation when there were states like North Carolina got back more than they paid in. But if your Congressman can’t do it for you, then nobody can. I don’t mean anything sinister, but dealing with the government bureaucracy and getting information on behalf of your constituents, is something we did well. It was a fascinating experience. I did not seek re-election and if I had, the same thing would have happened to me that had happened to Martin Lancaster. Price was defeated too. By the way, David Price is a superb member of Congress. It was a fantastic experience. People say to me about every time I go out, aren’t you glad to be out of that mess in Washington. What I try to say to them, if I’ve got my wits about me, is that relatively speaking, there is a bigger mess in that local board of education … a whole lot bigger mess in that courthouse than there is in Washington. There are a lot more things that are right about Washington than are wrong about Washington.

TV: At the kick off of a new program which had received some special federal funding or something of that kind, and I was invited. I remember saying to the President of that
institution, that I would like you to invite me back and see what had happened to this program in one or two years. Beginnings are wonderful but endings are more important. I would like to see if there is anything to celebrate at the end of this period, other than you had a few more dollars of federal money infused into the local economy. In dealing with community colleges as a member of Congress. I think it would be a wonderful thing if you had a standard system of measuring a college’s contribution by checking on your graduates. You have somebody who gets money to pay the cost of taking a course on bricklaying; I’d like to know whether that guy is laying brick three years from now. It seems to me that wouldn’t be too hard to do. The person who handles the public relations at the community college could do this. You can find people… if you can’t find them any other way, call your Congressman.
JW: Ed, my primary question has to do with the Moore years and any memories you might have of Governor Moore. Of course, he took over from Governor Sanford, so tell me about your experience with him.

ER: The first time I met Governor Dan Moore was up in the mountains when I was working with Governor Umstead, then United States Senator, William B. Umstead. This all goes back to the death of Senator Bailey. Greg Cherry (Governor) and William Umstead were … Of course, William Umstead was a longtime lawyer and a major force in the Democratic Party in North Carolina. He was campaign manager for Cherry, who was successful in being elected governor. When Bailey died, quite suddenly, of course, the decision was left to Governor Cherry to choose his replacement. He appointed William Umstead. Umstead was sent to the Senate, where Bailey had twenty years of experience and spent most of his time in the Senate Commerce and Banking Committee. When you are a major force in the Congress, your state office becomes secondary and you work out of that area, because it is national (you can wield national influence). So what Mr. Umstead found when he got up there was that there was only about one—half a staff, just enough to keep things going in the state office. So, since he was going to run for office, he had to very quickly build his staff. My friend, John Hardin, who was private secretary to Governor Cherry, recommended me and I went to Washington, was interviewed and was employed. I hadn’t married then… but that is how I got to where I was. When Umstead then began his campaign, of course he was a member of the United States Senate and had to catch up and find out where things stood there, but at the same time, campaign. But I was traveling with him and I became more or
less, his aid de camp… I was the press guy and I wrote his speeches, and did all I could to help him. But in traveling through North Carolina, of course we went from county to county and of course, Dan Moore was a very prominent person in Haywood County and in western North Carolina Democratic politics. He happened to be a very close friend of Umstead. They had met through the years, they were both attorneys. They shared a common characteristic. They both appeared to be very serious, sober, energetic person. They were not big on personality per se, but they believed in, they loved North Carolina and they loved public affairs and they loved the Democratic Party and they wanted to see victory. Anyway, that’s how I met Dan Moore. During that campaign, he would be in touch with the office and part of that time, I was at the Sir Walter Hotel headquarters working for the campaign as a member of his staff. So we got to know each other fairly well. Any way, the upshot of it is, after Umstead was elected… then Dan (later) ran for governor and my friend, John Hardin and I were volunteers, working in his campaign, trying to help him. At that time, I was in Greensboro, both John and I, working for Spencer Love at Burlington Mills, which it was called at that time. We were taking our time when we could to help him. To make a long story short, when Moore was elected, he called me (and I was glad to help him, but I was just one of many volunteers) and wanted to talk to me and said, “Ed, I want you to do what you did for William Umstead.” I said, “What do you mean, sir?” He said, “I want you to be my private secretary.” I said, “Dan, I appreciate that but I’ve done that job and I don’t really want to go back over it again.” And so he said, “Ed, I can understand that” and so I thought that was the end of that. Well about three or four days passed and he said, “Come back, I want to talk to you again.”
Well this is at the time that they were beginning to consolidate state government and it was leading to a Department of Administration. The first one was called Director of Administration, not Secretary, because the Secretary title came later, with Bob Scott. This was a new position, fairly new, in state government, and he said I want you to be my Director of Administration. Well that was another story, I love state government. I enjoy it, but I did not want it as a career, I did not want to stay at it as a lifetime thing. But I could not turn away from it… I knew at that position (It’s really exciting, I worked with three governors), you’re right at the heart of what’s going on. And if you have a good relationship, which I did with my three governors, they were wonderful men; it’s a very exciting and thrilling thing and very satisfying. Anyway, that’s how I took the position with him and off we went. You know I didn’t really know him that well, except by reputation and the context in which I had met him. But I found out he was absolutely a delightful person, very much a mountain man. What I mean by that was that his point of view was that his ancestors were among the very first white people to settle in western North Carolina so he came from a line of stalwart people. We hit it off. Charles Dunn was his private secretary and I had known Charles (he was younger than I was). So we got along and of course, we had a good relationship. We tried to direct the affairs... the Department of Administration is a pretty powerful organization, as you know, particularly on budget and state properties and all of the responsibilities they had. So I was learning a new job too and found it interesting and of course you are working with him especially with the legislature, with the Advisory Budget Commission. I traveled the State. I guess they still do it, but the Advisory Budget Commission was a very powerful organization made up of the money committees from the House and the Senate, along with appointment of someone from the Governor’s office, and I
was that person. And so we trouped around the state. We went to all the state institutions: the prisons…you name it, whatever. We looked at their needs and looked at their budget requests to see if we could handle it and so forth. A couple of other things…

Dan Moore’s wife, Janelle (he called her Nell), was a delightful lady. She was a great first lady. She took over the Mansion. But I found that she had very ambitious ideas about the Mansion for example and I was responsible for that budget too. So she started doing this and that without any regard to the budget. So I finally had to go sit down with her and I said, ‘Janelle, we got a little problem here. There is such a thing as a state budget and if the governor’s wife can’t follow it… if the Governor himself cannot follow the budget for the Executive Mansion, what is he going to say to everyone else. Well she was flustered by this, but she was a great sport. Anyway, we were able to work it out. She was very kind to me and to Fran; we had some great times together, particularly going to Governor’s Conferences. Those were a big deal… the Southern Governor’s Conference and the National Governor’s Conference. And I got to know the family. Young Dan was a student at Chapel Hill then.

Anyway, I found that Dan Moore… see he had also been a judge…

JW: Yes, I heard him referred to as Judge Moore.

ER: That’s right and later he was on the State Supreme Court. I found that he was judicial in every respect. If you bought a matter to him, he looked at it, absolutely in as unbiased a way as you could. He would look at it in all aspects. He would listen very carefully and he would ask questions. He would maybe ask for additional information. If there was something he needed to read, he read it carefully. He studied it carefully. So that when he said Yes or No, or to do this, it was his considered opinion. It was judicial in nature. It was just a part of him. Now Hodges was not like this. Hodges was a business man. He said, “You take care
of that or tell him to do this.” He was moving. Hodges had a rule, fifteen minute appointments, basically. You had no coffee time out, no nothing. He was all business. He tried to get people in and out quickly. Moore, on the other hand, was very slow moving. I mean, if it took thirty minutes, it took thirty minutes. His approach was so different. I for one, had to get adjusted to that. I found him to be, of course, scrupulously honest and a man of integrity. I guess his biggest problem was speaking. Of course, he was a very highly intelligent guy. Ph.D. in Chapel Hill and all of this and could write beautifully. But in his speaking… Well, for example, I am reading a book called *Presidential Voices* which talks about the presidents and their speaking and writing. And how many of them had difficulties in speaking. I mean, Truman for example, he could not read a written speech very well. Now he could write… Well what I am saying is that Dan Moore had a problem. It was kind of … well he tended to chop off his words. I mean he knew the language, but he could not speak well. Now he could sit down with you and I, be perfectly relaxed and you wouldn’t notice a thing. But you give him a speech and he would get up and it was different. It was just a characteristic of him. Some people speak well. He did not speak well. And in the early days of his campaign when we listened to some of his take recordings, John and I said, “Oh God…” So what am I saying, well other than that he was… well , number one he knew a great deal about North Carolina and about North Carolina history. He had enormous contacts among the lawyers: legal relationships, courts and all of that stuff. He had to learn more of course, once he got in office. I would say the fifty western counties, he had pretty well covered. The fifty eastern counties he didn't and so he had to learn about them the hard way. Especially through the legislature, in terms of who they were and what they did. But he was a quick student and he did well with that.
I’ll tell you one little story about him. During the campaign, things were not going well at all, and it looked like the Sanford group had gotten Rich Pryor all geared up and everything was going well for them. The Sanford organization was very much in place and everything was operating well for them and it was particularly strong in eastern North Carolina. Joe Branch who was, bless his heart, his campaign manager, took him down to, I think it was, Williamston, for a Democratic meeting. They were going to bring in people from about six or eight counties to have a Democrats for Moore meeting. Well, first of all, a lot of people didn’t show up. Because they didn’t know about it because there was some misunderstanding or something. Well they had the meeting though and did the best they could. Both of them recognized that it was not going well. They did not have the support … I mean, he had some good friends there who were going to work and break their backs for him, but a lot of people were standing off and they weren’t following through. So on the way back from down there, driving late at night, into Raleigh, Joe Branch said that Dan didn’t have a whole lot to say and finally he said, “Joe, let me ask you something. Just a straight out honest question.” Joe said, “What’s that?” Moore said, “Is it too late to get out of this mess?” (Laughter) Joe Branch responded, “I am afraid it is Dan. I don’t think we can do that.” All systems were on go.

Well one of the things that turned the tide on that particular campaign was “Snow” Lewis Holding, was a very active young Democrat banker (the Holdings you know are First Citizens Bank) and he was the type of guy that if it struck him just right, he would get involved… he would do something. For some reason, though he did not know Dan Moore well, he took to him. See you have to understand, the Democratic Party was divided; liberal, moderate and conservative. Dan Moore was a conservative, especially a fiscal conservative.
And so Snow Holding realized what was facing the party. And also there was Lake that scared him to death. Anyway he got his crowd together and said, we are going to have to help this man. And one of the things they did was to call a rally of Moore supporters from around the state and have them come into Raleigh. They rented a bunch of buses and brought in busloads. Well no one knew how it was going to turn out. People would say, “Oh yeah, I think I’ll be there.”, but you just didn’t know. So soon after the failed meeting down east, Snow and his boys went to work and on that night they had busloads rolling in from all over North Carolina to support Dan Moore at that big event at the hotel and it was highly successful. That really rejuvenated the campaign. And that was the key event in the campaign. Of course, it wasn’t just Snow; there were a lot of other Democrats that were for Dan Moore. They knew the quality of the man and they knew that he was not as such, one of these bright and shiny guys who stand out, but he was a quiet, steady, good person who loved North Carolina and would do a great job. The problem was, he had to get elected. So that was one of the turning points. Well, to make a long story short, I had a very happy time with Moore, though we had some ups and downs.

Now there is no biography, but I recommend you take a look at the letter book [Governor’s Papers, published by the state]... here are the appointments, which are very important, speeches, reports. So this is a lot of material. Some of it I remember, some of it I do not.

Now of course, he had many successes. One of his biggest problems was the speaker ban law. And that was a tragedy in so many ways because the speaker ban law was well intended by those who introduced it, but it unleashed division and put Dan Moore on the side of those who were not that concerned about the university or said that I am more concerned
about the communist speakers than I am about the university. Of course, Dan Moore was caught in the middle of this. Of course it happened that this [law] was just slipped in at the last moment…of course, this is the way that things could be done and still are. You could come in and introduce a bill in the closing days that didn’t look like it would amount to anything. It doesn’t involve the budget…it didn’t involve any major areas… and it can just slide right through and that’s what they did. I’m sure Terry Sanford heard what was happening, but anyway, this all happened before Dan Moore became governor.

JW: Oh, I had forgotten that…

ER: Yes, you go back and trace and you’ll see that. I think Pat Taylor was the speaker of the house at that time and he recalls it very well. To make a long story short, Moore inherited the situation that was developing. In fact, Luther Hodges inherited the Pearsall Plan when he became governor. It was the same thing. I mean Umstead had done what he could before his unexpected death, but Hodges found himself facing… What are you going to do about the school situation and you’ve got the 1955 General Assembly coming? Well, what are you going to do? Well that was a much more, deeper thing. But at the same time, this thing [speaker ban controversy] cut so many different ways. And one of the toughest things was that Dan Moore thought it was terrible. He did not want to see it become law. But to undo it was something else. For what he was trying to do, while building support for the University, is getting whipsawed between these people who absolutely hated the communists. Well, for example, it was like the classic question… have you stopped beating your wife thing?

JW: Right… it was almost like he was supporting communist speakers if he opposed the ban.

ER: Exactly. If you put it to a vote everybody would say no without even thinking about it. What about freedom of speech? Freedom of Inquiry? What about the impact on the
university’s accreditation? It all came into question. So he survived that … it was a real long tough situation.

JW: Right. I believe Ned Delemar of Oriental had something to do with that law.

ER: Very much so. And also the guy from Gates county, who was one of the governor’s strongest supporters. He was the guy who really was behind this thing with Ned. There were about twelve of them. I just can’t remember his name…. However Moore did survive it.

JW: Yes, as I recall it was eventually struck down by the Supreme Court and that ended it.

ER: Right, but it was never voted down by the legislature. So it was law until the Court ruled. So that was how that went…

JW: Right. But one of the things that interests me is that you had those Sanford years and as you point out, Sanford supported a whole different candidate. I mean Pryor was his man and yet Moore came in and won. So do you think there was a little bit of a backlash in one sense against maybe…?

ER: Well, you see, Sanford was the first. For a half a century or so the Democrat Party ruled the state. If you weren’t a Democrat, you were on the outside looking in. It was divided, however, and the conservative wing of the party basically pretty well carried the day. Starting with O. Max Gardner and the so-called Shelby gang, Pat Taylor’s father was involved in this and so forth. But they did a good job. They gave us balanced budgets. As one treasurer said, “Good government is a habit in North Carolina.” You don’t hear that much any more. So they did it… but it was on the very conservative side of the party. Terry Sanford, being a very ambitious young man, he was one year ahead of me in Chapel Hill, or two I think. His wife and I were in the same class. He was very ambitious. He wanted to be governor and he wanted to be president. Of course, I didn’t know that at the time. He looked
at this and he said wow… What you had to do was that you had to stay in the legislature for a
certain time and work yourself up through all these old timers. And Terry said, “I don’t want
to do that.” And so he came out and of course, the Scotts helped him, because the Scotts
were sort of renegades too, political renegades. The Branch Head Boys. They hit on the
road deal which was a tin strike. I’m saying Sanford was a new face and a new voice who
managed to get in and capture the party. But here he was going out and Dan Moore was not
a Sanford person. They were good friends, but they were like Democrats and Republicans.
They really were. So here was Sanford and he said I am going out and where is my future.
How can I reach my goals? So he thought, and I am just speculating on this for I was not
privy to this. You understand, I was not part of the Sanford organization. I was part of the
other side. When I went in as Director of Administration, Sanford’s Director, his name
escapes me, well we met one time in his office, shook hands, said hello and that was it. I
mean that was the way it was. His staff went out. My staff came in. And that was it. There
was no… the budget bureau was doing the best they could to be available and to be
nonpartisan, but it was not a very easy thing to do. But anyway, we bridged the gap and went
on. I’m saying that Dan Moore was caught by all the events that happened. You see the
Sanford group… Rich Pryor is a first rate person. Is he still living?

JW: You know, I don’t know. I really need to check into that.

ER: He and his wife are just delightful people. Very qualified to be governor, no doubt
about that. But I have heard some of his friends say that had not Sanford picked him, he
might have in the long run, been better off. But once he was chosen or tapped by Sanford, he
was pretty much trapped in that. Now mind you, with that came all this enormous support.
So it is six and one-half a dozen… well not quite that … But anyway, back to Dan Moore.
These were the circumstances he faced. Because he had to fight Sanford, and fight Richardson and fight all that crowd. And he had to fight Lake.

JW: That was the far right…

ER: Oh my, and Lake was playing hell with the school thing. And yet many of Dan’s friends, they support, I mean, they agree with Lake. But they wanted Dan. What I am saying is that there were all kinds of divisions within the party. It was tough. Dan Moore, he was a great man. Now he was able to placate and condense. And once he got in office, he just did a great job.

JW: So would you say that maybe Sanford, though in hindsight he did good things, yet in the minds of many of the citizens of North Carolina at that time, he had gone too far? And they wanted to go back to that conservative leadership?

ER: Yeah, I think there was a natural swinging back, more to the center. I don’t think Dan Moore was on the far right. He was not at all. But he was a moderate and he was not as far right as many of his friends and supporters. So when Dan Moore came in, he continued to support Terry Sanford’s programs. Things that he had started, the School for the Arts and all of that sort of stuff. He understood the value of that.

JW: How about the community colleges? That is of course, my primary focus. Dan’s view of that. And I believe that Ed Gill was behind the item in the inaugural speech. Was there some concern about the way that that system was expanding? The way money was being spent in that system? What happened?

ER: Oh boy. I would have to go back and look at some of this [Governor’s papers] and read some of the speeches. Well as you know, to go back a little way, Hodges really was responsible. He was the one who came up with the idea …
JW: Of those IECS…

ER: Right, of vocational instruction in the public schools. And not just shop, but a broader scope of that. And so he was the one that started it and Sanford seized on it. And very successfully multiplied it. Looked at what California had done and other states and took it and was the primary architect for the community college, no question about it. But Dan Moore supported it as far as budgets and as far as I can recall. I can’t tell you much more without going back and reading some of these speeches. It’s been a few years you know…

JW: Oh yes, just a few…

ER: Fran said why are you going to talk to him, you don’t remember anything about that.

(Laughter)

JW: Well actually, you have reminded us of some important things that we need to get into the historical record. Now I talked to John Sanford and his comment was that he felt like Moore consolidated the good things that Sanford did. But he didn’t start many new things …

ER: Oh no, he was not that kind of innovator. I can’t remember the inaugural speech that much but one of the things that he was hell bent on, he says that I am going to look at all of it. I’m not going to be the education governor; I’m not going to be the roads governor. Many of them would seize on something like that and put it ahead of every thing else. Dan Moore said that I will look at the whole of North Carolina and he did. When it came to education or it came to the community colleges, he looked very squarely at it and made a determination of what he thought was good and should be funded and continued. As a result, he was not that exciting a governor from that standpoint. And as we’ve mentioned, he did not enjoy going around the state making these speeches. He didn’t mind doing it, but you
know, good Lord, Terry Sanford would speak at the drop of a hat. He would jump out of his chair to go over and talk to ten people. He loved that. That was not Dan Moore’s forte.

JW: Right. The way you describe him as very much the mountain man and you think of the mountain people as not having a lot to say, but a high degree of integrity and hard workers.

ER: Yes, but when he said something he meant it. This was the thing. He was not a person to leap to conclusions, but once he took a position, you were going to have a fight on your hands to change him. You’d better come in there with something far better, that is what I am saying. That was his characteristic. I remember he told me about his first introduction to politics as a little boy. I think he had a younger brother who died tragically later, but anyway his mother would tell him when they were getting ready for school or whatever, “Boy, you are going to stay home today. This is Election Day and you can’t go down town. This is Election Day and there’ll be drinking and there’ll be fighting and there’ll be cussing and some might even get shot!” She said, “Boy, stay out of town.” (Laugher) That was his first introduction to politics. That was mountain politics. They were serious about this thing.

(Laugher) So I remember that.

JW: Dallas Herring says that one of the things that happened during the Moore administration was that they came up with the formula for the community college budget. He says that helped. But he remembers Moore being very supportive of the community college idea.

ER: Oh yeah. There is no question about that.

JW: Do you think that may have had something to do with him coming from the mountains where there were not as many opportunities for education and advancement?
ER: I think so. He had a very strong feeling of support for those who had been left out. And who had been bypassed and who hadn’t had the opportunities. And I think that is why he wanted to look at everything. He looked at the prisons. He looked at all aspects of state government, which many governors tend, you know, they don’t want to get that involved. They appoint somebody and put them on a board and you go and run that. But Dan Moore, he viewed everything carefully. That is a judicial quality that I did not really fully appreciate when I worked with him. I could see where when a lawyer brought a brief to him, man, … First of all he respected you. He would read what you wrote. He’d listen to what you said. But he would ask you questions to satisfy himself that he thought he had the information at hand, and then he would make a decision. That’s how he dealt with things. That was his [chief] characteristic. Not that he wasn’t a politician. Obviously he was. He was concerned about the welfare of the Democratic policy. He wanted to see increased numbers of Democrats in the House and the Senate. He wanted to see a Democratic congressional delegation. And he would cooperate with the state party and the national party. But he still … Well, on the other hand, in contrast, Terry Sanford was political, man. In a very good sense and there is nothing wrong with that. But they just had very different approaches.

JW: Right. Did you work with the community colleges in your office of Director of Administration?

ER: Yes. Of course, at that time there wasn’t that many of them. My recollection is that I found very quickly that community college presidents are like any other educators, they are different and they are also political. They want to please their region and their area. They want more money and they want more power in the educational scene. But I think Governor helped, because there was conflict between Charley Carroll, who was Superintendent of
Instruction, and had been for all of these generations and here are these new colleges. And they are infringing… I never heard him say that but I am confident that he felt that way. But Dan Moore, I think, was able to mediate. Here was another thing characteristic [of him]. He could bring people in around that desk and they would sit around there and they would have conflicting points of view. And it was wonderful to see how he could help them to find common ground. And that is a great skill.

JW: Did you know Epps Ready?

ER: Yes, not well, but I knew him. Dr. Ready, he was a very nice person.

JW: He was the first director of the IECs and the community colleges…

ER: That’s right. They had some good people there and in the beginning they had a struggle. I mean as long as Sanford was there, they were fine. He was right out front on this thing. But once Sanford had passed on, that was another thing Dan Moore had to confront. He wasn’t Terry Sanford on that issue. He was treating community colleges like the university, and like the prison system, and like the highway department. Not that …. I mean it was very high, education was a very high category, but he treated them all fairly.

JW: As you said, he wasn’t trying to be the education governor. So that was a significant change for them as far as dealing with Sanford and dealing with Moore.

ER: Right. They had an in with the king you might say.

JW: Now how about… after Moore, in comes Scott? What was that transition like? Because the Scotts, they had supported Moore.

ER: Oh yeah, they had a good relationship. Bob Scott was a different character though. I knew his Daddy and I knew his Uncle Ralph and they are different guys. But I think there was a good relationship basically there.
JW: But you said that Bob Scott was a different character?

ER: Oh yeah.

JW: In what sense?

ER: First of all, I remember Bob… well Hugh Morton and I did a book called making a difference in North Carolina.

JW: Right. You gave me a copy of that book that I have treasured since that time.

ER: Well look in there at my interview of Robert Scott. Well look in there at what I wrote. He said, “My Daddy told me that I want you to go to go to State college and I want you to learn how to be a good farmer. Because you’ve got to come back here and run these farms. He said, ‘I’ll do the politicking. You learn how to farm.’ That’s what he told me or words to that effect.” And yet Bob Scott had enough political ambition that once he got going, and he had some friends supporting him and urging him to break out and run for governor… lieutenant governor and then for governor.

JW: You know I had forgotten that he had actually ran against Hunt at one time. I had forgotten that till John Sanders reminded me of that.

ER: John knows everything…

JW: Anything else you want to add Ed? You’ve been very helpful.

ER: Well, I don’t know. We could talk for hours about my recollection, but he was a fine man and he did a great job for North Carolina.

JW: And it was a critical period for North Carolina. Laying the foundation for all the growth that we are enjoying today.

ER: And sensible growth. Balanced budgets, you had to have the money…. Well I am glad to talk to you and I’ll let you get on your way. And I think you’ll find this (Governor’s
Papers) very helpful. There is a lot of material in there. There will be a resolution for 4-H week but at the same time, there is a lot of helpful information there.

JW: Well, thank you and it’s great to see you again.
Article A – 5

Interview with Thomas Lambeth at Durham, North Carolina on 29 September 2004

JW: Mr. Lambeth, you have had a long and distinguished career in North Carolina. How did you get involved with the field of higher education, particularly with the Sanford Administration, and what do you see as some of the highlights of your career?

TL: In the Governors office our immediate attention then was public education, K—12 education, because that had been the governor’s main focus in the campaign. He thought improvement at that level was essential to improving the quality of life for the citizens of North Carolina and critical also for economic development in this state. I must say that in those years, initially, there was less attention paid to higher education, though at the end of the Sanford Administration there was a major study on education beyond the high school. As regards the community college system - during the campaign during the 1960’s, Dallas (Herring) who was always very much involved in the development of the community colleges, which was then essentially the technical institute…. I remember met one day in Wilmington, at a television studio, with Sanford, who was there for an interview, and Dallas made a big pitch to him then for his support for the technical institutes becoming a part of a major educational system makeover. Governor Hodges had seen these institutes as a part of his economic development program, which was the major thrust of his administration. Dallas was a very effective advocate of their role in education reform in the state as well as economic development. Dallas was then chairman of the State Board of Education and he impressed on Terry the idea that this system, which was then really very early in its development, as it was nationally, that it needed strong leadership. There was a junior college movement in the
country and it was a little bit like the community college movement. He told Sanford that they (community colleges) were a necessary part of anything that we did in reforming education, especially higher education, of the state. .. and also in support of the economic development of the state. Certainly Terry became a great admirer of Dallas and of the whole movement and as the years went by, it became more important to the state. And I think it was because initially, Sanford saw it as the “second chance” for people. Even then people were beginning to the see the need for retraining the workforce, even though it was not nearly as clear then as it became in the 70’s and 80’s that the traditional sources of jobs in this state (textiles, furniture and agriculture) were going away. Agriculture was already changing, and only later on, would the problems in manufacturing really become apparent. … the emphasis shifted to, not only training the workforce, but also providing a level of post secondary education which we had not had before and which we had to have if we were going to rise above the level of poverty that we had in the state of North Carolina. They were seen as the best way to do it. And then that became increasingly a part of the economic development of the state, because if we were going to be successful in attracting the industry which we wanted to attract, then we had to prepare people to be a part of that work force. I believe that they believed, men such as Dallas, that we needed these institutions, regardless of the needs of the state for economic development, but because of the needs of the people of the state. They needed access to college level courses as well as the training that industry of the time was demanding for them. I can tell that I developed very much at that time, and even more so in the later years that followed, the idea that we really need to look at education as a continuum. When we look at education, we don’t need to see it as choosing between K—12, or the community college system or what we see as the senior institutions. It is really
a continuum … it is training people at all stages of their lives. The community college system is really important as a sort of quick response educational system from an economic development perspective. Also as a system which provides a second chance and also brings to the doorstep of citizens the quality education that they need. I guess this is an argument for the 58 institutions that exist today. That system is the way to quickly do something in education and it may be one of the best strategies for the professional development of teachers in that there are ways to develop relationships between public education with the university system and then take it forward through the community college system as a partner. And it would be better done than if you utilized those other two systems alone. That has been my own involvement through The Public School Forum … and I have served on a couple of state commissions involving teacher education. I served as chair of the Teaching Fellows Commission on two separate occasions. I have served on the Board of Trustees at Chapel Hill and the Board of Visitors at Wake Forest. … I have had some involvement with education at every level and am on the Board of the Community College System Foundation as well.

JW: I am especially intrigued by your comments about seeing education as a continuum for I believe in the past there has been some real competition between the systems, especially in regard to funding and influence… As community colleges are relative newcomers, I would imagine that in the early years, there was some opposition to them?

TL: On yeah. Of course they are different in their organization. The university system has a highly centralized governance system. K – 12 has a combination, a highly centralized system at the top but a very strong local system throughout, a very strong local government throughout the system. The community college system had been difficult to govern from a
central location. You’ve got the boards appointed by local county commissions, even though the governor does appoint some members. Essentially these boards are creatures of county government. In fact several counties sometimes are represented and you have the competition between the counties. And I know that everybody that has been in the presidency (of the system) has been challenged as to how to manage them centrally because there is so much local authority. I think they have all [the system presidents] have made great effort and had some successes with doing this. I think Martin has been very effective in doing this and I think some of that may be because he was in the legislature. But surely it is a challenge and fundraising is a challenge too. Some of the larger campuses have pretty effective fundraising activities and they don’t necessarily want this to be done by the state system. So there are real challenges to making all of this work. One of the ways that we have tried to do that recently is the creation of the Education Cabinet. I can’t remember exactly when it was created, probably about ten years ago. Chaired by the governor and then the Cabinet is the governor, the chairman of the State Board of Education, the President of the University System, the president of the Community College System, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the President of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. All these people work together to develop state policy on education. Obviously some of those people are elected officials and some are not answerable to an electorate. Some of them have Boards that they work for and some of them have more powers than others. And different governors have had different attitudes about how aggressive to be in the leadership of this group. It has been our effort to develop some statewide collaboration and responses to education needs. But it has not been as effective as it was hoped it would be at its creation.
JW: As recently as last night, I heard Dallas speak about this when he shared with me how they had consciously built in this element of local control in the beginning of the system and for the first time, I heard him bemoan this some. As he said, it is very difficult to accomplish any thing… to have any oversight of hiring of qualified personnel and like issues important to the state office.

TL: Well I know that the idea was to have them placed in the community and to be a part of that community. Also, wasn’t there the idea or requirement that there would be one within a thirty minute drive of everybody? There was a real effort to have them close and therefore to have local people have some sense of ownership of them. But this has created challenges.

JW: You mentioned today the challenges we face, including the independent colleges. Did you have any sense of how these independent colleges, especially the small junior colleges, felt about the community colleges in the early years?

TL: I honestly have to tell you that I don’t have any strong sense of that. I have a lot of friends in the private colleges in North Carolina. Hope Williams, for instance, is a very good and longtime friend of mine and I have great admiration for her. The smaller ones… well, Wake Forest, Duke, Davidson, Elon for that matter, they don’t care. The truth is they are not going to be effected. They are going to be successful. The smaller ones, however, worry about anything that they see as strengthening the competition. They are dependent upon the market to keep going. The private money and the revenue from enrollment and all of that is what keeps them going. They get the legislative tuition grant but they would all close down if they had to depend upon that. I think anything they view as strengthening the competition from the public institutions scares them to death. And my guess is that in the beginning they, especially the junior colleges, saw the community college movement as going after some of
the students that they were going to get, somebody that was not going to go off to a four year institution. At the time that the community colleges were developing, you had a lot more junior colleges in North Carolina. Many have now become four year institutions. Well I am sure they saw them as competition. Every time that more money goes into public education, private institutions wince a little bit. Most of them are good citizens of the state and in the end anything that is done for education they see as good, but they always worry about what makes the competition for them harder. And if you can subsidize tuition in the four year institutions or in the community colleges, and obviously you do, then they see that as making the competition worse. This is especially true of schools like Peace or Salem or Meredith… they fear they will lose students that might come to them because they are close by, but now will be attracted to go off to the public institutions due to the lower tuition cost. And some of them have gotten very active, especially the smaller institutions, in developing special programs and setting up satellite campuses to increase enrollment. For example, Pfeiffer now has a campus in Charlotte.

JW: Just the other day I was going through Cary and there is a Campbell location there…

TL: Well Wake County has gotten campuses from many institutions. And I think it is because they see that the community college can rapidly create some of these programs, especially programs for corporate needs, that is competition and so that probably makes them nervous.

JW: Going back to the Sanford years, what role did you play in that administration?

TL: I was what today we call “Chief of Staff.” From the eighteenth century on, the position had been called private secretary. By 1960, that title didn’t seem appropriate, so we called it administrative assistant. And in recent years it has become Chief of Staff.
JW: So basically you took over Ed Rankin’s job?

TL: Yeah, I did have his job.

JW: What was it like to work with Terry Sanford?

TL: Well I knew him, by the way, before that. He and my father were active in the Methodist Church as laymen. So I knew him initially through that contact. When I was a student at Chapel Hill, I served on a committee, the Chancellor Search Committee, as a student member and he was on as an alumni member, so I got to know him that way. So we had that contact. Then I went to work as his aide during the campaign. And worked throughout the campaign and then four years in the governor’s office. It was great and is something that I will always treasure. A positive experience, but it was hard work too. You tended to do a lot in managing his office. He wanted to accomplish a lot of things and to see a lot of people and I had to manage the schedule as well as overseeing the day to day operation of the office. Also, you have a much larger staff in the office today than you did in those days.

JW: During the Sanford years, of course, you had the Carlyle Commission. Was that a difficult thing, moving these IECs and bringing them together with the few community colleges that existed at the time, to bring this about?

TL: Well in the beginning all of that was challenging. The governance of the public senior institutions was a real challenge. We had several structures over the years that finally resulted, under Governor Scott’s leadership, in the restructuring of the public institutions into one system. Every time there was an effort to provide a new governance system, it was a great challenge. In all of those episodes, it was about individual institutions concerned about what their role would be in the new system. I think probably that community colleges
realized that they would gain something by having a greater voice in Raleigh, as long as they would not have to give up too much at the local level. They would be better off to have one spokesperson in Raleigh and one effort in the legislature, and not have to depend solely upon their local legislator to look after them. All of those things, the Board of Higher Education, the adding of new campuses to the system, at every point it was very difficult because of the governance issue. Sometimes individual boards of trustees were suspicious of centralizing control...

JW: After the Sanford Administration, Governor Moore was elected. What type of changes did that bring to North Carolina?

TL: I will have to tell you again that my familiarity with that four years is somewhat less. I was at the Smith Richardson Foundation in Greensboro, which had some involvement in higher education… Governor Moore was very committed to the improvement of education in the state. Governor Moore started out with a suspicion about the university system, because it was led by people who had not been friendly to him, though he was a graduate. But over the years that changed and he worked to improve the system of education in the state. I think the same could be said of his attitude toward the community college system. He probably started out with some suspicions there, due to the leadership of that system. I don’t think things were done in the Moore administration to go backward, but they were not pressing forward in the same way that the Sanford administration did.

JW: I believe it was during the Moore administration that Dallas told me that they developed the formulae to determine how money would be given to the system. That is one of the points that Moore was concerned about… how money was being spend in the system.
Would it be safe to say then that really what you have is that it was a conservative administration, that it didn’t roll back, but it moved forward at a more cautious pace?

TL: And the main reason for that were people like Dallas who just were so committed to progress. You know Dallas worked at it all the time. And there was great respect for him from everybody because he was committed to public service and he made a lot of the difference. I think you see that in leadership in education in this state. You have always had a lot of corporate, a lot of business support for it and that has been somewhat consistent whatever administration you look at. We’ve not had a governor who really wanted to penalize education. We’ve not had one who didn’t want to somehow be identified as a friend of education. It has become politically a good thing to be seen as a supporter of the community college system. I’m sure that the frustrating thing for Martin Lancaster is that while there is this broad support of the community college system and when state leaders develop public policy they talk about how important the system is… but the frustration for leaders like Martin is that they (state leaders) have not always found that the dollars follow that talk. Almost everyone celebrates the community college for offering a second chance in life for people who can’t afford to move to the senior institution. And yet the danger is that the institutions don’t receive adequate funding for their programs or to attract the faculty that they need.

JW: And it is critical that we do support them, because many of these students are now transferring to the senior colleges and they need to be prepared for that move…

TL: And I think what frustrates some of the leadership is that you’ve got corporate leadership in North Carolina that see it as their great means of getting a skilled workforce
overnight almost. A workforce that is trained in certain activities and yet they're not that generous in their financial support.

JW: In other words, let the state train our workers.

TL: Right, right. One of Martin’s contributions has been to try to get the corporate leadership to not forget their obligation to the citizens of the state beyond just seeing the community college as a means of training the workforce and the dollars that this produces… I must say by the way that there is the other end of that and it has become dependent on the community colleges to play a role somewhat different than envisioned in the beginning. Sometimes you see a hospital that wants to have the most expensive imaging equipment when there is another hospital in town that already has that equipment. I think sometime some of the community colleges have aspirations to become like a university or an institution like that. I think that they need to be supported as much as possible to achieve excellence in their role, that it is important for them to do.

JW: I think that some of them try to become four year institutions.

TL: Right and I think that they should not lose sight of their role. It is not a matter of remembering their place; it is not that at all. It is that their role in higher education in this state is a very special role, even critical. And if they leave it, who will do it.

JW: How about Bob Scott? How did things change when he became governor?

TL: Well, one, he was a strong supporter of the community college system. But he got preoccupied with the university system… and he fought so hard and in the end successfully restructured public higher education. And much of that came out of his own conviction that that was the way to do it and also his experience and knowledge of the infighting that went on between institutions. For example the effort by East Carolina to get a medical school
which caused a lot of infighting among public institutions. This attempt at restructuring led to a bitter political fight, a very close fight down to the very last vote. But in the end, he won and we got the structure that we now have. He had a lot of support in agriculture and indeed he had a close relationship with NC State.

JW: Would you say then that this giving access to education is one of the roles that the community college has played in North Carolina?

TL: Yes, because the truth is that we have an historic commitment in North Carolina to education. First with the university and then our somewhat early commitment to public schools in the early nineteenth century is somewhat radical. When we came to the fight over whether or not we would provide the same kind of facilities to both black and white in the public schools, there was a move to have a different formula for the black schools. We defeated those who wanted to have a different formula for the black schools. … one of the ways that we made real that commitment to public education. Unfortunately, initially we didn’t really mean it honestly in regard to gender, for more funding went to males. But in the current system [community college system], we have a way of making it [the promise of education] real for everybody and making payments on that neglect of the past. It is a way that we could redress the grievances of those that we have left out …

JW: When you look back on the early years of the community college system, the Sanford years and thereabout, do you see any mistakes that were make?

TL: Well I suppose that if in the beginning we had designed a system with some type of strong central control with formula’s to control funding… that would have been better. But there wasn’t any way to do that and I am sure that people closer to it, such as Dallas, would have some better answers to it. Of course, it you sat down in the beginning and said, “OK,
we’re going to have forty institutions and this is where they will be and you were able to plan better… but there was no way to do that… I think there have been benefits to the local ownership of these schools. I was out at the Peachtree Campus of Tri-County Community College two weeks ago. And realized that they are far away from everything and they have done a wonderful job and part of this is that they really see it locally as their college. Therefore I think letting the system grow up that way was probably wise. And I am sure that there are people who will tell you that if you look at the curriculum, there is some replication and some of the courses being taught are no longer needed. But with any institution or system, if you look back, you could say that if we were to go back and do this again, we would do some things differently.

JW: Well one difference in the development of the North Carolina system is that we started out with a technical and vocational focus [the industrial education centers] and then added the comprehensive courses [humanities and the like] later, do you think that has helped our system to be able to respond to the state’s needs better?

TL: Yes, I think so. I think we have always looked at the community college system as a system that was constantly worked at to make it relevant … to make it relevant to the world as it was at that time. When we began the industrial education, they had a more limited role, but then as they grew that expanded.

JW: These institutions were never segregated, is that correct?

TL: Yes and in a way, they have played a role in integrating the population. They were not created for that purpose, but I guess by accident, they’ve played that role… but I don’t think they ever were…

JW: Any final comments?
TL: No. I think if you look at the last fifty years… if you look at the institutions and public policy positions, it made a difference. The decision to create the community colleges was one of the most successful public policy strategies that we have had. Economically we are still not where we want to be. But we would be in a lot worse shape if we had not had community college system. If we had depended on the system as it existed before the community colleges, we would not have the ability to go back and give a second chance to so many. We would have lost so much of that generation… the public schools could not have taken them back and the senior institution would never have done it. They couldn’t… and the only way we could do it was this system. If we are only two-thirds of the way to where we need to be in terms of our economy, the skill of our workforce, and education, we are probably a third further along that we would have been without the community college system. There are a lot more people today who believe in education because of that system who otherwise would still be discounting the value of education to the general population.
Interview with Dr. John Tart at Garner, North Carolina on 2 November 2004

JW: I was talking to Tony Bevacqua some years back about Dallas Herring’s leadership, and he agreed with you that strong leadership was needed in the early years of the system.

JT: It was very much needed. There was hardly anybody in the State who knew what the community college system was. Well, Dallas had an early concept of what it was and what it could do, a much greater concept than anyone else in North Carolina.

JW: Well, the system was almost totally focused on vocational training in those early years, is that correct?

JT: That’s right. Dallas and I think that it has left its original mission a little bit too much. I feel that it has…

JW: You mean in the sense of that earlier mission of training people…

JT: Vocational and technical education. That was the original purpose of the system and the college parallel program has sort of worked itself in … And that’s good. But there are plenty of places that you can get an academic education. No shortage of places. In the early years, in fact it was a state law that a certain percentage of the money had to go for technical, vocational or extension education. And you couldn’t transfer it over into the college transfer program. You had to use it for its intended purpose. And that was good. Quite honestly I think we need it now.

JW: So now there is much more flexibility as to how that money is spent?

JT: I haven’t kept up with it for the last five years, but when I got out of the system, I could transfer it all, ever how I wanted to. You’ve got a lot of presidents that come up through the academic ranks and they were not involved in vocational and technical education…
remember one course that a lot of us took at State and the question came up to write out the qualifications for a community college president. Back then it was called a technical institute or technical college. And one of the things that we stressed was that before you ever become a president, you should have taught a vocational course such as agriculture, home economics, trade and industry, or one of those vocational or technical courses. And of course we realized that that couldn’t happen one hundred percent of the time, but it did happen a lot of times. In the early years, most of the presidents were former vocational agriculture teachers.

JW: And having that in their background, they would be careful to promote that type of education. John, tell me a little about your career.

JT: I started off teaching vocational education in the public school system. Taught that for fifteen years in Wayne County. That was my home county. In fact, right there behind the community college. And for some reason, I started back taking courses at State in the early sixties. I don’t remember what year I got my masters, in the late fifties, probably. We would come out on Saturdays and during the week and take a course. The first thing I knew I had ten or twelve courses. Well maybe not twelve, but I had at least eight. Twenty-five hours or so. And talking to Dr. Scarborough or Dr. Boone one day, I’m not sure, he said, “You know you’ve got nearly half enough work to complete a doctorate. That was really in the back of my mind anyway. So I got serious about it and applied for a Kellogg Grant. Back then it was $4,500 and that was more money than I was making. I could go to school on that and it was not taxable. I could go to the school on that and get along well. So I went back to school for a year and then I went over to Mount Olive and taught there for a little over a year and a semester, I think. Then I applied for at State, a teaching fellowship. When I got it, I quit Mount Olive and came back to State. When I finished that, that was one semester that I
came back full time, I went to Johnston County as vocational director for the county school system.

JW: When was that?

JT: That was about 1968. And then in 1969, the college opened up and I was hired for it.

JW: So you were hired as the president of the college in 1969.

JT: Yes. That is an experience, a really great wonderful experience that very few people will ever have. Because there is not going to be a lot more of them opening up. To open, we had an old abandoned school house, run down. No air conditioning.

JW: When you opened up, what courses did you offer, that first year?

JT: Well, everybody that was in the system said, “Now John, don’t you even dare start a course for six months. You do a lot of planning. Take surveys. Get advisory committees together. Do all of those things.” I said alright. And the paper wanted to list some courses that we would be offering. Typing, electrification, bricklaying and courses like that. And the telephone started ringing. People wanted to know when we were going to offer these courses. When can we start? Well, I said that it is going to be awhile. “How long is it going to be?” Well, we were really advised to wait six months. “Well, what are you going to wait six months for?” In fact, I remember, I got a call one day from a young man who said, “I want to take public speaking and I want to take it right now!” I said, “When did you want to start.” He gave me a date about three weeks later. And I said, “Well that’s the date we’re going to start.”

I called the newspaper. I sat down and made a list of the courses that the telephone had told me about, that people had requested on the telephone. I would make a list of what people were asking for. From the day I went to work, four weeks later we started classes.
JW: Wow, that much demand for them… Where did you get your instructors?

JT: From the industries around, for the technical programs. Generally, the public schools for things like typing and public speaking, and some of those courses. And having served one year as vocational director, I knew a lot of school teachers so I knew where I could get teachers. The superintendent didn’t want me to have them, didn’t want me to bother them, but I got them anyway.

JW: How many students did you have in the beginning?

JT: That first night we had 600. We had an old auditorium over there and that auditorium was filled up. People were sitting in the windows, standing in the hallway; we were just filled up with people. The press was there taking pictures of it and there was a great big story on the front page. They really blew it up. It was just electrifying. People just started calling, “When can I take a course?”

Of course, there were a bunch of problems too. I had a secretary and a business manager; those were the only people I had. That was the college. And we certainly had not done any planning. We hadn’t had the time to. We had one hundred and twenty-five people wanting to take electric wiring. I had one teacher. And we went out and we found more teachers. And those students, well it took probably two weeks to get the teacher, kept coming back. They were patient. I remember, one night we had, I’m going to say, twenty typewriters and there were twenty students sitting in the chairs at the table with the typewriter and there was twenty standing up beside the typewriter. Each one of them saying, “That’s my typewriter.” I walked in there and they said, “We have a problem here. Everybody wants these typewriters.” (Laughter) Well, we got another night scheduled and took care of them.
We had a bunch of problems but I really think we did it the right way. We just jumped into it. And it started off and it didn’t ever stop.

JW: Well one thing that comes to my mind is that those people had waited a long time for that opportunity. And all you would have done is to have made them wait even longer.

JT: Right. They were ready and wanted it. I don’t think you could have waited six months. I think they would have been going to see the school trustees. I know they would. They would have demanded it before six months. And again, I would not say that’s the way every school ought to go, but I think it was right for us.

JW: In those early years, did you have, in addition to your white male students, did you have women students?

JT: Yeah, we had a lot of women.

JW: How about African Americans?

JT: We had a lot of them. But in the beginning, not as much. Percentage wise, it was not equal to the population. There were less percentage wise going in, but it didn’t take it long to go up. Within five years, I would say, it was equal…

JW: Why do you think it was like that at the beginning?

JT: I don’t really know. I started to say that maybe we didn’t cater to them as much as we should have, and that may have been, but I can’t remember now. But probably at that time, the courses that we were offering may have something to do with it. You didn’t find many black people that were electricians, for example. Now we started MDA courses, Manpower Development courses, made up almost entirely of blacks. They got a stipend, you know.

JW: Now what was taught in those courses?

JT: Bricklaying and carpentry.
JW: What were the women taking, John?


JW: You said there were a lot of women in the beginning. I would think that they were the majority in those courses at that time?

JT: They were.

JW: Now you mentioned that you had some difficulty getting faculty and equipment in those early years. Where there any other obstacles that you had to overcome?

JT: Didn’t have enough space. The space gave out. The old school that we had, I remember very well, I’d have presidents from other schools coming to see us and just marveling at all the classrooms and shops that we had. We had an auto mechanics shop, a great big nice shop. Classrooms, bathrooms, we had a gym; nobody ever much had a gym. We didn’t want it, but we had it.

JW: You were in an old school, is that why you had the gym?

JT: Right, a black school. We had two old classroom buildings. One of them had a fairly large home economics area and we converted that into cosmetology. That was a popular course. Still is, I imagine. In those two old buildings we had, and they were great big classrooms, we had, I imagine, fifteen or twenty classrooms. And most of the colleges didn’t have that. They didn’t have it. And they were sort of jealous of what we had, even though it was old stuff.

We were doing all we could to get money together for a new campus. We bought an eighty acre tract of land, where the college is now. And finally got enough money together to start building. And when the building was about two-thirds finished, I had a call one morning about four o’clock, by a nursing instructor. She said, “The College is on fire,
burning.” I lived about twelve miles from campus and I rushed over there and the building was in flames. I mean it was burning. It was an old building and the lumber was dry. And used to, they would put oil on floors, you know, and I am quite sure that oil had soaked through those boards. And it burned. We lost our equipment and our building.

JW: What year was that, John?


JW: So that was at the old building, that burned? Did you ever find out what started it?

JT: Right. The wiring was old and we had just run drop cords and receptacles, where ever we needed one, we would just add one. We probably just overpowered the wiring.

JW: So that sort of put an urgency in the new building process then, didn’t it?

JT: Well we needed it right quick then. People were so nice. They would call and say, “I’ve got an old building here you can use. You’re welcome to use it if you can.” Others would call and say, “I’ve got an old building here that I’ll rent you.” We got enough space that we didn’t have to rent a bit. We got plenty of space to keep our classes going.

JW: What kind of places did you go into?

JT: Churches. A recreational facility. Down at Hope Lake there used to be a bowling alley there and a motel. They said, “Anything that we got here, you’re welcome to it. We’re not using.” So we used it. That time was in the winter; I’m not sure what month. And the building was finished up in the summer. And we got into it. We had space for parking, but we didn’t have the money to build the parking space. Didn’t have any. I had a friend at Fort Bragg, he was in charge of all the educational programs on Fort Bragg. I called him and told him about my problem and he said, “No worries, we’ll send the Army over there with all of our equipment and we’ll build you a parking space.” Now that was a life saver. They sent
their equipment. Dozers, they had a dozer there one day, not quite as big as this room here, but it was big. They couldn’t haul it on the highway, without taking it apart and putting it on two trucks. They came over there. They cleared it off. Took those dozers, piled the stuff up. We burned it. Dug ditches. Leveled it off. We hauled rock in. It was a funny thing. We intended to start classes in the new building in September and we did. And we had rock on the parking area so nice. We had the rock they could drive on. I went to a meeting in Charlotte. I got a phone call that night. They said, “Our parking space is gone.” I said, “What in the world has happened?” They said, “There come a flood here and all the rock sunk down in the ground, and we got nothing but mud.” Mud was everywhere. I said, “Well have them to haul more rock in.” So they came in with another layer of rock and we’ve never had no more problems since then.

JT: That night we had the fire, I remember. Our people, our employees, everyday they would say, “I’ll sure be glad when we can get out of this old building.” But that night as it was burning, a lot of the faculty, you know, found out about it and came out. And I remember seeing the tears running down their cheeks. Their building was burned. It was theirs. They had ownership of that. I think we missed two days of school. And then we were ready to go back.

JW: I guess the school had grown some by then and you had more resources, faculty that you could depend on. John, my whole idea in this dissertation is that the community college system changed the access that we had to education in this state. Do you think that is a fair statement?

JT: It certainly did. Before the community college system, your high school graduate, of course half of them dropped out, they tried to find a job such as farming, that was about all
they could do. If they were competent, in other words, if they had worked hard enough and made fairly good grades so that they could go off to college, four year degrees was the only thing we could offer them. A few business programs, barber shop, a few cosmetology schools. That was the only thing there was for the students to do. The high school vocational programs were not as extensive as they should have been. So there was no place for them to go. A vast majority of them had no place to go to. They couldn’t go to a four year college. So they just went out and tried to find a job. And then there was the military.

JW: Now when you say they couldn’t go to a four year college, was that because of money or training or… well, as you say, a bunch of them dropped out, so they couldn’t go?

JT: All of those things. Fifty percent of them dropped out, they couldn’t go. A bunch of them had no money, they couldn’t go. They probably could have if they had realized it, but most of them, there was no way for them to realize the fact that they could go off to school. I found out later when I went, that even if I was there without a dime of money, I could make it.

JW: But you didn’t know that till you got there.

JT: No, I didn’t. I remember one time, getting on the bus. I borrowed, well it didn’t cost but about seventy—five cents. I know I borrowed half of it. I got up here and nothing. And when I went home that weekend, I had money in my pocket. I found a job.

JW: I was just sitting here thinking, what you were just saying would be especially true of women and blacks. I mean, where were they going?

JT: No where. If we had not had the system develop, we would be so far behind today. We would be lost. We couldn’t, we probably, if we didn’t have this system, would be below Mississippi or any other state, in our standard of living. There was just no … I mean it meant
everything. And it still does. A lot of people don’t realize the gem that they’ve got in the community college system. The News and Observer didn’t realize it for a long time. They didn’t give any good publicity to it. But they do now.

JW: Well in this state, there has been such strong support for the university that it has overshadowed…

JT: Everything else. And that support is well and good. The university system is very important. But if we had today to do away with the community college system or the university system, I don’t know which would have to go. I’m glad neither one does.

JW: For one thing, the community college system even in those early years was playing a role that the university system either couldn’t or wouldn’t play.

JT: They couldn’t and wouldn’t. In one way it could have, but they didn’t want to.

JW: And today the community college system is still playing a role that the university can’t play. Such as literacy or some of the vocational training.

JT: That’s right. In many counties in this state, the largest high school is in the technical institute, I mean community college. Over at Johnston, in our high school program we had five or six hundred students made up of drop outs.

JW: You mentioned, John, how in the early years the News and Observer didn’t really support the community college. I’m sure in those early years everyone wasn’t for the community college. Was there opposition?

JT: Absolutely. Many of the private colleges opposed the community college. Members of the legislature put it in second class situation; they wouldn’t really come out and support it. A lot of your leadership didn’t really come out strong for it. About twenty years ago, it started changing very slowly. And today, well I served in the legislature for four years and a
lot of those members of the legislature come up to me and said, “You know I am really supporting our community college now. I didn’t really know what it was really doing till here recently.” I remember one fellow talked to me for a good long time and said, “I’m going back home and call my president and tell him that I am going to support the community college system.” And I think there is wide spread support today in the legislature. And the governor is always making kind statements about the community college system.

JW: Who were some of the ones that opposed the system?

JT: There was one from Wilson. I can not call his name. Dallas would remember. [Dallas didn’t remember either] But I don’t mean to imply that there was widespread disapproval in the legislature, they just weren’t for it. They just didn’t push for it.

JW: Was that because they were afraid of the money that it would cost or they didn’t see the need?

JT: Both. And a lot of them didn’t want the competition with the private schools.

JW: People lose sight of that, but the private schools had access to those legislators too. When you say the private schools are you referring to church related schools?

JT: It was Mount Olive, Mars Hill. See those are four year colleges now, but back then they were two year colleges.

JW: So they really did see it as competition, especially when it became comprehensive.

JT: Yeah, they didn’t really want us to have the college program. As long as we were vocational technical, they didn’t really care. But when you add the college program, that’s when they saw you as a problem.
JW: So when you look back at those early years, you know we talked about the opposition and the way things were done, do you see anything that makes you say, “Well, maybe we could have done this differently.” That this is causing a problem today, because of what we did then. What would you change, if you could? And of course, we all know that hindsight is twenty—twenty.

JT: Well, there was a lot of things I am sure, that could have been done better, differently and better, but I think by and large, the whole system did the best it knew how to do. We just did the best that we knew how to do, and generally, it worked mighty well. Dallas, he was the ramrod for a long time and he saw that his influence was waning, so he backed off a little bit. And finally they took him off the State Board, Governor Hunt did that.

JW: John, it’s not a part of my dissertation, but I am just curious. Why didn’t Hunt reappoint him?

JT: Well, don’t talk with Dallas about this point, because Hunt appointed me in his place. And Dallas and Craig Phillips were at odds with each other, the last eight years that Dallas was on the Board, he and Craig fought the whole time. And it got worse and worse and worse. And Jim told me, he said that it just got so bad, that he had to take him off.

JW: Because he couldn’t remove Craig because he was elected?

JT: Right. I think he would have took Craig off if he had had a choice. He irritated a lot of people and made a lot of people happy. … And some people thought that I had instigated it in order for me to get on, but I hadn’t.

JW: So you went on the State Board at that time?

JT: Yes, it was a great experience. I had talked with the Governor and he had talked with me about an appointment to the State Board and Dallas knew about it and Dallas encouraged
me. He said that we would both be on there and we would get some things done. He was expecting to be reappointed. He said, “Now what I want the Governor to do is to appoint you as an at—large member, because we both lived in the same district. ... He [Governor Hunt] called me and said, “I’m appointing you to this district, if you’ll take it?” He said, “Will you take it?” I said, “Yeah, I’ll take it.” I said, “How about Dallas?” He said, “We’re not going to reappoint him.”

JW: Of course, him being Chairman at the time, that did cause a stir.

JT: I knew right then that that things weren’t going to be good. (Laugh) Went to the fires meeting, and Jim, the Governor, had picked out his own Board Chairman. Well, went to the first meeting and...well actually before the new members went on, Dallas resigned as chairman, he didn’t resign from the Board, but he resigned as Chairman, and the Board appointed Lieutenant Governor Jimmy Green as Board Chairman. And that just made the Governor terribly mad. He sent me a note. And the new members were sitting around the table, but we didn’t have a vote, and the Governor sent me a note. And I didn’t even notice the note because somebody passed the envelopes out and I slipped it in my notebook and I didn’t even open it up. I got home the next day and the Governor called and said, “John I asked you to come by and see me.” I said, “Governor, I don’t know anything about it.” He said, “I sent you a note.” I said, “I didn’t get it.” About that time, I opened the notebook up and there it was. I wouldn’t dare tell him I had it. (Laugh) He said, “Well I can understand that. They probably didn’t know you.” I said, “That’s probably right, they didn’t know who to give it to.” He said, “I was disappointed in the way that Board voted.” I said, “I know you were. I’ll be glad to go back in to see you if you want me to.” I forget whether I went back
to see him or not. Smithfield was close by and I could come up in a few minutes. But maybe we just talked on the phone.

JW: And there wasn’t much you could do about it. They voted Green in and that was it.

JT: Right. He kept it until he decided he didn’t want it. He did it to irritate Craig Phillips and the Governor. That’s the only reason he did it.

JW: You mentioned Dallas and obviously he is one of the movers and shakers of that time. Were there others that come to mind, John?

JT: Well Dallas is the man. I mean no question about it. He was the man, he made things go. He was the engine, the transmission, the whole thing. What he said went. And he was right, his vision was sure.

JW: And that really was the primary source of his power, I guess.

JT: He was right. People generally knew he was right. And he knew he was right.

JW: What made him so powerful? How was he able to influence people? What was the secret to Dallas Herring’s success?

JT: Dallas was a genius. Still is a genius. He had a concept of education that was probably twenty years ahead of his time. He had this concept of the community college system before anybody else did. And he knew we needed these vocational and technical people trained for jobs. And if we didn’t get it, he could see the time coming, if we didn’t have it, our economy would just be in real trouble. He got it. Now he had some help on the State Board. Most all of them, well a good majority of the State Board of Education members was on his side. Probably his closest ally on the State Board was Barton Hayes. Barton was altogether a vocational and technical man. He ran a cotton mill in the country. So he really pushed vocational education in high schools and in community colleges. Now Dallas was right and
he knew he was right and he knew more about community colleges than anybody else. He could… well the Budget would come up. The legislature would pass the Budget to give us the money. And he had a group of presidents that he would call and he would say, “I want you to come to Rose Hill tomorrow night and we’re going to take the Budget and work it out. We would go down there and he would lead us in a discussion of the Budget, how it ought to be divided out. Of course the State President was there with us, Ready was the president, and he did whatever Dallas wanted him to do.

JW: What was Ready like? He is one person I’ve never been able to talk to.

JT: Very smart. But recognized Dallas as being the authority. He knew Dallas knew about the system and everybody else. So he readily took Dallas’s advice. He might argue with him a little bit once in a while, but in the end, he went with Dallas. Ready was a good man. He was kind and gentle and easy going. But he was firm as he could be. Some of the presidents were… they were not being as cooperative as they ought to have been. And he was strong enough to stand up to them. Of course Dallas could stand up with them, no problem. He got some of them that were strong minded and had yet to learn how it was to be run. But they didn’t know as well as Dallas did how it ought to be.

JW: Was the system ever segregated?

JT: No.

JW: How about Bob Scott? He became governor about the same time you became president.

JT: I don’t know what year he came in, but I had been president for five or six or seven years. [Here Dr. Tart is probably referring to Community College System President.]

JW: So who was governor when you became president? Moore?
JT: No Scott was governor when I became president and after him we had Holshouser.

JW: That’s right.

JT: And then Jim Hunt.

JW: So was Scott a supporter of community colleges. I know some consider the Moore administration to be a little more conservative.

JT: Yeah, Bob was a little more than lukewarm. He was not bombastic in his support, but he was a supporter.

JW: Well other than Terry Sanford, who do you see as being supportive? Have we had a community college governor? It seems like the emphasis is always on the public schools and the university.

JT: We have never had a governor who says, “This is the baby here. And we are going to put it priority number one.” We’ve never had that. And maybe never will. I don’t know but maybe our present governor supports it as well as any governor ever has.

Bob Scott, he tried… he wanted to be state president. And, let’s see…What was the man that came in with such controversy?

JW: Was he African American?

JT: No, he came in before the black man. It was Blake. And I was on the State Board that hired him. But I didn’t vote for him. Bob wanted the job. And Bob and I were pretty good buddies. And I would try to keep him informed about where it was. And I thought he was going to get the job. Let’s see… I just called his name a while ago from Hudson… Barton Hayes. He and I were working together to get Bob in as president when Ben Fountain went out. And we would stay in touch with the Governor’s office. And I remember being over there in his office one day and this was not Jim, but it was his man that Jim had told us to
work with. And he said that we want Bob Scott in the president’s office and I said, “That’s right, we want him.” And the next week is when we were to hire the state president. I got into Raleigh, the phone was ringing and it was Jim Hunt’s right hand man. He said, “John, you know we want Blake for state president.” I said, “What do you mean we want Blake.” He said, “He’s the man.” I said, “No, he is not the man. Bob Scott’s the man and that is what you have been telling me.” “I haven’t told you anything about that John.” I said, “I got proof that you have, because Barton Hayes knows about it. We’ve got two phones in this room and when we’re here talking to you, either he’s talking to you and I’m listening or I’m talking to you and he’s listening. We know what you told us. He said, “Well, we’ve changed our mind. We can’t go with Bob Scott; we’ve got to go with this other man.” Well that was a big change. And Blake, he got enough votes to hire him, but he didn’t by any means get unanimous support. There was about four that did not vote for him. Bob called me the next morning, he said, “John what happened?” And I told him. He said, “OK, I’ll fix that. I’ll run for governor. I’ll run against Jim Hunt for governor.” Well he didn’t win, but what it did do, it paved the road for him to become State President. We had lost confidence in Blake. And when Bob came in, it was just like the seas calming down. He brought harmony and good will to the system and he did a fairly good job of being president. A good job.

JW: And that is really a tough position because the state president doesn’t have any real authority.

JT: He’s a figure head. His persuasive power is all he’s got.

JW: I guess that is one of the things Dallas and those around him built into the system, that strong element of local control. Has that been a good thing in these later years?
JT: I think considering everything, I would pick the local control. … When Dallas was sort of losing some of his power, that was a problem. There were several of us that wanted Dallas to stay in power. Dallas called me one day, don’t talk to him about this, but he called and said, “We’ve go to do something about this John. These presidents are becoming hard to deal with. I want you to go in and see…” And he named them over; it was the leadership of the Senate and the House. And I knew them. I want you to in there and tell them that we want a statute, a law enacted, giving the State Board of Education absolute control of the hiring and firing of community college presidents. I said, “Are you sure we want it Dallas?” He said, “I know we want it.” (Laugh) I said, “OK.” I went and seen one of them and he said, “I’ll write the statute up.” And I went in his office to meet with them, the whole leadership was in there, and he read it out to them and they all agreed with it. So it was introduced in both the House and the Senate, entered into both. Now you talk about some presidents getting upset, but they got upset.

But they didn’t know that I had connived in it. But it was so that they calmed themselves down and became more cooperative then. The end result was that the legislature let it die in committee, but it had a whole lot of effect.

JW: Right. What year was that?

JT: Early Seventies.

JW: And when did you serve in the legislature?

RS: When I came into the community college system as president of the system, the system was being examined by members of the legislature and pointed questions were being asked about the direction the system was going. The system had expanded rapidly prior to the time that I came on board and was beginning to settle down as it were. Well, it was true that there were no more campuses being added at that time; however, programs were being added as the individual institutions were trying to meet the needs of the communities they served. So there were people in the legislature who felt that the community colleges were getting away from their mission. And yes we did have a few that were comprehensive community colleges, such as the one in Charlotte. And on the other hand, there were many others, primarily the rural college, though not necessarily so, that not only carried the name of technical colleges, but also the vast majority of their program offerings were in the vocational and technical areas. And so there was developing a concern in the legislature that the community college system was getting away from its original charter.

JW: What year would that have been?

RS: Well, I’m trying to think what year I came with the colleges. That would have been 1984, 1985 or 1986, right in there. Because I retired at almost exactly twelve years, lacking a month or two, and I think I retired in 1994. So somewhere in the early or mid eighties. The college system was still very vibrant at that time. It still is, I won’t deny that. But the presidents and their deans were excited about what they were doing. It wasn’t all that new to them, it had not built up a body of traditions that they felt that they had to adhere to. They would experiment with programs and if they didn’t pan out, you weren’t considered a failure.
It wasn’t wrong to try, although they were careful and that kind of thing. And there were new presidents beginning to come into the system. The original presidents, the founding presidents were gradually retiring and the new presidents, at that time, most of them came from within the ranks here in North Carolina. A few came in from out of state but it was felt by many boards of trustees that we had a system that was unique and it was best served by someone who understood it, the mission, and that would be people, not necessarily from their own college, but that would be a vice president or a dean of another college that they brought in as president. It was only toward the end of my tenure. You might say almost at the beginning of the retirement of this second wave of presidents that boards of trustees began to look at those from out of state. Who may have had a sterling president or might have been the president of a college in another state who wanted to maybe get a larger college, or perhaps for whatever reasons, move to another system. And by that time, the system in North Carolina had developed a nationwide reputation as being an excellent system. That is not because of, I just came along at the right time. This reputation had been built with hard work and sweat by the early administrators and the second wave of administrators had built on that and as I said, I got on the train that was already moving and rode it. And when I retired and I felt like it was time for me to do that and there were two reasons. First of all, and probably the most important reason, that I retired, is it is better to quit while you’re ahead. Things were going very well system wise. The voters of the state had enacted a major bond issue for the community colleges. And we had worked very hard for that. The trustees, we marshaled the support to get the vote out to support that bond issue. Secondly, and more internally, and academically, the system was beginning, getting ready to initiate the recommendations of the commission that had been appointed to look at the future of the
community college, chaired by Sherwood Smith, then president of Carolina Power and Light Company, which is now Progress Energy. That report had some recommendations that were going to have to be put into place over a period of a few years. And it was not universally accepted by everyone, that is to say, the recommendations. However, generally speaking, it was supported by the administrators in the system and the faculties. But I realized that someone ought to be in my chair, that is the state president, who had the energy to motivate and direct the implementation of those recommendations as they applied at the state level, at least, and to get the presidents and deans behind it. And secondly, somebody who not only had the energy, but somebody who was going to be around long enough to see it through. So for those reasons, I felt it was best to submit my resignation and some new thought and blood could be brought in. And I had reached the age that I could sense that I was slowing down a little bit. My enthusiasm was just as great and maybe even a little more, but I was at the age that I couldn’t get that enthusiasm on the road like it ought to be. So that was a watershed in my life.

JW: When did you first come in contact with the community colleges in this state?

RS: Well I suppose, I came into it during my years as governor, to some extent during my years as lieutenant governor. Because occasionally there would be matters before the legislature, related to budget matters mainly, though it be a new school that was being chartered, but I wasn’t intimately involved. It was in some ways just another agency of state government as far as the lieutenant governors office. Although as lieutenant governor, I was also on the state board of education. And we had the …

JW: Who was governor when you were lieutenant governor?
RS: Governor Dan Moore was governor at the time. And the state board of education had committees which had oversight of various matters and John Reynolds from Asheville was chairman of the committee that dealt with issues pertaining to the community college system and I was fortunate to be on that committee. I guess that’s my first real contact … The first contact, I’m sure, was with what is now Alamance Community College, when they had expanded to the point that their campus in Burlington was no longer adequate and they were looking for land for a new campus. And so the interstate ran through our community and having some farm land there, we were able to work out an agreement where they would move out to the country, so to speak. This was a good thing, and they had adequate land there to expand and a good location. Again, I was governor during that time and other than being aware of what was going on and giving my OK to it, I was not intimately involved. After serving as lieutenant governor and having those matters as mentioned, as governor, coming before the legislature, it (the community colleges) became primarily a budget issue. With the governor submitting his budget to the legislature. And again, to be honest about it, the community college request for funding, within the budget, became another state agency like the university and the public schools. But I did realize though, that we had three systems of education in this state. The public school kindergarten was non existent, but we did get a pilot program started during my administration. Incidentally, an amusing side story to that was that I had decided that we had talked about public school kindergartens for a long time and it was time to either fish or cut bait and get started on it. We knew we didn’t have enough money to install a state wide system of kindergartens, so we did put up enough money to put in a pilot kindergarten, a state supported kindergarten, in each educational district in the state. And it was a good thing that we did because of two things that occurred.
We found out, number one, that we weren’t really ready as a state to implement a state wide program. Nobody had any little tables or chairs for kindergarten students. And number two, we had no trained public kindergarten teachers. Those who would teach would be retired public schoolteachers, who had really no training, except maybe first grade teachers, in teaching that level of student and that type of curriculum. So this pilot program gave us time to develop, to see the weaknesses and what we had to do to really put in a good kindergarten program. And of course, by the time they were able to get around to that I was long gone. But I’ve always thought that a little amusing. Nobody ever thought about that … Anyway, I got involved in other things. I learned something. I set up a lobbying office, thinking that the clients were going to come to me. I learned very quickly that if you didn’t have a law degree, you were not qualified to lobby the legislature. I totally disagreed with that, still do, but that’s the way it is. Many of the large firms at that time, they wouldn’t hire anybody but somebody that had a law degree, specifically. So that was not a success. And then I went to Washington in the administration of President Jimmy Carter, whom I knew as governor of Georgia. He put me in charge of the Appalachian Regional Commission and that enabled me to have a part in economic development issues and funding projects in the mountain regions of North Carolina, including partial funding of vocational technical programs, and particularly facilities and equipment, in the community colleges of western North Carolina. I know the community college at Mayland and Spruce Pine, or near Spruce Pine, their first vocational technical buildings were funded by the Appalachian Region. And I went down for the ribbon cutting and all of that. So I was still involved in a peripheral way with the community colleges at this time in the western part of the state.
JW: You know you mentioned that vocational technical element there and I think that is one of the things that is very interesting about the North Carolina system is that it began, well as you know the system starts in 1963, but the colleges actually get started in 1957 with those IECs…

RS: Yes.

JW: And so the focus of the system from the beginning has been both vocational and technical.

RS: That’s right. And some of the old timers around, most of them are out of the picture now, but as I mentioned earlier, they were the ones that knew that, those in the legislature. And they felt that we were moving away from the old industrial education center concept and that we were trying to be too much like junior colleges. You know all this business about getting an associate degree, that wasn’t what they understood that the system had been established for.

JW: Luther Hodges played a big role in that…

RS: He did that. I was not aware of that at the time, but he did, according to what others that were involved, mainly Dr. Dallas Herring. As a matter of fact, the story is that, what is now the Alamance Community College was one of those first industrial education centers and the other one, as I understand it, went to Randolph… or Reidsville? Anyhow, Senator B. Everett Jordan was from Alamance county and he was a close friend of Governor Hodges. And you can say what you want to, but the establishment of any kind of major program like the industrial education centers and community colleges, there is a political element involved. And Governor Hodges put one of the industrial education centers in Senator Jordan’s home county, his old friend. Senator Jordan owned textile mills and was a business man.
Governor Hodges came from the textile industry and was a business man. So they had much in common. I guess this was an effort, successful, to please his friend and do something for him. So that is how Alamance Community College was one of the old industrial education centers established in the state. It is interesting when you look back at the, why were the community colleges, what’s now the community colleges, back then the industrial education centers and then later the vocational and technical colleges, post-secondary education focused on vocational training and technical training, why were they so successful. And the reading of the history of those early years, following World War II, when so many young men were coming home from service after World War II, and wanted an education because they could take advantage of the GI Bill. That was one of the federal government’s pieces of legislation that probably had the greatest impact on this country, certainly in the rest of the century. So these young men were flooding back into the workforce. They had been away from home, most of them for the first time in their lives. They had gone overseas and yes, it is true that some of them, a lot of them, didn’t get back. Others perhaps never really got to see a whole lot, but many did. And they realized that there was another world out there [beyond] their local communities here in North Carolina. And particularly those who lived in rural areas and perhaps more particularly those who lived in the mountains. On more than one occasion someone would come to me and tell me their experiences of leaving home in the communities in the mountains of North Carolina, even though they might not have gone overseas, most of them did. But they were in another state and they began to realize there was another world out there and when they came back, they were not satisfied with what they saw. Nor were they satisfied with what their own situation was going to be. There was a great hunger for education and training to enable them to find a place in this other world.
Now the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or then the greater university which consisted of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N C State University and the Women’s College at Greensboro; they experimented for a short period of time with a two year program, postsecondary. I don’t recall whether that lasted two or four years but they shut it down quickly, before it took hold and consequently, again, there was nothing for those out there who could not afford, well they could under the GI Bill, but due to extenuating circumstances, maybe family and other reasons, they could not pull up state and go live in the “vet villes” of the campuses. They were married and had families, those kinds of things; even though many married students went to school to. But it just didn’t work out for them. They needed something close to home where they could commute back and forth. Many of them, no doubt, had already gotten jobs and were working and they wanted to continue. Therefore the ground was right for the establishment of a system of postsecondary education for these people. And they flooded in. The industrial education centers, in looking back we can call them the first tentative step, but the thought was there. Truthfully the leaders in the state at that time were feeling their way along. And the system that we have today, we arrived at this level of confidence and high degree of reputation, step by step. It wasn’t something that was implemented full blown and was instantly put into place all over the state.

JW: Right. Dallas described it as “what was politically possible to be done at that time.”

RS: As is most things of that nature or that magnitude. You have those for and those against and those who want to go to the restroom when the vote is taken. So yes, it certainly does cause a split. You can’t shove the whole shooting match at the legislature or the population at one time. You have to prove it as you go along and there has to be that demand for it.
JW: Tell me about, well they (community colleges) started in 1957 and then Terry Sanford came into office and in 1963, things really took off. You knew Terry Sanford, of course. Tell me about what role he played in all of that. What type of individual was he? What type of governor was he?

RS: Terry Sanford was an activist governor. Terry Sanford believed that government could and should be used to meet the needs of people. And he believed that all it took was leadership and telling the people what they already knew, since it would better their lives. Sanford, of course, was known as the education governor. And he did, he worked hard and if he had an idea and a program, he did go out and sell it to the public. He knew about, or had seen this beginning under Luther Hodges, of the industrial education centers, and he realized, apparently, I didn’t talk to him about this, that a need was being filled. That a gap in education systems occurred between the high school and the university. So he took this beginning that occurred under Governor Hodges and ran with it, so to speak. And it was during his administration, there was considerable expansion of the system. There was more, not only additional campuses established, but they began to move from purely industrial education to a more, shall we say, sophisticated vocational and technical programs. Again it wasn’t full blown community college, two year college parallel institutions, there were a few, but certainly not all. Part of that, again as Dr. Herring would say, was what you could do politically. There were many boards of trustees, out across the state, who did not see any advantage in moving beyond vocational and technical training and would resist even a name change. So we wound up literally, during the time that I was there with, under Governor Martin, with a convoluted name, The North Carolina System of Vocational Technical
Community Colleges or something like that (laughter) and frankly the Legislature got tired of it.

JW: That was like the old North Carolina State name change…

RS: That’s right. The Legislature got tired of it and said that we are going to give the institutions until a year or whatever to change their year to a community college regardless of their mix of programs. And so that is the way we got to be where everybody had the name “community college.” Some of them stubbornly kept their vocational program name in their college [name, for example] Guilford Technical Community College and Catawba Valley Vocational Technical Community College, a few of those still around.

Terry Sanford, going back to him, was an education governor. He believed in education. Terry was a visionary too. And I think he realized education in this state should be seamless from the beginning on up to, as Dr. Herring said, as far as they could go. And if they went to the university, it would be a seamless thing. And although I don’t recall Terry ever saying it in this way, as we did later, a person should be able to leave and enter the system at any point. And it was there and you could get off the train, it you will, at any station you wanted to and go about your business. And if you wanted to come back later, you could come back and get on the train and go a little further. Or you could stay on it and go to the end of the line. So Terry was a visionary, he had the energy, he understood what was needed and he believed that government should be used to forward people. And he was very active in his programs in that regard, particularly with respect to education. I was a young man. Terry Sanford was my father’s campaign manager, when my father ran successfully for the United States Senate. That was where I first got to know him. When I
came back from tenure in the service, Terry invited my wife and I and some other young couples down to his house in Fayetteville…

JW: What branch of the service by the way?

RS: I served in the Army’s Counterintelligence Corps. And Terry invited us down and cooked hamburgers in his back yard. First time I ever ate hamburgers with a slice of tomato in the middle. When he cooked them, he cooked them that way. But anyway, and they were great. But afterwards, we went into his living room and he talked about his vision for North Carolina. And he asked for our help. Well, he was doing this with young couples all over the state. And which I didn’t know until later (laughter). And he was a very convincing man and he did have a vision for the state. He had the energy and the drive, which was admirable. So we got on board with that and I helped him in a minor way with his campaign here in the county of Alamance. And then I did a little work down east for him among the people who had supported my father. So Terry then, I guess you could say, rewarded me, if you will, and named me to the Board, then Board of Conservation and Development. At that time they handled both the Conservation end of it, the State Parks, and the economic part of it, in what’s now the Department of Commerce. All under the same Board, and I was on the State Parks Committee. I did not have any role to play in the community colleges in that period of time. I was just aware of Sanford’s program in a distance and he was very active in it. And bear in mind that the industrial education center in my home county of Alamance was already in place and so I wasn’t really paying too much attention to what was going on in other areas of the state with respect to the community colleges.

JW: He was working very closely, I think, with Dallas…?
RS: Yes, I meant to mention that he was. In fact, he leaned on Dallas a great deal for Dallas’s advice. Dallas was the chairman of the board of education, as he was under Governor Hodges and under Governor Moore and under me. So, I think that’s correct? And I believe, under Jim Martin, I mean Governor Holshouser, who succeeded me. And so, anyway …

JW: I guess one of the longest serving chairmen this state has ever had.

RS: Must have been. But Dr. Herring as we all know, is considered somewhat the father of the community college system because he did work closely with Governor Hodges, and Terry Sanford particularly, in the expansion of the system. And sort of shepherded the molding of the system as it evolved from the industrial education centers into vocational and technical institutions and later to community colleges. And Dallas was not only astute in education, but he was astute in politics. And he knew what was politically possible. And no doubt he was able to have access to these governors and to talk with them. And I suspect, as anyone that is in a leadership role as Dr. Herring was, he planted more than one seed with these governors. I suspect that the governors would call Dallas and ask him, “What do you think about a particular idea?” That maybe the governor had or someone had spoken to the governor about. Dallas in his own quiet way did indeed shape the policy and future direction of the system. And I think most people who know the history of the community college system will agree with that. Sure the governors had the visible role, as would be expected and they had to give their blessing, if you will. And indeed in some respects, support various issues. But Dallas, the idea, the germ had to come from somewhere and governors have a whole lot more on their plates than the community colleges. So I would say this, the governors primarily signed off on, maybe, an idea that somebody else brought to them.
Much like the Research Triangle, which was really not Luther Hodges idea. It was an idea of a man whose name I cannot recall. [According to A. G. Ivey (1968) in Luther H. Hodges, Practical Idealist, “The idea had been discussed before by sociologist Howard W. Odum of Chapel Hill. In 1952 he proposed a research center utilizing the talent available at the University in Chapel Hill and N. C. State College in Raleigh. Making it a “triangle” and bringing in Duke University was the suggestion of a Greensboro construction man, Romeo Guest. He prepared a brochure. The three universities were pictured in a triangle, the points of the triangle, Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh. The potentiality for research was stressed. Guest also envisioned research libraries inside the triangle, and new industry radiating throughout the state.” (p. 177)] He was from Greensboro and then retired in South Carolina. But he was the one who planted the idea with Luther Hodges and Luther Hodges being a businessman and working with Archie Davis with Wachovia Bank at that time and others. He took it and ran with it. Because he was governor, he was able to give it the visibility and the leadership and the credibility that was required to get that concept going, which was very successful. And I would say that Terry Sanford was much the same way. That he took it and ran with it because he believed that it was a good thing. And he gave it the credibility. What little was done in my administration, which was a very little, in terms of the growth and development [of the community college system], it had a momentum of its own during my time. And I am not using that as an excuse. But I think all of us just recognized the validity of what Dallas Herring or perhaps some others, Barton Hayes, or people like that said. And Barton Hayes, from Lenoir?

JW: Or Caldwell?
RS: Caldwell? Anyway from western North Carolina. Somewhere up there. He was a great friend of Dallas Herring’s. He was on the Board of Education for a long time. And Barton didn’t do much, without the stamp of approval of Dallas and I think Dallas ran a lot of his ideas before Barton Hayes. As would any two friends who were interested in the same subject.

JW: In fact, I think Dallas was speaking of it as late as last weekend; he worked so closely with Terry and then along came Dan Moore. And Dallas hadn’t supported Moore and he told me he was sort of holding his breath there. (Laughter) I think he told me that he had supported Richardson Preyor.

RS: I didn’t know that, but understandably.

JW: Well that was Terry’s man. What was happening there? You had Terry who really expanded education, increased taxes to do so, things were really on the move. And then there was somewhat of a conservative backlash, I guess?

RS: Yes, I would say so. There was a combination of factors. One was a conservative backlash. As a matter of fact, the candidate Dan Moore, running against Richardson Preyor, said publicly that it’s time to slow down and catch our breath. Terry Sanford, he had a lot of things going and as I said, a very proactive governor. And Dan Moore was elected primarily by the business community. At least he certainly had their support because even though he was a judge, he had been legal counsel to Champion Fiber and Paper Company in western North Carolina.

By nature, Dan was a quiet, easy going person. He was not, I never heard him make a really great speech in his life.

JW: Ed Rankin said that too.
RS: He basically couldn’t speak. But he had a sound mind and a solid way of approaching things in a judicial way. And it was deliberative and rather slow. It wasn’t the Terry Sanford style, where it was almost sometimes looked like you were shooting from the hip. Not really, but you understand what I am saying.

Interestingly enough, as a side issue, when Dan Moore was running against Richardson Preyor, Richardson Preyor had already announced that he was going to run. And I entertained the thought of running for governor myself at that time. Naively, very naively. And I did not and that is another story that I am reserving for my book. But I wound up running for lieutenant governor because nobody was paying any attention to that and I figured I could sneak in, and I did. And I knew I would have some support out across the state, but not for governor. Everybody had already pretty much chosen sides with either Richardson Preyor or Dan Moore and Beverly Lake was running at that time as well. So it was not a fight that I should get into, a young fellow like me would get beat pretty badly. Because well, I was young, naïve, didn’t know any better and was, perhaps, a little too full of myself. Anyway eh, and Richardson Preyor never, well there were a number of reasons. And one could draw some rough parallels with the presidential race this time. Richardson Preyor never could give the public an impression of being one of them. First of all, most of people who kept up with politics knew he came from a wealthy past. Now he may not have had a lot of personal wealth, but he was identified with the wealthy family. Secondly he had been a judge. And Dan Moore had been a judge. However, Richardson Preyor, I don’t care how much he rolled up his sleeves, loosened his tie, he still looked and talked like a judge. Dan Moore had this slow voice and twang of a mountain man and he elicited, well he identified more with the person on the street. And I was at the meeting in Greensboro at the
old Holiday Inn next to interstate 85; it’s not there now, when Richardson Preyor was brought before Terry Sanford’s leaders. And Bert Bennett, his political guru, from Winston-Salem. And brought in, it was a quote secret …meeting so to speak. Terry Sanford actually came into the room, he was governor at the time, actually came in with sunglasses on, this is at night, with a hat on and a raincoat and I didn’t recognize him when he first walked in. And as governor he had to slip in, so to speak. Bert Bennett was presiding. Terry Sanford’s key folks from around over the state were there, including Launch Faircloth. And they talked about who they could get behind and support for the next governor of North Carolina. Well a naïve person like me and I’d say, two-thirds of those in there, maybe all of them, were made to believe that we were being asked for our advice, who they would support. But the decision had already been made, but we didn’t know it. And uh, at least I didn’t. And Lauch Faircloth sat right behind me, and he didn’t know it. Finally somebody said, “Well what about Judge Richardson Preyer?” Well that, you know, sparked some supportive conversation from Bert Bennett and a few other key people. So they said, “Well, let’s get him in here and talk with him. We’re here in Greensboro and he lives in Greensboro.” Well it wasn’t five minutes before he got there and I knew he lived across town. (Laughter) So he had to be in another room, down there [in the hotel]. And they bought him in and they anointed him as the candidate. And I turned around and looked at Lauch Faircloth and I said, “What do you think, Lauch?” And Lauch says, “He’ll never make it in eastern North Carolina.” And he was right. He did not. He might have eaten as much barbecue as anyone else, but he didn’t talk the talk and walk the walk. So that was what was going on. Beverly Lake was a strong factor to be contended with. He had his supporters out there.

JW: Yes, I believe there was John Burney down in eastern North Carolina.
RS: Right. Very much so. And of course, Robert Morgan, Senator Bob Morgan. And Bob told me back then, I probably would not have voted for Beverly Lake, but when I went to law school, or when I went to college, Beverly Lake, I stayed in his home. I couldn’t get around it. And Dr. Lake let me board at his house. So Dr. Lake had his supporters, strong supporters.

JW: And he was on the far right and then there was Dan in the middle, and that is where North Carolina went.

RS: Exactly! You’ve got that pegged exactly right. That’s what happened years later when I ran for governor. I had Melvin Broughton, Jr., the son of a former governor, who was conservative and had the heritage of the conservative wing of the party. And on the right we had the liberal Dr. Hawkins, Reginald Hawkins from Charlotte, who was a black dentist, well-spoken, impressive, good talker. And so I was in the middle of those two and I made it my campaign strategy to literally be in the middle and crowd the others over on the left and right shoulders of the road. And that was also the success of Dan Moore, doing the same thing.

JW: Did you ever hear Dan Moore, indeed that administration, was he supportive of the community colleges?

RS: Yes, he was. But not to the extent Terry Sanford was. I think, as I recall, I was lieutenant governor, as I recall he was supportive of the colleges in the budget. But you see Dan Moore was not the kind to take the initiative to go out on the stump and speak to the community colleges. I’m sure he had one or two, or maybe more, graduations he went to, that kind of thing. But that just wasn’t his nature. He was not, as Ed Rankin said, not a good speaker. I think he knew that. He was more judicial. He was used to the quiet decorum of
the court room. And rather than the noisy public crowds. Even though he had campaigned and had to do his share of speaking during that time, it wasn’t his nature.

JW: So after his term, you decided to run?

RS: That’s right.

JW: So that was a natural step for you then?

RS: Well, it could be said that having gone about…

JW: And you supported Moore too, correct?

RS: Well yes, I did. Yes, after the Democratic primary, I supported him strongly. And I named him to the Supreme Court. It was one of the few times, I am told, when the entire Supreme Court, Dan Moore was not a member at that time, and Justice Robert was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. But he bought all of the associate justices and they came trooping into my office as governor, and recommended that I appoint Dan Moore to a vacancy that existed on the Supreme Court. And I did. Because when I ran for governor, Dan Moore supported me strongly. He raised money for me. He had dinners at the Governor’s Mansion with business people, asking them to support me and so on. So politically, I had good cause to, if you will, reward him. It was one of the best appointments I made. Because he was, had a judicial background; it suited him perfectly and he was happy at that. And he taught me some lessons. Two things he always taught me. When I had been elected as governor, and although I had been lieutenant governor, I was around during the transition period and we talked about a number of things. And one of the things that he taught me was, he says, “There is no training ground for governors.” By implication he meant, just because you have been lieutenant governor, you don’t know a thing about it. And he was absolutely right. The other occurred after I had gone out, had left office. And Bill
Friday, the president of the university system, had a program over UNC—TV, that had originated from Greensboro, over at UNC—G. He had Dan Moore and me, and I don’t know who all, and I’ve forgot what the subject was and we had to be up there at something like 7 o’clock in the morning and Dan Moore had to drive from Raleigh, and we were standing around having coffee, waiting for the program to begin and I had not long since left office. And I asked Governor Moore, I said, “Governor, I thought, that when you left the governor’s office, you didn’t have to do this kind of thing anymore?” And he says, “Bob, let me tell you something. You never get through being governor.” (Laughter) And he was absolutely right about that. Those were the two lessons he taught me. And I have just told you some of the stories that I’m going to use in my book. (Laughter)

RS: And you know when you get to be as old as I am, and I’ve been here three quarters of a century now, what you want to do is tell stories. And so I would be a simply great person to personify the old man sitting in a cane bottom chair on the front porch of the store, talking to anybody that would listen. (Laughter)

JW: But you have something to tell. Well one of the things that I wanted to mention to you and check with you, that Ed [Rankin] said was that there was very little transition between the Sanford and Moore administrations. He said that when he came over, the guy said, “Here is the key, take over.” There was some animosity between those wings [of the party]. Is that fair?

RS: That’s a fair assessment, I think. I can honestly say that I couldn’t verify that because I was not into those conversations. The lieutenant governor is just that. He was automatically on the state board of education. He was automatically on one other board, I’ve forgotten what it was. But you weren’t the governor and the governor would say, “Don’t call us, we’ll call
you.” And all though we got along alright, it wasn’t easy. It just wasn’t the nature of the game at that time to (apprise) the lieutenant governor. So I wasn’t there. However I do confirm what Ed Rankin said about the political climate at that time. So I would not be surprised at all, knowing Terry’s staff, knowing, if you will, Terry himself, I suspect the handed him the key and said, “Here it is.” I wouldn’t be surprised if they had just left it on the desk and said, “The key is in there.” (Laughter) Of course, Governor Moore had had no experience in the executive branch of governor and it’s like jumping in the river, you’d better know how to swim when you get in there. Ed Rankin and a few others, although they had no experience in the executive branch as far as I know, Governor Moore picked a good staff and they served him well. So they got off to a good start.

JW: Getting back to the community colleges, Governor, I would think there was opposition to the community colleges from some corners in those early years. Was there opposition to the colleges?

RS: Yes indeed. There was opposition from the private colleges in the state particularly. They saw the community college system as competitors for students. They felt, some of the presidents of these institutions felt very strongly that their role was to provide for educational opportunities even though, so far as I recall, all of them were private liberal arts colleges that did not have as far as I know vocational programs and those colleges were receiving some small grants from the legislature in terms of money. And they saw that these community colleges, these new institutions were eroding their financial base as well as picking off some students that might normally come to their campuses. I took the position when I came on board and that feeling still was there among some of the older private college presidents. Burkette Raper was one. They were very, well they weren’t strident or all that vocal about it,
but privately they lobbied the legislature, particularly through their own boards of trustees and community leaders, to hold down. See, they saw how rapidly the community college concept was catching on in the state and legislator after legislator wanted one of those institutions in their county or in their district. I am told that Anson community college is Anson community college only because then lieutenant governor Pat Taylor, or speaker of the house at that time, Pat Taylor from Anson County, “wanted one of them colleges too.” And he got it. So…and they were able to get some of them institutions. One could argue at that time that we had too many. And if they were more strategically placed, rather than politically placed, then we wouldn’t need as many. And there was some validity to that. However, in today’s market, the state has grown so rapidly, you know, that all of them are now viable institutions. One could still argue, maybe, that we could have done a better job of placing them, but that would not have been possible, because the legislature would have had to decree that a college had to, there could only be so many miles for it or whatever. And they weren’t about to do that because they might want one in their district. There was opposition there among the presidents of the private colleges. There was also some opposition in the legislature. I don’t know whether that opposition came from their siding, some of them were on the boards of these private colleges. So that might have been the reason for their opposition. And as I recall there was some opposition from some of the communities to the establishment of a community college because, you know, it’s going to require some local tax money. They were concerned about that. Frankly, by the time I came on board, the movement had gone beyond strictly vocational education. More and more of the institutions were offering the college parallel courses. And that disturbed some in the business community, because they said that your mission is to provide vocational and
technical training. And they didn’t, frankly, did not want to go much beyond that. Some of them didn’t want to go that far. Because they felt that if their pool of low wage labor would be lessened as these people were given the training. That is to say a graduate of the vocational technical institution should, would expect and probably could command a higher wage than somebody who was drawn from the population generally. There are some particularly in the textile industry who probably had some misgivings about the community college system because they were training people who could command high wages. And therefore their pool of cheap labor was not as large as it had been. And this was, as I said, particularly true in the piedmont. Which was odd because the system began under Luther Hodges, who was a textile man. But you know, and the resistance came primarily from the family owned textile people. Not the Burlington Industries, who had a nation wide viewpoint and who saw that, you know, as Dr. Herring or somebody said, a rising sea lifts all ships, or whatever that phrase is.

JW: So when you say the family owned textiles you are thinking like Cannon Mills…

RS: Exactly.

JW: Well that’s interesting that you mentioned that viewpoint toward them. There has been some suggestion by scholarship that sometimes these schools might have been set up to serve as institutions, not just for the disadvantaged, but to siphon away minorities from the university. I don’t find any record of that in North Carolina.

RS: No, and I’ve never heard that. I really did not hear that. Now I think the university may have had some misgivings about this system of institutions from the standpoint of the general population. But not for reasons of gender or race or anything of that sort, rather that these pupils ought to be coming to the university and getting a four year degree. However, at the
time of the initiation of this [system of community colleges], the universities were flooded; they didn’t have room for what they had, because of the flood of veterans coming back.

JW: The reality was that many of the professors at those universities didn’t want to deal with the freshmen and sophomores anyhow.

RS: Exactly. They did not perceive… that’s why the university system was so reluctant I think to accept the graduates of the two year programs. They had not been taught by faculty who had Ph.D.s, not necessarily, and they had simply not been grounded in the subjects that were deemed necessary to get a Bachelor of Arts degree. So there was reluctance. In retrospect it’s not too surprising because of the culture of the university system; the backgrounds of the faculty and this was something new. Kind of an upstart thing. If they wanted to be over here and do their thing, that was alright but don’t try to send them to us and make us accept their credits. Well gradually the faculties or if you will, the administration of the various campuses, they would sometime say, we’ll take graduates of your programs if you’ll let us send our faculty out there and conduct the classes, give the lectures and the exams. And then so, that was done, as sort of a first step. Of course, now it is much more widely accepted, especially the college transfer program. It’s interesting…and I don’t know whether it’s an issue yet, because I haven’t followed it that closely, but apparently there is some attention being given to the fact that the community colleges now are indeed moving toward the model of the junior college. And so maybe a battle is starting all over again. Or maybe, these things evolve and the community college system, it may be the end of the beginning. We began as industrial education centers and we’ve gone through these steps and now it’s time to move on and become not only a comprehensive community junior/community colleges. And that’s terminology, because it’s what you offer that’s the
real measure of what you’re doing. And so maybe some institutions at least are ready to move into the role of junior colleges. And again I haven’t been involved enough to know really what’s being taught out there. Central Piedmont is a huge operation, larger than any campus in the state. I guess it’s still that way, in terms of enrollment. And just a smorgasbord of offerings of various programs. And so maybe they’re [ready]. The structure of the community college probably won’t change, that is to say, I don’t see in the immediate future, even in the near future, the community colleges having resident students, dormitories. Maybe some sports, but not [much], because the presidents don’t want to have to deal with that. I have heard president after president say that they thank God every time they get up in the morning that they don’t have students living on campus. They don’t have to deal with the problems that come from that. So I don’t see that happening. And you know, there’s really no need for it under their present structure.

JW: These institutions, is it fair to say that they opened doors to African Americans, to women, to the rural poor, that didn’t even exist before?

RS: Yes, they did, in my judgment. I am not so that it was simply because the community colleges were there. I think it was the change in the times in that, the gender issue and the racial issue, began to be focused more sharply during in the sixties and seventies…

JW: It was moving full speed ahead when you were governor.

RS: That’s right. The community colleges were at the right place at the right time and they opened the doors to anyone, as Doctor Herring has said.

JW: They weren’t segregated?

RS: They weren’t segregated. There were not the tensions on campus that would have likely resulted had there been dormitories and resident students. And they opened the programs to
anyone who wanted to come, if they had the talents to get into the professions, like nursing and other professions. And the university system, because of the traditions and because of the culture, was slow to move toward freely accepting women and minorities. They did, but we all know that it took the federal government to see to it that they moved more quickly than they would have otherwise. And again, that’s part of the culture of the university system and was a part of it and it was not a part of the culture of the community college system. So those opportunities were there for women then and I suppose as much so now, more so now, because if for no other reason, the community colleges, most of them, have done a wonderful job in raising scholarship money for the rural poor, or for the poor anywhere. And they saw to it that the money was spread in a non-discriminatory manner to those who deserved and merited scholarship money. And that enhanced the opportunities for those two groups to enter the colleges, particularly the minorities. Being a community college and the ability of the student to work during the day and take courses at night or vice versa, that opened the doors for minorities and women, particularly women, who wanted to get a degree and yet had a family to support. And this was particularly true of single parents. They were able to take advantage of the local college. Be home with their children at night, get them off to the school the next day, so all those things worked to the advantage of the minority and the female students.

JW: Well, obviously there were a lot of successes in the early years and during your tenure as governor. When you look back, do you see any mistakes that were made; anything that maybe could have been done differently, in the creation and expansion of the system?

RS: Never really thought about that and my knee jerk reaction is, not really. Sure there were some areas probably, and I really can’t think of one now, but there must have been some
areas were improvements could have been made even more quickly than they were done. But as Doctor Herring says, these things … you have to do what you can do politically and you can’t go full speed ahead, what do they call it in the racing business, zero to sixty in two minutes or in a minute. So … but the concept was sound, even more so in retrospect, and I am not sure that the founders recognized it at the time. But by starting off small and not trying to take the whole, eat the whole cake at one time, they were able to work out the problems or see maybe some of the pit falls that might have been ahead. They avoided, for the most part, taking on the university, which certainly in the legislature they would have lost those battles. And incidentally, when I was in office, and when the fellow from Charlotte, the big fellow, that took Bill Friday’s place, what’s his name?

JW: Oh here we go, I can’t think of it right now (laughter)…

RS: He came in and he was a business man, and although I did not know him, we got to be friends. And he was really a wonderful guy, personally. But he was willing and wanted to work more closely with the community college system. And we had a number of conversations in his office and he would occasionally come by mine and we had meetings, we would often have coffee together, and we talked about how we could work more closely together. And he was aware of the rich and long traditions of the university and he knew that you could only move them along so fast. And we talked about those things and we shared what our visions for our respective systems as well as trying to come up with ways that we could work more closely together, or at least have more or better communications with each other. And we did and we were able to get some things started. … And this is not to say that Bill Friday was not cooperative, Bill was. I think Dr. Herring has said that Bill was in on it from the beginning. They had a good relationship.
JW: I think they had good relations. And it was somewhat critical to the story of community colleges in North Carolina, just like you said earlier, that these two systems did not end up in opposition to one another and that was part of it.

RS: That’s right. You know a leader of any system or whatever, you can lead only when you have somebody following you. And if you get too far out front, there’s nobody going to be following you. So I think all of us in a way were aware of that subconsciously. And you can only provide the leadership, you may have the vision, but maybe you can do your part in fulfilling that vision, but you may not be able to see it completely fulfilled. It may have to be somebody who comes after you. These systems always are moving forward.

JW: How is the system different today than it was in those earlier years? Of course, some of it we have already talked about, the vocational/technical focus has changed. It’s obviously much larger.

RS: And I think another thing, well giving me the wiggle room, in that I haven’t been involved in a number of years, but my impression, in that when I left the community college system, I did some part time teaching work at NC State.

JW: You were one of my professors.

RS: In the graduate school with Dr. George Baker, who is a renowned professor of higher education. And during that time, I sort of kept tabs of what was happening, but that was the last time that I was really keeping up with what was going on. But one of the changes which has occurred is that more of them have become comprehensive and offer more programs other than purely vocational and technical training. And according to the leadership of those colleges and their boards of trustees, depends on how far they have gone down that road, but I get the impression that the entire system, looking at the entire system, that they have moved
more toward the goal of being comprehensive community colleges. And I don’t know how far that road goes. I think another thing that changes in this period, and this is not a change, but they have grown tremendously in enrollment. They have …

JW: Eight hundred thousand.

RS: They can hardly get the money; they are always having to ask for construction bonds, or bond issues in the legislature. And consequently this says that the, quote, opportunities out there, are still as great as they were when the system began. There is still a demand for these programs. And I would suggest to you that… more and more students see this as the first step toward getting the baccalaureate. They are willing to go for two years; I think that is because the university is more willing to accept them. I think that may be the case. I don’t know that, but I sense that. The campuses, if you will, they are truly campuses now. At one time, they were, in the physical plant, they were pretty pitiful. They took buildings wherever they could get them. The one that is always cited, in that respect, is Tri-County Community College, which had then and still has as a keep sake, an old jail. In their vocational place, they keep some of their specialty tools locked up in that cell. (Laugher) They kept one just as a souvenir, because they did literally start out in an old abandoned jail. So there have been those kinds of changes. Philosophically, I’m not sure how much that’s changed. I think the public is more willing to accept now that there is a need other than vocational and technical and therefore the presidents are moving more to comprehensive programs.

JW: You mentioned the funding issues; in the early years I understand there was a battle over funding?

RS: No question about it. Again that battle… there was resistance. Even though the community college system had been established, it wasn’t … it was being perceived, since it
was growing so rapidly, it was being perceived as a threat to the private colleges and to some extent the university. Taking away students that ought to be enrolling in the university, so yes there was more opposition then. Now it’s just another item that you are going to always see in the budget and they are always going to be asking for more money, just like the university and just like the public schools. Which brings me to a point of concern that I have and that is that the community college system, because of its success and rapid growth and now half a century in business, becomes stagnant, I don’t want to say stagnant, but like the other systems in the sense, we’ve got our presence and now what we have to do is have more money and keep going… I worry that there is not the sense of excitement in the faculty and the administration and the trustees. Because they were not in on the building of the college and the physical plant. And were not in on the early day with experimentation and entrepreneurship. And they begin to become a little complacent. And because we are here, you ought to take care of us. Rather than be out front, and as you get older, you build more traditions and you get tied to those traditions and therefore you don’t have as much, perhaps, entrepreneurship in the system. They will get too complacent and say we’re doing this because this is the way that we have always done it. All of those things go into complacency.

JW: And we lose that spirit of innovation.

RS: There you go. That is the word I was looking for, that spirit of innovation. And not only the institutions themselves, but the legislature, the governor and others will say, “Well now look, you’re pushing too much.” And that was true in the early days, very much so. But now maybe the institutions themselves will say that we can’t do that, because they are scared, maybe, to take the risk because of funding and all of that. Back in the early days, they wanted to, they almost wanted to pick a fight, not really, but you understand what I am
saying. They were not afraid of it, let’s put it that way, in order to move ahead… And now it’s become a matter of increasing enrollments, which with the funding method/system they have, is [critical to their existence]. I’ve often wondered, and today, this is really 2005, and I think about when I went in the office as president of the system, I was told at the time, and it was true, that only God and Tom King, the Vice President of Finance, understood the formula for funding the community college system. And it was true. (Laughter) I never understood it. And I often wondered if that is still true. Maybe Kenneth Briggs now, if he is still there as Vice President. But once in a while I’ll think about it. (Laughing)

JW: Right, exactly. We talk about simplifying the tax code, maybe we ought to work at simplifying the community college formula.

RS: Tom King was never much in favor of simplifying it, because only he understood it.

JW: Right, it was somewhat a source of power for him.

RS: But he used it judiciously. But it’s a great system. And I am just glad to be a part of it. And I’ll say this, and I think I’ve mentioned this to you before. I’ve been fortunate. I came along… I came into this world at a very fortunate time. I got to experience the days before the mechanization of the farm, the horses were used, and then before I got out of it, we were beginning to use the high technology of computers in farming. So I had all of that… I came along politically at a good time. I have often said that my father literally paved the way for me to go into the governor’s office because of his strong road building program in rural areas. And I was the last of the, you might say, Democratic dominance, because Governor Holshouser succeeded me and he was a Republican. I was the last of those that campaigned in the old fashioned way. Well Governor Holshouser did, but it was beginning to change. More technology and so… We didn’t do polls, for instance, because we didn’t know what
questions to ask. (Laugher) You know… and so, I saw a little bit of that, the old ways of doing things and the new. And the same thing, of course, being able to be in public office as well as the educational realm. Out of all of that, the greatest satisfaction I had, in all the things I’ve done, was the community colleges. I have thought that along, after I retired, I had thought that all along and I feel it just as strongly today. Being governor is, well you know, somebody’s got to be governor, the constitution requires it, so why not me. So… but the governor is so busy, with all that is on his plate. But you know, the things that I was interested in most, …is just another thing out there. Now that’s not true with all governors. Some governors are able to focus, like Terry Sanford did on education generally, Jim Hunt did, on education generally. I must say that I was a generalist. I was interested in history and I did right much for the Archives and History as a separate department back then, and museums, because nobody paid much attention to them then. And the state parks, because I was involved in that, under Terry Sanford. Well, what I am saying is that though, and particularly, when I went up to NC State and was able to be a teacher part time and working with people like you, who I knew were going to be leaders, if not in community colleges themselves, in some aspect of our state. That gave me great personal satisfaction. And back before that, the community colleges, if ever I felt down in the dumps, the one thing that would get me out of that mood was to go to a graduation. I’am telling you, that made me understand that I was involved in something that was really good. Particularly a GED graduation when you have somebody yelling at the back, “Way to go Mom.” That is really true. I’ve said that many times, I continue to say it, because it is true.

JW: So the door is still open?
RS: The door is still open. And that’s another satisfaction. And we tried and with some degree of success in a few areas, we maybe opened that door, may be an inch or two wider. I don’t think it was ever opened quite all the way for various reasons. It might have been that the institution didn’t get the financial support of the local board of commissioners to build the building or get the equipment for the campus they wanted or needed if they had had the funding. It might have been in some areas that they were not being as quite as innovative as they could have been. But by and large, it has continued down the road and I think they have gone down the middle of the road between the public school and the university system and they have widened that part of the road, not to the detriment of the other two systems. Perhaps I should say, they have done a better job of filling that gap that existed before.

JW: John Tart mentioned something to me that I did not realize; you were at one time a candidate, for the presidency of the system, when Fountain left. Is that true?

RS: That’s true. And unsuccessfully. John was on the state board of education, and …

JW: And he is a very strong supporter of yours.

RS: There was a vacancy when Fountain retired. … And I put out the word that I would be interested. I wrote to, I don’t know who, umm, there was a search committee underway and I wrote to the chair. Oh, I know, it was the doctor from Southern Pines, I can’t think of his name right name. And he was appointed by Governor Hunt, I believe, in that position and he was later named in the Hunt Administration as Secretary of Human Resources Department. Anyway, I wrote to him saying that I was interested. Almost at the last minute, before the close of the application, I wrote a formal application for it, I was told that I should. Well, it stirred the …pot internally and eventually as those things would and should, it wound up on the Governor’s desk. And I don’t know whether the Governor had made another
commitment or what the story was. I even had some key members of the legislature, who went over to talk to the Governor and the Governor knew of my interest, though I did not personally talk to him. But he did not in the end, support me. Now whether or not the State Board of Education made any recommendations to again or not, I don’t know. If they did, what it was, obviously, I don’t know. He, the Governor, did not support me. That disappointed me, it did. Because I gave Governor Hunt his start in government, because when I was governor, I supported him to be chairman of the Young Democrats of North Carolina, which was quite a battle at that time. And he always, then and later, kept talking about what a great person my father was, so forth and so on. That sort of put a rift between the two of us. And it has been rather cool, even though our families knew each other, very closely. And so I didn’t get it. Let’s see, what year would that be. I was ready to come home; indeed I had come home, after the two years I had served with President Carter with the Appalachian Regional Commission. I liked that work very much, it was satisfying. I did not like Washington. My family was down here. I was a Monday through Friday guy, leave on Sunday night, sometimes about this time [around 6pm] and drive to Washington. Or get up real early Monday morning. I made that trip every weekend for two years except two. One we had a conference in West Virginia that I had to attend and the other there was a huge ice storm. That was the only time I’ve ever been told that I would be better off in Washington than I would down here. (Laughter) Because all the power was out. My daughter told me that. So I didn’t go. So I got to the point that I would leave the office and call my wife and say, “I’m on the way home.” And I could tell you within five minutes of what time I would be here. And that five minutes difference was dependent upon how much traffic around Richmond…
JW: One other question, I have got to ask and it’s not a part of my story [of the community colleges] really, but it is a part of the history of the state. In 1977, Jim Hunt didn’t reappoint Dallas Herring. Why? What happened? I know that there was the battle between Phillips and Herring.

RS: I don’t know. I do know that Dallas was greatly disappointed.

JW: Right. In fact, he ended up in the hospital.

RS: I don’t know. Phillips may have convinced the Governor, and this is speculation, Phillips may have convinced the Governor that Dallas had been there long enough. Because he had, well he hadn’t been there long enough, but he had been there a long time. Phillips may have convinced the Governor that it was time for some fresh (blood). And so… I suspect that if I had been there I would have reappointed.

JW: John Tart said that he felt it was the fact that Phillips was elected and Dallas was appointed and the only way to end the fight was to not reappoint Dallas. That was his take on it. And that was big change for North Carolina.

RS: That was a sea change, wasn’t it? As they say. Isn’t it rare, when you think about it, that a person like Dallas Herring, who was a small business man from a rural area …

JW: A bachelor.

RS: A bachelor, but a scholar and who devoted himself to public service in an unpaid capacity for that long. Now lots of businessmen will serve on a study commission or something like that for a few months. But this guy devoted a good part of his adult life to the cause of education. And he was passionate about it, deeply committed. And I’ve often thought that Dallas Herring is an excellent example of a commitment to public service and public good. He believed in the worth of an individual. His philosophy was such that he
could help this state and do it, and lifted this state and its people to a higher level, a considerably higher level. Who knows, there might have been someone else who could have done it, but Dallas Herring did do it. And he gave of himself. And focused, as much as any man I have ever known, on one subject for so long, during my lifetime, on one issue and that was the cause of education generally and the establishment and the role of the community colleges, particularly. North Carolina has been extremely fortunate in having Dallas Herring and on a personal note I’ll just say that I am glad to have known him and to have seen the results of what a person can do if they are willing to do it. And I am glad that I count him friend and I believe that I am one of his.

JW: Oh, most definitely. He thinks extremely highly of you, Governor. One last question. When you look back on your four years as Governor, what do you see as your greatest achievement?

RS: I’ve been asked that a number of times and it’s a difficult question to answer, because, again, I consider myself now, in looking back, that I was a generalist. I was interested in everything. Even now, I get distracted easily, because I am interested in everything that is going on. But during those four years, I suppose, the issue that will stand out always will be the restructuring of the higher education system and particularly the university system. That was a difficult thing to accomplish and it cost me considerable political capital. But of course, it came at the end of my administration; it did come at the end of my administration. And close to that was something that most of these folks wouldn’t think about … changing the structure of our state government from what would be called a commission system (a structure of commissions and boards) to a cabinet system. When I took office, there were over 300, and nobody ever knew exactly how many, boards, commissions and so forth that
reported directly to the governor. Which meant that the governor didn’t know what was going on with most of the, he simply couldn’t keep up with them. And they didn’t want you to know. And so that was when I got the legislation passed to restructure. We had the usual study commissions and so on to make recommendations that we put all of these agencies under one or other cabinet officers. Which we now have the Secretary of Commerce, we have now … And I used the thing about efficiency in government and the saving of money, but it didn’t and I knew it probably wouldn’t. But I had to have something to sell it to the people, to the legislature particularly. I think the average person out there across the state didn’t care one way or the other, as long as they got the service of government. Now I have to say that there were other things that gave me more personal satisfaction. There are two examples I use. One there is a little community up in Avery County; I’ve forgotten the name of the community. And they had been trying; it might have been Mitchell County, for a long time to get a water supply. This was where they had been mining mica. And the members of this community got their water from a pipe that came from a spring way up on the mountain and came down. And all the people of that community took their buckets over there and filled them up with water and took it to their home. And I said, you know, that ain’t right in this day and time. We cobbled together money, form here and there and yonder, federal and state, and got them a water supply. I don’t recall whether they drilled the well or what, but anyway, we got that solved. The other example that I use is on the other end of the state, down at Ocracoke. And that had to do with education. Prior to my time as governor, most of the children on Ocracoke had to get on the ferry and go to Hattaras to go to school. The county, Dare County, had finally built an elementary school on Ocracoke Island. The high school students still had to catch the ferry to go to Hattaras for high school. But they built a
very modern school, wasn’t large because they didn’t need a large one. And they had all of … grades in two or three rooms. This was the time when the experiment was being done on open classrooms. And they had that. It was a nice looking modern school and they were very proud of it. But they had no equipment. No visual aids, no audio visual equipment, things of that sort. The county was very poor, they did build the school, but they had no money to equip it. So Craig Phillips and I got together. I guess he or one of my political people, brought it to my attention. And I told Dr. Phillips, I said, “Craig, there’s got to be some way that we can do this.” I would point out that the school had tried to qualify for federal funds to do this and for one reason or another, they fell for the cracks. They did not qualify for federal funds and I still don’t know why. But anyhow I said, “Craig, there has got to be a way that we can do this. I want to tell you something. All these vendors that supply us with equipment throughout the state, for one reason or another, I assume that they would like to have those contracts. And you know that they can spare a movie projector or a slide projector or other visual equipment, whatever. You know darn well that they’ve got an extra one around somewhere.” I said, “How about you contact these people and say that the governor wants, and you can say expects, if you think it’s necessary, for them to provide this piece of equipment or that piece of equipment. … And that’s the way that we did it. And it turned out that they were almost covered up with equipment for a short time. Those kinds of things gave me a great deal of personal satisfaction. Because it wasn’t something abstract. You could see government in action; you could see the effect of government leadership. It could have been somebody else other than me. But this was my way of thinking of how government should work. It’s true that the governor can’t get involved in every little situation that comes along like that but that’s the concept. And I think Terry Sanford did that. He
wanted to do things for people. Not saying that the others didn’t either, but he was willing to be much more proactive about it. I tried to be that. That’s why I say that I was more of a generalist. In that anytime anyone would come along with a problem, I would kind of take it personally. And I’m not talking about the, you know, the some state employee trying to get information; I’m talking about the people trying to get the benefits of the government programs who for one reason or another got pushed aside, were unheard, or were being discriminated against. But those kinds of things gave me the satisfaction that I really have. Now the record books won’t show that. And I have to say one other thing in response to your question and I have said this to news people and others from time to time. The biggest success in my administration will never be told, because it didn’t happen. And that was the fact, well remember the period of time that I was in office. There was a great deal of civil unrest. Students marching in the street about Vietnam, there had been the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and the blacks were upset about that. And there were riots in the streets, so on, so forth. And great unrest in the public schools. But we didn’t have anybody in North Carolina standing in the schoolhouse doors. We didn’t have anybody saying, at the university, you can’t come. And Dr. Phillips and I were both elected at the same time. We had both gone into office at the same time and we got together and largely it was his doing. That is to say that it was handled through his office. But we had teams of people, that went around to the community and to the public schools… and the idea was to get people talking to each other. …And I think we prevented it being a lot worse situation and probably would have been and therefore it won’t be recorded. And therefore, in retrospect, that may have been the biggest contribution. But again it won’t be recorded. Gene Cosby, you didn’t know him, and Dudley Flood. Dudley was an African American, and he was one of Dr. Phillips’s
key people. And Gene Cosby likewise, he later became executive director of the state school boards association and lobbied … most are retired now. And those guys, heaven only knows how many schools they went to. And they had a little routine that they did. They would get the students together in the school auditorium. And Gene would play the guitar, which was a big thing back then, the hippie days if you will. And he’d smoke cigarettes and he had a routine that he went through and it was just funny as all get out. And Dudley, he had a sense of humor. He appealed to the African American students and they would take questions from the audience.

JW: Where they both African American?

RS: No, no. Gene was Caucasian from Burke County, north of Morganton. In fact, you go up to Interstate 40 and there is a bridge going across there, says Cosby Road. And Gene, he had a wonderful sense of humor. He said that when he was growing up as a boy and he was up there in the northern part of Burke County, there was a big Republican coming to speak at the courthouse up there. And Gene and his family were Democrats. And Gene was a boy and he begged his Daddy to take him down to the courthouse because he wanted to see this Republican. His Daddy had talked so bad about Republicans; he wanted to see what one looked like! (Laughter) And you know, he had all that kind of stuff all the time. And we formed a group of students from high schools across the state and to meet with us to express their concerns. And in time we gave them some talking parts and we asked them to go back and talk to the students. We expended an awful lot of energy in that kind of thing and I have often said, in connection with what I told you about what didn’t happen is that if in those four years, I and my administration could have concentrated on positive things, instead of having to deal with the negatives, I sometimes wonder what we could have done.
JW: Right. During that period there were so many fires that had to put out.

RS: Literally and figuratively. I went up to Oxford, when the city was burning. We had the National Guard up there. Much against the advice of my security people, I took off one night after supper and of course, I had my driver, a state trooper, with me and an SBI agent. And we went up there and I visited the National Guard in the armory there. Some of them were there. Others were out in the city on duty, on patrol. And I remember, I got in a poker game with one of the guys, didn’t get in game really, just played one hand and I won it. And I took his dollar, lying on the table. And I ran into that guy years later and he told me, “You are the one who took my dollar. I’ve never forgotten that. It wasn’t the dollar; it was the kidding I took from my buddies that just gave me a hard time. But any way I got in the jeep that night and I rode around in the city to where these Guardsmen were on duty. And you could see the fires burning out there. Houses and all that. And they were all over the place. Here in Alamance County, they didn’t burn anything but we had to send the highway patrol in. And we did special training for patrolman and all like that. And that was the subject, those kinds of things, were the subject a lot of times, of the news conferences that I had. And so we weren’t able to talk about the community college system. The average person on the street wasn’t interested in anything but, like they talk about in Iraq right now, their safety.

JW: Right, if you’re worried about safely getting through town, that’s going to be the focus.

RS: You’re exactly right.

JW: Before I leave, tell me about these pictures on the wall. I’m fascinated by them. That’s Jimmy Carter there… (Governor Scott related stories attached to each of the pictures. These included how he got his picture with Clinton, during his campaign for his second term, in Graham, North Carolina. It was unexpected and Clinton hugged him like he was his long
lost friend, though he didn’t really know him as that was about the first time Scott had ever seen him. He remarked, “Clinton was a hugger as obviously we became aware of later on. He was that way with most everybody…”

RS: I’ve got a picture somewhere of Lyndon Johnson When Lyndon Johnson ran, I was his national chairman, Rural Americans for Johnson and Humphrey. Well, national chairman of that meant, again, don’t call us we’ll call you. And I was running for lieutenant governor, that was in 1964, and we had a large office set up in a motel on Hillsboro Street where… and we ran it out of there. Basically it was a telephone operation. And they provided us with a list of rural leaders across the country and we were calling, asking for their support. … I never really was around Johnson. We went to his ranch one time, when I was governor. I was at a governor’s conference and the governor of Missouri said let’s go down and visit the president. … We flew down there and ate supper with him…

JW: Of those five governors, four are still living (referring to a picture on the wall)?

RS: Yep, Terry Sanford is the only one that’s gone.

JW: Is Jim Holshouser is still active at all?

RS: Sort of, not as much. You see I’m seventy…, Jim Holshouser is thirty years younger than I am, and Hunt is four years younger than he is and we’re all in our mid-thirties when we were elected, no excuse me, forty, about forty, when we were elected. And I was with community colleges when Martin was governor. And Martin saved my (?) politically. He was under great pressure to get rid of me as head of community colleges. People saw, uh, some political people saw me as a threat to the Governor and his programs. But Jim Martin was an educator, and he understood … and he had no evidence and I had been very careful not to be perceived as being political and was not political. And so he hadn’t… I found out
all of this later, he had a couple of delegations to come to him. And I had somebody in the
department of community colleges who wrote almost a dissertation on why I should not
remain. And I’ve got a copy of it. And I don’t know yet who wrote it. I have some
suspicions. But umm, it was very well done, it wasn’t a strident (work).

JW: But what were they, what were they thinking?

RS: Well I was a Democrat and he was a Republican. But Martin refused. He said I am not
going to politicize that office. And I’ll give him credit, always will, for that. Now Jim
Martin and I have never been real close. But he always used to kid me. He said, “You know
why I ran for Governor and was elected?” I said well no. He said, “Well, when I was
chairman of the board of county commissioners in Mecklenburg County, you were governor.
And you had all of us over to the Mansion for a reception. And I looked around at this place
and said, “I’d like to live here.” (Laughter) So we’ve been friends, but not close. Now Jim
Holshouser and I have gotten to be real close. In fact Jim supported some of my programs in
the legislature, the ones that really counted. A very strong supporter of community colleges,
he really was.

JW: I probably should go and talk to him?

RS: It wouldn’t hurt; it wouldn’t hurt at all, Joe. Jim was more involved after he left office
with the university than he was the community colleges, though he certainly kept his interest
in them. He was on the board of governors and chairman of the board of governors at one
time. He’s had some health problems…, but he still maintains his law practice in Southern
Pines. I think … he picks and chooses his work. We’ve remained real close and we just call
each other once in a while. And I don’t really know why, other than, like I said, I do know
he supported my programs in the legislature.
JW: How was it, you know, he’s the first Republican governor…

RS: But North Carolina has changed. If you look at the race I had with Jim Gardner, it was close. And he went in on Nixon’s coat tails, otherwise Pat Taylor might have won. It was the Nixon landslide together with state wide changes. The IBM’ers were, had been moving in. A lot of other people had been moving in from the Triangle, the Triad and Charlotte. So it was sort of a watershed time.

RS: I think Jim Martin, well we’re all Presbyterians. (The Governor is referring to the picture of the living NC Governors on the wall) and Terry is Methodist.

JW: Well what is Jim, Jim Hunt?

RS: He’s Presbyterian. And I think Jim Martin, I’m not sure about it, but I think he is. Anyway they had the four of us on the stage one time at UNC TV and … Jim Martin was there because he walked in just before they went on the air. It was the last show. And Ferrell Guillory, I think, with the News and Observer introduced us and somebody made the remark that four of us where Presbyterian and there was one Methodist. And we all followed each other… And Terry spoke up and said, “Well that makes it about even.” (Laughter) He was quick. And Jim Martin had been in Europe and he was flying back. And he got to Atlanta and called and he said something about his connecting flight. And he wasn’t going to make it. And this was earlier in the afternoon. And UNC TV got somebody to take a plane down there and get him. And they flew him up here and Martin changed clothes at the airport, Raleigh Durham, and walked in literally as the panel was being introduced. And you would not have known that he had a hair out of place or anything. (Laughter) But we talked about
our careers. It was a fun thing. There wasn’t any pressure. There wasn’t any thing political, much about it.

JW: Interesting to me, looking at the picture. You’ve got three lawyers there, and a professor, and a farmer.

RS: That’s right.

JW: And I think it’ll be a sad day when only a lawyer can fill that post.

RS: Yeah. And I won’t say that’s the way it’s going to be, but that is certainly the way that it is heading.
Interview with Ben Fountain at Cary, North Carolina on 11 January 2005

BF: Of course, Jim Hunt was lieutenant governor under Jim Holshouser and Jim Hunt was very helpful during those years. As a matter of fact, Holshouser agreed to break the $500,000 limit on capital funds for the community college system and Hunt did too. So they both agreed together. And Holshouser got us some extra, we had had kind of a dry spell for appropriations and Holshouser helped. But also during that period, Carl Stewart, who has never gotten proper credit for what he did...

JW: Now who was he?

BF: He was chairman of Appropriations Committee in the House and working with Ralph Scott, who was chairman of Appropriations in the Senate, we got a huge burst of funding in that ’73-’75 period. So that’s when the system really got the money to take off. If you’ll go back through the Annual Reports of the system, or the Biennial Reports, and look through those figures you’ll see what happened in that ’73 to ’75 period. And that was due to Governor Holshouser, to Jim Hunt and right there in the legislature, Carle Stewart, who was later Speaker of the House and Ralph Scott, Bob Scott’s uncle. Now Scott, Ralph Scott got some recognition, but Stewart, and Hunt of course got some, but Stewart and Holshouser got less recognition although they did get some. That was the period of just a burst of growth and it was so fruitful, that finally the universities got kind of jealous and began to take pot shots at us. (Laughter) And so did the universities for that matter. And some of the money was taken back when the recession hit, because some of the schools didn’t spend their money and a lot of money reverted and that hurt us in the next session of the General Assembly. I found out that getting money was fairly easy but spending the money wisely was hard to do
and some of the schools got more money than they wanted. Because then they had to get out and get new programs, go to work and do things and some of them didn’t want to be bothered with all that work. Also that was the period when we began to get them all on a permanent campus. And ass you know, you’ve heard me say before, that by the time I left Raleigh in ’78, all of them were accredited and all of them had the beginnings of a permanent campus. And they’re still using those. And Alamance moved from their original campus to a new campus. They were the first ones to drop their old campus and move to a new one. And that was a very fruitful period, but that’s all documented in the biennial reports. And they should be available in the university library, or you know, State University, or down at the community college library, or maybe the state library. I tried to put copies in all of those places. And the story is told in those reports, in the dry figures, you know…

JW: But you can see the great increase in funding.

BF: Oh yes. Each year we would update the annual appropriation and you’ll see that big jump in 1973. That gave us the resources to do things. That was the same year that Carl Stewart put a lot of emphasis on improving the highway patrol salaries too. We got extra salary money that year. But Carl Stewart and you really should talk to him.

JW: Oh, I would love to.

BF: He’s a lawyer in Gastonia, an attorney. And by the way, the trustees association was very active in all of that effort. Carl Stewart and Ed Stowe, Ed Stowe’s retired now, he was an accountant. But Carl Stewart is still practicing law in Gastonia.

JW: And he was head of House Appropriations?

BF: At that time, later was Speaker of the House and later ran for Governor. But Carl Stewart, more than any single living person, was responsible for those big appropriation
increases that you will see detailed in those reports. Now after I left they stopped doing those biennial reports which I think is a mistake. As you know there is no continuing record like that, but it was some effort to put them together, but I thought it was worthwhile. There is some of this in Wigg’s book and I gave you a copy of that…

JW: You gave me a copy of that and I appreciate it.

BF: And some of it is in Wigg’s book, but you’ll find the budget summaries in the biennial reports.

JW: Ben, did it take a lot of lobbying to get that kind of appropriation, was the department [of community colleges] involved that much?

BF: Oh, the department was in the thick of it. I spent day and night working on it. But actually, the head of the system was, couldn’t have done it. What you had was, and by the way, Senator Billy Mills, in 1971, and I should back up to his effort, Senator Billy Mills is the one who made the first turn around in 1971. And he lives in Jacksonville.

JW: And when you say the first turn around?

BF: The system had stalled a little bit. The system had gotten started and was just kind of stable, was just getting modest appropriations and so on. I came to Raleigh in January of 1971 and this young senator called me up and said that he wanted to come and meet me. His name was Billy Mills. And he came over to my office. I didn’t go to his office, he came to mine. Of course, I was fresh out of the barrel. Hardly knew where my parking place was. And he came over to see me, Senator Billy Mills, and he said, “I want to do something for the community colleges.” And that is [was] news to my ears. So we laid out what had needed be done and he broke the log jam and got some capital construction money for us. And then in the ’73 session, he and Carl Stewart and Ralph Scott, but critical to the whole effort was
the Trustee’s Association and Ed Stowe led that effort. So you need to talk to Senator Billy Mills in Jacksonville, and Dallas will remember all of this too. And Carl Stewart in Gastonia, you probably can interview him on the phone, though I think you would enjoy meeting him. Now he’s just been appointed Chairman of the Ports Authority, so he’s still active. But this system owes that group of men, plus Holshouser and Hunt and many others. The current base on which the system is built goes back to the ’73 period. The prior base on which it’s built goes back to the ’63 period, which was Dr. Ready and Dallas, of course Dallas was through the whole thing. But you know that so I am trying to give you the leads that you will need to go further. So really after you talk to them and talk to Billy Mills and Carl Stewart and Governor Holshouser, and Jim Hunt would be good. He is hard to catch but you tell his secretary what you want to talk about, the history of his role in the community college system and that will make him a little easier to get through... I remember sitting in his office, [he was a] young lieutenant governor, knee to knee literally. He had a little tiny office over there in the legislature building as I recall, may’ve been somewhere else, it’s all getting fuzzy now. But he pulled his chair up and we were just about this far apart [about 2’] and he said, “What is it?” And I said, "We need to get this $500,000 ceiling lifted from the state’s matching community college money." I didn’t tell him that Holshouser had already agreed to it and we were going to get some money. And he said, “We’ll get it done.” And he did. It was a fun time. But we had the trustee association back of us, the president’s association, the faculty association; it was just one of those times when you get a spurt of support and growth. I’ve always felt like that it was the only time that the community college system flexed its muscle and got good results. Everybody pulled together. It was tough because this group wanted to go this way and another group wanted to go that way and trying to keep
them all going in the same direction was not fun. And worked 12 or 14 hours a day and was on the phone all of the time. Billy Mills set up for the trustees association in the basement of the Velvet Cloak a conference call. I had never been in on a conference call. He called; ask him about the conference call. He’ll remember that. He had a conference call all across North Carolina to the various political leaders and it was a very effective device to build support.

JW: So that was just a critical infusion of funds?

BF: Right, in that ’73-75 period. And if you go back and look at that time, it was the biggest infusion of dollars, I believe, that the system had ever had. One of the architects that I used to work with, he was talking about it, he said, “Ben, that helped all the architects in the state.” (Laughter) It was a huge infusion of money and of course that money had to be matched, state government, and the federal government put in some matching money at the time too, so state dollars went a long long way. The result is that every time you go to the doctor or go to the hospital or get an x-ray, x-ray technicians are likely to have come out of the community college. Nurses are likely to come out.

JW: A lot of teachers get their start in those community colleges too.

BF: That’s right. As people say, I don’t know what we would do with out them, without the community colleges.

JW: Right, I can’t imagine the state of the state without them.

BF: So Dallas’s little baby and Epps Ready’s little baby has grown up. They tell me it’s still short of money.

JW: Tell me a little more about your personal involvement with the community colleges. When you first got involved with them and when you first came to Raleigh?
BF: My first involvement was with the College of the Albemarle. And it was first a junior college in the old junior college system and then came into the community college system as adult education programs were shuffled around; we had the nursing program or LPN program in the public school system. I was superintendent of schools in Elizabeth City and they said, “Well, we want to move the nursing program over to the college.” I said fine. I said that’s really were it ought to be. It is an adult program, but the school system has been running it for years. And at that time the program was somewhat under Pitt Community College.

JW: I see. What year was that?

BF: Somewhere about 1963. I’d have to go back and look it up to be sure, but anyway a lot of people objected to losing those programs, but I did not, I said it ought to be done. So I worked with the College of the Albemarle and then in ’65, when Lenior Community College got started, I was invited to be the President over there. I followed Danny Wise, who went through the procedure of getting the college set up and then I became the president. Danny died a few years ago. So I stayed there till January of ’71 and then went to Raleigh. In 1978 went to Isothermal [Community College} and then retired with 33 years one step ahead of the posse. (Laughing)

JW: Whom did you take over from? Did you take over from Epps Ready when you went to Raleigh?

BF: Yes. He was a great gentleman.

JW: I was going to ask you about Ready, what kind of man was he?

BF: He was a very scholarly kind of man. My mother taught school with him before she was married and before I was born, in Rocky Mount. He was superintendent in Roanoke
Rapids and I went up to talk to him as a young man about getting a doctorate. He did not encourage me. He was one of the few men that had a doctorate. I’ve forgotten where he got it from, the University or somewhere. Then he went on to Raleigh with his curriculum study commission and was active in the effort to draft the community college act. Became the first director of the system. Just a fine scholarly gentleman. Then he retired and I went to Raleigh.

JW: So you were there from 1971 to 1978?

BF: From January of ’71 to September of ’78. In retrospect, it would have been better for me personally to have gone to Raleigh in July either before or after, because coming into Raleigh simultaneously with the legislature. I didn’t have time to turn around before I was over there working in the General Assembly. And my scope was fairly limited in knowledge of the whole system. Took me two years to get around to visiting all the schools. But it was a great fun experience, made a lot of friends, and met a lot of people. The result was a little bit of me in all the schools. And just as I was leaving Raleigh, we got the last one established, the one in Brunswick County.

JW: Whose president is now getting ready to leave [retire]… What were some of the challenges that you faced? We mentioned the money, of course, that’s always a challenge.

BF: Well one of the biggest challenges I had in the legislature was that the community colleges were always being accused of trying to go four year. And I would tell them that we’ve never had one to go four-year. We’ve never had one that requested to go four-year. I said, “This is…” I used to make a speech called “The Five Myths of the Community College System.” I’ve forgotten what the other four was, but that was one of them. Another one was that they all wanted to become academic and drop the vocational programs. And that was
another myth. There were three or four more myths I used to tell them about. But that was one of the big challenges, was to get the members of the General Assembly over that and it stemmed from the fact that UNC-Charlotte grew out of the Charlotte City College and the black public college there. And the one down at Wilmington which had been a white junior college. But we had nothing to do with that. That was a totally foreign thing. So one myth was that they all wanted to go four year and the other myth was... three four myths that we talked about. That was one of the big challenges. Another challenge was, in the early days, the members of the General Assembly did not understand what a community college was. That was a problem. Then we had 54 schools at that time. There was the laudable effort for each school to develop its own personality and specialties, which I encouraged. At the same time, trying to keep them all pulling in the same direction generally. The other challenge was in building public support. We, you know, we couldn’t invite people to football games and basketball games and lunches at the planetarium and so forth, the way the university crowd could. It was hard to compete with that kind of showmanship. The university provided homes to its chancellors and its presidents. And entertainment budgets. Of course we had none of that. In Raleigh, any entertaining that I did, I paid for it out of my own pocket. So you don’t do much when you’re doing that. That was a challenge. We did not have the public relations staff and all of that that the universities generally had, the propaganda machine. We had one lady, Nancy Duckett, who put out the little “Open Door” magazine and did as good a job as she could do. It was a shoe string operation. But those were some of the challenges and of course, the goal was to get the money to get them accredited and get them established. It was a time of creation and operation. And you had to get the money from the General Assembly and of course, the localities had their money. Sometimes the
General Assembly would say such and such a county doesn’t have any money, why are you putting in money for them? I would say, “Well if they see this matching money there, they’ll raise the money.” And sometimes the county commissioners would come to me and say, “Well we can put up the matching money but there is no state money.” Well which comes first the chicken or the egg? You put up your money, we’ll get you some state money and we did. But you had 54 individual institutions. I remember Bill Friday one time calling me up. We worked very closely on lots of issues. Particularly closely on the desegregation plans. That was a big distraction and very time consuming, but we finally got it successfully resolved. This was in the ’70s and Bill Friday said, “Oh Ben, I’ve got these 16 institutions” and he was moaning and groaning about it. I said, “Bill, what you need is 48 more.” (Laugh) Or whatever the number was… I said, “What I need is an airplane to get around to all of these places.” You know it kind of irritated him a little bit and he didn’t want to talk any more after that about that, it bothered him. I said, “You can control your chancellors, but I can’t control these 54 presidents.”

JW: The state president is truly almost just a figurehead…

BF: It’s a leadership position. It’s not a control position. A board would call me up and say, “We want to hire so and so.” And I’d say, “Fine, we’ll take it to the State Board to approve it.” “What do you mean, it has to go to the State Board to be approved?” “Well that’s in the law you know.” “Oh it is.” So we’d take it to the State Board and they’d approve it. Then they’d call me two years later and say, “We need to fire so and so, our president.” And I’d say, “Well did you call me when you hired him?” “Well no.” I said, “Then you don’t call me when you fired him. You want to fire him, fire him. I’ve got nothing to do with it.” (Laughter) They didn’t like that much. I’d talk right straight to them about it. I’d say, “Now
if I had anything to do with hiring him, I’d take some…” I’d just talk straight to them like that… That was kind of a challenge. The other challenge was, we were responsible for the money, but I had no control over money. That was in a separate office in the State Board of Education, the controller’s office. That’s not true anymore. And the controller could do things without my knowledge. And sometimes did some things. They would have an auditor come along from the state auditor’s office, chewing out some school. They’d come to me asking about it and I’d say, “Go to the controller’s office and ask him about it, I don’t have any control over money.” (Laugher)

JW: Don’t chew me if you’re not going to give me control of the purse strings.

BF: Of course, A C Davis wouldn’t give them the time of day. But anyway that must be another myth, that I had control of money, but I didn’t. Because that was vested in the controller’s office. A C Davis was the controller. A very fine man, but he had his own show to run. The president was truly a leadership position and it’s still true to some extent. Martin Lancaster is fairly limited in what he can do. The University has far more control over its institutions. But any way it’s a great system that has just done invaluable service to North Carolina.

JW: When you look back at your role as president of community college and you were in those early years there, as president of Lenior, any real challenges there you saw as an early president in the system.

BF: Well everything was new. And the rules were loose. And it was primarily, for me at least; it was a local operation. In other words, we got money from the county commissioners; we got construction money from the county commissioners. The state made us a grant of $500,000. The state was sort of in the position of being a grant maker. And less so the
control developed while I was there. You know, you didn’t go to Raleigh much, except
when you were trying to get a construction grant. But all that changed over the years and it
became a little more centralized. There was no way that one man physically, or one
department, could supervise 54 institutions across the state. There was no reason to even try.
You relied on the local board of trustees. But it was a fun time because it was creative. How
many people get a chance to establish a new educational institution? Build a little college
from the ground up. It was wonderful having vocational programs as well as transfer
programs, because you had people right there on the campus who could do, if you had a
program in agriculture or horticulture, they could plan your landscaping and plant plants as
part of the curriculum. If you needed something to be fixed, one of the institution’s cars, you
would take it over to the automotive department and they’d fix it for you. If you needed a
haircut, they wanted men to come down to the cosmetology shop so they could work on men;
you could get you a haircut, manicure. It was a fun time. Building a library, the local
history collection. It started through Charlie Holloman and Dr. Herring. Lenior Community
College, we sent Bruce Howell and his wife to Raleigh, to Archives and History for two
weeks and they developed the local history collection and brought it back to Lenior and
that’s the way that the local history collection got started there. So…it was really Charlie
Holloman’s idea. It was a fun time. A creative time. Clearing land for new campus,
starting a new building, having a groundbreaking, it was just great. First graduating class,
first catalog, putting out the first catalog. I remember after the first college catalog came out,
I’d meet people on the street in downtown Kinston and they would say, “You know I thought
we’d really have a college and here we’ve got this college catalog.” It was just a fun time.
JW: I would think that experience stood you in good stead when you went to Raleigh. I know it was a very different role, but at least you understood, the presidents knew that you had been there.

BF: That was help. There was another aspect to it that is kind of interesting too… Dr. Ready had founded the system and he had been a school superintendent, but he had not worked in a community college. And so I came in with experience. But also, I knew what the presidents couldn’t do and could do. And sometimes they would call me up and say, “Would you so and so?” Well first of all, I don’t have the authority to tell you yeah or nea. Or they would call me up and say they couldn’t do thus and so, and I’d say, “Oh yeah you can”, because I had been there. So that would irritate some people. They couldn’t pull the wool over my eyes. So it sort of cut both ways. And there has not been another true North Carolina president in that office since. Because you see, a fellow came from Montana, Larry Blake. And then you had Bob Scott and now you’ve got Martin Lancaster. You know it’s a political thing. Now Martin in benign, benevolent, and he’s done a good job. But it’s really a shame for the university that that they have to go out of state to get the presidents and chancellors we ought to have some talent here in North Carolina. … But if you hire somebody from out of state, you’re more likely to be able to control them. I think probably there is a power aspect to that [decision].

JW: We talked a little bit about your experiences at Lenior. How about some of this opposition to the community colleges? I know earlier on, the early ‘60s, some of the private schools, they were definitely wary, as were, I’ve heard, some of the universities. Did that continue, to a degree?
BF: Yeah, there will always be tension among the various sectors, even with the public schools now. And I might pause; you see I was not in favor for a separate board for the community colleges. You see I was opposed to it. Sure enough, after we separated. The community colleges salaries and everything began to fall behind those of the public schools. You see the State Board [of Education] had to kind of keep the salaries schedules coming along together. But once they were separated, that didn’t have to continue you see and the State Board would just concentrate on public school salaries. And the community colleges were out here, and this was after I left, community colleges were out here and were sort of an after thought and their salaries began to fall behind. And are still behind public school salaries in a lot of regards. That happened after the separate state board came in and never has caught up. Not only do you have the continuing competition with the private colleges and the university, but now you are competing with the public schools. And the community colleges without the appeal of the football and the basketball…and without the appeal of looking after the little bitty children, is sort of on, will always be on that fringe, struggling. So I would say that the competitive element continues…Private colleges had a specific mission, community colleges had their mission, research universities have their mission, the public schools have their mission. As Dallas Herring used to say, “There is enough ignorance to go around for everybody.” (Laughter) What it is now, I don’t know, I expect it’s still the same.

JW: You have known or worked with many of the educational leaders in this state. Who stands out and why? You’ve mentioned some of the legislative leaders…

BF: Of course, Dr. Ready, I think was a fine gentlemen, scholar and great schoolman. Of course, William Friday is without peer. I first met him when I was 16 years old. He was
back from the Navy and finishing law school and was an associate at the Institute of Government as it was called then, working with Albert Coates, who is since deceased. And as a high school junior, rising senior, I was elected to Boy’s State and went up to the Institute of Government where we had the Boy’s State. And I met Bill Friday and Terry Sanford there, I was 16, and they were in their 20s, in law school still, in the Institute of Government, and I knew them all my life from then on. So Terry Sanford, of course, would be one of those. And Leo Jenkins, who was just crucified by the people who did not want to have a medical school at East Carolina, which I supported by the way, and Leo knew I supported. Leo was very supportive of Lenior Community College. When I wrote him and asked him to accept our credits, I wrote all the colleges, and he was the first one to write back and say by all means. Leo Jenkins was a great leader and if it weren’t for East Carolina University, eastern North Carolina would be in worst strait than it is, because that medical school, all of that is an economic engine down there. And I’ve always missed the fact that Wake Forest moved its law school, so those are the ones that touched my life and others, speaking of professional education now.

JW: And you’ve also known several governors. Who among those stands out when you’re thinking of community colleges?

BF: Well of course, Luther Hodges was a moving spirit behind the industrial education centers. He said we can’t bring industry in without a trained work force. He worked with Dr. Herring and got the IECs started. And Terry Sanford, of course, the community college system was created during his administration. Now Governor Dan Moore was not particularly known as an education governor, but he was real supportive of the community college system.
JW: A lot of folks thought that when Moore came in behind Sanford, that a myth out there, that he was really against community colleges, but what I see is that they continued to grow.

BF: Yeah, as a matter of fact he called all the presidents, invited all the presidents for a luncheon at the Mansion. One of the few governors who ever did anything like that, I mean all of them. We had lunch at the Mansion. After he was elected he said to the public school teachers, the community colleges were just a little thing [in the budget?] he told the public school teachers, “Now you didn’t support me, but I will hold no grudges and I will support education.” And he did. He was a very fine man, a very fine governor, and certainly good to the community college system. Very conservative of course, and that’s fine. But I can see him now standing there, where we were sitting around in the governor’s mansion and talking to us in very positive manner and letting us know that he supported what we were doing. And that has happened very rarely, I can’t remember another incidence of that. Of course, I’ve already related to you that Hunt was supportive and Scott, of course. Generally every governor I’ve known… have all thought well of the community college system. But they all respond to political power. And the community college system has to marshal its political power… just like all the rest do. … It’s a political game…you’ve got to have that political clout and the community college will have to develop that.

JW: There has been some thought by scholars in the field that these institutions came about, consciously or unconsciously, to protect the university, to shuttle minority students away from the university into a lesser level of education. Do you see any evidence of that?

BF: Well that was sort of a national theory, that the community college would serve as a screening process, to screen out the chaff from the wheat. And the wheat would go on to the university. And there may be a little element of that. But it was never a problem for North
Carolina, because the universities would like to get them all. They can’t take them all, but they’d like to take them all. As a matter of fact, they’ve found that were they needed students was at the junior and senior level. You see they’d take freshman and sophomores and they would drop out or move to other colleges and they needed the community college graduates to fill in those gaps at the junior and senior level. That was more of a bogey man issue than a real issue. There’s no doubt that in some snobbish academic circles they look down on the junior colleges. The junior colleges they look down on the community colleges. And the community colleges look down on the high school. Right on down to the kindergarten. But that’s mostly a bogeyman, not a real issue, in my judgment.

JW: Right. … I don’t see that as a part of the plan of building the system.

BF: No, no, no. The system was begun as an integrated system. We took in some schools that had a history of segregation. But ones that started, they took the black and the white. That was never a serious issue.

JW: Do you feel the community colleges have opened doors for people in North Carolina?

BF: Oh yes. That’s the greatest feature. The open door consisted of low tuition, accessibility, that is, in their own communities. It didn’t mean that you take everybody in every program. It means you take a fellow from where he was and carry him as far as he would go. Everybody can’t get into the nursing program and everybody can’t get into the lab technician program, but there would be some program he could get into. And I think it ought to be maintained. And I am sorry to see tuition rise. When I left there I think the tuition was about $42 a quarter or something like that, very cheap. What is it now, about $500 a semester? I guess the semester system has worked out OK.

JW: Yes…
BF: I prefer the quarter system. …I went to Carolina on the quarter system. But with everybody else on the semester system, you finally had to get in step. So I think it was time to do it and it made some of the tech courses a little more transferable, so it helped the occupational training some as well.
Interview with James E. Holshouser, Jr. at Chapel Hill, North Carolina on 18 January 2005

JW: Of course, we’ve been talking about the community college system. Tell me about your experience with that system and anything that you would like to share about community colleges in North Carolina.

JH: Well, it went from skeptic to full advocate. I was in the legislature, a freshman, in ’63 and Terry brought his proposal in and I had serious doubts about whether this was a good thing or not. Looked like it was going to be a lot of money that we didn’t have and I had some real doubts about it. But it is very clear looking back that it was exactly right, maybe even ahead of its time, looking at the whole country. I was sort of amazed, Bill Friday asked me to serve on the Southern Literacy Commission and we had a meeting down in Louisiana, this was in the ‘90s I guess. And at that point, I think maybe Arkansas didn’t have any community colleges and Louisiana had three or maybe vice versa or something like that. There were still a lot of states around the country that didn’t have any, just hadn’t gotten into it. And it’s not a step that we’ve taken without some impact because the budget has definitely grown overtime. And some of that has come at the expense at the University. Because the University’s share of the budget now is down to under 12 percent now as compared to 17 percent at the time I went to the legislature. But when the pie gets bigger, a smaller slice still gets a lot done so you can’t always measure just a percent of the budget. And to some extent, some of the institutions are getting away from Dallas’s original concept, he was really hard for trying to keep it tech oriented and making sure that the people that went there got some skills that they could use in the market place and not just book learning. And the current flurry of discussion about a seamless web between the community colleges
and universities says that there is being more and more emphasis placed on this being the first two years of college as opposed to technical education. And I would be interested to know whether Dallas feels like that the times have changed so much in terms of what’s happening with the manufacturing in North Carolina that maybe that’s a choice that has gotten pushed on us whether we wanted it or not. It seems to me in biotech, that we’re in that first effort, I can’t remember how many campuses, maybe a dozen are doing biotech things. But the News and Observer had a pretty interesting article a couple of months ago about how biotech manufacturing jobs are going to India too. So it’s a little hard to know. But I just know in my gut, even when I can’t always just get it in my head, exactly how it is that I know, but I just know that this is going to be a big part of what our state and a lot of other states have to do in terms of jobs for this next century. The University is going to play a major role and I think has a real responsibility to be out front, but I also think that the community colleges are going to have to be there too or it doesn’t work.

JW: So are you concerned then that the community colleges might be losing some of that focus on vocational/technical training?

JH: Yeah and at the same time, what I am inclined to think is that that focus is going to have to be renewed in maybe a different way than it started. That I think we’ve had a peak; we’ve had a time when we went along with tech training and then the emphasis on that drop in a lot of community colleges as they took on the term community colleges as opposed to technical institute, but I think it’s already started back up in some places and it is going to have to start back up in a lot of other places just out of necessity. Now you could make a pretty good case that that system could be a public junior college system.

JW: Which is the way they were in Virginia to begin with.
JH: Yeah, yeah. There is a strong argument that can be made for the fact that you are going to increase access to a larger pool of high school graduates, if you let them start close to home with less expense. And then move from two years there into a university campus for the last two years. More coordination with the first two year program curriculum probably needs to be done and they’ve been working on that. I say they, I’d say we except I haven’t been directly involved, but the Board of Governors and the community college folks I know have been working on it. I just got to believe that we’ve got a tremendous investment; a lot of capitol has been spent by local governments and the state, to a lesser degree, in putting campuses in place. And it just makes good sense to use that investment for recognizing that the jobs for this coming century are going to have to be staffed by people who have graduated from community colleges in a lot of instances.

JW: I can see that. I would agree with that. And I think, based on my research in North Carolina, one of the unique things about the North Carolina system is that it started in ’57, really, even though it has the ’63 birthday…

JH: Everybody feels like it, and I have a tendency to feel like it started in ’63, but Luther Hodges in ’57 really started…

JW: Those industrial education centers.

JH: That’s right.

JW: And one of Dallas Herring’s complaints, if you will, is that the system seized on the ’63 legislation to mark its birthday and he feels that it really should be ’57, because in his mind, that is when they really got started.

JH: And that’s true.
JW: And yet, that’s the unique nature of the North Carolina system, it started with a vocational technical focus. And it would be a sad thing for it to use that. You said you were in the legislature in ’63 and you were concerned about the money that this was going to cost, what changed your mind?

JH: Well it was, I suppose, simply that over time, you can see given the drop out rate we’ve had in our rate, given the fact that we’ve still had a relatively low percentage of high school graduates going to college, that if we didn’t have something to help people’s job skills when they finished high school, there’s just a lot of people that aren’t ready to go to work when they finish high school or when they drop out. And it’s easy to say, that’s there problem. But that isn’t what a good society does; a good society is going to pick you up at least once when you fall down. Some of us it has to pick up more than that. (Laughter)

JW: I can testify to that. ……

JH: The market place is what it is and certain things are going to make more money than other things. And that doesn’t necessarily mean that you want to be in the thing that makes the most money. Sometimes that thing that is going to make you happiest is what you ought to do, even if it doesn’t make quite as much money. Sort of like I still practice law mostly in a small town, when I could make more money if I practiced law in a city. There are a lot of people who have gone through that experience who have gone back to community colleges to get something to earn a living with.

JW: I talked with Ben Fountain last week and he tells me, that you play a role in the expansion of the community college during your administration, how you supported removing some type of capital spending cap, can you tell me more about that?
JH: Well when we put the system in the legislation in ’63, there was a pattern set up that the state provided a half million dollars maybe and that’s all they did; from then on it was up to the county commissioners or multiple county commissioners if it was a multi-county institution. And sometimes good things happen out of peculiar circumstances because in this particular case, as I came into office, there was a significant state surplus. In fact I just ended up talking about that on the TV that I had fought Bob Scott on his tax increases in ’69, said we didn’t need it, and sure enough all that surplus from the extra taxes built up. And the Advisory Budget Commission had recommended some one time tax rebates, which were pretty attractive, but I didn’t think that was going to be smart and it was going to cause a blip downward in the state’s graph of revenue and spending. And so I suggested that we not do the one time tax rebate, but once you’ve been involved in budgeting you know you can’t afford to start reoccurring spending funding it with non-reoccurring revenues. So I didn’t want to do reoccurring spending with that so I started looking around for capital expenditures, one time expenses that we could use. And we looked at community colleges and whether capital spending could make a difference in their ability to do what they were doing. We added some park land and several other things and it turned out that the people in parks were ecstatic and so were the people in community colleges. It was maybe a bad step in one way as far as the community colleges were concerned because it opened the door for all of them to come in constantly asking for it now, instead of leaving the burden on the commissioners at the local level. But all in all, it has made such a big difference in the community colleges ability to deliver their goods that I would do the same thing all over again.
JW: Well Ben said that when you look at the budget for community colleges in those years, it led to a great increase and provided the resources for the colleges to do their jobs.

JH: Well you know it was a little bit like the ‘90s, in a way. The energy crisis hit and started impacting the budge in ’75. The first two years gave us the opportunity to really do a lot for public schools and the community colleges and the University. And we tended to put an emphasis on that just like Mike Easley had done and I think that’s good.

JW: Looking at your support of community colleges in 74, you said in your budget message to the General Assembly, “…I recommend to you another 10 million in capital improvement funds for these institutions.” Did the legislature, as you recall, go along with that recommendation?

JH: The legislature was pretty responsive when asked them and showed them a way that you could fund education stuff.

JW: I assume by then, too Governor, that there were enough of those institutions in place that many counties had one?

JH: That’s right and you’ve got a good grassroots lobby for it.

JW: I visited last November with Bob Scott and he thinks highly of you…

JH: Well that’s mutual. It’s interesting, we fought each other at times during the ‘60s, but there is a strong mutual respect there. Worked hard on the same side where the University restructuring was concerned in ’71 and we’ve seen a lot of each other and worked things together since then too.

…

JW: You also reappointed Dallas Herring. Tell me what went into that decision?
JH: Well, you know I’m, at that point I was a mixture of being a traditionalist, which I still am, but also realizing there ought to be some change. The things we were trying to change were some of the political bad things, I thought and if the Republicans had been in office… The traditionalists said you do well by the public schools and the community colleges and the university and the changer says you try to put some new ideas in the way you approach road building and maybe mental health. And since we had a brand new university structure, the idea there was to just try to help it. But I never heard any body say bad things about Dallas Herring. And when somebody is doing a good job, you just get out of their way and let them do it. He had a leg up with me in that he had gone to Davidson like I did, so you can’t ignore those things too. (Laughter)

JW: What is it with that Davidson group? (Laughter)

JH: I’m just glad I went when I did; I don’t think I would get in today.

JW: I’ve heard him say the same thing and he is also proud of that affiliation. When you look back on that administration, what do you see as the hallmark of your administration as governor?

JH: Well, it’s a little hard to say. I worked hard in rural health. And I think we got some good things in motion that have served the state well overtime. Support for the new university system, I think, was important. And we put a new system in about how we go about the process of saying which roads were going to be built, get it all out in the public airing at least. I’m not sure all that has held like I would have liked. A lot of it has. Starting the kindergartens was a good thing and I say starting, Bob [Scott] had actually started the pilots but we took it statewide. And I don’t know, it wasn’t a program, it wasn’t anything I could take credit for, but one of the most fortunate times for me was the fact that the
bicentennial came along when I was governor. It was a great time to be involved in government, all the festivities and celebrations that went on. That was good. And of course, you got to park right in front of Kenan Stadium or Reynolds Coliseum, and that was good. (Laughter) But that didn’t have much to do with progress.

JW: But it was still a benefit. (Laughter) Was there still, I mean obviously by the time you were governor, you were a strong supporter of community colleges, was there still some of the opposition to them in existence?

JH: I don’t think so. I think as the ‘60s went along, I think all the nea sayers sort of fell by the wayside. Because I don’t remember much serious discussion about the value of the system as the ‘60s passed the mid point and went on. Dallas probably has a lot more memory since he was in the middle of the storm as to when that started to die down, so to speak.

JW: But I guess they had, if you take their chosen date of 1963, certainly by your administration ’73, you’ve got a decade of existence, and like you said no one is questioning their value and it’s not whether we’re going to fund them and how?

JH: Right. And to the extent that we did start some state capital money that was probably a major endorsement of what they were doing and maybe removed any remaining doubt, if there was any, I don’t think there was. It was recognized by the community college people, I didn’t realize how much at the time, when they started giving out the Ready Awards, I was in the first group that they asked to, or they selected, and I appreciated that a lot.

JW: That is quite an honor.

JH: And partly because I felt like I had done so little compared with the work that Luther and Terry had done, and Dallas and some others.
JW: And you mention Luther and Terry and Dallas, anybody else stand out in your memory, especially during your years (as governor)?

JH: Well, course Ben was over there in charge of all the day to day stuff. He and I got along really well. Matter fact, if you talk to him, he’ll probably tell you about going to Japan and getting over there and having to borrow his coat to get off the plane because we didn’t realize that they were going to have a delegation out to meet us and I was there in a golf shirt. (Laughter) I looked around and said, “Well, it looks like it is going to be sort of informal. “He says, “Here, take my coat, at least put on my coat.” And of course, it’s been an interesting thing, I don’t know about all the states compared with South Carolina, which is very centralized governance, ours is about as loose as you can get. Bob [Scott] tried to change that and just ran into a stone wall.

JW: Of course, I talked with Martin Lancaster, his experience is the same. And of course, correct me if I am wrong, but compared with the president of the university (system), the president of the (community college system) has little real power.

JH: Right. It’s very different He is there as a cheerleader and to try to help with the problems as they come along and somebody comes to him with things looking for an answer. There are some advantages to that, I’m not sure they go to Martin every time some community college screws up around the state. So that would be nice. Because one of the things I found out being governor is that you don’t realize how many idiots you have to be responsible for every day. (Laughter) Because some of them are going to screw up.

JW: And that’s when it gets to your desk.

JH: That’s right.
JW: And better to your desk than the editor’s desk at the News and Observer, at least to your
desk first.

JH: Well sometimes it does and sometimes the reporters call and Jack Childs at the press
office is saying, “What about this?” And we didn’t know.

... 

JW: What role did you see, Governor, those [community] colleges play in opening doors for
North Carolina citizens and what do you see them doing today?

JH: Well, I think we’ve consciously tried hard to make sure that the door was open for the
student to come in. To keep costs down to a minimum and they still are, despite inflation and
everything else, everything being equal, it’s very few people who can’t go that want to. To
the extent, as opposed to some learning, the things that you are going to be learning there, if
you work at it at all, should make you better prepared to make a living at the things you’re
working with. And the challenge, I think ahead, just as it is for the university, is to recognize
what the market place is out there and in a sense, we’ve got to create our own marketplace, I
believe, by creating a labor force at three or four different levels, that are going to be
available for the businesses of this new century. That are going to have jobs here and a lot of
it is going to be knowledge based as opposed to elbow grease and that’s a change in
direction. And at the same time, what’s happening is just not happening in North Carolina,
it’s around the country. And if we build a labor force, and the community colleges have to
be an integral part of that preparation, not only are we going to have a base with which the
biotech entrepreneurs are going to have some people to do their stuff, it’s going to attract
people from outside the state to come in. You know, one of the things you saw in this fall’s
last election, is that places like Ohio have really been hurt by outsourcing, and those who get
to this next level of preparation first, are just going to have a leg up on everybody else. And California has been there in the tech business already, the Silicon Valley. Austin, Texas has a big stake. Boston has a big stake. Maryland is putting a lot of money and resources in to this kind of thing. But North Carolina has as good a chance as anybody, just about, to be a leader in this new revolution of sorts. Molly Broad at the University is working extremely hard in this area and I told her last week, she’s dragging some of the rest of us along as best she can who don’t still quite get it all. But it’s clear that we’re going to have to think just a little differently if we can, than we have in the past. There is a certain amount of base education that everybody ought to have, no matter what they’re going to do. And then when you reach a certain level, it seems to me, you start branching here and branching there depending on what you want to do for a livelihood. And some people are going to take more… And I still believe in the liberal arts, but I think there is going to have to be a heavy add on in some job related things for this next century.

JW: Looking back, what was you’re greatest challenge as governor?

JH: I guess the first one was finding people to bring into the top levels of the government, because the Republicans hadn’t been in power in that century. And there was a real scarcity of people who had much dealing with government. And fortunately that’s not the case anymore; if a Republican had gotten elected this year, there would be a cadre of people out there who had been there once at some level or other and would know what to do maybe. And it was a real challenge to the people who we brought in, because they had to be a fast study and most of them did pretty well. A few had to struggle, but most of them did pretty well and I look back on them with pride. And of course, you had the energy crisis that nobody expected. You had Watergate, that nobody realized was quite coming like it was.
And the last part was really tough, because it got a mind set with a certain percentage of the media at least, that you sort of proven guilty or proven innocent everyday. They just thought something, government just had to be watched really carefully. Now that I’m back as a private citizen there’re days that I think that too. (Laughter) It created an atmosphere which really made it hard to maintain, to sort of keep your chin up in a way, because this was just something we weren’t used to having to deal with in North Carolina. And it didn’t have to do anything with me; it still had a lot of impact on how people just viewed whoever happened to be there at the time.

JW: You continued many of Bob Scott’s programs. Did Jim Hunt continue many of yours?

JH: Well, the highway program stayed in place, pretty much as it was.

JW: And he was your lieutenant governor?

JH: That’s right. And we got along pretty well. And part of it was out of self interest because he knew he was wanting to be governor. There were times during that four year period when some of the folks tried to take a run at the authority of the governor’s office and he helped to squelch that. And we’ve worked pretty well together over the years on a bunch of things, just as Bob and I have. And of course, Terry and I ended up being law partners. The Sanford Holshouser name is still together. And that was a good experience. He was an interesting guy and I got to know him a lot better.

JW: Tell me about Terry Sanford. He seems so integral to the establishment of the system.

JH: I tell you, Sam Poole who worked for him for a long time, with him, has told a bunch of us on more than one occasion, Terry would come in every morning with ten new ideas and you just had to separate the two that were really outstanding and try to get him to focus on
those and get off the others. But he was, man, he just had a lot of interesting ideas. There are some of us who pay attention and listen to what others say and occasionally, a light bulb will go on. Terry, that light bulb stayed on all the time, even when he was asleep. (Laugher) I’ve got a client like that right now from Wisconsin who’s like that… and sometimes he’s like a bull in the china shop getting from point A to point B, but he knows where he wants to go and that’s more than you can say for a lot of us.

JW: So, Terry he was an innovator then?

JH: He was, very definitely. And if you look back, at the School of the Arts and the community colleges and what he did in terms of elevating the level with the public schools and the teachers in the public schools was just a giant step, which was very badly needed but hard to make happen.

JW: How about Dan Moore, did you know him?

JH: Knew him well. His niece was a classmate of mine for twelve years in elementary and high school and lived in Boone. I felt comfortable with his philosophy and approach to government, a little bit more like mine than Terry had been. Maybe it was a good time for him to be governor, because Terry had been so “activist” that the state needed just a little rest. Dan didn’t push as hard a big agenda and broad agenda. He had some very focused things and was a good steady hand on the throttle.

JW: Ed Rankin said that there was very little transition between those two camps in the Democrat party.

JH: That’s true.

JW: That they were very far apart, that was his comment.
JH: I tell you, we’ve had better transitions at times between Republicans and Democrats, advice going back and forth, than between Democrats at times and that was certainly true there. Ed Rankin was a great guy and he was one of the best men in Dan Moore’s administration and has been a great servant for North Carolina. The work he did for the Citizen’s Association and of course, he did good work with Cannon Mills. He worked down there for awhile and I think he retired before it started all its bouncing around. But he’s a good guy.

JW: There has been scholarship in the community college field in general that suggests that the community colleges were in the minds of some a way of safeguarding universities from minorities and tracking like elements of society into this level of education and away from the university. Did you ever see any of that or sense any of that in North Carolina?

JH: That’s the first time I’ve ever heard that thought. And I certainly don’t think it. You can’t ever know what’s in somebody else’s mind or what’s in the minds of all the people who were working on all of this, but the university has worked pretty hard to increase participation by minority communities and we’ve done, you can’t say across the board, a great job but you can say we’ve done a great job in a lot of different places. And there’s still a ways to go there when you look at the percentage of high school graduates going on to college. And you know if you just honestly believe, as I do, that education opens doors, like you say, you’ve got to keep pushing everybody for those extra levels or two that are potentially there for them. That includes everybody. I don’t know what we’re going to do where the growing Latino population is concerned. It is a new challenge that North Carolina just never has had before. And federal funds are probably going to end up resolving whether you are illegal or not, but we’ve still got some hard public policy questions to (come at).
And up to now, most of the people who have moved into North Carolina from outside the
country have come to do labor that’s needed. And it’s not those people that you worry about
as much as it is their children, who are growing up, going to the schools here, they are going
to be residents for university status, they’re going to be eligible for community college access
programs, that sort of thing. And everything I see, says that’s going to be a growing thing to
face rather than something that’s going to go away. A little bit like when I went to Jim
Graham’s retirement party and when I was in Raleigh, the agriculture board in ‘91, building
the state fairgrounds, the Holshouser Building. And I told the folks at Jim’s retirement, they
had called that building the “Village of Yesteryear”, they had crafts and stuff there at the
State Fair. And I said I always thought that really what was in Jim’s mind was as soon as I
left town he hoped that was the last they saw of the Republicans! (Laughter) And I think that
is how some of our folks feel about Mexicans and Puerto Ricans and everybody else that’s
here. But I don’t think that door is closing either.

JW: I think it’s actually swinging wider and the percentage is growing. You know I’m from
down east and that population is really exploding down there.

JH: And it’s exploding in strange places. My daughter when she was first married lived in
Mount Airy and they’ve got a big population in Surry County. And we’ve got a big
population up around Robbins in Moore County. And it’s clear to me at least that the
community colleges are going to have to be prepared to help the children of the people
who’ve been the first generation of immigrants to be prepared to be productive citizens.
Because, the last thing we need is to have another generation of welfare clients coming up
that we’re not taking the opportunity to keep out of that system, which is just self defeating
all the way around.
Interview with William (Billy) Mills at Raleigh, North Carolina on 10 February 2005

JW: I guess a good place to start would be how you became aware of community colleges and what your involvement was in their expansion back in the 1970s or whenever that was?

WM: It really goes back into the Sixties. I was on the board of county commissioners in 1959 when the technical extension unit or whatever the community college was [called when] created in 1959. And I was the chairman of the county commissioners for one of those years and I went on as a trustee, to sort of be a watch dog. It was a new thing and we had come to see Terry Sanford in that early phase of the community college system to buy the prison camp from the state to start our community college in Onslow County. So that was the initial involvement.

JW: Is that where it got started? In a prison camp?

WM: Right. In an abandoned, in a local county, every county used to have a prison camp. And we had places for the rooms…. Dr. Henderson was a good friend and we worked closely together trying to … as a trustee. I ended up running for the legislature in 1965 and sponsoring the legislation to create the industrial education center, Onslow Technical and then later we moved it to community college. But most of the system was created by special acts all over the state. I mean it was a … of course we had a central system, under the State Board of Education, as you know. And there was some competition naturally, you know and as it got bigger, competition developed with all of state government. It doesn’t matter what you do, there is so many public colleges. And in that first session of the legislature, Pat Taylor was the speaker of the House. … He encouraged us to get involved in some area of public service that nobody could question a conflict of interest and you know, it would be a
lot more satisfying. And I already had that interest in community college, so I said, that makes sense. Because you can’t commit yourself to having a degree of knowledge about everything. Higher education, public education, mental health, all of them are worthy causes and all of them have advocates. But the community colleges didn’t seem to have anybody. They didn’t have any alumni. They didn’t have any base. You know we do now, but we didn’t have at the time. Of course, among the trustee association, we weren’t moving fast enough. At least, as I thought and some other folks thought, like Dallas Herring and some others. And seemed like the leadership of the trustee association… and some of them resented that. I ran for the president of the trustee association. Lost the first time…but the next year we won. (In the late 70’s I was president of the trustee association.) And we talked about creating a separate board… As I told you all of the colleges were created by separate acts, but to my knowledge the first really major legislation that was introduced in 1977 by Senator Ed Renfrow, who sponsored that legislation. I was not in the legislature in ’77, I had got beat… (Mills discusses here what happened to cause him to lose the election and his experience on the Board of Governors, where he attempted to build the bridge between the university and the community colleges. He then discussed that upon his reelection, he reintroduced the Renfrow Bill in 1979, which created the separate board for community colleges.)

...

JW: You actually came to the Senate in 1971. Ben [Fountain] mentioned that it was the early 70’s that you helped him break the capital spending cap. Tell me about that?

WM: Well there was constant battling in the appropriations committee to increase capital funding…
JW: I think he said it was actually capped or limited to $500000, right?

WM: Right. And it was back in 1973 and we had some very austere years at that time. I also got involved in the med school at East Carolina... I had the east locked up. And I think it was $2 million dollars when that cap was broken, without any going to my school or anybody else’s. Now heretofore, every dollar of capital (funding), if you were chairman of appropriation chairman, you got it for your school. And the state board didn’t really have any … that was the capital he was talking about. It might have been $6 million, but I believe it was $2 million when we broke the cap. And Ben [Fountain] was a lot of help. Anything that I asked for, as far as information when I was defending the various bills in the legislature, for the department.

JW: He said that you came to him and said, “I want to do something for community colleges.” That just delighted him that he suddenly had someone...

WM: To wave the flag and go to bat for him. Of course, they would have responded to anybody that would have asked for information. Knowledge is powerful, especially if you know what you are talking about. The legislators, they can recognize fact. … Of course, some of the college got too aggressive in trying to build FTE and the public felt like some of the courses were frivolous… The public supported vocational /technical and also vocational/extension. I don’t know what it is today, but my last session, something like 25% of the students were college graduates coming back to retool. I don’t know what it is now. (Mills discussed here some of his family history and the situation in eastern North Carolina.)

JW: Do you feel like the community college has opened doors for people?
WM: Without any question. My son wound up going back to the community college and he graduated with an associate’s degree. Had it not been there, his story would have been very different.

JW: Did you sense any opposition to the concept of community colleges?

WM: No, not really. Our first vote was 38 to 2. … The second vote was 33 to nothing. There were some reservations about creating a separate board, nobody likes more bureaucracy.

JW: What about Carl Stewart?

WM: Carl was very supportive; he was speaker of the House at that time. And so was Jimmy Green. But it was, I felt like, easier in the House than it was in the Senate. We don’t have football games or basketball games to offer tickets. Like last night, the Duke-Carolina game. If I had been president and could offer tickets to something like that, that can make a difference. I would want the Chairman of Appropriation and Finance to be sitting on the front row. Also, members of the Advisory Budget Commission don’t have trouble getting tickets. But community colleges can’t do that. We don’t have the programs…

JW: Ben Fountain said to ask you about something you set up in the Velvet Cloak Inn?

WM: Right, I set up some conference calls in the Velvet Cloak Inn. Trustees across the state. I wound up chairing; I was working both sides of the aisles, so to speak. And we wound up setting up a conference call to every trustee. I think that was 73 or 75. But I wanted to get everybody on line, because I had experience that in business groups, you have had rate of attendance, because it was there livelihood. But in trustees, volunteer groups, you have a much smaller rate of participation. A lot smaller percentage and you have to take
advantage of whatever time they will give you. (Now Mills spoke of his work with the Pirate’s Club.) But every school needs to have advocates…

JW: When you were calling, you were doing that…

WM: We were calling in order to respond to their local delegation. We had sent out mailings to them to call Joe Jones or Jim Smith about this appropriation bill. We were trying to break that cap. That is what that was about. We were calling to make that contact, just that weekend. You don’t need to call everybody; you need to call the right ones. The right ones are the ones that the committee is in, not the one it came out of. You have to cultivate the trust of the trustees as well.

JW: What do you see as the vision for the system now?

WM: I would like to see more focus on continuing education and retooling. We have college graduates coming back. We have a lot of higher education in North Carolina. But we are no longer making a living in the tobacco field and the forest. We’re competing with China, making gadgets. We need to beware of programs that we don’t need anymore. We need to be geared toward demand. There is a demand in healthcare and homeland security. … So if you’ve got an industry in your county that’s gearing up… we need to keep looking for those partners. And it is even more important for us folks in the East.
Interview Release

I hereby grant to Joseph W. Wescott II the right and privilege to include information shared with him during the interview(s) held in ________, North Carolina within his dissertation entitled, “A Vision of an Open Door.” I grant to Joseph the right to publish such information for profit within the context of the above mentioned dissertation or any resulting publication. I agree to hold free and blameless North Carolina State University and its colleges, departments, and agencies from any and all liability.

________________________   ______________________
Interviewee                  Interview Date
APPENDIX B

SPEECHES
The Community College System

This brief account of the origin of the North Carolina Community College System was written at the request of former Governor Robert Scott, who then was president of the system, by William Dallas Herring for a presentation to the Watauga Club, of Raleigh on the eleventh of September, 1984. A hurricane hovered at the mouth of the Cape Fear River on that day and it seemed likely to strike north of Wilmington. For that reason the author of the paper was not able to appear in Raleigh. Governor Scott made the presentation on his behalf.

I am honored to be asked to speak to the Watauga Club about the beginnings of the community college system in North Carolina. I do not profess any particular competence in the field of education - only a citizen’s awareness that education is essential to every man’s progress and that it is indispensable to democracy. I believe, therefore that the means of education should be available to all educable people and not just to the few with superior ability. It is thus everyman’s business; and one man has as much right, I suppose, to talk about it as another.

It is obvious that in North Carolina every individual is required to pay his share of the cost of education, whether he benefits directly from it or not. The poor and the ignorant who do not participate in education pay for it, not only with their taxes, but also, in a negative way, with both economic and cultural penalties which deprive them of an abundant life and hold back the general progress of society.

The remedy for this condition, as Jefferson insisted, is not to deprive them of their rights as citizens, but to “inform their discretion” through education. As a practical matter,
this means that education must be made available to them where they are, at a time when they can afford to take advantage of it, at a price they can manage to pay and in programs which are designed to meet their individual needs and capabilities. The prisons are full of our failures, but education can do much to empty them in a generation or two, if we meet these conditions. We, therefore, must do so, or we must admit that we do not believe fully in democracy.

North Carolina’s achievement in education during this century is a remarkable contrast with our past. A century and a half ago the overwhelming obstacle to education for everyone was nearly everyone’s belief that we could not afford to educate ourselves. From our present perspective it is like saying that food costs more than we can afford, so we will not eat - or we will not eat today, perhaps tomorrow. Or it is like the farmer who complained that seed and fertilizer cost too much, so we will not plant anything, but feed off the that land and what it produces on its own accord. It was a stupid idea which had taken hold of people who knew better, but who seemed unable to trust their own freedom and sought refuge in a policy of mass ignorance, because it seemed inevitable to them.

I think it was Oscar Wilde who had one of his characters say that we are all “standing in the gutter, but some few are looking at the stars.” Joseph Caldwell was one of these few in North Carolina. In his Letters on Popular Education Addressed to the People of North Carolina, 1832 he wrote that “vast numbers have grown up into life, have passed into it’s later years and raised families without education...Human nature is apt to contract prejudices against that which has never entered into its customs...So strangely may the truth be inverted in the minds of men in such circumstances, that they become avowed partisans of mental darkness against light, and are sometimes seen glorying in ignorance as their privilege and
right.” He thought it no small difficulty “to neutralize their antipathy against education, and enlist them in support” of universal education, but he earnestly pleaded with their leaders to give them a chance to become educated in the confident knowledge that the experience would change them and thus the whole future of the state.

North Carolina did not escape from this antipathy against education until our own times and the history of the intervening century and a half is replete with the eloquent pleading of men whom we now remember with respect and even affection, but who often were not so well regarded by their contemporaries. Walter Hines Page, while sometimes eloquent, was at times blatantly critical and impatient, especially with our political leaders. John Milton Cooper, Jr., writes that Page, “aroused by continuing opposition to the Watauga Club’s renewed proposals for an industrial school,...blurted out his anger and frustration in a long, sarcastically humorous diatribe against the whole climate of opinion in North Carolina” in his famous “mummy” letter. Cooper continues with his comment, quoting heavily from Page:

It is an awfully discouraging business to undertake to prove to a mummy that it is a mummy,’ Page began. Yet the mummy’s existence was ‘a solemn fact’ and apparently ‘lasts forever. They don’t want an Industrial School. That means a new idea, and a new idea is death to the supremacy of the mummies. Let ‘em alone. The world must have some corner in it where men sleep and sleep and dream and dream and North Carolina is as good a spot for that as any.’ Never mind that North Carolina was ‘the laughing-stock among the States.’ Why be bothered that ‘the most active and energetic men born in North Carolina have gone away?’ It did seem sad that so many ‘bright and promising men’ in Raleigh had drunk themselves to death during
the last twenty years. ‘Why did they drink?’ The mummies drove them to it. ‘When every intellectual aspiration is discouraged, when all the avenues that lead to independent thought and to mental growth are closed...there is absolutely no chance for the ambitious men of ability, proportionate to their ability.’ And the mummies would go on ruling as long as men of ability kept annihilating themselves or leaving the state. North Carolina was backward ‘not simply because we are poor.’ Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia have progressed further since 1865 by giving every man a chance in making intellectual and social progress.’ Tar Heels could do even better if only the best of them were not stifled or driven away by the mummies.

Page’s diatribe met with severe reaction, but there were a few who discerned the truth of his remarks and took heart from what he had to say. Charles B Aycock, who was then a young lawyer practicing in Goldsboro, wrote Page that “fully three fourths of the people are with you and wish you God speed in your effort to awake better work, greater thought and activity and freer opinion in the state.” He urged him to return to North Carolina and start a daily paper with Josephus Daniels. He thought it would be worth more to the state than all “the living and dead mummies have been in a quarter of a century.”

Benighted as we may have been, and may still be to some extent, the thought often occurred to me in my own experience with education that the people are often ahead of their leaders and want only someone in a high place to unlock the doors to full freedom of opportunity. The fact that in recent decades we have had such leaders, after the example of Aycock, who have met with overwhelmingly positive response from the people, it seems to me, proves the case.
Governor Kerr Scott, as I recall, opened the windows of state government “at the top and at the bottom” to let out the stale air to make room for widespread popular influence on the policies of state in all areas. When Luther Hodges became Governor in the mid-1950s he made industrial developement his chief emphasis. If he made any mistake, I suppose it was when he appointed me to the State Board of Education in 1955 and a year later to the newly created Board of Higher Education. Agriculture was in a state of acceleration transition from the old agrarian ways in which I grew to maturity to the new technology of farming. It meant vast changes in the way crops were planted and harvested. The produce of one man on the farm, aided by new equipment and new methods, doubled and redoubled several times in the space of a few years. These changes created a vast surplus of manpower leaving the farms to seek employment elsewhere.

During the decade of the 1950s North Carolina suffered a net out-migration of its people equal to the combined population of it’s three largest cities. Industrial development was urgently needed to provide employment for them and for our growing urban population. In a conversation with Governor Hodges in 1956 (when I went to offer him my resignation from a post which did not seem to me to provide much opportunity for change in the status of things), I told him I thought it singular that these displaced farmers were expected to walk into the new industrial plants he was bringing in and start efficient production without any preparation for such a role. He quickly agreed and made some uncomplimentary remarks (worthy, I thought, of Page himself) about the ignorance and obstinacy of the people. I replied that I thought the remedy was to “inform their discretion” through education. He sat up quickly in his chair with his hands face down on his desk and instructed me to go back
and prepare a proposal for industrial education of adults. That, it seemed to me, was challenged worth my remaining for a while in Raleigh.

I gave the matter serious thought and conferred with Dr. Charles F. Carroll, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and learned from him for the first time that the General Assembly of 1953, under the influence of Representative Roger Kiser of Scotland County, a retired schoolmaster of no mean ability, had defeated the proposal of Dr. Clyde Erwin and Dr. Alan Hurlburt for a comprehensive community college system which could have met the need which I had pointed out to Governor Hodges.

About the same time Mr. George Geohagen and the State College Development Council made a proposal to the Board of Higher Education which called for improvements in engineering education, the establishment of three technical institutes under the auspices of State College and a system of area vocational schools. Hiden Ramsey, chairman of the Board, suggested that I take the area vocational school proposal to the State Board of Education. I told him that, coincidentally, it was already there as a result of my conversation with Governor Hodges and Dr. Carroll. I proposed that we request an appropriation of one and a half million dollars with which to begin the system. Dr. Carroll insisted that we request twice that amount, which we did.

Late in the legislative session of 1957 I received a call from Governor Hodges, who informed me the Appropriations Subcommittee had voted the proposal down. At his instruction I came to Raleigh to confer with Watts Hill, Jr., and Richard Long, members of the committee who favored the proposal. In conference with them and with Governor Hodges it was agreed to try for an appropriation of a half million dollars to be made to the Advisory Budget Commission pending a more definitive proposal from the Board. This
request was approved. After the session we spent the fall of 1957 in intensive planning for the Industrial Educational Center or IEC proposal and it was submitted to the Advisory Budget Commission in April, 1958, which allocated the money to the Board, but restricted its use to the purchase of equipment. Faculty and administrative salaries were to be paid from funds provided under the federal Smigh-Hughts and George-Barden Acts.

In less than a year from that time the first IEC was opened in Burlington with a student enrollment of over one thousand and part-time faculty of some forty people recruited from industry. Excellent equipment in several trade and industrial areas was placed in the new building erected by the Burlington school board. There was no library and there was no plan for one. Instruction was limited to intensive, practical courses in specific methods of production and maintenance. Governor Hodges would not agree that anything more was needed. In fact, when he later became Secretary of Commerce he took me to task for bootlegging some liberal arts instruction and literacy education into the system. I replied that, if one cannot read, he cannot progress very well in modern industrial employment, but we had no funds for it and the U.S. Office of Education ruled, illegally, I think, that the federal funds could not be used to teach millhands how to read and write. Their famous “bulletin number one” clearly indicated it not only was permissible, but was encouraged. In this case it was terminated for a while. I am not sure that Governor Hodges ever forgave me for this departure from policy, but he is due much credit for getting the system started.

The Board of Higher Education, under the influence of its director, Dr. Harros Purks, an avowed opponent of the community college idea, and with the help of Representative William Womble, of Winston-Salem, who was also a member of the Board, proposed during
the last days of the 1957 session a new act empowering the Board to create a system of junior colleges. These institutions were to be financed and controlled locally and their programs were to be limited to the liberal arts and sciences. The state was to make a very modest reimbursement per credit hour of instruction actually delivered by the end of each quarter. This proposal passed the General Assembly that year and the existing institutions at Wilmington, Charlotte, and Asheville came into the system, which ironically was called “the community college system” not withstanding the fact they were forced to divest themselves of all vocational and technical programs or pay for such courses with non-existent local funds. The IECs quickly began to provide courses in these fields with federal funds, since the IECs were still a part of the public school system.

Eventually new junior colleges were opened at Gastonia and at Elizabeth City and a Technical Institute was opened at Gastonia under the control of State College. It seemed to me that this separation of programs was based on class distinctions, and inference which was strengthened further by the creation of separate junior colleges for blacks in Wilmington and Charlotte. By contrast, the IECs were integrated from the beginning under the “open door policy” adopted by the State Board of Education. I felt the junior college proposal was a mistake and voted against the motion recommending the system to the 1957 General Assembly. The people responded quickly to the new opportunity for industrial education which the IECs began to offer in abandoned jails, motels, churches, lodge halls, community buildings, and in public school buildings at night. By the end of 1960 some 35,000 people were reported to be in attendance in many places across the state.
A State Citizens Committee for Better Schools had been appointed by Governor Hodges at my urging and formal study of the public school curriculum, headed by Dr. I. E. Ready, was begun in 1958 with the assistance of a central committee and some 38,000 citizens and teachers organized in local committees in every county of the state. There was a ground swell of support for change in education which undoubtedly would have startled Joseph Caldwell and gratified the finest dreams of Walter Hines Page. In one year more than fifty schools were consolidated as a result of citizen study of the curriculum.

It was in this exciting context that Terry Sandford was elected governor of North Carolina in 1960. In his inaugural address he called on the people to join him in “the audacious adventure of making North Carolina all that it can and ought to be.” The state had not witnessed such enthusiasm for education, I think, since the days of Governor Aycock and Superintendent Hoyner. Notwithstanding the fact that the integration crisis was approaching its climax and schools in other states were closing, huge assemblies of citizens were held at Chapel Hill for workshops and addresses on the subject of new opportunities in education.

Governor Adlai Stevenson addressed one of these citizen assemblies, sponsored by he State Citizens Committee for Better Schools, while the racial crisis in Little Rock was in progress. He asked for my counsel in the preparation of his address because of this crisis. To his surprise, and mine, there was no indication whatever of negativism-only enthusiasm for the improvement of education at all levels. Dr. James B. Conant spoke at another of these events along with Governor-elect Sanford, who gave the enthusiastic audience a preview of what his administration would do in education. Dr. Conant wrote to me after the Sanford program was adopted by the 1961 legislative session that it represented “a landmark in American education.”
Early in the 1961 session supporters of Wilmington College, then a junior college of liberal arts and science operating under the 1957 act, announced that they were planning to seek senior college status through an appeal to the General Assembly. The 1957 act had started the institution on the way to that goal by forcing the exclusion of technical programs. The Board of Higher Education was alarmed and remained in session until late afternoon without adjourning for lunch. I suggested to Major L. P. McLendon, who had succeeded Ramsey as chairman, that the idea had merit, but was premature and that we ought to propose to Governor Sanford that he announce plans to appoint a formal study commission to take a thorough look at the whole area of education beyond the high school and ask for delay in any further decisions affecting the organization of education at that level.

Much to my surprise and satisfaction, Major McLendon agreed and we went together to see Governor Sanford, who immediately saw the wisdom of this course, if indeed he had not already reached that conclusion for other valid reasons. President William Friday and I met with the Governor shortly thereafter at which time plans for the study were discussed in detail. Irving Carlyle, of Winston-Salem, was chosen to head the commission, which came to bear his worthy name. He was a man of great vision and courage who had spoken out frankly in support of the civil rights decisions, and urged the state to comply, but there was no opposition to his appointment then or later. The commission devoted the next twelve months to an exhaustive study of the situation in higher education. It held numerous hearings and its various committees met frequently as consensus began to be reached. The press understandably displayed intense interest and reported extensively as the work progressed. President Friday gave invaluable leadership to the commission and rightly exerted a profound influence in our world.
Very briefly summarized, the commission recommended that the University, at the apex of the educational pyramid, be authorized to expand in the time to new campuses, that the junior colleges at Wilmington, Charlotte, and Asheville become senior institutions, that the existing senior colleges be strengthened and that the remaining junior colleges be brought into a new system of institutions under the State Board of Education along with the industrial education centers, which were to become technical institutes with two-year programs in addition to the existing extension courses with provision for their gradual growth to full comprehensive community colleges where the need was justified. Governor Sanford gave full support to these proposals and the General Assembly of 1963, in spite of Representative Roger Kiser’s opposition, adopted the proposals by a wide margin. Much credit was due also to John Sanders who gave intelligent support to the commission as its secretary and wrote its report.

The institutions now under its jurisdiction were organized by the State Board of Education in a new comprehensive community college system and a Department of Community Colleges was established with Dr. Epps Ready, who had led the public school curriculum study, as director.

As the working adults and college-age young people of the state became aware of the new opportunity, the system experienced a sustained period of popularity and growth. While there were some fears expressed by private junior colleges that their security might be threatened, there was no effective opposition to the new system throughout this period as it began to grow. The General Assembly was generous in its response and appropriated funds to support the growth. In his budget message to the General Assembly of 1965 Governor More sounded a warning note and suggested that the state should take another look at the
system, which was growing more rapidly than most observers had anticipated. I went immediately to confer with my great friend and colleague on the Board, State Treasurer Edwin Gill, who was close to Governor Moore, and learned from him that he, himself, was the author of that part of the Governor’s address.

I told Gill that it was true that the system had grown like a patch of weeds in a barnyard, but that it was because the need was there and had never been met before in the history of the state. Some of the newspaper echoed the Governor’s concern. The response of the Board was to direct the Department of Community Colleges to prepare rules for a fair and equitable formula budget plan whereby growth could be controlled and directed toward legitimate goals. When the appropriation for 1965-66 was received the Department had not completed the formula and insisted that it was not a good idea anyway. The Board thereupon froze the new funds and would not allow them to be distributed until a suitable formula was adopted.

I came to Raleigh almost daily for the next few weeks and worked with a committee from the institutions and the Department until we had established the system-wide average cost per student for every line item in the budget. Pupil accounting procedures were strengthened and the institutional reports verified. With this information at our disposal, it was a simple matter to define a workable formula for allocation of funds to each institution in an equitable and adequate amount in each line item of the appropriation based on the institution’s full-time equivalent enrollment for the previous year. This process uncovered a number of inequities, which were quickly and automatically corrected by application of the formula. There were numerous complaints from the institutions, but gradually they came to realize that it was the only fair way to administer the budget. The Board adopted the policy,
allocated the funds and formed a standing committee to review the formula and make suggestions for its improvement. Edwin Gill was satisfies by this innovation. Governor Moore indicated his approval and I earned a reputation for obstinacy which has not subsided since. Governor Robert Scott, having served on the Board of Education as Lieutenant Governor during this period, was a principal participant in these decisions while he was on the Board, and a staunch supporter of the community college movement during his term as governor. I will not discuss the events which followed my departure from the Board in 1977 except to record my gratitude that he was chosen to head the system some years later and to say that I am pleased to leave the assignment in his capable hands.

President Jack Kennedy remarked with considerable forthrightness after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, that “success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan.” I have noted, not without some embarrassment, that now and then I have been referred to as “the father of the community college system.” I must disclaim paternity in this and all other instances. There were too many people who contributed very substantially to the creation of the present system and to its early years of growth for anyone to be singled out for such an honor. I was rather, I think, the midwife and nursemaid of this significant event in our educational history. Now that the infant is alive and kicking, I am relieved that Governor Scott is in charge, so that I can try at last to get some rest in the relative quiet of my secluded library in Rose Hill, thankful that my name is not often in the newspapers and that my telephone seldom rings.
If there are any mummies still around, they have not troubled me -- at least they have not done so recently. And Mr. Page would be pleased to know that, as a Presbyterian elder and clerk of session, I am not given to strong drink.
Article B—2

Remarks by William Dallas Herring at NC State University on 17 February 2005

I never visit this fine campus but that I am reminded of men such as Clarence Poe, whom I knew very well and many others, including Bill Friday, a graduate of this institution, and one of the greatest North Carolinians living, or for that matter, that has ever lived here. I especially want to thank Dr. Edgar J. Boone and tell you, just briefly about the beginning of this department. [During the administration of Governor Sanford, Andy Jones] the director of the Department of Administration, (formed under Governor Luther Hodges), remarked to me one day that the community college system needed to have better trained presidents, deans and administrators, and that we needed to get a hold of that problem and create a program that would help. I realized that was true. I had decided after a couple of years that we needed some experience to decide how the best way to deal with that was. I approached two other people in our senior institutions [UNC--Chapel Hill and UNC--Charlotte], because of the people whom I knew in them who were interested in community colleges, to see whether they would be interested in forming a program especially for community college leaders. I will not tell you all of their answers because the institutions’ names are well known… One said, “Well we already have a program for training administrators.” He didn’t say it was for public schools only, but it was. The other, a newer institution, whose leader, formerly dean of this institution, had the reputation and ability, I thought, of building a good program, told me his school was not yet accredited. I said in my simple way, “Maybe we can get Bill Friday to bootleg it from Chapel Hill.” (Laughter) And he didn’t agree with that and of course, I was not serious about that. I was sort of disappointed about it. I attended a meeting here [NC State] earlier in the day, I don’t remember the year, but there was a
substantial fund granted to NC State and to the rest of the institutions of higher education, for curriculum improvement, not just the financial control and leadership… I sat in the discussions here that morning and decided that it was over my head and about senior institutions. I was on the Board of Higher Education also. I went down to the Department of Community Colleges and a friend there told me that I needed to come back to this institution and meet a man named Edgar J. Boone, who had recently come here from the Mid-West, the University of Wisconsin. I said, “I don’t think I want to go back out there.” [Laughter] But I did. I had in my pocket a promise of a grant from the US Office of Education of $150,000 to begin a program to train presidents, deans and leaders of the community college system. I had offered it in two other places and had been turned down. My informant said that Edgar J. Boone was a dynamic leader in adult education who had the ability to do it. So I came out, walked into his office, and I tell you the truth, in fifteen minutes we agreed on it. He took it over and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. Our board [State Board of Education] followed my recommendation about it and we have worked together in the way that the spiritual founder of this institution, Walter Hines Page, would have agreed to do. He was a native of a suburb of Raleigh, Cary. He was born near the middle of the Civil War, as I recall it. He did not go to Duke University, as some people have said he did. He went to Randolph Macon College in Ashland, Virginia and he studied Greek and majored in English. And he was chosen as one of the first fellows of a new university called Johns Hopkins.

The president of Time, Inc., Roy Larsen, who happened to be a member of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools [established by James Conant, president of Harvard and the author of The American High School Today] learned of my interest in
Walter Hines Page, and Mr. Larsen gave me a dozen or so of books that he had had printed himself containing three speeches by Walter Hines Page, one commemorating what is now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro… I read it on the train from Wilmington to Atlanta in a carload of Marines that were going down there and I had to make a speech in Atlanta. It was so fascinating to me, so challenging, so far beyond what I read in his biography in my Grandfather’s library, at least at the time that I first read those books.

One other little incident that may be of interest to you is not so profound. My mother and father took my twin sister and my older sister to Flora McDonald College at Red Springs in 1933 and then they drove on toward Davidson, where I was to be enrolled. My mother insisted that we stop at Aberdeen at the old Bethesda Church. She didn’t tell me why we should stop and I wondered why. We got to the doors of the old wooden church with a lot of history, the door was locked and there was nobody present. So she said, “Let’s walk through the cemetery surrounding it.” And she led me to the grave of Walter Hines Page. I didn’t know why she did that and she didn’t tell me. We went on to Davidson and they put me off at the dormitory and showed me where the library was. So I went down there and I looked up all I could find on Walter Hines Page. He was the one who made the challenge for this university to do exactly what it has done for community colleges and to employ people like Ed Boone and many others, Chancellor Caldwell and present leadership here. I am confident that you are doing the right thing. And the greatest achievement, not in honor of what I have done, but in honor of the fact that it was done by many people. When we opened the door to the people who worked with wrenches and trowels, hammers and saws, the tools of working class people. That it was intended by the founders of this institution and of this state, to include everyone. Universal opportunity for education as far as they could go, that is what
has been achieved under the leadership of Martin Lancaster and the State Board [of Community Colleges], and the State Board [of Education] when I served. And that is the contribution that will be remembered when the historians write the true story of these years.

I cannot thank you enough for your individual contributions and recognize you as I should. I wish I could have heard all of the words that were spoken. I hope it is recorded and we can read it later. Thank you for inviting me.

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Postscript

After the U. S. Office of Education authorized the use of surplus vocational education funds to support the internship program at N. C. State University, A. C. Davis, controller of the State Board of Education, called me to say that Andy Jones, head of the State Department of Administration, had ruled that, since the General Assembly had not appropriated funds for this purpose, he could not allow the expenditure, notwithstanding the fact that he was the person who had urged me to set up such a program.

I asked Davis to arrange an appointment with Andy Jones and I went to Raleigh immediately. Davis and I met with him and I explained that the funds we proposed to use were appropriated by the U. S. Congress, that the specific use of the funds had been approved by the U. S. Office of Education and that the State Board, which under State law is the Board of Vocational Education, also had approved the appropriation. He immediately agreed and said that he had been misinformed and thought we were to use State funds. The funds were then made available to the University for a number of years until the following events occurred:
When James B. Hunt became governor in 1977 he explained to me that in order to find the funds needed for his new educational programs, the appropriation for support of the community college internship program would have to be deleted. He also said that the internship program would be restored in the following year. It never was restored and it does not exist today. There were numerous state-supported programs for public school principals, but no other one for community colleges.

My appointment to the State Board of Education ended in April of 1977 after 22 years in office. Governor Hunt called me to Raleigh on Monday before the Board was to meet on the third Thursday in April, when he informed me that he would not reappoint me. I returned home after assuring the Governor that I was not offended by his decision and that I wished him well.

When I reached home it occurred to me again that the internship program was funded by the U. S. Office of Education from the appropriation for Vocational Education. I called A. C. Davis, Controller of the State Board, and asked him why he had transferred the Internship Program to the state budget where it could be terminated. The Board had not been informed of this action, which made it easier for those who opposed the community colleges to take action in secret opposition to them. This irregular action was in opposition to the decision of the State Board and the decision of the U. S. Office of Education. It also was too late for me to correct the error made in secret by others, much to my regret, but the Community College system has grown tremendously ever since and tens of thousands who heretofore have been neglected are walking through the Golden Door. I thank North Carolina State University for all of the wonderful help rendered to this cause, which is the cause of enduring democracy.