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An Interview with Dr. Lorne Seidman

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

The UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV

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Claytee D. White, Project Director
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Preface

Lawrence Seidman grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. He attended Culver Military Academy the first three years of high school, but graduated from Bay Village High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, and went on to law school at Case Western Reserve University.

Lawrence and his wife moved to Chicago after he finished law school, where he worked in the First National Bank of Chicago doing estate planning and analysis. He wanted to try teaching, so he sent letters to many different schools. Ferris State College in Michigan gave him an interview, and he and his wife moved there for one academic year. The freezing cold winter convinced them that they did not want to stay in the Midwest, so Lawrence began writing letters to schools out west.

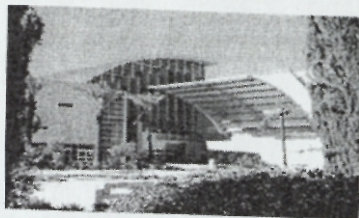
UNR replied to the letter they received, saying they had no openings, but he might try Nevada Southern University in Las Vegas. The school was in the middle of changing its name to University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). Lawrence flew out, interviewed with future colleagues, and accepted the job. He and his wife have lived in Vegas ever since 1969.

Lawrence was the first full-time person hired to teach business law. He restructured the way the courses were developed and presented. A discipline officer was needed after the regents passed a new code of conduct and he was asked to take the position, which he did. Because the administrative or discipline officer reports to the president of the university, he got to know several of them rather well.

Eventually, Lawrence became assistant general counsel, and also served as deputy attorney general for a while. His wife Janet pursued her degrees at UNLV, taught for about five years, and then worked at Children's Behavioral Services. Today they are both retired, and are enjoying traveling and working on their home. Lawrence occasionally teaches summer sessions at UNLV.

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

UNLV Oral History Project @ Fifty



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This is Claytee White, and I'm in the home of Lorne -- will you pronounce your last name correctly?

Lorne Seidman.

S-e-i-d --

S-e-i-d-m-a-n.

This is November 14th, 2006.

Correct.

Okay. So we're going to get started. How are you feeling this morning?

Well, I'm feeling fine this morning.

Okay. We're going to start just by talking about some of your early life. Where did you grow up and what was that like?

Well, I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio -- actually a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, called Bay Village, which is on the west side of Cleveland. We originally lived in a closer-in suburb. It was a pretty normal childhood. You know, my parents were just fine. They were married for about 50 years.

What did they do for a living?

Well, my father started out selling real estate. And then he got tied up with some people and he wound up being a general contractor, built kind of middle-class housing developments. That's what he did. My mother didn't work.

And where did you go to school?

Well, for most of high school I went to Culver Military Academy. I grew up in kind of a middle class sort of a background. I went to Culver Military Academy except for the last year. There was just no social life at all. So when I finally graduated from high school, I graduated from a public school, Bay Village High School. Then I went to Ohio University, bachelor's degree in business administration I think it was, and then to law school at Case Western Reserve University.

Okay. Now, tell me about the prep school, the school that you went to.

The military academy?

The military academy, what was that like?

Well, they tried to model themselves on West Point, actually. Of course, it was a high school and not a college. But it was, you know, all quite military. It was all uniforms and drill, no girls. It

was just an all-male thing. It was kind of neat at first and kind of boring after a while, pretty tedious actually.

Did you live on campus?

Oh, sure. Oh, sure. We lived in barracks, yeah. Oh, yeah, it was a full-time school. It was in Culver, Indiana.

How far away from home?

Well, Culver, Indiana, would be pretty much a good day's drive. It was also out of South Bend. So from roughly Cleveland to South Bend, it was a drive.

Now, how do young boys feel about that; going away to military academy?

Well, some like it. Some click right into it. Others are out of there almost overnight. It's kind of a regimented kind of a lifestyle. And you've got to remember you're dealing with high school kids, not career-oriented military people.

Right. So you're talking about 14-year-olds to begin with?

Roughly around there, yeah, sure. And as I say, some people just clicked right in and others didn't like it at all. Some people were, in effect, hazed out actually in the plebe year. Others just took it day by day and went through.

I have always thought that that would be just an uncomfortable way to live.

I think it's coed now.

Oh, really?

Yeah. So there probably is more of a social life. It probably is a little bit more normal today. But back then I think that was kind of just -- well, as I say, some people just really liked it and other people did not.

Did you ever go into military after that?

Oh, no. That was the last time I ever wanted to see the inside of a uniform. If they were going to get me after that, they were going to have to draft me. And they never did. So, no, I've never been in the military. I had plenty of that.

Okay. And what happened after you finished law school?

Well, after I finished law school, I went to Chicago. Janet wanted to get out of Cleveland. I guess I did, too. So we went to Chicago. I worked in the First National Bank of Chicago doing estate

planning and analysis. That was a real button-down kind of a real regimented job and I wanted to try teaching.

I've always kind of wanted to try teaching. I didn't know when you were supposed to apply for a job or anything. It was, I don't know, probably in the middle of winter or something like that. I just started writing letters around, and I wrote a letter to a place called Ferris State College in Michigan. And apparently what happened there as I recall -- this is a long time -- apparently what had happened there is they had somebody on the faculty die. So they had an unexpected opening. So I just wrote a letter. I didn't see an ad or anything. I was just writing letters around. And, lo and behold, they took me on, interviewed me and hired me. So that's when I started working there. I worked there for one academic year, just one academic year.

The weather was just terrible there. I remember I was teaching on the second floor of a building and I looked out the window and I could see cars. And where they plowed the snow, cars were just driving around in these trenches because the snow had been thrown to the side. I looked out the window and I remember thinking I could do this anyplace.

I really wanted to go to California, so I started writing letters out west here. And once again, I wasn't looking at ads. I didn't know about the Chronicle of Higher Education. I didn't know there was an association to contact. I just started writing letters. And I wrote a letter to UNR. I probably got the name out of the back of a dictionary or something. And they wrote back and they said, well, we don't have any openings but there's this place in Las Vegas that might. So I wrote a letter to here.

It was a little bit confusing because that was '69 and we were transitioning over from Nevada Southern University to UNLV. I kept getting this correspondence back about a job at UNLV on stationery marked Southern Nevada University and it was a little confusing there for a while.

But in any event, I finally got -- they made a job offer to me. This was all done either over the phone or through the mail, but I wasn't about to take a job out here sight unseen much less working for people I had never met. You know, I wasn't all that unhappy in Michigan. I liked the people there, too. So I flew out here and interviewed the people that would be hiring me and that I'd be working with. And then I called Janet and we accepted a job and came out here. We've

been here ever since.

I thought we'd just be here for a couple of years as sort of a stopping place on the way to California. But when I got a job offer in Las Vegas, it just sounded too interesting to pass up. So...

What did you know about Las Vegas before that?

Well, as a practical matter nothing. Actually, I had been through here one time many, many years ago when my father drove my mother and me out to California. So we'd been through here, but I really didn't remember anything about it. Janet and my parents came out here and they bought a house, and I remember pulling up in front of our first house. I had never seen it before until we pulled up in front of it. And that's how we got here.

That's great. Why didn't you ever think about practicing law?

I did think about practicing law. The idea was I was supposed to go into practice with my uncles in Cleveland. But I worked for them for a summer. And after that, that was just not for me. I just was not going to do it. I clerked in law school a little bit and I worked for them. I just really had no interest in going in and making a living practicing law on a daily basis. I've never had that.

Wow. So you found more freedom in the classroom, more variety?

Oh, sure. Oh, definitely. You know, teaching gives you the flexibility to really pursue interests. You know, you just have a lot more flexibility and you're not dealing with people that are problems. You're not dealing with lawyers that are confrontational. Well, I was university attorney. And the toughest part of being university attorney and general counsel and that sort of thing is dealing with other lawyers. It's not that they're evil people. They're doing a job. I mean, it's a confrontational situation.

So what was the first job at UNLV?

Oh, first job at UNLV was just strictly teaching business law.

Okay. Now, business law, was that geared, though, not really for people going to law school?

No, not necessarily, although a lot of them took the course. No. Originally, it was one of two required courses actually in the College of Business. I was the first full-time person hired. The courses were kind of unstructured, so the first thing I did was structure the courses as to what would be in the various courses, which was interesting in itself, you know, just trying to create

these courses, structure them. And for several years that's all I did. I was an assistant professor and I taught classes. That's exactly what I did.

So who hired you?

The guy that was chair of the department at the time, which I think wasn't the Finance Department -- that department broke up like that a few years later -- at that point in time the department I was hired into was I believe the Department of Business Administration. The guy that was chair of that department at the time and that really kind of hired me was a guy by the name of Bob Reekey. And the dean at that time, who also was part of hiring me, was a guy by the name of Tom White.

And now, what did Bob Reekey teach?

Bob Reekey taught finance. He taught finance and he taught investments I believe. Tom was the dean then and Tom was an economist -- still is. Tom I think is now married and living in Arizona I believe.

So you were a young couple, really, moving here?

Yeah.

What was life like? What was entertainment, church life -- what was general life like away from the campus?

Well, when we moved here what they had was something called a Newcomers Club. It was the Faculty Wives Club at the time I believe because the spouses were essentially wives. That's not the case anymore, of course. But the Faculty Wives Club had a group called the Newcomers Club. And in 1969, which is the year I came here, for whatever reason there was a burst in funding or something and a lot of the faculty were hired in that year. So there was a substantial number of new faculty in the Newcomers Club. So we fit in pretty easily. We made friends pretty quickly because everybody was looking to integrate and make friends, as well. So it was a pretty easy transition moving into Las Vegas, actually. It was pretty open.

Where did you live?

Our first house, as I say my wife and parents bought. Let's see. It's roughly in the area way down Flamingo almost to Boulder Highway. Back then that area was like Summerlin is now. I mean you'd turn around and everything was being built. I remember when they built the first grocery

store that you could get to. We used to have to drive from, oh, roughly Mountain Vista and Flamingo up to the Boulevard Mall to shop, even grocery shopping. Now, of course, that area is starting to become an old area. But back then everything was brand-new. Flamingo was a two-lane asphalt road. I think there was one stop on Flamingo at Eastern I believe -- one stoplight rather. So that's what it was like. It was wide open.

What did Maryland Parkway look like?

Maryland Parkway was a main road. I know people that knew Maryland Parkway when it was a dirt road in front of the university. I never saw that. But, certainly, the area around the university, you know, the opposite side of Maryland, that was all vacant land. Those shopping centers weren't there. But Maryland Parkway was a real road back then. It wasn't a dirt road by the time I got here.

How many buildings on campus?

Oh, that I don't know exactly. It didn't look unlike a campus. Our first offices were in Grant Hall. Frazier Hall was, of course, there. The old library was there. The student union was in place. They started building the humanities building shortly after I got here. So there was a campus there.

Good. Oh, that's great.

The College of Business at the time took up one hallway on the second floor of Grant Hall.

How many students in business?

Once again, I don't know the answer to that. But it wasn't like you had classes of five or six people. We had classes of 60, 40 people. Oh, yeah.

Well, good. And at that time they're getting ready to turn it into UNLV?

Well, it did turn into UNLV. And I believe it became UNLV in 1969, which was the year I got there. So when I put my foot on campus, I guess it was UNLV at that time, yeah.

Okay. Now, tell me about becoming the university attorney.

Well, how did that happen? Well, I started out as a discipline officer. What happened was that all of a sudden the regents passed a code of conduct and they needed a discipline officer, which is called the administrative officer. The title I still think exists today. In reality it's a discipline officer, but it's called administrative officer. And I was on the faculty senate. Oh, and Don

Baepler, who was vice president at the time, was made the administrative officer or the discipline officer. A guy by the name of Jay Zorn was president at the time. The faculty senate wanted some faculty involvement in the discipline process. So they wanted to appoint an assistant or a deputy, whatever the title was, administrative officer. I was on the faculty senate and somehow I got appointed to that job.

Then when Don Baepler became president, he just stopped by me one day and said you're going to have to do the administrative officer thing or you're going to do it. So I became the then administrative officer. In that capacity I wound up working with various presidents and vice presidents because the administrative officer technically reports to the president. And I just got to know those people.

Eventually, I became assistant general counsel. Back in those days we were also deputy attorney generals. So I was an assistant counsel and deputy attorney general for a little while. Then we broke off from the Attorney General's Office and it was just assistant general counsel for a while.

So tell me about the work, first, of the discipline officer and then becoming the administrative officer yourself. Tell me about that work or what that added to your --

Well, what the administrative officer does -- I don't know if they still do it to this day, but back when I did it -- is sort of like the prosecutor. In other words, what you would get would be a complaint against faculty or a student. Back then they did students, as well. You get a complaint against a faculty or a student. And you would investigate it. I mean you weren't just a prosecutor; you kind of investigated it. If there was, in fact, some substance to it, then you would either negotiate a disciplinary sanction or have a hearing officer bring a hearing panel into existence and present whatever you had to a hearing panel that would then direct some sort of a sanction.

Give me an idea, not from real life, but just give me an idea of what we're talking about, especially when we're talking about faculty. What kind of infraction are we talking about?

Well, okay, it could be -- what kind of infractions would involve faculty -- falsifying a publication record, something like that, falsifying credentials. It could be sexual harassment, for sure. That sort of thing.

Okay. And I guess students -- almost the same things?

Students would be quite a range. I mean students would tend to do stuff that was obviously, you know, students. They would tend to do stuff that might be physical. It could be like fighting. It could be cheating. It could be whatever. You have cases like that. And then when they began to build -- Tonopah Hall was always there -- but then when they began to build those other dormitories, you got a lot more students on campus and you started to get sued and stuff. I remember one of the last ones was somebody dropped a water balloon on somebody. And when it got to that -- wait a minute, this is for somebody else. You know, this is a student discipline.

They were going to bring that before the -- oh, wow.

Yeah, right. So now there's some sort of student structure for doing discipline, and I'm not familiar with it.

Tell me about the early faculty senate and how that operated. What that was like?

Well, the early faculty senate was originally composed of faculty. And I can't remember. I think maybe it would have been two representatives from each college as I recall. And then we had a president by the name of Roman Zorn, Jay Zorn. He got the bright idea -- and I'm not sure where he got it -- but he wanted to convert it from a faculty senate to a university senate and bring some classified people in and I think even students on it. So the senate went along with that. I was on the committee to draft it, as a matter of fact. We went along with that. It kind of broadened the senate sort of a thing. We converted it from really being a faculty senate to being actually what I think is still today called the university senate and it's a more diverse group.

I remember thinking at one point in time that maybe it really should go back and be more concentrated as a faculty senate. Certainly, we have a lot more faculty. But I don't think it ever happened. I think it's still a university senate.

And I'm not sure because we still call it the faculty senate. Yes. So I'm not sure of that.

Who were some of the other faculty that you became friends with?

Oh, there are quite a few people. It ranges over departments. We used to just tailgate together. I don't want to start naming names. I'll leave somebody out. But we used to tailgate at football games and have parties after football games. It was just a substantial number of people. A lot of us all came in the year 1969.

Wow. Tell me about the Tarkanian years.

Be a little more specific. Like what?

When I am anywhere -- at home in North Carolina, California, Hawaii -- when I'm anywhere and I say I work at UNLV, people will say "Runnin' Rebels."

Really?

Yes.

To this day?

To this day.

Well, I remember back in those days I was in Hong Kong talking to a German engineer in the bar at the airport waiting for an airplane and the German engineer knew about UNLV and Tarkanian. But Tarkanian goes back towards the end of Jay Zorn's term of office. And I don't think -- I don't think; I can't put words in the man's mouth -- but I don't think he wanted to bring Tarkanian onboard. He, for one reason or another, left the presidency shortly thereafter. And then Don Baepler came on and Tarkanian wound up hired.

Tarkanian obviously came up with at least one championship basketball team. Those were the Tarkanian years. Everybody talked about Tarkanian and, you know, what was his image in the school? Was he keeping us from joining the WHAC? He was always rather controversial on the faculty, definitely.

But were those fun years going to basketball games?

Yeah, sure. That was big-time basketball. The Thomas & Mack was full. Tickets were being scalped. I mean tickets were -- oh, yeah, tickets were rare. Tickets were scalped. And the restaurants around the school were full on basketball nights. It was big-time basketball. It was a big winning season and it was enthusiastically supported by lots of people in town, yeah.

How did faculty, other than athletic faculty, feel about the kind of money now that the athletic department was getting compared to what business, social sciences, hard sciences was getting? Was there any talk of that?

Yeah. The fact that the money was coming in back then, into basketball from like television and playoffs and that sort of thing, people were not objecting to that because what that was doing was supporting all the other athletics. In other words, you could take that money and you could support -- you know, you wanted women's teams. You know, people don't go to ladies basketball,

but it still costs something. So if you could have a big revenue-generating sport like that, it was taking care of a lot of other sports and it wasn't hurting anybody. It wasn't a drain.

Good. I want to talk about the attitude of a gambling town having a university. It's 1969. We've become a university. How did you see us fitting into Nevada?

Okay. We would fit in a little differently depending on who might be president. For example, I mentioned Don Baepler. We fit in quite nicely with Don Baepler. He knew these people. He knew the town -- still does I believe. So as far as the university fitting in with the town is concerned, I have never come across this harsh town-versus-gown sort of an attitude.

I think the town generally well receives the university. They don't understand it very well. They don't really know what goes on there. I guess they think it is mostly Jerry Tarkanian or whoever's coach of the moment. But they don't really understand the academics of it here. I don't think these people in gambling are really very much in tune with research and academics and that sort of stuff. But I've never seen a situation where I thought it was confrontational. I think that the people at the university have always been pretty welcome by the people in town.

Do you think that has changed recently? We see people from casinos now giving scholarships.

No, I don't think it's changed. I think that the university is -- once again I'll go back to it. I think it is still generally well received in town. And the fact that you see this most recent scholarship donation, that's great, but I don't think it shows any change of attitude.

Okay. It's also been supported?

I think so.

We've had one female president, Carol Harter. Tell me the difference in working with a series of male presidents and then we get a woman president and now we have a man again.

Do you think there will be differences or did you see differences?

Oh, there are differences, but I don't think it has anything to do with gender. We've had presidents that were very outgoing. As I mentioned, Don Baepler had very good relations in town. Bob Maxson, of course, was something of a real cheerleader. He had excellent relations in town. We had an interim guy, who to this day is a close friend of mine, who was an interim president, Brock Dixon. He had good relations in town.

Carol Harter, on the other hand, came onboard, which has nothing to do with gender, but I think she is just sort of more reclusive by nature. In other words, she just, to the best of my knowledge, wasn't out and about. She made appearances as reasonable and necessary, but she wasn't just up and down working the crowd at a basketball game like a Bob Maxson.

You know, Bob Maxson...I watched a game from his booth one evening. And he came into the booth and he said hello to everybody in the booth, but then he was gone. He was out working the crowd. You'd think he thought he was running for office. I mean he was a real booster of the university, an enthusiastic man.

That's interesting.

You worked closely at one point probably with the regents.

Well, yeah, I worked with them, yeah.

What is that like? What is your professional impression of that board? Do you think that it's being elected in the right way? Should it be appointments? Just tell me about the regents in your voice.

The regents are definitely a mixed bag. I mean I've known all kinds of people that were on the regents and they range from very competent and very enthusiastic to people that are just off the wall and you didn't know where they were coming from.

So as far as what I think ought to be done with regents is I like that proposal that was on the ballot last time. And that is that you appoint a substantial number and then you have a few running. The idea being there that if you have a few running, they'll get enough scrutiny from the press and the news so that people will actually know who they're voting for -- you know, they'll get more scrutiny if there's fewer running -- and then have some politically appointed. And the idea behind the political appointments is they would be political. They would be political. But I don't think any governor would want to embarrass himself by appointing a disaster as a regent. So you're not going to get politics out it.

But the way it is now I think you have a situation where people vote for regents and sometimes they hit it right and sometimes they have people that are just on there for who knows what reason. But they're not focused as regents I don't think.

What about how they're paid and if they should earn more, if it should be full-time?

You're just talking about regents now?

Yes.

I don't think there's any reason for it to be a full-time job. That's a chancellor job. I mean the chancellor should be doing the running. The regents should be setting policy. I don't think we need a full-time body that's sitting there setting policy. So, no, I don't think it should be a full-time job by any stretch of the imagination.

As far as paying them is concerned, I guess I'm kind of neutral on that. I wouldn't be opposed to paying them, but I don't think that would improve the quality very much. I don't think you could pay them enough to get real professional people to quit their jobs to be regents. I don't think that's going to happen. So...

Now, tell me about your wife. She went back to school. So tell me about the process and how the two of you decided about her going to school.

Well, yeah. Janet, when she graduated from high school, really never had the opportunity or the means to go to college. So when we came out here, it's tuition free for children and spouses. So Janet just started taking a class. She did very well. She graduated magna cum laude and all that kind of thing. She just went through and eventually got a job. She taught in the school system for a while and got her master's degree. And then as she mentioned to you a little bit ago, she became a marriage and family counselor. So she taught for about five years I think and then the rest of her career she was working for Children's Behavioral Services.

Now, does she still work outside the home?

No. She did a little substitute teaching at -- what's the school up here? -- at Dawson School. She did a little substitute teaching there. But, no, she doesn't work now. She's retired.

So both of you are retired. What are you doing in your retirement years? Most people want to travel. They look forward to traveling.

Oh, we're doing some traveling. We're leaving for Belize in a few days. So, yeah, we've done some traveling. We did some work on this house, too. This house is fairly new. So we stay occupied. This association is Sienna. And Janet is just Wednesday going off the board of directors. She's been on the board of directors in here for two years. So that keeps her quite busy. I've done some teaching. I've taught the last three summer sessions.

So would you want to keep on teaching, continue that?

Well, I've decided I'm not going to do it this coming summer, but that means almost for sure I'd want to do it the following summer. I just don't want to keep doing it every summer. So I'm going to take a summer off this coming summer.

So you have enjoyed the art of teaching all these years?

Oh, sure. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Looking back on it, I've been perfectly happy with what I've picked for a career. I think it's worked out quite nicely for us.

That's wonderful.

How did Las Vegas differ from -- you lived in Cleveland, of course, and Chicago.

And then you came to Las Vegas.

Well, after a year in the woods in Michigan. When we first came here -- we lived on a dirt road that was off another dirt road. Our nearest neighbor was a half-mile away. What we were living in was a summerhouse that some guy was converting into a year-round house because he was going to retire there I guess. So he rented to us very cheaply, a hundred dollars a month, just to have somebody stay in it. So that year in Michigan was real isolation. I mean it was real isolation. We didn't know people. We didn't have neighbors. It was beautiful. We lived in the woods in Michigan in the winter and the snow was beautiful. I mean everybody should have a picture of it, but you don't want to live in that stuff. So in any event, that's what Michigan was like.

And the difference between Las Vegas and someplace like Cleveland, Ohio, is the difference between night and day. I mean, you know, Cleveland is --

(End tape 1, side A.)

-- go away for whatever -- a month, a week -- and you come back and everything was the same. In Las Vegas you go away for three days and something's different when you get back. So it's been a growth situation. It was on the other side of town where we lived originally. And now that we live out here on the west side -- out here in south Summerlin is where we are -- everything is growth. You look around and you're just going to see dirt movement and growth. Obviously, the housing industry is slowing down right now, but there's still plenty of other growth going.

Yes. And that's going to pick up again in a few years I'm sure.

Probably. That's what I've read.

You've told me about the Newcomers Club with the faculty club. What other entertainment did you find fascinating about Las Vegas?

Well, when you first move here, for the first maybe couple of years you're intrigued by the Strip. And we've never gambled. Janet gambled once and I'll tell you about that. We've never been gamblers or anything like that, but you're just intrigued by the liveliness of what's going on on the Strip and the noise and the sights and so on. And back then of course if you wanted to go out for a decent restaurant, if you wanted a decent meal for a birthday, an anniversary or something like that, you'd wind up going to a casino. That's not the case anymore at all. But that was intriguing when we used to do that.

So tell me about Janet's one --

Oh, yeah. We were in a casino. I don't remember which one. And Janet wanted to try the slot machines. So I said okay, fine. We didn't have a lot of money. So I went over and got her a roll of nickels, 20 (sic) nickels. And she sat at this nickel slot machine and she put each one in, 20 nickels in a row. And she never hit anything. We just looked at each other and said, "Why did we do this?" And that was the end of it.

That's great. That is great.

What do you consider some of your major accomplishments at the university?

Oh, I don't think I changed the course of the university in any way. When I got here the curriculum that I taught in the business law curriculum was really pretty much of a mess and I did have the opportunity to straighten out some courses and create a couple of courses that are still taught to this day. So that must have worked out right.

Going back to my time as a discipline officer, I think by being reasonable and even-handed, I think I turned some people -- you know, I'm not saying I changed lives, but I might have gotten some people's attention and toned them down a little bit. At least in one case -- I've seen him since -- and he's just fine. So I might have done some good there. But I don't think I changed the course -- I know I didn't change the course of the university.

Tell me about writing and presenting at conferences.

What can I tell you about that?

Did you do any publishing?

Oh, sure.

What kind of publishing did you do, in what area?

Well, I wrote in a number of areas. It was anything from taxation to taxation of controlled substances like was just, as a matter of fact, on the last ballot. I worked on that for a long time. And I went on sabbatical in Australia and I wrote an article on interstate trade in Australia. Probably most of the articles I wrote, the majority of them -- so, in other words, what I'm saying is I would go from topic to topic, no one topic. Probably the one I wrote the most on would have to do with sexual harassment.

Tell me about the tenure process at the time that you applied or got tenure, how it worked then.

Okay. It differs from today in that you'll usually be promoted to associate professor at the same time you receive tenure. Back in those days you could be promoted to associate professor before. So I was actually promoted before I received tenure. And then a tenure vote was essentially -- let's see. How did that work? Well, not too terribly different from today. The department had to vote on it. Then the department chairman -- we didn't have personnel committees; it was just the department chairman who voted on it. At that time I was a department chairman, as a matter of fact. The department chairman had a vote on it, so I had my vote.

How did you become a department chairman before you had tenure?

It was a real small department. And Bob Reekey, who was chair when I came onboard, just didn't want to do it anymore I guess was the story. He left the university shortly thereafter, so I just wound up doing it.

Oh, back to the tenure thing...so what would happen is the department would vote on it. Same as for promotion, too. The department would vote on it. And then the department chairs, which were then an advisory committee to the dean, would vote on it. And then it would be recommended by the dean.

The first time I went up for promotion, actually, I was denied. That's how I met Don Baepler. I was denied promotion and I was just furious because I was denied promotion from assistant to associate and I was just furious. The reason I was given was insufficient time in rank,

and I thought that has nothing do with what I'm doing. You know, that's just waiting to get older.

How long had you been there at that time?

Oh, probably two or three years. But in any event, I was just furious. I went up to see the academic vice president -- we didn't have a provost then -- and it was Don Baepler. And that's when I met Don Baepler. I just went up there furious, and he was so smooth and so pleasant and so reasonable and logical and so optimistic and whatnot that I walked out of there liking the guy. And that's how Don and I met. When we first met I was up there ready to quit. He was just so reassuring and smooth about it that I came away with a lot of respect for the guy.

So when you look back on it now --

That's how I first met him I think.

Good. When you look back on being denied that first time, do you think it was a good decision on their part, on the department's part?

No.

Okay. So you haven't gotten over that yet.

No. I was also denied the first time I went up for full professor for the same reason. But I got it the next year.

So you were really on an upward spiral. And at that time it sounds as if it went faster.

I think it did. I think you're right. I think it took me about -- gee what? I think it took me ten years to go from assistant professor to full. So I think today you're going to have to show much more of a track record. It's much more rigorous today. And I do really think that's right. I think it should be more rigorous.

Since you have a law background, did you have anything to do with or any input in the idea of a law school on campus?

Oh, yeah. There was a law school study done in the mid 70s. I was part of it. We brought a guy by the name of Willard Pedrick in from ASU. Pedrick and I wrote the original law school feasibility study. It wasn't accepted. The lawyers didn't want a law school as I recall at that time and the legislature probably wouldn't fund it. And the governor was opposed to it. I remember meeting with the governor at that time, a governor by the name of Mike O'Callaghan. He's still around. And he was opposed to it.

He just passed away last year.

Oh, did he? Oh, okay. Well, anyway I remember going with then Chancellor Neal Humphrey and I believe it was Don Baepler, too -- sure it was -- and we met in his office in Carson City. He was rejecting the study. So that didn't go anyplace. That shot at it didn't go anyplace.

So why do you think it was turned down the first time?

I believe it was turned down because I believe it was running into opposition from the legal community. I believe that the lawyers did not want a law school, you know, cranking out more lawyers. They were just sort of protecting their interests.

Why do you think that kind of consciousness changed over the years?

You know, I don't know. I don't know. Maybe the legal community in town came around to believing that if they had an academic institution in town that it would actually tend to enrich them, maybe give them resources that they really hadn't had before just for research and just for intellectual stimulation.

I think the guy they brought in to do the law school, Morgan, has worked on that very nicely. I think he's done a nice job of integrating himself into the legal community and getting that operation accepted. I guess he's retiring now, too. But I think if you look at that guy, I think that's what you commend him for -- integrating that institution into the existing legal community, which probably had some hostility in it even then.

And he's been here for ten years now believe it or not. So that's some record.

You've worked with a lot of different students over the years. Do you think Nevada students have enough funding that they can depend on, local funding sources?

Well, you'd always like to see more. But I don't see any complaining along those lines. I mean sure, they'd like more. And then, of course, they just got some funding. They just got -- what? -- a million-dollar grant. So, no, you know, you can always say, no, you'd like to see more. But I don't think it's been a critical problem, no.

Okay. One of the previous president's goals was that UNLV would become a Research One university. We've been around for 50 years if we look at all of our phases. Do you think we're ready, or what do we need to do?

Well, it depends on how you define "one." I mean we're a long way from being a truly prestigious

research institution. What you need to become a prestigious research institution is you're going to have to put money into hiring the best faculty. You're going to have to put money into giving them the tools they need, which are good graduate programs that have graduate assistants that can be of help. I imagine in the sciences and whatnot there's a question of money. Just equipment is probably expensive, which is not so much the case in the College of Business. But I can easily imagine that there are areas on the campus that to do sophisticated research they need pretty fancy equipment. And that is probably -- and, once again, I'm out of my area -- but I'll bet you that's quite expensive.

So to bring those people up to full speed, that's what you'd have to do. You'd have to equip them. You'd have to staff them with people that can work with. And then, of course, you're going to have to bring in people with excellent ideas, people that are prepared to not just repeat knowledge in a classroom but to actually create knowledge in the research in their labs and whatnot.

When do you see us becoming that?

Well, you know, we are a perfectly normal state university. And to go to the level of what I conjure up when you say "a number one research institution," I don't know if that's even a reasonable goal for a state university. Now, if the state became much bigger and the school became much larger and you could start to bring in that kind of funding for those kinds of faculty and staff and equipment, then I suppose you could do it.

But how far in the future would that be? I would say -- well, I hope I'm wrong. But I could easily say that if you really started to march in that direction, it would probably take you another 50 years to get there. But first you've got to start the march in that direction.

Well, don't you think we've really have kind of started? We have graduate programs coming along.

Oh, sure. Oh, no, this doesn't look like 1969 I'll tell you that. I know we do have people doing real research. But I'm just talking about what you conjure up with a "number one." But to say that there isn't real stuff going on on campus, I mean there definitely is. I mean I know firsthand we have some very good people doing some very good stuff. But, you know, to talk about the number one, that's...

When you look back, what would you say would be some of the major changes in this city, in the university, however you want to look at it, since you've been here from 1969 to 2006?

Well, I think I just mentioned one and that has to do with the sophistication of what's going on at that university. I mean as I say we have another 50 years to get to the very top. But to say that we haven't come anyplace in the last 50 years, you don't know what you're looking at. I mean we definitely have good people. We've got people doing good stuff. That's the biggest change: just an upgrade in people and, obviously, just in physical plant, too, of course. But that's physical plant. What really makes a university tick isn't a campus. It's people. And that has definitely been upgraded.

I really appreciate this.

You told me a little while ago that you and your wife now that you've retired are beginning to travel and that you're getting ready to take a trip. Now, do you usually travel alone or how do you do this? And how did you decide on Central America?

Oh, we've been. This is our fourth trip. We like it. We're going just to a resort on an island off of Belize. Janet and I certainly travel together. And then there is another guy that used to be the graduate dean at UNLV, a guy by the name of Jim Adams. His kind of hobby was collecting colonial art. So Jim and I would take trips down to Honduras or Guatemala and all through Mexico. He would poke around looking for art bargains and I would go along with him. So I've taken some trips like that. But then Janet and I have certainly traveled. We've driven around in Mexico and we've gone to Belize. So, yeah, we travel.

Well, good. Well, I really appreciate this.

Is there anything that you would like to add knowing that this is going to be part of our celebration next year for the 50th?

Well, no, I don't think I really do have anything to add. I've already said that I'm glad I've spent my career here. That was not a mistake. As I mentioned we started out on our way to California. This was going to be a stop. I just wasn't going to pass up living in a place like Las Vegas of all things for a little while. I wanted to get to the water, but I never applied for another job. We've always liked it here.

Did you get to go to Los Angeles often during the years or to Southern California often?

Oh, yeah, sure. We go every year. We don't go to Los Angeles. We go to like the Laguna area. But, yeah, we go there at least once a year.

Okay, great. I love those areas. I love San Diego.

Oh, yeah. Sure. It's a great place to visit. Oh, sure, we go all the time to the ocean. But I don't think I'd really want to live in California. I think they've got too many problems, financial problems and physical problems. It's also gotten incredibly expensive in those areas.

Laguna/New Port areas, I mean that's very expensive to live there.

Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

Oh, sure.

(End tape 1, side B.)