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An Interview with Jerome “Jerry” Jay Vallen

An Oral History Conducted by Lisa Gioia-Acres

The UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV
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The transcripts received minimal editing. These measures include the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the narrator.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

Claytee D. White, Project Director
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Preface

Jerome "Jerry" Jay Vallen was born and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father was in the restaurant business and Jerry worked for him throughout his teens and young adulthood. He and his two brothers entertained themselves during their childhood years by going to the library and reading. This was a legacy of the Depression era, when there simply wasn't any money to spare for extraneous expenses.

Jerry's first jobs were bellman / assistant manager in a small hotel; auditor, and then property manager at the Pine Tree Point Club. He attended Penn State for a year (working in his dad's restaurant the whole time) and then transferred to the hotel school at Cornell University. After a stint in the armed forces during the Korean War, he returned home and used the GI bill to finish his master's degree. He started on his doctorate, but it would be 20 years before he completed it.

After getting married (1950) and starting a family, Jerry and his wife Flossie realized that the restaurant business and family life did not mix well, so he decided to stay in education. He spent several summers at the University of Pennsylvania in their graduate school of business and in 1966, interviewed with Jerry Crawford, provost at UNLV.

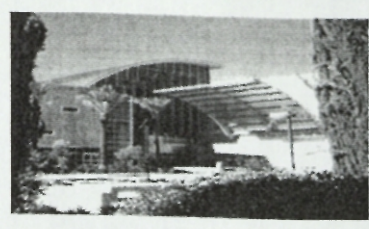
Jerry and his family moved out to Las Vegas in June of 1967, leaving northern New York during a blizzard and arriving four days later in southern Nevada to find tulips blooming. They decided they liked Las Vegas, found a house right away, and settled in to their new life.

Jerry taught marketing in the hotel college at the beginning of his career and for several years thereafter. Boyce Phillips took the rooms division and George Bussel taught foods. Their main focus was to attract students, and they worked on making it easier for students to transfer from out of state. Jerry also thought it was extremely important that the hotel college be independent of university administration control.

Dr. Vallen has 5 or 6 books published, including 3 textbooks that he continues to update, and an oral history of the hotel college completed shortly after he retired in 1989. Today he and his wife travel and enjoy twice yearly gatherings with their family.

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

UNLV Oral History Project @ Fifty



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Jerome J. Vallen 10/2/07
Signature of Narrator Date

Lisa Gioia-Acres 10/2/07
Signature of Interviewer Date

Today is Tuesday, October 2nd, 2007. This is Lisa Gioia-Acres. I am here interviewing Jerry Vallen, formerly of UNLV, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Good morning, Jerry. How are you?

Good morning. Good to be here.

Good to be here, too. Thank you so much for having us. We're going to conduct an oral history interview for you for during your tenure at UNLV and your early history. And this is for the UNLV early history project for UNLV at 50.

Okay.

Okay. Let's talk a little bit about your childhood, where you were born -- well, before you do that, I always like to start with the correct spelling of your full name.

So Jerome, J-e-r-o-m-e. Middle initial is J. And my middle name is J-a-y. And my last name is Vallen, V as in victory, a-l-l-e-n.

Perfect. All right. So let's talk about your childhood, where were you born and what do you remember about your early years? This could take awhile. You can give me as much as you decide you want to give me.

All right. I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and lived in west Philadelphia. The woman who eventually became my wife was born in Philadelphia and lived in a place called Strawberry Mansion. But we both met in junior high school, although it was the opposite ends of town.

My father was in the restaurant business, and I would work for him. He owned at one time four restaurants. And I would work with him. One day one of the customers came into the restaurant and said to my father, "Harry, are you going to send Jerry to Cornell?" And my father said, "What's Cornell," although he himself knew Cornell because he was a University of Penn attendee and they used to play Cornell for Thanksgiving for years at the football games. But we didn't realize there was such a thing as a hotel program. And that's really how I got started there.

So I spent my first year in college at Penn State and then transferred up to Cornell and finished up there. I then went in the service during the Korean War and used some of that money to finish up my master's and -- let's see -- it must have been 20 years later I finally got my doctorate degree.

Wow. Well, let's go back in time just a little bit prior to that. So you were born in

Philadelphia.

Right.

Brothers and sisters?

I have two brothers. They are both dead. I have an older brother and a younger brother. My younger brother was born the same day I was four years later.

Oh. And October 2nd is your birth date.

That's right. So that was a coincidence. He died about two years ago.

My other brother -- well, let me digress. When my wife and I went off to take an assignment in Australia for a couple of years, my older brother had retired and came to live at our house to take care of it for us. So he moved from Philadelphia to Las Vegas for that period of time. And we were very pleased to have somebody in the house and watching it for us.

My father had four restaurants. The idea was the three sons and himself each would take one. My older brother took a restaurant. I did not. My younger brother did not. And so that was the end of the chain.

And how did your father feel about that?

He knew I was going to college. He knew I wasn't necessarily going to be in the restaurant business.

Talk a little bit about mom and dad. What's their background?

My father was probably one of the most intelligent people you want to meet. He went to study chemical engineering in the University of Pennsylvania but never finished because of money problems.

He and mom date way back as youngsters, too, although my father told me that he was not allowed to marry in the family until his two older sisters married. There was a sequence in those days. So that was an interesting part of it. They were married for many, many years. I can't remember how many years they were married.

We lived as I say in west Philadelphia during the Depression. Things were pretty bad. My father worked as a milkman. But he was really an entrepreneur. Over the course of his life, in addition to the restaurants that he owned and operated, he owned a cigar manufacturing business. He owned a gift card business. He owned golf courses. So he was very entrepreneurial.

And they originated in Pennsylvania?

Let's see. I guess so because his mother brought that from Russia.

Wow. Beautiful.

Yeah. So, yes, they settled in Philadelphia. My mother's mother -- that's a good story. My mother's mother -- during the Depression we lived with them as everybody consolidated, economics. So I would talk to my grandmother often. And she would tell me stories like she came to the United States as a 12-year-old girl all by herself across the ocean. She was met by my family here in New York. She came in on a Sunday she told me. I remember this very clearly. They gave her a hat. And on Monday she was at work in one of the factories. She didn't speak English. By the time my grandmother died, she had owned the largest fur store in Philadelphia.

Wow. Very interesting.

Yeah. Interesting story. Very, very interesting.

What I find fascinating is that your father from his era was interested in an education. So it sounds -- and then they passed along to his children.

Right.

So education seems to have been very important in your family.

Well, it is. My oldest son has a baccalaureate and a master's in business out of Stanford. My second son has a Ph.D. out of Arizona. My third son is a CPA. And my daughter has a baccalaureate in computers.

Do you know where that came from because it was a struggle way back when your father was --

Right. Well, of course, that's a Jewish tradition, education. And we were of Jewish background. So, yes, that was --

That's fascinating. And I think that's just a wonderful legacy to pass on.

It is. Right. Definitely. And I now have three grandchildren in college themselves.

And do they all live close by here?

No. We moved out of northern New York because we were in a small town at a junior college. And as my oldest son got to be 13, we realized that none of the children of this small town ever came back to that small town because there was nothing there economically. So we moved here.

As a result, none of the children are here, either. I've got one in California, one in Michigan, one in Arizona and one in Pennsylvania.

Wow. All right. So as you were a child growing up, what did you do for fun and entertainment?

I was a very insistent reader. I remember particularly in the summers. We lived right around the corner from the library. So that was -- during the Depression time there wasn't much else you could do. So that was one of the big things.

It's interesting. My kids ski and ice skate and what have you, swim and what have you. We never had the economics with which to do those things as children. So I don't do much of that. I'm a heavy crossword puzzle doer.

Well, very good. Your mother, did she work after she got married?

No. My mother never worked. In the house lived -- after the Depression and we moved in with my mother's mother because her husband had died -- that is my grandfather had died -- my mother maintained the family, which was myself, my father, two other brothers, my mother, my grandmother and my mother's sister. It was a three-story, very large house. And she ran the house.

Good cook?

Oh, my mother was a good cook. She had mother's favorite chocolate cake that we would always get. I would have had it today if she had been living I'm sure.

Oh, yes. So how is it that your father came to become a restaurateur?

I told you. He was entrepreneurial. And he had one of the very earliest putting golf courses, one of those kinds of things. He was a manufacturer of cigars. He never smoked one as a result.

Good for him.

Well, he knew how they were made he said. And I think it was just an opportunity.

Did he buy a restaurant or did he start from scratch?

Uh-huh. He bought the first restaurant. And I went down. I was just a child, maybe 13, 12, and began working with him. So I worked with him all the summers. I worked with him the first year at college when I was going to Penn State there.

What kind of a restaurant was it? What kind of food?

My father would open around six in the morning for breakfast and close around five in the afternoon. He always built in business locations. So at five o'clock when everybody went home, he would close the restaurant.

Do you recall the names of the restaurants?

Yeah. He called them Vallen's.

I think you should remember that.

It was interesting. Just recently a cousin of mine sent me an E-mail that said you and your mother are listed as unclaimed money in Pennsylvania State. So I looked it up. And sure -- my mother's name was Francis. It was listed as Fran and Jer, J-e-r, which was what they called me. How could that be? Anyway, to make a long story short, they wanted addresses. So I gave them the addresses of all these restaurants, which were 13th and Vine, 16th and Sampson, Third and Vine, Second and Chestnut. I didn't have an address for where this bank was that they thought -- I didn't know anything about it. Sure enough, they send me the money. Guess how much it was? Three hundred and 50 dollars.

Good for you. I hope you invested it well.

I gave a third to each of my sister-in-laws.

Oh, that's pretty good. I like that story.

So they were downtown. And my father and mother moved from West Philadelphia High to a place called Havertown, which was on the west side of Philadelphia. And then as they aged they moved into a condo down on Market Street, which is downtown at 15th or 16th and Market, which is right in the heart of downtown Philadelphia.

Okay. And when did your parents pass?

My dad passed in '76 and my mother lived 12 more years. My older brother, who is also dead by now, ended up taking care of them because they both lived in Philadelphia.

Very good. So you talked a little bit about your first jobs and your education.

Okay. My first jobs. I worked as a bellman -- that was my first hotel job -- one of the summers that I had off from university. I worked after we were married. My wife and I moved to Miami, and I worked as a assistant manager in a small hotel down there. Then I was drafted and went during the Korean War. I used some of the Korean War money to finish up my other degrees. I

think I mentioned that. GI bill. Then we came back. I worked in downtown Philadelphia at the Adelphia Hotel. I worked as an assistant manager. I was an auditor and then an assistant manager at a hotel in New Hampshire called the Franconian Inn. I was the manager of a property in the Thousand Islands called Pine Tree Point Club. So while I was working on my doctoral degree at Cornell, although officially it wasn't allowed -- you weren't allowed to work -- I ran the alumni club.

Oh, very good. So when you started your education, did you know exactly what it was that you were going to go into?

I was going into the hotel business.

And did they have a good program -- I mean did they have a long-established program in the hotel business at that time?

Cornell?

Yes.

Cornell was the first school.

The very first school.

Yeah. So it would be probably 70 years old. Let's see. I think it was in the late 20s. It was probably 75 years old. And today I'm the class of 1950 scribe.

Very good.

How do you like that?

Have you been to any reunions?

I haven't, not in many, many years.

So what was it about the hotel business that drew your attention? Was it the jobs that you had?

Well, the jobs came after the -- I think it was my background in foods with my dad that took me into Cornell. When I got finished obviously enough I went into the hotel business. Then we realized the hotel and restaurant business are not good for family life. You're never home. My wife was working those days. Before we had children she worked in the daytime and I worked at night. I think one day I said I'm going to look for another job. And that's how I ended up in education.

And tell me your wife's full name.

Florence.

And her maiden name?

Levinson, L-e-v-i-n-s-o-n.

And you met her -- you said she didn't live too far away from you.

No. She lived the other side of Philadelphia. She did live very far away.

How did you meet?

On a blind date. We did not like each other.

That's usually how it happens.

Right, and then about three years later, we double dated with two different couples and I ended with her, even though she was the date of the other guy. So that's how we got together.

And how long after that were you got married?

Oh, we didn't marry -- I remember I said to my father I think I'm going to get married. And he said if you're old enough to get married, you're old enough to pay your own tuition. I was in college. So that was the end of that. We waited until I was out of school, which was 1950. And I must have met her when she was about 15, which would have been '44. I must have met her in '44 or '45. So we married after five or six years.

So it sounded like you were very wise -- your father was very wise with that.

Yes, he was. And if the occasion had arisen, I would've said the same thing to my children. But things were different. We married when we were 20. In fact, my wife was so young her mother had to sign for her to get married. But my children married in their 30s. So it's a "whole different ball game" kind of thing. My daughter married the night she turned 30. So she tells everyone she married when she was 29.

Very good. Smart woman.

Yeah. And attractive.

Was it difficult to raise children and get your education at the same time?

It was expensive. Yeah. When we went back Cornell had a requirement -- Cornell had an interesting Ph.D. requirement. One did not have to take any courses. All you had to be was in residence. You had to be on the campus for six semesters. Well, I was always married with three

children. I took leave from my job at the junior college. I used the GI bill. I went to work. Then we found a job for my wife and I would come home and watch the kids while she went to work. And then vice versa. I'd go up to campus and she'd be at home. So you know --

And what was it about the Ph.D. that drove you to --

Well, I decided I was going to stay in education. I was in a town called Canton, New York, where the state university's junior college program was. Right next to door to us in an adjacent campus was St. Lawrence. So I was able to do my master's degree even as I was there over the summers and in the evenings. But when it came to the Ph.D., Cornell required residence. You had to be there.

I also went -- oh, I forgot that. I also went several summers to the University of Pennsylvania in their graduate school of business. My wife's mother was ill, so we moved down there. I went to school for several summers, and Cornell took that as one term of residence. So I took leave and we spent two -- well, off and on two years on campus.

Let's talk a little bit about how you came to Las Vegas. You said a little that you knew that the kids were --

It was a really small town.

But what was it about Las Vegas that drew you?

Well, I wasn't quite finished with my doctoral degree yet. In fact, I didn't finish it for ten more years. Anyway, I decided -- my wife and I -- that it was time to move. So I looked at programs. There was a program at the University of the West Indies. I actually looked at that one. Looked at New Hampshire. They were looking for somebody. None of them had the pizzazz that I thought I wanted.

And then there was -- and this is in the book. There was a man named Meek. He was Cornell's founding dean.

M-e-e-k or M-e-a-k?

Yeah. M-e-e-k. Howard B. Meek, whose doctoral degree was, believe it or not, in mathematics? He took over the hotel school at Cornell. By the time I was ready to do anything, Meek had retired and come out to Las Vegas as a consultant to the program, although I was never able to prove that. I just had a belief that it was so. One of the newspaper articles said that. Everyone

that I interviewed who would have known said they didn't remember that. There was no report that anyone could ever find in the files for me. So I think he came out.

Anyway, he came one day to a meeting in the New York Hotel Show, and we talked to him. He said to me, "There's a job out in Las Vegas. You should take a look at it." So I sent papers in because I was looking.

Then there was a meeting at the National Restaurant Show in which the UNLV people -- Jerry Crawford -- I don't know if you know Jerry Crawford. Jerry was the provost at that time. He must have been all of 35 years of age. He eventually became a very outstanding playwright at the university. You never ran across that name, Jerry Crawford?

No, not that I can recall.

Don Moyer was the president. And Don's still living to the best of my knowledge. I see him now and again.

Jerry Crawford was the provost, and had come out with a man named Stollum who was head of the accounting department. The program was in the business college, and they came out and interviewed me at the restaurant show.

And what was the title of the job you were applying for?

Well, that was under debate because when I took the job, I made a condition that I would not report to the dean of business. That was the condition. Well, they hadn't had much success. They had interviewed three or four people who all had turned them down. Las Vegas didn't have too good a reputation. Well, when I talked to my father, he said you'll make a big splash in a small town and it'll be better than making a little splash in a big town.

And what year was this do you recall?

Well, I interviewed in '66, and we came out in '67. When we came out it was just the most exciting thing. First of all, we left northern New York in a horrible blizzard as only New York can have. You know what I mean, where the snows come in?

Oh, absolutely.

We got out here and the tulips were blooming, you know. But they were very well -- cordial, very cordial. And, of course, it was all the Mafia gangs. I mean that's who was still here. That's who had funded the school. I didn't get the funding for the school. A lot of people think I was the one

who got the money. I raised a lot of money in my day, but I never raised the initial monies, which were raised by the incumbents at that time.

Anyway, I came out and was interviewed. We liked it a lot. My wife looked into the schools. At that time my younger brother was involved in education, and he said the schools in Las Vegas had a high reputation, which they did. We decided it would be okay for the kids here, so we decided as we flew back that if they offered the job we'd take it. Jerry Crawford called a week later and offered the job and said I could have a week to think it over. I said I don't need a week. I'll take the job.

Were you happy with the salary that they offered you initially?

Yeah, because -- and I got that all in the book and I can't remember the figures. But I came maybe at -- make up a figure because I don't remember -- something like \$17,000, which was a couple thousand more than I was drawing in New York.

And they also met your condition of not reporting to the dean?

Yes. That was very important condition. I wouldn't come without that because --

Can you explain why that was so important?

Well, many of the schools don't have the reputation we have -- Michigan State for example, Florida State for example -- those schools are organized in the schools of business -- those programs. They're not schools, they're programs in the school of business. The deans of the business schools sort of look down on hotel people and take all their money. There was a famous case in Michigan State where a large grant of money was given to the hotel program. The hotel program was in the school of business. The dean of the school of business, who was the boss, said no, I'm taking the money for the business school. And so there was a big lawsuit and they lost.

So with that background that I knew -- I was active in a group called CHRIE, which is the Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education. I eventually served two years as president of that association during the period at which time I pulled us out of bankruptcy. So I knew a lot of people in education. And you talk to people and they tell you things.

Right. So you came with?

I came with an understanding that that was it.

Exactly. And so did you explain that to them during the interview process?

If so, I don't recall.

Okay. So they offered you the job and you came. And your first impressions of Las Vegas other than the tulips?

Well, the first impression was because we came out of a snowstorm. The second impression is we drove across the country with four kids in a car. Oh, that's another story. I had just bought a new station wagon before the job was offered to me because we had the four kids. When the job was offered to me, they said be sure you bring a car that has air-conditioning in it. So I sold the new car, which had like 400 miles, back to the dealer and he ordered me another car. So I bought two cars in the course of two months. We drove across the country, got here, and I kept telling the children, "Now remember, Las Vegas is very dry. It never rains. It never rains." We came in and there was a torrential rain. On the way we stopped at all the historical spots that we had wanted to because I had never been west of Texas. I had served in the army in Texas.

And so what month in 1967 did you arrive?

We came in June in order to be here for the 1st of July, which was the beginning date. I had convinced them to bring in Boyce Phillips, who subsequently has died. Boyce was the first faculty member that I hired. I hired him in New York. I guess that was a little audacious. I hired people without their okay, without the campus' okay. Boyce was also a New Yorker and I wanted him here at the beginning even though the school year didn't begin until September. He, too, came the first of July or maybe the first of August with his family.

When we moved to Las Vegas in '67, the city was in peril as far as housing goes. They had just closed the atomic energy testing. All of the high-powered executives and scientists had left the town. So we bought a house that was in bankruptcy. Boyce bought a house that was in bankruptcy. The whole city was in bankruptcy. It's worse than it is today. The people took you right in, you know. We checked into a motel. The guy found out what I was going to do. He said okay, I'll take you to my bank. So he takes me to the bank. He says to the banker this is Jerry Vallen and so on and so on. He wants to buy a house. So the banker takes me to the back room and opens a couple of cabinets, and there are hundreds and hundreds of house keys. He says pick one. We wanted to buy the house and I had just sold a house in New York. Of course, the banks were very suspicious in those days. Finally, when we had the deal made, I said to him okay, you

call Don Moyer and see if I'm legitimate. They called Don Moyer and Don Moyer said I know him. He was very supportive. And we bought the house.

And where was this?

It was right behind the Boulevard Mall. It was a five-bedroom house because we had four kids. It was a beautiful house. We lived there 30 years before we moved up here.

Can you talk about your vision? You were excited about taking the job.

I didn't have any vision. Don Moyer had the vision. Don Moyer said to me you're going to have a thousand students. At that time we had maybe six, eight. Come on, Don. Come here. I want to show you something. He took me up to the second floor of what is now the Moyer Student Union and said I'm going to build you a kitchen in here. Where are you going to get the money? It's okay. The hotel people will give us the money.

Well, of course, within a year Don was gone. So that changed things. But he had this vision, a thousand students. We have I think 2500 today. But I thought -- first of all, I had come out of the junior colleges. And I knew that even if you had outstanding junior college graduates, it was impossible to get them into four-year schools. Nobody was taking transfers. So I knew the market was there for transfers.

When I took the job, even up in Canton where I still was there, I began writing to all the people that I knew from this CHRIE organization telling them -- junior college people -- that we would accept transfers even as late as the last weeks in August. And sure enough, one of the faculty members who was there, a man named Pat Moreo, was our first admissions. Pat now claims that he is our fifth child because he's gone away, gone away and gone away. Just last year he came back as a faculty member.

In the hotel school?

Yeah, in the hotel college. And he, too, has picked up his doctoral degree. So those people came out of New York City community college, out of the junior college where I was. And I think we opened up with -- it's in the book because I don't remember -- a dozen students.

What was that first year like?

The first year we had plenty of faculty because we had the money from the Resort Association. So we had me. I was teaching. We had Boyce Phillips who had come also from New York State

but had a background in hotels out of Florida. And we had a man named George Bussel, who had -- at the University of New Hampshire who wanted to get into a warmer climate. He took the food. Boyce took the rooms division. I took the marketing and taught marketing for many years.

Excellent. So your first president was Donald Moyer. Who came after him?

Well, Don Baepler was hired as the provost. But between the time he was hired as provost and the time he actually physically arrived on campus, Don Moyer was fired, so Baepler came in as president.

So describe your experiences with the presidents.

Don Moyer was just unbelievable, he and Jerry Crawford because Jerry Crawford was the provost. And you have to realize -- you saw the picture -- the campus was that big, you know. Both were young men, both eager to build the campus, both supportive as could be.

And then Don Baepler came in. Eventually he became the president. A man named Unrue -- I imagine John Unrue is still on campus. He and his wife taught in English. I don't know if John is still on campus. He might have retired, too. The thing I liked about most of these guys is that -- don't bother me if you don't need me. And that was fine with me. A couple of times I had gone to John Unrue with issues and he would say to me, "If you're happy with the decision, just make it." So I stopped going. That was particularly true of -- who's the basketball --

Jerry Tarkanian.

Right. And who did he have the fight with, that president? Anyway, I can't remember. He was particularly not interested in --

Maxson.

Maxson was not interested in internal affairs. Maxson was strictly an outside president. Anytime you went to Maxson, he would send you to Unrue, and anytime I went to Unrue, he would say do what you want as long as I don't get into trouble with this. So it was a very nice arrangement.

And that's why I wanted to be independent of the school of business.

Well, one of the interesting things that we did -- and I think that's what helped make the school grow -- is I made a deal with ACT exams. And in those days students -- I don't know if they still are -- were checking off the major that they were interested in -- hotel, business, philosophy, whatever -- when you took the exam. And for 25 cents ACT would send a postcard to

that student who checked hotel. And it would say, "Have you considered the University of Nevada, Las Vegas?"

That was your idea?

Well, that was the deal we made with ACT.

That's wonderful.

And whether that looked like -- it looked like an endorsement to me because it was a postcard from ACT. So the postcards would flood in, and I ran out of money. And this is the kind of thing I never could understand. I would go to Unrue or somebody like that and say look at all these out-of-state tuitions we're generating. How about if you give me some money to -- no, they wouldn't give me any money to do that.

We had some fantastic clerical supports. We made up a whole series of little pieces of paper, all fancy setup and so on, one dealing with the internship, one dealing with scholarships and one dealing with admissions. And we would put together this whole package. Again, I had to pay for all of this, including colored brochures that they weren't using anywhere on the campus. But that's soft money, you see. Don't forget that. And so we put that together. As the postcards came out, within two days the answer would go out, and the admissions began to flood in. At one time we had about 5 percent of the campus and 80 percent of the out-of-state student body. It was one of those kinds of things. The figures may be a little exaggerated.

Is ACT still doing such a thing?

I have no idea.

So you don't know.

I never wanted to go to 2500 students. After we reached about a thousand, I stopped because by then the interviewer is coming on the campus -- that was another thing. We wrote to all these hotel companies and said come to campus and interview our graduates. Well, they would tell me -- the Sheraton and Hilton -- that when they would go into their bosses and say we're going to Las Vegas to interview -- yeah, yeah, to interview.

But one of the things that we did is -- everyone that came to interview, I would say did you get anybody? Oh, yeah, they got this young man or they got that young woman. Fine. We need scholarship money to support that kind of thing. And so the scholarship money began to flow in

from the hotel companies that began to interview with us. That was a big help as you could well imagine.

Let's see. We also had the most active student group. We had what they called the Hotel Association. And the Hotel Association voted us a block, like the president on the campus -- the student government. We elected the queen of this and king of that. We really were doing great things. And they did a lot of private charity work, this group did.

Then we hired a lot of local people to give us the enrichment of the course material that we didn't have. One of those important people for us was a man named Leo Lewis. Leo had actually been teaching part-time before I came, he and a fellow named Phil Arce, A-r-c-e. Phil's still living. Leo is dead. But they were teaching part-time, P-99 they call it today, when I came. And Leo, of course, was running hotels around the city. His big joke was: "The first thing Jerry did was fire me when he came in because we didn't need any -- we had all these three faculty members and half a dozen students." But Leo became a regular supporter and a full-time teacher for a couple of years. And I don't remember the year.

Gosh, isn't it funny? I was called into the Aladdin to do some -- we had a consulting company on the side, the faculty did. I was called into the Aladdin hotel to do some consulting. In those days it was run by a guy named -- what the hell was his name? Anyway, he was a Mafia operator. He called us in and we did the job for him. He was very pleased, and he paid us. Then he had a job for us in Denver or somewhere else. We went out there. And it was a real Mafia situation. After we did the job, they wouldn't pay us. So I negotiated with him to send us a monthly check. This was the Mafia.

Anyway, Leo takes over that hotel because the state closes the hotel because of the gambling background of the owners. They put Leo Lewis in charge of that hotel, and every day in the newspaper Leo is being raked over the coals by the union or somebody else. So one day I said to him, "Leo, why don't you come and teach full-time?" Did you read that in the book?

No.

That's a good story.

Oh. Put it on record.

Oh, okay. "Why don't you come and teach for us full-time?" Leo says, "Yeah, I think I'll do that."

So he said, "How much would the job pay?" And I said, "It'll pay \$35,000." He said, "Yeah, but what does it pay the second term?"

But he did. This was the way he got out from under the court's jurisdiction because the court had taken over the supervision and he was the general manager of the hotel. So he said, gee, he has to leave. He told the court I have to leave because a new semester is beginning. So they let him out. And he taught for us for maybe three years during which time he went to Europe to talk about gaming in Switzerland. We sent him all over the -- as part of this consulting group.

But what really happened was he came to me one day and said, "Jerry, I can't live on this kind of money." Why is that, Leo? You know, the faculty weren't drawing any money in those days. He said, "Well, right now I've got a plumber who's working in the house and he's taking almost my whole month's salary." And I said, "One thing you have to learn when you're a faculty member is you don't have any money, but you have lots of time. You go home and fix the plumbing thing yourself," which is what we all did. But then Leo went back in the industry. He worked for Baron Hilton. He worked for Steve Wynn. He worked everywhere. Just a fine man.

Very good. Talk about the campus. You watched it grow.

Oh, wow, I watched it grow. The chairman of my search committee was a guy named Bob Smith. And Bob Smith at that time was -- they didn't call them deans; they called them directors -- he was dean or director of the sciences. And he was on my search committee.

For when they hired you?

Yeah, when they hired me. I'm going back a little bit. The story that everyone told was that he had all the papers of all the candidates. And he put them on top of his car while he went back into the office to get something. And only somebody who lives here knows the wind. The wind picked up the papers and blew them all around the whole desert, which the campus was all desert. And the only one he could find at the end was mine. And that's how I got the job. I talked to Bob several times. He denies that story. But that was a good story that went around for a while.

He told me that they used to grow poppies on the campus for drugs. But as the campus grew -- you asked me about the campus -- as the campus grew, that particular patch disappeared under the construction.

Phil Arce who taught for us and guys like Bob Smith told me that the year before I came

Maryland Parkway was finally paved. It was all desert at that time. And you would come down the road and it was all bumpy earth.

I can't even image that today.

You can't. And I bought the house behind the Boulevard Mall on the idea that -- because I used to do that at the other job -- I was going to come out of the house and walk to work back and forth. But I never did.

A little too hot?

Yeah. It was a little too hot.

Did you have any involvement in the growing of some of the buildings or the development?

Well, the only one was Beam Hall, the one we have. Lilly Fong was a regent. And Lilly knew Mr. Beam. George Hardbeck was the dean of business, and we were going to share the building. George and I had met and decided that we were going to ask this much to have the building named after you and that much to have the atrium named after you and this kind of thing. We had a whole set of how we were going to finance this thing. Well, lo and behold, Lilly as a regent negotiated with Beam for -- I think it was a million dollars, but it was less than we had planned. And so that's how the building got to be named Beam.

We got very friendly with Mr. Beam. We did -- and they're going to start them again. We did unbelievable dinners. We were getting a hundred dollars a plate in the 60s in that building doing dinners. We would have all of the politicians and all of the hotel people all come to these dinners. I always had one table where we invited a governor or a senator or somebody important to these dinners. So then the Boyd family came through with a million-dollar gift for the dining room. So if you go look at the dining rooms, they're named after the Boyd family.

I had spoken to Mr. Boyd and he agreed to give us some money. The next thing I knew there was a big announcement of the Boyd gift. So everybody gathered. Bob Maxson had a funny way. He would never tell you anything in advance. You always had to come and be surprised. So I figured it was my money because Boyd had promised me a million dollars. And then, oh, it's the Boyd stadium. It had nothing to do with us. Well, I was sort of really taken back. And while this party was going on, Mr. Boyd came up to me and said, "Don't worry; that's not your money." And sure enough, a year later he came through with a million-dollar gift. He sold a bank that he

owned and took the stock and gave it to us. So that was a real nice gift.

So the evolution of the hotel and management school is that it was started in Moyer Student Union.

No. We started in Grant. I had advocated for years -- nobody ever listened to us -- that we should not have all the faculty of one discipline in one building; that we should put the hotel faculty in with English, the philosophy faculty in with the sciences, the science faculty in with -- because that way you get to know everybody. No, nobody wanted that. They wouldn't listen to that. That was hearsay.

So originally we were placed in Grant Hall -- business, hotel, education, and the fine arts. I mean that was 18 faculty members. That gave us a really good base because that way we got to know the entire faculty as the university grew and they moved here and they moved here and we moved there. We still had those contacts that we made originally.

I still think it's a good idea. If I were a president of the university, I would do that. I would require the disciplines to interoffice and get to know the guy next door who's -- how did it get into that?

So from Grant we went to --

Oh, yeah. From Grant we went to Wright Hall. There was space there. And that was the social sciences. And then from the social sciences we went to the humanities building. We were up on the seventh floor with the president, Brock Dixon, and that whole gang up there. And then we eventually got our own building and moved over. So we've been moved around the campus quite a bit.

What equipment did you have in your department? You had a kitchen in Moyer.

No. We never built it because Don Moyer left. So we never built it.

If you read the book, you'll find out -- and I didn't know this until I saw all the old records after 50 years or 40 years -- they were very hesitant about hiring me because they were afraid I was too food-oriented. After all, I had come out of a restaurant background. Even though I'd been in the hotel business, I came out of a restaurant background. And they didn't want food. Well, that was fine because I didn't want food, either. And so there was some reluctance. I saw this in the old records as I did the book that, in fact, there were people who voted against me because

they were afraid I would introduce food. The sciences were afraid I would introduce food and food science, and they didn't want that in there. The business department in the college -- what did they call it? -- the business department in those days didn't want me to introduce food because they didn't think it was appropriate. I didn't want to introduce food because I didn't think it was -- I did think it was too consuming an asset for the school. So how did we get into that?

I was just asking about the kitchen. So you concentrated more on the hotel aspect.

Yes. So we didn't have a kitchen. But this Pat Moreo that I mentioned was one of our first faculty hires of our own grads. And he's a foods man. He began to offer with his wife, who was a music major -- they began to offer a renaissance dinner in Moyer. We would take Saga, which was the food service company -- very friendly. They were a recruiter, and they would let us use the kitchens. We would cook in the dormitories -- you may not remember how the -- and then transport all the food to the second floor of Moyer and give these dinners. Those dinners were sold out. People would call me angry as heck that they weren't able to get tickets. Eventually, when we opened Beam Hall, then we went to gourmet dinners. As I say we went up to a hundred dollars a plate.

Very good. Let's talk a little bit about your wife. She is coauthor of your book.

She's been very -- everything we ever did we used to have big parties. All the alumni would come back and meet at our house, the graduating class. We would have everybody in the graduating class and all their parents and all their grandmothers to our house on graduation day. The alumni came in and began catering these meals for us because it just overwhelmed us after awhile.

How did you fit them all in your house?

Well, we had a big house. We had a swimming pool and a whole backyard. And the thing that amazed us is we had hundreds of strangers through and never had a broken glass or ever had a thing lifted. It was just the most delightful thing. And if you talk to some of the early alum, that's what they remember. Remember we had those luncheons at your house? Remember we had those dinners at your house?

But then the thing just grew too big. The fall swim party, which was originally at our house, got larger and larger and larger until finally the decision was made to move it to the pool at the Aladdin because it just outgrew our home.

So Flossie -- I noticed early on when I was interviewing you, first you said I and then you said, no, my wife and I. So she was always there in your decision-making?

She was there in the decision-making. The alumni voted her -- what do you call it? -- an honorary alumnus because of her activities.

With some of your ideas for the hotel school, did you bounce them off of your wife?

I can't remember a specific. But I'm sure. Sure. She ended up in the antique business in case you can't tell. She ended up in the antique business. She had one of the very first antique stores on Charleston Avenue.

What was the name of it?

The Auld Country Corner. We came up with the name because we wanted it to be among the first in the telephone book. So we called it auld, A-u-l-d, Auld Country Corner.

I'm glad you made that --

And that was in order to be first in the telephone book.

The Auld Country Corner. And it was on Charleston.

Yeah. It's still there.

Is it still called that?

I don't know that.

And when did she get out of the antique business?

I went back to college to finish -- when I came out here, I had done all but my dissertation. I didn't have my dissertation done, and I didn't get it done for 12 years after that. And then Cornell said they would take me back. That was beyond the time limit. I think you had ten years and I was beyond. So I had to petition. They agreed to accept me back. And so, in order to go, she sold the business.

And what was your dissertation on?

My dissertation was -- what the hell was the name of it? Essentially, it was forecasting the hotel business. It's a futuristic -- it was called eristic(?), which was non-measurable -- a eristic(?) forecast of the hotel business in the year 2010 or something like that. And guess what? A lot of those predictions have come through.

The thing that I think is the most interesting prediction that I made -- and this was through

surveys, ideations (?). You write off and get 14 people to say something and then you get some of them back and they write back. And so you narrow the information. The most interesting one that came back and that we put in was that hotels would take on a residential aspect because in those days there was no residence in hotels. And today you have all the -- hey, The Plaza in New York City has just turned all the hotel rooms -- almost; they weren't able to do all of them -- but they turned most hotel rooms into permanent living quarters. When they build a hotel here, right next to it or as a part of it they built a condo. And that was just unheard of. That was one of the predictions I made.

Another prediction made was that food service -- and that hasn't been as true -- food service would become more and more a public entity, particularly beginning with the military. And I think that's beginning to happen. You see all these private contractors in Iraq. And so that's what it was, essentially.

Very interesting. Are you going to put that into a book?

Nah. It's already 20 years old.

How about talking about some of your students? What was the caliber of student that came to the program?

Well, because of my background at the junior college and because of the difficulty of getting junior colleges into senior college transfers, we began to solicit almost a hundred percent. Until I started with the ACT exams, they were all junior college transfers. They came in with two years' credit and usually took two and a half or three years to get done. They were a mature student. They were an experienced industry wide student. And they became absolutely fantastic grads. Today they run the hotels in town.

The interesting part of it was that the initial interviewers were Sheraton, Hilton, those kinds of people. I couldn't get the local hotels to hire anybody. The explanation was that all these gaming people without any education were afraid. I mean that's the story. But it took me a long time. The fellow at the Riviera hotel, a man named Frank Watts who has subsequently died, was very helpful in getting us in.

Also, we began to work with a hotel -- I joined the hotel sales managers. They became lecturers in the class. We offered a course called hotel sales and marketing in which we bring in a

separate guy. I'd set up the outline and we'd bring in one guy to talk about the relationship to airline, one guy to talk about foreign guests, whatever. So we had the sales managers and they gave us lots of scholarships. We had the hotel accountants. They gave us scholarships. We had the food service executives. They gave us scholarships. And those people began to talk us up. I notice since I have been a student at UNLV there's a lot of international students. What's the percentage of international versus --

At one time we had them all, all international. I went off to Korea twice to set up a sister school relations. The new dean had set up a school in the Middle East. I don't know if you're aware of that. We've opened a school in Singapore. But we went for the international student, the Asian student. Cornell has always been the European end. And Florida State has always been the South American international student. So that's the way the hotel programs were broken down -- Cornell from Europe, South America going into Florida State or Florida International -- two schools down there -- and we've been the Asian. So we have Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Philippino students..

Now, did that take place right from the beginning or was that an evolution?

That was an evolution because one person would come and then they would let the word out. We were getting so many that I began to boost the TOEFL. Are you familiar with the TOEFL exams? So the university had one admission level. We had a different level. We had a higher level. We had too many students.

One of the pictures I'll give you is an alumni gathering that we had in Hong Kong about ten years after the first group came. One of the men put together this meeting because I was going into Hong Kong for some reason, and we had the alumni meeting. That was just a great arrangement.

One of our graduates runs a program in -- there is a Hong Kong school now. And one of our graduates -- he was a master student who eventually picked up his doctorate -- he's head of that one.

Did you find a difference in the attitudes and work ethic of international students versus our American students?

Sure. A big difference. If you ask an international student on an exam to tell you what the ninth

word on page 46 is, they could tell you that. But if you give them a problem and ask them how they solve it, they wouldn't know how to do it. If you called an American student -- Jimmy, tell me what this and this is, he'd get up and give you a story. If you called on the Asian student, she wouldn't even stand up. She would just absolutely refuse to do anything. Whole different culture. Really different culture. Yet, we've had some very successful international students. A lot of nice people came from all over.

So at one time I think we had all the international students in the university. That was very small. There wasn't any appeal. But it was our reputation that began to pull in people from all over. Basketball team and the hotel college were the draws and made worldwide --

I'll tell you a good story. There was an interim president named Brock Dixon. Have you ever heard that name?

I've heard that name, yes.

Okay. Brock was the interim president under which Jerry Tarkanian got fired. After Brock retired he went to Australia because he had a son living there with children who weren't feeling well. So he went down to help out. In the interim I had retired. And I went into Australia for a couple of years to open schools in Australia and got to see, of course, Brock Dixon. One day I called home and my second son said to me, Dad, Dad, UNLV has just won the NCAA basketball thing. So without thinking I sent a telegram to Jerry. Dear Jerry, Brock Dixon and I wish the best, blah-blah-blah. Well, of course, when Brock Dixon heard that, he went crazy.

And how did Jerry Tarkanian react?

I have no idea. I was in Australia.

Oh, my goodness. Reflecting back on what do you feel was -- I'm sure there are many -- your greatest accomplishment that you just feel very proud of and --

I think our greatest accomplishment is that we have a reputation worldwide. We had it because we had good students. I never hired a faculty member who hadn't been in industry. And that was a problem as the school grew and they needed more and more faculty members. It's impossible to find a faculty member with industry experience and a Ph.D. and 35 years of age. You can't find them. But all of our hires, except one or two, were Ph.D.s with lots of industry experience. That made a fantastic faculty, and so I think was the reputation we built.

There was an agency -- this group called the Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education. One of its members in New Orleans had a hotel school. And the fellow down there began to run an annual survey of the best hotel schools in the country. Cornell would always beat us out by one or two votes, so we began to call Cornell the "UNLV of the East."

Oh, I'm sure they appreciated that.

Right. Right.

How did the Vallen distinction award or the dinner come about?

Well, I was retired. And the new dean who was Stuart Mann said he'd like to come over the house one day and talk. I said come over and Flossie will make lunch. So he came over with one of the other faculty members. And Flossie and I and the two of them sat here and they said they'd like to do this.

And what's the exact name of it?

The Vallen Visiting Professor, something like that. What they're doing is raising money to bring in guests. Well, I always did that for years, but I did it on state money. They've obviously filled all their lines. But I always kept one line open. We had all kinds of visitors from everywhere -- again, from Australia, from England, from Switzerland. I bring in faculty members and they would spend the semester and they go back and talk about UNLV. I brought them from lots of universities. Anyway, they're going to use that money for that purpose. So they've had several dinners. Maybe this is the third or fourth. I can't remember anymore. And at that time they honor the outstanding graduates. So it's a dual arrangement with -- it's an honors program. The dean gives his medal to somebody and each of the departments --

And do you attend each one of those dinners?

Yeah. I attend each one. And it's so great to see these guys. I mean it's been 40 years. Anyway, they come every year. I can't believe the same guys and gals come.

We had a house cleaner that would come to our house and clean for my wife once a week. And she had a young boy. And I kept telling her, "You send him to UNLV. I'll get him scholarship money." He showed up at the first one. He owns a big restaurant in Denver, somewhere like that. And he was so excited. We were so excited because we had seen him as a little kid. He gets on the phone and calls his mother who is still here in town. And all three of us

had a -- so it was just great to -- and they're the kind of people that come back to these dinners.
Oh, that's wonderful.

Yeah. At the first dinner we had a book signing. The book had just come out. So all the alumni came in and bought one.

Talk about retirement. What year did you retire?

I retired in '89.

And what was the reason that you decided to retire?

I was just getting old.

What do you think of the program since you've left?

Well, since I've left they've had a fellow named David Christianson who has served -- I don't know; I'll make up some number -- seven years maybe as the dean. And then he left. And they've had Stuart Mann. He's the third dean. Stuart just landed this \$40 million great gift from Harrah's. And you know we're called the Harrah Hotel College because the original grants got named by the college. So there have only been three deans.

Stuart's done very well. My only criticism is I wouldn't have the school as large as they have it. But you're driven because the university wants enrollment. And enrollment means money and money means more faculty. So you get into a mean cycle there.

And just for the record, what is the problem with having such a large body of students?

You can't know them. You don't know them. I'm talking about when we had a hundred students and they're talking about when they have 2500 students. So things are different. My requirement was that every faculty had to have office hours and that those office hours had to be available for student consulting. And so the students got to know the faculty very intimately. Today that's all farmed out. There are centers which see -- whereas the faculty don't do that; they're special -- counseling offices and things. To me that's a weakness in the program. But that's the university, not the hotel college. That's the way the university works.

So I think size is a big issue. I don't know how the politics drive it because enrollment is important for dollars. You know that's the thing.

How involved are you in the school and the program at this time?

I go to those dinners once a year.

Okay. And that's it.

That's it.

And this book came out in --

Last year and the year before last.

So you spent your retirement years compiling --

Oh, no. I've been retired ten years. That took us maybe two. What we did was interview everybody. And then Stuart Mann paid to have it all transcribed. Then Flossie and I would take all the papers and spread them all out here. All right. We're going to talk about enrollments. What did he say? What did she say? What did they say? And then you have to get it all -- so that was the -- because most of it is interview and the difficulty is trying to get it coordinated so that every one of the persons that you interviewed fits into this particular segment of the book. And Stuart took care of all that. Stuart paid for everything. Whatever money is coming in goes into the hotel college to pay them back for the publication rights.

Any books in your near future?

Well, I've just finished and submitted the eighth edition of one of my textbooks. I have that textbook. I have two other textbooks. I did a gaming book with a big law firm downtown. So right now I don't -- maybe I'll do a novel. I don't know. So I have five or six books out.

And what's Flossie doing with her time?

Well, Flossie and I just don't have the energy anymore that we used to have.

Do you travel?

Well, just last week we got back from Iceland, Greenland, Norway, and the Faroe Islands. So, yeah, we travel. And then twice a year by tradition my family gathers. So every Thanksgiving all my children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will show up here. And we're just making those arrangements right now. And then every summer we gather. In fact, there are some pictures hanging of the family. Every summer I take the whole family to a resort somewhere.

Sounds wonderful.

Yeah. We do this because as I grew up, my brothers and I separated. We rarely saw each other.

This way the family at least sees each other twice a year.

That's wonderful. So family is very important.

Family is important. Yeah. Fortunately, I have very successful children.

Well, I pretty much think that we've covered everything. But I'd like to ask you if there's anything you'd like to share that I may not have brought up as a question?

I think one of the things we haven't talked about is UNLVino. Do you know UNLVino?

In fact, that was one of my questions. How responsible were you for UNLVino becoming a reality?

Well, when we got here we wanted to offer extra special courses. So we got Bill Friedman to teach casino. We got Leo Lewis to teach front office. And one of the things we decided to do was a wine course. By golly, I look up at my bookshelf and I've got a wine book authored by a guy who was wine manager at the Dunes. So I went and saw him. And he said yeah, he would teach a course in wines for us. So we're getting it all ready and he calls me one day and said he had an emergency. He's going back to Scotland. He can't do it, but he'll set me up with somebody.

And so he set me up with a man named Rolph Laern, L-a-e-r-n, who at that time was working at the Hilton, the big Hilton. And so we talked about what we were going to do. He had never taught. So I helped him. And I would sit in his sessions and get him directed and so on.

To make a long story short, we decided we needed wine. So I went around to all the wine companies and said, "Would you give us wine for these courses?" And, by god, they all would. And so we'd do the course. And then we began to do unusual things. We had champagne. We would take everybody out for hamburgers and champagne. We had Italian wines. We'd go to Italian cuisine. The course filled up like that with -- guess what? -- public schoolteachers who needed extra credit. That's who would come. So we made a whole big family.

Anyway, to make a long story short, after the first time Rolph and I went back and gave all the wine back that we didn't use to these distributors. Finally, one guy said, "Look, Jerry, the cost of putting this back into inventory is greater than the value of the wines. Please don't bring any back." But that set us up as good people.

One day Larry Ruvo -- and you may know his name -- asked me for lunch. So we went to lunch and he proposed that we start up UNLVino. I listened and I listened and I said okay. So the first -- and, here again, Flossie was involved -- the first couple of times we had it in the warehouses.

And what year was this?

Well, we must be in the fifth year now I would think. So back up. '65 -- '70 maybe. I'd have to look it up for you. I'll look it up in the book.

And so we started and we had maybe 200, 150 people in Larry's warehouse. Flossie was at the gate taking all the money. They moved all the wine and all the liquor outside to open the warehouse. And that's where we had the first couple of UNLVinos.

There's a famous story that goes there. We had an elderly student, a woman who in those days maybe was in her mid 60s who was on heavy medication. And she had all this wine and went berserk at one of these things. She was so bad that I gave my car keys to a couple of the young men and told them to take her home because she was out of it. The next day she swore out a warrant for our arrest for kidnapping. This is a true story. I can't believe this. So I go over to the security department and they swear me in. Anything I say is going to be used against me, all that kind of business. But the woman was sick and we took her home. Well, we left her car. That was one thing. So it looked like we kidnapped her. Well, I didn't know what to do.

There was a judge named Paul Goldman here in town. Did you ever hear of Paul? Paul was teaching hotel law for me. So I called up and said, Paul, this happened. Don't worry; I'll take care of it for you. Whew. In the meantime, the boys had gotten a lawyer. So to make a long story short, a day or so later he calls me back and he said, "Don't worry, Jerry, I took care of it." Oh, wow. What happened? He said, "When they arrest you they will not put you in handcuffs." Of course, that was his joke.

But that was one of the very first UNLVinos that we had. So after that we were very careful about security and things. The program grew, and we finally moved it to Beam Hall. It outgrew Beam Hall, so it ran for five or six years in Mack stadium. Then it outgrew that, and we're now at the Paris.

Absolutely. Now, do you attend them?

I attend them. Now I do.

I'm going to see you at the next one.

No. I don't go every time. Now and again. They've gotten so big.

The culinary program had started by then, so we used to make food. We used to make

meals as part of your ticket. You would not only get all of this wine, but you'd get a plate. Well, the chef instructor decided they were going to make small chickens and give everybody a chicken. Okay. So they did that. Where are you going to store the things? I mean we've got a refrigerator box. But we're talking about thousands of people. Well, they're going to store them in the dining room. There's no refrigeration. Oh, they'll fix it. So they turned the air-conditioning down. It was so cold in the dining rooms. After that we would hire refrigerated trucks. The whole thing just grew, not from dozens of people, to thousands of people.

Oh, it's huge.

It's still going on. They must have raised a billion dollars.

I think that's wonderful. I'm very glad you remembered that because I did have that written down.

That was important. And, again, that's made publicity for the school and, of course, for the university.

Anything else you can think of?

I think the faculty were really important, critically important in what really was the big breakthrough for us. There was a program at Michigan State, very old. It was modeled after the Cornell program and the Washington State program. Probably the Michigan State program is the third oldest. And this is where the gift had been given to the hotel college and the dean of business where they were organized had taken the money. The chairman of the hotel program sued his boss for the money, and they went to court. Of course, the industry was all upset, and with that, the faculty decided they were going to bail out.

So we ended up hiring three or four of Michigan State's best faculty with industry experience and doctorates. That was the turning point in the faculty with doctorates and industry experience and that was because Michigan State was having that problem. Two or three of those men are still with us. One or two have died.

Very good. Well, this has been a fascinating interview.

Well, I'm glad you enjoyed it.

I totally enjoyed it. You gave so much information about the evolution of the hotel administration school. Thank you very much. If there's anything else that we might need to

do a follow-up, we can give you a call, or for any questions. Anything else you'd like to add?

Your philosophy?

My philosophy was to bring an intimate relationship between the student and the faculty member that I felt was in contradiction to the university's need to bring in more students. By the time I left, I saw that conflict growing because we had too many students and the faculty were not able to handle the intimacy aspect. I still remember a lot of these people from the early days.

And I'm sure they remember you.

Yeah. And believe it or not they still write for advice. I get an E-mail -- what do you think I should do?

Thank you very much, Jerry.

Okay.

This is Lisa and Jerry. Jerry just recalled a story that he would like to share.

In that first graduating class -- I think there were about six or eight; maybe it was nine -- we decided we needed to have a little ceremony. And so there was a man named Bob Cannon who was very active in the American hotel and motel association. Mrs. Cannon incidentally was very active in the public school board. But Bob Cannon, who subsequently has died, arranged to bring in a very well known hotel executive and give us a free luncheon at the Desert Inn Country Club for the half-dozen students and the few faculty that we had. That began the tradition of the graduation luncheons. The Resort Association began to pick up the tab for that. And they began, as you can imagine, to grow because we not only invited the graduating class, but we invited all the hotel people in the city. Steve Wynn and all the rest of them all showed up. It was a very -- I've got pictures of that one. It was a very important event. We had Mr. Hilton as a speaker. We had the president of Harrah's as a speaker. At one of the events the Governor of New Jersey came to speak because Jersey was getting ready to introduce gaming. And he accepted the invitation. That audience was packed with all the hotel executives.

This dinner that they've -- is sort of an adaptation of what was originally done because I would go to the food and beverage manager of, say, the Hilton. And I would say Mr. Hilton is going to be the speaker. Well, you can imagine the quality of the luncheon that came out on the budget of nothing, which the Resort Association -- or "Bill Boyd is going to be the speaker" or

"Elaine Wynn is going to be the speaker" kind of thing. So those luncheons just grew and grew and grew. And they've outgrown themselves and they've begun to adopt --

The Vallen Dinner of Distinction.

I think it has replaced it because we would honor people and now they're doing the same thing. Very good. I think I'm going to take our recorder with us into the other room and as we're talking about the photographs --

We're going to take a look at some photographs and just have this on while we're doing so.

One of the things I forgot to tell you is when I decided to retire there was a fantastic goodbye luncheon party in the atrium of Beam Hall. And these are just some of the photos.

And you have some copies of these?

I have copies.

So this is your retirement...?

My retirement party.

Then we did a lot of traveling. So here is when I was teaching in Guam. Here is a meeting that I attended in Tinian. Tinian is where the bomber that dropped the atomic bomb on Japan took off from. You can still see the Japanese and the American situation.

Here is a picture of the alumni gathering in Hong Kong. This is a picture of Rolph Laern who was teaching our wine class, L-a-e-r-n. Oh, these are all pictures of our meeting in Hong Kong with the alumni. And this young man -- well, he wasn't a young man -- he set it all up for us. Here's another one here.

Of the same?

Yep.

Here is one of our graduation luncheons.

Let me see what else I've got here, if anything. Oh, we started -- I've got a lot of these pictures. We started a golf tourney for scholarships and invited all of the local hotel people to play golf with the student body. This young man -- I went to college with his father. And his father ended up representing Banfi wines and letting us use the exhibit hall.

Oh, here we go. Alumnus Gary Brown. But Manfi wines? How do you say that?

Banfi, B-a-n-f-i. Let me see if I've got a picture of that. Here it is. This man is dead. Now, this is

the Banfi kitchen. But what you can't see because it was done beforehand is they provided all the television and so forth in there. And we painted in this huge room a mural of Banfi wines in Italy where their vineyard is. And so this young guy -- he just came back.

This is Gary.

This is a pretty recent picture.

But his father has passed away.

His father has passed away. Yeah.

Let's see what else we've got here. Oh, here's a good story.

Okay. We're looking at a photograph...it looks like a young woman with a bouffant hairstyle, and she's looking at a book called *Travel Agents*.

She was one of our first women grads.

Her name is Maria Valenzuela.

Right. Maria ended up marrying -- oh god, what was the name of that fellow? -- Pratt, P-r-a-t-t, the Pratt family, which at one time owned the Desert Inn. But Maria was one of the very first women and she was very interested in sales. So I went to the hotel sales managers meeting one time and I said to them during the business meeting I want to bring a student to the meeting to meet some people. Well, that's fine. That's fine. Well, it's a woman because there weren't any women in the group. A woman? Fine him a dollar. So they fined me a dollar for bringing that up. And they wouldn't let her come. Today --

And what was the name of this organization?

Hotel Sales Management.

And they fined you a dollar.

They fined me a dollar. Now, we're talking about '68, '69. Today the organization is almost a hundred percent women because that's who's moved into the sales areas of the hotel.

So she never got to go to that meeting?

Never got to go.

What a disappointment.

Yeah.

Wow. Very interesting story. And you have a copy of that? You're okay giving that one

up?

Well, I'm not giving any of them up.

Oh, these are not for permanent loan, then. You want these all copied?

Well, I'm in the process of putting a book together for the hotel college as opposed to my personal record. And so these are going to go into that book.

So you want these --

I would really appreciate it.

Well, no, I misunderstood. I thought these were being given because you have copies. So these are not permanent loan. These are just for loan. Perfect.

Right. Well, this is the alumnus meeting in Hong Kong. Well, they're all pretty much the same. Here's one of our hotel student presidents, Larry Kaizer.

Now, here's an interesting story. Claude Rand worked for TWA before he came to work for us.

And this is the UNLV China tour photograph.

Right. I don't know if you ever heard of the Fongs.

Is that Lilly Fong right there?

Yes. Here's Wing. And right after Mr. Nixon went to China, we went because Claude was able to negotiate that. And here was the group that went to China before Coca-Cola. I mean that was our little joke: We went before Coca-Cola and the Fongs went with us. The Fongs had family in China. We went to the hotel. And after walking for two days -- the family came from rural China in the pouring rain -- the hotel wouldn't let them in because they were peasants. And so there was a lot of negotiation going on. All right. They finally opened a little dining room and brought the family in. And the Fongs fed them. They had also carried all kinds of clothing and things of that sort. The Fongs bought the family bicycles. They all left and went back to --

Wow. What a wonderful story.

Yeah, it's a good story. Here it is. That's the dinner that they called it.

Here is a picture of the photo of my retirement party. Oh, look, here's that chair, incidentally, too, right there.

Yeah. I saw that beautiful chair.

Oh, you did see that.

Yes, when I first came in.

Let's see what else. This is another picture of Gary Brown's whose father gave the -- if you look right up there it's the Banfi vineyard. Here is the photo of the Wall (*Ed. Note: the Great Wall of China*). And here is Gary and then myself in that dining room.

And I'm going to put these all in one side.

This is a picture of Mike Unger. Mike Unger was one of our early grads. And he was working at the Frontier hotel when we started the internships. Here is Maria. Remember I just showed you a picture of her. So here is the first group of interns.

When I came to work -- and I was interviewed not only by the university but by the hotel people. And so what did you think, they wanted to know? And I said, well, this won't go unless you take students in as interns. What?

You better put this on because this is another interesting story.

It's on.

Oh. So they read. That's just what we want they said. Oh, fine. Well, I started to do that when the union stepped in and said you can't do that.

Now, did you ever hear of a man named Al Bramlet who was murdered out in the desert? Well, we had lunch with Al Bramlet, Don Moyer and I and a man named Dick Thomas. Bramlet headed up the culinary union. Dick Thomas headed up the Teamsters union. And the four of us had lunch. At that time we shook hands and negotiated that we would have the interns. The quid pro quo was that any student who wanted to work would go down and join the union. We would never bypass the union's hiring hall if one of the kids wanted to work. And so they allowed the interns. That became one of our strengths in the program -- that every student ran through that senior year internship in one of the hotels.

And was part of the culinary union?

No. The culinary union and the Teamsters, which is the front desk and this sort of people, would not object. See, they objected under the contract to putting in a nonpaid intern. Nonpaid? Well, they're not going to take anybody's job. No, no, not going to take anybody's job. Moreover, if a student wanted to work in the industry, which we required that they do incidentally -- every

student had to go through an internship which gave credit but no pay, and every student had to work for pay but no credit. Both of those were graduation requirements.

Got it.

Well, if they wanted to work, we insisted that they go through the union's hiring hall rather than be a scab and go around. And in turn the union said, okay, we'll allow the nonpaid employee, the intern, to go --

Got it. Beautiful.

So that was negotiated. And the very first year at the -- oh, there was that -- where the present MGM stands was a big golf course called the Tropicana Golf Course, right across the street from the Tropicana. They had a coffee shop on the golf course where all the business of the day was done, so we met there and transacted this particular negotiation. The union never ever complained. They began to send us scholarship money. And we had a good relationship with the union.

Is it still in place?

I have no idea.

Okay. What else do we have?

Well, this is Senator Bryan's --

Can I put her name on the back?

I don't know her name. She was the Las Vegas representative of Senator Bryan. At my retirement party she read what the senator had put into the congressional record, which was a -- I've got that and I don't know where that is -- but a salutation from the senator into the congressional record for me.

Beautiful.

And I don't know if you realize that I was one of the 100?

Yes. Who have made Las Vegas. Yes.

I was the only one from the university.

The 100 people who have made Las Vegas.

In the last century.

And what we forgot to mention during our interview is that at the time you were one of the

three people in the country that held a Ph.D. in hotel --

No. Let's get that right. When I was going to school there were two other Ph.D.s. I was working on my Ph.D., but it took me ten years to finish my degree. In that interim quite a number of others had come out. Part of the reason is that Cornell was the only one offering a Ph.D. in those days. And to get their Ph.D. you had to have their undergraduate. There was their requirement. So there weren't that many people who had a Cornell graduate who wanted a Ph.D.

Okay. Beautiful.

There was a man named Joe Digglas. God, these names come back to me. Joe Digglas was the public assist for the Nevada Resort Association, which gave us the initial grants. He turned out to be a real good friend. He died recently up in Reno. He would get all kinds of things in the newspaper. Here is a story that he got in the L.A. Times.

Here is a Los Angeles Times, December 1st, 1967, article. Very good.

Joe Digglas got all kinds of stuff.

And here is another article.

And here's another article saying that.

And there you are.

Okay. Here's the book signing.

Of Dinner of Distinction.

This is one of our graduates, Oscar Portillo, who manages a hotel in Henderson, which one I can't remember. But he's one of the really early grads.

One of the things we did to raise money -- money is always an important aspect as you can imagine -- is we started -- Las Vegas is an attraction. So we went to the National Restaurant Association of which I was a big wheel at one time and convinced them to hold seminars in Las Vegas on restaurant management. We would provide faculty and support and so on, and this is one of the dinners. This is Leslie Cummings who was a faculty member and her husband who was the assistant dean. Do I have that all on there?

Yes. Leslie Cumming. Dick Basal.

Yeah. He's dead. Charlie Levinson, he's dead.

And Ted Cummings.

Ted was with the business college. Leslie was with us. Leslie was the first woman I ever hired.
And beautiful food.

Yep. This is my retirement party. These are all the people who helped me put that together.
 Here's one of the visitors who was a wine -- I don't know what this is. This was in China I think.
 Here's Boyce Phillips death. He was the first faculty member I hired.

And here's Dick Basal, his death. He just died about two years ago.

Here's a copy of the letter from the Governor of New Jersey when I invited him to speak to
 the group. New Jersey was becoming a potential --

What else do we have here? Here's Marie again. Look at the old-fashioned telephone.
 She was an intern. Here she is again.

Switchboard. Okay. What does she do today?

I have no idea. I lost track of her early on.

It's Glen Hammer, H-a-m-m-e-r, and my wife and myself.

Do you remember what the event was?

I think he came back for my retirement party. Glen runs restaurants up in California along the
 Fisherman's Wharf. I can't remember a nickname I had for him. But he showed up with his wife
 one day after being away for years. And he walked in and I called him by his nickname. And he
 turned around to his wife and said, "See, I told you he'd remember."

Oh, here's a good story, too. Gee, now these pictures bring back a lot.

I thought they might.

This is a visiting faculty member. I told you we had them from all over, from Korea. We had him
 to our home for dinner. And here I am here and he and his wife. Look at the outfit she comes in,
 the robes. And we had Dave Christianson, who was my associate dean, and a Korean couple who
 did the translating because she didn't speak any English. Well, we had this lovely dinner. Flossie
 had made the dinner. We were all eating and sitting. And after one of the courses, I got up and
 bussed the tables. And when I did, this woman went (noise). She had never seen a man pick up a
 dish and carry it off the table. So that was the big conversation after that, and that sort of broke
 the ice. Not only that, but my wife had bought antiques in Korea. At that time we had some
 hanging on the walls. And she was just fascinated that we -- because we had been to Korea a

couple of times.

Good stories. I'm glad I'm talking to you. I remember them all. I'm glad I wrote the names of these things back in here.

Yeah, me too. I'm just writing things that we're taking and how we're going to scan them and return them to you.

Oh, this is another girl named Judy Lawry.

Now, isn't that Maria? No, no, no.

I thought it was, too, but it's Judy. The hairdos I guess -- she went to -- I don't know where she happens to be, either.

Well, I'm just going to gather them up and take them.

This man is one of our grads. He opened a hotel school on Guam and invited us to come over and teach one summer. And then we flew to Tinian for the PATA, Pacific Area Travel Association. And that's what that group meeting is.

Perfect.

All right. You've got enough?

No. I think we have plenty. And I'm not going to take your book.

Oh, you're not going to take the book?

No. I don't want to take the book because it looks like I have plenty here. I will discuss it with Claytee and see if she's interested in the book.

Do you want all these or not? Not all of them are marked. So if you could call me...

Well, what questions I have -- what I'll do is when I have the copies, I'll come back if I need you to identify them.

All right.