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Albert W. Brown Interview #1

Jacob Tynan
jtyna1@brockport.edu

Kenneth O'Brien
SUNY Brockport

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Kenneth O'Brien 0:01

This is the first interview with Dr. Albert W. Brown, former president of SUNY College at Brockport. On the date is July 23 2000. The interviewer is Ken O'Brien. And Dr. Brown. First, thank you very much for the time that you're giving us.

Albert W. Brown 0:15

My pleasure.

Kenneth O'Brien 0:17

Let's begin talking about your arrival on campus in 1965. Please describe the interview process both on campus and at SUNY central. And a final question. We have heard that the Chancellor was relatively insistent that the college appoint you and I'd like to have your comment on that.

Albert W. Brown 0:34

Okay, I don't know really where to start on this, because keep in mind that one of the reasons I was there was because the background the circumstances that went into that background, I had graduated in 1952 with a doctorate from Syracuse took the job at Eastern Illinois with the guarantee that I would go into The geography geology department there. And they hired me at \$510 a month, which was the highest faculty appointment with new PhD out of Syracuse that year. And I went there into a department that was pretty energetic, but still the 1952 variety of a Midwestern Teachers College. And after six years there, went to Eastern Michigan into a fast growing urban on the western edge of Detroit, an institution that had, again, very good academic leadership, knowing if they were going to become a more comprehensive institution although they're still organized as a teacher's college. In two years, I had I had an opportunity to go into the Stanford program which was to train administrators evaluators and what have you, which was done through the North Central Association We met with all the best presidents there. And they talked about changes of institutions and what you could do and couldn't do, and then became evaluators and consultants within the North Central Association. 1960 became Dean of Arts and Sciences, the first one at Eastern Michigan. And we created 17 departments out of what has been a, again, a triumphant of education, physical education and something else there. But there had been no College of Arts and Sciences. So that was the first one reorganized to accommodate what became the 17 departments. I did that for about two and a half years and became very convinced that somewhere somewhere, there was the information and the intelligence to know whether the first course in English should be 101 or 1A, you know, we seemed to be debating that and nobody seemed to have the answer. So I although I was a registered republican george romney asked me if I would come into his office to help set up the Office of Economic Opportunity for the state of Michigan. And I did take a leave from the deanship got the head of history department to assume the acting deanship, and then went out to

try to find the answer to this tremendously important educational question as to what should be the first numbering of the first courses in the curriculum. And that gave me 310 j Cessna with a pilot, and it gave me free access to all of Michigan and a few other things. And it gave me an opportunity to in Flint to look down the street, and to deal with Community Action groups in all areas and so forth. And I was very convinced that personally there was a backlog of extremely able unserved people and that that education could play a role in releasing that group of talent that had been buried for so long. Recognizing when you could pick the top off the box, that could be some real good stuff coming out in a hurry. And you'd be caught with the belief that you were somehow or other doing a wonderful job because all you're doing is releasing talents that had been restricted and knowing full well that in or five, six years, then you'd start to process as it were, whatever was coming through the flow would start being the population you had to deal with, as opposed to this tremendous amount of unserved talent. Anyway, after we had a faculty member who was a close friend of Jack Crandall, and there and he was visiting Jack Crandall and Jack Crandall's (unintelligible) him and mentioned that They were looking for a president. And whenever a faculty member recommends a dean or colleague or something for another position, you have to look at it with a certain amount of motivation. Although we still correspond. So, lo and behold, he put my name in the pocket for here. I had a choice then in the spring of '65. To have gone permanently with I'm certain Trevor was the man who ran the Washington office, and Romney ran the Michigan office office. And I could have gone full time with either one, either there or Washington and decided that at that time, I still thought the future was in higher education in terms of being an instrument of change in service. And so when the Brockport situation broke, more open came and I do not recall all the details. And I will be more candid than I should be. I told them with the situation I saw, and with Jordan Allen, obviously, intending to be the president. You do not give away the president's house to the English department if you had intended to move there and he had his own home of course up there. And it was very, very clear that he was going to, in his own mind and in the minds of the Brockport hierarchy, that he was going to be the successor. I told him that under no circumstances would I come if that was an issue. In other words, I was not there to route out somebody who'd given long and good service and obviously deeply devoted to the institution. And, and this is terribly candid, that probably shouldn't be said, when I was told that absolutely no circumstances would he continue as the President in the institution but yes he was the acting president since before, but it'd been well decided that he would not succeed. And therefore they recognized the the potential tension from anybody coming in I met with him in Albany. I know, I met on the campus. Interesting thing. I mean, there were not many strange faces on the Brockport campus at that time, when I was kind of scurried around. It wasn't an unmarked car, but it was practically that and of course everybody knew what was happening. And then I was offered the position and saw that I said I would go as soon as I could find a successor in Oyo in Michigan, and which turned out to be middle of September I suppose. And I had good talks with Jim Frost and with Sam Grool (?) I had done quite a bit of evaluation of institutions in north central area. I thought I knew what the problems were. If Sam Grool did say and it's published in the papers, you've probably seen that it was the worst institution he'd ever seen. I think that was unfair, because I've seen institutions that look better that didn't have the resources, that that Brockport had Brockport had y'know loyal,

dedicated, committed group of people, faculty and administrators the potential do something it was not in great conflict. In fact any potential conflict had been killed.

Kenneth O'Brien 8:42

The decision had been made.

Albert W. Brown 8:44

And so I saw I saw a tremendous opportunity I mean the job the third largest city and fourth largest metropolitan area Rochester to To make a unit of state university that would have a significant impact on education, and on the service to the people in that area.

Kenneth O'Brien 9:09

Let's follow up a little bit, that that's getting ahead in the list, which is just fine and talk about the opportunity that was brought forth, as you saw it.

Albert W. Brown 9:18

Okay. The first big opportunity was an in house group of good faculty and administrators, potential administrators, that were not in any serious conflict. They were in a conflict between doing something and not doing anything, but they were not in a conflict with each other. There was no schism breaking them completely apart. Its location in the Rochester area, gave you access to a large population, and you're still on the fringe of it so that you were somewhat independent, but you're at a service area, and it was an unserved population. The riots in in Rochester I think had occurred a previous spring sometime in there?

Kenneth O'Brien 10:00

summer of 64

Albert W. Brown 10:02

64 yeah that was it and you didn't have to travel far in Rochester to know that they were light years behind Michigan for example, in even thinking about what was going on. And as it turned out later this is jumping timespan. You had RIT in the process of moving out of Rochester to 1200 acres unserved by a bus line. You had Monroe Community College with Leroy, good. Very good Montana cowboy who didn't frighten the death of blacks and once They threw a book off to

the third floor of the library of the high school that they were in down the stairwell and he was coming down. He really wanted no part of it after that. And so they moved Monroe community college, basically out of East highway/Iowa (?) or whatever. Oh, Henrietta. And Later on, delighted to get rid of the relationship with the inner city, which we took over and combined the cooperative college Center and the other one into the ELC.

Kenneth O'Brien 11:10

I think that was a story I've always wondered about because as I've looked at the ELCs as they've evolved in the late 80s, and 90s. I think every single one of them is administered by run by staffed by designed by a community college with the exception of the ELC in Rochester,

Albert W. Brown 11:30

And we received it with great enthusiasm. And took it. we accepted it with enthusiasm. It was given to us with enthusiasm, because there was an opportunity to combine the skill part and the educational part into a group that would never be served at all. And also lurking in the background was the fact that I felt it would be a laboratory in which some of our own faculty and staff would maybe become more acquainted with the The needs of the population of the city and the 60s and 70s. And what have you, as opposed to where they were at that particular moment. So it was a this was an opportunity it was a place it had everything that could make it successful if given a few breaks and used for the successful service function.

Kenneth O'Brien 12:24

This is not on the sheet. But do you think it would have been wiser for the state to continue the investment on the academic skills development side of the ELC centers, as opposed to the investments they've made through EOP in trying to mainstream students may be too early.

Albert W. Brown 12:48

That's that's a toughy. It's hard to tell but i would i would say that it could have been done that way involving because we tried to be on site academic in there. But But then I would call for site and personnel. And this other thing became a funnel in which you can put EOP people were would go so, I don't know I don't know. It's it was our choice. And then I what I had hoped to do and never was able to he was a bob Potter was to get the sociology staff to teach a few courses of the in there. So that they might learn urban-ese and I thought it'd be a wonderful place for the graduate students to, you know, do counseling and and advisement for the students in there. And eventually, they would learn a great deal. I'm back to this one

Kenneth O'Brien 13:47

Yeah, well we're going to we're going to continue with question three. from all sources. It seems that you've had a special relationship with Chancellor Grool. How were you able to get the funding necessary for that unprecedented expansion of the college between 1965 and 1971, and sort of an ancillary question did the extent of that expansion, surprise even you

Albert W. Brown 14:09

the answer to that lies in my inauguration address which you probably never read. If you haven't go back and read it very carefully,

Kenneth O'Brien 14:17

okay.

Albert W. Brown 14:17

It frightens the hell out of me because I think of it in my background as Mein Kampf.

Kenneth O'Brien 14:23

Now I read it and I didn't read it as Mein Kampf,

Albert W. Brown 14:26

read it again.

Kenneth O'Brien 14:26

Okay. laying out the blueprint,

Albert W. Brown 14:30

Yes. that address which I wrote everything except the one paragraph. At the very end, I had it reviewed by Cooper and I think by somebody else in there but they made no basic changes except it was suggested my one of them that in the last paragraph that where we were weak, we will get strong, you know the non en dotted about three, four lines there The rest of it I wrote. And the rest of it is absolute bloop. Absolute no box board on the top of the box. And it was a

deliberate statement. Grool was there enthused beyond belief. And it it wasn't doing anything, it was immoral or illegal or impractical, but said was we will convert this institution. And these are the barriers that we will do it in. And it was totally endorsed by Grool and by Frost. And it was a blueprint. And once they were committed to that, it was very difficult for them in those days to say you can't do it when you've already said that's where you're going. And remember that they had said it was the worst one of the systems and therefore it behooves them to If they saw any way to change it He said kill it or to nurture it and they nurtured it. And during that period of time, I don't think there's any question whatsoever. There was no basic area, that I was denied at least some form of support. But I'm very grateful we were able to do it because

they supported me. But they had to they couldn't bring me in to have me fail that'd be kind of stupid.

Kenneth O'Brien 16:39

But they could have put a limit on on the extent of the expansion.

Albert W. Brown 16:44

Not if you said this is the third largest city, the fourth largest metropolitan area, served by nothing. And of course, I take the position from the very beginning and still do with a SUNY is a series of 16 historical accidents makes no sense whatsoever. The only thing that makes sense was we had Syracuse University in 1948. Bill Tolly opposed strenuously, and if he had become State University we now would've had as SUNY one of the great institutions in the world. But when you try to take a whole series of historical accidents, badly placed, and then try to build the flagships with a defunct Buffalo, and an ambitious building in Suffolk or Nassau County.

Kenneth O'Brien 17:37

Suffolk.

Albert W. Brown 17:37

and then taking a secondary education place called Albany, that didn't want to do anything. And then, Binghamton they wanted to still be Harper College. But it was insisted that these all these other people could have University Centers and Warren Anderson would have one too you can't, you can't control their resources that way, and come out with really a first quality institution, which they couldn't have given if Tolly had given up Syracuse as SUNY and then the Brockports would have been satellite campuses like they would've been a Kent State. And you would've

gotten a great, quote, delivery system. And So given that sight, and given their commitment that they had to support me and they did right up through to 71

Kenneth O'Brien 18:36

Yes and then that's also the time when Chancellor Gould retires. Do you think if he had if he had had the stamina to stay on for another five years, that that there would have been a very different SUNY record.

Albert W. Brown 18:50

I think so, I am convinced that had he kept his perspective his energy effectiveness and at least a congenial governor. He would've SUNY would've been quite different. But he was a beat man by 71.

Kenneth O'Brien 19:10

beaten by

Albert W. Brown 19:12

tiredness constant exhaustion wuth working with the different units they he had strong support from Beth Moore. I don't know what else or not but he certainly had used this energy.

Kenneth O'Brien 19:30

Okay.

Albert W. Brown 19:31

And I think he was just lucky to get out at that time. And this is somewhat despoiled, Ernie boy and I had a very good relationship which means something or other in 65 and we spent many hours in airports. conversation he has always supported a graduation speech when I left and all that kind of stuff. But Ernie did not have the background, the vision, the experience. And maybe he didn't have necessary strength but maybe didn't have the vision of the SUNY that Sam Gould had he had a vision of Ernie and he knew he wanted to stay at the university.

Kenneth O'Brien 20:27

Even conceding the fact that he had a vision of a university that that might have worked. SUNY's a 64 unit, multi flex that is extraordinary just to begin to hold in one's mind as an entity. And I haven't seen anybody occupy the chancellor's office in my lifetime because I came to SUNY after Gould. I haven't seen anyone who has been able to articulate The system as a university,

Albert W. Brown 21:04

my scheme, which was shot down by Ernie, well it wasn't shot down by him. I have said before and I've said it on fossil (?) statement. I don't know as I can prove it, but I know it's true. He offered me the presidency of empire state. And at that time I told him, I would not take it because he'd already made appointments. That In my opinion, he would not go with what I saw Empire State. I saw Empire State and I talked to him before he created it as the holding company, as the Extension Service, if you will, but particularly the delivery system for all of Sunni to all in the state. It would never have a campus. You would never have a quote faculty per se. It would go to well good example would be Rochester area which had 3200 people in social work, he wanted a master's in Social Work at least working there. And he would say, okay, as soon as our empire state we'll do that. And we would staff it as we did with your adult program and everything else out of people we could get, we could offer buffalo Stony Brook, whatever it might be. And you offer the program as you would in a real good extension, as we get some standard tradition. and that in turn, because that'd be the fastest part growing part of the university system. It would eventually accumulate all the resources, surplus resources in there, and then you would have the, the other 64 units, knowing that that was an integral part of their total operation. And you would have then had a delivery system that would have worked and it would be manageable and it would've been offer everybody in the state Some educational opportunities as on demand. And that's what Empire State should have been. And that would have made a a SUNY That would have been 21st century. I think what could be done now. Access all the resources in SUNY

Kenneth O'Brien 23:17

and and with today's technology had that model been developed, it would be, SUNY would have been a very, very different animal by the year 2000.

Albert W. Brown 23:26

And you'd have no problem with budgets you've got people clamoring to pay you to, to save industry in downtown Jamestown. If you have faculty, and if you have that, then your faculty whether you were history or political science or economics would see the writing on the wall. And I don't mean they'd all become applied. But they would be thinking in terms of not my departmental advancement but by what would happen to the you know our service component, which would be recognized as first rate, great big research institutions don't have to worry about

their budget, as much as second third rate institutions that are struggling. You have people think that they're doing something. And if you had all the resources, of SUNY which you can apply you would develop the competence that you'd need, it would have been a very, very, very interesting

Kenneth O'Brien 24:31

it hasn't been put on the map. I mean, nobody has implemented that

Albert W. Brown 24:36

I have written about it two or three times, in fact, even up to last chancellor there but uh Dalton when we spoke it was, Hugh's inauguration. Put it in a note, and he told me It's all very interesting, but somebody had had to create an opportunity for it, or we would continue in the same 19th century mode. I mean SUNY Buffalo didn't build a moat around the castle, until the four lane highway. Then at Nassau up until a little while ago, You couldn't get there with a bicycle or on foot, without illegally crossing the highway.

Kenneth O'Brien 25:15

I didn't know that. There was no

Albert W. Brown 25:18

No pedestrian access to it. Now, I mean, that's what's called service, you know service well anyway. \

Kenneth O'Brien 25:35

Yep. Beyond the Chancellor's in those early years, three names keep popping up as people that you or other members of the Brockport administration would have been dealing with. Jim Frost is one, Harry Porter who really shepherded

Albert W. Brown 25:58

Jim Frost was our strongest ally and he was the vice chancellor for the four year colleges. Jim and I did not always agree on everything. Jim and I still maintain a relationship and is cordial his wife has Alzheimer's and is very bad and has taken care of her at home, but it's kind of a sad situation in that way. But Jim, anything that was obviously legitimate and good, he would

support who he was. And he would go to bat for you. And whatever conflicts there might be in the Alb (?) see, Jim, and I did not see completely eye to eye on some things Jim used to call himself, the president of the presidents, which made people very unhappy. I saw him as the implementer of what the President wanted. There was a slight kind of difference, but

Kenneth O'Brien 26:59

difference of perspective.

Albert W. Brown 27:00

Yeah, he was the President's president and he was to me an implementer. And he did a very nice job of implementation. But he never he never hurt us. You know, by stonewalling or by just simply failing to support anything and he did know that when I flew him over campus for a long time that I was using him but that's a story.

Kenneth O'Brien 27:30

I read the story. That's wonderful. I can understand that having being subject to motion sickness. s an aside, I was always fascinated by the fact that

Albert W. Brown 27:47

I had an undergraduate major anyway. But the basic that was being done to be cute.

when I went to Brockport, there was extreme hostility between the community and the campus because they'd been taking 50 foot lots. You can move them out. I mean, totally stupid. I mean, you had all the acreage out there so they were going in and taking Maple Jones's house or something or other by eminent domain and moving it out and causing all kinds of grief and what have you. And I said in my right at the beginning I will not take any more

blocks in Brockport we had all this area out there. That was the purpose of it.

Albert W. Brown 0:05

We're Buying only unoccupied land and far as I know we've still done that which they had.

Kenneth O'Brien 0:15

not buying much (unintelligible).

Albert W. Brown 0:17

No, They've got the land.

Kenneth O'Brien 0:19

Yeah.

Albert W. Brown 0:20

And they've got interest in off fourth Section road, which of course under the green plan that had been (unintelligible) which would've given us another thousand students in total. And would've been one of the kinds of adult housing that is now beginning to come in across the country you know associated with college campuses and could very easily had good adult housing built up down there. But everybody required to take at least one course a year on the campus. Anyway you're back at where You're on four that you're going to talk

Kenneth O'Brien 0:59

Well, bye We're we're now looking at six

Albert W. Brown 1:02

okay you talk on five they're Gould years obviously Jim was Herman Cooper was gone Harry Porter was supported at first and then got this remote. I don't think because of any personal feelings but because by then the SUNY system was big and he had many other responsibilities in subsequent years once earnings got in the subchancellor (?) was the same less and less important things there might have been any number of reasons for it. Certainly Bruce Deering came in with a strong feeling that he would be able to assess the academic programs without SUNY and his last three months reading the books on his head

Kenneth O'Brien 2:00

That's, that's a sad story. I

Albert W. Brown 2:02

Yeah And that happened throughout. I don't know who was in charge. And I think I invented the phrase the horizontal paper trail (?). And I don't know why that happened. It certainly there wasn't the freedom of people to make decisions and carry them out that had been true in earlier years.

Kenneth O'Brien 2:30

so if I understand that correctly, not only is SUNY getting hit from the state level, because of budget problems generated by the economy, of the mid 70s. But there are also internal organizational and internal leadership problems that really compound all of that.

Albert W. Brown 2:47

Definitely.

Kenneth O'Brien 2:49

Okay. makes sense to me from what I've read.

Albert W. Brown 2:52

Yeah.

Kenneth O'Brien 2:52

And that leads us I think, to the retrenchment of 76, which, although there were some mini scars on the Brockport campus, I read a history of Albany where on that campus that is seen as the Rubicon that the campus is just never the same after that moment.

Albert W. Brown 3:15

No.

Kenneth O'Brien 3:15

So could you tell us a little bit about the way in which you were asked, told by the state and how that unfolded.

Albert W. Brown 3:26

We were given very precise numbers, as you know. And the details of this, basically had slipped in terms of all that went on with, it was our determination not to ruin what we were doing, if at all possible, and I don't think we did anything illegal. It was easy at that time to count everything three different ways. You had FTE you had equated headcount, you had all kinds of things that you could do and you had all kinds of dates that you could play with and lots of people to leave in March and return in April or something or other and that went on we were hurt. We we tried very much not to destroy the programs that we want to keep. And I do not have the detail in mind at this moment to tell you more than what your records will show. But if you do it in seniority for example, obviously you're going to destroy all the new people in pain and you can do in deal with (?) seniority and nolt down on these programs and since the early programs had the most senior people, but you'd destroy other programs. And we did not destroy great numbers of programs. But we did choose. But it was not it was a bad scene But what we tried what we could to make the decisions for these people. You also have to keep in mind, and correct me if I'm wrong historically. But we had lost some of the very best experienced administrators by that time where was, where was Crandall at this time?

Kenneth O'Brien 5:31

I think he was on his way back to the department. I think he was on leave at that point.

Albert W. Brown 5:36

And here was a man of great integrity and great insight virtually esconced I believe in the Olean (?) college at the time and he was building his own little college with this is not bad, I mean, he had gone a little ways from the original concept of what the Olean college was. Vera was a nice person and serves a very very useful purpose her academic role and went on to greater glory to be in the President's college there obviously should not have been long term and wasn't expected to be long term when he was (untilligible) because it makes an interesting moment. I can't I don't know the exact date when he came in. But I've never hired anybody by the name of Richard Simpson, regardless of your credentials, because I obviously Purdue led me astray on Harry 'cause he wasnted to het rid of him at Oswego and honored students there knew because he admissions (?) for RIT that's naughty.

Kenneth O'Brien 7:08

But you didn't have one you had several.

Albert W. Brown 7:13

And it may have been I retired. I don't know. Or maybe I'd gotten so used to working with people you could trust that it's like, oh, maybe maybe I was extended too far, I don't know. But certainly they were bad appointments done into the best of intentions. If I had my name,

Kenneth O'Brien 7:33

I won't,

Albert W. Brown 7:34

but certainly, as administrators that didn't know where the institution is going who didn't know where I was going. And it'd be my fault. We lost a sense of direction there, that was pretty horrendous. And if it had not been for golden shackles I would've gone

Kenneth O'Brien 7:54

if it has not been for what

Albert W. Brown 7:55

the golden shackles remember, I had moved from Illinois and Michigan. to New York state,

Kenneth O'Brien 8:01

yes,

Albert W. Brown 8:01

I had been under the State Retirement System for all three states. I had chosen when I came to New York State to go into the Teachers Retirement System because it represents 30% more than I would get if I just started CIAA. And this was worked out. I came saying I would spend 20 years in SUNY, not one day more. I needed 20 years. And so, I came in 65. I left in 85. I had opportunities to leave in 76 78, 9 what have you could have gone to the University of Toledo if I wanted to. It would cost me something like two and a half million dollars to endow my retirement to bring it up to that.

Kenneth O'Brien 8:48

And they debated it

Albert W. Brown 8:48

Well I mean I don't know how heavily they debated it. they had to set up some kind of the thing is I had an golden shackles.

Kenneth O'Brien 8:58

Yep.

Albert W. Brown 9:00

I had my youngest child was doing well in high school, she was six years younger than the next one and she was going to graduate. And so

Kenneth O'Brien 9:10

she was a terrific student.

Albert W. Brown 9:11

And I should go on and happy and they should've had a clean sweep, in there at that time, actually. Maybe not. But the administrators that I had at that moment and I'd been there after all, I was senior in like the tenure (unintelligible) at that time Bob McVinnny and I were close ten two years earlier (?) about two years before we were 16 years. And by then, you're tired. You've used up you're Maybe not creativity, but you were dependent more and more on The vice presidents and administrators and we did not have that (unintelligible) replaced

Kenneth O'Brien 9:53

No you didn't

Albert W. Brown 9:56

absolutely did not

Kenneth O'Brien 9:57

did not.

Albert W. Brown 10:01

But by that time, remember that the SUNY system was a far different system.

Kenneth O'Brien 10:09

Let's talk a little bit about that in a somewhat different way. This is also the time I think in the mid 70s when the funding formula changes all over the place,

Albert W. Brown 10:19

and then basically to be able to support the mid center and Long Island had to try to build a University Center at Buffalo and Stony Brook particularly. And so once we became a quote, mature college, then every thing that we have done to support the institution was taken out from under us in terms of the budgetary formula. You know, if you went over your Enrollment figures then they multiplied your new budget by the number of students you have but if you took a 150 students instead of 100 then you have hundred dollars and you only got to whatever that'd be 75 cents from then on anything you went over. In other words, he would reduce your your student support level. And Brockport had been above.

Kenneth O'Brien 11:14

Yes.

Albert W. Brown 11:15

Well, So if we had 1000 extra students that went into the formula that divided your budget as to how much you would get the next year, in terms of students. On the other hand, Geneseo that puts their students quota to be very low, was able to ride this down to that and retain better support pursuits (unintelligible) it was a jungle. And you could not tell where it was going.

Kenneth O'Brien 11:53

Some of us were talking the other day and this seemed to be the time when we started to get an annual pattern of a budget and then a November callback or December callback, is that. Is that accurate? Is that

Albert W. Brown 12:05

Yeah.

Kenneth O'Brien 12:07

And then you had to find money within a three month period that was supposed to be allocated for an entire year.

Albert W. Brown 12:16

It was almost impossible. We didn't have the horses in place to handle it. I don't think anybody they were all surviving under this uncertainty. It was not. It was not a happy time as far as I can see. (unintelligible).

Kenneth O'Brien 12:37

That's certainly had to compound, all the new problems. Let's turn to some curricular issues. You want to take a break

Albert W. Brown 12:45

no I'm fine, thanks.

Kenneth O'Brien 12:47

Let's turn to some curricular issues. When the reason I came in in 1970. What we were told is that you had come in 65 and brought the liberal arts curriculum with you Could you talk a little bit about curricular change and, and the impetus for it, and then your role in really implementing the new curriculum?

Albert W. Brown 13:08

That was uh, I did not bring it with me. I had been as I mentioned earlier involved with creating 17 departments of creating the college arts and sciences in Michigan. But none of those were very novel. I mean, these were just the component parts that you would find in any, I don't know, 8,000 or 10,000 student body in a Midwestern institution, I went to Brockport and I spent the better part of a year listing every group that thought that they should be a unit. And I mean, I would meet with any group of people, that thought that they ought to constitute an academic unit. And just for example, with where stamps (?) originated. This was where women's physical education originated out of physical education of old. I mean the women I'd met with them and

they thought they should be unit an academic unit Met with the social science poeple and some of them felt they should be maybe sociology or economics or political science. And so, we developed a target figure as to what might be developed and then there were these areas that to some extent I forced dance was one of them and I always say because Rul Strophers came and jumped up on the desk did two twirls and everybody could read his throat truth of the matter was we had long conversations that dance was one of the earliest forms of communication and therefore, deserved a place in the requirements for communication. This was Before the English literature books did (?) They were determined that if we got it a legitimate place in the curriculum this could develop as it should anyway I think I think we had 21 revisions of the college organizations when I have a piece of paper on the wall of the old administration, up near Hartwell, with a grease pencil, and I asked people to come in and put in where they thought they would like to be. And I believe the number of times I took the sheet down the number was 21. Because I remember from World War One, I didn't remember personally didn't remember the history of but the 21 points. I thought that was a significant number. And so we things moved from here to there. I mean, should they be, you know, under social sciences, should they be some other place? Eventually it started gel and revisions couldn't come through and we organized in that way. I did not come with any blueprint or (unintelligible). I came with a reasonable knowledge from North Central Association accreditation and some experience of Eastern (unitelligible) Possibly the leadership training program under Carnegie Franklin ahead 1960, 59 as to where institutions were going (unintelligible). And that was evolved from a need fo that area perceived needs of the area. If they were real or not I don't know.

Kenneth O'Brien 16:28

The was a whole city wide process that had begun about two years, three years earlier, coming out of that 10 year moratorium and then

Albert W. Brown 16:37

each institution for us to have the process, to some extent, appear to this. each institution was to have the normal undergraduate majors, and then there was rather a strange assumption that each of them could have a Masters in those same areas I mean you had a bachelor's in history, theoretically had a master's in history, of course it came apart because it made no sense for some institution to go that way. (unintelligible) There was authorization, to go through the Masters with normal academic departments. Most of them broke down on traditional departmental identification.

Kenneth O'Brien 17:29

How was curriculum developed in those early years did was there that this is before a faculty senate is there? Was there a faculty body that laid it out? And

Albert W. Brown 17:38

I'm trying to remember where it was? There was No. There was a faculty organization (unintelligible)

Kenneth O'Brien 17:42

Yes, yes. There was a faculty organization but

Albert W. Brown 17:48

There was plenty faculty involvement which I can't tell you the exact details.

Kenneth O'Brien 17:50

Okay.

Albert W. Brown 17:52

I don't know whether Wayne dedman's book talks to that or not.

Kenneth O'Brien 17:56

Wayne has talked to that in conversations, more than than I've found in the book itself. He talks about that early period that there's a 63 committee that lays out a blueprint. And the way Wayne has described it, you were really the implementer you came and made it work, because there were a lot there were massive widespread pockets of massive resistance.

Albert W. Brown 18:22

Well, yes, but there's another point to it too. And If you go to the masterplan if you want to find an interesting document go to the master plan that was written before I got there in 65. which had been submitted to Albany before I got there, and which I asked to have come back from Albany. And I took three months to rewrite it. Because the one submitted by Jordan and by Wayne would show that there would have been 3300 students, I think, well something like that, by 1970. Well, there was no way in god's green earth that any curricular pattern would have been developed with by adding 300 students or 600 students between 1965 and 1970. Their goal was to add about 100 a year in that Master Plan, which we scrapped and rewrote. So, it is not true.

Kenneth O'Brien 19:19

So in one way the the the implementation of the new curriculum was depended upon for

Albert W. Brown 19:26

growth,

Kenneth O'Brien 19:27

faster growth that had been originally projected.

Albert W. Brown 19:30

There was nothing in that 63 projection that was given any consideration whatsoever as far as I was concerned.

Kenneth O'Brien 19:36

Okay.

Albert W. Brown 19:38

And that would not sit well with Wayne. And it is true that if you if you use the verbiage it'd repeat itself but the whole concept (unintelligible),

Kenneth O'Brien 19:50

okay?

Albert W. Brown 19:52

And I'm not being hostile to Wayne

Kenneth O'Brien 19:54

No. Brockport among the colleges and SUNY seem to be most insistent of requiring an academic major of the elementary school teachers,

Albert W. Brown 20:12

right? We were

Kenneth O'Brien 20:13

and could you

Albert W. Brown 20:20

I guess it dates back to Illinois. Whereas in when I was there in 1952 53, they demanded that you have a Master's if you continue to teach elementary in four or five years, Eastern Illinois developed a fifth year program to give a master's degree to elementary teachers who were not qualified. We took all the freshman courses and gave them a 500 number. And then the elementary teachers came in and they took I taught freshmen geology in under a 500 number And then they became competent in earth science by taking a course. freshmen there I called it fifth year remedial, the dean didn't like particularly, fifth year remedial. And they got their masters by taking five freshmen courses. It seemed to me I mean that left a bad taste in my mouth in terms of my own choices, seemed to me that elementary teachers needed to have an area of competence of academic competence. And then they could even team teach, or they could trade off for something but at least they had more than well as opposed to 60 hours of education, and that plus the freshman sophomore courses and whatever they got in the general education, Andy Virgilio and Ray Conrad both were very supportive in the idea of an academic background for elementary teachers and this was not unique, but it was rather unusual and I was absolutely elated that they would go along with the idea of putting in an academic major so that elementary teachers actually had an area of competence besides more and more education courses and this came through very nicely in my opinion I don't (unintelligible) now if they've gone back to.

Kenneth O'Brien 22:23

No, no, no, we, we have not. And I don't think there's any chance that the college will. as a matter of fact, the state now 30 years later, 35 years later, has moved so that the new regulations which will be going into effect in the next five years, demand an academic major

Albert W. Brown 22:41

that's the only possible (positive?) and it came from it basically stemmed from my In fact, I used to when I was acting department head in Illinois I used to advise my failing undergraduates to enroll as a graduate student because they were going to get a b and if a student had never had anything above a D and that and needed some (unitelligible) enroll in the graduate course, then you'll get an A or a B and you'd be able to raise your (unitelligible)

Kenneth O'Brien 23:10

So you were caustic even then

Albert W. Brown 23:11

Afterwards, no and, and that's the way it worked

Kenneth O'Brien 23:22

with the new curriculum in place, or the new curriculum on the books, and and the plans for growth, you needed to have not only places where they would be taught which that was in the pipeline or being built at the time, but you also needed the faculty to teach. Could you talk a little bit about that, that process of getting that faculty. Remember that among the faculty are your two interviewers here,

Albert W. Brown 23:47

right. The we had identified the best department heads, we could As we moved into that process, and I can tell you some very interesting stories about the changing of department heads one of them concerned an area that apart which I, well, person that the difference between the industrial arts and the fine arts and the faculty they all were, you know, making yellow or orange jacket lanterns in October and buying the materials separate. And I did go in and meet with the two of them and said they can resolve some materials that they were going to buy etcetera, etcetera and curriculums they were going to have because they were at two parallel programs and if they put meet together and resolve it it'd be great If they didn't if they didn't the roof of Hartwell would open and a heraldic angel would come in bearing a tablet upon, which would be the decision and Wolski went back and painted. Have you ever seen his painting

Kenneth O'Brien 25:00

Yes, I have

Albert W. Brown 25:02

Came back this tablet indicated one. So the other departments we had an art department I asked the head to come in about 11 o'clock or so and I said that in Michigan I'd decorated the office with student art and the faculty art. And I'm sure he was proud of some of the things that they were doing and (unintelligible) wanted to know what I was talking about. I said, I'd like to have some student art and some faculty art in the offices and just rotate through two to three months or something like that if you could. And this is not nice to have on tape. One o'clock he came back drunker than a horse.

Kenneth O'Brien 25:48

What did you say

Albert W. Brown 25:53

And I said that when it rotates some of the students' art Through the office, they were convinced And he said, I thought that's what you said and two days later he had resigned from his (unintelligible). And that went on. And of course, another department head had not read a book for over seven years and was legally blind.

Kenneth O'Brien 26:21

Oh, dear, okay.

Albert W. Brown 26:24

There were some people who have been carried for a while. I think And the message is, is that we had changed some department heads to make the strongest people we could. On those we could rely for the selection of what was assumed to be potentially qualified faculty.

Kenneth O'Brien 26:40

And you also created a dean structure. That was the first time

Albert W. Brown 26:45

and that was part of that 21 revisions of the organizational chart. Sometimes, I mean, people'd come in and look and say we don't want this so they'd take a grease pencil and move these out (unintelligible)

Kenneth O'Brien 26:58

Were the deans directly involved with the hiring of a faculty

Albert W. Brown 27:03

They would've been once they were in place. They would have been involved with the faculty (unintelligible). And there was a general assumption that if they were going to be academic faculty they would be on the road towards their PhDs (unintelligible) in terms of their degrees.

Kenneth O'Brien 0:01

The question we have is is, was this change with a greater emphasis on professions and professional programs? intentional and conscious? And when did it really begin to develop?

Albert W. Brown 0:17

In my opinion, in retrospect, whatever the intention from the beginning was to serve the Rochester metropolitan area,

Kenneth O'Brien 0:26

okay.

Albert W. Brown 0:27

With a broad spectrum of whatever academic preparations would be necessary for that area. The first order was to get the academic the traditional liberal arts organized and up and running. Then it was pretty obvious that the supporting areas and the technical fields that would be closely related I mean we weren't going into automobile mechanics or anything of that nature, but the applied academics, as in social work and nursing and so forth obviously would become a part of a need to (?) serve the Rochester Metropolitan Area. And I think it's that simple, I think I think it was inherent. To go right back to the inaugural speech, you'll see that it's working. But you had to get the academics first. And once that was in place you use those building blocks as the base for the, for the applied program. Remember I've said from the very beginning that I do not believe in the concept of the University Center, I believe, and I've never intended Brockport to be a University Center because I didn't like University Centers, I like the delivery system where the everything that was needed would be able to come through the pipeline, not restricted because of the title over the door.

Kenneth O'Brien 1:47

Is that because so much of the research that's conducted at University Centers is, is really presumed to be theoretical and pure research, or

Albert W. Brown 1:56

no, I think there's a place for that which is theoretical and in there but at the same time that has its place. But you also have a place that if the applied might come. And if you need the applied, then you ought to be able to get it and simply because buffalo says I'm now a University Center, I can't dirty my hands with with electronics or something or other applied electronics in in this field, you shouldn't be prohibited, or forced to do anything because of the title of the institution. You're talking about an educational delivery system. And if you're doing that, then once you put a label on it, I am an University Center and you want to go to class A football or something rather because university centers have class A football. And you know and I doubt that that's the label gets in your way, and that has been true with the University Centers Why should there be two four year colleges in the buffalo or in the Rochester area Geneseo and Brockport? I mean, if they were the same, wouldn't it be kind of silly, well you have Potsdam and Platzberg, up on the northern edge of the Adirondacks, the title has restricted thinking as to what the function truly should be, in my opinion. And so the applied came in because it was necessary in that area, you had 400,000 people you oughtta be able to give them the educational opportunities that were not available in any of the other institutions.

Kenneth O'Brien 3:47

You were saying the model for Brockport?

Yes. I mean, what we were talking about was the proper role of the institution and how it should use its resources and certain people and the phrase that I use the model for Brockport was Brockport was not an accidental phrase at all, because our faculty was coming in fresh from Michigan, from Wisconsin from California, sometimes even Harvard and other places of that nature. And all of them saw the ultimate goal for their institution to create as near as they could a facsimile of the institution from which they graduated, which of course, we were bringing their talent to form a cohesive, whole that had its own purpose and its own function and responsibilities, not the same as Penn State or university of texas or anything else. So by the concept that the model for Brockport is itself you could use the academic in order to achieve the purposes that you have decided to in service of the people there, whether it be an education, whether they come in applied fields, or whether that they be destined go on for academic PhDs in their traditional disciplines, you had to decide what you were trying to do. And then to use all of the talents and resources you had to achieve that the best you could. And the people who said you can't do it because you're a University Center or that you must do it because you're a

University Center, in my opinion, are both equally wrong. There should be a rational discussion, as to have a decision made as to what you really ought to do.

one of the distinctive features, it seems to me of the Brockport that you built, or had such a large hand in building was that there were very special kinds of programs. Not all of them lasted but they for a moment in time they defined the place

Albert W. Brown 5:46

and they all served a purpose while they were existing

Kenneth O'Brien 5:50

Peace Corps. The dance major as it became a resident Dance Company,

Albert W. Brown 5:56

the junior year at home

Kenneth O'Brien 5:58

the junior year at home

Albert W. Brown 5:58

in Washington.

Kenneth O'Brien 6:00

The alternate college. Could you talk a little bit about talk about the junior year at home?

Albert W. Brown 6:07

Okay, a junior year at home. Was a concept that it's, it's terribly nice to go to France or some other place to pick up a bit of culture and language and what have you. But it seemed to me that one of the most important things is to get a cross cultural experience and enrichment if you will, without having to leave the country. And of course, one of the first of these junior years at home was the Washington exchange program and the teacher education. And the President of

washington dc teachers college and I were good friends through the AAS, asking of the associations through colleges and universities and made a basic agreement we would accept their students whenever ready for student teaching at face value, and they would accept ours at face value. Our students being in dormitories would pay their tuition but live with the families in Washington and their students never having lived in the dormitory or outside of their own homes would come and live in the Brockport dormitories. So they would have a junior year experience and basically an all-white teaching in Pittsburgh or Penfield or someplace, and ours would go down and live with a black family in Washington DC, and teach there. Didn't have to you know have to take a year in Africa to experience the, different kind, you've experienced a South American culture and worked beautifully for two, three years. We had some outstanding students in both directions. Many of the last I knew many of the Brockport students were still working in urban areas. some of them still in Washington. We had Mary Francis which was an outstanding black student in Washington. It was the University of Massachusetts the last I knew I don't know where she is now. But this was the idea that you could and should experience that cross cultural experience without the glamour and what have you of going to some other exotic place you've got exotic places here at home Peace Corps program came as I said in the tape before and basically through jack Vaughn and myself and three Bloody Mary's at Rothmans restaurant in Oyster Bay. We were both down at old Westbury. And I pointed out to him that if we could train pencils and second lieutenants with ROTC, we ought to be able to train Peace Corps people with the same amount of international competence (unintelligible) survival and so forth. After the third bloody mary, he said right on or something or other. And so we agreed to work it out in the pattern on Naval ROTC, and I gave it to of course jack Randall to run which he did a beautiful job with but the There was a logic behind it and that was preparing to do international service you ought to be prepared as much as possible not only get the job but to survive. And so we had a break in the pattern a visit to the host country and during the summer in the summer encampment and made the professional language requirements. I think we did a very good job it was killed by Nixon, actually, in the budget reductions that came but it was we had good Lord, we have 200 applications or so from some of the best institutions in the country because kind of appealing I mean you finish your sophomore year for the subsidized program.

Kenneth O'Brien 9:40

Yeah

Albert W. Brown 9:40

for two years. And not automatic but almost certainly admission to the Peace Corps and a good chance of surviving and also brought to the campus not only 25, 30, 40, 50 students, whatever it might of been in this program, it also brought The campus competency on language for example, Spanish competency at the professional level yes 250 from the doctor do that because (?) then you had to bring in some competence that often did not exist in the foreign language departments. In fact, it would always tickle me in the foreign language department that when

there was a great conflict between two members of departments kind of both came in to argue about how bad the other one was. I could not understand either one in English.

Kenneth O'Brien 10:51

Speaking of things foreign, one of the other distinctive programs or features of Brockport is The extent of the overseas program, the International Education Program, and that seems to have been fostered just about this time.

Albert W. Brown 11:06

Yeah. Well, it's it's part of an extension of the same. The same pattern I mean obviously the international programs without being a peace corps member, important to history to language to physical science and everything under the sun. And so there was an opportunity to get it and we had competent people to work with the programs in France. and what have you, and a person in the political science area the same thing came in with Mike Weaver and Ken Washington, these were opportunities for the students to if you will have color practical color, hands on call it whatever you want to, but education on the site that was appropriate for that education.

Kenneth O'Brien 11:48

The alternate technology very good. Where does the impetus for that come from?

Albert W. Brown 11:54

number of things going back originally, it's Carnegie's less time, more options. That's the general concept of

Kenneth O'Brien 12:08

Jim Frost was

Albert W. Brown 12:09

Jim Frost was for it. And I am. Of course Ernie Boyer was very much in favor of that type of thing. I mean, he was at that time lecturing everything on the less time more option type of thing and actually was sorta given to us in terms of would we be interested in it? And so with Armand Burke and others, we drew up the the alternate college, which, incidentally, I don't know how well this is known, is an alternate college. It's chartered on the Brockport, separate from the rest

of the college and there was a reason for that, because you might well know, and this was missed by a lot of people and it was one of the requirements by Hannah. That meant that they would develop their own curriculum. Without having to go back through the appropriate traditional academic approval. And if you had a faculty that was gonna teach English in history and sixteen other things in there, if it were not alternate college, then in order to maintain the academic supremacy, which is important in there, you'd had gone back to the departments, and there would've been no alternate college, there would've been another major of some kind made up of the existing pieces. But by going to the separate charter, it was the alternate college. If you didn't want to go to Brockport you could go onto the campus. You were controlled by Armand Burke and his faculty and nobody else.

Kenneth O'Brien 13:47

The early years of that program had an incredible esprit de corps.

Albert W. Brown 13:50

Oh yes. They did a wonderful job with it. They had a problem. And that was that what was the What did you do with a 3 year college degree That didn't give you an immediate access to a vocation of your choice. So a lot of people felt that or some people felt that Jeez, if they'd only taken teacher education. They could've gotten a job in college. You see what I'm saying. But as an academic experience I mean if you want to look at the Baccalaureate as being a base from which you can do different things, I mean a good education. The alternate College was, was a tremendous thing. It did not get the credentialling to to teach or something else. Which some parents thought we should.

Kenneth O'Brien 14:38

No, but you know what could happen. And this is the way we advise them. You can get a master's in Ed. And with a half semester more, you'll be a year plus ahead,

Albert W. Brown 14:51

but your colleagues and some others I mean would not immediately endorse that concept.

Kenneth O'Brien 14:58

No I know

Albert W. Brown 14:58

But I mean it made tremendous sense and Armaund and Chris did a wonderful job in those early years of putting that together, and the faculty

Kenneth O'Brien 15:07

A great and good, man.

Albert W. Brown 15:08

Yeah.

Kenneth O'Brien 15:10

The fine arts, they seemed to be created out of whole cloth that you had to put enormous resources to get the artists to the space, right? Why did you make that commitment?

Albert W. Brown 15:24

because anybody coming to a university or college, whatever you call it of any quality would have had the opportunity to participate in those things art music and what have you. And I, I couldn't conceive of a college graduate who had not had, you know, real opportunities to work in in the arts, and that included some reemphasis in the drama area went along with dance. We always fell short on music. In terms of creating any great strength there, but no, I mean, art is one of the fundamental things that you would expect an educated person at the Baccalaureate level to have some relationship with. You want to talk about college education

Kenneth O'Brien 16:22

as fundamental as history,

Albert W. Brown 16:24

yes. In fact, probably is history you know it would be hard to deal with art without knowing history, wouldn't it?

Kenneth O'Brien 16:34

But what struck us as we were as we were looking at the changes from 63 to 73, is it with dance at least there is the relationship with women's phys ed and with physical education. But for the art department itself, there's there's not much there to build on. As you look at 63 forward

Albert W. Brown 16:59

Go Back to my story on the drawing part of Fine Arts when I suggested that in my office should be the student artwork and the faculty artwork

Kenneth O'Brien 17:12

Okay,

Albert W. Brown 17:12

which resulted in a long cocktail hour I'm not reminiscing but I'm just saying it's kind of funny because the concept that we did anything besides draw jack o' lanterns on Halloween and, and pink and blue baskets at Easter. I mean, they were all supporting elementary education in part. And that's not at a college level operation

Kenneth O'Brien 17:39

No. And to this day, what has survived is the student art show and the excitement about that and the faculty art show and

Albert W. Brown 17:48

and look what we did in the other areas if you want to talk about these funny programs. The philosophical year,

Kenneth O'Brien 17:52

yeah.

Albert W. Brown 17:52

And Kiefer's account of that which I Imagine you've seen he sent a document oh a year year or so Basically Akerton had him, and, he wanted to go over so I said, Why the hell don't you bring him here instead, said I rub off (?). And of course his favorite story is that guy who recounted

going to someplace or other United States and they wanted to know how far it was from Brockport that great Center. Which I think is just hilarious. But anyway, what that is is make an impact on the institution so we can have quality people here and it is defensible within our budget (unintelligible) budget, I mean to to expose the faculty and fellow students and in that area, discipline to whatever quality you're capable of attracting

Kenneth O'Brien 18:43

This is getting a little ahead of ourselves, but in looking over 1966, 67, 68 I've been struck by the extraordinary number of those kind of events, very few on that scale, but still an incredible number. The campus seemed to be so intellectually alive. You had to make a commitment to that. How did you foster that? How did you get the people to do this all the work involved in bringing these folks to

Albert W. Brown 19:16

they were good people who again you once you take the top off the box, they came out and were willing to many of them had some seething ambition to do something which they had not been able to do under the old pattern. I mean, if you had implemented the 1963 curricular pattern, which I'd have not the faintest idea what it was, you'd probably would have had different colored easter eggs. And at Easter time and I'm really writing down (?) I'm just saying that these people had talent, they had dreams, and they hadn't done anything and they had never been able to do anything because it was pretty tight run shop. And of course the first thing we did was to use the midpoints of the 65 class as the cut off point for the 66 and then the midpoint of the 66 was the cut of 67. And then we started to bring in the transfer students who built us a square rectangular student body as opposed to this one. And which created an instant upper division, which meant that they better be capable of teaching third and fourth year, whatever. Which was also delivered. But the student body by 68, 69 was bipolar. You had the original Brockport always had good students, but there were few and far between and they were the dumping ground.

Kenneth O'Brien 20:41

And it is you always talk about the not just the few good ones, but that distribution throughout the entire class.

Albert W. Brown 20:46

Yeah. But when you start knocking off, the and you could get to Brockport, if you couldn't get any other institution that was well known in the system. This was one of the things that Frost and Gould were terribly. Not that not that you want to be exclusive, but you'd better be able to serve

the students that you take. And so there were an awful lot people went to Brockport that probably were not benefited a great deal by

Kenneth O'Brien 21:18

people would make the same complaints about what happened at the end of the 70s.

Albert W. Brown 21:25

Yeah, but Remember, we had a couple problems. Richard Miller dumped the entire summer Start program into the fall admission without telling anybody because they were running short on enrollment. And so he rolled out the summer start people enrolled them in September. So he dumped in that faculty without my knowledge. The people who should have been there for the summer four five week remedial program, which is they got two C's or something or other They would have been admissible in September, he admitted it.

Kenneth O'Brien 22:05

Okay.

Albert W. Brown 22:06

And he did that tape on

Kenneth O'Brien 22:08

tape on.

Albert W. Brown 22:09

He did it with the knowledge of the admissions staff, which resulted in some changes in the admission staff,

Kenneth O'Brien 22:15

but not your knowledge.

Albert W. Brown 22:17

Absolutely not my knowledge. I didn't know about it until well into the year. So what we did was to pollute the academic area we would our admission probably would have dropped off more heavily, but we were not responding to the reality of admissions.

Kenneth O'Brien 22:43

We'll talk about admissions, particularly in the 70s and early 80s, I think at a later point.

Albert W. Brown 22:51

But I was I was horrified to learn that the class should have been a summer start group had really become a sizable portion of the (unintelligible) September admission, and I learned about it sometime before Christmas, I think

Kenneth O'Brien 23:15

one of another piece that sort of strikes us whether fair or not, and I'd like to just have your wide ranging comment on it anything you choose is, is the importance of precedence. And in this case, the one particular case where I think it really comes home to us is that despite all the changes between 65 and 75, if you look at SUNY in 95. The two colleges that are most similar, in many ways are Cortland, and Brockport. And those are two colleges that had a very similar curricular mission at the beginning of SUNY So that turns us to sort of the consideration of physical education and health and the way in which it is infused throughout the college in a whole variety of ways. It may be the largest academic major, it's certainly one of the two largest academic majors. And the athletic program is among the most extensive within SUNY has been for the 30 years that we've been there. How does this very large group fit into how did it fit into your vision of the place and what it could become?

Albert W. Brown 24:35

Of course Physical Education was certainly something better than a third of the power structure of the campus in 1965. And it contained some very dedicated very, very able people, some strong physical education leaders. It moved into a better academic base without any great resistance. I mean, I think the quality of the instruction moved along and the staff, by and large were high quality as moved in they are Marty Rogers is was an exceptional person, no question about it and an alarm and then of course Boozer and, and just named 'em. I mean, they, they were just very, very great people in that there was whether their mission coincided with the campus or not, I'm not quite certain. At times, I think they were sort of running their own happy little shop. Certainly that was true with the Adirondack camp that they had, whether it was a great vacation for them in the summer and everybody had fun and I was teams do not have to win in order to be good. One of the first shocks I got in terms of the size of the physical Education department The

first time I saw a basketball game. And any one of the sweet 16 teams in Illinois, could have beaten them out of high school. And so it seemed to me that if we were producing people who were going to be coaches and what have you around that they had to experience a quality performance while there and that doesn't mean you have to have all winning teams or anything of that nature. but soccer was wonderful. Basketball was very weak. Swimming was great, with Jim Fultman, but in football, nobody ever was better than the football coach, but the team certainly compared to Cortland What was his name? Still there who was the quarterback from Cortland ran through the team all the time.

Kenneth O'Brien 27:00

Nugent?

Albert W. Brown 27:02

Yeah. And it seemed to me that that performance had to be at the level that you would expect in college. Now, we don't want to stress that too far because the we can minagio (?) a sad moment and terribly time consuming everything else and certainly not my intention but to it's also true that that part of this plan had become more uniform. It's also true that the women's physical ed was one of the most obsolete curriculums curriculums I have ever seen in my life. I mean, that was 132 hours, you know, required sequential. And I'm sure you read my little Billy do the Millard Chief and I used to enjoy so much on the sorting of arrows

Kenneth O'Brien 27:59

Yes.

Albert W. Brown 28:01

If you were a department hed you were sorting arrows because Students were not capable of doing it. And she had no time to conceptualize anything else wonderful person, but a lot of physical ed was sorting arrows. And we had to get out of that. my own feeling as to physical education in terms of the required

Albert W. Brown 0:01

Time sports and the requirements (unintelligible) including climbing the seven peaks in the Adirondacks we wanted as opposed to the usual requirements didn't make an awful lot of headway but we certainly built a good facility continues as good physical ed, good reputation throughout the state. It we had some very good faculty who some of whom have left that had academic orientation that would have helped us a good deal as summer programs at Penn State and so forth that it was a stabilizing influence on the campus. There's no question about it. And

people like Marty Rogers, had all kinds of doubts about where the institution was going but remained basically very loyal and supportive.

Kenneth O'Brien 0:52

Great man

Albert W. Brown 1:00

We were organized like the Trinity. And that was my expression in one of those weak moments (unintelligible) education physical education was a experience of liberal studies which you can sense but could not find. And that's the way we were organized. You are aware it was there not readily felt. And pause the tape.

Kenneth O'Brien 1:38

We're going to bring this to a close now, in a couple of there are two questions. One, I'm going to ask on behalf of a student who I have working on this particular subject this summer graduate student, and that's involving the Special Olympics and how it was brought to campus in 1979. It became a major showcase for the campus. What did you hope to achieve for the college by the kind of investment and time and energy that the administration made for that.

Albert W. Brown 2:08

Come back to what we've said earlier on it. And that is that we were looking to create a student body that was as competent as you possibly could to take a role in the world that was coming. And one of the worlds that was coming was the reentry of the people from Gowanda and the mental hospitals back into the society and the remember, I had come out of (unintelligible) of Michigan in which, we were trying to utilize people to their full talent in any way we could. And one of the Great neglected groups, would have been the handicapped in order to give our students the and I enforced this, there's no question about it whatsoever. Do it deliberately. In order to give our students that opportunity. We started with a number of funny little things. We had the Wednesday or Thursday night program for the kids in the Rochester and Batavia area. They came into the PE building and swam and had a social hour and everything. And students could work with that for a semester or two, so their credentials would show that they had worked with the handicapped. And some we went from that to seriously looking at the New York State Special Olympics, which we held, I guess twice before that we went for the Nationals at least once before. Yeah, but we have been what we had started before that back very early 70s, late 60s, with programs in the PE area. One or two nights a week I forgot what it was, but we hadn't been I know they'd rushed in students betweenone and the the other deliberately to give students a hands on experience. And that was to, if you will enrich the program and make them more

competitive as they went out into the job market more capable. And that led to where After we'd run the successful New York State to go to the international Special Olympics and First Peter does a wonderful job with that. And that brought to the campus a great number of things that couldn't possibly have been brought there. Otherwise,

Kenneth O'Brien 4:22

material things

Albert W. Brown 4:25

Well I mean Zurab came over I remember the year there were no handicap children in the Soviet Union but it was the year of the child. So he was able to make that statue an (unintelligible) for the year of the child which we saw called the Special Olympics and yet was able to recreate his nephew as Prometheus in front of the administration building and that was his nephew you know.

Kenneth O'Brien 4:47

I didn't know that.

Albert W. Brown 4:49

The model is his nephew who probably, I'm surprised that The whole population of that there is a whole generation in Brockport. that Looks Georgian and speaks Russian. His nephew is something to behold. Take that out I hope.

Kenneth O'Brien 5:14

You'll have an opportunity to edit

Albert W. Brown 5:16

He was the great hulk of the area and study of the north country. Model for prometheus.

Kenneth O'Brien 5:23

Okay. Prometheus is now bent, you know, oh, fearsome west wind about three years ago. And it's cracked on the east side. And so it is now got guide wires around it to make sure that it does

Albert W. Brown 5:39

Realize the person that originally, that Zurab was going to make a statue because this is a big country, and therefore your statue should be big. And he came out with a design that you would have been, I don't know, 36 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty or something or other. And I said to him, I was talking about proportion, but he said, oh no. It was a big country, you must have a big statue. And I finally said to them, that we're on the flight pattern into the roughest airport. And in order to have that we're going to have to have a red flashing light on the top. And that would really detract a great deal from the convention. I didn't think about it being part of the Soviet Union. I mean, I said this is this would be just unacceptable to have a red light on that and now flashing all the time. They agreed and so they cut it down. I think it's one sixth or something or other the size it was going to be and then all hell broke loose. So I got calls from the Soviet Union. What is your artistic background? I have none. Well, how can you tell the people's artist of the Soviet Union? That his that you is too big. And I said it's not my problem is that it's regulation some of these. Air regulations that it would be a (unintelligible) it was taller than the administration building, the plan at the time So eventually when they heard regulation, they all decided that was true. But then I discovered he'd already made (unintelligible) and now it's on the hill behind Depleasy.

Kenneth O'Brien 7:13

the full scale.

Albert W. Brown 7:15

Yeah. So the statue is in Depleasy, but then he brought up 7 18 wheelers and stuff there and assembled the. Special Olympic Park and the and made one hell of an impression in terms of the arts in terms of here's a guy that turned up half a dozen pieces of painting today, you know, most of many of the sunflowers in the spring but all neat it opened up the eyes of the campus I'm sure and the community what about 7,000 The people involved in that all together.

Yeah. And and there's a there's a long term effect. People still talk about that as one of the defining moments of the campus. And, and its contribution

He leftus with an identification working with those people. We could have continued a close relationship with Special Olympics if we had wanted to, but the seeds were planted whatever. Certainly had a big impact on PE people

Kenneth O'Brien 8:32

last question for today. Okay, and there will be more. What do you think was your greatest success? And what do you think was your greatest failure?

Albert W. Brown 8:46

greatest success was building the faculty with the academic orientation that we had say by 1974 at the time, I mean it was a campus that was alive and it had the resources to do it. Greatest failure was is not being able to cope with the changing conditions and what have you in the late 70s. Early 80s probably 79, 80 and so forth we talked when we had a weak sub administrative structure, maybe oughtn't say sub, a weak administrative structure. And that obviously was changes had to be made. I guess I'm saying the greatest failure was to not to cope with the changes of the late 70's at least with the same energy (unintelligible)

Kenneth O'Brien 9:47

Let me show you a few other other things,

Albert W. Brown 9:48

okay.