THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Celeste Ulrich

INTERVIEWER: Hermann J. Trojanowski

DATE: April 20, 2006

HT: Today is April 20, 2006, it's a Thursday. My name is Hermann Trojanowski and I am at Jackson Library at the UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro] campus to conduct an oral history interview with Dr. Celeste Ulrich. This interview is for the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection. Dr. Ulrich, thank you so much for coming in to talk with me today. I really appreciate it. If you would tell me your full name, we'll use that as a test to see how we both sound on the machine.

CU: My full name is Adele Celeste Ulrich.

[tape stops and restarts]

HT: I wanted to ask some biographical information about yourself such as where you were born and when you were born and a little bit about your family.

CU: I was born in Baltimore, Maryland, 1924, and my father's name was Frank Ulrich. My mother's name was Adele Seidewitz Ulrich. I grew up in a family in which I had one brother who was two years younger than myself. Because of the times, it was during the Depression, in the latter years of my stay in Baltimore, my mother's mother, my grandmother, joined our family; so I grew up in a family in which there were three generations.

I went to school, at public school, at Howard Park Elementary School and Forest Park High School and I always considered my education in Baltimore to be exemplary. It prepared me well for my college experiences.

HT: Well, in high school, what were your favorite subjects?

CU: Well, I've always been interested in science and I also liked English literature and history. I did well in school scholastically and so therefore, everything that had to do with school, I enjoyed. I remember apparently, as a very young child, when people asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I used to apparently say that I wanted to be a high school teacher. That to me was the epitome of what one could reach in those days. I also participated, obviously, in athletic events for women. At that time, Baltimore had a lot of

interscholastic athletics for women which was unusual in those days. But I had the chance to participate in several teams of volleyball, basketball, women's field hockey teams and enjoyed that a great deal also.

HT: Since you were from Baltimore, what made you decide to come south to go to college?

CU: Well, it was right after the Depression and we certainly didn't have very much money and when I was interviewed by the counselor, the guidance counselor, at Forest Park High School, she suggested that probably the very best school in physical—I decided that I might want to be a physical education teacher. The very best school as far as physical education was concerned, she thought, were two places; one was Sargent [College] which was a private college up in Boston [Massachusetts] and the other one was Greensboro [Woman's College], which was a state institution. And when I talked with my family it was obvious that we couldn't afford Sargent and so therefore it seemed to me that the best opportunity would be to come to Greensboro. I wrote to find out if there were any scholarships and at that time there were no scholarships available, but there were work opportunities so I got a job working in the dining hall, also stacking book in the library and had an opportunity to read to one of our blind colleagues, so that I was able to earn my tuition that way.

HT: And when did you first arrive at Woman's College?

CU: 1942.

HT: Now this was the height of the war [World War II], do you have any memories of that time.

CU: Well, yes. As a matter of fact—it wasn't quite the height of the war yet, the war had just really started. I remember the day that war was declared and I was still in high school at that time, I was a senior. And we went to history class and my professor there—in Baltimore, some of the teachers in high school had their doctoral degrees, which was unusual, and Dr. [Harry] Bard, who was my history teacher, admonished all of us that we must be historical and not hysterical. And that was—so when I can to Greensboro, I remember the only way we could get down here, because there was rationing as far as gasoline was concerned and so on, was by train. And at that time, they still met us at the railroad station when people came in and so I came into Greensboro from Baltimore on an all-night train from—came through Washington down to Greensboro.

And my other poignant memories of the war were during my time here at Greensboro. We had, at that time, there was only one telephone to every dormitory and so that therefore the students took turns in manning the telephone and when a telephone call came in to a specific girl, you had to call over the loudspeaker and announce, "Mary Jones, you have a call down here." And anytime that there was a phone called—phone calls were not made in that time just for fun and you knew that something terrible had happened and one of my poignant memories was the fact that as you called up over the amplifier to hear an absolute scream of horror from the girl as they say, "Mary Jones, you

have a telephone call." And then to hear this shriek knowing then it probably announced the death of somebody.

HT: Can you give me some information about the time that you spent at WC [Woman's College] such as the administration, the teachers, the counselors, college life, etcetera?

CU: Oh yes. [both laugh] This could go on forever. In those days, first of all, there was a very heavy emphasis on the liberal arts and sciences so that everyone for the first two years were pretty well enmeshed in those disciplines. You did not begin your professional discipline, at best, until you were a junior. So consequently, the professors that I had, particularly that were in the College of Arts and Sciences were just exemplary. I have told this—said this to many people. One of the things that happened during those years, was that the teachers here, there was no emphasis on research. Although, many of the people had written text books and had written articles in their professional journals but their main emphasis was teaching, and so therefore, they really cared a great deal about teaching and spent their whole time in working hard with their students and with counseling and it was a marvelously rich opportunity.

On top of that, the other thing that I thought was so enriching here at Greensboro was everyone lived in dormitories. Of course, it was during the war and there was no opportunity—there were no young men on campus at that time and so that therefore we all spent all of our time on campus. People couldn't even get home because of the rationing, even if they lived in North Carolina. And so as a result of that and because of Harriet Elliott's influence, the dormitories became extended classrooms and all of the dormitories at that time were, for the most part, headed by counselors who also had teaching responsibilities and so our opportunities in living were just as rich as our opportunities in the scholastic atmosphere. So, as a result of that, the four years that I spent at Greensboro just added tremendously to the kind of opportunities I had ever had before in terms of being enriched with knowledge and understanding and thoughtful teachers.

I remember so many of my teachers at that time, I certainly remember Lyda Gordon Shivers who was in sociology at that time. Dr. Shivers was the first woman who had ever graduated from the University of Mississippi in Law and she had come to Greensboro to teach sociology and she taught a course in criminology in which she gave us a case and then assigned students to be either on the defense or the prosecution and we had to try the case and she acted as a judge. And then she would point out the fallacies in our thinking and our—if we had not done a good job in trying to find out about what had happened with regard to the case itself. She also made sure that we visited institutions where there were people who were needy so we got to see what the reality of life was like. She sent us over to institutions where there were people that had been incarcerated either for crimes or sometimes because mental disabilities and the experience that Dr. Shivers offered us was a very enlightening experience.

Then I remember another teacher by the name of Inez Coldwell who was in biology and one year I—Mrs. Coldwell always came to class early to get us all set up for the laboratory experience. I got there one day a little bit early and she was dissecting a frog. And she said to me, "Celeste, come over here. I want you—I want to do something." And she said, "Reach out your hand." And she dissected the heart of the

frog, which was still beating. And she put it in my hand and she said, "You will never ever forget this experience of having a beating heart in your hand." And of course, I never have.

I remember Margaret Endicott and Miss Endicott was a professor of chemistry and a very exacting woman and she, one day—whenever the bell rang she would stop in the middle of a sentence, but not to worry, because the next time you met class she began the sentence exactly where she had stopped. And so that you learned to write to the last few words that she had said so you could pick up the next words when you came into class the next day. And one day I remember Miss Endicott saying—asking us about how to test for unknowns and she said, "Suppose you were given two gasses and one was carbon monoxide and the other was carbon dioxide, what is the unknown test? What is the test for the unknowns to find out which is which?" Well, I had forgotten what the real test was so being rather flippant I said, "Well, I think I would breathe in both of them and if I did, the one that I died from would be carbon monoxide." And she said, "Yes," she said, "Celeste but if you were wrong, then you couldn't answer my question could you?" [both laugh] I also remember once Margaret Endicott pulled down the chart of the periodic classification of elements and at that time, not all of the elements had been found but it was obvious that there were a systematic system and she looked at us and she said, "Now, if you look at that periodic classification if you think the scientists don't have faith, there's something wrong with you there."

So, you know, that there was another person—another person who was a tremendous influence on my life was Katherine Taylor. Katherine Taylor was my French teacher, my beginning French—elementary French teacher and also in addition to that was the counselor in the dormitory in which I lived. And Miss Taylor, to this day, remains one of the most erudite person I've ever met. She taught herself Japanese on her own. She was well-schooled in languages and in literature. In the dormitories, one of the things that she did, and she did this to a number of girls, but she called me into her office and she'd have a book there and she'd say, "Have you read this book yet Celeste?" And if I hadn't, then she would say, "Well, why don't you read it and we can talk about it." Well, of course, I was flattered to think that anyone would want to talk to me about a book and so I'd read the book and I would race back to her office and we would probably have an hour's discussion about what the book was about. And she always had another book for me to read and so during that time of the year, I would read sometimes as many as fifteen to twenty books all of which I would have the opportunity to interact with Miss Taylor and I say, I was not the only person she did that for, she did that for a lot of us.

Miss Elliott, I had the opportunity to take a class with her. She—during the war she was part of the President's [Franklin D. Roosevelt] cabinet—what they called the "Kitchen Cabinet" and so as a result of that, she wasn't on campus all the time. Her counterpart in political science, a teacher by the name of Louise Alexander—and Miss Alexander's classes were extraordinarily popular and in order to get into an Alexander class you had to stand in line at the registration which was then held in the gymnasium at the beginning of each semester. And so I had taken one course with Miss Alex and thought it was wonderful and I wanted to take a second one with her and the class was so full that they had to split it up and Miss Elliott returned to campus for that semester and so I was put in Miss Elliott's class. Well, of course, I was horribly disappointed because I wasn't going to have Miss Alex, and then I found out how fortunate I was because Miss

Elliott was equally as good as Miss Alexander and of course, she was right off of everything that was going on in the government. And one time I walked into her office and she—I had an appointment with her and there was a man in her office so that her secretary, May Lattimore Adams, who was very protective of Miss Elliott said, "Well Celeste, I'm sorry, you can't see Miss Elliott right now, she has a visitor." And Miss Elliott peers through the door and saw me, she said, "Come on in Celeste, I want you to meet Mr. Stettinius." And it was Edward Stettinius who happened to be the secretary of state at that time. And what I remembered was that he was a good-looking, Adonis-looking man and I was just absolutely impressed but it was not unusual to have Miss Elliott talking to the president of the United States when you were in her office nor was it unusual, for example, Eleanor Roosevelt came to visit on campus because of Miss Elliott's influence. Miss Elliott's concept of responsible freedom, she talked about a great deal and I remember her giving a lecture once on the fact that it was people and not systems that were important. That too was an extraordinarily rich experience.

I loved my classes with Marc Friedlaender who was an eminent Shakespearean scholar here on campus and he made Shakespeare alive for all of us. One of Dr. Friedlaender's examples was the difference between—he said that the difference between tragedy and comedy and we kind of looked at him with [unclear] and he said it was a simple test. He said, "If you see a young braggart whose has told you how good he is, walk along the street and slip on a banana peel, that's funny, that's comedy. If the same banana peel is there and an elderly lady who is trying to race toward the bus slips on a banana peel, that' tragedy." And he said, "That's all. That's the only thing you really have to apply and you can find that in Shakespeare as well." I still have all the classes I took in Shakespeare, I still have my Shakespeare book. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. Every once in a while, I reread some of the plays that we learned in college. We learned about gerontology from *King Lear,* we learned about what happened as far as Hamlet was concerned, his fixation with his mother's death, etcetera. All of that to me was a part of what Woman's College was at that time. But the emphasis upon teaching was exemplary.

Then, of course, when I got to be moved into my professional courses, the probably outstanding person there that impressed me at that time was Mary Channing Coleman. Miss Coleman was a woman who—she would always wear a hat, even when she was in class. She brought her fox terrier to school named Bonnie who was just as equally ferocious as Miss Coleman. Miss Coleman brooked no nonsense. When we first arrived she told us—she looked at us and said to us, "Three fourths of you will never graduate from my course." She said, "If you survive, you are going be second to none." And, of course, none of us ever thought we'd ever make it past there and I have said to several people since then that it was up until the day I graduated, I always knew that you could be dismissed for some transgression that you didn't even know that you had done.

We were not allowed at that time to wear our gymnasium clothes. Anything that suggested shorts or slacks and so on, on campus unless it was covered by a respectable length raincoat. And in addition to that Miss Coleman demanded a certain type of punctuality. We had to be in class always on time and so on. On of the stories that I remember about Miss Coleman, particularly, I was in her office and she was arranging my schedule at that time and she had a call from Dr. Friedlaender, the person I just mentioned that's a Shakespearean scholar. At that time there was a requirement for

everyone to take a physical education course, that was part of the requirement, and so apparently Dr. Friedlaender said to Miss Coleman, I later found out, "Miss Coleman, I have a young woman over here who has a horse that she is going to stable out at Sedgefield [Stables] and she is going to ride every morning and I can get some kind of certification about that. Will it be necessary, can she be excused from her physical education requirement?" Miss Coleman, I remember, sort of thought pensively for a few moments and she replied to Dr. Friedlaender, "Well, isn't it interesting Dr. Friedlander, I have a student in my office that I am just registering who promises faithfully to read Shakespeare every morning. Can she be excused from her freshman English course?" And reportedly Dr. Friedlaender said, "I see you point Miss Coleman." And that was the end of that. She was—Miss Coleman demanded of us the best that we could possibly offer. She, as I said, brooked no nonsense. If you didn't do what she wanted, she would let you know about it very fast.

Also in the physical education department, there were other teachers who were probably a little softer than Miss Coleman, but still very demanding as far a their expectations were concerned; Ethel Martus, Marge Leonard, and then the rather whimsical and the best athlete of the group was Ellen Griffin who was always able to somehow or another get you to change without you knowing you had changed because she would guide you in soft and thoughtful ways. We—there are so many other memories I have of the staff here that were just absolutely incredible. I got to know Dr. [Walter Clinton] Jackson because I had worked in student government. Got to know him well and he was, once again, a kind and thoughtful man who for years and years I always thought "WC" meant "Woman's College" Jackson instead of Walter Clinton. [both laugh] We all—I can't remember anybody who didn't love the man. He was that kind of a person. Then we—I used to listen to stories about the time when Miss Alexander and Miss Elliott had chained themselves to trees in order to sponsor women's suffrage downtown in Greensboro.

In addition to the teachers, there was the support staff which was always another very strong protector of the Woman's College reputation. The maids that were stationed in the residence halls, literally stayed in those position sometimes for generations and so that as a result of that you knew that every residence hall was identified with a certain maid and they were very, very protective of their girls who lived in the dormitories and insisted upon that we acted like young women and the maids in no way hesitated to let you know if you were doing anything that they thought was inappropriate for a young woman at Woman's College to do.

Speaking of Miss Taylor, another thing that I remember once, she made [Arthur] Rimbaud and [Charles] Beaudelaire so exciting. My class in French was just before lunch and we used to have to race down from our classroom down to Spencer Hall to get to the dining room to get in line in time to up pick lunch, but because of Miss Taylor's concern about Beaudelaire and Rimbaud, many times we'd stop by the library which at that time was right on College Avenue and I think it is called Forney Building today. And we would stop there and I would see our whole French class looking up books that Miss Taylor had suggested on the poetry of some of the French poets rather than go to lunch and I think that takes a special type of teaching to be able to do that.

HT: That's truly amazing. Well, what do you recall about social life during that time?

CU: Well, it was during the war and so that consequently there wasn't as much social life at least interacting with young men because most of them had been drafted and were off to war but there was an Overseas Replacement Depot here, ORD, and every Saturday these young men would come over to campus and we would have dances with them. And I remember personally those dances and most of the time they were showing you pictures of their girls and their mothers or their sisters or somebody else. And it was just before they were going to be sent overseas and they were, for the most part, scared young men and we were frightened for them.

Most of our social opportunities here on campus were among women because that's what the whole University was at that time and they provided opportunities for us. For example, I remember the Christmas concert that was done. George Thompson, who was a choirmaster and they always, the Christmas concert was always ended with the singing of "Stille Nacht" in German and we used to leave from Aycock Auditorium after the Christmas concert and sometimes there would be some snowflakes falling and it was really a picturesque time. In addition to that they would also have the Easter Rise Service here on campus that would be held in what was then known as Students' Building. And then I remember they, at that time, had four societies because there were no sororities on campus and so these four societies—. I remember the time when everybody got their class jackets and we got our class rings and there were always celebrations with regards to that.

I can remember one time when they—for the first time they had put soda pop machines in the dormitories, and the girls were taking soda pop out and leaving the empty bottles of soda pop in their rooms and so a bevy of ants began. And so the housekeeping staff decided that that could not do so they decided they were going to close the soda machines. Everybody was so incensed that they closed the soda machines that somebody said, "What we're going to do is that we'll gather together all those bottles and we'll pile them in front of the doorway, in front of the main housekeeper, and that will show her." The next week everybody on campus brought over their empty soda bottles and piled them in front of the doorway. The next morning the housekeeper came in and said, "See, I knew if we turned off those soda machines, they'd bring those bottles in and they did."

I also remember the time when President Roosevelt died and the train from Georgia came up through Greensboro. The train came here about midnight and we were allowed, which was very unusual, for anybody who wanted to go up to the railroad track which was behind Curry [Building] just to watch, to watch the presidential train go by. And, so of course, I rushed up there with all of my colleagues and all I can remember is standing along those tracks. First of all, the train was a steam engine and it came by and the first thing that you saw was a light. And the tracks were lined with people from Greensboro and from the colleges and so on there. And somebody started, who knows, Dvorak's Fifth [Symphony] "Going Home" and all during as the train went by, people were singing "Going Home," or humming it. And the last car, of course, had the President's body in it with a guard at either end of the coffin and that was the only part of the train that was lit and that was a really memorable night, to watch the President going home.

I'm trying to think. You know, there are so many things that I can remember about being at Woman's College. I remember, for example, that the war ended during my

last year and we were dismissed early, which was unheard of, in order to get aboard the train and literally, we went down to the railroad station and the place was filled with soldiers attempting to get home and relatives attempting to get back because their sons were going to get back from the war. And I stood up all the way from Greensboro to Washington on that train but there was no chance of falling down because it was so crowded. We literally went to sleep standing up on our feet there. I don't think I would have ever made it to Baltimore except some young Marine decided that I was—that he would take care of me and so he said, "Just grab onto my belt, and we'll get through." And I did, I trailed this Marine around and we finally got through the station in Washington D.C. which was a mess at that time and I got home to Baltimore.

The war years were—everybody was deprived of something, and so that therefore, you never thought of deprivation of being anything that was terrible, it was just one of things that you came to accept. You had to bring your ration books to school with you. And I don't recall ever feeling that I was—that it was tough. For the most part, there were a number of our people who joined the WAVES [acronym for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, a World War II-era division of the United States Navy] and the WACS [acronym for Women's Army Corps, a World War II-era division of the United States Army] at that time and one of my roommates joined the WAVES, Frances Butler.

HT: Did you ever think about joining the WAVES?

CU: Yes I did. As a matter of fact, I thought about that during my junior year. I was persuaded that I could do as much good by remaining in college and finishing and I thought about that along time. Miss Taylor had gone to join the WAVES and she wrote back to all of us and urged us to stay in college and she was a strong influence on my decision to do that.

HT: Well, after you graduated in 1946, what was the next thing that happened in your life?

CU: Well, in those days you were told what you were to do and so Miss Coleman called me into her office and said, "You're going to go to graduate school and you are going to graduate school over at Chapel Hill and I've made arrangements with the head of the department over there, Dr. Oliver Cornwell, and we have a tuition waiver so that you will be able to do that." And it never occurred to me that I should do anything except what I was told to do. And although in many ways I was feisty and somewhat independent, what your department head told you to do, you did. So I went to Chapel Hill and I got my Masters degree and all I can remember over there—I had some very good teachers over there but they were not—they couldn't compare to the ones at Greensboro. At that time there was plethora of jobs, so you didn't have to worry about whether or not you were going to get a job and Miss Coleman wrote me and said that. "There was a job up in Madison College in Harrisonburg, Virginia, that I think you should be interviewed for." So I got aboard a bus and went up to Harrisonburg, Virginia, and was interviewed and was offered the job and so I went to Madison College at that time.

I was very interested in professional organizations which we had been told we had to join and we had to participate in and to do all the things that we were suppose to do. And so at a professional meeting I was much impressed by a woman who was a very

good orator and she—what she was saying made a lot of since to me. Her name was Eleanor Mathney and she was at the University of Southern California so when I was told that I should go ahead and do my doctoral degree I thought that that was the place to go. At that time, there was an opportunity for me to have a Fulbright Scholarship that would have taken me to India. As a matter of fact, I had been accepted for that and when I was also accepted at Southern California and so then I decided I would go to school at Southern Cal and I did and that was a good experience also. And then from Southern California, I went back and I continued my tenure at Madison for two years and then was offered a job down here and so then came I think it was in 1952, if I recall correctly, came to—back to Greensboro to teach.

HT: And what made you decide to come back to Woman's College?

CU: Well, you know, my love, awfully, of Greensboro. I decided it was still, from my point of view, and still remains one of the preeminent schools in the disciplines in which I was concerned. By that time, I knew that I wanted to be in college teaching and I was flattered, I'm sure, to think they would even want me back at that time. There was difficulty in terms of the fact that I was coming back where my staff colleagues had been my teachers so I had that adjustment to make. Miss Coleman had died by that time and Ethel Martus was the head of the department. But there I had the opportunity to meet Gail Hennis and Rosemary McGee who were well established on the staff and because we were the only three people at that time with doctorial degrees in the department we had the opportunity to forge the graduate programs in our field.

HT: So, it wasn't much of an adjustment.

CU: No, not as far as expectations in teaching and that sort of thing. The adjustment was a personal adjustment. But I also, because the pay was paltry, I think my first salary from Greensboro was $1,800 a year, and so to supplement that I was a counselor in a dormitory and I was counselor at Shaw, Anna Howard Shaw Hall and later on South Spencer [Hall]. And one of the things that Miss Taylor said at that time, was she said she would be glad to take any member of the physical education staff who was to be a counselor because she knew that they would be better than average as far as counseling was concerned. And so Rosemary [McGee] was a counselor and Gail [Hennis] was a counselor, I was a counselor, Marge Leonard was a counselor, Betsy Umstead was a counselor. It was heavily inundated with physical education personnel. And, of course I, at that time, remembered all the things that I had learned from Miss Taylor and from Miss Elliott and so on, and I tried to make our dormitories as much as I could an extension of their educational experiences. In the dormitories, we had dormitory newspapers and sessions on poetry and sessions on reading and we would invite some of the professors to come and talk with us and so on—we had art exhibits, photograph exhibits. So I tried to emulate as much as I could what had been my own experience, and I think that Gail and Rosemary and others did the same.

HT: Do you recall any particular events that happened during your time as a counselor in Shaw [Hall] or South Spencer [Hall]?

CU: Well, it was during my time that our first Negro students were—came to the University and they were put into Shaw Hall. And they were put there particularly, Miss Taylor later told me, because she knew of my feelings with regards to racial integration and also because I was a Southerner and because I was a graduate of the University they figured that all those things would, I think, help to allay the fears and concerns of anyone who thought that somehow or another that they were bringing some damn Yankee down to be a part of this integration pattern. Bettye Tillman and JoAnne Smart were the two young women who were thought to integrate the University and at that time they were placed at one end of the first floor of Shaw Hall and there were no other students there; they had the whole end of that hall. At the other end of the hallway were graduate students in physical education who were my students. Everybody had—all the students who lived in Shaw were written ahead of time to tell them that JoAnne and Bettye would be a part of our dormitory life and at that time, as I recall, we had no difficulty at all as far as integration was concerned. The students were wonderful. The house presidents, who were always very mature young women, were marvelous and they had no problem as far as the integration of the students was concerned.

My greatest concern was that the maid at Shaw Hall was aghast that there should be black students in her dormitory. And Annie refused, even though she did this quietly, to escort the young women to their rooms when they first came which she had done with all the white students. I tried over and over again to try to change Annie's opinion, but it never worked to any great extent. To the best of my knowledge, I don't think Bettye and JoAnne were ever aware of the fact that Annie was so belligerent with regard to their being a part of Shall Hall dormitory. I do remember at the time Annie speaking in derogatory patterns to the young men who courted JoAnne Smart, telling them, most of them came from [North Carolina] A&T [State College] at that time, telling them that they should take JoAnne over to A&T and that's where she probably should have gone to school anyway. But both of those young women I think did a good job and as far as I was concerned the integration pattern went quite well.

HT: Did you ever have contact with any of the girls after they graduated.

CU: No I never did. Bettye, I understood, had died fairly young. She had—Bettye was married, I didn't know it at the time but she was married when she was there and had a child who was taken care of by her family. And JoAnne who was a very attractive and very schooled, well-schooled young woman, I thought. And since has apparently proven that, being part of the Board of Trustees as I understand it.

HT: Well, I was doing some background reading about your life. Could you tell me something about the food workers' strike that happened in 1967?

CU: Yes, the—when the food workers' strike was about to come, the girls, the students, were going to support the food workers. They felt that it was terrible the way in which they were treated and so on. They decided that they would have a rally up at the president's home. At that time Watson was the chancellor of the—I said the president, I meant the chancellor. And Whatley Pierson [William Whatley Pierson] , Pierson –

HT: Pierson.

CU: Yes, Pierson and so they were going to go up there and chant and so on in order to get him to support the strike. Miss Taylor heard of this and so she commissioned Gail Hennis and myself to walk around the quadrangle where all the freshman dormitories were with the thought that seeing these two counselors who were reasonably popular pacing around that the freshman would not dare come out of their dormitories and as a result they didn't. And I don't know whether it was our presence there that stopped them or not but they didn't come out; therefore, the actual gathering at the chancellor's home never really amounted to very, very much but we continued to support the workers and I think that as a result of that they did get a pay raise, I don't recall that exactly.

HT: Well, you mention mentioned Chancellor Pierson and, of course, Chancellor [Gordon Williams] Blackwell came after him and then [Chancellor Otis Arnold] Singletary and then [Chancellor James Sharbrough] Ferguson. Can you tell me something about your thoughts about these various men?

CU: Yes, well I always thought that Pierson was kind of an interim person so he was a little aloof and pedantic but I think did a good job. And then when Blackwell came, that—he was really a very personable man and he reached back into the faculty and tried very—I was a faculty member at that time—tried very hard to integrate the student- faculty relations in such a way that they became somewhat reminiscent of what Dr. Jackson had done. And then when Dr. Ferguson came, let's see, I'm trying to think who was there; and then Blackwell. Just keep me straight.

HT: Well, I'm looking through my notes here. Chancellor Pierson was here from '56 to '57.

CU: Yes, right.

HT: And then '60 to '61 there was kind of a jump in there. And then Blackwell was '57 to '60.

CU: Right.

HT: And Singletary from '61 to '66.

CU: Yes. When Singletary came, I remember thinking to myself—he was a kind of a brash young man as far as I was concerned at that time. Had a very charming wife though who I thought did a good job of trying to help with his rather abruptness. And I thought that the University prospered well under him. And then Ferguson who I thought, once again, came closer to probably being what it had been when I was a student than anyone that I'd known. And all three of those men, I think, did a good job. Then, I was not here when young Dr. Graham arrived [Chancellor Edward Kidder Graham, Jr.] but I did keep up with what went on at the University and I know a good deal about all the trauma that

went on during his regime. I think he was a man who never—his potential was never realized.

HT: Well you were on campus for twenty-three years as a faculty member.

CU: Correct.

HT: What kind of changes did you see from 1956 to 1979?

CU: Well, I thought the dormitory patterns changed appreciably. I mean, after Miss Elliott's death, and when all of the counselors that had been under her regime retired or died, I thought then the dormitories became more housemothers rather than counselors and that there wasn't quite the same enrichment that I saw when I was a student. The University, obviously, was growing. We had graduate programs. There was a greater interest on research at that time so that the professors then were rewarded for their scholarship, writing, and research and teaching became a little less important during that time. Although, I think that those of us who felt that teaching was important, tried our very, very best to continue to push the concept of teaching, but you weren't rewarded for it in the same way academically as you had been in the past. I noticed those changes, but I still thought that the essence of Woman's College was still there. Then, of course, when it changed to a coeducational institution, there was that whole pattern that we had to adjust to and I can't—I was surprised that it changed but I can't remember being adamantly against the idea. We just knew that it was going to inflict on us more changes. The thing that worried me was the most personally was that as a Woman's College, we had opportunities for student leadership that was equal, you know, to that of any university in the country. So, you know, we were the head of publications, the editor of the newspaper, the president of the student government, and so on and having grown up in co-educational institutions I realized that probably with the men there that wasn't going to happen anymore and that worried me a great deal. It didn't happen immediately, but, you know, I had seen in my lifetime women who were really smart who didn't act smart when there were a lot of fellows around. And I thought, "Oh dear," you know, "there's going to be that kind of change." I never was a witness to some of that, but that did concern me.

HT: Right. Well, in 1976 you became the president of American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation [AAHPER]. What was that like?

CU: Well, that was a wonderful experience. In the first place, that association had done something which very few national associations did. In 1932, I think it was, they decided on their own and with no rules or any type of legislation that every other year there would be a woman president of that; so there would be a man's year and a woman's year. And the first woman president of that was a professor who had been the roommate of Mary Channing Coleman, she was—her name was Mable Lee and Miss Lee was head of the physical education department at the University of Nebraska and second woman president had been Mary Channing Coleman. So that when I became president of the AAHPER, you know, I felt that I was doing what Miss Coleman expected me to do. That was one of the things, a professional obligation that you had to your profession. I was

fortunate in being able to associate with some of the men in our field who I thought were just exemplary. One of the ones was Dr. Leroy Walker, who afterwards became president of North Carolina Central University. Leroy Walker was a track coach and was an eminent track coach. He had been an Olympian track coach and I got to know Leroy well. As a matter of fact he and I were able to trade teaching opportunities. I went to Central [North Carolina Central University] to teach and he came here to Greensboro to teach on several occasions for a semester at a time. I got to know a man by the name of Ross Merrick who was in the Washington office and Ross was a—had been very, very influential in the establishment of the men's athletic associations, NCAA [National Collegiate athletic Association], and some the rest and was very, very supportive of what I was doing. I got to know another man by the name of George Anderson who was also very supportive of my presidency. It was a super opportunity.

Another thing that I had the opportunity to do, because of my professional background, was to speak publically. I therefore, was able to make speeches all over the country and was asked fairly frequently to do that and so I got to meet all of my professional colleagues throughout the country. And I often used to say when I was younger, that if ever I was in an automobile accident someplace, and I didn't know anybody, I would ask to see their physical education teacher because for sure he or she would know someone I knew and I would be well taken care of; and that proved to be true. I was never in the accident, but I was able to call upon my opportunities there. The presidency also, I think, afforded me, at that time, the opportunity, I thought, to be more instrumental about the establishment of women's athletics. That proved to be a false premise on my part. They were already headed toward what seemed to be certainly a road that was not going to lead to what I had always hoped would be a scholarly approach to athletics instead it became a recruiter approach to athletics which has proved to be true and at some time along that line I realized that my hopes for the scholar coach was gone and so—although Leroy had been particularly helpful in trying to set that up.

And I was the first person—the first woman that was appointed to the NCAA convention that would meet once a year. And at that time, the presidents, theoretically, are the members of the NCAA but they always send their athletic directors, so when I was here in Greensboro, I said to the president at that time, I think it was Blackwell, I said to the chancellor, "Send me." So he did and at that convention in order to vote you had to hold up a paddle and so I got to hold up a paddle at the NCAA convention. And my only contribution to that convention was there was a man who was the head of the NCAA by the name of Walter Beyrers and Mr. Beyrers kept that convention to do anything he wanted to do as far as athletics was concerned. And they did not run the convention using *Robert's Rules of Order*, so that therefore, he just decided who was going to talk and who wasn't going to talk. When I found out about that and we had a motion that was to come up that we were to adopt *Robert's Rules of Order*, that I had sponsored and they put it at the very, very end of the convention which I found out later on they put it there because people left and there was never a quorum to make it possible. But fortunately for me, there was a professor of law— [tape stops].

[End of Side A, Start of Side B]

CU: —some place in Ohio, his name was Steven Horn and they decided this would be done, so they brought the motion up before the house, before the quorum was dismissed and as a result of that, we got in *Robert's Rules of Order* and I don't think [tape stops and starts] And so I—one of the things I remember most about the NCAA Conventions was the fact that the black coaches at that time had similar problems with Walter Beyrers and others because they were dominated at that time by the white coaches and so that all those black men came over and talked to me about what I should do as far as being able to sponsor women's athletics and how to get control of it. Some of it didn't work at all but I remember what a strong coalition that was as far as I was concerned.

HT: Well in 1979, you left WC—it was UNCG at that time.

CU: Yes.

HT: What made you decide to go all the way to [University of] Oregon?

CU: Well, they asked me. [both laugh] I had—one of the things I have had the opportunity to do was I had taught at summer school at a number of institutions and so one of the institutions that I had taught at was the University at Oregon. And there was—the head of the department there was a man by the name of Esslinger, Arthur Esslinger, who apparently had been favorably impressed with my teaching and whatever I had done professionally at that time so he wrote and asked me if I would consider—I knew he was retiring and he wrote and asked me if I would consider becoming an applicant, at that time. By that time, Ms. Martus had retired and we had as the head of the department a woman by the name of Margaret Mordy who I thought was weak and really as I sat and thought about it I thought to myself, "I think I've done everything at Greensboro that I can possibly do and so that if I should still continue to do things professionally, I ought to probably look for something else." So I went out to Oregon and they offered me the job. And they had never had a woman dean out there and I was very, very impressed with the provost and the president of the University of Oregon. The president was a man by the name of Paul Olum and Dr. Olum had been one of the physicists at the Los Alamos [New Mexico] facility during the atomic bomb creation. And the provost was a man by the name of Dick Hill and he was a sociologist, very well known and so on and I was very impressed with them. But personally at that time, my mother was very ill and it looked to me though she was not going to live for much longer and I really felt that I probably should not leave the east coast at that time to go out to Oregon. And my mother who was ever thoughtful said to me, she said, "You certainly can't build your life around me and I want you to go." As it so happened, my mother died before I left, so that therefore, she never saw me go. But I went out to Oregon and that turned out to be the right position for me. I was—I became dean out there and was able to work in an atmosphere that was appreciably different from that of Greensboro.

One of the things I learned out there that I thought was very important, up until that time I had always thought universities were run either on a dictatorial pattern in which you were told what to do which I had sort of grown up with or a democratic pattern which I thought I had evolved into. But then I found out that, no, universities are really run on a political pattern and so I had to readjust all my thinking to a paradigm that

was political rather than governance orientated. You've got to give a little bit and take a little bit and so on. At that time I was the head of the college and we had probably a budget at that time probably of a half a million dollars, I had a staff of about seventy to eighty people and an enrollment in the various departments which were in the college of approximately, I'd say probably about 1,500 students. So it was a whole new adventure and I was able, once again, to translate some of the things I'd learned from the past into this new experience and it turned out to be a very, very good experience for me and I was dean out there for twelve years.

HT: As dean, did you do some teaching as well?

CU: Yes, I did. Yes. I continued to teach. I taught—when I was here at Greensboro, I taught kinesiology and most of the science courses. I also taught the history of physical education and I taught philosophy. When I went out to Oregon, I taught mostly history and philosophy. By that time, I realized, in order to keep up with the sciences, I had to continue to do a lot of reading and experimentation and stuff like that and I just didn't have the time to do that. But history doesn't change, and neither does philosophy, so I was able to keep up with that. I did not teach any graduate classes in Oregon, I mean undergraduate classes. I taught only graduate classes.

HT: And how long did you stay at the University of Oregon?

CU: I was there from, let's see, I went there in 1979 and I was there until 19—eleven years I taught there and I was dean during that time.

HT: And you decided not to come back to the east coast I guess, since you—

CU: Well the west coast is so exciting and enticing and so on and it is not as crowded as the east coast. Although when I left Baltimore, I did promise my family, which now consists of two nephews that I would always return at least once a year as long as I was able to do that. And every time I come back to the east coast, I am even more amazed by the sprawl that has occurred. When I come back to Greensboro, I can't get around Greensboro any longer. It's a whole different city from anything I ever knew.

HT: It's true. So what are you doing during your retirement years now?

CU: Well, I still help out with the university to some extent. I usually do such things as read for scholarships and making evaluations. But my community work is done mostly with the Lane County Legal Services and I work with lawyers and I find out that they have the same problems that they do in higher education. But I work with lawyers that do pro bono work and they are a pretty fine group of people. In addition to that I work with the Y—with the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] really, and I work with the Girl Scouts which I did a lot of work when I was younger. And I try to do such things in the community that I can. I sometimes—I am part of what is called the bill payers program and that's a program that helps people who for some reason or another are no longer able to take care of their finances, to help them pay their bills and what to do.

That's through the AARP [American Association of Retired Persons] and I work for them. And I keep busy and I try to keep myself active as far as activity is concerned to the extent of my ability. I play a mean game of table tennis three or four times a week and I swim about four times a week; I do fifty laps, at least, every day in the pool and do a lot of reading. And try to keep as busy and up to snuff as far as politics are concerned. I work with the Democratic Party and what not.

HT: Well, we were talking earlier about your dog training days. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

CU: Well, I grew up in a family where we always had dogs. And I became very interested, I guess, maybe because of my interest in teaching that you ought to teach dogs to be mindful as well as people. Besides that, I found out that by training animals you can find out a whole lot about how to work with people. And so my uncle had had a collie kennel and had been associated with a woman whose name was Florence [Bell] Ilch who was up in New Jersey and he knew Albert Payson Terhune who had written books about collie dogs and when I was a very young girl had taken my up to see Dr. Terhune—Mr. Terhune he was, and Mr. Terhune—I lived in a big house in Poplin Lake, New Jersey, and I was only about, I'd say, ten years old at the time we went up there and I saw Terhune walk down the hill; he was surrounded by probably three, well more than that, five or six collies coming down this hill. He was a big, tall man and it looked to me like he was floating down the hill on the backs of these dogs and I was absolutely intrigued by that.

And so we always had dogs when I was a kid and because of my uncle's interest in collies, very often we had a collie and I read all Terhune's books, *Lad a Dog,* and *Wolf*, and all of those books that I felt like I knew the Terhune collies as well I knew our own dogs. So I've always had dogs. And when I came down to Greensboro, there were dog lovers down there also and Miss Martus had cocker spaniels at this time and Miss Coleman, I already mentioned, had her fox terrier and they came to school at that stage. And it was a very good entrée very often because students that were frightened of teachers and so on would come in a pet the dogs and then pretty soon they'd be talking to their teachers about what their real problems were. So I decided at that time, I was never interested in showing dogs for beauty although I went to dog shows. And there I found out they had dog training there and so I thought, "Oh, that's kind of fun." So I joined the, it was run by the recreation group here in Greensboro and I joined that and became one of the dog trainers and taught classes and so on. Then we would take—I had a collie at that time and we would go with the team all over the country most to the east coast to dog shows to enter into the obedience training classes and I became interested in that and won trophies and so on. That was my recreation.

HT: That sounds wonderful. Well, Dr. Ulrich, I know we're pressed for time a little bit. I don't have anymore questions, but do you have anything else to add to the interview? It has been just wonderful listening to your stories.

CU: Well, thank you. You know as we were talking, there were so many things that were popping into my mind and I'm trying to remember if there was any particular thing that I

had forgotten about. You know every, every memory leads to one other, you know, that you remember. I haven't talked about some of my colleagues when I was here and my colleagues became my friends throughout my life and although I haven't kept up with them person to person, for example, I can still recite the twenty people who were in the class role and you know, go right on down and I can tell you what happened to every one of those young women; [Marjorie Jane] Burns, [Mary Christine] Cherry, [Ola A.] Chitty, [Lavonne] Current, [Nannie Ree] Fisher, [Irene] Gilbert, [Luva Frances] Hilliard, [Ellen Grace] King, [Elizabeth] Limbert, [Elizabeth Loduska] Lyda, [Sally Dixon] Moseley, [Bettie Jane] Owen, [Dorothy Elizabeth] Perry, [Ann Reynolds] Richardson, [Amy] Shaw, [Julia Maria] Spence, [Jean Vivian] Stockton, [Margaret Jean] Thornton, [Adele Celeste] Ulrich, and [Helena Gragard] Williams. And, you know, I still hear from some of those people. The—I was always very fortunate, I shared this with Kate [Barrett] earlier, was that the Baltimore school system was so good that as a result, I came to Greensboro and had a very easy time scholastically and I was being rated against young women who had not had some of the advantages that I had. So it always seemed to them that I was much smarter than they were; I really wasn't. It was just that I had a good background so that therefore I was able to help them in ways; I did tutoring and things like that and they still act like I really helped get them through college but they really helped me is what it really was. I learned a lot about myself during those times.

I remember my work at the dining halls; I mean you have to get up early in the morning. At that time there were cafeteria lines for breakfast and for lunch but all evening meals were served family style. If you were a dining hall girl, you had to work in the cafeteria behind the counter for breakfast and lunch and then had to serve at dinner time. That paid for your tuition and they were rich experiences. I remember one time as I was coming through—I had to cut through the woods, I lived at Weil Hall, I had to cut through the woods to the dining hall and it was early in the morning like about 6 o'clock or 6:30 [am] or something like that I had to get over there, and I saw this strange character in the woods who obviously shouldn't be there so I reported the fact that there had been a man in the woods and he was supposedly not there and so they became interested because there had been some problems around campus with some transients who had been on campus. So, later on that day, that evening, I was back in the dormitory after I came back from serving in the dining hall, and I looked out the window and there was that man still that man I had seen earlier that morning standing outside the window. So I immediately called the campus police. The campus police came over and by that time, the man had disappeared and so they said, you know, "Where could he have gone?" Well, at that time the golf course, there wasn't the fields down there, so we went through the golf course. I was trailing these two campus policemen. And all of a sudden I saw ahead this form and I said to them, "There he is, there he is!" And they raced over, it was evening, and they put there flashlights down and turned them on and it was a bush. [Both laugh] So that was my great adventure in being a police agent.

Oh, then another thing that I do remember, I had forgotten about this, one time Paul Robeson came to Greensboro and he was going to sing at Bennett College. And I absolutely adored Paul Robeson, I thought he was just marvelous and so I had somehow or another gotten enough money to get a ticket to the concert over there. At that time, in order to leave, you had to go—had to sign—what they call sign out, and you weren't ever to go anyplace alone. Well, I didn't have enough money for anybody else to go with me,

so I decided I could get to Bennett College, go hear Mr. Robeson sing, and then by running, I could run from Bennett College, get back to Greensboro, to Woman's College, in time to get in the dormitory with the 11 o'clock [pm] curfew. And unfortunately for me, a thunderstorm occurred while we were at Bennett, we were in their chapel there where he was singing, and he couldn't use the microphone anymore. Well, that didn't make any difference to Paul Robeson, because he had a tremendously powerful voice. So he kept us there and he sang to us in the dark. And the whole audience just stayed and Paul Robeson sang, mostly spirituals, and it was a marvelous thing but it was 11 o'clock [pm] when got out and I knew that I couldn't get back to Greensboro in time, to Woman's College, and so I ran it was like 11:30 [pm] by the time I got here and I had to get Miss Taylor, who was a counselor in my dormitory, to let me in. Well then, I hadn't signed out and I hadn't done anything and I knew that I was going to get expelled. The next morning, she told me I had to see Miss Elliott and Dr. Jackson to explain what I had done, because to be at Bennett which was another part of town at that time and not— without a chaperone, without anything. And so I went really expecting to be expelled but they were very understanding. I was campused for a month. And campused meant you couldn't leave the campus, you couldn't even go down to The Corner, but that didn't make any difference to me because I never left the campus anyway.

So, you know, I do remember all those things and I'm sure I could sit here and talk to you another hour telling you all the things that occurred.

HT: Well, thank you so much. This has been wonderful.

CU: Well, thank you. I enjoyed doing it. One of the things I've done, I was sharing it with Kate [Barrett], I've recently written up some of my memoirs of the University to— for my family so I will send some of those things down to you.

HT: That would be great. Yes, that would be wonderful.

CU: Okay.

HT: Okay.

[End of interview]