

**INTERVIEW WITH ALAN AUSTILL  
FORMER DEAN OF STUDENTS, OYSTER BAY**

**August 31, 1988**

**Dr. Hartzell:** An interview with Alan Austill, August 31st, 1988, at his home.

**Alan Austill:** Good, they don't know what they're interested in, all they know is that they

**Dr. Hartzell:** Try everything.

**Alan Austill:** Yes, they're willing to try everything. Leonard Dragner must be still around, Ruth, Merrill Rodin.

**Dr. Hartzell:** No, I think he was there the first year that I was there for a year or two.

**Alan Austill:** Harold Zyskind was there the first year.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Harold is still

**Alan Austill:** Harold's the reason why I went to Stony Brook.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Harold was, is that right.

**Alan Austill:** He was my guru.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, let's follow these questions here, it will give some structure, then you can go on from there.

**Alan Austill:** Sure, fine. Alan Austill, I was Dean of Students. I was the third administrator on the campus in 1957, and Olsen was already there; and the Business Manager was there, his name was Frank Conway, Frank and Martha Conway.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Conway.

**Alan Austill:** C-O-N-W-A-Y, he's dead, he had a stroke many, many years ago. And Joan and I arrived June or May, May or June 1957.

**Dr. Hartzell:** That's early.

**Alan Austill:** Oh, yeah, I was the third person there.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I see. How old were you?

**Alan Austill:** Twenty-nine. And Len said we have to have a class of students of 150 by September 15, something of that sort. And he had been working it, on getting both the class and recruiting the faculty and getting the Coe Estate ready for occupancy. So a very short period of time, just a few months. He knew in February or so that it was going to happen, but they actually get legally authorized until April someplace. So, that's all I did the whole summer, that whole first summer, was interview students.

**Dr. Hartzell:** How did you advertise?

**Alan Austill:** Well, you see because it was the Coe Estate, because it was going to be a major science and engineering center for Long Island, because State University had only had Farmingdale on the Island, no four-year institutions, and because Sputnik had made such a national splash, both Newsday and the Long Island press had stories and they did our recruiting for us. It was the press, we didn't have to do anything.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Who were the publishers, or the editors at that time?

**Alan Austill:** Don't know, have no idea, it would be very easy to find out, but I have no idea. I can remember, and I don't believe it was that first year, it was the second or third year, that there were profiles on, there was one on Lambe, there was one on me, there was on different members of the faculty. I mean the Long Island press in particular covered the campus. I'm sure if you went down to their archives, you will find incredible amount of press coverage in those early years, not the least of which were a series of rather extraordinary public incidents that we had. For example, Merrill Rodin who was teaching in a humanities class a poem by Ferlinghetti -- have you heard about this?

**Dr. Hartzell:** No, I don't think so.

**Alan Austill:** This was one of the first, big major, in fact, it probably was the first major political crises. Merrill was teaching this humanities class. There was a Catholic girl in the class who thought the poem was sacrilegious, told someone, and the Brooklyn, whatever the, the archdiocese paper, whatever it is, conservative paper, very conservative, went up in smoke, wrote a piece about it. And the Congressman, whose

name I can't remember, picked up the piece and went after SUNY, went after us as an institution.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It wasn't Carlino.

**Alan Austill:** No, it was not Carlino, if you said the name, it would ring a bell, but it was not Carlino. I'm sure that, I mean Frank has got to have clippings on this; as a matter of fact I might even have clippings on it. And it didn't stop, I mean, it was in Congress, it was in the State House, it was in the press, and we, of course, Len in particular and Olsen had to defend the institution's right to do this, and the faculty member's right to teach this; it was really, it was a magilla.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Sells newspapers.

**Alan Austill:** But it was not the newspapers, this was votes, this was votegetting on the part of Deroonian, Deroonian was the Congressman's name, that's what he was interested in, solidifying his political position. Then, let's see, so I told you I came, three, I came from the University of Chicago, where I was in the position of Director of Student Housing at that time and was working on my Ph. D. simultaneously. The person who was primarily responsible for my coming to Stony Brook, well, Len hired me, but the person who was responsible was Harold Zyskind, who I had worked with for many years in Chicago, and he was my never official, but my unofficial intellectual mentor. And so Harold had recommended me to Len, and Len and I talked several times.

**Dr. Hartzell:** In Chicago.

**Alan Austill:** Yes, he came to Chicago.

**Dr. Hartzell:** He was from Chicago.

**Alan Austill:** He had been, but I had never known him in Chicago. I'd never seen him before or even heard of him, didn't know anything about him. But Harold had known him. So Harold recommended me to him and recommended Len to me and said that he, Harold, was going to go, and so if Harold was going that was wonderful to me, and if he recommended Len, that was good enough for me too. So I came out east, out here, had no idea of what I was getting into, what the place was like. So that was terrific,

of course. Len interviewed me, I think that answers 6, right. I was going to be involved in the development of a new operation with people I liked and respected, and I was bored doing what I was doing, so there you were.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Do you like to work with students?

**Alan Austill:** I've always liked to work with students. I mean I was the luckiest guy. But unlike a good many deans that I know, I like people, not just students in general, I like people. So I'd find occasions to make it possible for me to have contact with them.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The higher up you go in the administrative hierarchy, the fewer students you see normally.

**Alan Austill:** Oh, yeah, you have to work hard to do it. You have to, I mean, I actually at the University where I'm at now, where I've been for 27 years, it's a lot easier. We're an elevator campus, I talk to students in the elevator every day, and get off in the hall and will continue to talk with them. It's very, very easy, and I go to a classroom and sit down next to somebody and talk before class starts. So, that's just my style.

**Dr. Hartzell:** What was your understanding of the purposes behind the institution?

**Alan Austill:** Well, we went through many formal stages, which are reflected in the rapidly changing name of the institution. The initial, as I'm sure you know, the initial mandate by the Trustees and the Legislature was that we be a teacher training institution for science in public schools basically.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Was engineering in the picture at all?

**Alan Austill:** Engineering I do not believe was in the picture that first year. It was the natural sciences and mathematics, because it was teacher training for secondary school. Engineering was not in, I'm sure it was not in. Now, that was an extremely narrow mandate and was basically an unacceptable mandate for all of us who came. Len said, and all of us who came believed him and of course it turned out to be true, this was only the first step, and that it would very rapidly be converted into a full four-year institution with a full range of programs, the liberal arts, and I don't remember whether

initially engineering was in it or not, in the plan, it came along very soon thereafter. But Len, none of us were interested in being attached to teacher training, one of the other teacher training institutions in the State of New York. So, there was a lot of faith, a big gamble ..... because we came from very, most of us came from very distinguished institutions.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Of the initial ten, how many were from Chicago?

**Alan Austill:** Oh, a large number, which also was probably a mistake.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Probably the only thing that he could have done easily.

**Alan Austill:** Well, considering the time he had. I mean he only had six months, so he had to go where he knew people and who knew him, because he had to sell the long term without a piece of paper which said only you're going to become a teacher training institution like Oswego. So, that was probably, I think Frank Irving had been in Chicago, he came from Washington College in Maryland, maybe he got a degree in Chicago, but he was not in the sense that the term was used in those of a Chicago person. There was a biologist, another biologist besides Frank, young man whose name I can't remember.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Carlson or Merriam?

**Alan Austill:** I don't think Carlson was the first year. I can see him but

**Dr. Hartzell:** We have two Carlsons, Elof and

**Alan Austill:** Who's the other one?

**Dr. Hartzell:** I'm trying to think, Frank

**Alan Austill:** Frank Balsan, yeah, and the biologist who turned out to be one of my very close friends, who is now at Cornell, was

**Dr. Hartzell:** That light is off.

**Alan Austill:** Is this a voice activated machine?

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, the light is off, so I can't, I'll have to follow the tape.

**Alan Austill:** It's supposed to go on when you speak into it.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes.

**Alan Austill:** Well, you don't have it on voice activated, now it should, this is voice activated here, but the light is still not going on, I'm pretty sure that VC means voice activated, at least it does on mine, but the wheel is going, so.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It's all right, it's working but the light is off.

**Alan Austill:** It stopped, now it's going, no, you didn't have it on voice activated, you want it on. Now you say something

**Dr. Hartzell:** It's going.

**Alan Austill:** All right, now it sounds to me like your battery might be a little low, you should have the battery test, it should

**Dr. Hartzell:** I'll just go ahead.

**Alan Austill:** Howard C. Hollend, that was the biologist's name I was trying to think of.

**Dr. Hartzell:** What was the place like when you first got there, what were the students like?

**Alan Austill:** Well, there weren't any students when I got there.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Right, right.

**Alan Austill:** There were no students, there was nothing, there were no desks, there was nothing, absolutely nothing. The rooms that became classrooms on the second floor of Coe Hall were all bedrooms. The bathtubs with gold plated fixtures were still in when I got there. When I got there construction was just beginning to make classrooms, to make a dining room, to make faculty offices. It was not finished when school opened in September. The students that we recruited that first year, there were approximately 157 of them, and they were of course students who only knew about the mandate, the public statement, this was to be a teacher training institution for science, biology teachers, math teachers, physics teachers. It was free public education in 1957.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Largely from Nassau and Suffolk.

**Alan Austill:** Completely, totally, mostly Nassau, a few from Suffolk. We admitted 157. I don't know whether we admitted 157, we probably admitted 200, but we had a

class of 157 ..... took a terrible beating over the four years. I believe only 30 graduated.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Is that right.

**Alan Austill:** The class itself by standards of university were, there was quite a bit of bitterness about it. I heard about it for years and years, long afterwards. I heard about it at a reunion of the class in 1982 when they asked me to speak. Understandably so, they felt that they had been led to believe one thing, and we were doing another thing, which was true. True in the sense that we were doing what we felt was the right thing to do. We also felt it was the right thing to do even as far as teachers, that they had to be very high quality, very well ..... And I was largely responsible, probably exclusively responsible for solving a political problem in a way where students, a large number of students suffered. We had to have a class, we could not not have a class. If we did not have a class, the Legislature would not have appropriated an additional set of funds for us to keep on. They had no idea, they don't know anything about higher education, they don't, all they know is that they want students to be educated, they want science teachers. If we say in April go ahead and do it, then we do it. Well, we did it; we really did it, and I did it. I lived with a lot of guilt about that for a long time. Of the 30 who actually made it through that sieve are by and large extraordinary people. The reunion was incredible, 20 years.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Twenty years, 1962.

**Alan Austill:** No, it was 1961-62. I mean, I couldn't believe how many Ph. D.'s there were. There was an Assistant Director of Biological Institute at Cold Spring Harbor.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Remember his name?

**Alan Austill:** No.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Is he still there?

**Alan Austill:** Yeah, he was there.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I mean, is he still at Cold Spring Harbor?

**Alan Austill:** I think so. I had dinner with him afterwards, I had dinner with the whole class afterwards. And there are high school teachers throughout the Island who are profoundly dedicated to the work that they are doing, very, very pleasant group.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Would they make a good alumna?

**Alan Austill:** No, no, I don't think so. They are very unhappy about how the University treated Len Olsen, how he is still being treated in effect. The first group, the first couple of classes, I mean I know that they are not a good alumni group because they feel like today it has no interest, no respect for the early group, and particularly Len, because Len was alone after I left, Harry Porter left. Faculty was split by then, it was absolutely, it was split right down the middle. There was pro-Lee and anti-Len, which was really not true, it was the pro-Lee anti-Len, it was a Lee problem more than anything, it was pro-Lee anti-Lee, not really pro-Len anti-Len, I don't think. I mean it was John F. Lee who crystallized the division very rapidly in my opinion. That's where it gets to be a Rashomon story for us.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Did you have anything to do with people up in Albany?

**Alan Austill:** I had only two relationships with Albany, two professional relationships. One was with the architectural firm, whoever that was, I don't remember who that was, but I was instrumental

**Dr. Hartzell:** Voorhees, Walker?

**Alan Austill:** It was a man.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Otto Teegen?

**Alan Austill:** I don't know the name, but whoever designed the first Humanities Building and the Gymnasium, those were the two buildings that I worked on, I spent a lot of time on those drawings and the conceptualization and developing a program.

**Dr. Hartzell:** ..... students.

**Alan Austill:** That starts much later. Then there was an administrative assistant to, whose name is not here, the President's name is here, I read in, he's died, Hamilton. There was an administrative assistant to Hamilton who was, as far as I was concerned,

from what I knew, Len was the one who dealt with him, I'm using the term administrative assistant but he may have had some title, but I don't remember what that was.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Reuben

**Alan Austill:** No, it wasn't Reuben Freuden, it was somebody else, no, Reuben I knew. the one who was the day-to-day manager of the place. He was the person that, I mean he and Len would talk every week. Hamilton and Len would talk every couple of weeks. I mean there is another link in here, somebody you really should talk to because I, he's the one who in terms of the politics in Albany and the policy setting in Albany and what was going on around, he's the key person, he knows, he's the only one.

**Dr. Hartzell:** John

**Alan Austill:** John, yes, that's his first name.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Something like Scofield.

**Alan Austill:** Yes, that's who it is, it's John somebody or other, and that's who it is, he's very key in terms of the power structure of this operation. Anyway, go ahead, we got sidetracked here.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, I was just asking you

**Alan Austill:** My contacts, yes, those were the two, it was John because John would deal with me if Len wasn't around. When John F. Lee fired me and said that I, he didn't fire me, he called me into his office and said that I was being transferred to Albany, and it had been authorized by Central Administration, I was going to go work in the Central Office. I went back to my office, and called this guy and said, what do you mean, I'm being transferred to Albany, how come somebody hasn't talked about it. Not true, John Slocum, that's the one. Have you interviewed him?

[tape begins skipping]

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yeah, with 200 people.

**Alan Austill:** Oh, he's still alive.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, he is, yeah.

**Alan Austill:** Where is he?

**Dr. Hartzell:** He lives up .....

**Alan Austill:** John Slocum, that's the man. I could talk to him. You absolutely should because he was, and he will remember me, I'm sure. I remember quite vividly that he was the day-to-day central administration contact man, which he was. He was it, absolutely, on the property. He did everything, he was right there. He was the main solver, policy maker insofar as he could. .... he was a problem solver.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, now, ..... personnel.

**Alan Austill:** The office expanded very rapidly. I did admissions that first summer the way Len had done admissions before I came. He was not particularly interested in students or fond of students.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Really, I'm surprised.

**Alan Austill:** ..... he was, but it was abstract, it was not person to person except when he was teaching them, when he had a class then he .....

**Dr. Hartzell:** What did he teach?

**Alan Austill:** Len was a philosopher. As a matter of fact he ran a seminar in that opening section on the politics on slavery. Let's go back to the administrative thing. What we did was, what I did was I hired somebody to interview, David C. Tilley.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Where did you get Tilley?

**Alan Austill:** I believe that he was a professional admissions person, and he then was responsible for doing admissions, and I supervised Dave, and I supervised the Registrar, and the athletic, remember the athletic person, he had a faculty appointment but he was really Director of Athletics. We only had, you know what the Coe Estate was like, we had a couple of fields and the arboretum had to be preserved. We were not even supposed to use the fields. I don't know how long that lasted. It was certainly June 1957. .... was responsible for the greenhouses, gardens, trees and so on, a wonderful naturalist, Gordon Jones. Gordon's wife and my wife became very good friends. Gordon and I had a lot of respect for each other. Funny, students couldn't play, nobody could play, and so Hank was willing to play ..... That was one area of

problems. Another area of problem was that I had a probably much too intellectual notion that we were doing science, one of the most interesting scientific kinds of sport was a sport that we could do not on the campus, but we could do it on the water which was crew. And sailing was ....., there was something about sailing a lot of intellectual as well as physical work that could be done in crew and sailing, so we actually got a crew team started. So those were just early starting things. We got a small gym built on the back campus in a Butler building, and once we got the Butler building then we could play whatever, basketball, handball. But I was also very much also involved in and deeply concerned about the, as I have continued to be throughout my whole career, the connection between individual students and the institutional ..... and that's where I spent my time and energy working with individual students on their ..... and/or failure in the curriculum. And a lot of time, I spent a lot of time ..... with the faculty on the obligation that the faculty had for these students recognizing that this was a class that came very rapidly, without the best credentials, without the support and training that they should have had. Since the institution had taken these students in, we had an obligation to do the best possible for them. It was a constant issue and problem. It was much better the second year.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Much better in what way?

**Alan Austill:** Well, much better in the sense that we had a whole year to recruit, and we could select, we had much more selectivity, we could get students who were of higher quality and better standards.

**Dr. Hartzell:** How large was the freshman class?

**Alan Austill:** I can't remember how large the second class was. I'm sure it was larger than the 157 but 157 is the number that I remember. David C. Tilley is the one who really brought in the next batch anyway. And we had a faculty committee that was reviewing these things, it was all much more structured, much better organized. David visited the high schools, the high schools were all very excited about having a school in their own back yard. David, he knew what he was doing, he brought high school

guidance counselors to the campus. I mean they thought they had arrived in Dartmouth when they came to campus, because it was one of the most beautiful places in the world for a college campus, a small college campus.

**Dr. Hartzell:** So you had support from the guidance counselors in the high schools.

**Alan Austill:** Oh, in those early years of course, absolutely. This was a real bonanza for them.

**Dr. Hartzell:** At one meeting I had with

**Alan Austill:** Before I left one of the things that the high school people wanted, which they got, was teacher training certification beyond science and mathematics, they wanted it in humanities and social sciences. That came in in 1959 and 1960, that really opened it up. When engineering came in then the liberal arts came in also, it was parallel.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The mandate was changed in 1958, I think.

**Alan Austill:** Yeah, it was changed three times.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Can you specify how it was changed?

**Alan Austill:** I remember the first one vividly. The second one was probably the addition of engineering, I'm not sure.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The second one was a four-year liberal arts college.

**Alan Austill:** Is that what it was?

**Dr. Hartzell:** I believe so, yes.

**Alan Austill:** Okay, then the next one was engineering and the potential for University and graduate work

**Dr. Hartzell:** Chemistry and Physics.

**Alan Austill:** Graduate chemistry, that's probably right. Well, you've been, I'm sure you

**Dr. Hartzell:** From there as far as I know there was no review of chemistry and physics.

**Alan Austill:** It always improved. Whatever measure we were using in those days, rank in class, SAT scores, recommendations, improved every year. Those were very heady years in terms of the demand for college, and it was space and it was free space.

**Dr. Hartzell:** ..... tape recorder. Just sat in the car for about 15 minutes ..... coming through. Well, I tried to reach him by phone down in North Carolina, finally got him, and he was coming up and later I got to meet with him. He had somebody with him, and I never saw who it was in the car, but

**Alan Austill:** When was this?

**Dr. Hartzell:** This was early June.

**Alan Austill:** This year?

**Dr. Hartzell:** This year.

**Alan Austill:** I haven't seen him since 1962.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Really, is that right. Well, he's down in

**Alan Austill:** I know where he is.

**Dr. Hartzell:** You know where he is.

**Alan Austill:** Yeah, yeah, I know where he is, and when his wife died, Eloise, I don't know how I heard about it, I wrote him a note and told him I was very sorry that Eloise had died.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Tell me a little bit about him, what kind of a person was he.

**Alan Austill:** Well, Len and I worked extremely closely together. I probably worked as closely with him as anybody during those five years, first five years, probably more than anybody on a day to day basis. Len was one, probably the most honest person I have ever known in my life, intellectually honest person I have ever known. He was profoundly committed to the development of a high quality University, that was his mission and he saw it that way. He saw it as his mandate, he accepted the mandate, that's what he wanted to do. And everything evolved around that. He was a distant person, very distant. There was not a warmth about Len Olsen, he was not a warm person, he was not an unfriendly person, but he was not a warm person.

**Dr. Hartzell:** A management type with ..... competence also with a

**Alan Austill:** Very long fuse, right, extremely long fuse. On the other hand, he was extraordinarily good at asking questions which would then precipitate an action, a reflected action, dimensions of the problem and analyzed and thought about because of the questions he would ask. Frank Conway and Len and I that first six months would formally meet every Monday morning and review, we'd spend three hours every Monday morning and review the past week and what the problems were for the next week. Frank would talk about the physical plant, about the buildings and about food and things, and I would talk about students and recruitment and the faculty from the perspective that I had. And then Len would report to us on Albany and faculty issues that interested and concerned him that he wanted to share with us. Then Len and I, it turned out that he didn't have anybody to talk to so he talked to me a lot.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Lonely business at the top.

**Alan Austill:** Lonely, lonely business. So I got to listen to him, about how he would think about problems all the way through, and I learned a great deal from him about such matters. I was very fond of him.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I liked what I saw of him.

**Alan Austill:** He was, I mean I've been an academic dean now for a long, long time myself and I'm very different from Leonard K. Olsen. Len really, Len had no concern for himself, very extraordinary. If it was the right thing to do for the institution, then it was the right thing to do. And what was the right thing for the institution was always in intellectual terms, it always had to do with the highest quality, and his political sense was, well, let me put it another way. He was not willing to sacrifice in the short run, he would make a political decision like on a faculty reappointment, for example, or an initial appointment because it would solve an internal political problem but over the long haul would not be good in the structure. He wouldn't make, he wouldn't do it. I mean that was in fact his undoing, I now know. I didn't know it then. I guess I did know it then, but I, that was his undoing.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I've heard that he and Lee .....

**Alan Austill:** Oh, he did, so did I.

**Dr. Hartzell:** You both

**Alan Austill:** Absolutely, we were both crazy about John F. Lee. John F. Lee was extraordinarily impressive. I spent six hours with John F. Lee, either alone or together with Len, the man was fantastic ..... of the interview in terms of how he conducted himself, what he said, and it was very, very clear it was going to be clearly an extraordinarily high ..... operation. And Len was going to be what he should have been which was Academic Dean and not Chief Administrative Officer. And John F. Lee was going to be a spectacular fund raiser. He was interested in politics, and he was interested in Albany, and he had high standards, and he knew a lot about engineering, and he had a flair, which Len does not have. He was going to be super, just what we needed. He was, he didn't turn out that way.

**Dr. Hartzell:** ..... people completely.

**Alan Austill:** His recommendations were spectacular, he was ..... I believe, my view is of course, and it's very prejudiced and biased, my view is that John F. Lee -- tape

**Dr. Hartzell:** Pretty soon, she started when you talked, all right, go ahead, your view was?

**Alan Austill:** Well, I was going to say that I thought maybe he'd change, but you know I haven't thought about him for a long time ..... The contrast between John F. Lee and Leonard K. Olsen was honesty. And the reason I say he must have changed is because I can't believe that the man could be as good a scholar as he apparently was and had been able to either distort the truth or literally lie as much as he had to throughout his whole professional career, and my brief experience with him, it only lasted a year, was that he had an extraordinarily difficult time telling the truth. Even on simple things, let alone important things, but that was his undoing, of course. His undoing was an incapacity to tell the truth over and over again, and Len's undoing was

that he was unable to really take into account anything but the long-term best interests of the University, his own interests did not play a role, political interests did not play a role, and so it was this lack of human sensitivity in a way on Len's part.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Did the students like Len?

**Alan Austill:** No, Len was so distant, no the students didn't know anything about Len. He made wonderful

[end of side 1 of tape]

**Dr. Hartzell:** That started it, all right.

**Alan Austill:** .....an interesting experience.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Sure, everything that you can say of that kind of thing to give a picture of the place.

**Alan Austill:** The other, I mean probably in addition to the ..... I remember quite vividly. The next major vivid crisis before John F. Lee was what was known as the BF and C case -- Bowen, Fleisher and Chill -- I'm sure you've heard about it.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I've heard about it.

**Alan Austill:** All about Bowen, Fleisher and Chill.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Not all about it, no.

**Alan Austill:** Well, this was renewal appointments and ideological issues had crystallized here between Chicago and Columbia, between CC, the Contemporary Civilization course at Columbia and Chicago in the humanities.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Was Gelber there then?

**Alan Austill:** It was Bowen, Fleisher and Chill, they were all three Columbians, and I think Sidney was too, Sidney was probably there, I can't remember. But in any case, Len's close advisors were extremely split on renewal of these three.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Who were his close advisors?

**Alan Austill:** Well, there were probably only several. There was Merrill Rodin, myself, Harold Zyskind, that was it, I mean we were basically it. The thing about Len is that you never knew what he was going to do. He's ask your opinion, and he could argue

every position, but you never knew what was really going to do, you had no idea. He played everything very close to the vest that way. He was going to be responsible, it was not going to be anybody else's responsibility, he ..... responsible, he would be responsible.

**Dr. Hartzell:** He didn't delegate much then?

**Alan Austill:** Well, I mean it was ..... He had brought in an associate dean, the fellow was basically an administrative person not a faculty member.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Who was he?

**Alan Austill:** It was Terry Lunsford. He was there, I believe, only a year. He's a friend of mine. He had a law degree and a Ph. D. in psychology from Berkeley. The question was with Bowen, Fleisher and Chill had to do with, his case had to do with whether he was a competent scholar, as well as the case with Bowen, Bowen also; and Marty Fleisher was really a competent scholar I thought, but he's a very, very difficult and complex man, high-strung, very high-strung. I think Len, personally my own judgment is that Ralph Bowen was extremely well liked by everybody, all of us liked Ralph personally, and he was not as smart and not as quick, not a wonderful scholar, not a productive, highly productive person but was a good member of the community, responsible member of the community. I think he was an ....., you needed to have those kinds of people around, if you have enough of them and you can't build a big place without having good citizenship people. Anyway I think Len, I think that was a political mistake because then he had three, and it turned into ideology, what was not an ideological issue. In the last month at any rate it became an ideological issue because it was three people from Columbia, it was a stupid ..... and it led to real trouble, inevitably it did. Well, about five years ago I was at a public lecture at City University Graduate Center, there was a European scholar who came over that I wanted to hear and I went down, the room was packed and I sat on a table in the back, ..... and I. During the question period the chairman of the meeting called on a guy who was sitting on another table about eight or nine seats down from us, and he said, ah. Professor

Marty Fleisher has a question. So, I looked over and sure enough, there was Marty Fleisher. I had not seen Marty Fleisher since 1958. So I was extremely impressed not only by the question he asked but by the discussion that went on. And I went over to him afterwards, and I introduced myself to him, he remembered me. I told him I thought he made a wonderful contribution to the meeting, and I then apologized. I said, Marty, I'm really sorry for what happened in the early part of the Oyster Bay years, and I probably contributed to it, and I am delighted you've had such a successful career. And he couldn't have been more gracious. It was a very nice experience. He's a big gun at City University, he's on one of the campuses, Queens, I don't know, but he's a very smart guy. I don't know what happened to Ralph Bowen, I don't know what happened to Manny Chill; but I do know that that was a serious political mistake. And Ralph ..... should have stayed, and it might have made a big difference.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Because?

**Alan Austill:** Well, you see, I'm not sure who the people were. I mean if I have to see a list, the reason I describe Ralph the way I did is because the thing became ideological because this was a nice man and a good citizen, and so everybody in the community could say, well, there's no reason to fire this man unless it is ideological.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I see.

**Alan Austill:** That's what happened. So it really doesn't matter who they were because I know that is what happened. And it had only been a couple of years and Len Olsen, why did you hire this man to begin with if you didn't think he was good, right; and now, he may not turn out to be wonderful, as wonderful as you thought, but he is a good citizen. So there must be other reasons why you tried this. Well, there weren't. It was just Len realized that he had made a mistake the first time in terms of his high standards of scholarship. But the community couldn't see it that way, and Len's not going to talk about it that way to anybody. He never publicly, let alone privately, to me privately. So there you are, everybody was very distressed.

**Dr. Hartzell:** .....

**Alan Austill:** Actually, ..... probably ..... pretty vague about it. I remember extremely vividly what happened to me personally.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, go ahead and tell me about it.

**Alan Austill:** There were a whole series of things. The first thing that happened, of course, was that after he had been there a year

**Dr. Hartzell:** Was he there a full year?

**Alan Austill:** Well, I don't remember. I remember the end of the year, I don't remember the beginning of the year. But by the time he had been there and June had come around and ..... came back from his vacation and discovered that he was, very shortly thereafter Len was reassigned to Albany. .... lived on campus in the white house in the back

**Dr. Hartzell:** This is Coe's cottage.

**Alan Austill:** No, no, that's where John F. Lee lived. No, ..... old farm house, white farm house in the back, and I lived in one of the ..... And Len was transferred to Albany and it was clearly a decision that had ..... what Len had done and so they made it very easy but it was extremely ..... But then the following summer I'm really not sure about this

**Dr. Hartzell:** Lee left in November of 1961.

**Alan Austill:** Okay, well, I came back and it all happened pretty fast now. I came back from vacation in August of 1961. John F. Lee called me into his office ..... he took away the admissions office from me and he took away the registrar's office from me, he was reassigning my responsibilities and a couple of weeks after that he called me to tell me that ..... the chairmen had been having all kinds of problems with John F. Lee, Frank did and they had resigned their chairmanships. When the students heard about my being

**Dr. Hartzell:** You know, Arnie Feingold resigned.

**Alan Austill:** Arnie Feingold, he was in physics then, he had been replaced, he was the physics chairman. Then when the students learned from somebody, not me, that I had

been ..... he had a problem with his faculty on one side and he had a problem with the students on the other side and Albany because he lied. I knew, everybody knew about that one. I mean there are lots of other lies but that was ..... That's, you know, I don't want to condemn anybody but there was something wrong, I don't know what it was, something wrong, I use the term change of ..... I can't construct if they were, if they knew, if they had any sense of what they were doing ..... And then he left. It all happened, I mean, it was all over. It seemed like an eternity at the moment, September, October, November, you got into November, it seemed like every day was a week. And then Len and I both got asked to go to the Ford Foundation, which was much better than State University. It says that you were doing some writing on value and valuation

**Dr. Hartzell:** Right.

**Alan Austill:** What's that?

**Dr. Hartzell:** I'll turn this off here.

[end of interview]