

**INTERVIEW WITH ERNEST L. BOYER**  
**FORMER CHANCELLOR**  
**OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**  
**6 JULY 1989**

**Dr. Hartzell:** Interview with Ernest L. Boyer, formerly Chancellor of the State University of New York and presently President of the Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching; July 6. [gap] He was born in China and I was born in Chicago.

**Dr. Boyer:** The same day.

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

**Dr. Boyer:** I don't think I have ever met anyone who was born on the same day.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, there's another coincidence, we were born on Benjamin Franklin's birthday and also on the two hundredth anniversary of his birthday.

**Dr. Boyer:** Oh, my. Oh, my.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Very interesting. January 17, '06.

**Dr. Boyer:** Two hundred years after Ben Franklin was born.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Just strange. Bentley is the scientist, although I have had some exposure to scientists at Brookhaven.

**Dr. Boyer:** I guess so; well, you have a big and interesting job on your hands here. How long have you been working now on this.

**Dr. Hartzell:** This is something I have been doing more or less my little finger, because I am working on a book on the human valuation. I'm interested in that; it's the result, I think, of my experience both at Brookhaven and then for ten years as college and university dean. And I feel quite strongly that there is a gap the

curriculum which is the systematic study of human values. I am an historian, not a theologian. But I have an interest in values because as a boy, my father and mother were both ministers and it seemed to me that there is an analogy here. At Brookhaven I would go to a colloquium, sit in, and the speaker would get up and in English say what he was going to do, and then he would go to the board and put the mathematics on the board. And I was completely lost; I had never gone beyond trig. There were biologists, chemists, physicists, mathematicians, reactor people, accelerator people, engineers, they could all understand the mathematics; and it was clear to me that mathematics was both a common language in the sciences and a tool. When I became a dean first at Cornell College in Iowa at Bucknell, I had to listen to ..... and socially to people in the social sciences, humanities, talk back and forth and it was obvious to me that there was no common language for humanities and the social sciences and the valuation aspects of the social sciences and that the arguments would go back and forth as they do and it bothered me, and yet here I had this example of sciences having a common language. And it gradually came to be a conviction what was missing was the structure that the evolution, structure, function of human values as a systematic study; and at that time I knew nothing about value theory. I knew nothing about axiology and when I had my sabbatical at Stony Brook, went to the Union Theological Seminary for one semester the divinity school, study values and the philosophy of religion and ethics. Because I felt I needed that kind of background and since then I have been working on an outline, I have an outline of a book that I want to do ..... and I am going to give a course on American Values this winter down in Florida, just for the fun of it.

**Dr. Boyer:** Where is that?

**Dr. Hartzell:** It's in Palm Coast, there's a community college there, they're going to take me on. I've given an outline.

**Dr. Boyer:** Terrific, that's wonderful. Well, we need that.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think we do.

**Dr. Boyer:** We really do.

**Dr. Hartzell:** So, this is what I'm doing in my retirement.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, that's great, you're busy, busy, busy.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It's

**Dr. Boyer:** All right, you have

**Dr. Hartzell:** This is an exercise in the memory.

**Dr. Boyer:** We'll have to stir some

**Dr. Hartzell:** Number one, when did you join SUNY?

**Dr. Boyer:** Okay.

**Dr. Hartzell:** And from what institution did you come? Who appointed you? What positions did you hold?

**Dr. Boyer:** Right, I joined the State University of New York July 1, 1965. I went to the State University of New York from the University of California at Santa Barbara. I was appointed by Chancellor Sam Gould.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Sam Gould, I've interviewed him.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yes, he appointed me and my first position was a new post that had been created, about the first one he created as Chancellor, it was called Executive Dean for University-Wide Activities. It was Dr. Gould's view that the University had administrators who were working on separate pieces of the organization, but he wanted someone who would look at the enterprise overall and take on those functions that were more integrated. And so the title "University-Wide Activities" fairly well described that new position, it was without precedent and I had to

decide what university-wide activities meant. I served in that position from '65 to '68. And in 1968 I was appointed Executive Vice Chancellor to Sam Gould, which was the number two position in the Central Administration, and then August of 1970 I became Chancellor; so those were the appointments that I held until January 1977, when I resigned to go to Washington, D. C. as U. S. Commissioner of Education.

**Dr. Hartzell:** That takes care of 1 and 2., all right, and I guess part of 3.

**Dr. Boyer:** And 3, yes, let me just repeat again the, it was a fascinating position, the Executive Dean for University-Wide Activities, since Chancellor Gould felt very much that there should be efforts made to create some sense of cohesion. It had been organized categorically around types of campuses; there was an Executive Dean for Four-Year Colleges, Universities and Community Colleges, yet he had great fascination with, what I guess you would call, the horizontal missions, those that cut across. Now, in addition to my, just a footnote to that, in addition to my office, he had an Executive Dean for International Activities, which was system-wide, that was Glenn Olds.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Glenn Olds, yes.

**Dr. Boyer:** And he had an Executive Dean for, it wasn't called this, I think, but it was telecommunications, and that was Bob Thomas, they were trying, Bob Thomas was trying to develop the system-wide technology, the TV network, and, of course, Olds was working on International. I had within my portfolio a whole range of activities that included such things as university-wide arts to the system-wide government structures. I was responsible for the Faculty Senate development system-wide; I was responsible and helped develop a Council of Presidents, in which we had a group of Presidents who were advisors to the Chancellor. I was responsible for helping to create a system-wide student association; I was

responsible for university-wide admissions policies to the extent that they were existing, and, I must say, then, during student riots I became kind of the point man on the issue of crises. But also I was asked by the Chancellor to develop a system-wide policy of affirmative action in '67. So all of the issues that tended to deal with the overall policy matters were ones that I tended to be responsible for.

**Dr. Hartzell:** That took a wide vision and to what extent do you feel that centralization is an important goal or need for a system as large as SUNY?

**Dr. Boyer:** I've got a little cold in Chile where I was last week. I think it's a very difficult thing to execute, but not impossible. I think it is appropriate for a State, a network of State institutions, to be guided by a policy structure that gives some rational and coherence to the effort while still allowing for the uniqueness of institutions within that structure and above all the creativity and some degree of vitality for those who are working on separate campuses. Now, as I said, that's easy to say and very hard to do. It's very easy for a system to become suffocatingly uniform, on the other hand, I guess I still don't believe that the State of New York could handle 64 separate institutions that would be working directly with the Division of the Budget or with the Legislative Committees, so the matter of how to structure this in a way that has some state-wide policies while retaining great vitality locally is a skill that I think many don't have, but I think the system needs to operate within those dual obligations. Now, you could have organized the State University in different ways. I thought for a time you might be able to organize it around four or five regional units, with the University Center. In fact, I pushed for that for a while, where you would have the University Center in a cluster.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I remember some expression of thinking along those lines at one point.

**Dr. Boyer:** The other you could organize it along the California model of having the community colleges, the university centers with medical schools, and the arts and science colleges as three separate systems, with perhaps a coordinating board. I don't mean to say that the State University of New York in its current configuration is the only way to do it. I only know that you probably couldn't have each campus freestanding, so I think if I were starting over, I would probably choose another model than the one that exists; but I don't that means that it's necessarily bad.

**Dr. Hartzell:** You talked in part to 4.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yes, now it's true there was, of course, a senior person responsible for the University Centers, that was viewed as a category of institutions that had unique mission and had some shared policies, so the Central office of the University did have a Vice Chancellor for University Centers. I think there was a clear expectation, certainly during my tenure, that the four University Centers would be similar in that they would all offer advanced degree through the doctorate; and yet not all of them would be evenly developed in terms of professional schools or certainly in terms of the doctorates. I mean, I think there was a general expectation that Buffalo and Stony Brook would probably emerge over time as the most distinguished in terms of the breadth of programs, and maybe even in terms of the dimensions of their scholarship, within a matter of several decades, certainly not overnight. And that the mission of Albany would probably in its professional effort be limited more to public service, for example, it may be education; and Binghamton would perhaps develop a series of good graduate programs growing out of Harpur College but would have very few professional schools. Although under Bruce Dearing it developed in the field of technology and was developing some affiliation with the IBM connection. But I don't think it was

ever imagined, at least during my tenure, that Binghamton would have a broad based network of professional schools, but would probably have some very solid graduate and doctorate programs that were really an extension of what had been a very distinguished college of arts and sciences. But certainly it was always my expectation that Buffalo, which had a long history, and Stony Brook, which was coming on very rapidly, surely in the sciences but not exclusively so, and developing a major medical school, would be probably the two most broad based university centers in the system.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Who was the person that was responsible for the University Centers? Was it Komisar?

**Dr. Boyer:** Jerry Komisar, yeah, I'm going to have to sort this out; a whole group of names float through. Of course, there was Harry Porter and there was Sy Syrette and then there was Loren Baretz and Jerry Komisar, he was there during my tenure primarily as Vice Chancellor for Personnel.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I see, who was the Vice President of Personnel prior to him?

**Dr. Boyer:** You're talking about Dave Price?

**Dr. Hartzell:** Dave Price was the person, yes.

**Dr. Boyer:** Dave Price.

**Dr. Hartzell:** He died unexpectedly.

**Dr. Boyer:** I hadn't heard that he had. Well, Dave Price was, of course, there when I came; he was one of the old timers and he handled personnel; but when I came, I brought Jerry Komisar up from Binghamton, where I think he was Provost and he took responsibility for personnel and employee relations, because I inherited the Public Employee Relations Board responsibility, and there was collective bargaining so we needed the strength in that unit.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Dave Price was extremely helpful to us.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yeah, he knew the inside, a very bright man, knew the inside and out of State personnel policies, ran it all out of his back pocket; no one else began to understand the elaborate mechanisms but Dave knew everything, he carried it in his head, and was probably one of the best bureaucrats -- and I say that in a complimentary sense -- that there was.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Okay, did you have ..... , this is 5.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yes, oh, I did often, of course, both as Chancellor and indirectly before that with Stony Brook mainly through the President, through Johnny Toll. I didn't, I wasn't involved in a lot of the discussions about curriculum, and faculty and staffing, those were handled by colleagues, I was mainly involved with the campus and John Toll on matters of budget and construction and the like. Well, it depends on the issue, the final decisions regarding budget, regarding new facilities were made I guess ultimately by the Board, depending on the level of decision you are talking about. But there were, I am sure, a number of other matters dealing with curriculum approval, for example, and the like that would have been done, I guess the decision would have been made by subordinates of mine in the Central Office, and personnel appointments the same way; they tended to be processed through the Personnel Offices of the Central Administration. But on the larger issues, whether there was going to be a new building or what the decision would be on the annual budget, they were made by me or S depending on the issue, recommended by me to the Board of Trustees.

**Dr. Hartzell:** We had what seemed to us to be difficulty getting, finally getting the Fine Arts Center.

**Dr. Boyer:** What year was this?

**Dr. Hartzell:** I don't think the Fine Arts Center came until late '70's. We had ideas for a while before Sam Gould came, and he came down and visited us, and



we gave him the ideas that we had, instead of backing us, he set up Purchase, which took us back somewhat. We had requests for a 1,500 seat auditorium for the Fine Arts Center; somebody cut that down to 1,100; and who that was I don't know, but the present stage is just barely large enough for a visiting orchestra.

**Dr. Boyer:** I felt, I don't want to pass any buck, or, but I felt, and I am not speaking about the Stony Brook circumstance which I do not recall -- I do not recall being involved in the Fine Arts discussion; I could well have, but I don't remember it. But, I wanted to make another point. I felt one of the basic mistakes that the State University made in its construction during the '60's was to wholly underestimate the importance of art centers on almost campuses. I find, when I was Chancellor during the '70's, I was just endlessly frustrated in going to campuses, the arts and sciences colleges, I think, had a maximum seating capacity of 300-400 in the new facilities that were built, and little cubbyhole of auditoria space and staging space, some kind of modern art theater open area, but no auditorium arrangements, no satisfactory place for concert, drama; I just thought it was, in retrospect, a scandalously short-sighted view, not only for the campus but these college and university centers were very much the cultural center of their region, and what an opportunity was missed. And I go back occasionally and still go and speak in gymnasiums for events. No place to gather people. So, I think frankly that was an enormously short-sighted Facilities policy that was made sometime during the early mid-'60's and almost like cookie cutter fashion applied to all the new campuses that emerged; so I'm sorry that Stony Brook doesn't have a more adequate facility.

**Dr. Hartzell:** We are building a Field House but that's not quite the same thing.

**Dr. Boyer:** No. Well, you mention, I know, as a matter of fact I had no idea that Oscar Lanford was an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency of Stony Brook; had no idea, never heard that until this moment.

**Dr. Hartzell:** That's while I was running it, running Stony Brook.

**Dr. Boyer:** And of course, I was on the Stony Brook campus many times, many times. I can't recall all of the occasions, but I visited the campus often. There was also another side of the contact, I was, during my days especially as Vice Chancellor, I was very much involved in the student riots, and, so, it wasn't only Stony Brook to be sure, but Stony Brook was having a lot of hard times with local police being mischievously interventionist. And so our job was primarily to keep these guys from running amok.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The Republicans had gotten themselves into trouble over the sewer construction project, and they needed something, and did you ever see the brochure, half an inch thick, that they got out for the raid on our campus, with a knight with hauberk and armor.

**Dr. Boyer:** You're kidding; kind of a plan of action, you mean.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Plan of action, absolutely, for the television.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, it was a very bad time. But that was only a footnote, to say that my contacts were multiple, well, I had relations with three Governors: Rockefeller was the longest; Malcolm Wilson for a brief period; and Hugh Carey. Without question, Rockefeller was the Governor who understood and believed in and was enthusiastic about the University. It was a great delight to work with him; I saw him regularly, and I said often that I learned, when I was going to see Rockefeller, that whatever I was asking for, it wasn't a matter he wouldn't say yes, but rather how much he would escalate the request. So I ended up being very

careful what I asked for because I usually walked out with a bigger assignment than I expected. He

**Dr. Hartzell:** Once you gave him an idea, he

**Dr. Boyer:** He took it, not only approved it, he'd multiply it, so you had to be very careful or you'd end up with a lot more work than you ever expected. I found he never, he would always see me within hours or certainly days of any request that I made to see him. He was delighted with the University, and I think for the right reasons. All sorts of snide comments were made about him wanting to have a building program or building edifices. I think he had a sense that this University was in the interest of the people and New York and it seems to me quite a remarkable thing given his background. So he took great pride in it, and I think for the right reasons. More than that, I can say that he never made an inappropriate request in the seven years, it was actually five years, that I was Chancellor and he was Governor. He called, he called frequently on different matters, but he never made an inappropriate request.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Did he check with you the appointments to the local Councils?

**Dr. Boyer:** Uh huh. His appointment secretary would.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Because there was a wide variety, a wide range of competence, of understanding, among those who were appointed to our local Council. He could have done so much better.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yeah, I don't know. My sense is he didn't take, he took huge interest; it was my impression the Governor did not much interest in the local Councils. That was handled by his appointment secretary, and I think those were deals struck for all sorts of reasons. I think it was in a sense a weakness; the Governor, I think if that issue would have been perhaps more vigorously pressed with him, he'd have had the courage to do better; but I think it just fell into a kind

of second level attention and the recommendations would come up and he'd sign off. Carey was much more of an enigmatic man. I always got along with him; we never had any difficulties on the individual level. But, it's well known that people never quite understood where he stood on the University or any other matter. I recall being in a meeting where, in his office, for over an hour, and he didn't say one word. His staff members ran the meeting. He just sat and sort of stared at the wall, totally withdrawn. Well, compared to Rockefeller, Rockefeller ran every meeting and said half the speeches, so it was a totally different thing. But I don't have any negative feelings at all about Carey, either on a personal level or; I never felt he was hostile to the University, I never felt he

**Dr. Hartzell:** But he had no ideas.

**Dr. Boyer:** No, no. But then again, the other people, but that just didn't apply to the University. It was a style of leadership that seemed to go across the board.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Was there any difference?

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, I think under Rockefeller there was no question. He felt that the University, I think, in a very real sense, was going to be a constructive legacy. Now in 1974 the State had a huge fiscal crisis, as did the nation. It was a big recession in '74, all the economists, you can now see the big dip. The only time I ever saw him speechless was when he was in a meeting with the Cabinet, turned to Arthur Levitt -- Arthur Levitt's sounds kind of modest now, but \$700 million deficit turned to revenues and requirements -- and he just, the Governor, just kind of turned white and as much as said, "Arthur, what do we do?" The first time I ever saw him feel rather powerless. But, I, I always felt that the Governor, Governor Rockefeller above all wanted to protect the University as best he could, in good times and bad. And, so I think, to be honest about it, it was in a rather favored position.

**Dr. Hartzell:** We get to Stony Brook. This is probably 8 and 9 combined.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, I have to say I do not remember Stony Brook being a topic with Governors in a very direct sense. I can't call the event either yes or no, that doesn't mean, in fact I don't remember discussing specific campuses with any Governor. I am sure there must have been comments along the way, but I don't remember, so that doesn't mean Stony Brook was neglected, I just don't recall campus priorities were discussed with the Governors. Well, I have already said, I think that Stony Brook was envisioned to be one of the peaks of excellence in the system. And when you realize, as you say here, that it started from scratch, it's, to me, an absolutely remarkable situation that within a decade it was internationally known. Now, that I think is almost without precedent. When I went in '65 Stony Brook was just getting itself settled in after having left Planting Field. I think it was in the early '60's when that move was made. You'd know that, I wouldn't.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I came there the month that the move was made which was September of '62.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, there you are. And I came '65, so it was just moving on, but you think of the fact that in '62 it was in Planting Field, that estate down there. To realize that by the mid-'70's, that is ten years later, and the reason I can be so explicit about this is that I first visited the People's Republic of China in 1974, and I went alone, except my wife went with me, at their invitation. I'm making a point, when I would be at various delegations and with various people in the People's Republic, I'd be introduced as the Chancellor of the State University of New York, I could tell there wasn't much recognition. And then someone would say, this is the system that has Stony Brook, "Oh, Stony Brook." They didn't recognize the State University of New York, they recognized Stony Brook. Now, this was I said in 1974. Now it's true it was very uneven, it's true it was primarily in the sciences

at that time, but the point I am making is that went farther, faster than any institution I know. I think that there was clear expectation that Stony Brook would, as I mentioned earlier, develop into an institution with broad-based doctoral programs and several professional schools, including one of the largest medical centers in the State. And, of course, that is still in the process of developing. That mission I think was always clearly understood.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Marine Sciences too and Buffalo .....

**Dr. Boyer:** Of course, Marine Sciences. I'd say it was a vision that was well understood and people were taking pride in Stony Brook, even at the very, almost at the moment it was emerging. And as I said I think the thought was that Buffalo and Stony Brook would be, probably be the most comprehensive university centers in the system and would have international recognition.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I remember getting calls, this is '64 on, from, several times, from the Chairman of the Board of Hofstra, who was a Judge. Was Stony Brook going to have a law school? And I referred it back to Larry Murray and the answer came back 'no, we don't have any idea of one, certainly at this point.' And Hofstra went ahead and established a law school. Now, there has been some interest in a law school on the part of the organization of the legal profession in Suffolk, but you have Hofstra and you also have another one at St. John's. What about the principle of supplementing the functions of private institutions as a guiding principle of the State University system? We had that as a concept given to us by Central Administration, that where there was educational opportunity already in place, they would not compete.

**Dr. Boyer:** I never heard that one.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Never heard that.

**Dr. Boyer:** No, I think that might have been the mentality in the early days, and it might have been the sort of thing that Larry Murray and others carried around in their heads, but Sam Gould never thought way, no; and I never thought that way, I thought it was an institution that had its own mission and was serving a clientele that needed to be as broad based and as distinguished as any. More than that, it's a little mischievous because many private colleges serve a different kind of constituency or even national in their student enrollments. The very fact that they are in New York doesn't mean that they're serving New York citizens in quite the same way. I don't mean that you're just blatantly competitive, but I had never thought of the University as building in a kind of filling in around the edges. And I know Sam never thought that way either.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, let's see, number 10.

**Dr. Boyer:** There was always an effort made, I think, to try to work out this understanding of where the decisions would be made and to give campuses more initiative, but I would be the first to say it was never probably achieved in a way the campuses felt good about. My own experience was that the University never established enough autonomy in the State to, in the financial and construction matters, to be able to delegate. Now, that sounds like passing the buck. But there was, the State of New York had developed this, in some ways, very professional executive branch, it's an executive branch ..... state, the Governor and his staff run the State, much more powerful than the Legislature, and so you have within the State government, within the executive branch of the State government, this huge executive structure that really does get itself into the interior of every agency. Now, I never felt the fundamental integrity of the University was violated, but I did feel there was a huge amount, there was a hassle factor, that was unnecessary, so that it was very difficult for the University to give the kind of freedom that the

campuses would prefer because it often didn't have the final authority itself, it had to check. Now, that got worse, I understand, as time passed. And about three years ago they tried to renegotiate the balance, and the Governor, I think, has never quite forgiven the University for pressing on that. Cuomo, I think, feels the University wrested some independence because when the budgets were being threatened, he's say, 'well, you guys got the freedom, go ahead. If you can't do it, I'll take the authority back.' So, he was playing a little smart. So, my own sense is that the University was caught in an executive structure that caused friction, and the campuses, I think, really felt that they didn't have the freedom that they needed. Now, I don't mean to say that the University Central Office was perfection in every way, as well. I know that I tried to say to these people, 'for goodness sake, let's not try to pretend we can run campuses.' And I think, by and large, these were good people. I do think that some of the earlier central administrators -- the ones who were there when I first went there -- really did, Larry Murray who I think is a wonderfully nice guy, but I really did think that he was sitting in Albany and presidents were kind of branch managers; and he used to talk that way. I know Sam Gould never felt that way, I never felt that way; but I don't think the University ever worked out a system where there was sufficient initiatives that were given to the presidents themselves. I really don't think so.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I can understand why they had to make many of the decisions for Stony Brook in the beginning. There just wasn't, there weren't, the first president - - Lee -- was a darn good engineer, but he just had no, he had a certain amount of paranoia, he certainly had no

**Dr. Boyer:** Didn't Harry Porter go down and fill in for him then?



**Dr. Hartzell:** After he was removed, no. Harry was there for a year when I came, and Harry and I worked, I think, pretty well together. My function was to try to calm and to get things squared away.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, you mention John Toll. I'd forgotten that he and I came the same year.

**Dr. Hartzell:** '65.

**Dr. Boyer:** The answer to your question is, we always got along well. I always liked John Toll. We never had any personal problems at all. There was during my tenure several occasions in which the Board of Trustees thought that John was not playing within the restrictions of the Board.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Such as, can you be specific?

**Dr. Boyer:** No, as a matter of fact, I wish I could, but I can only say that John Toll became a point of irritation for the Board of Trustees, whether they felt that he refused to take no for an answer, that might be one example, which he never did, I mean he never took no; and to the point where the Board felt it was almost, in spite of his wonderfully open style and manner, a matter of almost violation of authority. Whatever, I wish I could be specific, but only to say that I have to say, since you ask, that during my tenure, while John and I never had any problems, I do know that the Board on several occasions felt that he was not working within the ground rules and limits they had set for him, and on several occasions they insisted that I speak with him directly; and I guess I can even say it, his job was in jeopardy. But, having said all that, I always felt that a huge amount of credit for Stony Brook moving so far, so fast, during that period of late 60's and early 70's was in fact a tribute to John Toll, with all the, I think part of the answer, part of the problem may have related also to the campus unrest. I don't recall the details, but I think John was a very uneven manager; I think he attended to what he wanted to attend to very

well, and I think there were aspects of his administrative style that were very weak, that he didn't attend to. So, I don't mean to say he deserves a huge gold star on everything, but what I wanted to say was, when I draw the bottom line, my opinion is that Stony Brook moved as far and as fast as it did, got its roots established as quickly as it did because of the vision and, I if I might say so, the doggedness and tenacity of John Toll. As I said, he just never heard the word no. He had a vision in his head, I think it was to some degree an uneven vision, an imperfect vision, but you have to start someplace; and John started around the areas where he was most confident, attracted some wonderful people early on, and I think the University owes him a huge amount of credit. In the process, as I said, he irritated people on the campus, he irritated the Board, I know he irritated people in the Central Office; he never irritated me, I never, I had a good chemistry, but I saw the weakness. And I had to go and talk to him about some very serious problems.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Where these largely in relation to buildings?

**Dr. Boyer:** Yeah, I think so.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Rather than staffing?

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, it maybe management of and relations with staff as well. I can't, it wasn't just buildings; I think it had to do with the balance of his leadership there and the care he was giving.

**Dr. Hartzell:** What about Alec Pond, do you remember him?

**Dr. Boyer:** Sure, I remember Alec very well. Now, I have mixed feelings about Alec too. I knew Alec first, primarily, first through the Faculty Senate when I was the responsible officer for Faculty Senate affairs, and Alec was one of the senior administrators in that, and we got along very well, and I admired Alec. He was a clear headed guy and worked very hard. I always felt that, in the end, he

probably became a victim of the time and in some ways almost a victim of John Toll. I mean by that he was caught up in both the strengths as well as the weaknesses of that period, and I think if it would have been a different time, a less contentious one in terms of students, John, er, Alec Pond could have easily emerged as a great, distinguished campus head, but he was in some ways both made by the events, and also in a sense destroyed by the events. But I always thought well of Alec, I never saw him

**Dr. Hartzell:** Very able person.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yeah, I think he worked, he did yeoman service for John Toll. I think John who tends to move around and pick up 15 balls at once and want everything done overnight, I think Alec just performed heroically under those really, sometimes I would say, almost impossibly demanding circumstances. And he had to do all the staff work on all this student upheaval stuff and get out clear headed statements, so I think he deserves a lot of credit. But in the process you lose a lot of Brownie points too. You can't go through that without having people, for the right and wrong reasons, vote against you.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Just one question about why; I was thinking Warren is an upstater.

**Dr. Boyer:** Who?

**Dr. Hartzell:** Warren, he was Vice

**Dr. Boyer:** You mean Jim Warren?

**Dr. Hartzell:** Jim Warren, yes.

**Dr. Boyer:** On the Board.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes. I've got him as

**Dr. Boyer:** I have just a few minutes, yeah. Well, it's hard to know who knew most about Stony Brook, Karl. I think most of the people you mention here -- that is Larry Murray and Dave Price and Charlie Foster, Harry Porter -- they were the

guys who were there during the transition in the early 60's. They probably had more detailed memory of Stony Brook than those who came later.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I've interviewed all of them. Does Carl, I don't know Carl Carlucci.

**Dr. Boyer:** No, I don't either.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Did you have anything to do with Axelrod or Veillette?

**Dr. Boyer:** Of course, both intimately, they were both in the finance office and I worked with Don Axelrod and Paul Veillette for practically every day. They were the people who ran the budgets and I had great good relations with both of them; but I have to tell you they were overly, especially Paul Veillette, he really worked out he ended up being the Budget Director of the University of the State. He was responsible for the budgets for the SUNY system.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I knew Norm Hurd personally in my experience back at the end of the war.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, the political, you know this is, I think, I never felt that SUNY was politicized. I never felt that the Governor or the Legislature inappropriately invaded. Now, sometimes we didn't, a lot of times we didn't get what we wanted. But I never felt I as working in a framework in which I felt I had to play politics in the wrong way. You played politics in the sense you tried to be nice to people and let them know. But I never felt that, even in the budget allocations, I never felt that there was a lot of game playing tradeoffs from campuses. I didn't see that going on. So I think SUNY in that regard really stayed above what I would consider to be inappropriate incursions.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think Stony Brook sometimes has had the feeling that it's down on Long Island, Long Island is part of New York City, and that most of the people come from upstate and that it was getting the short, short shrift.

**Dr. Boyer:** I understand, only to say, I

**Dr. Hartzell:** You think it was imaginary?

**Dr. Boyer:** Yeah, now, I never even heard the debate about budgets on that fashion. Now, whether talk went on in the private legislative committees and the like, you never know; but, at least I was never confronted with evidence that somehow this was an upstate-downstate battle. I heard a lot of talk about New York City, but Stony Brook was never a part of that. Well, here again, it would be hard to talk about the specifics by which University Centers were developed. I can only say, Karl, there was an effort made as the University got more mature to compare the University Centers with peer institutions. There was a recognition that you couldn't build a great university and use a uniform formula that applied to Potsdam and Fredonia and all the rest. I think people understood that and exceptions were made in salaries from time to time. exceptions were made for super-grade appointments from time to time, so I think, to put it as simply as I can, the criteria that were used for University Centers were criteria drawn from peer institutions across the country to decide what would be appropriate for salaries and the lot.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think in the early days we felt that those were our criteria, they were not the criteria of the Central Office.

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, it may have been, but I can only tell you what I, and I think, again, I don't want to pick on former colleagues, I like all these guys, but I didn't sense this when I first got there in '65. I didn't have any sense that there was a feeling of what a university was; and Sam Gould has said that many times. He may have even said it on this tape. He knew what a university was.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Sam did.

**Dr. Boyer:** Yeah, and so I think when, at least when I got there in '65, I didn't have any sense that Stony Brook represented anything unusual and more than that, Buffalo, which was just coming into the system, all that I ever heard of was that it was a political headache, didn't represent any potential. I mean Larry Murray saw those guys out there as simply being ungrateful nags. He said, 'you know we saved them, and yet they think they want to get their lives on a silver platter.' So, there was no real sense 'hey, we have now the potential of a great university center.' No, it was 'we bailed those bastards out' sort of thing. So, I guess I am saying it took time for this to evolve. There is no question as time passed the Trustees and others in the University understood what a university center should and drew its criteria from peer institutions.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It's 17, did Stony Brook use its funds well within the constraints that

**Dr. Boyer:** Well, you know it was my feeling, Karl, that campuses generally used their funds well. I always used to marvel at the way the university, the campuses, would achieve really remarkable programs and because they were very raw. The thing about Stony Brook it didn't have a long tradition, and it was just building, it was like putting together a 747 while you were in flight; and that was a huge innovation and so I never felt there was any place to hide and tuck money. It was very raw, it was just building its traditions, didn't have big endowments, it couldn't slip money back and forth; it was literally living from hand to mouth. So, it never occurred to me that Stony Brook wasn't using its money well because I knew the dollars were limited, I knew the growth was rapid, I knew there was no great tradition behind it, I knew it didn't have moneys tucked away that had grown up over the years, little slush funds, so every dime was there. So, the answer to

your question is ‘yes;’ it was, by golly, about as efficient as you could get. Probably doing more for the buck than most universities in the country.

**Dr. Hartzell:** We were keeping school on a construction site.

**Dr. Boyer:** Sure, exactly, that’s another thing, the fact [gap in taping] I was going to say when I’d visit the campus, I’d leave depressed some times, not because of the people, but because of the ruggedness of the campus, the unfinished buildings and the fact they were being asked to do so much with so little. So, I would always tip my hat in gratitude for the willingness of people to be a part of an experiment that was just getting started, and to get the kind of reputation that it did under really very grim conditions. Now, you always have to build, you can’t start full-blown, but I never felt it was a case of inefficiency at all, but was usually marveling at what was accomplished under tough conditions. When I left New York, clearly the big item was the emerging medical school. That was just halfway out of the ground, some staffing was starting; it was very clear it was going to be a huge enterprise. It wasn’t at all clear to me that the State was ready to make the full commitment to cause that Health Sciences Center to flourish. Ed Pellegrino was in charge for a time and he had grand dreams. What I worried about then and I guess I’d still worry about now is whether the main campus would have to absorb the continued expansion of what would be a very expensive operation. So, that was my main worry about Stony Brook. I also saw a great unfinished agenda in the humanities and in the arts; I felt that Stony Brook to be a great university had to continue to strengthen in those areas. So those were the two things I had in mind: can the medical center develop as a distinguished and free-standing a well funded institution and can Stony Brook expand into the humanities and the arts adequately?





**Dr. Boyer:** And I must say, I rather admire what you have to do here getting all of these lost folk together.