

**INTERVIEW WITH MARTHA J. DOWNEY  
SECRETARY OF THE UNIVERSITY**

**November 24, 1986**

[Taping started after beginning of conversation; interviewee not identified]

**Dr. Hartzell:** All right. You were talking about problems at Albany.

**Interviewee:** They were divided, and they come back together again so that they have the professional schools of public affairs and social welfare and social services and police science and political science, graduate and undergraduate on the lower campus, and they have their own separate library there. That makes more sense than the way they were before, they had to do that because they were using one of the dormitory towers for the school of public affairs and some of the people from political science. Of course, they had to capture the dormitory for dormitory facilities. They still have dormitory problems.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, we're going to have to do something with space in the Library given over to offices; they'll need it for bookstacks.

**Interviewee:** Well, that's going to be another problem in a lot of institutions within the State University, I think in particular the University Centers.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, how do you see Stony Brook now, where do you think it's come, where do you think it ought to go?

**Interviewee:** Well, I think that, I would hope that, my point of view that it would be one where it would be not so much involved in further expansion as more in integration than in trying to improve in quality.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Quality in faculty, quality of students?

**Interviewee:** Well, I think quality of faculty. Yes, I think that, I don't know how you deal with, I think in general State University in most of its institutions is doing pretty well quality wise as far as students are concerned. I think a problem in the future is going to be one of not being too closed door, I think they are going to have more of a problem

that way to keep the doors open than they are in terms of improving further on the quality of their students. That's a difficult question to deal with.

**Dr. Hartzell:** By keeping the doors open, they are not expanding, how do you do that?

**Interviewee:** I'd like the campus to become more of an upper level institution.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Do more in the direction of graduate work for graduate students?

**Interviewee:** Well, more students in the upper division the last two years. I think that the open door situation has to be dealt with primarily through your colleges, and then as they, then you have to deal with the situation where you are going to have .....  
literate number of students in the first two years at any University Center. I don't think that you can have upper level institution without freshmen and sophomores. I think you need to have, I think you have to have a reasonable balance in the four years, but that doesn't mean that you can't have more students in the upper two years than you have in the first two years. And then this ties in again particularly with a graduate program, you know, and with dealing with the opportunities for graduate work and tying in the last two years with a graduate program. And if you have more students in the upper two years, I think it buttresses your graduate program. I don't think most students really can or should in most cases make a decision as to what their ultimate major is going to be.

**Dr. Hartzell:** They shouldn't concentrate too early.

**Interviewee:** Right. I see a great place for the University Centers in this respect, and it seems to me that this is a proper function for a public university. I think that this would probably happen what is happening in the City, in New York, they've got a long way to go in developing the graduate programs. I think they have much farther to go than even the State University, with the possible exception of Albany and maybe Binghamton.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, I think, let's see, should there be any questions to be addressed to Chancellor Wharton now that he has announced his resignation?

**Interviewee:** Well, I don't know. I would give him the opportunity to say anything he wants to say. On the other hand, I think that he has, with this development of

this new program for the development of graduate programs and research for the University, which he has just had approved by the Trustees, I think that they did a very good job in that respect, and I think he's pretty well spelled out what his ideas in that area are, and I think he has also spelled out pretty clearly what he feels how he would like to see, what he thinks the University needs for its own governance and independence, so that I don't think he could have much more to say than has already been made clear in those two reports, but he may have other things that he might feel that he could make in terms of students and faculty. I don't know what his feeling is about how he sees the University in terms of serving the different kinds of public that should be served and its students or how he feels about the matter of faculty, the character of the faculty, that I don't know anything about. And I haven't seen anything in particular that he has made in the way of public statements that have recently addressed those two areas, but again I'm not associated with the University closely for some years now.

**Dr. Hartzell:** When did you retire?

**Interviewee:** In 1971.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I retired in 1971.

**Interviewee:** But I'm sure there are in-house studies that they have made that they haven't made public that he might be able to comment about, but I don't know what they would be because those things go on I'm sure all the time. I think you have to assess your situation as far as facilities are concerned, though, before you can determine to what extent you can grow further, you know. I think that, in other words, as far as the master planning is concerned, I think that, first of all, you can indicate what you feel a reasonable further growth, both undergraduate and graduate is concerned, in terms of programs and curricula, but also it seems to me that you have to combine that with a need for equipment and facilities that will properly accommodate whatever the objective is. And I think you have to couple the two together; they can't be answered separately. You can't approve one, it seems to me, without a realistic approval of getting together, and I think such things as getting your humanities people together in closer physical proximity

to one another is important. I think the library requirements are important. Well, I think that this isn't something that's peculiarly to Stony Brook. I mean this is true of any of the other campuses that you have. I think that University has got to try to make some kind of a forecast as to what they see as a reasonable development. I don't think you can go too far into the future. I think it's very difficult to play five years ahead, but I think you ought to make some attempt to try to realistically look as to what you think you should be doing for the next five years. But I think Stony Brook has got a particular responsibility because of the large public that is being served on Long Island. I think that's a lot more, still growing situation, you know, and for the most part you don't have that in most of these metropolitan areas upstate.

**Dr. Hartzell:** There's one factor that is difficult for us. Yes, we've got a lot of students being produced on Long Island, but it seems that the brighter ones, if they can, find acceptance elsewhere, try to go away from home. So, they either go out of New York State, or they go upstate, say Albany, and we do not recruit actively, our admissions staff's fault. We just take people as they come to us. So that we do not get students from upstate New York in large numbers. I think the association is that somehow we are right in the middle of the city or something, which we are not, we are out in the country.

**Interviewee:** Do you get many from New York City?

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, we do. But at the undergraduate level we are reachable, at the graduate level we're national, we tend to be more national.

**Interviewee:** Well, I think that's reasonable. Well, I don't think that's something that's illogical. I think the logic of the situation will continue to determine where the students come from, undergraduate students particularly. I think that, and with the great change in terms of financing, a family's financing higher education, it's awfully hard to predict where that's going. I would have to say right at the moment it looks like it's going to become increasingly difficult. I would have to say that of all the states, in a way, that scholarship-wise New York State does more by far than any other state in the country.

**Dr. Hartzell:** You mean the Regents scholarship program?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, and the general student aid program without a scholarship basis for New York State, so that I think this does give some opportunity for students that want to go away from home and want to go still to a state college, a state university. And I am sure that, I don't just how, what the student composition by residence for the various state University Centers is but I am sure that the bulk of the undergraduate students at least as far as Stony Brook, Binghamton and Albany -- you have a problem with Buffalo - - do not come from their immediate, I mean there's

**Dr. Hartzell:** They do come from their regions.

**Interviewee:** No, well, they may at Stony Brook, but I don't think they do at the others.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yeah. Ours certainly come from, I think, a radius of 100 miles.

**Interviewee:** Well, I'd say that Stony Brook is more a regional college or university than the other three.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, but they have to go outside because -- I don't know about Buffalo -- but Binghamton and Albany, I think, have to go outside to get their student clientele.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, they don't have any trouble.

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

**Interviewee:** As a matter of fact, the students from the commuting area, take around Albany, they have to have a pretty high academic high school record in order to get in. And I think that's probably true at Binghamton, and I think Buffalo perhaps is more similar to Stony Brook, but I don't know the figures as of the present time. But I think that may be true in part because they really don't have as extensive dormitory facilities to accommodate that many from outside of the community.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, thanks very much. Where do you suggest I go.

[end of interview]

**Martha Downey:** I don't understand the relationship of Frank Abbott's book on the establishment of Stony Brook, or are you just doing that for yourself.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think he probably stopped before Stony Brook came into the picture.

**Martha Downey:** Yes, he did.

**Dr. Hartzell:** He did.

**Martha Downey:** Yeah.

**Dr. Hartzell:** All right, that's all I want to know about it. Frank was my assistant dean at Bucknell; he came from the American Council.

**Martha Downey:** I'm sure that book has been in the Board of Trustees files for much longer than before 1960. In fact, let's turn off the tape and I'll go get the book and just see when it was published.

**Dr. Hartzell:** All right, okay. Martha Downey has suggested Frank Moore's papers and the book by Oliver C. Carmichael, Jr., "New York Establishes a State University," Nashville 1955, Vanderbilt University Press.

**Martha Downey:** I think most people around here would point to the Rockefeller years as the years in which the University really got its impetus toward becoming the kind of University that we see today, and certainly it was without a doubt Governor Rockefeller's baby in every sense.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Where did the Heald Report come into the picture, because it was going for that sort of thing in 1959?

**Martha Downey:** I can't answer that, I don't know.

**Dr. Hartzell:** When did Rockefeller become Governor?

**Martha Downey:** I would have to look that up.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I need the chronology both for the Governors and of the Chancellors or Presidents of the State University.

**Martha Downey:** Oh, that's easy to do, I just don't have it right in my head.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I need to get that to get the history straight, and then the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Who preceded Mrs. Moore, was that Frank Moore?

**Martha Downey:** No, it was Cliff Phalen.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Cliff Phalen.

**Martha Downey:** And you've got him on your list to contact, and then Frank Moore was chairman before Cliff Phalen, and then I'm almost positive that Oliver Carmichael, Sr., was chairman of the Board prior to Mr. Moore's appointment. There haven't been that many, of course.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Right, those are the questions that I had, some of them are, wouldn't apply.

**Martha Downey:** Well, the think is, Karl, a lot of this I can probably research for you in my files for the Board of Trustees. It's just that I personally may not have the knowledge.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Let me do that, if that's all right.

**Martha Downey:** Well, as best as possible I would like your help, because obviously I don't really have that much time to set aside for this.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I understand. It's a question of what you have in recall.

**Martha Downey:** Well, what I have is a set of 3x5 cards which cross-references all the Board resolutions adopted since the start of the University, and my secretary and I understand the filing system, so that we can research that sort of thing and find, for example, these are the cards that I pulled from the early years when we first thought of a college on Long Island. And I thought if you could go through there, and these are summaries of the resolutions, anything that you find that would be of interest, and we can pull them out of the minutes for you.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Good, all right.

**Martha Downey:** So I think the best thing to do is for you to start on this, and make any notes that you want to.

**Dr. Hartzell:** You have a

**Martha Downey:** I have a set of two file drawer cabinets, a set of what we call our archives that was prepared by the former secretary to the president, who has since died, and in that there is a lot of good historical materials also, probably not an awful lot about Stony Brook, but about the University as a whole. I guess what I'm saying is that I think that I probably would be the person to access a lot of things from the standpoint of the Board of Trustees and archival kinds of things about the history of the University.

**Dr. Hartzell:** All right, then let me go through those folders, and I will put on the tape some of the things that I find there, and I may come back.

**Martha Downey:** Well, what you could do is anything that you find in here that you would like a copy of, I can't promise that I would Xerox it today, but we could get it done for you through the week and mail it to you. I haven't had a chance to even open the folders, I have no idea what's in there.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I see. All right, well, those are Frank Moore's folders.

**Martha Downey:** Yeah.

**Dr. Hartzell:** This is the report on the Temporary Commission for the Need for a State University printed in Albany in 1948, Legislative Document No. 30, under Chairman Oliver C. Carmichael, Vice Chairman of the Commission. The act creating the commission was Chapter 353 of the Laws of 1946. Under the section entitled "General Conclusions," the first paragraph:

The State of New York is confronted with a serious problem in the field of higher education, the implications of which reach far into the future. The great upsurge for demand for opportunities for higher education, though of relatively recent origin, according to all indications is likely to continue unabated. This demand is not being adequately taken care of today and will even less well met into the future under the state's existing facilities and type of organization.



Martha Downey made available a stack of 3x5 cards dated from March 1955 to June 1965, all relating to actions of the Board of Trustees with regard to Long Island and Stony Brook. I have asked her to go through and Xerox this material for us starting with a file of Frank Moore's entitled "University at Stony Brook 1957 to Present." A memorandum of Dr. Carlson, who was President then in January 1957, to Frank Moore entitled "Background of Activities on Long Island." At the bottom he said in 1953, in 1954 we found that the one overall organization that was willing to drive for public education on Long Island was the Citizens Committee for Public Colleges on Long Island. Through this particular organization we have been able to gain the support of a number of important organizations such as PTA's, school veterans, schoolmen unions and management.

[end of tape]