

**INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL FRISBIE  
FORMER DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS**

**January 13, 1989**

**Dr. Hartzell:** Daniel Frisbie former Director of Admissions, January 13, 1989. We'll start at the top of the checklist. All right, so and then ..... after we get farther down here, you're not confined to it by any means. Name, department, rank, position.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, that's at the present time or at the time we're talking about.

**Dr. Hartzell:** At the time we're talking about, I'd like to know what you're doing now, but I also want to know what you were doing when you were Director of Admissions.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Okay, well, I'm Dan Frisbie, and I joined the Undergraduate Admissions Office on August 1, 1965, as an Admissions Counselor, working for the then Director, Ed Malloy. A fellow named Bob Haberman was Assistant Director of Admissions, Margaret Sullivan, who is now Assistant to the Chair in the Physics Department, was also a counselor there, and Wayne Carhart, there were four of them, and I became the fifth. Two more were added that year because Dr. Toll joined the campus that same summer in 1965. I think I've mentioned this to you before, I was the last person in the Admissions Office interviewed by you, you were in effect the acting president at that time, I think your title was Chief Administrative Officer, in the catalogs they listed it that way, but I recall that very vividly. Ed had taken me up to meet you; I think Sheldon Ackley was outside, and I remember Sheldon seemed a little upset at that time because he didn't know that that interview was going to take place, and he was questioning Ed a good deal about how did this happen to be. But anyway, Ed took me in and introduced me to you, and we chatted for about fifteen or twenty minutes. I remember that you asked me a rather difficult question, perfectly natural from your point of view, but you asked me how would I go about getting a freshman class into Stony Brook; and I had not actually had direct admissions experience. I had done alumni

interviewing for my *alma mater*, Union College up in Schenectady, and I had taught for fourteen years in secondary schools at that time, so it wasn't as difficult a question really in a sense, and I remember saying we would have to contact guidance departments in schools in the area and convey to them the kinds of students we were seeking and solicit their assistance in doing that. Your field was history, and I had taught history in secondary school so I think we sort of hit it off at that time, and that turned out favorable, and I began employment on August 1. I was informed about the position opening in Admissions by a friend at the College at Geneseo, who was then an Assistant Director of Admissions, his name was Bob Riegel, he later became Director of Athletics there, just retired last year, outstanding athlete, was all-pro, all high school in Buffalo for the whole city of Buffalo, played professionally for a while, unfortunately wasn't that good a hitter, he was in the Pirates chain; he went down to a big Texas league in 1954, but the manager told him if he could hit 250, they would send him to the Pirates immediately because they needed catchers. I never honestly saw a catcher that I thought in the major leagues did the job better than this fellow did, strongest arm that I ever saw. I used to play center field because I was fast; I used to kid everybody if any runners tried to steal center field, he could throw them out, sometime he threw so hard it sailed right over the second baseman's head, marvelous player. Well, anyway, he told me there was a position open and Ed Malloy was a nice man, and I should contact him, and I did. He was right. I thought the world of Ed.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Ed's a fine person.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Great gentleman.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I've lost touch with him, is he still at .....

**Daniel Frisbie:** No, he retired. He's living there, yes, he's still living there and Anne has also retired. I think Ed has been retired now about five, six years or so. Things kind of went a little downhill for Ed after he left here. It wasn't a good experience at Union, where he had gone to be Dean of Students. But it was just a terrible time to be Dean of Students anywhere, 1968 to 1973, the activist period. Nobody was really prepared to

cope with that kind of activity and that kind of action from students. I don't think anybody knew how to handle them. Ed was just exhausted; he was living on campus, on call all night. He left here when ..... was Vice President for Student Affairs. I don't think the experience there was all that successful either. I felt very badly about that because he deserved better -- a fine man. He's having a bypass operation; he did not have a heart attack, but he did have to have a bypass operation. I think he has a little cancer in the back of his back, the last I knew that's under control. So, he's doing okay, they took a trip to England he wrote on a Christmas card this year. But I felt very badly when he left here. I just couldn't imagine the Admissions Office without him being there, and then Dave Tilley was moved over to Admissions. Of course, you remember that experience. In January 1968 I remember coming to work that January day and seeing police cars all up and down Nicolls Road, buses coming onto the campus, seeing news people from CBS, NBC, ABC, Reuters

**Dr. Hartzell:** They had been carefully notified.

**Daniel Frisbie:** That they had.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Did you ever see the manual that was gotten out.

**Daniel Frisbie:** I only saw a picture of it, Karl, but they said it was nearly an inch thick. They had floor plans of all the dorms. They had pass keys to it and undercover agents apparently on the campus. It was a production. Terrible. I always felt badly that Rockefeller let it go forward, but I guess in his position maybe if he'd blocked it, it would have looked as if maybe he was trying to cover up something. But there really wasn't all that much here anyway, because none of those kids was ever indicted or convicted, I believe. My recollection of twenty-five or so that were arrested and taken off with small amounts of marijuana, they never really found anything that was all that bad. I remember Bob Haberman, Bob was calm. Look, he said, our kids are adventuresome, they're not stupid, they don't get into heroin. I think that was true. When we visited high schools that fall, in the fall of 1968, I used to have counselors sort of ask me in a confidential way, how bad is the drug problem on your campus. Haberman developed this marvelous

method of warding that off, and he'd sort of look around, learn forward to the counselor and say, how is it in your school? In every case the counselor would say, you know, you wouldn't believe it but we've got a few kids in this school that are into drugs. Bob would say, where do you think we got it from. It came from the secondary school. We didn't invent drugs on this campus. It's just that it happened to erupt here, and we had an ambitious Commissioner of Police.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The Republicans at that time had a problem, I think, it was the sewer district

**Daniel Frisbie:** Oh, terrible, southeast

**Dr. Hartzell:** Southeast sewer district and wanted to get attention away from it.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, that was it; I'd also heard he was seeking reelection, John Barry I believe was the man's name, but I thought he did the University, the ..... system and the people of Long Island a terrible disfavor by carrying that out. But to get back to my story, I think Dave Tilley was given perhaps unfair in some ways responsibility for not properly alerting the administration that there was some drug use on the campus.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Wasn't he still Dean of Students?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, he was, he was Dean at that time. And I can still remember watching the news that night on television with Alec Pond sitting there with Dave Tilley and the two of them looked like they'd both just been sentenced to twenty years in Siberia. They were as grim as anyone can look, and understandably, because so much attention had been given to this raid, as you point out it was well planned, well publicized, all the media were notified. And I understand that even Pravda had written an article about it.

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

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes. I heard from others that some of the German newspapers, French newspapers, English newspapers, it was picked up on news services.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, Stony Brook had had quite a lot of publicity since Johnny came, and particularly Frank Yang and Bentley Glass type of quality appointments that he

made, and stories around that and stories around the development of Stony Brook and then suddenly this. But Berkeley was also in the picture.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, yes, it was. It sort of took the bloom a little off Stony Brook for a while. I'm not sure it ever really recovered, and I think it also was the beginning of a shift in the mix of students on this campus. We weren't immediately aware of it, but by some time in the mid '70's it was clear that where we had a large representation of students of the Jewish faith, a small representation of Catholic students, and a fairly steady percentage, which still persists today I believe, at the Protestant level. The Jewish and Catholic percentages just shifted. The number of Jewish students began a steady decline, and number of Catholic students showed a proportionate increase.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Why did you come to Stony Brook, what factors were important in your decision?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Probably was to a large extent some dissatisfaction with the way secondary school teaching was practiced on Long Island in a particular school that I was working in. I'd only been down here two years at Commack School District, which was then listed as the best growing school district in the United States, and it really was outstanding, it eventually reached some 17 schools, 7,000 students that were in the school district; it's all shrunk now. But I had a marvelous system in western New York, I taught in Linden, East Aurora, New York, to south Buffalo, I taught in an all-central school district in Elmer, New York, called Iroquois Central, as so many schools up there had Indian names as you know, in New York State, and worked for a marvelous principal up there, and I was chairman of my department, social studies. I came down here and there were some nice people, the kids are pretty much the same I found most everywhere, but the administration here wanted people to all be teaching the same thing on the same day. We had to be in lockstep, and it seemed to me it destroyed something very valuable, each person brings a certain personality traits and a certain style of teaching to the task, and what works well for you is the way you should approach your subject matter and how you teach it. I felt that that was not being permitted here, and I remember that here in

Commack. I can't generalize and say that's true in all schools because I've only worked in the one. But I remember having a discussion with the principal, he'd come over to observe me, and when we talked about it afterwards, he said you know you're the kind of teacher we could make a television segment out of. He said if you would just make a couple of changes in this and that and the other thing, and I said, well, if I make those changes, then it's not me, not my approach. And I remember using an analogy with him, I said, you know, if a coach had told Stan Musial that he could improve his batting average ten points by widening his stance instead of using that closed in stance, would that be smart to do and risk the fact that he might drop down to a 250 hitter because that happens to work well for him. Well, that seemed to upset the principal, but it didn't change. I could just see more and more of it. The chair of the department wanted everybody doing the same thing, and I talked to my friend Bob ..... about it, he told me, he said, there's an opening in admissions that you might enjoy that. I'll try. So I wrote to Ed in January. I didn't hear from him until March. Not until after I got into the office, Ed's desk used to be piled high with documents. But I came in for an interview, and they introduced me to people, and then I didn't hear from them again until the end of the school year. My wife had just gone in for a D&C, four o'clock one afternoon I was home having a glass of beer, feeling sorry for myself, and the phone rang, and it was Bob Haberman, he said, you still want to work at a job over here. I said, is it too late to start this afternoon? So, that's how I got here. I think it was probably dissatisfaction, Karl. I love teaching, I really did, and I love the kids, and I don't mean that I should be above being observed or criticized, I never meant that to be, but I think someone observing has to look at the end result. If you are having success, students enjoy being in your class, and they are learning something. I think you have to give some latitude to people.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Teaching is an art, and you can't make a science of it. There is some mechanics, but they only go so far.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Indeed they do, and what they do is enhance someone who has those qualities that make a successful teacher. If those are already there, then you can refine it a little bit, supplement with the mechanics.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Now, how much did you understand of what was going on at Stony Brook at the time, what was your understanding of the purposes behind the creation of Stony Brook, the function of the institution?

**Daniel Frisbie:** In the large plan, it was my understanding that it had been determined that a University Center was needed in this area of the State of New York. There was a Center at Buffalo, one in Albany, and a small emerging in Binghamton, New York, the former Harpur College. And that really the citizens of this area, the greater metropolitan New York State area were underserved by the SUNY system by not having a major University Center located here. I think Mr. Rockefeller wanted to make it a flagship institution. We were often called the “jewel in the crown.”

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think it was Sam Gould that used that term.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Is that where it originated from?

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, I think so.

**Daniel Frisbie:** He was, of course, he was still Chancellor when I came aboard. I remember that phrase, “the jewel in the crown.” It was often said that Stony Brook held a special place in Rockefeller’s view of the SUNY system because it was one that really didn’t really come into being until the time he had become Governor. I remember well that year because my family came from a small upstate town, Schoharie, southwest of Albany, and my grandfather had been a fascinating man. I was only six when he died so I didn’t really get to know him, but he was an entrepreneur. He owned a small electric company that was formed up there. The world’s smallest railroad, a five mile long railroad that ran from Middleburg to Schoharie. And he served in the New York State Assembly, and in 1911, 1912 when Tammany Hall was having one of its periodic squabbles they chose him as Speaker of the Assembly for that year in 1911-1912, and he became good friends with the young senator from Dutchess County, Franklin Roosevelt.

My father took me to meet Mr. Roosevelt in 1936 when he was campaigning for reelection. My sister, father, and I remember what he was eating his supper in the Governor's mansion because my dad worked for Herbert Lehman. God, I wish we had a few more men of his character. I have to tell you, Karl, he was, I've met a lot of people in public life, and I never met anyone that I thought was a more decent, compassionate, intelligent human being than Herbert Lehman. My dad used to take me in on weekends, a lot of times we'd go to the Governor's mansion. He did some speechwriting for him on agricultural matters. I had a lot of chances to see him as a small boy.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Did you know that I interviewed Lehman with a stenotypist the end of the war, I was doing my "Empire State at War, World War II."

**Daniel Frisbie:** No, I did not, 1945, 1946.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It was 1945, '46, down in his apartment in New York City. I interviewed Poletti also.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Oh, marvelous, Charles Poletti, what a sweetheart he was. They came out to my sister's wedding. She was married in 1939. I had an attack of flu or something that day, and I was up in my bedroom with my buddy, and I was just ..... God, into my bedroom comes Charles Poletti, and he was marvelous. He joked around with us. He went back to Italy, I think. He was Acting Governor.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, he was Acting Governor, I don't know what happened.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Lost track of him, I'm sure he's probably dead now. But he was a nice man. Lehman, I just thought he was, not only the other things, he was a tremendous Governor. What an outstanding administrator. I mean he inherited problems from Franklin Roosevelt when Franklin went off to bigger things. He eliminated the debt, he built surplus, he expanded schools, he did a lot of things.

**Dr. Hartzell:** His picture is in the book. The book was published by the State of New York.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Good, good. Well, there have been some good, well, I have to say men because there's never been a woman Governor in the state, but there have been some good men who have served as Governors in New York.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The qualities gone downhill the last eight years.

**Daniel Frisbie:** I think so, it's sad, sad. I certainly didn't always agree with Mr. Dewey, but I think he was a very capable administrator, cared a good deal about the State.

**Dr. Hartzell:** We owe the State University to him.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, he, that's correct, because 1948 it came together, Dewey was supportive

**Dr. Hartzell:** He appointed a commission to look into the State University. He appointed the youngest chairman ..... What were your impressions of Stony Brook when you first came, the campus, the people, the leadership, the spirit?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, I had a sense that there was a strong spirit, a strong *esprit de corps*. It seemed to me a lot like a family here, a fairly large family. There were only 250 faculty here and less than 1,000 undergraduates at that time. And I remember there were only 16 buildings, I think, on the campus at that time, so you knew people all over the campus, and it was easy to expedite things. You'd just pick up the phone and call so and so, and it seemed to me at that time it wasn't necessary to put everything into memoranda form. People were still honorable, and their word meant something. If you made some agreement, you didn't think about it. If somebody agreed to do something, you knew that it would be done; and if there were a problem getting it done that person would have gotten back to you. So, I think there was a lot of spirit there. And Johnny, of course, was the most fascinating person I think I've ever met here, in fact, perhaps met anywhere. I've never seen anyone with such energy. I remember he had Ed arrange for him to come down and meet us, we were at that time the admissions office was down in one of the dorms, G Quad it was. And we were on the lookout for him coming down, because the administration building was in the library at that time up on the third floor,

and he wasn't walking, he was running -- Presidents don't run -- and he came in and talked to us at that time. He had such an amazing grasp of detail. I'm sure you know that.

**Dr. Hartzell:** He could carry more things in his consciousness at the same time than any person that I have know, and he was open, he was without guile, he was a good man to work for.

**Daniel Frisbie:** I think he was largely misunderstood by a lot of the faculty members who regarded him as sort of the enemy of the campus, that really bothered me.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, faculty have a way of doing that.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, yes, they do sometime. But you came to the position that Johnny took over when he came here as a result of faculty conflict with John Lee, I believe. That preceded me, I really didn't know much about it, but I understand that the divisions among faculty were deep and seldom forgotten or maybe forgiven to this day, but you were the ideal person for the transition from those difficult days until the time when someone like Johnny could be brought in.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Ideal, why?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, I think you had the temperament for it. I feel I think you were a patient person, you listened, you were not precipitous, you encouraged people to speak up and to talk about the things they had concerns about, and you created an atmosphere that allowed that to happen. You were not seen as a threatening person, you were not seen as an authoritarian person, you carried the responsibilities of your office with dignity, and I think that was what was needed at that time. The last thing that was needed here was to have someone here who had a very strong agenda. As I said earlier, the campus and the people seemed like just an enlarged family. I found people friendly, receptive, cooperative. I think they felt, most of the people I talked with, thought they were doing something exciting and very productive.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Yes, that's definitely true.

**Daniel Frisbie:** There was that sense of it. There was good morale, I felt, with the people I had direct contact with in the Admissions Office and what would later become the departments that make up Student Affairs, like the housing office and financial aid and so on. One of the things that I regretted seeing take place, and I watched it happening before Ed left, his contact directly with the President began to lessen, and more and more he had to work through intermediaries. I think the Executive Vice President Office was created around 1967, Alec, I think

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think earlier than that actually.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, maybe it had been created, but I seem to recall that Alec was appointed to that around that time, maybe it was '66. That was fine, I enjoyed Alec very much, I was extremely sorry to see Alec leave here. I thought that he got a very bad deal. All of us in Student Affairs, all the Directors supported him. I had attended a dedication at Cobleskill Agricultural and Technical School, when my grandfather was Speaker, he designated that campus to be created as one of the Ag and Tech schools.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Speaker of the Assembly.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, yes, he was Speaker at that time, and there is a hall up there called Frisbie Hall, and they had a portrait done of him, and the President asked the family to come for dedication, which we did, very nicely done, 1977 I think it was. And I had a chance to meet, I can't remember the gentleman's name, he was then the Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Of SUNY, Warren.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, that's the gentleman, and I chatted with him and when he learned I was from Stony Brook -- and I reported on this to Johnny when I got back -- half jokingly Warren said, how are things going down there. Well, so far, okay, everything's fine. He left no doubt that they found it very difficult to deal with Johnny. They just had never encountered anybody with his determination and his energy, and he left me with the impression that they would be very happy if Johnny was someplace else. He didn't say it with meanness, but ever for him to say that, the fellow that worked for this man

was a lot. I reported that all to Johnny, he kind of smiled, and I'm sure I didn't tell him anything that he didn't already know for a long time. But at the time I wrote to him that it was clear that the Trustees were attempting to block Alec's appointment or that there was some indication that that was going to happen. And I wrote to him and I said it would be a serious mistake for the Trustees to assume that simply because Alec was Johnny's Executive Vice President, that his approach to the job would be the same. I said there may be similarities, and I don't say that to attack Johnny Toll's approach, but they are two different people. And I told Alec, I think I gave Alec a copy of the letter that I sent. The letter unfortunately was all to no avail. Alec has never forgiven Cliff Wharton, he apparently holds Cliff Wharton responsible, he and Judy Moyers. She came down hard on Alec, I never understood why, I don't whether sometime maybe he had met her, and might have said something that she had taken offense to, but Alec ..... tact when he was dealing with people. I enjoyed that, but anyway I didn't mean to get off my train of thought. When Alec left, well, even before Alec had left, the Admissions Office and the whole so-called Student Affairs area was created with Dave Tilley's old Dean of Students line, that position as such was eliminated and upgraded, if you will, to a Vice President for Student Affairs. I'm trying to remember the fellow who was the first one, I can't think of his name.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Is the one that went to California?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yeah. Dave Tilley had actually hired him as a Counselor or doing something in the Dean of Students area. Dave was never too high on this guy. But for the period that he was in, in fact he wasn't the first one, Trask, David Trask was the first one, and he lasted about five weeks and collapsed on the campus they said one day under stress or whatever. And then this fellow was appointed. He had a doctorate. During his period of stewardship in that position, not much else happened. We continued to report to the Executive Vice President, and then Elizabeth Wadsworth came in. And increasingly all decisions had to go through the Vice President for Student Affairs, but Alec continued to call me from time to time on things, information about this or that. I

was always happy to give him any; you know, I really had a nasty problem, I could go up and see him anytime unless he was actually talking to somebody, and then he'd always see me, and I could get something resolved. And I don't mean that it always went my way, it didn't, but you could get an answer, and that was the point of what an administrator has to do.

**Dr. Hartzell:** What were some of your problems?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Oh, sometimes you were trying to get something done with another office, about using another office, and I tried every means possible and talked with people and gone through all the protocol and nothing, somebody was just going to be stubborn, and it often was in another vice presidential area. So I had no, I couldn't coerce, I don't like to do that anyway, I prefer to deal with people and point out the wisdom and the value of doing something, and hope that they see the sense of it. I can't remember a specific incident, there weren't all that many of them, but occasionally that would happen, and I don't mean that you run to the Principal and solve all your discipline problems or something, but often he'd have a suggestion as to how we could go about getting something resolved. But he was receptive, that I remember. He would always listen.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Do you remember when Elizabeth Wadsworth came?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Oh, very much, 1974, she came aboard.

**Dr. Hartzell:** How did she work out?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, I think people in the Student Affairs opened up to her and were very supportive and made offers of assistance, let us know how we can help, we welcome you to the University. Elizabeth as a person was delightful, wonderful human being. Interesting little anecdote, we were in those years often looking to hire admissions counselors, we had some that were coming and going, leaving for other jobs, so we had an opening and resumes would come in from time to time, and I had no input the hiring of the Vice President for Student Affairs. When they settled on Elizabeth, her resume was sent down, and when I saw it, I couldn't believe it. It was the same resume that had

circulated in our office some months earlier for an admissions counseling position, and my policy was to circulate it to all the counselors to get input -- do you have any comments, do you know this person -- it was unanimous, they said she was not qualified for an admissions counselor position. I think I told that to Elizabeth many years later, I certainly told it to her in a very soft way, but anyway I think she had very limited experience for the position, and I think it hurt her. She was dealing with all men at the vice presidential level who had been in academia for a while and knew their way around. I even heard at times she was reduced to tears, and I know she didn't want to do that because she was a feminist, and you never show a man your tears that somebody has gotten to you so badly that it makes you cry. She was a very sincere person, but I don't think that she was, I don't think she helped that whole position all that much, and she was not helpful to the Admissions Office. Her interest I think lay in residential life, counseling, that's where her strengths were, I think she was very good that way. She was not helpful to our office. That was what I had regretted, and we just kept getting farther and farther removed from the chief administrator. I don't need to add other burdens to that person, but I ..... Marburger tied around an institution like this, but the only way you can do it is to have good people around you and give them both the authority and the responsibility, and then you hold them accountable for it. It seems to me that's the logical way to operate. But enrollment became increasingly important after the mid-'70's because the demographics were beginning to have impact.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Impact in what way.

**Daniel Frisbie:** In both the quantity and quality of students applying to the University, and the effect of that of course is to intensify recruiting. Private institutions could offer scholarships and other forms of inducements to overcome their higher tuition than SUNY could offer. So we needed to have a lot of things. Do you remember one of my associate directors, she's now a number three person at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Deirdre Kedesde, she completed her doctorate at Tufts while she was in my office in English Literature, she was a very bright woman.

**Dr. Hartzell:** The first name rings a bell, but I can't bring a face

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, you wouldn't have, she came in about 1975.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I had retired by then.

**Daniel Frisbie:** You were still around the campus, but you weren't in an active position by then. But anyway, I mention her because she saw a great need for us to have word processing in our office. The number of applications had increased tremendously; when I came here in 1965, we had 3,000 applications, they were read by three or four counselors, each of them. You could three or four readings and evaluations on each one, that was kind of fun in those days. But as the number got up to 8 and 10, 11,000 applications, to combine individual service required some technology to help us to do the more tedious things, so she made a proposal for word processing, and Elizabeth shot it down through Emile. Emile's a delightful man, he's the most loyal company man I have ever seen in my whole life. He's still Associate Vice President of Student Affairs. Whatever the company line is, Emile would support it. He's not a mean or vindictive man at all, but he was not a great risk taker. I've talked to him about this, especially since I left Student Affairs, and we're good friends and I like him very much, I think he's a, if you needed help, Emile would be the first one there to help you, but anyway that tended to block some of the things that we needed. I didn't get those things until after Fred Preston got here; Fred was very helpful. There were a lot of things that we needed in that office, and I think in retrospect at times people thought that I had never asked for those things, and it was not so, I had, many times, maybe I should have been more persuasive and able to get people to ..... But that was kind of legacy of Elizabeth.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Let me ask you this, I've heard a good deal about the quality of the students that we got and are getting. Without going into that immediately, what about the staffing of the Admissions Office and what about the degree of initiative that the Admissions Office was able to take in dealing in looking for first-class students, not only on the Island but upstate or possibly, I assume that Stony Brook really could not look for first-class undergraduates outside of New York State.

**Daniel Frisbie:** That changed. When I first came here, it was unwritten, it was said there's a gentleman's agreement that we do not recruit outside the state, you don't use taxpayers money to go outside, and we didn't for years. I became president of the Admissions Counselors group in the state of New York in 1975, and I began to push for us to make forays into contiguous states, particularly New Jersey, which doesn't have a great state educational system itself; into Connecticut, which doesn't have it either; maybe some into Massachusetts; and Pennsylvania; and in western New York into Ohio, you could run into a big state system in Ohio, but still there were areas there we have lots of advantages to offer those people. I created a program, which is still operating, I called it "Operation Inform." I used the word "Inform" very advisedly because I felt that we had a duty and an obligation as a state agency offering an invaluable service to inform the citizenry of what is available here. There was an attitude in central administration that taxpayer's money should be used in a limited way to compete with private schools. I'm sure you know all about that. That has changed, not as quickly, and it may not be supported quite as strongly as we would like it to be, but it has changed, and that's for the better. But we do now run these "Operation Inform" programs in Connecticut, we run them in New Jersey, we run them in Pennsylvania. And there is recruiting going on in those states. Before I left the Admissions Office, about two years before, Michael McHale, my associate, he's still there, and I put together a program for a three year national recruitment campaign; it involved a budget that would knock your socks off, that's why nothing ever came of it. But to do what we felt needed to be done on a national level would have required about a million and a half dollars, that was an advertising campaign, publications, radio, visits to high schools all over the United States, and it went nowhere.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Now, was this beamed at the undergraduate level?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Oh, yes, it was all undergraduate. Now, the other issue that you raise, Karl, is a very valid one, and it was of great concern for me in the last years that I was in the Admissions Office, and it dealt with the quality of students coming in. The

Admissions Director always walked a very thin, very narrow line. The administration needed enrollment targets to be met because that drives budget, budget drives everything.

**Dr. Hartzell:** FTE's.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Full time employment is all lined to that. That's the administrative side and that's really where the Director of Admissions or that's who the Director of Admissions answers to. The other side of the line is the academic side with very legitimate concerns about quality of students coming in. You know, the best of all worlds would be to steal Harvard, Yale or Princeton's freshmen class and bring them in here, that would make most people happy but not all. We long ago decided the only thing that would please some is if we could clone some faculty and bring them in as students. But that joke aside, what would we have available to try and satisfy both to recruit the numbers of students, to enroll the number of students we want closer to the quality we would all desire. To do that you would have to give, I'm going to make an assumption here that the quality of education, the academic level of it compares with the best anywhere, that's a given. If you don't have that, then you're really up against it. I was never concerned about that, never in my life did I ever give a second thought to the quality of education, and I would argue with people in public and with other admissions representatives on panels, I'll match the quality of our faculty with any in the United States. You can go to Harvard and Yale and get a degree that will carry more prestige than one from Stony Brook, but don't ever go there thinking you're going to get a better education than you'll get right here, because I won't buy it, never had a problem with that. That aside, however, we have to offer them something else, and for lack of a better the old expression the quality of life on campus. As you very well know, our dorms got trashed in the '60's and early '70's. A lot of them haven't fully recovered yet.

**Dr. Hartzell:** By trashed, you mean what?

**Daniel Frisbie:** Well, students literally did a lot of damage to them; and when dissatisfaction with the food service got to the point of rebellion and students no longer

supported it and started cooking the dorms, it attracted visitors we haven't rid ourselves of yet.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Really.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Cockroaches and rats, mice, because students are careless about food. We've got rats in the building where I am right now. We have a little Harriman Cafe over there, you keep that locked up. Anytime there is food around, you draw rodents. The windows were broken, the furniture was damaged, and one of the biggest complaints I would get from guidance counselors, what have you done about your dorms. I have students whose parents called me, why did you recommend Stony Brook, do you have any idea what the conditions are in those dorms out there. And I had to listen to that a lot. Now that's one aspect of it, the dorms, that's one knot. The other thing

**Dr. Hartzell:** We were educating other people's children and some of those children were bright, but they weren't housebroken. In other words, there was unfinished business from the home coming to us, and we had to deal with that in the dormitories; and that is one of the points at which, I think, Dave Tilley and I wanted to part company. At least I wanted to part company.

**Daniel Frisbie:** I think, I was going to add to what you were just saying, all of that was occurring at a time when *in locus parentis* was being abandoned. You're absolutely right, and that's probably what in the long run got Dave in that kind of difficulty with the administration. He, I think, Dave was, the Dean of Students position was seen as one that should have addressed these concerns, should have been on top of them. But that's another aspect, and it's been a mixed thing. You know, we've had these shootings on the campus, and we've had rapes and other things, and unfortunately, we live in an area where newspapers and other media give it a lot of publicity, and it tends to hurt. The other thing that an institution can do to go after high quality students is scholarships. Now, I always argued that our tuition was our financial aid right up front, because you can't beat it. In fact, actually that's one of SUNY's enormous problems. I told Wharton that at a meeting about three years ago up in Albany, a whole gang of people there, and I

stood up and made the observation to him that, why cannot SUNY publicly advertise the quality of its education at the very affordable cost to the parents, because I said the problem is people, because it costs so little, they cannot believe that you can get an education of such value, so that it means our educational programs are undervalued. And I say to people, if someone comes up on the street and says to you, hey, you want to buy a 1989 Cadillac for \$12,000

**Dr. Hartzell:** Who did you steal it from?

**Daniel Frisbie:** And I felt that SUNY needed to undertake strong public relations efforts to promote the most affordable educational value in this century that the citizens of this state have. He didn't disagree, Wharton, but I didn't know it at that time, but he was about ready to leave himself so he wasn't going to take on any new struggles. I have no sense of the present Chancellor whatsoever.

**Dr. Hartzell:** He came right out of Buffalo.

**Daniel Frisbie:** The College, not the University.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I just don't understand that appointment at all.

**Daniel Frisbie:** I didn't understand it the minute I heard it. The College is one of the weakest colleges in the state system.

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

**Daniel Frisbie:** Absolutely one of the weakest colleges. If you saw the quality of students they take into that institution, when I taught in western New York, I knew kids graduating from high school at 65 high school averages, and they were accepted immediately. Some of them were going into home economics.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I don't understand that. .... Wells was I thought a reasonably good person.

**Daniel Frisbie:** He may be and maybe that's not fair for me to impugn his ability simply because the college is not a highly competitive college. I think they are probably below Brockport. Brockport was right down the tubes, but they are coming back. They

are making some good changes up there. But, anyway, I guess it says something about SUNY Central, the Trustees, doesn't it.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It certainly does. The quality of the Trustees has gone down, I think, from what it was in the beginning.

**Daniel Frisbie:** How could they settle for anything but the very best they could attract to that position nationally. That was a big disappointment to me, and I see the period where Johnstone will be as SUNY marking time stage. In fact, we might do well just marking time, rather than going downhill. But I worry about that, because the last two Governors we've had have not been strong supporters of us. I know if Mario Cuomo were sitting here, he'd climb all over me and argue quite to the contrary, but I think the sense of a lot of people in SUNY is that not as much as could be has been done. But, anyway, those are the reasons and the administration, I told Elizabeth on many occasions, if we continue to take the large numbers that you're asking for, and I worked through Ray Maniuszko's office

**Dr. Hartzell:** Ray's a first rate guy.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, he is, and I told Ray several years ago, in fact, we invited their whole staff down for breakfast one morning as our way, we invited them for scrambled eggs and bacon, we had a big spread for them, I had scrambled eggs myself, but I told him that his office was the most useful office for the Admissions Office of any on this campus. I can call him up in the morning and ask for an analysis, and I'd have it, if not that afternoon, by the next day. And they are still very, very good. But I told him, and I told Alec, if we continue to try and take these large numbers, something is going to happen to the quality. We tried best we could to satisfy both groups, and of course when you do that, you usually end up satisfying nobody. We did maintain the numbers. There were a couple of years, '81 and '83, we missed the target, and I'll take full responsibility for that. There were some things I wanted to do but Student Affairs would not let me do, and much later when Marburger found out what I wanted to do, ordered them to be done by their Students Affairs, and we met the targets, or exceeded them. But it's a real

challenge now and Theresa La Rocca-Meyer is an experienced person, she comes in from St. Johns, she's doing a good job, and she's getting some additional support that I couldn't get out of Fred that will help a great deal. It's a long term struggle to turn that around. I told people from SUNY Central who came down two or three years ago, they were interviewing various people on campus, and they asked me where I thought enrollment numbers ought to be placed, and I said that I think that we should shift away from lower division and go more to upper and graduate. Stony Brook is the leading research institution in the SUNY system, well ahead of Buffalo, the only reason Buffalo will catch up is because the state will pump more money into them up there, not because they went out and got the research dollars as our faculty do here. In my opinion the freshman class at Stony Brook should be around 1,200 or 1,300 freshmen. That would have a salutary effect on the quality of students; it would leave a perception among high school guidance counselors and parents that this is a selective school, that you need strong records, that you need to be strongly motivated to be accepted at Stony Brook. And let me give to you guys a prime example of exactly how that's happened at Binghamton. Binghamton is now the number one undergraduate institution in the SUNY system. They've put a lot of time and effort, they've put a lot of resources into the undergraduate program; they can't compare to us with research, which is not to say some good research doesn't go on there, but not to the extent of us here. But their freshman class is around 1,200 or 1,300; they cut off at 90, 91 high school average, where the dickens we need to be. And I've told that to, but you know, it's a hard thing to sell, and I understand. And the Provost is not happy about it, because he sees faculty lines being cut with lower numbers. I understand the connection, but I have to say, I don't think we can have it all ways. That's the dilemma of it, we want top quality kids, we want large numbers of them, and we want to be able to keep all the programs we have for all the faculty we have teaching them, and it's difficult, it's a challenge.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Okay, let's get to 13, where your activities confined to the Stony Brook campus, and what extent, you mentioned being chairman of a group

**Daniel Frisbie:** I was President.

**Dr. Hartzell:** President of this SUNY system

**Daniel Frisbie:** It was called, the group was called the SUNY CAP, College Admissions Personnel, there were some 200 of them, and they represent all the SUNY campuses. Now, the medical schools were part of this, they were recruiting at the graduate level, I'm talking those institutions that recruit undergraduates, all the two-year schools, all the four-year schools and the University Centers. I was one of the people that helped get that organization started. I used to tell Ed, how come we don't have a professional organization, we need one, we have a lot of interesting things that we need to talk to each other about and share our experiences, we can learn from ourselves, and he agreed. So we had it all set up. We used to meet at the Concord, it was 1967, I think, when that started, and Ed was asked to be the chair of that meeting. So we had a business meeting up there, and Ed chaired it, said the nominations were open for first President of this organization. We got sandbagged, the guys from Binghamton had this thing all planned, one of them jumped up and said, I nominate Ralph Richel, who was then Director of Admissions at Binghamton, who is since dead. Another one from Binghamton jumped up and said, I second that, and somebody else jumped up and said I move we close nominations, so it was like boom, in a minute it was all over. There was one nominee and Ralph went up and took over the thing and Ed was out. But anyway, we did push to get that organized, and it's been a very well organized group. My criticism of it is that it is too provincial. When I was President, I had an encounter here with an Associate Director of Admissions from Emory College, Georgia; he was up visiting this area.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It's a university.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Fine school, fine.

**Dr. Hartzell:** It recently \$100 million

**Daniel Frisbie:** From the chairman of Coca-Cola, that's some gift, oh, boy. Well, his name was Coleman, and he stopped in around 11 o'clock one day. He said, I was in the

area, I just thought I'd come in and chat. We chatted for a while, and he was telling me about this organization called PROBE in Georgia, and how it worked. And I listened with incredible enthusiasm, and I said, listen, I don't know what your lunch plans are, but forget them, I'm taking you to lunch because I want to hear more about this. They had established there an organization, and PROBE apparently was not an acronym, it was just a name they gave to the whole program. There was a guiding committee that consisted of representatives from elementary school principals, secondary school principals, all the two-year and four-year colleges in the state, the Georgia State Legislature, the Georgia Commissioner of Education Office, they had covered every base, and what they would do is plan each year, and they still do as far as I know, 25 programs, college information programs, that would cover the whole state of Georgia, geographically go around so that everybody in the state could hear and meet college representatives. But they were even smarter, it not only included all of Georgia, but they opened it to college from outside the state of Georgia who could also come in. I think they had to pay a fee, but it was not an unreasonable fee, to do so. I thought what a marvelous idea if we could create a program in this state that would take the representatives of SUNY all around the state so that all the citizens could have access to us and see us all at one time. That would be a good investment. I called it Operation Inform. But I went one step farther, because in Georgia they did the same thing, there were both public and private institutions involved, and I wanted to include the privates because I thought we can benefit working together. I never feared the competition from the private colleges because I felt we had a lot to offer. My god, Karl, I can't believe the opposition I ran into from directors in the SUNY system, other directors of admission and their staff. I called a special meeting in Syracuse in December and took the whole staff up. We took a van, we drove up to that meeting, we met all day and had discussions all day long, and I could not get them to approve the involvement of private institutions because they feared, they said they're stealing our kids, I don't want to work with them. I said, don't you go to other college nights that are put on by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors,

they have them in the Nassau Coliseum and in the Coliseum in New York City and other places; you go to those, what do you have to fear from them. I don't want anything to do with them; I don't want them to know who our kids are. I couldn't get it to go through, and it's always been my great regret, that's why I say they remain provincial. I brought up to that meeting, he made a special trip at my request, the President of the New York State Association of College Admissions Counselors -- I'm still a member of that -- that includes both public and private, but it's predominantly private, it was a fellow from Adelphi, who was President, Dworsky or something like that. He came up and he made an appeal to them to no avail. So, it's a big regret, but I was very active in that organization, and I like to feel that I've brought about a lot of changes. When I first became an Admissions Counselor and Ed took me to the first meeting in Syracuse at the Randolph House there in December of 1965, there was one woman among all the counselors in the SUNY system at that time. Her name was Dorothy Mott; she was Director at Oswego, very nice lady, she was not all that far from retirement, she would retire a few years later. By the time I became President there were a lot more women being hired, and primarily because you can't get men to take these jobs, not for the salaries they are paying, how's somebody going to support for \$22, \$24, \$25,000. But women will take a lot of them because they are either second income in the family or they don't have such expenses or whatever. But I created committees, I wanted to get more women involved, I appointed them to committees, and since then there have been women presidents in it. I changed the constitution, I had a good time with it. I had a short term, which is an interesting anecdote. It was the time that the establishment of affirmative appointment for staff had come in. Johnny Toll was dead set against that, and I agreed with him. He and I would say we don't need permanent appointment, but I said one thing we do need is due process. There should be some protection so people are not dismissed for capricious or arbitrary reasons, he didn't disagree with me on that. I tried to get that established, it wouldn't fly. A lot of people were frightened, and they wanted the protection of permanent appointment. About that time there was a memorandum that had

been circulating on this campus. I don't know how it got around. Johnny's advisory team, I think they were called the cabinet at that time, and this was a memorandum from Johnny to them that was supposed to have remained confidential. I don't who leaked it, but it was all over the campus, pointing out that a lot of people would be fired when this permanent appointment routine for professionals was established. So, I read from that at our annual meeting of the SUNY CAD group, and I pleaded with them, and I said if you're not a member of the union, join so you can vote against this thing. I made all the arguments I could think of, and some of them came up to me afterwards and said, well, Dan, if I were on your campus, I could understand your not wanting the thing in, but we don't have those kinds of problems on our campus. God, I said, I hope you're right, I'm happy to hear that. This was in May. I get a phone call in August from the Director of Admissions at Brockport. He says the guy we elected President in May has just been fired. He was fired and his associate was fired. But I never said to him, I told you so. He said, will you run for president right away in a special election. I said, sure, I would. So, I did, so my term was abbreviated, but it was a marvelous experience, and I sowed the seeds of a lot of things that needed to be done. Today women almost predominate. I haven't been to a meeting in quite a while, but I would say 70% of them are now women. But anyway, that was one of my chief, and I had a lot of contact with Central. I was on the first bargaining team for the union, UUP, in 1972. There were four of us selected from all the campuses and I was on that bargaining team. That was a fascinating experience.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Was it a bargaining team of faculty members or

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, it included both professional and faculty. A woman from Oswego, I think she was, worked in the library; Bob Granger from Alfred, I think Alfred Ag & Tech, was president. It was called SPA at that time, Senate and Professional Association and later became UUP. And I've forgotten who the other person was; but we ended up on that, and we bargained with Office of Employee Relations, which was the Governor's office. That was a super experience. They had central documents which they

distributed to each of us who were on the bargaining for our campus showing personnel transactions, and I looked at, I knew many, many people on there, and I looked at their names. You have this all wrong, this person isn't doing that, this person is doing something else. Karl, the mess. I guess it wasn't so much a mess as it was personnel maneuvering, budget impact. People who were working in certain jobs were on lines in other divisions, scattered all over hell, right in Stony Brook. And then there were some other, one of the worst examples was somebody, I think on the Buffalo campus, I don't know if it was on the Stony Brook campus or another one. Two people, approximately the same age, same background, same experience and so on, doing the same job on two different campuses, their salaries were \$10,000 difference. I couldn't believe the discrepancies. I think SUNY Central was even a little embarrassed about it at the time. I think they've corrected probably, but I got to know a number of Vice Chancellors up there, and it was helpful later when you have a problem with something locally. I don't mean to go around, but to get advice. I went up a couple of times and asked, well, here's my problem, I don't want you to do anything but tell me, do you have any suggestions how I can get something resolved. I had to solve a problem with Sheldon Ackley, difficult man and funny man, very bright guy, great sense of humor, but boy oh boy, he could be a cold and indifferent in some situations than anybody I've ever seen.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, he's divorced.

**Daniel Frisbie:** That says something.

**Dr. Hartzell:** That says something, yes. I think his Ph. D. was in philosophy, abstraction.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Good observation, good observation. I remember Ed Malloy telling Johnny one time, don't restrict yourself, don't make access to yourself so difficult, not everybody on this campus is out to harm you. There are lots of people who want to help you, who want to support you; and I think Sheldon tended to keep them all at bay. I'm sure he was very useful to Johnny, maybe Johnny didn't see a hint, he had his mind on so many damn other things. He couldn't get bogged down in a lot of detail things. But

nothing got into Johnny that Sheldon didn't know about, and you never knew how Sheldon presented it to Johnny, that was always a concern. He would interpret it and express it the way he wanted. So many experiences here.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think you've covered the questions pretty well, not necessarily in order. What are you doing now?

**Daniel Frisbie:** I'm Associate Dean for Enrollment Planning in the Harriman School for Management Policy working with Gerrit Wolf.

**Dr. Hartzell:** I see.

**Daniel Frisbie:** I sent memoranda to the administration for years urging the creation of an undergraduate business program showing evidence that it was the most asked for major that we did not offer. And I understood a lot of the objections to it over the years, particularly from faculty. In the early years the faculty were very traditional, many of them still are, and there is nothing wrong with that. They were dedicated to the arts and sciences approach to educating, and as in the case of elementary education, they didn't

**Dr. Hartzell:** I think the Harvard level of quality in the administration is phenomenal and consistent year in and year out, and I think that the core of the institution is the undergraduate college, which provides an experience four years with the kind of teachers to which alumni refer in later years. And these teachers that build a loyalty to the institution that translates itself into dollars and cents in the way of alumni giving and we've got to build up the quality of our undergraduate college students, but also the quality of their experience as undergraduates here. And this is where we have a long way to go.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, we do. If I had any long range criticism to make of John Toll, I think he's one of the most remarkable people I've ever met in my life, and I don't think anyone with less energy could have built this place in 13 years as he did, but in the course of doing so, some things may not get as much attention as they deserve. And I think his emphasis was one on building faculty that would stand with the finest anywhere and a strong research program, and I think the price the institution perhaps has paid for that is

that the undergraduate program did not receive its fair share of attention. It isn't that I think Johnny was opposed to undergraduate education, that would be silly, but his priorities I think were on both establishing the faculty and the research preeminence of Stony Brook, and the undergraduates, because in those years we were flooded, we were extremely selective.

**Dr. Hartzell:** We could afford to be.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Yes, we could, absolutely. But I agree with you, and I remember Bob Haberman saying at that time to faculty, if you want, you can't have a strong graduate program if you don't have a strong undergraduate program. Well, maybe that's an extreme, but Harvard's graduate program is unquestioned for the most part. In fact, for years no one has questioned the value of the undergraduate Harvard education, but that's what one hears more about at Harvard, the undergraduate; a lot of effort goes into maintaining that.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Well, they do get, there's no question about it, they get the kind of student who has very often been gently reared, is a cultured individual when he gets there, a person who has been accustomed to a family life where you respect furniture, other people's property, and you have enough inner security so that you don't have to claw your way over other people, and you need role models of that kind in the positions of leadership in the dormitories, and that was one of my particular ..... of what was going on, the failure to get the kind of people in leadership positions.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Leadership is ..... quality, of course, but we can all recognize it when we see it. I think that you are right, that more should have been and could have been done to encourage that to come forward and help in building a different kind of image of Stony Brook. It bothers me still. People in the area, when you mention Stony Brook, usually get predictable reactions. Some who are knowledgeable about the quality of programs here will so express that, and then others not so but read more of the tabloids and the occasional incidents that occur on the campus and roll their eyes when you mention Stony Brook. Well, I would never send my son or daughter there, I would send

them to a good institution like Hamilton or Franklin and Marshall or wherever it happens to be. And that bothers me because I know the quality of education that's here. I had the best of both worlds, maybe like you, I was educated in a fine private

**Dr. Hartzell:** Union is an excellent private.

**Daniel Frisbie:** A fine private education and spent all my life in the public sector. I ascribed to the same philosophy that Mr. Jefferson, the only way of free people to remain that way is through education, I support it 100%.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Okay, well thanks a lot. Good to see you, Dan.

**Daniel Frisbie:** Oh, it's always good to see you.

**Dr. Hartzell:** Hope you keep up your bowling.

**Daniel Frisbie:** They've done an interesting thing the last two years, they divide the year into two seasons, and the first half of the season ended last night, and we locked up second place, which is not very bad; I was certainly very happy about that. We'll take first place in the second half.

[end of tape and interview]