

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR HOMER GOLDBERG

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

May 27, 1988

Dr. Hartzell: Interview with Professor Homer Goldberg of the English Department, May 27, 1988.

Dr. Goldberg: Does that work on more than one speed.

Dr. Hartzell: It does; I'm working on the slowest speed.

Dr. Goldberg: I've got to get one, because I've been recording using the Department's recorder to record my classes and I do it on slow speed because you can get so much more on; and now when I want to listen to them, I don't have any way of doing it.

Dr. Hartzell: You don't?

Dr. Goldberg: Well, I would have to go to the Department, if I wanted to do it at home. So that's great. Well, I'm Homer Goldberg, Department of English, and as of sometime in the next few days, I will be Distinguished Teaching Professor of English.

Dr. Hartzell: Very good, congratulations.

Dr. Goldberg: Thanks. I came to Stony Brook in 1961, when I was, must have been 37, I think. I came from Haverford College, where I had been an Assistant Professor. I went to Haverford from the University of Chicago as a Visiting Assistant Professor, and they asked me to stay and offered me a three-year appointment, but I decided to come to Stony Brook instead. The people who were primarily responsible for my coming to Stony Brook were Harold Zyskind and Richard Levin, both of whom I knew at Chicago. We had talked together at the University of Chicago. I was interviewed by Harold Zyskind, and on another occasion by Tom Rogers, Richard Levin; I think those were the only people I was actually interviewed by, I had never met Tom Rogers before.

Dr. Hartzell: Who was Chairman of the Department then?

Dr. Goldberg: Dick Levin.

Dr. Hartzell: Dick Levin.

Dr. Goldberg: Right. Uh, and I can remember the moment that I decided to come because I had the offer from here and I had the offer to stay at Haverford. And Haverford was a wonderful place, because the students were very, very good. And you know from Wesleyan, it was kind of an ideal liberal arts situation. But I felt that I would sort of turn into Mr. Chips; it was so comfortable that I was kind of afraid of settling in too easily. There were also problems about my position, that I was in, I would have been an Assistant Professor in the English Department, and people outside the English Department were looking for me to reform the English Department from the bottom, which would not have been an easy thing to do. And I just thought it was not a very realistic prospect. But I think the thing that really decided me when I think about it now, this was when Kennedy had just come into office, and I thought I had never taught in a public institution. I had only taught in private universities -- Chicago and Haverford. And I thought, well, this is kind of a Kennedy thing to do, to get into the business of public education, so that was a strong factor. And the other was, of course, in contrast to my situation in Haverford, where I would have been trying to have an influence from a very lowly position in the established hierarchy, here was a place where everything was wide open and nothing had been really determined, and I saw a wonderful opportunity to have a role in building the institution. And that was something that appealed to me because I had had that kind of role even as a junior faculty member at Chicago, because it was a place where you could, in the college, you could exercise a leadership role even though you were an Assistant Professor. It was really a very democratically organized faculty. So that was my main thinking about coming here. Of course, when I came it wasn't Stony Brook but Oyster Bay, and I wanted to talk about one event in particular. Let me see about these other things. Well, I came

Dr. Hartzell: Give me the question number, if you can.

Dr. Goldberg: For number 7 and 8, okay, yeah, 7 and 8. I was recruited by the Chicago people. And it was very clear that Leonard Olsen and Harold Zyskind and Bill Lister and Frank Erk, Dick Levin, were all, had in mind creating a general education

program, which was in some way at least related to the program at Chicago. And I was specifically recruited, I mean one of the reasons that Harold Zyskind said that they wanted me to come, besides the fact that I had a well established reputation at Chicago, was that I was the only one of them who had taught in all three of the humanities courses in Chicago. There were three different levels, more or less freshman, sophomore, junior.

Dr. Hartzell: What were they?

Dr. Goldberg: Humanities 1, which was the one that I had taught, that none of them had taught, was Music, Art and Literature, and you taught all three. They didn't give the music to the music people and the art to the art people, but everybody had to do everything, on the theory that if we were asking students to comprehend it, we ought to be able to comprehend it; and I think it was a sound idea, and I enjoyed it, because I learned a lot about music and art doing it. I was a musician, so I had some background; I could read music and so on. But with art

Dr. Hartzell: Are you a pianist?

Dr. Goldberg: No, I play the trumpet.

Dr. Hartzell: Play the trumpet, I see.

Dr. Goldberg: So, they brought me here because they were trying to organize a similar first-year course. See, the other two courses, Humanities 2 was much more text oriented. It eliminated the other arts and you did, there you did literature in the context of philosophy history literature, so the first one you did art, literature, music; second one, philosophy history literature; and then the third one was a criticism course basically, which was the one I did most of my work in. Humanities 3 was a course in, that was the course where we read Plato, Aristotle, Croce, and then tried applying those positions to literature and ended up with a quarter on poetry, which was what really interested me. So, Dick Levin had had a lot of experience in Humanities 3, Harold Zyskind had had an enormous amount of experience in Humanities 2. I taught both of those courses, but I also taught Humanities 1, and they wanted somebody who had experience moving across the arts. I got here and within a few weeks of my arrival, it was announced that the fine

arts people were not going to put up with anything like that. They were going to divide the humanities course up and one semester was going to be in the hands of the literature people and one semester was going to be in the hands of the music and art people; and there was going to be no crossing over. So, that was one of the things that made me feel I was in a, had come into a different situation than I thought I was coming into. I knew that situation, you know when I came, it was right in the middle of the ruckus. That is, six weeks after I arrived, John F. Lee was fired.

Dr. Hartzell: Is that right.

Dr. Goldberg: So, that I, and I wasn't entirely unaware, because I had been corresponding with Dick Levin. And, in fact, as I said in the talk I gave earlier this year, I was actually here the day Oyster Bay opened in '57.

Dr. Hartzell: You were, in '57.

Dr. Goldberg: I was coming back from Italy. I had been on a Fulbright, and we stopped to see the Levins. And we were visiting them for a few days, and Dick said, well, today is the first day of school. So, I went with him to look at this place. You know it was a real madhouse, because nothing was settled at all. Students were milling about, and faculty didn't know where anything was So, I had seen the place at the very beginning, and I had talks with Dick and others in the intervening years, but at that point I had no intentions of leaving Chicago, and I was interested but I also then, in the year immediately before I came here, it was hitting the newspapers; that was when the firing of the three social sciences guys from Columbia started the whole and so I knew that the place was in some turbulence when I came. But Dick Levin said it will be over once those guys are gone; things will calm down. Of course, he wasn't quite an accurate prophet about that. So I should tell you, and I don't think it's any surprise to you, your first four people there were all on one side of that thing.

Dr. Hartzell: Yes, I realize that now but that's not why I

Dr. Goldberg: No, I just wanted to, they're good friends of mine, and I was thinking

Dr. Hartzell: They were all supporters of Lee, is that right?

Dr. Goldberg: That's right.

Dr. Hartzell: What is your view of why Lee let Olsen and Austill go?

Dr. Goldberg: Well, let go is a mild way to put it. I don't know why he did it, because at the time I remember talking with people about it being a tactical mistake. If you wanted to achieve what he wanted to achieve, and he, I think there was clearly, he had a sense that, I mean, I didn't know Austill very well, I knew Olsen a little bit better; but it was clear that Olsen was the sort of intellectual leader of the place, that is, he was the sort of *de facto* leader of the place. And Lee, I think, saw that as a threat to his, I mean, if he was going to be the head of the place, he was going to be the head of the place, and here was this man who had been in the position of head since the place had opened, who had a very loyal cadre of people who were loyal to him, and you can see how, in a political situation, someone would size that up and say, I think he handled Olsen better than he did the Austill thing. That is, I think he just sort of eased, kept easing Olsen off to the side and giving him less and less to do, which is a way of letting Olsen know there's not much for you to do here, it wouldn't hurt for you to look around. He never, I don't think, directly fired him or anything like that. Why he did what he did with Austill, I don't know, because all he had to do, if he wanted to do that, was wait out the academic year. If he had done it in June or July, there would be some mutterings, there might have been some protests and so on, but the suits wouldn't have been. So, that it seemed to me just a bad tactical on his part. And I don't know whether it was, I never really got to know Lee at all. I think I only met him once. So, I don't have any sense of what he was like as a person. But it may have been that he felt impatient. I don't know what went on between them as personalities in meetings, and so on. So, it's sort of hard to know. But, that was the thing that struck me immediately, that there would have been no student protest, which was, I think, a very important part of the whole upheaval, that is, it called attention. So that he must have, something must have been very threatening to him about Austill, or else he miscalculated how firm his own position was. And you could see that it would be a miscalculation that someone might make in 1961 in the way that they

wouldn't make in 1985 or '86 or '88. That is, students were not a force that one had to worry about in any way, shape or form; this is before Berkeley or any of that stuff. So, he may have just felt, I'm the future of this place, and I know, I've got the mandate and these people came with a different mandate and they are in the way. But the Austill thing, see, because first of all, all Austill was doing was Dean of Students; I mean he didn't have any role in curriculum or faculty recruiting or any of the things that would involve institution building, so that there would be nothing to be lost to leave him in place for the rest of the year.

Dr. Hartzell: What was he like?

Dr. Goldberg: Austill?

Dr. Hartzell: Yes.

Dr. Goldberg: He got on very well with the students.

Dr. Hartzell: How?

Dr. Goldberg: They seemed to really respect him. Dave Tilley got on well with the students, but it was a somewhat different thing that they, I think they had a stronger sense of leadership from Austill. And that may have been in part the state of the institution, the state of development it was in. It was Olsen who, and everybody was in an alien situation, and here was a man who seemed to know where he was going, where the institution going, and they took a certain security from him,. I think. I didn't know him, well, I was only here for a couple of months. I guess he, did he stay on the rest of that year, was he reinstated or.

Dr. Hartzell: I don't know.

Dr. Goldberg: No. I think there was some kind of temporary, makeshift thing; you know, the thing that happened was that Lee didn't have the authority to discharge him, and he didn't know the State University of New York's bureaucracy well enough to understand that that was, only Albany could do that; and he went ahead and gave him thirty days' or fifteen days' notice or something, he said October 30, you're out. And

somebody went up to Albany, and Albany said, you can't do this. You have to recommend it to us, and then that's what really got Albany involved.

Dr. Hartzell: Okay.

Dr. Goldberg: I can tell you one anecdote about that. The one asked me about when I came over here, you mentioned having talked to Ed Fiess, the one time that I found myself personally, well, everybody was involved in one sense. When Lee was, there was a stage before he was actually fired, okay, where Albany was looking into the whole thing, so that there was a clear sense of him being, his job possibly being on the line. And then there were petitions going around; and you were supposed to be on one side or the other. And that was very uncomfortable. I didn't want to get into that. I didn't know the guy. I was trying to get some headway in my own career, and this thing, you could see how this was just sort of taking everybody, and I was trying to establish some kind of position of independence for myself. I mean, I had Chicago all over me, so there was no way I could pretend that I wasn't a Chicago person; but I resented the fact that I had to defend myself for having gone to what I thought was a pretty good university, and having taught at what I thought was a major university. So, it was an awkward position, but I tried to stay out of the fight itself, simply because I was untenured, I was brand new.

Dr. Hartzell: You say you were "on tenure."

Dr. Goldberg: No, untenured. You gave me tenure, and I thank you for that, it was a wise decision. No, I came as an untenured Associate Professor. And at the time Olsen said, well, you can ask for tenure, you can try, but people will wonder why you need it. Something to that, that you ought to be able to earn it in three years. So, I had three years in which to show what I could do. And I thought, you know, it was a very different marketplace, and I taught at two first-rate places. I figured I'll land somewhere if I don't stay here. So, the one time in which I got directly in the middle of it was over a curriculum committee. There was an election for the curriculum committee, and at this point, the curriculum committee was really a rather important arena, because it passed on everything about the curriculum. And one of the fights that was going on was about what

direction the curriculum was eventually going to take. And the scientists predominantly were on one side, with exceptions like Frank Erk and Bill Lister; but predominantly the scientists were pushing for a much more, much stronger movement toward what would become, toward research, toward high-tech, toward all of that. And

Dr. Hartzell: Toward the departmental organization.

Dr. Goldberg: Yes, exactly, that was very important. And, in many respects sort of more traditional or conventional academic program. So, I ran for the Curriculum Committee; I decided because I had some ideas of my own which weren't Chicago ideas, they weren't these peoples ideas, they were just, I wanted to take a fresh look at the whole business in curriculum. And I had an interest in it. And I was approached by various people and told not to run because everybody knew that I was being used by the Chicago people and I was just, and I ran against Ed Fiess. Ed was the candidate of the other people, and it had to be, it was a Humanities slot, I think that was it, you see, so that it had to be somebody from the Humanities, and I remember having a talk with Ed. I went over to see him before we had the meeting; these things were done like this then. You could get the whole faculty into a classroom practically. And I remember going to talk to Ed about this and say, look, I'm not trying to make trouble, and I told him that I thought he was being used by the other people, and he told me that I was being used by the Chicago people, and we agreed to disagree. Okay, I won the election by one or two votes. Whatever it was, I can't remember. But I was elected. And I didn't hear anything more about it. I kept waiting, you know, to hear when the committee would be convened or whatever. Then I remember very vividly going to a faculty meeting at which Harry Porter presided, so this business started at the point, it must have started at the point where Lee was out, and for a while the Chancellor himself, I've forgotten his name now, Thomas Hamilton, he actually came down here for, I don't know, a few weeks. But I think it was during that period that this election was held, and then Porter came in and quite a bit of time went by, not weeks, but maybe months. And so in the faculty meeting when there was a sort of a, new business or whatever, some opportunity to address Porter,

I said, I was just wondering, I was elected to this Committee and I'd never heard anything more about it. And Porter said, I'll never forget his words, Porter said, well, people in the sciences felt that the sciences were underrepresented on the Committee, that the number of seats on the Committee was not fairly apportioned, and so they refused to elect a representative, and I decided to do nothing in the matter. That was his resolution of the problem. So the Committee never came into being, but I mean, I thought the whole thing was kind of charming in a way, but at the time, being young and intense, I was bothered by it too. Here I had put myself forth in good faith, I wasn't, didn't have any secret agendas or anything, and it hurt me that I couldn't get myself judged on my own. Now, to be fair, when I went to see Sidney Gelber early on when I was talking, I wanted to let him know what my sense of my mission in the place was when he had been made Dean about that time, and I told him that I didn't, the same thing I told you, I didn't come here to get into any fights, and that I had projects that I wanted to get on with, and he seemed to understand that. And I've always been on good terms with Sidney. I knew that he was on the other side, in terms of where most of my friends were, but I think he, he respected that sense of that I was who I was and not just somebody wearing a particular uniform. And I think he was also impressed because I was doing something; I got the summer research thing right off the bat because I had an important article to write, and I got it written and I got it published. So, one of the feelings was that the people, the old guard were not going to be producers, were not going to, so that was one of the things I had to sort of

Dr. Hartzell: The old guard being the Chicago group.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, yeah. So, it was a crazy period. I'm sure you've heard about the fistfights and all of that.

Dr. Hartzell: No.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, two guys actually came to blows. I know who one of them is, I can't remember who the other one was. One of them is a guy named Spike Martin, who was a mathematician.

Dr. Hartzell: Mathematician, yes.

Dr. Goldberg: And he actually got into a physical fight with somebody on the other side. This was sort of right at the peak of the Lee business. So that there were, it was a, it's amazing that we got anything done. You were conscious of it all the time, and at the same time trying to even, you know, even within the Department, the English Department was very small, there were something like

Dr. Hartzell: Who was in the English Department?

Dr. Goldberg: I can give you the whole English Department. Dick Levin, Ed Fiess, Tom Rogers, Joe Pequigney, Judah Stampfer.

Dr. Hartzell: Already.

Dr. Goldberg: Those people were all here before I came. Okay, so that's the first five. And I think of those the first three were Levin, Rogers and Fiess. Then in the year I came it was Jack Ludwig, myself and Jim Harvey. And everyone of those people are still here, or retired or

Dr. Hartzell: Jack is still here.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, yeah. So, the Department was divided; Joe Pequigney was very keen for Lee, and Judah Stampfer had the same sentiments. And Ed was leaning that way, Ed tried to sort of maintain a middle ground, but he, Tom Irvine was his closest friend and he was very close to Francis, and, well, he wound up being related to Tom eventually. Anyway, we would, as a Department we would meet and discuss our concerns knowing that we had these tensions. Oh, Bob Marsh, that's the one person who isn't here. Do you remember Bob Marsh? He went to Chicago from here and then died of cancer some years later. You running out?

Dr. Hartzell: No, no, we've got loads of time yet, just watch the little red light.

Dr. Goldberg: Okay, so, but the point was that we went on doing our business of planning. First of all we didn't even have an English degree at that point. When I came, they had just gotten permission to give a B. A., because the only degree they were authorized to give was a B. S. initially. And, so we had to start planning what would

constitute a B. A. in English. Then we immediately went from that to planning an M. A., and right after that a Ph. D. And when I think about it now, it's kind of amazing that I came in '61 and by '65 we had graduate students.

Dr. Hartzell: Right. Do you remember that group that came in to review the English Department, Margerie Nicolson, Bill Dix from Princeton, the Librarian at Princeton, and there was one chap from, I think, NYU, I've forgotten his name.

Dr. Goldberg: Boy, that is a long time ago. I had forgotten that.

Dr. Hartzell: Remember that?

Dr. Goldberg: I remember as soon as you mention the guy from Princeton that, and I remember having met Margerie Nicolson and I, when did they, was that in the middle '60's?

Dr. Hartzell: That was probably '63 or 4; it was before John Toll came. I brought the group in because I wanted to make sure that any request for graduate work that went to Albany had support from some outside people. I think the first group I got assembled was for Biology. When I came, Chemistry and Physics already had had permission to go to graduate work. See, I came in September of '62.

Dr. Goldberg: So you came just a year after I did.

Dr. Hartzell: That's right.

Dr. Goldberg: Boy, that was a long year. I seemed to me that when you came, I had been there three or four years already.

Dr. Hartzell: Right, right. Well, the faculty was certainly split when I came. Do you remember any of the circumstances of my coming? Did anybody know anything about me?

Dr. Goldberg: What we were, what I, this is my understanding: that you had originally gone to Albany to take a position in the Central Administration, but that Porter, who was then the Provost, right?

Dr. Hartzell: Yes.

Dr. Goldberg: Wanted somebody to be in charge here. He couldn't go on doing it himself or didn't want to go on doing it himself. So that you came with the understanding that you were going to work in Albany, you got to Albany and were told you were going here. That was how I understood it.

Dr. Hartzell: That's right. I was, my budget title was Executive Dean in the Albany office. I was on detail down here for a year, until they could find a President to succeed Lee. And a week

Dr. Goldberg: Did they in fact start a search right away?

Dr. Hartzell: They had been going, they had been looking for some time, as I understood it, and a week after I came here Tom Hamilton announced that he was going to resign as of December 31st of '62. And he ultimately went to Hawaii.

Dr. Goldberg: Right.

Dr. Hartzell: So that left Frank Moore, who was Chairman of the Board of the Trustees with the task of finding a replacement for Hamilton.

Dr. Goldberg: At the same time that there was nobody in the seat here.

Dr. Hartzell: At Stony Brook, that's right. So it was a three year term instead. Um, well, go on with the questions then.

Dr. Goldberg: Okay.

Dr. Hartzell: Did you recruit Jack Ludwig?

Dr. Goldberg: Oh, no, he was being recruited at the same time that I was.

Dr. Hartzell: That you were.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, independently. And my only role in that was that a man who was working with him on a periodical that he was editing with Saul Bellow, called the *Noble Savage*, which I guess Meridien Books was doing as a kind of, I think it was an annual or a quarterly and it only lasted a few years. Aaron Asher, who was sort of the managing editor of that, was an old friend of mine, and when they were talking to Jack Ludwig, Dick Levin asked me to ask Aaron Asher what he knew about Jack Ludwig, and he only had good things to say about him. But I wasn't, we were simultaneously and

independently being recruited at the same time. And I didn't know that Bob Marsh was going to be here either. He was recruited at the same time. He came at the same time, and Bob Marsh, I knew his work because R. S. Crane, who I did my Ph. D. with, had sort of converted Bob, and Bob had been corresponding with Crane about his work. We were both in the eighteenth century, so it turned out that he and Tom Rogers and I had a lot of intellectual interests in common and became good friends right away. And I've answered the question about number 10 I think, I said why do I think I was appointed. I think that the people who recruited me, I think Dick Levin knew that, in comparison to other people on the faculty, I had already established something of a publication track record. I was the co-author of a book and, with colleagues, and I had written several articles.

Dr. Hartzell: What was the title?

Dr. Goldberg: Oh, it's an introduction to the humanities, so it was very much on this business of teaching humanities, and it was used by the Ford Foundation for adult education courses around the country, and I was the literary person in a thing that had art people and music people and philosophy people, and so I had, I think Dick saw me as having the kind of potential that he clearly had, he knew he was going to publish and once he got settled in here, he knew he was just going to do it, and he hadn't been able to do it much in Chicago. And he was counting on me going in that same direction. I think I may have disappointed him somewhat because I stayed more involved with institutional matters and with teaching and service than maybe was good for me. I have published but probably not as much as I could have if I had his single-mindedness. But, so I think that he probably things that I have to some extent fulfilled what he had in mind for me, not just as a recruiter but as a friend. And obviously the other thing, the humanities thing, in a way I've tried to fulfill that in other ways, by being involved in almost every experimental program that we've had here. I was on the advisory board of the old experimental college when Dick Mould was running that over in one of the dormitories in '68, '69, I guess. I was in the first FLC, which Pat Hill recruited me for because he knew I was used to talking to people in other disciplines.

Dr. Hartzell: FLC is Federated Learning

Dr. Goldberg: Learning Communities, the first program was a program on world hunger, which I had no professional competence in whatsoever, but he wanted somebody who was an experienced teacher and experienced in the business of talking to people from other disciplines, so I agreed to do it. So I tried to keep, I've had that interest and I just got through being on the Honors College Committee, which has drafted a plan for an Honors College, which is going to go into effect year after next. So, I've kept up that interdisciplinary interest, but it's not anything that the University has required of me or that, in effect, in a way it's been sort of bucking the main trend of the University to do so. So, I think that talks about expectations. Almost all my activities were confined to Stony Brook itself, yeah. For a time I went, I served on a couple of state-wide committees, there used to be something called the, what was it called, Faculty Assembly, I think it was called, which was made up representatives from all the campuses, which came together maybe once a year or something like that. I went to that twice.

Dr. Hartzell: This may have been in Gould's time.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, I think it was. I remember him

Dr. Hartzell: Gould had the idea that this was, the system was not a system, but a single University, he had that idea, and he had the idea of a faculty of a single University.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, I went to two of those and then I served on a Governance Committee of the SUNY Senate, which went around the campuses investigating the state of faculty governance. I remember we went to Binghamton and can't remember where else we went. And I did that for a while, but those are my only extra-campus things.

Dr. Hartzell: What about the quality of students here?

Dr. Goldberg: Well, that I can

Dr. Hartzell: I don't know where that fits.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, but that doesn't matter. I don't see it here, unless there are more questions, oh, yeah, there are. I think it's, for me, there's a perceptible arc or curve, or whatever you want to call it. I was surprised when I came here, how good they were, that

is, having been with two really elite student bodies. And at Haverford they knew they were elite because the *Chicago Tribune* that year or the year before had proclaimed them the best men's liberal arts college in the country; and they were going around patting themselves on the back. And I had some good students at Haverford, some very bright ones. But I also discovered something about a place like that, and it's not saying something about Haverford, it's saying something about an institution of that size. There were 450 students, so that if someone were an English major and had been there and became a senior, the faculty had designated that person, they knew them so well that they were sort of, people would say, oh, he's an 85. His number grade. And I came in from the outside, never having seen any of these people before and taught a senior honors seminar and some of them were good and some of them were not good. But some of them had this reputation now and could do no wrong. I remember one of them in particular, who I think I ended up giving a C in this honors seminar, nice guy, bright guy, but he just was not performing up to the level that other students were. And he was one of the distinguished graduates, he's now Vice Chancellor or Vice Provost out at Stamford and he's doing very well. Did a Ph. D. with Tom Flanagan at Berkeley, but I don't think he's ever forgiven me for that C. But, you know, the thing is that coming from there I thought, well, these students aren't recruited the same way at all, and a lot of them just sort of stumbled into the place because who's ever heard of it. And yet, so I tried to make some mental adjustments in advance, and I suppose I had, that is, I suppose I went in saying, now, look, don't expect these people to do what people in Chicago or Haverford could do, and I'd already made some kind of mental adjustment. But, still, I thought there were good students. And they got better, that was what was clearest to me. For me it kind of peaked in terms of sort of total quality of the undergraduate students and the graduate students, whom I was coming in contact with, in the early '70's. I remember the graduating class of '72 in the English Department was an extraordinary bunch of students, many of whom I am still in contact with. And then the first time I really felt that something was changing radically, I didn't teach freshman, when I first came here,

everybody taught Freshman English, we had not TA's, the whole faculty taught Freshman English. Maybe Jack Ludwig didn't, but everybody else did. And I did that for a number of years, and as I had done at Chicago, and then with the graduate program and various other things, I wasn't teaching Freshman English, so I didn't do it for seven or eight years. In '75, maybe it was five years from '70 to '75, '75 I went back and taught a Freshman English class and I was just really struck by what I could no longer expect of the students in the way of reading, just of making out the Declaration of Independence. When we started teaching Freshman English here, we used a little book called the *University Reader*, this is Oyster Bay, okay, the first year that I was here, a little book called the *University Reader*, and it had pieces by Bertrand Russell, Matthew Arnold, John Stuart Mill, Einstein, serious intellectual essay, and these kids were just off the street, and they did it. I assume that, because their high school educations were such, that they had learned to read serious things. I wouldn't have dreamt of putting any of these things in front of these people in '75. I kept, I had gotten an anthology with a wide range of reading, the things that finally worked best were sort of transcriptions of what firemen in the Bronx said about their job or what policemen said about their job. This they could read. Now, I think I drew a particularly, I might have drawn a particularly, you never can tell from one section, the accident of who's in it, but it shook me up and made start, sort of, looking at students. Now, as far as English majors are concerned, I think we still get, some of the students I've had in the last five years, have been as good as any I've had. But I think this is something that my colleagues have said, for me there is a kind of erosion of the middle. There are still very good students, but there are some very weak ones, and there's less of a sort of sturdy, competent sort of student. So, I think they have, and I don't think it's that they're, well, I don't know, sometimes it is that they're just not as intellectually able as others, but often it's that they've just had miserable educations.

Dr. Hartzell: Yeah, I think you have two factors, you have a decline in the quality of secondary school teaching and teachers, and you also have possibly a decline in the reputation of this institution, I don't know.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, it's certainly that the recruitment story has been a very unhappy one for the last several years, and that, if you're, if you don't have as large a pool to select from and if the people you accept are going elsewhere, which has been the pattern here, then what you're going to be left with, some of them are going to be good, but an awful lot of them are going to be there because this is the only choice they have.

Dr. Hartzell: Do you remember a girl by the name of Cheryl Bowden?

Dr. Goldberg: No.

Dr. Hartzell: She was an English major, Phi Beta Kappa, now a lawyer. Well, both of her sisters went here also.

Dr. Goldberg: I see.

Dr. Hartzell: Okay, how are we on the

Dr. Goldberg: The red light is still going and it's three minutes after eleven.

Dr. Hartzell: Okay, are we

Dr. Goldberg: Let's see, what do you feel you had accomplished at Stony Brook by 1971? Well, we had a Ph. D. program in place. I had published a book I had been working on for years. I had a wonderful sabbatical year in England in 1967-68, and during that sabbatical year I bought about 1,500 out-of-print books for the Library, which I did by going to bookshops and auctions and had a wonderful time doing it.

Dr. Hartzell: That's fun.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, because I was spending somebody else's money. And I still run into those books over in Special Collections and so on, so that I think that in the long run that will be something that matters for future scholars. Well, and I think that I had helped to recruit good people for the English Department; I think we've been very successful in the people we've recruited, and we seem to be doing better and better, and I know people are

Dr. Hartzell: Do you remember anything about Alfred Kazin?

Dr. Goldberg: Oh, yeah. Well, Alfred was a temperamental person, and he was moody and very sensitive to his prerogatives; and people resented it.

Dr. Hartzell: They did?

Dr. Goldberg: Sure, because he was here one day a week, and this was at a time when more of us were teaching Monday-Wednesday-Friday than now; and there was resentment, you know, I think some of it was just plain envy. He was a tremendously successful and able and visible person, and the institution, understandably, tried to make as much of that as it could. I still have people, not recently, but up until a few years ago, people saying, oh, isn't that where Alfred Kazin is? He was not an easy colleague; he wanted what he wanted, and he could be reasoned with about things, but he was petulant.

Dr. Hartzell: I remember when Jack Ludwig came in and told me about him, told me how good he was and how important it was for us to get him and that he had an offer from Northwestern, which was above our salary scale, and I went to bat with the Vice President for Personnel up in Albany, his name slips me now, and explained the situation. And now it's in my corner and I'll see what I can do, and he was able to work it out by setting up the Distinguished Professorship, and we got the first Distinguished Professor and that was Kazin, but he couldn't do it without offering also Buffalo a chance to have a Distinguished Professor, that's the relativism within the system that you're still up against. Buffalo finally

Dr. Goldberg: They got Fiedler, didn't they?

Dr. Hartzell: Came up with one. No, the actual man considered was in Political Science, and he was offered the job and for some reason or other didn't take it, but they had a position and so they broke the salary scale for that particular type of label, Distinguished Professor.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, I remember that when, I remember talking to Crane, to R. S. Crane about getting Kazin and he said, it doesn't matter, he said, you won't see him. And he won't stay there.

Dr. Hartzell: Which is right.

Dr. Goldberg: Because he knew that Kazin had moved from place to place, I mean that's the story of his academic life. I don't think any place could have done better to try and satisfy his requirements, I mean, we arranged things to his convenience maximally, even to putting him up at Sunwood. And he was

Dr. Hartzell: Was he a good teacher?

Dr. Goldberg: I think he was good in a large lecture situation, he would write out his lectures the way he would write out his books, that is, they would be well crafted and eloquent. I don't think he was a very good judge of students. I think he didn't have, well, there's a certain kind of, he's got a good critical mind, but there's a certain kind of analytic approach that isn't congenial to him, and I think he was not very good. I think he was, he either was bowled over by a student and would say, you know, this is the best student I've ever had, or else they were terrible, and he wasn't making the kinds of discriminations that might be more careful. Individuals who did things that were important for the future development of the University as a whole or some part of it. Wow, well, if I think about it, I still think that in his own way, Harold Zyskind has been an extraordinary influence for good. And I mention him simply because he's such a sort of hidden figure. People have said he's the most extraordinary teacher they've ever had, and my colleague, Bruce Bashford, who has team taught with him, oh, four or five times now since Harold became ill, says it's just extraordinary to see the way he works with students. And that's been, you know, that kind of thing for me matters as much or more than the more obvious dimensions of institution building. And there's a way in which you build an ethos in an institution by the way you behave as a colleague and as a teacher, and I think he has been extraordinary. I was very pleased when he finally was recognized with the Chancellor's Award some years ago. But he

Dr. Hartzell: Distinguished Teaching Award.

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, he got the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Dr. Hartzell: Excellence in Teaching.

Dr. Goldberg: Uh, the other person who changed my life is Tom Rogers. He's the sort of quiet, self-effacing guy, but two things about him that I'm eternally grateful for, one is that he was one of the people who just sort of carried the English Department on his back, there wasn't any sort of dirty work job that he wouldn't do that other people with different attitudes would just shy away from. So that I can remember summers when he was Director of Composition, when he read the whole Freshmen classes proficiency essays, and sit down with 700, 900 of these things, and just do it by himself, without asking for anything else. He was a wonderful Director of Undergraduate Studies for years, students really could talk to him and he was very good at finding his way through the academic maze for them. But the second thing is that he's an extraordinary teacher. I taught with him in the, remember when we had the NDA Institutes in the summer. We had two, we had four of them actually. I did the first two.

National Defense Education Act set up a fund, there was a big rush to improve teaching, and this was a program for setting up summer institutes for high school teachers in various fields, and we got in on it the first year. Don't you remember, there was this business about running around with the, with getting your signature for the proposal to Washington in time, and it was a sort of hairbreadth thing. Well, in fact, that's the first real money grant that this institution ever got in the area of the Humanities, it was \$50,000, and it seemed like a million at the time. So, we did that, Tom and I did that together, and so I was able to watch him work with teachers and with students. And then we started visiting each other's classes and then we sort of collaborated in our teaching, we would try to, when we were teaching sections of the same course, we would talk about assignments together and swap papers and so on, and I just learned so much from him about being a careful reader and about how to conduct a discussion. He would seem to be doing nothing, and he would get students to do the most extraordinary things, students who you wouldn't believe were capable of it by just saying, well, would you say a little more about that, and then asking just the right question and then; I've seen him take a student who started out absolutely tongue-tied, absolutely unable to say anything

about the question that he posed, and he would just stay with the student, he had extraordinary patience, he would stay with that student for ten minutes, and you could see the student actually figuring things out because this guy was willing to wait until he or she figured it out. And it was really inspiring to watch him work. And one of my great regrets is that he never got any real recognition. We put him up for the teaching prize years ago and somehow he never got it.

Dr. Hartzell: How is his health now?

Dr. Goldberg: Good, it is good. He's teaching in CED, and I saw him yesterday, and he looks exactly the same. He's still bicycling, still swimming in the Sound, and he's going to Norway this summer. He tried to get a Fulbright to teach there next year, and instead he's going to take a summer course there. He's been studying Norwegian all year. You know he studied Chinese for three years, and before he had his stroke, I sometimes think that might have contributed to his stroke, because he was working so hard on that. He knew Japanese, he had studied Japanese in World War II in the Army, and so he had a inkling of what he was getting into, but he found Chinese was much more complicated. So Harold Zyskind, Tom Rogers, Dick Levin in his own way, I say in his own way, because I think it's been his way for the last fifteen years anyway, maybe longer, to pretty much withdraw from the day-to-day affairs of the University. I mean he does his citizenship duties in the Department, but he's really mainly wrapped up in pursuing his own work.

Dr. Hartzell: What's his field?

Dr. Goldberg: Shakespeare and he's now one of the leading Shakespeare scholars in the country, and he has a lot of recognition, he really has, so he's given Stony Brook that kind of visibility. Dick Levine, I think, had a lot to do with making the English Department as strong as it is today as Chairman. He was a very conscientious

Dr. Hartzell: Dick Levine and Dick Levin?

Dr. Goldberg: Levin were both Chairmen, and they're constantly getting each other's mail. But I think Dick was Chairman longer than anyone, Dick Levine, he was Chairman

for something like nine or ten years, and during a time when the Department really came into full maturity, and he deserves a lot of the credit for that.

Dr. Hartzell: Okay, what about the administrative people?

Dr. Goldberg: Well, that's harder for me to talk about because I think from the faculty point of view there's a sort of a tradition here, as you probably know, mainly griping about the administration. I think John Toll was, wanted to make this place a first-class place, but he wasn't very good at relating to the faculty. I was on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and can remember pleading with him to be more consultative with the faculty in the late '60's. And it just was not something he did very easily. And I guess the other thing that is that he really was very insensitive to kinds of things that mattered to other people, that is he had such a strong sense of mission and of ultimate goals, that he could be wading through the mud and not even be aware of it. That is, the amenity side of it didn't matter to him. And I think it was hard for him to understand how much it mattered to other people, how sort of frustrating and depressing it was to be constantly seeing the place in a state of disrepair and upheaval and so on. So, I think it really was a tremendous surprise to him in '67 when the students revolted about the lighting system and the mud and the catalogs and so on. I think he really hadn't noticed, because those things didn't matter. That was a liability. Marburger I think is more sensitive to that kind of thing, he has a stronger set of aesthetic dimension, and I think the campus looks better. I think it's got a long way to go, but it's not positively offensive the way it used to be. I'm not, you don't have any responsibility, I don't know, I think I sometimes wonder whether Charlie Wagner knew what he was doing. I mean people tell me, I don't know, I don't know how those things work, but I wonder whether some of the decisions that his office made about the layout of this campus and the, I certainly think the blacktopping was a mistake. That I think, I don't know whether that was Charlie's doing or it came after him, I think blacktopping the whole center there was, just makes it too urban somehow. The pleasantest parts of campus are places where you have a sense of green around you and not just lots of paving in all directions. I'm trying to think about

other administrators, I guess the fact that I don't think of any says something in itself. I'm trying to think about people below the level of Chief Executive, I don't remember any deans with any particular

Dr. Hartzell: Bob Neville, was he

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, well, I was never as impressed with Bob Neville as Dick Levine was, I think Dick Levine felt that he was a good Dean for the English Department, that he was a good Dean to work with for him as Chairman. I wasn't working with him as Chairman, so that I had to accept Dick's judgment on that but I never was impressed with him as an intellectual and I think that

Dr. Hartzell: Despite his five books.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, you know, there are a lot of books that I don't think should have been published. The, no, I haven't read his books, I'm talking about him in face-to-face conversation and so on. I think that, and I don't think he was all that good to the English Department. David Sheehan I should say has been a good Chairman too, I think we've been fortunate in our last few Chairmen. I think David's conscientious and unflappable, which is absolutely essential in a Chairman. And, who was Dean before? The other Deans were

Dr. Hartzell: Stan Ross, do you remember?

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, I remember Stan, that's right. Well, Stan, *nil nissi bonum*, right?

Dr. Hartzell: What?

Dr. Goldberg: *De mortuem nil nissi bonum*. I once said about Stan, because the thing that I remember about him was his parsimoniousness with institutional money, and I once said that I thought he ran the place like it was his own mom and pop candy store. I'm sure that there were reasons for that, but that was the impression I had that, and he meant well. I don't have a very, I guess it's partly distance now, I don't have a very clear sense of what Stan's role was. I mean he was very visible at the time and very active, but, and I remember him trying to get me to take a job with him, I can't remember what it was, some kind of position in that office.

Dr. Hartzell: Assistant Dean?

Dr. Goldberg: Something like that, and I remember deciding not to do it because I just didn't want to get into administration. And I remember the bravest thing he did when he tried to run for the Three Village School Board, which was a, you know, a really good citizen thing to do, and a bunch of us were working for him, campaigning for him, and so on, and I remember being at the election night counting the ballots and so on, and he lost. It said something to me about the University and the community; I think he lost because he was from the University, at that point. You know, you would think that somebody with his credentials, if he were willing to take the interest in doing it and so on, and he had kids in the school then, but he didn't get it. But I thought that was, you know that was something he didn't have to do.

Dr. Hartzell: Right.

Dr. Goldberg: It was a good thing.

Dr. Hartzell: What about you and the community?

Dr. Goldberg: Well,

Dr. Hartzell: Your wife is

Dr. Goldberg: Yeah, she is very involved through the Gallery

Dr. Hartzell: Gallery North.

Dr. Goldberg: Gallery North, she really has connections with parts of the community that I would never have come into contact with if it weren't for that. That is, the Gallery acts as a kind of community center, particularly with people from Old Field who we wouldn't ordinarily see, except for the Tennis Club. But, yeah, I think that's made a big difference, I mean, I think we feel as a family, I think we feel integrated in the community because of the Gallery and because of our children having grown up here and having been through the schools and made friends with people in the community, so that, but, you know, I think if you live in a place for 27 years, you ought to begin to feel like part of the community.

Dr. Hartzell: Right. Are you typical as a family or does the faculty still stay pretty much to themselves?

Dr. Goldberg: Gee, that's, well, if I think about social events, most of the social events that we go to are connected with the Gallery or that somehow come out of the Gallery in some way or another. People we know through the Gallery. There are very few faculty at those.

Dr. Hartzell: And not many faculty in the churches.

Dr. Goldberg: Is that right.

Dr. Hartzell: I think so, yeah.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, we don't belong to any congregations so we're not, I don't really know anything about that. The thing with my colleagues is an awful lot of them don't live in this area. I have colleagues who live in Manhattan, Brooklyn, New Jersey. One who's been living a sort of multi-divided life between New Haven, White Plains, and I think they now have given up New Haven. Her husband is a psychiatrist in a hospital in White Plains, so I think they now live in White Plains. She doesn't really commute, she's here for most of the week and they spend weekends together. But, of the people who've been in the community the longest, Ed Fiess and his family, Tom Rogers and his family, I think their friends are still mostly University people. There are, you know they have friends outside the University community, but I still, and it may be just that I see them in the context of which that is true, but I think that's still true. And I think it's partly the nature of a suburban community. It's a dormitory community, the men aren't there most of the time. And so that the networks that get built up are wide networks and that's apt to be based on something other than affiliation with the University. And I think it's still an alien presence for all its having been here so long, simply because there aren't many universities I can think of that are in this peculiar community situation. I think of Penn State, for example, which is a huge University, but the community seems to be part of it. It's clear the community is there because the University is there. The community was here and the University was thrust into it and that

Dr. Hartzell: Well, give it another thirty, forty years.

Dr. Goldberg: Well, you know, in a way I was thinking about Chicago. I went to the, I remember as a high school student, going to the fiftieth anniversary of the University of Chicago, 1942. It's only going to be a hundred years old in the next decade. I'm hoping to go to the hundredth, it would be nice to be able to say I went to the fiftieth and the hundredth, but the, it shows what can happen in 50 or 75 years. I mean, I think its amazing what's happened here in thirty years.

Dr. Hartzell: I think everybody feels that way, that a lot has been accomplished, a lot has been done.

Dr. Goldberg: And I think what, I suppose what I, you know, you asked there about people who've made a difference. There's a whole cadre of people who you could, some of whom you've talked to, okay, who I think of as people who are people of good will who have, if nothing else, kept the place from being worse than it might be. And I think, you know, Francis Bonner, Norm Goodman, Dick Solo, Max Dresden, people who've been willing to put time in and take their responsibilities toward the institution seriously. And the irony is, it's not an irony, the truth is that there is a small cadre of such people, it's bigger than that handful of names, but there a lot of faculty living off them. I mean that's just a fact, because there are a lot of faculty who take care of themselves and assume that the institution will take care of itself. Don't you think that's true?

Dr. Hartzell: Yes. What about faculty club, what about the interdisciplinary associations.

Dr. Goldberg: I don't think there's been enough of it clearly. I think, coming from a place like Chicago where talk across disciplines was just taken for granted, it's, I've always been struck by how departmentalized this place is. And as I said earlier, I tried to participate in whatever ventures the University's had that would try to break that down, and I think it's unfortunate because when I do get to talk to people from other departments, it's interesting. The man, the biologist from Harvard who came here, the

Nobel prize winner, uh, Hirschberg or Harshberger, who was here, he gave a lecture and another talk in April

Dr. Hartzell: I wasn't here.

Dr. Goldberg: He was brought here by Dick Porter in Chemistry. I lunched with him because I had said I was interested meeting him because he was supposed to be somebody interested in teaching undergraduates, and I wanted to see what a Nobel prize winner interested in teaching undergraduates was like, and we had a very fruitful conversation at lunch, and I told him about something that I had done, and he was going to go home and try with his graduate teaching assistants, and he gave me some references and so on, and I felt we were able to talk to each other, even though our disciplinary backgrounds were radically different. And I always enjoy talking people from other disciplines. I think Ed Fiess feels that way too. I think he's always felt comfortable talking to people in the sciences. And I'm not, I must say I'm not one of those humanists who sees science as the enemy.

Dr. Hartzell: Good, well, that's good.

Dr. Goldberg: So, I think the place, if the place is good, as good as it is, it's due to, you know, twenty or thirty people maybe who paid their dues and you had always, I think all of us have had to constantly say to ourselves, you know, there's a temptation to say, why should I care about it, if so and so doesn't care about it, why should I care about it? And I think it takes a special kind of super-ego or something to transcend that.

Dr. Hartzell: I think you're absolutely right, and a lot of morale is made from the top, and there has to be leadership, not only verbal but in behavioral sense too. It's, I know when it was smaller, Anne and I tried to do our part, bring the faculty together, giving the place a feeling of

Dr. Goldberg: Community.

Dr. Hartzell: Community, right.

Dr. Goldberg: It's hard.

Dr. Hartzell: I don't know how successful we were.

Dr. Goldberg: It's really hard, and it's hard, I know there have been a lot of attempts, but it's somehow hard to do institutionally, that is, by, even, you know, I think the faculty club is relevant, I think it, but I've gotten so used to eating my lunch in my office now that I have to re-adjust my whole way of living. But I think that it comes down to that word I used before, ethos. That is, I think there's no way that you can, just by having a structure, make it happen, because everyone is conscious of it being a sort of formal procedure. Somehow, there has to be whatever you want to say, a change of heart, there has to be a will on the part of the people involved to want to be together. Isn't that right?

Dr. Hartzell: I think that's true. You can facilitate it up to a point, but, I look at the Humanities now, and they are scattered.

Dr. Goldberg: Physically scattered.

Dr. Hartzell: Physically scattered. What can you do about bringing them together, and does it make sense to try to bring them together. What do you think?

Dr. Goldberg: Oh, I think it makes a lot of sense. I'm not about to advocate that the English Department be moved out of the Humanities Building, but I think that when I talk to people in the Philosophy Department, I learn things, and I, Carol Blum, who is in French is in the same period that I am, eighteenth century, and she and I have had very useful working relations, she's helped me with some translations. It's the natural way to go, but we've somehow built up this artificial thing. And I can't help thinking that, I mean, it may seem a little strange, but I think one of the sources of the extreme departmentalization, one source obviously is the research orientation, if you're research oriented, most research is disciplinary; interdisciplinary research is a rare thing, that's why I think this Collegium idea that Norman Goodman is leading the way, in which I was also involved in this year, is a good idea because it's going to try to promote interdisciplinary research. But the other factor is FTE's, the fact that this place runs on FTE's is at the source of many of its problems, because you have to set up your fief to be sure that you get your share of those things, and you don't get it by breaking down those walls. So I think that's a basic problem, that's a force that's pushing toward

fragmentation. Well, I've got to go because I've got to see this student. Thank you for letting me talk so much.

Dr. Hartzell: Well, I'm glad you came and you've given, you've put into the record ideas that haven't come before.

Dr. Goldberg: Oh, good, good.

Dr. Hartzell: This is fine.

Dr. Goldberg: Okay, I'm glad I ran into you, Karl.