

FIELD NOTES -- Dr. James M. Clark

Interviewee: Dr. James M. Clark

Interviewer(s): Cristina Brea, Alexander Katavolos, Zackary Modine

Date: October 10, 2018

Location: Memorial Library, SUNY Cortland, Cortland, NY

Length: 1:14:12

The Interviewee. Dr. James M. Clark was the eighth president of the State University of New York College at Cortland from 1979-1995 and is currently active in various charitable organizations within the community. He continues to be an influential part of the community through his participation and efforts just as when he was president. He spent part of his adolescence in Michigan, later moving to Maine and eventually Cortland, where he currently resides. At the University of Michigan, Dr. Clark was a teaching fellow in French and political science. Earlier, he had served as a teaching assistant in English at Lycée St. Louis in Paris. At the University of Maine, Dr. Clark joined the political science faculty. While on leave at one point, he served as a Fulbright Professor at the Institut Études Politiques, University of Toulouse, France, and eventually became Vice President for Academic Affairs. While he was president at Cortland, Dr. Clark fostered the growth of International Studies Programs in Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

The Interviewer(s). Cristina Brea, Alex Katavolos, and Zackary Modine are undergraduate students majoring in history at the State University of New York College at Cortland. This interview is part of Cortland's 150th year-long history with a focus on Cortland alumni and former faculty being conducted as a project for History 329: "Oral History and Historical Memory" for fall 2018.

Description of the Interview. The interview took place in a side room on the third floor of Memorial Library on the campus of SUNY Cortland. The library is on upper campus on the top of the hill. For the interview, we sat at a table with two of us on each side of the table (Alex and Zach, Cristina and Dr. Clark). There were minimal interruptions, and we spoke for an hour and a half.

Note on Recording: Recorded on a library recorder

ABSTRACT -- Dr. James M. Clark

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Dr. James Clark was born on April 11, 1930 in Wayne, Michigan. He moved around Michigan with his family during his early childhood, experiencing first-hand the effects of the Great Depression. His father worked at the Ford Motor Company and was later a farmer. Later in life Dr. Clark attended the University of Michigan and majored in social studies. Additionally, he has a master's degree from the University of the Philippines and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in political science. James Clark would go on to work at various schools, including the University of Toulouse in France. He would eventually become Vice President of the University of Maine, and later President of SUNY Cortland. During his tenure as President, James Clark was instrumental in numerous projects to improve the life of students and faculty including the renovation of the Brown Auditorium and the first private fundraiser for the school. During his time as president, Dr. Clark took a hands-on approach, trying to interact with all the departments as much as possible so he could better understand the day to day happenings of his administration. During the interview Dr. Clark spoke on some of his most memorable students whose lives he impacted immensely, from Bill Thomas, a reformer of nursing homes, to James Thomas (No Relation), who opened a school in Taiwan and is also a radio personality there. Most notable among his achievements was the International Studies Program. From being a part of delegations in China to apprehending burglars with the SUNY Cortland football team in France, James Clark's passion for international educational relations has been evident. In his personal life he has been a volunteer for various charitable organizations, and still resides in Cortland. James Clark was married to his wife Patricia Ann for many years before she passed away in 2016, and he has three children, Pamela, Matthew, and Timothy.

TRANSCRIPT -- Dr. James M. Clark

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AK: Today is October 10, 2018, my name is Alexander Katavolos, I'm here with

CB: Cristina Brea

ZM: and Zack Modine

AK: and we are interviewing Dr. Jim Clark here in Cortland. So, thank you for meeting with us.

Dr. James M. Clark: I'm happy to be here. It is a pleasure

AK: Great, so tell me about your childhood

JC: Well that's a good opening question isn't it? I was the fourth child of a family of five kids and I was born in Wayne, Michigan and I grew up on farms. My father was laid off because of the Depression, starting at about that time, we had a tough time on the first farm from which we moved in 1937, he continued to work for the Ford Motor Company but they kept on reducing the weeks from 6 days a week, five days a week, four days a week. That's the way Ford had tried to help people get through the Depression. So, he decided to become a farmer so he could at least raise enough food for the kids and then in 1936 he decided to buy a farm, we were renting before, and so we moved to a place where I could really remember growing up. One

room country school, just eight miles from Ann Arbor where the University of Michigan is located, however, this was a one room country school serving the local neighborhood. At home, we had no bathroom, we had outdoor toilets, just what you read about from that time, except for a hired man, we always had one or two hired men. There was a railroad going by and hobos were quite common in that time, running the tracks. And so they'd come and stay a night, just for a meal and could sleep in the barn, but then this one fellow stayed quite a while and he wanted to go into town Saturday nights so he took a closet in the building, put a bathtub in it, and we would carry the water, he would carry I wouldn't, from the wood stove, kitchen stove, put the water in, and then he dug a hole through the brick wall so that he could let the water out through a hose. Ok so that's the beginning, but I had a very good teacher in that one room country school. Then we came into the modern world in 1942, the war was on, the government was subsidizing the production of milk and so we moved to a place which had running water, it had a telephone, which we had never had, and I went to a good, another one room country school which only had 15 students, all boys in it, 15 students spread through kindergarten through the eighth grade. But I went to a good high school, Ypsilanti High School, just outside of Detroit, and had superb teachers there, programs like 4 years of Latin and just really a good school. So, I was a good student, I ended up as valedictorian of the class and at that time the state of Michigan gave free tuition to the University of Michigan for four years to all salutatorians and valedictorians in the state. Can you imagine? So that's how I got to the University of Michigan.

CB: Could you talk more about like how life was growing up on a farm and the relationships you had with your family?

JC: Yes, you're asking wonderful questions. Yes, I had a wonderful mother, she was a city girl and she was from out of Detroit. She had been a milliner, making women's hats and she

married this guy in Detroit who courted her, and later, I was told that it really was my mother's mother who liked him the most. So anyway, both parents had eighth grade educations. My mother was a very creative, warm lady, five children eventually, and she knew how to make things stretch, you know, whatever it was, food or making things, very creative lady. She also had to help in the barn so very often she'd be out helping milking the cows or working on the hay. One family story is, my father was more of a carefree guy and they had finished forking the hay up into the hay mound, from the wagon into the hay mound and unbeknownst to them my older brother, two years older than I, was playing up there. So, my father just throws the pitchfork up and it hits my brother in the head, not serious you know but still that's my father, funny. But because the war came along, for the first time he had money and he didn't know how to really handle it, and so he became an alcoholic, so the teenage years were not great because of that. And eventually he had to give up farming but the incredible story is that he decided he had lost so much that he, this would be at age maybe 60 or so, that he stopped drinking 100 percent, no counseling, no outside assistance, he just decided that was it. So later on, I became a home winemaker, I still am, I'm going to get some more juice tomorrow, I'd offered to him and he said no, he wouldn't touch anything. So, my mother said at that time that he became the man she married. Then I had brothers, my brother who was two years older than I was really the one we all looked up to and he organized us and we followed him and everything. The older brother was a blue baby in the 1920s, in the hospital. He came out blue, a breeches birth and so his brain was damaged. This little school that he went to, the teacher came and said you know he can't handle it, and so he went away to the Wayne County Training School at about age 7, and he was gone until he was 16, so that's quite a blow, you know, to my parents. I will say this though, when he came back, you know how children can be to each other, we weren't very good but eventually he

began to work on the farm and he handled the tractor, he could do a lot of the farm work and so, he then began to work for a neighbor who was a regent of the University of Michigan and after my father retired from the farm my father would work there some too. I love funny stories, but this regent married a professor of music from the University of Michigan, I think it was his second marriage or something, anyway lovely lady, so I go over to visit my dad one day, and he was in the kitchen with Mr. Matthei, the regent, and his wife, the music professor, was there, and so my dad says "Oh Jimmy here he likes music" and he says to the wife "go in the living room on the piano and sing for my son." That's my dad. Anyway, my brother then left there and he began to work for the University of Michigan in the dining service, handicap fellow, and then I learned that, my sister-in-law, told me that that he was going to get married, how could this be? He could drive a car, hard to get but we got a driver's license for him. She was horrified, but he married a local girl who had an eighth-grade education and had spent her life taking caring of her invalid mother. And so, this was a perfect union because, I found when I visited, they would get in a car and he would drive, but he couldn't read or write so he couldn't read the signs, so she would say turn here. Well for the first time in her life she got out of the local house and they came to visit us when we were living in Maine, they drove to Florida, it was a whole new life for both of them. Wonderful. And then he died when he was 65 shoveling snow and she died shortly after. So that's my brother, my sister, was the first in the family, where there were four boys and one girl. My sister went to college, she was the first to do that at Eastern Michigan, well it's now called Eastern Michigan University it was Michigan State Normal School. And she became a teacher, very successful teacher, and she just died two years ago, that's a whole story but I'm getting into too many side issues. So, had a good relationship, we did things together as a family from getting behind the horse on the sleigh and my older brother, older than I, he was a

motorcycle guy and a good family I would say. It was a bad period there with my father. Boy that's a long answer.

AK: So, what brought you to New York?

JC: Ok I had been Vice President of the University of Maine for quite a long time for academic affairs, I had always loved teaching, you can tell because I love to talk, and I decided after how many years there, about 11 years, that that was enough, I was either going to go on to another job in administration or go back to teaching. I continued to teach a little bit in the honors program and things like that but not full time. So, I thought I'd throw my hat in a ring and see what happens. The first one was successful but I didn't accept the job, I decided it wasn't right for us. At the time my wife was mayor of the town and she ran for the state senate and no Democrat had ever been elected in that district since the Civil War so she came within 38 votes of winning so had she won we probably never would've come. But I saw this notice for the opening here and I looked them up and they had a whole page devoted to International Studies Programs. I thought that was astonishing, at that time the University of Maine had none overseas, they did a few things here and there but nothing like where a student could sign up and go for a semester abroad. And since I had an interest in international things, in fact my doctorate by the way, I should have mentioned, was in comparative government and politics and that meant you had to study the governments of foreign countries. The basic course I regularly taught was the governments of Soviet Union, Great Britain, Germany, and France. And my doctorate was in French politics. So, I had that interest and when I was in the army I traveled and saw some of Asia and so that it I was interested in the rest of the world. When I came for the first meeting, there were two sets of interviews, one was half a day with the search committee and then you come back for the full-scale interview of three days with everybody, all public but

the first one was private. The lady that picked me up from the airport said by the way “I’m a farmer’s daughter”, I thought that was just so welcoming, so they offered it and I accepted it and never regretted it.

AK: And what year was that?

JC: 1979, I came here in the fall, July 1, 1979

CB: Out of all the subjects you were able to teach was there one in particular that really motivated you or was it just a general interest?

JC: When I was teaching full time it really was the comparative governments and politics course. I had two sections of it so that would be half of my load and I loved it that sort of thing, I taught other things like South East Asian governments and politics because that was the time of the Vietnam war and American government, everybody had to teach American government.

AK: What was your first year at Cortland like?

JC: First of all, I’ve got to say in the interview I did not realize how much I had learned serving three presidents at the University of Maine. I just didn’t realize it, the questions asked were fairly easy because I had experience with all of them. But the first year was not all that easy. There were three deans at the time to save money because I tend to be very thrifty. One of my vice presidents said “Jim you’re not thrifty, you’re cheap.” I knew that we had one dean who had two people reporting to him, the head of the campus school and the Department of Education. What did he do the rest of the day? I learned from the acting president that I talked with, he said I don’t know what this guy does but when he did the education accreditation, it had to be done over again. So, I felt there was a quality issue and also an economic issue so I proposed eliminating that unit. Well it did not cause a lot of trouble but it was some. So, in the faculty senate there were people questioning why this was being done, are you downgrading the

department of education by putting it with physical education, which we were, the division of professional studies. And one of the faculty members there organized student protests. The key discussion in the faculty senate, the students surrounded the whole area there, and they were ready to protest, and so I just gave my reasons then they got up and walked out. I don't know if I should tell this part but, the woman who led that, professor of physical education retired, I sent the usual letter, saying you will now be known as professor emerita of physical education she wrote back I will not accept that from you, you have ruined everything you touched in this university, that sort of thing. I wrote back "Dear Professor X, as you wish." It was a difficult time in many respects, as any new job would be but I did have to make personal changes but usually slower, over time. That was the first one but I inherited some wonderful people, able people, and wonderful faculty I'll never forget the wonderful faculty who were welcoming, it was tough but I got through it. But it wasn't the worst, the worst was 1983 when we had to cut budgets and let some tenured faculty go, not renew people who were on term appointments. We used to have, my wife and I had, receptions at the president's house every two weeks so that the whole faculty and professional staff would be funneled through so to speak. During that period there were faculty protestors carrying signs outside the president's house, don't go in, boycott this function. Or at my office I would open my door and there would be the reporters from Syracuse with their microphones, jamming it in your face. And then we had to close the campus school, the state by the way required that, but we took the burden of it and I remember the big public meeting and they had the little kids come in with signs. The worst year of my life professionally and personally at that time, 1983, I'll never forget it, then we had a couple years later another budget reduction but not as serious so and we'd been through the first one.

ZM: What was your best part about your first year?

JC: Oh, the best part. I would say just continuing to meet interesting people on the faculty here because I would always try to get out and go to their offices and, you know, get to know them. That was it and people really accepted me and asked me to run in races that they had. That's a good question by the way. It was a good year and I remember the summers were so different because all of a sudden, the night meetings were gone, there were practically no night meetings in the summer time. So, when you're president it really is your whole life and so you don't have any set hours so to speak because you're always doing something for the college and you're always thinking about it, always. But we took two-week vacations, the kids and everything. It's a good question.

CB: Could you discuss your experiences abroad?

JC: Ok, when I was president? I could tell you about the best one of all. It was next to the last year I think or close to the end of my service and they came to me and asked if I would accompany, if I wanted to accompany them on a trip to France, because I speak French. They had only the organizer, the professional organizer who was from Quebec, he spoke French, and one football player was from Quebec, so the three of us. Well, we flew out of Montreal, and for most of the football players they had never been on an airplane before, certainly not abroad, you know. And I got to know them, wonderful guys, wonderful guys, but then funny things happened. I don't know which one to tell you first. The last night there, we were staying at a cheap hotel in a suburban area near the airport and it was surrounded by grass, weeds grown up so high. I was asleep and I heard this shouting and everything, "oh they're having a party the last night," no, two thieves, it turned out to be three at the end, two thieves had gotten into the bus and they were picking up all the souvenirs that the guys had left in the bus. And so, the co-captain of the team, himself, actually heard it, looked out the window, saw them, he got the

whole team up out there, and the robbers were out in the field and so they searched the whole field, they stepped on one, and by the time I got there these football players are in a big circle in the parking lot and they have these two guys. My god it was so funny. So, then the gendarmes, literally gendarmes come, one tall and skinny and one short and fat in this old, broken down Citroën. And they went off, they took the organizer from Quebec and they took the co-captain of the team who had seen them first and they went down to the police station. Next morning I'm having breakfast in the hotel and someone comes in and says "Dr. Clark, Dr. Clark we need an interpreter, come quick" Well it turns out the third robber which we didn't know about, was in a motel, not too far, well, next door really. And so, the police discovered that or learned about it, they took the air out of the tires of the robber's car and was out there so they couldn't escape and they waited for them to come out. And so, then I talk to this one gendarme at that time and he opened up the trunk and he looked in and here are the other things they had stolen including groceries and such. So, the man he picked up a bottle of wine, he says, "oh, he says, they're not very good robbers, I said "why?", "Oh that's very cheap wine." That's one story, could I tell one more? We had gone to the Alps, we're on a tour now, we did play one game but most of the time we had joint practices. This one time we went, on a day off, we had gone to visit a chateau and we went out there and it was closed so our organizer went in and talked to the owner and she said "the boys can come through, my daughter will have to be the guide because we don't have our regular guides here." It turned out she was gorgeous! I think my heart's beating, she was absolutely gorgeous! And so, we all went in and I'm interpreting, she spoke no English, so I'm interpreting for her, and she's talking about the encyclopedia which was banned in France in the 18th century and it was printed in Switzerland so here are the copies in the library. So, then we go into this room where the ancestor's portraits are all, going back to William Tell, no, not

William Tell, somebody else. Anyway, they were of her ancestors of the Château de Menthon-Saint Bernard, so then she says, “y a-t-il des questions?” She says, “Are there any questions?” So, I translated, “are there any questions?” This guy says “how old is she? Is she married?” I didn’t know what to do. I translated it and she just laughed, she just laughed. It’s one of those funny, funny stories. I could go on for the next hour but I better stop. I became the water boy, by the way, at one point because the guys didn’t show up, the guys who were supposed to do that.

AK: I remember hearing you speak at the discussion panel, you talked about your time in China. Could you speak a little more about that?

JC: Yes, I would love to talk about that. Because when I came they had this full page of programs but nothing in Asia. And a faculty member who was a political scientist from Taiwan originally, got his doctorate here. He came to me in my first year and said, “We’ve got to go to China and have a relationship.” I said, “what, we have no connection with China, nothing traditional, I didn’t know anything about that particularly.” So, he talked me into it. The way he talked me into it, I said “we didn’t have money to do something like that” and he said well “what if I get them to pay for your visit there not the travel but your visit, so that’s nice.” He comes back, “we want Mrs. Clark to go.” I said “no. Wait a minute we got kids in college, we don’t have that much money.” He says “I’ll get her an invitation if she will tell about her job as a mayor of Orono, Maine,” ok. I said ok, so she’ll give a lecture there.

Dr. C: So, the delegation was composed at that time, the former head of the campus school, who had become the foreign student advisor. And then the director of overseas study programs. So, we all went, and this was a China that you couldn’t imagine, that had just come out and Mao died four years earlier, they were just beginning to allow some private activities.

Very poor and the men and women all dressed the same, dark trousers and shirts that hung out and when they walked on the streets of Shanghai, I remember that I looked behind us and there was a crowd of people just following us just to look at the foreigners because we were very, very different. Did I talk about this part of the thing?

Alex: I think you talked about it a little bit.

Dr. C: Well anyways, so we sat at the end, we had to sign agreements and I didn't know that much about the university either, or SUNY central. So, we sat at a table twice as long as this, our delegation sat this side, their delegation sat on that side, headed by a very old president of Beijing teacher's college, who had marched with Mao in the Long March, that's the one in Western China. So, he was an old communist, not an academic, no particular education. Anyway, I signed the agreement, not knowing exactly what was going to happen. So, our first students go, and the very first one was the son of the former head of the campus school, but then the second group included Todd Friends, who I'm still in contact with. They had to live in the bomb shelter, because they didn't have a foreign student building for them, and you'd never want to live in a Chinese dormitory, it was just dirty, eight people to a room the size, really unbelievable. One of the students I got to know later became almost Chinese and I visited him once, living in the bomb shelter. He says "isn't this nice, I feel lucky." My god, you had to go through this big round door thick like this, and it was dank and dark. But he was so happy in China. So, it turned out to be a pretty successful program and five years later our delegation went back to renegotiate some things that weren't working very well. I stayed because I went on leave and as you know, I studied Chinese while I was there and I gave some lectures. That's when we had eight Cortland students there, well actually one had transferred in from elsewhere. So, we had seven Cortland students at that time and I got to know them all because I lived in the same

dorm with them. We drank beer together, we cooked together, it was really an unbelievable experience; and I learned a little bit of Chinese. I could order a beer. So, is that enough? I went back a few years, a couple more times where we did other activities.

Alex: Yeah that sounds like an amazing time.

Dr. C: Oh yeah, really.

Alex: Going back to your time in Cortland, New York, what were some of the big historical events you remember happening at the school during your time?

Dr. C: One would be the first private fundraising campaign we had, which is small scale, no outside experts or anything, we just announced we wanted to restore the Old Main auditorium, which was in bad condition. So, our goal was three hundred thousand and raised about two hundred thousand. We didn't quite make the goal without professional help, but we were able to achieve our goal because the dean of arts and sciences was a theatre man and he comprised a new arrangement for the theatre. I found a donor who gave us a theatre organ, I don't know if, you've probably never seen it operate in Old Main. I know it was damaged in a storm once but it's the kind of organ that they used to have in theaters where they had all sorts of keyboards; and then instruments, drum that would play and violins the would play, all run by forced and compressed air. That's still there. So, we redo the stage, we put the proscenium there and then the physical plant people did most of the work. The story, I've told it quite a number of times is that they didn't know what to do about the old chandeliers, built in 1923, they weren't very good, didn't look good. So, they were sitting there in a meeting and they said "I know" and all the lights on campus were one style from 1970 or so, a stick coming up and a round plastic bulb, sending light in every direction, it would never do anymore. So, he said "Oh I know, we're going to take that globe in half, turn it this way, and it'll be the new globe under the (laughter).

So that's the story, that's one of the events. Fundraising. The alumni association, they had never had meetings outside of New York, and we began to travel and put a chapter in Florida, and I remember going to California to attend alumni meetings. So that was something new, bringing the alumni closer to campus. What were the other big events? Oh no new buildings were built at that time. You are profiting from all these wonderful buildings here and last night I went to a recital on Campus, Marina Gorelaya playing the Piano and Ed Wood I guess was his name, they were faculty and they were wonderful. I walked across the campus, this place is beautiful now, it's just so perfectly done. I think it's just marvelous what's happened since I left. I hope there's no connection between me and it's better since I left, but in my day, during those budget reductions, there's one story I told. The physical plant for the maintenance of the grounds, was fifteen people. It went to nine people, so we lost all those positions. Well they couldn't take care of all the flower beds and all the things, so we began to have these wood chips with stones, nicely placed, instead of flowers. Those stones are called Italian Shrubbery because the fellow who came up with this idea was Italian (laughter), and it became a joke at physical plant that the university had Italian Shrubbery. So, that's one of the things we had to do to reduce the spending, New York State was building prisons at that time and not supporting the university very well.

Alex: Do you remember who the governor was at that time?

Dr. C: Yes, the first one was Governor Carey, but I think he had gone, I think this was under Mario Cuomo. By the way you know it was because of the Rockefeller drug laws.

Alex: Right, Right.

Dr. C: Excuse me.

Cristina: No, my bad, during your time here you said that you've seen changes and all that but, have you seen any changes in student life?

Dr. C: Yes yes yes very much. When we first came in the basement in the student union, they had a bar which sold hard liquor cocktails, that was, coming from Maine we had beer that was it, you know (sings a motto), and also living in the Presidents house, we were astonished at what would happen on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights; because I said to someone once "it's like the barbarians invading the Goths, and the Visigoths. It was happening right by our house you know, they take the shortcut out there on Clayton avenue, and I thought "this was really different, not used to this, and so we would hear a lot of them and I remember the lady calling me in the middle of the night and she says: "You've got to do something, they've come up on my porch, they're breaking the screen door, I'm scared to death." And all I could say was "Call the police" and then the next morning the litter, it's a totally different atmosphere. Then gradually the state went to age, from 18 to 20 and then after that, 20 to 21; and that drove the drinking indoors essentially. You know we didn't have that blatant display of bad behavior. So, I'm sorry to say that but that's one of the things noticed. The students- what else would I say- I love being with them, except for their concerts which I had to wear ear-plugs for, because I would go to a few of them, the activities and that sort. Of course, the athletic events I loved to go to. I'll tell you once, we never had a Presidents Box for football, and Cortaca came around, oh that's a great event, so I'm invited over to the Presidents Box of Ithaca College, and I'm sitting there with the President of that time and his people and I felt a little out of place, but, and so it's kickoff and Cortland catches the ball and runs directly to the other end zone and makes a touchdown (laughter) and I felt very uncomfortable. But anyway, that's one of my high points and then I left and went to sit with my people shortly after that. But yes, good spirit, good

activities, and athletics was very important and I was always very proud that we had Division 3 athletics, no athletic scholarships, no cheating, no big-time stuff, I really strongly believe in Division 3. People come here because they want to play, and not to earn money and get famous or something like that. Oh, we had people get famous but still division 3, both men and women, we had the same number of teams, for men and for women. I don't think at the beginning I think it was after Title IX that we had to add some. But my first year here the women's, what team was it, they took a van and drove out west and won a national championship. Nothing, no money, you know nothing. What was it, could it be women's soccer? Could that be? I can't remember know exactly what it was, and at that time, there was no athletic fee. So, the coaches had to go to student government and ask for the student government to get money for athletics. So, in the State University of New York, I became one of the first advocates for separate athletic fees. We didn't raise tuition but we raised fees. It was little by little. And for a health fee also. So, we did that. I think you probably pay loads and loads of fees now.

Zack: A little bit.

Dr. C: That's not so bad, so what's next?

Alex: What are some changes that you remember instituting during your time here?

Dr. C: Ok, you know that's a good question, I think I have to look at that (laughter).

Because it's a summary of things. I wrote this, Among the things most proud of, it was a quarter century ago, Relations with the local community. Yes, I started meeting people in the community, the police for one, and the fire department people, we had a problem with false fire alarms and I remember this mother coming to me and we had expelled the student and she said: "Well I can't understand it he's a good boy." She said: "He won the 8th grade award in fire safety." And this sort of thing. That student discipline was a question, I would get the hard cases at the very end.

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Dr. C: So, the delegation was composed at that time, the former head of the campus school, who had become the former student advisor. And then the director of overseas study programs. So we all went, and this was a China that you couldn't imagine, that had just come out and Mao died four years earlier, they were just beginning to allow some private activities. Very poor and the men and women all dressed the same, dark trousers and shirts that hung out and when they walked on the streets of Shanghai, I remember that I looked behind us and there was a crowd of

people just following us just to look at the foreigners because we were very, very different. Did I talk about this part of the thing?

Alex: I think you talked about it a little bit.

Dr. C: Well anyways, so we sat at the end, we had to sign agreements and I didn't know that much about the university either, or SUNY central. So we sat at a table twice as long as this, our delegation sat this side, their delegation sat on that side, headed by a very old president of Beijing teachers college, who had marched with Mao in the Long March, that's the one in Western China. So he was an old communist, not an academic, no particular education. Anyway, I signed the agreement, not knowing exactly what was going to happen. So, our first students go, and the very first one was the son of the former head of the campus school, but then the second group included Todd Friends, who I'm still in contact with. They had to live in the bomb shelter, because they didn't have a foreign student building for them, and you'd never want to live in a Chinese dormitory, it was just dirty, eight people to a room the size, really unbelievable. One of the students I got to know later became almost Chinese and I visited him once, living in the bomb shelter. He says "isn't this nice, I feel lucky." My god, you had to go through this big round door thick like this, and it was dank and dark. But he was so happy in China. So, it turned out to be a pretty successful program and five years later our delegation went back to renegotiate some things that weren't working very well. I stayed because I went on leave and as you know, it says I studied Chinese while I was there and I gave some lectures. That's when we had eight Cortland students there, well actually one had transferred in from elsewhere. So we had seven Cortland students at that time and I got to know them all because I lived in the same dorm with them. We drank beer together, we cooked together, it was really an unbelievable experience; and

I learned a little bit of Chinese. I could order a beer. So is that enough? I went back a few years, a couple more times where we did other activities.

Alex: Yeah that sounds like an amazing time.

Dr. C: Oh yeah, really.

Alex: Going back to your time in Cortland, New York, what were some of the big historical events you remember happening at the school during your time?

Dr. C: One would be the first private fundraising campaign we had, which is small scale, no outside experts or anything, we just announced we wanted to restore the Old Main auditorium, which was in bad condition. So, our goal was three hundred thousand and raised about two hundred thousand. We didn't quite make the goal without professional help, but we were able to achieve our goal because the dean of arts and sciences was a theatre man and he comprised a new arrangement for the theatre. I found a donor who gave us a theatre organ, I don't know if, you've probably never seen it operate in Old Main. I know it was damaged in a storm once but it's the kind of organ that they used to have in theaters where they had all sorts of keyboards; and then instruments, drum that would play and violins they would play, all run by forced and compressed air. That's still there. So we decided the theatre, we put the proscenium there and then the physical plant people did most of the work. The story, I've told it quite a number of times is that they didn't know what to do about the old chandeliers, built in 1923, they weren't very good, didn't look good. So they were sitting there in a meeting and they said "I know" and all the lights on campus were one style from 1970 or so, a stick coming up and a round plastic bulb, sending light in every direction, it would never do anymore. So he said "Oh I know, we're going to take that globe in half, turn it this way, and it'll be the new globe under the (laughter). So that's the story, that's one of the events. Fundraising. The alumni association, they

had never had meetings outside of New York, and we began to travel and put a chapter in Florida, and I remember going to California to attend alumni meetings. So that was something new, bringing the alumni closer to campus. What were the other big events? Oh no new buildings were built at that time. You are profiting from all these wonderful buildings here and last night I went to a recital on Campus, Rita Lore playing the Piano and Ed Wood I guess was his name, they were faculty and they were wonderful. I walked across the campus, this place is beautiful now, it's just so perfectly done. I think it's just marvelous what's happened since I left. I hope there's no connection between me and it's better since I left, but in my day, during those budget reductions, there's one story I told. The physical plant for the maintenance of the grounds, was fifteen people. It went to nine people, so we lost all those positions. Well they couldn't take care of all the flower beds and all the things, so we began to have these wood chips with stones, nicely placed, instead of flowers. Those stones are called Italian Shrubbery because the fellow who came up with this idea was Italian (laughter), and it became a joke at physical plant that the university had Italian Shrubbery. So, that's one of the things we had to do to reduce the spending, New York State was building prisons at that time and not supporting the university very well.

Alex: Do you remember who the governor was at that time?

Dr. C: Yes, the first one was Governor Carey, but I think he had gone, I think this was under Mario Cuomo. By the way you know it was because of the Rockefeller drug laws.

Alex: Right, Right.

Dr. C: Excuse me.

Cristina: No my bad, during your time here you said that you've seen changes and all that but, have you seen any changes in student life?

Dr. C: Yes yes yes very much. When we first came in the basement in the student union, they had a bar which sold hard liquor cocktails, that was, coming from Maine we had beer that was it, you know (sings a motto), and also living in the Presidents house, we were astonished at what would happen on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights; because I said to someone once “it’s like the barbarians invade in the goths, and the Visigoths. It was happening right by our house you know, they take the shortcut out there on Clayton avenue, and I thought “this was really different, not used to this, and so we would hear a lot of them and I remember the lady calling me in the middle of the night and she says: “You’ve got to do something, they’ve come up on my porch, they’re breaking the screen door, I’m scared to death.” And all I could say was “Call the police” and then the next morning the litter, it’s a totally different atmosphere. Then gradually the state went to age, from 18 to 20 and then after that, 20 to 21; and that drove the drinking indoors essentially. You know we didn’t have that blatant display of bad behavior. So I’m sorry to say that but that’s one of the things noticed. The students- what else would I say- I love being with them, except for their concerts which I had to wear ear-plugs for, because I would go to a few of them, the activities and that sort. Of course the athletic events I loved to go to. I’ll tell you once, we never had a Presidents Box for football, and Cortaca came around, oh that’s a great event, so I’m invited over to the Presidents Box of Ithaca College, and I’m sitting there with the President of that time and his people and I felt a little out of place, but, and so it’s kickoff and Cortland catches the ball and runs directly to the other end zone and makes a touchdown (laughter) and I felt very uncomfortable. But anyway, that’s one of my high points and then I left and went to sit with my people shortly after that. But yes, good spirit, good activities, and athletics was very important and I was always very proud that we had Division 3 athletics, no athletic scholarships, no cheating, no big-time stuff, I really strongly believe in

Division 3. People come here because they want to play, and not to earn money and get famous or something like that. Oh we had people get famous but still division 3, both men and women, we had the same number of teams, for men and for women. I don't think at the beginning I think it was after Title IX that we had to add some. But my first year here the women's, what team was it, they took a van and drove out west and won a national championship. Nothing, no money, you know nothing. What was it, could it be women's soccer? Could that be? I can't remember know exactly what it was, and at that time, there was no athletic fee. So the coaches had to go to student government and ask for the student government to get money for athletics. So in the state of New York, I became one of the first advocates for separate athletic fees. We didn't raise tuition but we raised fees. It was little by little. And for a health fee also. So we did that. I think you probably pay loads and loads of fees now.

Zack: A little bit.

Dr. C: That's not so bad, so what's next?

Alex: What are some changes that you remember instituting during your time here?

Dr. C: Ok, you know that's a good question, I think I have to look at that (laughter).

Because it's a summary of things. I wrote this, Among the things most proud of, it was a quarter century ago, Relations with the local community. Yes I started meeting people in the community, the police for one, and the fire department people, we had a problem with false fire alarms and I remember this mother coming to me and we had expelled the student and she said: "Well I can't understand it he's a good boy." She said: "He won the 8th grade award in fire safety." And this sort of thing. That student discipline was a question, I would get the hard cases at the very end. I'll just mention two of those. One was a wonderful young man who was on the top floor of the first dormitory on the right as you go down the hill, the high-rise going down from the student

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Alex: Going off that same question, are there any changes you wish you had implemented?

Dr. C: Ah

Alex: And you don't have to answer there might not be an answer.

Dr. C: Well, no I don't (chuckles) putting the swimming requirement back, (Laughs) no no I'm teasing no. But I would say I think I had an overall good feeling about the place when I left.

Cristina: During your time here, how would you describe the diversity and the gender relations on campus, was it something that's increased or something that's remained the same, better or worse?

Dr. C: We usually had a majority of women students, I don't remember many cases of what you would, what we read about now, that I was aware of. There were some involving faculty, without giving any names I'll tell you about one where he was, well there was another one too, but this one he was not behaving properly towards a girl student and we got enough evidence to know that it was true, and so we said that we were going to describe this incident and put it in the file where it will remain for five years and we will pull it out for discipline if you ever do anything like this ever again. After three years he came to me and said he would really like that removed from the file because it was dangerous there. It was a sealed file that only the Vice President or the President could open or something like that. I said no, I said: "They say cancer can be cured in five years so we're going to stick to that limit". The other one was oh, much worse, it was a case of an associate Professor who constantly we received complaints about him, constantly. So we had disciplined, put letters in the file. We really thought we could finally, I remember writing a letter where we said: "You must always keep your door open, your students chair must be on the other side of the desk" I mean specific stuff like can you imagine that, why he violated it. So we said you go to, we are going to dismiss you. He got a lawyer, he

fought it like a tiger, and in the end we negotiated a settlement where he resigned early. Retired early, retired early. So we did have to deal with those issues but I would say they were more, how could I say this, they were really very serious. Nothing like patting a woman on the back or something or, well I guess groping was a part of it. I'm sorry to be so blunt but it was with these cases, not a lot, not a lot thank god. But affirmative action oh, we had a superb affirmative action officer. She would meet with people, explain what we're trying to do, and we really learned our own way. We had the first woman vice president for student affairs. We had a black associate academic vice president. Of course, our head of EOP was a black fellow and so we had some, but not like today. I mean, I walk across the campus now, this is a diverse campus. You've really succeeded in the last quarter century I think.

Zack: Just to back track a little bit, you were talking about Cortaca and all that stuff before and this year is the 60th game that they'll be playing. What's your most memorable home Cortaca home game?

Dr. C: (Laughing) It's the one I told you about. Yeah that's the one where, by the way we lost that game in the end, we lost the game. But, there was one, well this isn't quite, there was one year, probably about 1985 or so where they gave me a watch with a football on it and it said ten to one. We had a perfect, no ten to zero, where we had a perfect score. We had ten games without a loss. So, I really liked that, I mean I liked the coaches, specifically the one that went to France with us, David Murray, what a jewel of a man. I have plenty of stories, I will contain myself. But specifically, in Cortaca, I don't remember, sometimes there were some parties downtown that upset the people in the town. But that's about all I can remember. Do you play football?

Zack: In High School I did yeah. It's a big, big passion of mine.

Dr. C: You did, yeah. Who is?

Zack: Football is yeah, can't get enough of it

Dr. C: Good good, yeah I'm glad to hear that.

Alex: What in regards to the study abroad program, I know you've done a lot of work in that field, what's your favorite country you've visited?

Dr. C: My favorite country? I guess in connection with the job, it would have to be China because it was so different. So totally different. I now have been to China six times, five times since I've retired I've went back. In France, I had been a student there, I had been a professor there at the University of Toulouse. And it was more familiar and at that time we didn't have any programs in France itself we had a program in Switzerland, that was fun to visit but the one in Germany, it was the German Sport School. I think it's still the largest in Europe. Deutsche Sporthochschule. Yes we went there for the twentieth anniversary I think it was. Of course Willie (Last name unclear) was German and he started that from really the top sports school. I wonder if you still have students coming from there, we had students coming from there and studying here.

Cristina: There's a lot of German students that come here.

Dr. C: Are they still taking Germans? Good to hear that. My favorite, it would be hard to say really but China because so much learning went on. So different.

Cristina: During your time here I mean like you obviously learned a lot being President, was there anyone that you worked with that just made an insane difference in your time here?

Dr. C: Oh yes, really. It would have to be my assistant Dr. Marylou Wright. She was also for a while affirmative action officer and she had the right capacities and talents to deal with conflict situations of various kinds, to advise me, and she herself was an academic, doctorate in

English. So, she was great. I often have said that if I had been a success as President, I owed it to three women. My wife, Dr. McLaughlin, and my secretary Lori Barton who was at the dinner last Friday. I hadn't seen her in years, Lori Barton. She's now living near Albany, but she served under three Presidents. I think, one, two, three, four. Including an acting President. Yes. So she really knew that job she was superb. She and her husband own a golf course in Marathon, she worked a lot at the golf course. And of course my wife, she died a year and a half ago and she was so good as a President's wife. She was able to relate to everybody from difficult people to faculty and the grounds people, everybody on the campus. The students, we had at graduation every year the student committee would come to a dinner at the President's house afterwards. I think they probably stopped that. And then we would sometimes in Degroat, I think it's Degroat. The one next to the President's house?

Cristina and Alex: Yeah it's Degroat.

Dr. C: Okay, kids would yell "Mr. President can we come to your house and swim in your pool?" I said sure! (laughing) and then one morning, I know who did this now, you know at the time, someone went out at graduation time, our garden and patio furniture at the bottom of the pool, perfectly arraigned, the table here, the chairs in the pool and later I learned who had done it and he's a guy I'm still in contact with he's now a professor. (laughing)

Alex: Are there any students that really stood out to you during your Presidency?

Dr. C: Yes, definitely, definitely. And some of them I'm still in contact with. One, probably the most interesting one I would think, well there's so many, this is Bill, no not Bill, James Thomas. James Thomas I met first with my wife in a Tai-Chi class in the evening when one of the Professors we brought from China would talk about Tai-Chi and this tall, thin black fellow started talking with us and we got to know him. Well, what happens but in the delegation

of the students who went to study in China when I was there for the living in the dormitory with all those kids. So he normally, students were normally there for one semester, he stayed the whole year and the second year, he ran, he was a runner, he ran for The Beijing Institute for Physical Education, the physical education college. And then I told James Thomas and some others about an ASCU program, that's the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, they sponsored students to go to Taiwan to study Chinese, he applied and he got it. So he went to Taiwan and he's never really come home (Laughing) I'm on Facetime sometimes with him, and he does a lot of things there, he is in television, he has a radio program, his Chinese is perfect, absolutely perfect, probably better than his English. He also organized a school for Chinese people to study English, so I said to him "do you teach him to say ask or axe" (Laughs) because you know he'd say I didn't "axe" a question you know that habit that some of the black people have, he laughed of course, so he's done that and he travels to mainland China and sometimes Russia with his computing stuff, he's quite an interesting guy, that's James, has never married he's had lots of girlfriends. Anyway, then another one was Bill Thomas, that's no relation, Bill Thomas was a president of student government and he was the one that sort of withdrew from student activities for a year so he could focus on his courses and he was admitted to 7 medical schools, and he went to Harvard. So, I kept in contact with him after I retired, I served on his board for the reform of nursing homes and he's gotten support from the various, you know the Heinz Foundation, remember Mrs. Heinz was married to John Kerry who ran for the presidency, and the college gave him an honorary degree, and he lives in Ithaca now, another outstanding student whom I met. I wish I could remember Margaret's last name, Margaret was from Syracuse and she also went to China in that group, that year that I was there, got to know Margaret, red haired girl, she was the first to arrive in China. She and a young man when I was

teaching college success he was in that class, they got married and then they went into the Peace Corps and they served in something -Attu, and island group north east of Australia.

AK: Oh Vanuatu?

JC: Vanuatu! How do you know that?

AK: I'm really good at maps (all laugh)

JC: Vanuatu! (Laughing) What is that? So, they went and served there and I haven't heard since what happened, But Margaret she was a really outstanding student. Well I could go on, there are more, but those are the most interesting ones, probably.

AK: And of those 3 are you still in contact with all of them?

JC: Not Margaret, but with James Thomas, Bill Thomas I meet him at airports because in his reform movement he lectures in Japan and Germany so on and so forth, twice I've seen him at the Ithaca airport, just happened to overlap but that's it really. James Thomas, he's come back every 5 or 6 years, he's stayed at our house actually.

CB: While you were here is there any like components of the academic curriculum that you thought you had to keep no matter what, you were talking about budget cuts?

JC: Oh yeah

CB: Any departments that really (Unclear)

JC: I was always very proud of the fact that for the BA, we never dropped the foreign language requirement, that was the fad in that period of time, the 1980s "that language requirement that's a waste". We kept it, I'm very proud of that, even though we cut staff it was hard to keep. People said "why are you offering German?" So yes, that's one, and I was very proud too of the multicultural whatever we called it at that time that was an addition that was very very new in the country at that time. I think and I visited all the departments, I would do

every three or 4 years I'd meet with every department. But usually had to do with political things, and not so much about curriculum.

AK: Hmm what is the question Prof. Faulkenbury wanted us to ask?

CB: What does SUNY Cortland mean to you?

JC: Ohhhhh Golly, I would say it certainly is the biggest part of my life, my professional life. My wife and I decided to stay here when I retired because she was so involved in the community. Recently I was reducing stuff at the house, and I had all these boxes of plaques, I was going to throw them away, actually I called up one of the companies and asked "Could you reuse these somehow" and he said "no I can't use them". So, I said "no I'm not going to throw them out", so I put them on the wall of my garage, when I counted, she had more than I did (Laughs) She was so involved in the community, everyone knew her and admired her. So that... What was your question? Oh, oh what it means to me. Outside of family it was the most important thing in my life, really. It wasn't just a job, it wasn't a job, it was the people, meeting new people having the experiences, and even the frustrations gave me stories to tell, it was my life. People would say, "Do you miss it?" Now that's a hard question to say, to answer. I would say essentially, no because when I retired I decided I want to start a new life, I want to do other things and so I did not join committees at the college. I would go to social functions maybe, but I didn't take on any professional activities related to the college, I think that's true. I did serve on various community boards, like Bill Thomas's nursing home organization. I served on - by the way my wife was serving on the hospice board, I served on the Hospital Foundation, the Hospice Foundation and anyway, which end of life was I at? (Laughs) You know when you think about it, and recently I accepted a, about a year ago, an appointment to the college foundation and I'm serving a three-year term. I told them do you really want someone who's going to be 90 at the

end of the term? Really? And I'm not much of an influence there because these are basically bankers and finance people from New York City. So, I'm out of that league. I think it was the people that I appreciated the most here, the friends, I still have groups of friends that are associated with the college that I socialize with. I never thought of it quite that way, the way you asked the question.

AK: I think we - I have asked everything I need I think, before we turn off the recorder is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

JC: This has been fun you know, to answer questions about my life, I don't often think this way, it's a reflection on what has happened, the good and the bad but I appreciate being involved. Thank you very much.

AK: Oh no thank you, you've been a huge help with our project.

CB: It was a pleasure to hear your history.

AK: Yeah, fascinating stories.

JC: Could I tell you one more?

AK: Please do.

CB: Yeah.

ZM: Absolutely.

JC: So, there was this one time, we were in Lyon, the 2nd largest city in France and I had gotten to know the graduate students. One day I travel with them in their van, really great kids, they were graduate students who were assistant coaches. So, we go and were going to this site where we're going to have a joint practice with the French team. They're not associated with colleges or schools just independent. So, we get to the site, and the graduate students are lost. They don't show up in their van, so the director of athletics says "Oh we've got to start this, Dr.

Clark suit up” (Laughs) I say “What do you mean?” he says “You're going to have to lead them” I know nothing at all! How can I do that? He said “just wear the red outfit, and our guys will tell you what to do. So I remember being in front of them, and they were on their hands and knees, in front of me, the French guys here and the American guys here, and one said “Count to 3 and tell them to jump” So I said, “Un, deux, trois—sautiez!” and they all jumped over each other, I tried to sound authoritative, it was a total act (laughing) So then at that point the graduate students came and took over. I had told some French friends I was going to be here, these were young people, and they came and they were standing outside of the fence. So, freed from that duty I went over and talked with them, and they brought some beer with them so we had some beer, so when Director Lee tells the story later and he says, “So the president was going over and drinking beer”. (laughs) And then right next to Geneva in Switzerland we had a real game, it was lopsided because we were so much better than they are. Anyway, I said “What do you want me to do Lee?” and he said “You're the waterboy” (laughs) Oh god it was so funny. And then one, the hotels where we stayed tended to be very low cost, automated, we had advanced reservations, but for most people they would arrive at night, there's no personnel, you would take your credit card, run it down the window, you get into the hotel and they issue you a number, a combination number, every room has a combination lock, so you get into your room, and then in the morning some staff come to serve breakfast. And there's no showers in the room or anything, you would go down the hall and shower there, with a red light on top when someone was inside, and after each person it totally sprays the thing, inside. So, in the night I had to go to the john so I got up, and (gasps) I forgot the combination. So, I lay down in this hallway, slept in the hallway, and early in the morning some French visitors got up and walked beside me, and looked at this guy sleeping in the hallway. Oh, there's stories galore, great kids. And recently at one of the functions

here on campus one of the guys in Institutional Advancement said that some of those football players are coming back this year for Cortaca. So, I said “Oh if they come back I want to meet them!”