

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW WITH LANA J. WACHNIAK AND WILLIAM H. WALLACE JR.  
CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT  
for the  
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KSU Oral History Series, No. 119  
Interview with Lana J. Wachniak and William H. Wallace Jr.  
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott  
Thursday, 6 March 2014  
Location: Town Point, Kennesaw State University

TS: Let me start out by asking each of you to talk about your background: where you came from, where you went to school, and things like that.

LW: I was raised in Statesboro, Georgia. My parents moved there when I was very young, around five. They're from Canada, and I was born in Canada. So they were looking for the perfect spot on earth.

TS: And that was Statesboro?

LW: It was a business opportunity, and there was a college in the town, so they were looking toward the future, interestingly enough. I was raised there and went to school at the Laboratory School—Marvin Pittman—on the Georgia Southern campus.

TS: That's what it was called—the Marvin Pittman Laboratory School?

LW: Right. Yes. Yes.

TS: Marvin Pittman was the former president of Georgia Southern who got involved in a little controversy with Gene Talmadge [in 1941 when Governor Talmadge pressured the Board of Regents into firing several key administrators in the University System, including Pittman. After the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools stripped the University System of its accreditation, Ellis Arnall used that issue to defeat Talmadge for reelection in 1942. Shortly after Arnall's inauguration, the Board of Regents reappointed Pittman as president].

LW: Yes, a lot of little sorts of conflicts in this state! I was fortunate. When I was in eleventh grade, I began taking college classes at Georgia Southern. I was probably one of the first in the state, I would guess, to begin doing that my junior and senior years.

TS: You were at what we used to call JETS students [Joint Enrollment for Twelfth Grade Students].

LW: I always think of it as a B-52 [laughs]. But, yes, I was a JETS student. Another student and I did, and it was a lot of pressure on us. But I stayed at Georgia Southern and . . . .

TS: I noticed you got your bachelor's in 1972 there.

LW: Right.

TS: Since you got started in your junior year of high school, I guess you got through in record speed.

LW: Two years. I graduated high school in 1970 and also worked. My parents had a family business. They were immigrants, and so we were that classic case of people who lived upstairs and worked down stairs. We had a motel and restaurant back then, so the whole family worked. People have talked about those things, and they always think they are specific ethnic groups, perhaps Asian . . . .

TS: Well a lot of people from India have motels nowadays.

LW: We were the same way. Mother had a third grade education. Dad had a high school. Neither spoke English as a first language.

TS: French?

LW: Mother spoke French. Dad spoke Ukrainian. My father was born in Saskatchewan, but there were Ukrainian-speaking enclaves out there. So he learned English in school. Higher education was always a release and escape for me. Then I went to Florida State, and then UGA is where I got my doctorate. I have to laugh. Everyone has an UGA bumper stick, but I actually graduated from there [laughs]! I'm actually a bulldog.

TS: So I've got down 1972 you got your bachelor's. What were you 20 years old or 19 years old?

LW: I was 20.

TS: And then four years later you got your master's at Florida State.

LW: Correct.

TS: Then ten years after that, 1986, you got your doctorate.

LW: Right. Part of that time at Florida State I was in Europe. I got an assistantship to the Florida State program in London and just had fun. So you can imagine; here am I, what 21, 22, living over there as a graduate student supervising undergraduates. I think I was a professor at Georgia Southern when I was 26. I was still working [on my doctorate]; I was ABD. That's why I tell everyone, "Get your doctorate beforehand." Because you can see that it took me years and years to get it.

TS: It took me years and years to get mine for the same reason.

LW: We also did qualitative research, which added additional time to completing my doctorate.

TS: But you don't turn down a job if you've got one.

LW: No you don't. That's a bit of background. I was fortunate to have teachers in school who would take me to science fairs and things like that. My parents couldn't because of the work.

TS: You saw the world coming through the motel and the restaurant, I guess.

LW: That's why nothing fazes me. I think, honestly, that's why I'm able to keep my cool in so many different situations.

TS: When did you get attracted to Sociology? Was that immediately as an undergraduate?

LW: No I was a Criminal Justice major—probably one of the first because those were new programs back then. When I was at Florida State, I was in the masters/doctoral program, and I just wanted more. Criminal Justice was so interesting to me, Criminology, I had to have a greater disciplinary foundation, and that's when I became more interested in Sociology, and my area is deviance.

TS: So your master's is Sociology or Criminal Justice?

LW: Criminology.

TS: What about the doctorate?

LW: It is Sociology.

TS: My wife Kathy graduated from Kennesaw Junior College here, and she took all the criminal justice classes. Professors came out from Georgia State to teach them. She was in there with all the police officers taking those courses.

LW: Now the program has got, what, 600 majors.

TS: Wow. That's amazing.

LW: We were excited to get that.

TS: I guess you were teaching at Georgia Southern as soon as you got your masters.

LW: Well I was hired there as ABD. With the old quarter system, I had nine different classes my first year—nine different preps.

TS: Three a quarter.

LW: Yes. You remember those days?

TS: Yes, I do.

LW: We did. That were nine different ones and then a couple of new preps the following year. So we worked liked dogs.

TS: People think that since I started at Kennesaw when we only had 1300 students that we had small classes. I had fifty in each class my first quarter at Kennesaw. I had 152 students my first quarter here in the fall of 1968.

LW: Unbelievable! Yes.

TS: Two different preparations, I guess.

LW: And only a few weeks until the next quarter started. They were ten weeks.

TS: The big break, I guess, was from the second week in December to January, and then I guess a week between winter and spring. We had another week between spring and summer, and then two weeks before fall started.

LW: That was rigorous, very rigorous.

TS: Yes, it was, particularly when I didn't know anything [laughs].

LW: Yes, we were up all night preparing lectures, weren't we?

TS: J. B. Tate used to refer to it as staying a step ahead of the posse.

LW: That's good. That's good. That's a good example.

TS: Well, what about you Bill?

BW: I was born in Macon, Tom, and my parents moved to Dublin, Georgia. My father was born in Millen, Georgia, during the Great Depression. By the time he was eleven years old, both his mother and his father had passed away. He was raised by his grandfather in the heat and down on the farms in South Georgia. He lied about his age so that he could get into the military.

TS: Didn't everybody?

BW: I guess so. During World War II he started out in Texas, then was sent to the Philippines. As I've shared with you before, a great influence in my life was my

- dad. He was a survivor of the Bataan death march during World War II. I heard him interviewed for a book called *Death March*. It was fascinating to me in terms of the questions they asked, such as “Mr. Wallace, how did you know the war was over, and how did you know who had won the war?”
- TS: Because he was in a prisoner of war camp.
- BW: Prisoner of war camp. It was just fascinating to hear that. And I met some of the most . . . .
- TS: Wasn't it they knew because the Japanese started treating them better right before the end?
- BW: That's what he said. He said, “The beatings became less frequent, and we noticed we were getting a little more meat in our food. We presumed we had won the war.” Interestingly enough, when he passed away—my father later became a minister—the gentleman who conducted his funeral came up to me and said, “Bill, do you know how your father and I became acquainted?” His name was Mr. Townsend in Dublin. He conducted a lot of those funerals that my father was a minister for the funerals. I said, “No, sir, I don't know.” He said, “I was part of the Marines that liberated your father from prison camp in World War II.”
- TS: How about that?
- BW: They had been friends for over forty or fifty years. He met my mother. They were both born in 1922. But the reason I brought that up—my father had two brothers. At age eleven [when his parents died], he was the oldest, and he had a brother nine and a brother seven. They were all raised by their grandfather down in Millen, Georgia. When he returned, he became the first person in our family to get a college degree. He went to Mercer University in Macon. That just became expected that you didn't have a choice. The tradition had begun, and the only way to be successful was one must have an undergraduate degree. Also during that era, I graduated from Dublin High School in 1972. In 1970, if you will recall, the Vietnam War was going on. So I was one of those individuals whose draft status was determined by one's birthday.
- TS: Oh, the lottery.
- BW: My first year in college, 1972, I was number 26 on the list. So I knew that I was headed to Vietnam. That's when President Nixon signed the peace accords when I was freshman at Georgia.
- TS: Oh, the war ended before you got there, and then the draft ended the following year?
- BW: Correct.

TS: So you didn't ever get drafted?

BW: Did not. But I know because of my father's service that was something that was treasured and was expected.

TS: Did you go in?

BW: I did not. My father because of his service did not wish for me to enter the military. He wanted me to get an education and to be successful. But we've always maintained our respect for the military, as you know. One of the nicest events that Lana and I attended with my father was an annual reunion in Fontana, North Carolina. We met the bombardier of the Enola Gay. His name was Colonel Thomas [W.] Ferebee, one of the most lovely people . . . and also the chaplain in my father's prisoner of war group was from the state of Texas, and he became a personal chaplain for President John F. Kennedy.

TS: Was he Catholic?

BW: No he was a Baptist.

TS: And he was chaplain for President John F. Kennedy?

BW: He was a personal chaplain for President John F. Kennedy from the state of Texas, which, of course, is where Lyndon Johnson was from and became president. I do not even remember the gentleman's name, but he was a lovely, lovely person. And we met nurses. A lot of people never knew that nurses had survived the Bataan Death March as well. So we met those persons.

TS: They never show up in the films, do they?

BW: They do not. They were abused by the Japanese greatly. But their love and affection for the prisoners and the American soldiers and airmen was self-evident when we were there. That set the tone for me for higher education. I completed my undergraduate degree in 1977, started my master's degree in public administration, and I completed that in 1981. I then was the very first personnel director ever hired by Georgia Southern University. To be honest with you, Tom, I had a master's degree, and I didn't know what I wanted to do other than Lana and I were engaged at that time, and I knew I had to find employment. We had to become settled and start our life together. There was just an ad in the newspaper, so I applied and began work for President Dale [W.] Lick [GSU president, 1978-1986].

TS: Right, who went on to Florida State [as president from 1991-1993 after serving as the president of the University of Maine from 1986-1991].

BW: He went to Florida State, and guess who his best friend was? Betty [L.] Siegel. He and Betty Siegel were close personal friends. She told me that Dale was her very best friend. When I came to Kennesaw, I had a letter of recommendation from the president. She said, "Were you smart enough to get this letter from Dale?" I said, "Yes, ma'm." She said, "If you're that smart, we need you to come work at Kennesaw." Betty Siegel is one of my heroes, as is Dale Lick.

TS: I recall that football came in while he was at Georgia Southern.

BW: I helped hire Erk Russell who was the first coach there.

TS: You hired him?

BW: I did. Well, my boss and I did, along with the president who made the final decision, but we were in human resources, and, interestingly, enough his offensive coordinator was Paul Johnson, who is now the head football coach at Georgia Tech. We had hired Johnson at Georgia Southern to start his career.

TS: And our coach now is a disciple of Paul Johnson.

LW: He's a nice fellow, coach [Brian] Bohannon. I met him.

BW: The other thing about Dr. Lick—and this created some challenge for him—he always felt that we should have a university in South Georgia.

TS: I thought I remembered a controversy while he was at Georgia Southern.

BW: He was the person who upset the chancellor because he kept arguing that we needed a university in South Georgia.

LW: He lobbied.

BW: He was a champion for that.

LW: He got into trouble all along the way.

TS: It didn't seem to hurt his career too much though. So how did you all meet?

BW: I was a graduate assistant at Georgia Southern in Political Science, and Lana was an assistant professor in Criminal Justice. The department was collectively joined. It was called Political Science and Criminal Justice. So I happened to walk by her desk and noticed, and I thought she was very attractive, and she taught in a discipline and area different than mine. I had two buddies who were graduate assistants. So I made sure that they would go and tell Lana what a good guy I was, and that she should go out on a date with me, and that we would have a nice time.

TS: And she believed them?

LW: He wore me down.

BW: I guess she did. Tom, I guess it worked. We just celebrated our thirtieth wedding anniversary this past year. We were engaged for about three years before we married.

TS: What took you so long? Trying to get degrees out of the way?

BW: Lana was completing her doctorate, and I coordinated our wedding while she was finishing her doctorate. I fell in love with her mother and her father. They were just like parents to me and such honorable people.

TS: So you got married in, what, about 1984?

BW: In 1983.

LW: '83

TS: Bill, did you get both of your degrees at Georgia Southern?

BW: I did.

TS: Okay, so you got your bachelor's in 1977, and what was that in?

BW: It was a BS, and it was in Political Science. My master's was in Public Administration.

TS: Which was under the Political Science Department?

BW: That's correct.

TS: So you got that done in 1981, and then you went to work immediately for Georgia Southern.

BW: I finished up in the fall, and the interesting thing back then, Tom, was that in order to graduate not only did you have to complete coursework, you had to pass an orals presentation. So I had the department chair and the two toughest faculty members, the three most challenging to me, and they became mentors to me. They had three things. You either failed, you passed, or you passed with distinction. I passed with distinction, and one of Lana's colleagues who was a professor there told me afterward—he sat in—he said, "Bill, my doctorate orals were not as difficult as what you were just given in there. So Georgia Southern will always hold a special place in our hearts, Tom, because not only is it our

alma mater; it created a history or a foundation for us that we should respect and help others who were less fortunate. Even to this day, it feels like home when we go back to Georgia Southern.

TS: Now, how did it do that—create that spirit of helping others? Was it the courses you took or was the whole university community oriented that way or what?

BW: I guess it was just observing other people. The thing was that there was a strong bond between community and between what's called cap and gown. Just the people that were there instilled a sense of responsibility: civic responsibility, community responsibility. I've always believed that your actions speak louder than your words. Whenever we would go out and do things, we would see fellow staff employees there, fellow faculty members there. They practiced what they conveyed as important.

LW: My view was a little different. My experience was a little different. My parents were always open to helping other people. Having a motel, you could always take people in, and you weren't endangered like bringing them into your own home. So people traveling through or walking—you'd see so many people hitchhiking, homeless. Now from an adult looking back, yeah, the fellow that lived in the old yellow school bus was homeless until he moved. I never noticed he didn't have water or utilities, and my parents let him move on our property.

TS: So people would just show up to the office and say I can't afford a room?

LW: You'd get that or you'd see, because we had a restaurant also, they'd ask for food, you know, something to eat. And so if they did that . . .

TS: And then the reputation got out . . .

LW: Probably, the hobo signs. Bill knows. My parents were still both living even then, thirty years ago. Mom died about twenty-five years ago. He knows that my dad let this fellow stay. He was working on a crew, and they drove off rather than pay him, so my father took him in. They kind of had to boot him out of the room because he was getting a little funny, bringing in snakes and things. He had some mental health issues too. I don't know if you've ever read Gordon Allport's book on prejudice. [Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Addison-Wesley 1954). It's an older book probably sixty years old. He talks about Ukrainians. They were called reptiles.

TS: Oh, really? Why?

LW: Ukrainians were really the lower stratum in Canada.

TS: Oh, in Canada they were?

- LW: This is where my dad was raised. Even the features are different. Folks can look at you and say, “You look a bit different, ethnically. You don’t see that as much now, of course, with the diversity in this country. But my parents were always open. They were more inclusive than perhaps other people were in a small southern town. That’s what we grew up with. Then at Georgia Southern, and frankly at Kennesaw State, if you want to do good things and get involved, under Dr. Siegel, frankly, and Dr. Lick, and then Dr. [Nicholas L.] Henry [president of Georgia Southern University, 1987-1998], you were able to do that. You could start programs. You could have projects down there. We worked with the orphanage, with their fundraising, or the school for children with disabilities.
- BW: We had outstanding opportunities to work with leadership programs at KSU and to create programs with students, faculty, and staff.
- LW: I worked with students, and we made Easter baskets for kids who were in domestic violence shelters. We did all kinds of projects like that. So at these two institutions we’ve been able to find people who have worked with us on various projects. I laugh because my favorite saying is “vision without execution is hallucination.” If you try it on your own, it’s just not going to happen so often. We found these university environments to be conducive to helping others—the true concept I’d say of servant leadership, of like-minded people working together to achieve positive, common goals.
- TS: I’ve got 1988 that you came here, Lana. Bill, I guess you both came here in ’88?
- BW: I came in ’87. What happened, Tom, was Lana’s mother at that time had terminal cancer. When I came to Kennesaw, I commuted from Marietta to Statesboro every weekend and then back on Sunday night.
- TS: Which is, what, a four or five hour drive?
- LW: Three and a half
- TS: How fast were you going [laughs]?
- BW: What that would do is that permitted Lana an extra year to be there with her father and her mother and her brother at that time. They would take turns. She had to have chemotherapy treatment in Savannah. You know the challenge of that of getting her there and then the illness thereafter. When I would come in on Friday night, Lana and her father could go in one room and relax because I would sit with Lana’s mom. Our favorite television show became *Dallas*. We’d sit there, and I guess the nicest memory that I carry with me even to this day, is Lana’s mom had had chemotherapy and had lost all of her hair. She was a very beautiful woman, and she would wear a cover on her head so that no one ever saw her without her hair. She looked at me one night, and she said, “Would you mind if I took this off?” I said, “I would not mind at all. You feel comfortable in doing

that.” She did, and, Tom, she just had a glow of peace about her. Not trying to be sad, but the reason I tell you that story—I looked at her, and I said, “Mrs. Wachniak, I don’t think I will ever have the courage that you have.” Her one statement to me that I will treasure forever—she said, “God never gives you more than you can handle.” So when I went through my personal challenge of open-heart surgery, the one thing I remembered was “God will never give you more than you can handle.” It was a pleasure and an honor—the most lovely woman I’ve ever known, and Lana and I created our first scholarship in the University System of Georgia at Georgia Southern to honor her. With my father being a minister and ministering in the community, my mother working in the church, it was just expected—or it wasn’t expected—it was just part of our lifestyle that we help others, and that’s what we’ve always been about.

TS: That’s great.

BW: I didn’t mean to make you guys [feel sad]. I’m sorry.

TS: I’m surprised you didn’t become a minister yourself.

LW: I asked that question before we married. I don’t think I’d be a good minister’s wife. I remember that. This past Saturday we attended the scholarship luncheon at Georgia Southern, and the recipient of that scholarship met with us. So that was beautiful.

BW: We love that. We get to meet the individuals who are recipients of the scholarship. Later I’m sure we’ll talk about, we just completed one here at Kennesaw. First recipient will be this fall, and then we’re meeting with Chancellor [Henry M.] Huckaby at the end of this month, and we plan to create one for the entire University System of Georgia.

TS: Is it for homeless students?

BW: Yes, it is for veterans, at-risk youth, and others who are, or who have been, homeless. It was created to help these students to complete their undergraduate degrees.

TS: I definitely want to get back to that, so I’m sure we won’t forget to go back and talk about that. Let me just ask you, though, given your strong ties to South Georgia, why did you want to come to Kennesaw in 1987, Bill?

BW: To be honest with you, Tom, we had been married seven years, and after seven years at Georgia Southern, my salary was \$23,800.

TS: You’re kidding, as Personnel Director?

LW: Assistant.

BW: Assistant Personnel Director

TS: I'm trying to think. Even in 1987, \$23,000 wasn't a very good salary.

BW: Lana had been there at Georgia Southern eight years or longer, and her salary was only about \$24,000.

LW: Not even that. Southern wasn't paying . . .

TS: And you had a doctorate by then, correct?

BW: Correct.

LW: And I was professor of the year: the first woman ever.

BW: And guess what: the year she was named professor of the year, she was also named alumni of the year.

LW: The money just wasn't there. On my end of it, I was in the department—there were probably sixteen or eighteen of us—and two of us were women.

TS: You all got a lot less than the men?

LW: We honestly did. I know it's so funny. You laugh about it, but the term "pin money" was actually brought up. I was working for pin money since I was married.

TS: My goodness. That was their assumption?

LW: That was the statement made to me. But life goes on, you know. The salaries were not high at all.

TS: I was just wondering how that could be because if you're a four-year school, you get the same amount of money for salaries that other four-year colleges get. Someone must have been making a lot of money, if you were making so little.

BW: The other thing with me, Tom, and Lana knows this, at that salary, I went in and said. "Look, would you please give me two hundred dollars more. I'd like to at least make \$24,000, a round number. Guess what they told me? "Can't do it. If that's not agreeable with you, you need to look for employment elsewhere." So Don Davis (who was at that time associate vice-chancellor for human resources) and I had met. One of his very closest friends was Roger [E.] Hopkins [Kennesaw State's Vice President for Business and Finance]. Your human resources director, Ross [E.] Young [director of Personnel Services], had just left or it was vacant. So Don, unbeknownst to me, had recommended my name to

- Roger. When the opening became available, I asked Dr. Lick if he would write the letter. I was invited up by Roger Hopkins, and he and Dr. Siegel interviewed me, so I came in November of 1987. The salary offered, I'll never forget, Roger made me the offer on the telephone, and it was more than Lana and I were making together. I'll tell you this. I have not told many people what I was offered, what I started out with. He offered me \$44,000 to come to Kennesaw State. And before he could say anything else, I said, "Roger I accept." He told me on the phone, "Bill are you sure that's enough?" I said, "Roger, I'm a person of my word. I've already accepted that." So I learned a lesson. Maybe one should negotiate a little bit when we're going somewhere. I feel in my heart of hearts he probably would have offered me fifty. That was probably in the range. But forty-four was more than Lana and I were making collectively.
- TS: Betty Siegel's got a similar story. When the chancellor called her, she said, "Yes," and didn't even ask what the salary was.
- BW: But Lana was down at Georgia Southern, and I met George [H.] Beggs when I was here at Kennesaw. I noticed that he had an opening in the university. I said, "Dr. Beggs, my wife is a fully tenured [faculty member]. Would you mind, I would like for my wife to apply for an opening in your school." So independent of me, Dr. Beggs interviewed and brought Lana in in 1988.
- LW: Yes, Ed [Edwin A.] Rugg [Vice President for Academic Affairs], Dr. Beggs, Willoughby [G.] Jarrell, all just wonderful people.
- TS: Was Willoughby the department chair [of the Department of Political Science and Sociology]?
- LW: Yes she was. She'd offered me a job the previous year, part time, which is how people would often start out. But like Bill said, I wanted to be home with Mom.
- TS: Yes, and didn't want a part time job anyways.
- LW: Yes.
- TS: So you come up here for the salary. How would you compare Kennesaw to Georgia Southern? We were a lot younger and undeveloped compared to Georgia Southern at that time, weren't we?
- BW: You were, but when I was at Georgia Southern, there were less than ten thousand students. Before I left, they had just reached ten thousand students. When I came to Kennesaw, it was Kennesaw College. It wasn't even Kennesaw State College then.
- TS: Yes, the next year [1988] is when it became Kennesaw State.

- BW: That's correct. When I came here, the other thing I discovered, Betty Siegel had already established a reputation as one of the most forward-looking, creative presidents in the University System of Georgia. The other thing was when I met Roger and I met Ed Rugg and Jim [James A.] Fleming [assistant to the president for College Advancement], who was over in the Foundation, and when I met all the folks that reported administratively to Roger, I told Lana, "There's something exciting happening at Kennesaw State. It's on the verge of greatness, and Betty Siegel is going to take them to the Promised Land. I did not realize at that time, but found out later, Stephen [R.] Portch, the chancellor [1994-2001]—one of his favorite presidents was Betty Siegel. I worked for Chancellor Portch when I went there [as Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, 1999-2006]. We became good personal friends. He loved Betty, loved Kennesaw. I think the first or second year I was here, Kennesaw hit ten thousand students [10,030 in fall 1990]. Now you're at twenty plus thousand. You're larger than Georgia Southern. With the addition of Southern Poly, you may even exceed enrollment beyond competing with Georgia State. You may end up being the second largest university in the University System of Georgia.
- TS: If we get a bump in enrollment for football, like Georgia Southern did, then we'll be bigger than anybody but the University of Georgia.
- BW: You think, Tom, since 1987 is twenty seven years. It's amazing.
- TS: Well you all got here for the second half of the first fifty years.
- BW: That's right.
- TS: So you bought into that spirit. You felt that spirit from Day One?
- BW: I did. I did. Roger Hopkins just had a unique way of communicating, as you know. When he interviewed me and offered me the job, he said, "Bill, there's just one thing I'm going to tell you." I told Lana this story later. He said, "When the ox cart gets in the ditch, we all pitch in and get the ox cart out." So I called Lana and I said. "Lana, I don't have a clue why I'm coming up here. There's this country guy up here who talks in colloquialisms. I don't know how he got to be VP for Business and Finance, but I will tell you . . . "
- TS: It's because he got the job done.
- GW: My best friend and most important mentor in higher education in my entire career was Roger Hopkins. I loved him like a father, and the day I went in for my surgery at Kennestone, the person that was in the hospital was Roger Hopkins. He sent his son around to check on Lana and on me. Roger truly was like a father to me, and I will love, honor, and respect him forever.

TS: I remember when I first started here, when I had a bigger mouth than brains, you could argue with Roger, and he'd argue back, and he wouldn't ever hold it against anybody. It was just back to normal again once the argument was over.

LW: Oh, yes. That was good.

BW: This is my one favorite Roger Hopkins story of all time. My first year here, and I'm sure you know that he and Ed [Rugg] used to go in his office on an annual basis. They would go through the entire budget and literally sit there and discuss every employee and what percent raise they were going to get and what dollar amount and all like this. Roger was intense. When he became intense, he might say some things that he would never have said in public. So the three of us were behind the closed door, and he became upset and started using a term. After about three and a half hours and it was over, I came out. Roger really had never worked with me and didn't know me that well. I went up to Terri Thomas [Arnold, his administrative assistant], and I said, "Ms. Thomas, I'd like for you to call Macon, Georgia, for me." She said, "Okay, Bill. Who do you want me to call?" I said, "I want you to call Macon Hospital." She said, "Okay, why do you want me to call Macon Hospital?" I said, "I'd like for you to ask them to send Mr. Hopkins a copy of my birth certificate." So all of a sudden he came out, and I could hear him say, "Wallace what are you doing out here? What do you want?" I said, "Mr. Hopkins, I just was going to get a copy of my birth certificate for you to prove to you that my first two names weren't GD." He laughed, and from that point on Roger said, "This is a guy I can work with. This is a guy I can trust." That was not Roger other than when he was at an intense time. He was more interested in this university and in the faculty, the staff, Betty [Siegel], just top of the line. He laughed about that, and I think that what's really built the bridge between me and Roger. We could talk to each other openly and honestly.

TS: Now, I remember when your office was on the second floor of the Pilcher building because I actually inherited that office after you left there for a while before the new Social Sciences building opened up. Was that where you were all along? Where did you start out?

BW: That is where I started out, as a matter of fact. When I first came to work, we were on the second floor, and I guess the library was downstairs, and procurement was across the way where Walt [Walter W.] Dees [director of Procurement Services] was, who was a close colleague of mine.

TS: Well, the library had already moved out of the Pilcher building by that time.

BW: When I started there, we were up on the second floor, and I was adjacent to Nancy [S.] King's office, which is where Student Affairs was.

TS: Oh, that's right.

- BW: So we were next door to each other, and Campus Security was downstairs, and Cullene [M.] Harper [Director College Relations] was right across from Public Safety. All of us were within walking distance, and on the building right adjacent to you guys, where the Administration Building was, was Registrar and Admissions. Joe [F.] Head [director of Admissions] and Bill [William L.] Hamrick were over there.
- TS: Everybody close together.
- BW: Absolutely.
- TS: So how many years did you stay at Kennesaw before you went to the Board of Regents?
- BW: I was here from 1987 to 1999. I went to the Board of Regents in 1999. Dr. Lick had always told me—he said, “Bill to be effective you should only stay somewhere six to eight years. I was at Georgia Southern for six years and here for twelve. Then I went to the regents. To be honest with you, I’m proud of the time I was here, but I felt, Tom, just listening to Dr. Lick—and there’s no guide book of how long you should be anywhere—I thought maybe I had been here at Kennesaw a couple of year longer than I had expected. I never thought I would be here for twelve years. When I left, I was hired by Art [Arthur N.] Dunning, who had been an individual working for Dr. Siegel [in the 1980s as assistant to the vice president for academic affairs and dean of graduate studies] and had gone to the regents. Interestingly enough, Chancellor [Henry (Hank) M.] Huckaby has now appointed Dr. Dunning as interim president of Albany State University [announced by the USG on November 20, 2013].
- TS: I didn’t know that.
- BW: So Dr. Dunning and I will get back in touch with each other. It’s just interesting the connections you build. We’ve just made lifelong friends. Lana has friends that we’ve met back when we were at Georgia Southern and at Kennesaw. So higher education is a lifelong experience in many ways.
- TS: Art was funny when he was on the panel on the future of higher education [during KSU’s Founders Week celebration in October 2013]. . He started speaking, and the chancellor interrupted to tell him to speak louder into the microphone. His response was, “I’m very glad that I don’t work for the University System.”
- BW: And immediately thereafter, Chancellor Huckaby said . . .
- LW: Chancellor Huckaby said, “You can say that for now.” It was something like that. That was already in play.
- TS: Oh, was it?

LW: I think so, the timing. That's interesting, yes.

TS: What was Art doing at the Board of Regents—external affairs or something?

BW: He was vice chancellor for external affairs. The colleague who had recommended me to Roger had retired from the University System of Georgia, Don Davis. Art told me not to tell anybody that he was going to offer me the job at the regents. He called Dr. Siegel and took her and the president's staff and me out to lunch at a Chinese restaurant. Dr. Siegel's favorite restaurant was Chinese. He looked at her and said, "Betty, I hate to tell you this, but I'm stealing Bill Wallace from you. I'm taking him down to the Board of Regents. I ended up with him, serving with him for almost a decade.

TS: Now why would you be under external affairs?

BW: That's where Human Resources was situated at the regents' office.

TS: Does that make any sense?

BW: It's just, organizationally, that's the way it was structured.

TS: What did you actually do for the system as a whole?

BW: I was hired as associate vice chancellor for human resources. When I was here, I had two benefits specialists who managed employee benefits, and I managed employment, wages, salary, and everything else. I got to the regents, and the one thing they wanted me to manage were employee benefits for the University System of Georgia. The one area I had not been responsible for was where they put me. When I went there, Tom, the system was \$33 million in deficit, and that was unbeknown to me at the time I went there.

TS: I had never heard that.

BW: That's what I inherited. I don't know why things were as they were, but the point is that in a matter of five years, I turned it around \$100 million. We were \$67 million positive reserves within five years. At that time we had a deficit in the State of Georgia. Governor Sonny Purdue came and told us, "Chancellor and Mr. Wallace, we're going to have to take \$9 million out of the healthcare plan reserves for the State of Georgia to balance the budget this year, to make things work." They did, and that's when I learned that the governor is a very influential individual and can pretty much do what he or she feels needs to be done for the State of Georgia. The interesting thing there—that action led to me being appointed by Governor Purdue later in my career. I'm the only person ever asked to chair or co-chair two separate Commission for New Georgia task forces. After that, the governor appointed me to the Georgia Board of Community Health

where I'm presently vice-chair of the board, and I am chair of its policy committee.

TS: Wow. What all does the Georgia Board of Community Health do?

BW: We are responsible for managing the state health benefit plan, Medicare, Medicaid, and Peachcare for kids. So when you look at the number of lives impacted by the decisions this nine-member board makes, it's one out of every four Georgians that are affected by decisions we make.

TS: Wow. Have you told the governor to expand Medicaid to more folks?

BW: I have been invited to talk with his healthcare policy advisor. I would share with her ideas that we have implemented or recommended to address healthcare access, physician shortage, and stabilizing premiums and costs for individuals under the state health benefit plan.

Lana and I do the community service to help with those who are homeless, those who are in need—the Salvation Army, MUST Ministries, whatever the case might be. To me, the champion of that is Lana. She's done so many things, and she never does it for self-recognition. What we're doing is we are paying it forward. It doesn't matter if anybody ever knows our name. It's irrelevant. But we have to help those individuals succeed so that we can get leaders like the Betty Siegels of the world and like the Dale Licks of the world and, in my opinion, the Stephen Portchs or the Bill Wachniaks of the world or the William Wallace Srs. of the world. We have to do that, and that's why we do what we do.

TS: Bill Wachniak is Lana's brother?

BW: It's her father.

LW: My brother's Harry Wachniak.

TS: I meant to ask you earlier, Bill. I guess it would be too much of a stretch in South Georgia, but was your father named for *the* William Wallace [of Scottish history]?

BW: I don't know, Tom. We never discussed that, but when Lana and I went to England, Scotland, and Wales for our tenth wedding anniversary, William Wallace was received exceptionally well, and I had no idea why at that time until the movie *Braveheart* came out, and then it made sense.

TS: We've covered a lot of your story, Bill. Let's go to Lana for a little while. First of all, did you come to Kennesaw as a department chair or a [teaching] faculty member?

- LW: I came as a faculty member.
- TS: Oh, I guess so, because it was the Political Science Department—Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology . . .
- LW: Human Services. The only majors we had were in Political Science and Human Services at the time I came in.
- TS: Right, because it took forever to get a Sociology major.
- LW: It did. It did. I was brought in to teach one of the Criminal Justice courses even though there was no Criminal Justice program or Sociology program. I got here in 1988. I got a call one day in the 1990s—I don't remember which year—from Don [Donald W.] Forrester. I'll never forget. He said, "Are you sitting down?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you might want to. Dr. Siegel wants you to be the CETL director." I always thought that she confused me with Joan [E. Leichter] Dominick [associate professor of Communication]. I always thought that she thought it was Joan Dominick that she was getting to do this. But I had had a pretty good reputation as a teacher and I was very involved with things on campus and always committed to teaching. So I went in as CETL director.
- TS: So you thought she had you confused with someone else.
- LW: I know; isn't that funny. I always thought the same thing with Chancellor Portch because he was always very effusive whenever I would see him. But I enjoyed being with CETL. I had been a full-time faculty member, an advisor to the Public and Social Service club, through which we had the best time. Working with students—I would have them do research papers that they then presented at conferences. I always thought that was important. I think that's a part of what Dr. Siegel heard about or saw me doing. So I was CETL director, I think, for about five years, and I taught a course each quarter.
- TS: Because the CETL director was part time at that point until 2002, I think.
- LW: Well, I was working at it full time and still teaching a class. I only had Lynn Moss as my assistant. Back then it was very different. If I wanted to bring in faculty and provide stipends, I had to generate the money myself. I did that through conferences. I'd get about 300 people at a conference and charge registration, and so I was self-sustaining in that regard, unlike now where a lot of money has gone into CETL, and I think that's great. Also I did the leadership programs. This is interesting. While Bill was doing staff leadership, I was doing faculty leadership. I made some changes over what Don had done. We each put our own stamp on it.
- TS: I guess we already had the Leadership Kennesaw in place. But CETL had always been responsible for that, hadn't it?

LW: Right. I went national with it and one year brought in a group of faculty developers from around the country. You were one of our hosts. You probably don't remember.

TS: I don't remember it.

LW: We all came in, and we got on busses, and you took us through Marietta.

TS: Oh, yes. I remember doing some historic tours for a while.

LW: It was wonderful, and Tim Mescon did my keynote for me on trends in higher education. It was wonderful having people visit our campus. It was an exciting time.

TS: There are still faculty members who come to me and say, "My first year you took me on a tour of Marietta." Then CETL stopped that somewhere along the line.

LW: Yes, that wasn't me.

TS: No, it was Bill Hill.

LW: That changed dramatically.

TS: They didn't have the time anymore to include the tour as part of new faculty orientation. I always enjoyed taking folks on the tour.

LW: We would do that through new faculty orientation. I loved doing that. That's why I know so many people. People go, "you know everyone." Well, yeah, I was the initial point of contact for so many people on campus.

TS: So you were doing CETL full time even though you had to teach as well because they regarded it as part time.

LW: Correct.

TS: I understand how part time can be full time.

LW: Yes, they call that the Kennesaw way. Do you remember? Then what I was also doing was programming for staff. We had a thousand participants in CETL programs annually. You remember those were the halcyon years of the new internet, so we would do [workshops] on how to get on the internet and do things. So we had so many different workshops. It was truly exciting.

TS: Was your office in the Pilcher Building?

- LW: When I first came here, I was in the Student Center, in the faculty and staff dining area.
- TS: Wait a minute—Student Center faculty and staff dining?
- LW: There was an area there.
- TS: That was your office?
- LW: Initially, there was no other office space available. We had keys for that. Then I went over to where Ralph [J.] Rascati [dean of the Honors College, formerly dean of University College] is. I was in both Willingham Hall and the old Social Sciences Building [University College]. I was in a trailer out there [behind Willingham Hall]. I've been in the Science Building twice as CETL director because I was viewed as full-time CETL director, and the department needed space. So I was moved over there. I was in the Science Building from when it opened in 1996 to 2000 or something.
- TS: I had forgotten that.
- LW: I'll never forget when [former dean] Larry [Laurence I.] Peterson, was brought in for an interview. I was there up in my office, and he got down and was looking at the carpet, and I thought he was the carpet cleaning product salesperson.
- TS: Was he studying the chemistry of the carpet?
- LW: Possibly yes. Then there was the trailer over here between Science and the Library. I was in there too, then the Social Sciences Building, and then Kennesaw Hall.
- TS: I remember, I guess, when you were department chair, and you had an office on the first floor of the old Social Science Building, which is now University College.
- LW: Yes, I was there.
- TS: Because I used to teach in Room 102 across from the Sociology Department, and students would be passing out in there because the room was so hot. They'd be opening all the windows, sticking their heads out. I'd go over and tell the secretaries that we needed to turn on some air conditioning, and they would chew me out because they were freezing on their side of the hall. Heating and air was not a success in that building.
- LW: No, they had changed both out while I was there. But, anyway, it was quite a journey. CETL really was quite exciting for me, and it really laid a foundation

because when I was CETL director, Public and Social Services and Sociology—things blew up.

TS: Blew up?

LW: Blew up. They did. That department blew up.

TS: They didn't get along?

LW: They did not get along.

TS: Those are disciplines where they're supposed to understand how to deal with people and get along with each other.

LW: It was interesting.

TS: They didn't get along. I understand. It's the academic world.

LW: It could have been the individuals involved too. I think Vassilis [Economopoulos, professor of Sociology] led the charge to split the department.

TS: Vassilis?

LW: Oh, yes, Vassillis would get in verbal arguments, fights, yes. I'm not sure what happened. Again, I was with CETL. So they agreed to a new department. At the time, Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice were in the Department of Human Services. Geography was with Political Science. Helen Ridley, the chair of the Political Science Department wanted to move out the geographers. Louise Bill, the chair of the Human Services Department, was glad to move out the sociologists and anthropologists. So that's how we ended up with Sociology, Anthropology, Criminal Justice and Geography in one department. Folks invited me to the meeting, and we all voted, and I was the inaugural department chair.

TS: Because you were the one person that could get along with everybody?

LW: Well, that was a big part of it, but by then I had learned to maneuver too. That's important, you know. One of my dearest, dearest colleagues is Mel [Melvyn L.] Fein [professor of Sociology]. I adore him. We have had an agreement for many, many years that I would get what I needed by threatening to give him to someone as a committee person or something. We both know it. What happened is Don Forrester, who was known for being kind of tight with money, offered me the job as permanent department chair. I went in as interim.

TS: Oh, Don was interim dean. I forgot that he was dean for a while.

- LW: Dean, yes. So he made an offer, and I said, “No, that’s just not enough.” I had looked at the landscape . . .
- TS: Bill needed to learn from you how to negotiate [laughs].
- LW: Then he talked a bit and came back, and I’ll never forget. I said to him, “Listen, you can keep the job and have Mel Fein as chair if you want Mel knows that I said this to Don. I was in a meeting over at the Jolley Lodge, and I get a phone call from Don saying, “We’ll meet what you want. We’ll meet the salary.”
- TS: Poor Mel.
- LW: When I left, I didn’t make as much as an assistant professor in the [Coles] College of Business.
- TS: Well who did?
- LW: That’s right. We just don’t. But it was so funny. We would work it. You were probably on a Core Committee where they wanted me to get Mel off the committee. I said, “Yes, you give him some travel funds and I will take him off the committee.” I actually received an envelope with money in it from a faculty group that took up a collection to encourage me to put him on another committee.
- TS: I’ve always gotten along great with Mel. I don’t understand all this [opposition to him].
- LW: You know, I don’t either; I’ve gotten along with him too. He’s wonderful! That was when I went in as department chair. I was department chair when Linda Noble was dean, and she resigned unexpectedly, and Helen [Ridley] went in and needed assistance. So that’s when I went in as associate dean.
- TS: Did Don stop directing CETL because he became the dean? He became dean in about 1995, I guess.
- LW: I think I was in CETL from 1995 to 2000, and then around 2000 I became department chair.
- TS: Then Bill [Hill] replaced you as CETL director? He was part-time while he was associate vice president for academic affairs. Then he persuaded Ed Rugg and Betty Siegel to make it a full-time job, and he left the vice president’s office. Don was before you and Bill was after you, and you were there five or six years?
- LW: Right. Yes.
- TS: That makes sense, from the mid-1990s to about 2000, and then you became department chair of the new department of whatever it was.

- LW: Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice. It was wonderful, a wonderful group!
- TS: So Mel was already on the faculty at that time. Vasillis was on the faculty.
- LW: Barbara [C.] Karcher [professor of Sociology], Betty [A.] Smith [professor of Anthropology], and then again we brought in new geographers, Harry [Harold R.] Trendell. Garrett [C. Smith]. Mark [W.] Patterson was new.
- TS: So you hired Mark?
- LW: I didn't. Helen did.
- TS: I knew Helen had a role in his hiring.
- LW: We had no majors, and that's when we hit the ground running, and within, what four years, we had a Sociology major, a Geographic Information Science [GIS] major, and a Criminal Justice major, all three of which are quite successful.
- TS: When you started in 1988, were you the only faculty member who was doing Criminal Justice?
- LW: I believe so, yes, the only one teaching Criminal Justice, other than, I'm sure, they had some part-time people.
- TS: That area has expanded quite a bit.
- LW: It was amazing. I wrote the program because I had no one else at the time. From what I understand, they are up to six hundred majors. It's amazing. They've got wonderful people.
- TS: They've got some really good faculty.
- LW: I wrote with Mel [Fein] and Barbara [Karcher] and Vasillis [Economopoulos] for the Sociology major, and I co-wrote the GIS [Geographic Information Systems] with Mark Patterson. That was a bit of a learning curve for me because it's highly technical. I learned a great deal in writing that proposal, because I obviously needed to understand the major. I think Dan [Daniel S. Papp] was vice chancellor at the Central Office who worked with us in obtaining approval for all three.
- TS: He would have been [Ed.: Papp was senior vice chancellor for academics and fiscal affairs for the University System of Georgia from 2000 to 2006].

LW: The Criminal Justice was the interesting one. I remember that Frank [A.] Butler wanted to talk with us. Ed Rugg was still vice president [for academic affairs]. He wanted to talk to us about the Criminal Justice major.

TS: Frank Butler was at the Board of Regents at that time?

LW: Right, he was at the [Board of] Regents [as vice chancellor for academic, faculty, and student affairs from July 2001 to January 1, 2007] just under Dan. I just had that appendectomy in December, and this was like January. I also had tendonitis. So here I walk in with a brace on my arm. I'm still walking gingerly from the operation for a ruptured appendix and gangrene.

TS: Oh my goodness.

LW: Yes, I remember walking in with my pearls on, and Frank said, "I want you to understand there are some political problems associated with you getting a Criminal Justice major at Kennesaw State." I looked at him as I sat kind of hunched over because I was probably still on pain medications, and I said, "If North Georgia College has a problem with us having a Criminal Justice major, then they can just get over it." Frank just looked at me. He still laughs about it so many years later. We obtained the approval and had our program. It was so funny though.

TS: Did you have Sutham [Cobkit or Cheurprakobkit] and Pete [Peter] Fenton and all those folks?

LW: Pete was part time for me. He came in [full time] when I had already moved into the associate dean position, and Sam [Abaidoo] was chair there.

TS: I did an interview with Judy Brown-Allen about three months ago.

LW: Oh, I love her. I brought her in.

TS: That's what she talks about in the interview.

LW: Oh, okay.

BW: You hired Sam also.

LW: I hired Sam, yes, wonderful, wonderful people.

TS: I think it's remarkable, the diversity of ideas in that department. Maybe you want to talk about that a little bit. Mel has always stood out as one of the more conservative members of our faculty and it seems like you always got along great with him.

LW: Oh, yes. One thing going in—I'm more of a techie, and he's a Luddite. Other people were in between, and others had more expertise in technology than I did, but that was always one of the things I looked at. On our website we made sure that we had faces and names out there that reflected diversity because we wanted people to see the palette, if you will, of a department with names like Abaidoo and Wachiniak and Cheurprakobkit and Fein—all of that and our faces because I've always believed that students need to see someone who looks like them to the closest degree possible. There's just something that makes you feel more at home with that. You need that diversity in terms of ethnicity and the different backgrounds. You have to have that with political leanings too. It's a university, and I've always believed that there should be a diversity of opinions. Mel and I would disagree, but we've always been professional with all of that. I would make sure that people were respectful of one another. That's one thing as a department chair that's so important because that's why we're here—we're here to teach, and we're also here to learn. They were a wonderful group. We did so much community work and gave lectures in the community. Because we were new we were even making our own t-shirts. Every time we got a Sociology major, we would give them a t-shirt that we hand made. Mark Patterson, I think, did the design for it. It was a nice group of colleagues.

TS: So when you started, you didn't have a major. I guess you at least had an elective as a general education course.

LW: Right. That was about it. We'd have some of the upper division courses in other majors.

TS: You're really free from teaching a lot of general education courses on one hand, but everybody wants upper level students, and you didn't have the majors in your field, so you're basically a service department.

LW: We were, very much so—again, a great group of people who were committed to building the disciplines, and that's something we all had to agree to, that each one was equal. Now, of course, they had to split into two separate departments.

TS: Yes they've got Sociology and Criminal Justice by themselves and Anthropology and Geography.

LW: The Anthropology came when I was at the dean's office.

TS: How would you describe the Kennesaw spirit, and let me just ask, how have you seen it change over the last twenty-five years or has it changed?

LW: I retired four years ago, so I don't know really what's been going on.

- TS: Let's just say from 1988 to 2010 did Kennesaw change in ways you liked or ways you didn't like or have we basically kept the same spirit about teaching and service and scholarship and so on? What would you say?
- LW: I enjoyed the spirit of being able to be innovative, to try out new and different things, and frankly to not be fearful of failure, if you will. I saw that all along, as a CETL director, as a department chair certainly, and then as associate dean, I was able to do new and exciting things to try and get things moving. My last year—you're familiar with that—I went to the provost's office because I could do more things. I'm the person they brought in for the Paulding [County] campus that opened with classes in January of [2010]. I began in September of the previous year developing the schedule of classes for this new campus. I had been doing other projects. I think I went over there in July of my last year. I was able to meet with a lot of different faculty and department chairs on campus and get things done in a very short time period and then work with the fellow who went in after me, Ken Hill, who's just a delight. He's the person I wanted as my replacement who had the personality you have to have in an environment like that where there's a lot going on. I enjoyed that part of it too. You could still have that creativity and innovation, it just depends on where you are. The shift over time toward a requirement for more research—I don't think that was at the cost of teaching. Ed Rugg, when he was vice president way back in the Dark Ages, said this is the direction we're moving in.
- TS: Back in the Dark Ages. [Ed.: Rugg was vice president of academic affairs from 1986 to 2002].
- LW: Yes, back in the Dark Ages. We heard it then. People would say in 2008, "That's just brand new; it's no good." "No, it has been around for a long time because we've been talking about this and ways of keeping yourself fresh, and to learn as you teach." I've enjoyed all those kinds of things. You always get blips on your horizon, you know, but you move around them.
- TS: So Helen [Ridley] asked you to be associate dean, and she was dean [until 2006] and then Richard Vengroff [2006-2012]. You continued to be associate dean for several more years?
- LW: I did. In the middle of that, I was asked by Dr. Papp and Dr. [Lendley C.] Black [the provost] to go and assist in the [Bagwell] College of Education, when it suffered from internal strife. That was sad.
- TS: Then Frank Butler came in at some point didn't he?
- LW: He did. Frank Butler came in as an interim [dean] while I was associate dean of our college. There were a lot of responsibilities for all of us. We reviewed all the annual reviews. We reviewed all promotions and tenure—the associate deans along with the dean. There was a lot of work there. I was also the interim

department chair for the Department of Inclusion—Special Studies, you know. I was over there because there were a lot of difficult issues. A lot of the chairs in that college were moved, and others of us were asked to go in.

TS: When Dean Wan was out, did some of the chairs that were close to him go out too? Was that the way it worked?

LW: I don't know all the specifics about why this department chair and that department chair moved, but I think it was a needed upper level administration decision. They had to intervene. Dean Wan was still there, when I was there.

TS: That was kind of a touchy situation then, wasn't it?

LW: Yes. Dr. Sarah [R.] Robbins assisted over there too. I don't know that you recall that she was the faculty executive assistant to the president. I have to laugh about it because it was so difficult, and everyday someone would come to me crying. I know when I went in, I'll never forget this, I went in on a Wednesday. We were introduced to the faculty of the College of Education. I didn't know all of them and the secretarial staff and the other staff. This was a Wednesday. Classes were to begin on Monday. They had not done the scheduling in the department I went into as interim chair. They'd not done it. Can you imagine the stress level of those faculty and staff and students? It was like that all the time, Tom. Bill knows, I'd come home almost catatonic. Sarah and I have different ways of dealing with stress. Sarah would emote and she would tear up. I on the other hand, didn't, which was worse, probably. I would internalize it. By the end of that experience, I couldn't move my left arm. I had to go to physical therapy because of the stress related to all of that.

TS: So you unloaded on Bill when you got home.

LW: Yes [laughs], and [our daughter] Cynthia. No, I couldn't. I was just sitting there like this because I was doing both jobs. Each day I would go half-day. At noon, I'd go over to the College of Education. They offered me \$250 extra a month.

TS: [Only] \$250?

LW: I negotiated for \$500. That was the most I could get, and then they wouldn't let me keep it afterward as a part of my ongoing salary.

TS: Well, tell me how you all got started with the homeless veterans and homeless students and all of that?

BW: I think the one thing I want to reiterate before I do this, if you don't mind—Lana said, "What did we learn from Kennesaw?" I thought she captured it beautifully. When we came here, Dr. Siegel said, "Bill, I want you to create a staff leadership program. I said, "Dr. Siegel, what would you like included in such a program?"

She said, “I want you to tell me. I want you to be creative, innovative. I would like to have good results. I would like to positively incorporate the staff. I would like some national recognition.” That’s what she said. So we won national recognition, regional recognition, for that program, and for the staff. I never felt that we had boundaries.

That carried over for me when I went to the Board of Regents. If there’s one thing that really just causes me great concern, and I can’t accept, it’s when you come up with an idea, and somebody says, “We can’t do that.” “Well, why can’t we do that?” “Well, status quo, we’ve always done it this way.” “Well, you wouldn’t be in this mess if you’d figured out a way to get out of it.” I mean, when you’re sitting down at the Board of Regents, and you’re \$33 million in debt, you’d better be creative and come up with some things that are going to work. The other thing, I know about you, I know about Lana, I know about me, we’re all intelligent people, and we’re fully capable of identifying what the problems are. Anybody can do that. The real leaders are the people who come up with solutions. To be honest with you, I reached a point in my professional career, I enjoy being civil, I enjoy listening and learning from other people, but I want results. I don’t have time to just talk. If we’re going to talk, that’s fine. We can do that socially. But we’re impacting people’s lives. I want programs put in place. I want statutes put in place. I want policies put in place that are going to help our citizens and those families we serve.

What Lana has been about and what I’ve been about is trying to think outside of the box and come up with common sense ideas that can be applied. That’s what Kennesaw taught me—that you don’t have to be limited. Think outside the box. Be creative. Enroll other people in your vision, and always show common sense and respect for other people. You don’t do it for yourself. You do it for others.

The homelessness issue, Lana really got me involved in that. She started the Homelessness Awareness Week here at Kennesaw State along with other folks about six or seven years ago. The first year, they had absolutely no budget. So Lana and I said, “There have to be flyers. There has to be marketing, speakers, all these other things. So we donated the first thousand dollars out of our own account to create a fund whereby we could bring in speakers, we could do day-to-day operation functions. Lana and her colleagues decided to have the sleep-out. They did that for students. I think it’s two nights, three nights.

The first year I brought some food to them while they were there overnight, and I met a gentleman who was a student at Kennesaw State who had just returned from Afghanistan. As we were talking, I told him about my father and my father’s military service. He said, “Mr. Wallace, I’m homeless.” I told Lana, “That’s just something I cannot accept or tolerate. We have to do something.” That’s when we came up with the idea of creating a Homelessness Awareness 20/4/1 Scholarship here at Kennesaw State. Within three years, the scholarship was fully funded, and had I not met that veteran from Afghanistan, I don’t know if we

would have come up with the idea. We might have. But that's where we built in the criteria of requiring the recipient to be at-risk students and/or veterans who are or have been homeless.

Kennesaw State is known, as is the University System of Georgia, for being a place that is welcoming to veterans and recognizing their service. I guess the thing I'm very proud of, as I go out in my daily life, as Lana goes out, we can literally say we have created the first scholarship to address this subject. I met a gentleman at Kennesaw State who said, "If you do one for the University System of Georgia, please let me know. My company and I support veterans, and we will contribute to your scholarship for the University System of Georgia."

It began with her parents, my parents, and the people we met here at Kennesaw. One of the things people may not realize, Tom, for our Staff Leadership Program, we always had an annual project that we would require the staff to do. We began the Owl Prowl Road Race, and that went from like thirty people to where we would have five to six hundred people. My last year here at Kennesaw, which was 1998-99, I think; we did the Owl Prowl Road Race, and we raised enough money that we helped build a home for Habitat for Humanity. We would always cover our cost of t-shirts, but we would always make a contribution to the community. That gave me pride too. When Lana came up with the homelessness focus, we began to talk with the governor. Governor Nathan Deal, for the last two years, has issued a KSU Homelessness Awareness Week proclamation for the State of Georgia.

TS: I ran into you all down there last year when I was down there for something else.

LW: That's right.

BW: The city of Kennesaw issues a proclamation, Cobb County issues a proclamation, and Kennesaw State is recognized as the institution that is cognizant and supportive of this issue. We have folks in Student [Development], and I'm going to mention her—Janese Thompson [coordinator of Administrative Programs/Projects], is one of the people, along with Lana, and so is Judy Brown-Allen. This is important. Most folks don't realize. I will assure you that at Kennesaw State you probably have twenty-five to fifty students, full time, who are homeless. I guarantee it.

TS: Right now?

BW: Right now. Guarantee it.

LW: They're coming out, yes.

BW: We've talked with other universities. Lana just made a presentation to a Rotary club. A number of them are retirees who are interested in doing this. We do

volunteer work with the Salvation Army. Lana is a commissioner for United Way on the Regional Commission on Homelessness. That has become our passion. As retirees, we can do what we want, when we want, and yet maintain friendships with people like you. I'm going to say this for the record too. You were a good friend, who welcomed me when I came to Kennesaw.

LW: Oh, yes.

BW: And I will always respect and be indebted to you for your friendship.

TS: I appreciate that.

BW: I mean that sincerely. Tell him what you think about homelessness, what we do.

LW: The precipitating factors that led to Homelessness Awareness Week—and in October we celebrated the sixth annual event—occurred about seven years ago when I was teaching an introductory Sociology course. We were talking about socioeconomic status and life chances—how where we are on the economic stratum impacts whether we are going to benefit or suffer in society. We benefit or suffer in terms of education, criminality, or food and security. I talked about civil inattention. It's a simple concept.

TS: Civil inattention?

LW: Civil inattention. It's a concept in Sociology, which means that if someone makes us uncomfortable, he or she disappears from our social vision. They're invisible.

TS: If they make us uncomfortable, like, you don't really want to see that poor person there because it makes us feel bad? So we don't see them?

LW: That is right because they might want a handout, you know. We even do that walking down the street. It's like people sitting in a subway. You don't look around at the people around you. You're not sure they might ask for a pickup or something. I was talking about that with our students. Again, they just disappear, not because we're mean, but because we're uncomfortable. We might not know how to react. Two students raised their hands and said, "Dr. Wachniak, Dr. Wachniak, our church feeds homeless people." I said, "That's wonderful. What do they tell you about their lives?" And both young ladies said, "Well, we don't really talk to them. We're a little bit afraid of that." That's a common pattern, Tom. Again, these were lovely students, people who are well-meaning, people who have sympathy, but they don't have empathy. The distinction I make is sympathy is feeling sorry for someone else. When you do that, you maintain that distance from them. Empathy is feeling that sorrow that someone else has, which makes you take greater action on the behalf of someone else. I said, "We've got to do something." These kids are wonderful, but there is just some gap here in terms of a social conscience if you will. I tried to get something going with the

students, a sleep-out, and didn't get anywhere. I couldn't do it. As I started out saying to you, "Vision without execution is hallucination." I thought that I could pull off this event as a class project, but I couldn't. I sent an email across campus, saying, "Who would like to work on this with me?" As Bill said, Janese Thompson, was the first person. She comes out of the Adult Learner Program. Janese was my student when I came here. She graduated in Human Services. I'm not going to talk about our ages, but let's just say Janese and I are not spring chickens. The reason I say that is because we've both done the sleep-out for six years. Another person was Rian [J.] Satterwhite [assistant director of curriculum and assessment, Center for Student Leadership], who has since left, but he was in Student Leadership, and Karen Heilman, who was brand new in Student Leadership. As a group, we created Homelessness Awareness Week, or HAW.

TS: She's still here?

LW: She's still here. Maureen Patton [director of University Events] was wonderful. Maureen helped us because you've got to have a logistics person. [Lt.] Bernadette Haynes from campus police was the representative there. We got together and then started bringing in community partners. We had anywhere from twenty to twenty-five community partners each year that have been involved with us. That was the core group. KSU is now institutionalizing Homelessness Awareness Week. I think Jerome Ratchford has now put it in his area [Student Success] to handle planning and implementation of HAW events.

TS: The vice president for student success.

LW: Right, he'll be retiring I think in the next few months.

TS: I saw that. He came about the same time you did in '88.

LW: Oh, did he? It was exciting. That core group worked on it every year other than Rian due to leaving KSU last year. What we do with Homelessness Awareness is we have a week of activities that begins with a mini-conference. We've had great speakers. We have people going into classrooms and sharing their experiences at the invitation of the professors. That's where Judy Allen is wonderful. She came in maybe the next year and became involved with us, and she's been amazing.

TS: She has her own story about a homeless student on campus where she got started.

LW: The one she gave her car to?

TS: Yes.

LW: I remember him, yes.

TS: She had an office in the library and saw this student with a backpack that looked more like he was carrying clothes than books, and she started following him.

LW: You know, Tom, if you were to keep your eyes open for stuff like that, you'd see it too. Where is your office on campus?

TS: It's in the library now.

LW: That's where you'll see homeless students. We do have, again, speakers on campus, and that's important to have people who are homeless or have been homeless to talk. We have up to ten classes, so we're hitting six hundred students easily. Judy started the thrift store for us. It's a one-week-long thrift store. The first year, I think, she had sixty boxes of clothing that went to Gateway. That comes from donations of students, faculty, and staff. They're not going to do it this year, I don't think. I think that Student Government was able to collect two thousand cans of food last year. There are a lot of things that come out of this event including the sleep out, which is forty-six hours long. About three years ago—it's so exciting—students who are homeless on this campus started coming out and sharing their stories with other students, and that's when we knew we needed to do more. This is wonderful—Lynda Johnson, the president's executive administrator, is a Sociology major graduate. She was looking for classes to take, and I was her academic advisor the whole time, even after I retired. Even though I had already retired, but had been approved to teach, I said, "Do a directed study with me, and do something that's relevant. Do it about homeless college students." She was a bit hesitant, not because she wasn't committed to working with students who were homeless, but because there's very little data about this problem. We developed a syllabus, Dr. Abaidoo approved it, and she did a directed study on homeless university students.

TS: I didn't know that.

LW: She deserves credit for getting that office on campus that works with homeless students. This initiative that she spearheaded came out of that directed study. Then she got a group together, including Marcy Stidum who's running it and who is wonderful too. All these wonderful folks! We met with the [president's] cabinet. You always have to meet with the cabinet on these issues. HAW [Homelessness Awareness Week]—I had to meet with the cabinet to get [approval for the] week of activities focusing on homelessness. I give Lynda all the credit for implementing this [CARE] Center that opened last year because she took the ball, and she ran with it. The campus police knew that she was working on this issue, so Ted Cochran [KSU police chief], who was a very compassionate person in my dealings with him, would keep her abreast of what was going on with different students on campus. She shared some of these emails with me. There was a student who was homeless, and they reported that they would see him here and there. You knew he took his showers here; he'd sleep outside over there. They were very compassionate. They didn't do anything to hurt him, and

- they wanted to see how they could help him. At least, I know when I looked at this, and I think when Lynda looked at it, she said, “We have to do something. This is real. It’s not research on paper. It’s not numbers in a report.” I still have those [emails] because I’m reminded of that. Homelessness Awareness Week opened that door. There have been good spinoffs from this event.
- BW: You got a note this past year that you have . . .
- LW: Oh, yes, the food pantry this October—we were collecting food over in the Social Sciences Building. We have a note left in a baggie with donated candy, and it was from a student saying, “I don’t know if y’all can accept these, but I had to include them because my boyfriend, who grew up on donated food, said he never got anything sweet, and I know some kids would appreciate them.” These are the kinds of things that kept us going. And like Bill said, the scholarship . . .
- TS: The scholarship is going to be for anything they want to spend it for, for tuition, or what?
- LW: Anything they want to spend it on. Once they’re the recipient, it’s their money.
- BW: We had corporate support this year from a local Zaxbys. One day, they gave a percent of their proceeds towards the stipend, and then Lana and I matched that. The first recipient will be this fall semester, and he or she will have a thousand dollar stipend to assist them with their education. But one other thing this has led to, Tom, that really, really touched my heart—Lana has been involved with the Salvation Army somewhat, and we went to the Salvation Army over in Marietta.
- TS: Yes, Waterman Street.
- BW: Right, and the one thing they were telling us and sharing with us—they took us on a tour of the facility, but they have begun what is called a Shower and Laundry ministry. What it is—they allow individuals to come in who are homeless to take a shower. Well, we were looking there, and, Tom, the towels they had were in total disrepair—no soap, no shampoo, anything.
- TS: Towels are relatively cheap.
- LW: That’s right
- TS: It’s not going to break anybody’s piggy bank to buy a towel.
- BW: What we did, being in the hotel business and having seen that in our family business, Lana contacted someone, and we acquired two dozen brand new towels, full sized, that we donated. We then gave soap and other things. You think about someone; they don’t wish to be unclean. Something as simple as permitting someone to take a warm shower—it’s just things we would never contemplate.

TS: So they let them wash their clothes while they're taking a shower.

BW: Sure. Then we did, first time I've ever done this, a point in time count of homeless individuals. We were asked to go over to Decatur, I think, is where it was. So we went out from 8:00 PM to 3:00 AM, and the temperature was in the teens that morning. When you see individuals on streets of Atlanta at 1:00 or 2:00 o'clock in the morning with nothing around and at that temperature, you know that it's real. These are people in need. Then we were invited to go down to a place called Red Shield [Red Shield Service, Salvation Army], which is the primary location in downtown Atlanta for homeless individuals. They had something like 300 or 350 beds. On the second level they have an area reserved exclusively for veterans. So there was a gentleman there—they are the only group permitted to stay longer than I think it was ninety days, which I think is the max for anybody [else]. But these folks who were veterans could stay there for up to two years, and they call it the barracks, which is a military term we're all familiar with. To see that and witness that first hand—there's a lot of people out there who wish to help. So it's just like how can we facilitate? How can we participate? That's what touches our hearts, when we see things like that.

LW: We've done a lot over the years. Again, these are spinoffs from HAW, and Janese has been with us. We did a "t-shirt island" for homeless children. I'm fair at negotiating for textiles like t-shirts and towels. So we've done things like that. We co-sponsored Atlanta Homeless Connect—that was a huge partnership by so many different agencies and Georgia State and Kennesaw State. Services were provided to individuals who are homeless, ranging from legal assistance to medical exams. I'm still doing some things that I did as an academician, such as reviewing funding proposals for United Way. They recently had the three million dollar grant cycle, and I was a reviewer for that. I enjoy being able to do those kinds of things too, which are a reflection of my training and a part of who I am. I'm not going to pretend that I'm a service provider. We do what we can to help. It's the same with our scholarships—as Bill said, we're going to Hank Huckaby next. The university system needs to develop a "SPOC," a single point of contact, for students entering Georgia's colleges and universities who are homeless.

TS: So you're going to set up a scholarship for a homeless student . . .

BW: At any institution in the University System of Georgia.

LW: If we can.

BW: If we can.

LW: They don't have a single point of contact.

TS: They've got their own foundation at the regents don't they?

LW: But what do they do with it? We're going to talk to him [Chancellor Huckaby] to see what can be done.

BW: We've been old friends, and I worked with Dan [Papp] when he was there and Arlethia [Perry-Johnson] when she was there. Hank was [Senior] VP for finance and administration at [the University of] Georgia when I was down at the regents. We've been friends for twenty years. Then Dan left there and became your president here at Kennesaw State, and Arlethia came [as vice president for external affairs]. Lana mentioned one thing that I guess it was me getting my feet wet. That was when we went to the heart of downtown Atlanta less than a block from where the Georgia Dome is to one of the most desperate living areas I have ever seen in my life when we did t-shirt island. We had, I don't know, six boxes of brand new t-shirts, and we went down there on a Sunday afternoon in the fall. Tom, there were children that would come up that had never owned anything brand new of their own in their entire life. It had been handed down from brother or sister or whatever—just desperate living conditions. Lana and I forgot who was with us—a student—left me there at the table . . .

LW: Evelyn, Janese, they were there.

BW: So these children came up, and they said, "How many t-shirts can I have?" I'm there all by myself, never dealt with this issue, and I didn't know, should I give them one, should I give them two, should I give them four? Ended up, I started saying, "Well, how many would you like to have?" They said, "I'd like to have three, two for me and one for my brother," or something like that. Then all of a sudden an adult came up, and so you just never know who you can help. I've learned not to make assumptions because I didn't know what to anticipate and what to expect. If I went today, it may be different, but that was a great learning lesson for me that even in that type of situation, they were not being selfish and thinking only of themselves, but thinking also of a family member. I thought that's a pretty good lesson.

LW: This was at the City of Refuge.

BW: City of Refuge, part of downtown Atlanta. Oh, my goodness!

LW: He said, "All these legislators ought to come out here and spend the night." Now, Gateway no longer takes women and children, so the City of Refuge is assisting these families.

TS: I'm astounded that the Atlanta Community Food Bank does so well.

LW: Bill Bolling—he's quite a good, lovely man. Have you met him?

TS: Yes, he spoke at graduation, I guess, my last semester before I retired. I was up on the stage [as chief faculty marshal], and I got to talk to him a little bit. He's very impressive.

BW: That's one of the charities we support.

LW: A lot of good people.

TS: I guess I got my eyes opened when [my wife] Kathy was head of St. Vincent de Paul for St. Catherine of Sienna [Kennesaw, Georgia] and was going out into all these trailer parks around here, and it was like going into a third world country it seemed like back then.

LW: I'll tell you something that will shock you: 1.2 million children, K through 12, are homeless in this country.

TS: Wow!

LW: That's the latest figure.

BW: That the latest data. Tell him about Georgia. How many were there?

LW: Georgia has 37,000 homeless children in K-12, and then roughly 26,000 children younger than that are homeless in Georgia.

TS: Kathy goes to Scared Heart Basilica nowadays. We'll go down there for a Christmas Eve service, and the back row looks like the homeless come in just to get out of the cold, I guess.

BW: Lana was looking at data yesterday, and in the general population, veterans were higher than the general population in terms of homelessness.

LW: That's where the money's going now. Strides are being made to assist them.

TS: Well, it's remarkable all the things that you all are doing.

LW: We try. Are we doing enough? Yesterday someone from Emory asked me to be on a board. It deals with homeless youth.

TS: You don't want to be a full-time [volunteer].

LW: I'm not sure, but I do enjoy it. We enjoying helping and doing what we can. Like Bill said, it's not to get our names out there, although you appreciate it when people thank you.

- BW: But we sit there, Tom, and it's like we do what we can. We enlist the support of other people, and still it's just not enough. You sit there sometimes, and you say, "As much as we've been able to do, there's still desperation out there. What more can we do to help in that regard?" The last thing—my father being the minister—I guess I always remember is that old saying, "To whom much is given, much is required." We take that seriously. We've been very blessed, so that's how we give back.
- LW: I want us to have discussions with people who are homeless and document that, Tom. We had talked about doing a class [to do that].
- BW: Georgia Southern may even invite Lana down to do Homelessness Awareness Week. Georgia State has contacted her. There is other interest in the system now to model what Lana and others began here at Kennesaw State for Homelessness Awareness Week. When we talk to the chancellor, we may see those types of focused programs starting to occur throughout the system, which would be appropriate.
- LW: It's fun. But I want to travel too! [laughs]
- TS: It doesn't sound like you've slowed down any.
- LW: No, but it's more fun now. I did a national presentation in November. I'm going to do an international conference in July. You know how it is when you're an administrator and a teacher. I just didn't have the time to do that like I can do it now. So I enjoy that. You're writing so much, but you always have. But still, they've got you talking. I see you've got other speaking engagements. It's fun.
- TS: I taught a class last summer, and it wore me out, so I'm not sure how many more classes I'll teach.
- BW: What you're doing here has to be a joy for you. You're getting the history of this university through the eyes of the individuals who work here, and connecting different stories, what a wonderful opportunity.
- TS: It's been fun to do these. It's probably the most rewarding project that I've done. I think I probably like interviewing the people who get the service awards more than anything.
- LW: Yes, they're doing amazing things, aren't they? They really are. I'm sure you know, everyone who has talked with you has said how much they enjoyed KSU—and the opportunities, the friendships, all of that, truthfully.
- TS: I think that as a young institution, we've been able to start things that haven't existed before, so we can do them our own way, as opposed to somebody saying, "Well, we've never done it that way before in the last hundred years." Hopefully,

it will stay that way. I'm glad I started when I did. I'd hate to be starting a career here right now. I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong on that, but I'm happy I started when I did.

BW: I am as well.

LW: Me too, having had all those opportunities.

TS: Well, I really appreciate you coming and talking to me today.

LW: Well, thank you for asking us. It's very kind of you.

BW: Thank you very much.

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